

Minutes

Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 13th July 2023 in the Parish Room,
Stowmarket Road, Great Blakenham at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Steve Plume (Chairman), Cllr Debbie Kemp, Cllr Nick Leonard, Cllr Will Durrant, Cllr McNamee,
Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk), SCC Cllr Chris Chambers,

1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence - **District Cllr Marriott**
2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
 - a. Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda – **Cllr Plume for item 8 (g)**
 - b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any)
 - c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate.
 - d. Co-option of parish councillor(s) / to sign declaration of acceptance.
3. Public Forum
 - a. To receive the report from the County Councillor – **See attached report**
 - b. To receive the report from the District Councillor – **See attached report**
 - c. To receive questions from members of the public – **None**
4. To approve the Draft Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 8th June 2023 - **Approved**
5. To note the Clerk's update from previous Meetings.
 - a. We received a big thank you from the Parish Rooms for the contribution of funds to replace doors and windows.
6. Planning
 - a. To consider the following planning applications – **None received**
 - b. To note any planning determinations

<u>DC/22/01947</u>	Land At Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham, Suffolk	Part Approved -Condition 5 (Ground Floor Levels), Condition 24 (Covered Cycle Storage), Condition 25 (Parking and Turning NOTED
DC/23/02053	14 Portland Way, Great Blakenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0FH	Part Approved - Confirmation of Compliance with Conditions for 3310/14 (all conditions) and DC/18/02066 (all conditions) NOTED
DC/23/02043	Norfolk Trucks Ltd, Lodge Lane, Great Blakenham, Ipswich Suffolk IP6 0LB	Approved- Lighting NOTED
DC/22/05126	Land At Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham, Suffolk	Approved -Confirmation of Compliance with Condition

		22 (Access Surface Treatment) of Outline Planning Permission DC/20/03891 NOTED
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- c. Any other planning matters to note – **None received**

7. Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure

- a. To note SID device application was submitted to Suffolk Highways on 13th June 2023 -**CLLR Chambers to confirm that applications have been received.**
- b. Update on meeting with Port One Developers to discuss benefits to the community – **Port One offered to instal solar PV panels on both Village Hall and Parish Room. Offer is for installation of panels only with connection to the grid. Will then be able to import and export electricity. Later may be offered the opportunity to join a Peer-to-Peer network, which would be a local network offering better import/export rates. Both Halls to submit 12-month energy usage data (energy bills) and an average building usage to Sarah-Jane Hatt/Port One. Once data received Port One will then be able to provide Parish Council with details of how many solar panels required per building and how much energy will be produced.**
Gipping Meadows project is still progressing. Possibility of developers keeping ownership of land.
- c. To discuss Parish Infrastructure investment plan – **Cllr McNamee to produce a public survey for social media and local village store to see what residents want to happen in village so that a plan can be discussed going forward.**
- d. Update on proposed net zero project – **Hygreen Energy are working with Environmental Power International (EPI) to deliver an innovative and highly sustainable energy recovery plant. The site will take in up to 24,000 tonnes pa of non-recyclable waste and/or sustainable biomass, for treatment by EPI's unique and patented Pure Pyrolysis technology. More info on Cllr Marriotts attached report. Clerk and Cllr Chambers to investigate when planning will be submitted.**

8. Governance

- a. To finalise Budget forecast 23/24 – **Agreed general reserve should be increased to £60,000 to cover yearly costs and move to a separate account.**
- b. To note additional License for Acronis was purchased on 5th July 2023 – **Noted**
- c. Update on Campaign for 20mph Suffolk - **It was agreed that support from Suffolk Highways and Suffolk Police would be the major hurdle with implementation. As this project is geared towards residential areas, I saw no benefit in whatever cost to us as the major roads would remain as they are.**
- d. To note external audit submission sent to PKF Littlejohn on 28th June 2023 - **Noted**
- e. To note application for bank multiscard with Unity Trust was submitted on 29th June 2023 - **Noted**
- f. Review and adopt updated Financial Regulations Policy, Reserves policy and Investment Policy – **Adopted and to upload on website. Agreed that non-bank signatories to check monthly finance report and invoices at Parish meetings before payments are approved on online banking.**
- g. To discuss audit of Contractor tender – **Clerk to ensure that contractors have public liability insurance that also covers additional workers, health & safety certificates, risk assessments/method statements. Cllr Durrant to produce a work checklist to be completed on a weekly basis by contractors so that work can be cross checked with invoices. Agreed to add £200.00 per year to current contract so that the cleaning of the 2 new bus shelters on Bramford road is included to the work list.**
- h. To discuss and approve Chairmans Allowance – **Cllr Plume left the room whilst the allowance was discussed. Cllrs unanimously agreed to increase the allowance to £1000 .**
- i. To note Realtas training booked for August 7th 2023 - **Noted**
- j. To discuss Village Hall AGM, sustainability report and finances –

Cllrs agreed that they all had serious concerns with all reports or lack of information provided and how the AGM went ahead without being posted to residents . As the Parish Council are Custodian Trustees for the village hall they have a duty to ensure that all finances are in order and procedures are followed correctly. Agreed that a letter would be sent to the village hall committee raising our concerns. Once a response is received the PC could then have a discussion about any future funding.

- k. To discuss purchasing Adobe PDF editor software – **Agreed to purchase software**
- l. To note problems with EE contract changing account over to clerk –
Clerk is currently paying for 1 phone contract and Wifi hub on her personal EE contract due to issues with changing over contract from last clerk. Agreed that these costs would be refunded once issue resolved.
- m. To confirm all election paperwork has been completed by councillors. - **Confirmed**
- n. To approve monthly payroll for August 2023 for summer break –
Approved to pay Payroll, Shades and Cllr allowance in August 2023.

9. Allotments.

- a. To discuss allotment review –
Clerk to again contact plot holders to ensure terms and conditions are being adhered to. If no response received to go ahead and release plot to people on waiting list.
- b. Proposed date for treatment of allotment sheds by contractor’s week beginning 24/07/2023 - **Noted**

10. Village Maintenance

- a. Update on tree maintenance and quotes for Mulberry Gardens – **Agreed to go ahead with 2nd quote.**
- b. To discuss Lock Stop Planks proposal to replace planks –
- c. **Agreed to cover costs of replacing lock stop planks approx. cost £240 to £360.**
- d. Update on the purchase of trees for Hackneys Corner –
Quote from Botanica for 6 mature trees, planting and replace if trees die £4,941.60. Clerk to try and get another quote before planting time in September 2023.
- e. To discuss purchase of plaques for commemorative tree –
Cllr Kemp to gain costs for plaques
- f. To discuss options for tree guards for new trees -
Clerk to gain costs for different types of tree guards
- g. To discuss quote for painting bench in coronation colours –
Agreed that this would no longer go ahead due to costs.
- h. To discuss quote for Bramford Road bank clearance –
Clerk to find out how many people would be completing work and total costs involved.

11. Churchyard and Cemetery.

- a. To consider any options for the rebuild and maintenance of the shelter in the Cemetery –
To gain quotes for replacing the shelter from builders.

12. Training and Development for Councillors and Clerk

13. Finance

- a. To consider approving and making the following payments:

Shades	B	Hackneys Corner maintenance as per tender – Invoice 2340	£135.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Grounds maintenance as per tender -Invoice 2341	£507.50	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Street cleaning as per tender -Invoice 2342	£1300.00	LGA 1972 s111
Monthly Payroll	B	Month ending 30/06/2023	£976.30	LGA 1972 s111
PKF Littlejohn	B	Outstanding audit fee -Invoice SB2021 4526	£408.00	LGA 1972 s111
HMRC	B	P30 Quarter 1 ending 5/07/2023 – 120PY001082698	£78.97	LGA 1972 s111

SALC	B	Annual internal audit ending 31/03/2023 – invoice 27468	3452.40	LGA 1972 s111
Acronis	D	Cyber protect home office 1 year subscription - Invoice 736105089914	£53.54	LGA 1972 s111
Suffolk CC	B	Energy/mtnce costs 22-23 Invoice 9529519	£117.01	LGA 1972 s111
Suffolk CC	B	Provide and install bus shelter Bramford Road - Invoice 9530752	£4956.00	LGA 1972 s111
SALC	B	Councillor Basics Training Invoice 27364	£72.00	LGA 1972 s111

14. Reports

To receive reports from Councillors assigned to the following:

- a. Gt Blakenham Village Hall – Cllr McNamee –

15. Correspondence

- a. Email received about concerns for HGV,s turning right on exit to Port One –
Cllr Plume responded via email and advised that this has been reported to Highways and to Port One Developers with video evidence
- b. Email concerned about height of grass on the corner of Chapel Lane and Bramford Road obscuring view for oncoming traffic –
Clerk to contact Contractors to cut the height of the grass.

16. Future meetings

- a. To note invitation for items to be considered in the next meeting.
- b. To note the date of the next scheduled Meeting on Thursday 14th September 2023 and any items for the agenda.

Karen Grimwood
 Clerk to Great Blakenham Parish Council
 Email: pc@greatblakenham.suffolk.gov.uk
 Phone: 07508830777
 Parish Council website: www.greatblakenham.suffolk.cloud
 Date: 14th July 2023

Signed 

Date..260922

SP

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR ADRIENNE MARRIOTT REPORT JULY 2023

Proposed Net Zero Project at Great Blakenham

I have been contacted by Mike Roberts, Director, Vertigo Regeneration Development Consultants regarding a Net Zero project which is being proposed for an existing waste-consented site at Great Blakenham.

Hygreen Energy are working with Environmental Power International (EPI) to deliver an innovative and highly sustainable energy recovery plant. The site will take in up to 24,000 tonnes pa of non-recyclable waste and/or sustainable biomass, for treatment by EPI's unique and patented Pure Pyrolysis technology. The material is subjected to high temperatures in the absence of oxygen to achieve a thermo-chemical breakdown into a high-quality gas. The gas is then treated to produce a range of outputs including hydrogen, syncrude and solid carbon in the form of carbon char and carbon black.

As there is no oxygen in the system, there is no incineration/ combustion/burning and therefore Pure Pyrolysis has no emissions. Carbon is captured in the carbon char and carbon black enabling the whole process to be carbon negative whilst producing large amounts of usable energy.

The project is being supported by a substantial grant from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) as part of their Hydrogen BECCS (Bioenergy Carbon Capture and Storage) initiative, which sits within their Net Zero Innovation Portfolio.

Hopefully, Mike will have now contacted you but I have further details if required. I am having a short meeting with Mike next Monday afternoon so if you have any questions you would like me to ask him please get in touch with me on my council email address.

Norwich to Tilbury – National Grid Pylons

National Grid has launched its latest public consultation for a new high voltage power line across East Anglia including Mid Suffolk and Babergh. The public consultation event in our area is on Wednesday 19th July, from 2 till 7 p.m. at Copdock Village Hall, Old London Road, Copdock. There are also consultation webinars on July 25 (7-8. pm) and August 12 and 17 (both at 10-11 am). I intend to attend the event at Copdock. MSDC councillors were given a presentation by National Grid to explain the project.

MSDC Councillors were given a briefing on this subject by representatives of National Grid. I had assumed that we would be given copies of the presentation but I haven't received them; therefore I have to rely on my notes.

Their main objection to a subsea route was regarding the subsea connections – it would be necessary to have a very large housing at each end of the cables and each housing would cost hundreds of millions of pounds. Six or more converter stations would also be needed at a cost of £500m.

Regarding the overland option, there had already been five changes to the suggested route since 2022 to take the line

East of Wortham Ling
North of Flowton
West of Great Wentham
West of Writtle
Further East of Ingatestone (heritage assets).

Grid had put together a design development report to look at alternatives identified through feedback with reasons of why they were preferred or not. In this report they would look at “cumulative effects” e.g. those on the Grade 1 church at Flowton. They were considering some “undergrounding” but I didn’t get the feeling that this was related to effects upon residents, more that it would relate to practical building considerations, e.g. dealing with crossings such as solar farms. The route across “Constable country” would however, be underground.

Enso Energy Solar Farm – latest developments

21st June was the first meeting of the new MSDC Planning Committee at which they were to consider the duplicate application for this development – the first having been refused by the previous Planning Committee on 3rd February. I was to speak on behalf of Blakenham Ward and had written a report to that purpose. However at the last moment I was advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda. Instead of the duplicate application being discussed, the committee met in private to take legal advice and we were advised that they had decided not to defend the original refusal at appeal. There had previously been issues regarding deadlines for feedback re the duplicate application, whereby the online site gave an earlier deadline than was required. However, respondents would still have been able to email Planning Officers.

We were advised that a Press Release would be forthcoming and on 26th June Mid Suffolk District Council and CARE (Community Alliance for a Rural Environment) Suffolk issued a joint statement about the Bramford Green solar farm application and appeal.

The Press Release from the Council and CARE reads

““Like many rural planning authorities, Mid Suffolk District Council’s planning committee has been asked to determine large-scale renewable energy developments. The council always tries to balance the benefits of that with any constraints it may face in the district.

“When a council refuses a planning application, like it did this one in February, the applicant has the right to appeal with the Planning Inspector. On this occasion the applicant did just that.

When the applicant makes their case to the Inspector it is then good practice for the council to review its position and seek legal counsel. This legal advice was considered at the first opportunity on 21 June at the newly-formed planning committee’s first meeting.

“The committee will always consider and value public opinion alongside the recommendations of professional planning officers in reaching a decision, which the committee believes to be in the best interests of the district.

“However, it is bound to reach its decision in accordance with its statutory duty, which is to determine planning applications in accordance with the local development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, including among other things the National Planning Policy Framework.

“After careful consideration of the legal advice received, and taking into account material considerations that have changed since the original decision, the council will not be defending the reasons for refusal.

“Community representatives will continue to defend similar reasons to the council’s refusal at appeal. They will continue to make their case directly to the inspector, based on their own concerns and evidence.

“We will continue to lobby government to provide urgent clarity through the production of a more joined up strategic plan for energy developments as well as a national plan for agriculture, to help all local authorities find the right balance between food production, protecting our countryside, and delivering energy security.

“The council is considering how it proceeds with a separate ‘free-go’ (i.e. duplicate) application for the solar farm, and the various options, as it may influence the appeal process.”

Works get underway to install almost 30 new electric vehicle charge points in council car parks

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are set to install 28 new electric vehicle chargers across their car park network this year, to help tackle climate change.

Starting this week, (28th June) works are getting underway to install 28 new 22kW EV charging points in several council car parks in Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

They are thanks to a £300K grant from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV).

Each charging point will be able to charge two vehicles at the same time, significantly improving access to chargers for local residents and visitors.

Locations have been chosen specifically to provide an off-street EV charging option for residents living nearby, who currently use on-street parking spaces. However, they will also be available for all other car park users.

Their aim is to help cut carbon emissions, reduce air pollution, and encourage greater numbers of people to shift to more environmentally sustainable modes of transport across the district.

Works, being carried out by Suffolk-based firm [Anglia Car Charging](#), have been phased to ensure as minimal disruption as possible. They will start from this week and continue throughout this year.

Visitors are advised to refer to specific signage in each car park for information about when works will be taking place.

Mid Suffolk car parks due to benefit from the new chargers are:

- Ipswich Street
Stowmarket
- Bury Street
Stowmarket
- Milton Road
Stowmarket
- Iliffe Way
Stowmarket
- Union Street West
Stowmarket

The Range pre-sale at Gateway 14 named ‘Deal of the Year’

Gateway 14 Ltd (wholly owned by Mid Suffolk District Council) and development partner, Jaynic, scooped the 'Deal of the Year Award' at the recent UK Property Forums' Eastern Echo Awards.

The award was for the pre-sale of a new 1.17m sq ft warehouse at Gateway 14 at Stowmarket to be used by garden and leisure products retailer The Range.

Gateway 14 Ltd managing director Emily Atack said:

It's fantastic to receive recognition for this deal and its significance to the region – with this highly sustainable development set to bring 1,650 new jobs to Suffolk."

You're not alone: Support available as more people seek cost of living help

Find out what help you are entitled to – that is the message from the district councils and Citizens Advice, as residents and families continue to deal with the high cost of living.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils and Citizens Advice are calling on those feeling the financial squeeze to check what help they can access – particularly if they have not done so before.

The call comes as Sudbury and District Citizens Advice announce that they delivered £5,500 worth of fuel vouchers last financial year. Meanwhile Mid Suffolk Citizen's Advice shared that their team saw a huge spike in demand for their help, advising on 65% more issues than in the previous 12 months.

The biggest increases were from people looking for help with consumer goods, such as food, energy, phone and internet bills. This comes at the same time that research by [Policy in Practice](#) shows almost £19bn in support goes unclaimed every year, which could change the lives of millions of people nationwide.

Residents can contact their district council or local Citizens Advice to find out what help is available. There may be support that they are unaware of, and offers which help cut spending such as ['social tariffs'](#) from internet and phone companies.

Simon Clifton, Chief Officer at Citizens Advice Mid Suffolk, said: "We've seen record numbers of people accessing our services, including many who have not been in this situation before. But we know there are more people out there who don't know what support is available to them, and who may be uncomfortable asking for help.

Cllr Tim Weller, Mid Suffolk cabinet member for Environment, Culture and Wellbeing, said: "We'll be doing everything we can to support our residents over the summer and beyond. Anyone unsure where to turn for help should start on our website's Cost of Living section, where there's a clear breakdown of the help available."

Adrienne Marriott

Blakenham District Councillor 13/07/23

Suffolk Fire Service to bring control room back to the County

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has announced plans to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk. Since October 2011, Suffolk has shared a control room with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service in Huntingdon. The joint project has worked well, saving both fire services money and enabling greater cross-border resource sharing. However, the company behind a project to deliver a new IT system, initiated in 2019, has run into technical and financial problems, causing a significant delay. This, in addition to advancements in technology, has led to the decision to bring fire control back into the county by the end of 2024.

Help for Suffolk Pre-payment Meter customers

A package of support has been created for pre-payment meter customers in Suffolk who are struggling with their energy bills.

Warm Homes Suffolk is a Suffolk-wide Council partnership service, delivering energy efficiency support to low-income households affected by cost-of-living pressures.

Supported by Suffolk's Collaborative Communities Board and funding from Public Health Suffolk's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), the service is now able to offer specific help for households struggling to pay their energy bills via a prepayment meter, in addition to its existing support.

The support covers the whole of Suffolk and is available for all residents, whether they are in social housing, council tenants, owner occupiers or private renters.

The Warm Homes Suffolk Service can check eligibility and support applications for grants to increase household energy efficiency, with measures such as loft and wall insulation to air source heat pumps, draught-proofing and more. It is estimated that more than 24,000 people in Suffolk are pre-payment meter customers. The service will work with each individual to understand the pressures on their finances and the impact this is having on their lives. The service can carry out a home visit, as well as providing advice over the phone and by email.

The COMF funding of £180,000 will enable this project to run for 12 months to provide the following:

- Income maximisation (through grants and benefits)
- Budgeting advice
- Help understanding bills and heating systems
- Support to reduce energy expenditure (By promoting social tariffs and support to switch suppliers)
- Improving household energy efficiency (By installing insulation, draught proofing, heating systems and solar panels)
- Facilitating switch away from prepaid meters if appropriate

Pre-payment meter customers who would like support can contact prepay@eastsoffolk.gov.uk to find out more, or call: Prepay West at 07769 365796, or Prepay East at 07769 366229. Referrals can be made directly from households, the voluntary sector and professionals to find prepay households who can benefit from an independent look at their bills. Warm Homes Suffolk also offers support and advice for residents who are not pre-payment meter customers. To find out more about the support on offer, visit:

<https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/>

Ancestry appointed to digitise Suffolk's popular family and local history sources

More than 400 years of fascinating historical documents held at Suffolk Archives are to be digitised and made available online, thanks to an agreement between Suffolk County Council and Ancestry.

Suffolk Archives will work alongside the family history website Ancestry to create high-quality, full-colour digital images of millions of baptism, marriage and burial records from parishes within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

The earliest records being digitised date back to 1538 and include events in the lives of notable historical figures, such as the 1776 baptism of landscape artist John Constable, and the 1846 burial of Thomas Clarkson who devoted his life to the abolition of slavery

It is hoped that Suffolk's main parish records will be published online in early 2025 with other collections of local interest to follow. Public access will be free of charge in Suffolk Archives branches or at any Suffolk Library. Anyone with an Ancestry subscription will also be able to access the records as part of their research from their own computer or device.

£100m broadband investment in Suffolk under government's Project Gigabit

Better broadband is on its way for around 80,000 properties across rural Suffolk in a £100 million investment under a £5 billion government infrastructure programme.

The county is one of three to benefit from Project Gigabit and was chosen to host the launch of the announcement by Minister for Data and Digital Infrastructure, Sir John Whittingdale.

Similar projects were also announced for Norfolk and Hampshire as Sir John was joined in Orford by Suffolk Coastal MP Therese Coffey and Councillor Matthew Hicks, the leader of Suffolk County Council.

Project Gigabit is the government's £5 billion mission to roll out gigabit-capable, reliable broadband across the UK.

Improved connectivity unlocks new opportunities and fuels innovation, supporting the Prime Minister's priority of growing the economy by creating better paid jobs.

Around 62,000 homes and businesses in Norfolk stand to benefit from £114 million of Project Gigabit investment, across locations including Buxton, Castle Acre and Horning.

A further 8,000 premises in the northwest of the county are being reviewed for inclusion subject to survey in the next six months.

This project is managed by BDUK who in turn have contracted CityFibre to do the actual work of installing the cabling.

CityFibre, the UK's largest independent full-fibre provider, will deliver gigabit-capable infrastructure for around 218,000 homes and businesses having secured £318 million of Project Gigabit funding after a competitive process. The provider will also be making a private investment of £170 million to deliver the project.

Decisions on where broadband infrastructure is installed will be made by BDUK and not by SCC.

Survey work in all three counties commences immediately, with the first installations in the New Year and the first live connections expected by summer 2024. Once connected, residents and businesses will enjoy access to broadband services over a network capable of supporting speeds of up to 10Gbps. Council to consider new chapter for library services Suffolk County Council's Cabinet is set to discuss the future of library services in Suffolk at its next meeting on 11 July.

The current contract with Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), worth £5.92 million per annum, comes to an end on 31st July 2024. The Council now needs to consider how library services will be delivered following the expiry of the contract. The report to Cabinet will recommend that a new Library Service contract is procured using a competitive tender process.

To enable meaningful engagement, public consultation, and a competitive tender process to take place, the report also recommends that the current contract with Suffolk's Libraries IPS is extended by 10 months, to 31 May 2025.

The public consultation will be used to inform the requirements and future development of the new service.

Chris Chambers - County Councillor for the Gipping Valley Division

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT SEPTEMBER 2023

Pride in Your Place

Small grants are available to all Parish and Town Councils to improve the appearance, cleanliness and environments of our communities. Eligible projects include arranging community litter picks, sign or graffiti cleaning and the maintenance of public green spaces. Apply online at www.midsuffolk.gov.uk.

Staff at the council will be undertaking clean-up work that is more difficult for communities to do themselves.

Recruitment Fairs

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council have launched a new partnership with Jobcentre Plus to bolster the local economy. A series of recruitment fairs alternating between the districts will run until April 2025 to help local businesses to connect with appropriate candidates in their area. These free-to-enter events are funded by the government's Shared Prosperity Fund and the first event takes place at The Mix in Stowmarket on Wednesday 20th September from 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. To register for this and subsequent fairs go to <https://heartofsuffolk.co.uk> and search "recruitment fairs".

MSDC Council Meeting

At July's Council meeting at the Blackbourne Centre in Elmswell, Council Leader Andy Mellon spoke about the Council's plans for the short term. These include making homes more energy efficient, working to improve rural transport and a more active plan for Stowmarket.

Solar Farms

I attended the Public Inquiry into the Appeal on the Enso application – land to the east of the Channel, Burstall on 15th August following which the appeal was upheld by the inspector. It was a very uneven event as the developer had brought their barrister and panel of experts whilst myself, Samantha Main, a Babergh councillor and affected local residents could not bring such a recognised level of expertise. I expect that Parish Council members have seen the inspector's report. If not I can email it to you. I gave a report to the enquiry along the lines of what I would have said at the previous Planning Committee Meeting had the item not been taken off the agenda. The inspector was convinced that the "conversion of arable farmland to grassland for a period of

40 years, with sheep grazing the land” would result in improved soil quality. Also the “wider farmed landscape would prevail” in the face of this development,

It seems that the “free-go” planning application for this development is to be considered at the next Planning Committee meeting on 13th September. Myself and James Caston are invited to speak.

At the local Government Association Conference in Bournemouth, Cllr Mellon suggested that the Government should provide a clear national balance between delivering renewable energy, food production and protecting our landscape.

National Grid Pylons

National Grid launched its latest public consultation on plans for a new high voltage power line across East Anglia. There will be another opportunity to comment on the proposals next year before the planning application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in 2024. Copies of all maps and documents produced for both 2022 and 2023 non-statutory consultation can still be found on National Grid’s projected website. I attended the consultation, at Copdock and have been given a large-scale map of the proposed route of the pylons. At the Council meeting a motion was passed objecting to the proposed overland line and favouring offshore installations.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The Council is set to review the current Carbon Reduction Management Plan with a cross-party group of councillors

Review of Local Elections

The Audit and Standards Committee (of which I am a member) is to produce an action plan to resolve issues arising out of reviews of the local election process. Another review will be carried out by the Association of Electoral Administrators.

Locality Awards

This year’s locality awards are open for applications. Any group or organisation can apply for awards of £250 or more. Please contact me for an application form.

CIL Bids

Regarding the bid for CIL funding M23-02 for the Somersham Play Area, a recommendation will go to Cabinet for approval of £62,776.17 from the Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund. Other funding sources are from Somersham Parish Council Neighbourhood CIL, District Councillor Locality Monies and an MSDC Grant.

Adrienne Marriott
Blakenham District Councillor

18/09/23

