

GREAT BLAKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA

Minutes of Gt Blakenham Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 13th February ²⁰²⁵~~2024~~ at Parish Rooms. Present: Chair Cllr Nick Leonard, Vice Chair Cllr Debbie Kemp, Cllr Will Durrant, Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk), SCC Cllr Chris Chambers, MSDC Cllr Adrienne Marriot and 1 representative of GBVH

1. To receive and approve any apologies for absence. **None**
2. Declaration of any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests
 - a. Councillor's declaration of interest appropriate to any item on the agenda. - **None**
 - b. To receive written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interest (if any) **None**
 - c. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate. **None**
 - d. Co-option of parish councillor(s) / to sign declaration of acceptance. – **Cllrs unanimously voted for Matthew Powell to be co-opted as a councillor.**
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 9th January 2025 **Approved**
5. To note the Clerk's update from previous Meetings.
 - a. Precept request submitted and approval received from MSDC. **Noted**
 - b. Visit to Gipping Valley Bowls club agreed. **Noted**
6. Planning
 - a. To consider the following planning applications.

DC/24/05560	Port One Logistics Park, Blackacre Hill, Bramford Road, Great Blakenham Suffolk	Installation of sunken weighbridge (retention of).Deadline extended to 14.02.25 APPROVED
DC/25/00050 -	Land At, Moses Walk, Great Blakenham, Suffolk	Construction of 5no. staff car parking spaces. Deadline extended to 14.02.25 OBJECTED - GBPC have decided to oppose this application: The crossing from Sandy Close to Budgens is heavily used, particularly by children due to the nearby play area, raising concerns about increased risks to pedestrians. Vehicles turning into Budgens have been observed driving at excessive speeds, which raises the possibility that cars exiting the proposed site could lead to accidents. The access road to Budgens currently does not accommodate two vehicles passing each other on the bend, which could result in congestion in a confined area. The councillors do not see a need for more parking, as the current parking lot does not seem to be fully utilised by customers visiting the shop.

DC/25/00478	86 Plummers Dell, Great Blakenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0HW	- Erection of single storey rear extension (following demolition of conservatory), first floor extension and front porch extension. Deadline 26.02.2025 APPROVED
SCC/0113/24MS	Masons Landfill Site, Great Blakenham	Retrospective application for the erection and operation of Material Recycling Facility, provision of access road and associated works .Retrospective application for the erection and operation of Material Recycling Facility, provision of access road and associated works Deadline 18.02.2025 APPROVED

b. To note any planning determinations.

DC/24/05086	Land At Claydon Industrial Park , Gipping Road, Claydon	Land At Claydon Industrial Park , Gipping Road, Claydon - GRANTED NOTED
DC/24/03230	1 Stowmarket Road, Great Blakenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0LQ	Change of use of land to residential amenity land to enable construction of new driveway to existing access. - GRANTED NOTED

7. Growth, Highways, and Infrastructure

- a. Sackers update – **See attached response letter from Environment Agency. Cllr Chambers intends to write back with some extra questions around air pollution and explosions.**
- b. Consultation on Baylam neighbourhood Plan –**Acknowledged with no additional remarks.**

8. Governance

- a. Archive storage – **The clerk to confirm with SALC whether electronic copies of minutes and related documents are permissible, eliminating the need for paper copies. To acquire pricing for the archiving of additional documents with Ipswich Archive**
- b. Discuss who completes Internal audit – **Cllrs approved SALC to complete internal audit**
- c. Quarterly VAT return submitted – **Noted**
- d. Gipping Valley Bowls Club – **Councillors met with the bowling club committee to see the progress made and discuss remaining tasks. They recognised that the committee requires additional funding to finish the kitchen, heating, and flooring. The councillors suggested potential funding sources and ways to promote the new pavilion. They expressed admiration for the volunteers' accomplishments to date and are happy to continue their support in the future where it is needed.**

9. Allotments.

- a. Update on licence /signing – **Licence has been signed by all relevant parties. Clerk to notify plot holders of the situation.**
- b. Alternative site – **The Parish Council has communicated with the land agent regarding the possibility of an alternative site on Stowmarket Road. The agent indicated that the site might be utilised for community benefit, either through a licensing agreement or a freehold purchase. However, council members are struggling to envision potential uses for the land due to its frequent flooding and challenging access. The clerk will relay this feedback to the land agent.**

10. Village Maintenance

- a. Discuss Tender Contracts – **Cllrs agreed draft contracts for maintenance litter picking clerk to send out to relevant parties**
- b. Discuss Volunteer working party – **The clerk will begin gathering information on the necessary tasks throughout the village to establish a specific date each month for a volunteer work party.**

11. Churchyard and Cemetery –

- a. **Churchyard maintenance report – . Report identifies some work on bus shelter, overgrown trees etc. Chair & clerk to visit churchyard/cemetery to assess potential work needed as mentioned in the report**

12. Training and Development for Councillors and Clerk **None**

13. Finance

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

SALC	B	Invoice for payroll services ending Sept 2024 -29229	£57.60	LGA 1972 s111
Wave (Anglia Water)	DD	Charges ending 24.01.2025 - 14534455	£35.91	LGA 1972 s111
Payroll	B	Ending 31.01.2025	£1050.22	LGA 1972 s111
Nest	DD	Month 10 Ending 31.01.2025	£50.61	LGA 1972 s111
EE/K Grimwood	B	WIFI/mobile reimbursement	£28.04	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Maintenance/street cleaning as per tender Inv 2612	£507.50	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Hackneys Corner maintenance as per tender Inv 2613	£135.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Street Cleaning as per tender Inv 2614	£1316.67	LGA 1972 s111
Headway Suffolk	B	Donation	£500.00	LGA 1972 s111
EAAA	B	Donation	£500.00	LGA 1972 s111
MidSuffolk CAB	B	Donation	£500.00	LGA 1972 s111
CommunitiesTogether (Chinwags)	B	Donation	£1000.00	LGA 1972 s111
Lloyds Bank	DD	Multipay card	£149.99	LGA 1972 s111
Three	DD	Clerk phone contract	£13.76	LGA 1972 s111

- b. Payments outside of meeting – **None**

- c. Money Received – **None**

Bank Balance @ 31.01.2025 - Noted

Unity Trust Current Account Balance - £177,746.86

Unity Trust Saver Account Balance - £9,706.30

14. Reports -To receive reports from Councillors assigned to the following:
- a. Village Hall – Copies of the roof and asbestos surveys have been provided to the Parish Council. Sustainability images of the finished work will be distributed soon. The effort to gather quotes for fascia, guttering, soffits, and CCTV/fire safety measures is currently in progress. The Accounts and Trustee Annual Report has been submitted. A recent meeting focused on solar panels was productive for all participants, and a follow-up meeting will be arranged to maintain momentum.
15. Correspondence
- a. Dog fouling – Increase in complaints about dog fouling in the village. Parish currently has 16 dog litter bins in the village but some dog owners still not using them. Clerk to post some awareness posters on social media and in Intouch magazine
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 13th March 2025 and any items for the agenda.

Karen Grimwood - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Great Blakenham Parish Council
Email: pc@greatblakenham.suffolk.gov.uk
Phone: 07463329570
Date: 8th February 2025



Cllr Chris Chambers

**Gipping Valley
Division**

www.chrischambers.uk

**February 2025
Report**



/gippingvalleychris

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Council's budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services

Suffolk County Council has unveiled its proposed budget for 2025/26, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable residents across the county.

Under the proposals, the council's net budget would rise by 6.7%, from £752.9 million in 2024/25 to £803.7 million in 2025/26. Key allocations include:

- £18.1 million extra for children's services, ensuring continued support for young people and families in need
- £35.2 million extra for adult care, aimed at addressing the growing demand for social care services.

To help fund these essential services, the council is proposing a 4.99% rise in Council Tax. This would consist of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and an additional 2% specifically for adult care services.

This means the costs for a household would be:

- **Band B property:** £24.67 per week, a £1.17 increase from 2024-25 (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- **Band D property:** £31.72 per week, a £1.51 increase from 2024-25.

The council will also receive £12.1 million of the additional £880 million allocated by the government for adult and children's social care. It also expects to receive £2.2 million of the £263 million earmarked for a new Children's Services Prevention Grant.

To balance the books, the council has also identified £10.9 million in additional savings, building on the £17.5 million approved last year. This brings the total savings to £28.4 million for the 2025/26 financial year.

The budget proposals will be presented at a Scrutiny Meeting on Tuesday, 14 January 2025. The meeting will be live-streamed on [Suffolk County Council's YouTube channel](#), and relevant papers can be viewed on [the committee minutes page](#).

The final budget will be debated and voted on at a Full Council meeting on Thursday, 13 February 2025.

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Unique landscape to be changed forever by pylons

A large area of landscape on the Norfolk/Suffolk border with particular uniqueness, rivalling those of other nationally protected landscapes, is set to be decimated by pylons as part of National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury project.

In a letter to both Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council, and other local leaders, National Grid has outlined that it has decided to install overhead lines through the Waveney Valley, rather than running cables underground, as they had set out in their previous consultation.

This is a significant blow to local communities and the natural environment, especially following last year's Valued Landscape Assessment, a report jointly commissioned by Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council.

The report concluded that "the length of the Waveney Valley expresses many special qualities, and in the context of Suffolk and Norfolk, it is considered to be a valued landscape. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities articulated in this report is a key aspiration of existing planning policy."

The councils will now look to take up their concerns with National Grid and discuss the issue further.

Suffolk commits to devolution fast track

Following an invitation from ministers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet today agreed to recommend Suffolk for inclusion in the government's Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), which would see the creation of a directly elected Mayor (likely covering Suffolk and Norfolk) and the replacement of existing council structures with a streamlined unitary council being set up.

The decision followed a debate and vote at a meeting of all county councillors.

The government's English Devolution White Paper outlines plans for broader and deeper devolution, coupled with a programme of coordinated local government reorganisation.

Key to these proposals is the restructuring of councils in two-tier areas like Suffolk, shifting from district, borough, and county councils to unitary councils. The government argues that unitary councils can deliver better outcomes for residents and save money that can be reinvested in public services.

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Alongside reorganisation, the government is also proposing to create new Mayoral Authorities – with a single directly elected Mayor covering larger geographies (such as Norfolk and Suffolk) and with powers over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, health improvement and blue light services.

Suffolk County Council has now written to the government expressing its desire to be at the front of the queue for devolution and local government reorganisation. A decision is expected by the end of the month.

If Suffolk is approved as part of the DPP, more detailed proposals, engagement and Government-led consultation would follow.

Papers for the meetings can be viewed at <https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk>.

They are also available to watch back on the council's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SuffolkCC>

Detailed report provides blueprint for changes to Suffolk's SEND services

A report has been published that provides the most detailed assessment of need for SEND services in Suffolk and will be used as a blueprint for immediate change.

The forensic 177-page document delves into current arrangements, future anticipated need and looks at gaps and challenges in SEND provision. This assessment highlights the increasing demand for SEND services, the challenges faced by families and professionals, and the importance of improving service provision to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

As a result of this analysis, a series of recommendations have been made to further shape improvements to SEND services. Known as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Needs Assessment, the report will be discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board on Thursday 16 January.

Some of the key findings and recommendations in the report include:

- A significant rise in demand for SEND services, with projections suggesting further increases in the coming years
- The importance of early intervention, timely diagnoses, and accessible services to address complex and multiple needs
- Strategic priorities emphasising communication, transition support, and whole system improvements to meet evolving demands.

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The report also captures the voices of children and young people, parents, and practitioners to ensure lived experiences inform future strategies. The Suffolk Parent Carer Forum was involved in collating the report.

The report and the recommendations made, will become part of the Local Area Priority Action Plan for widescale SEND reform and improvement. This plan was a requirement following the Ofsted and CQC inspection in November 2023.

The local area partnership which delivers SEND services is made up of Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

Ten recommendations have been made as a result of this needs assessment. One of those includes addressing delays in assessment, diagnosis and treatment for a wide range of SEND needs. Another recommendation looks at the future planning for the provision of SEND services in Suffolk, noting that the needs and numbers of children and young people with SEND are likely to increase further in the coming years.

Helpful comparisons are also drawn between Suffolk figures, other councils and England averages throughout the report. One of those includes the average spend on each SEND child or young person in Suffolk, which was £155 in 2022/23 (East of England £95 and England £100). Figures also look at the percentage of children and young people assessed and issued with an education, health and care plan for the first time. In Suffolk in 2023 this percentage was 99% of children, compared with 94% across England and 93% with comparable councils.

The report can be found here: [Suffolk SEND Needs Assessment](#).

Council making net zero gains, but still work to do

Suffolk County Council continues to bring down its carbon emissions, with significant reductions from council-owned street lighting, vehicles and buildings, but there is still work to do to reach its ambitious target of net zero by 2030.

A report going to the council's Cabinet (28 January 2025) reviews progress since the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019. The report finds that emissions across the areas within the council's direct control, such as energy consumption in council buildings and vehicles (categorised as Scope 1 & 2 emissions), have fallen by a further 8% over the past year, contributing to a 43% drop since 2019. When taking account of the council's switch to a renewable electricity tariff, this becomes a 75% reduction.

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However, when calculating its overall net zero progress, the council also reports on many emissions where it has influence but less direct control. These are known as Scope 3 emissions. These include things like home to school transport, home-working, and staff commuting and travel for work in their own vehicles.

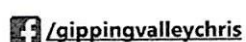
These make up 65% of the council's reported emissions, which the council is currently projecting will reduce by 48% by 2030 showing the scale of the remaining challenge.

Since 2019, when it declared a climate emergency, the council's carbon reduction successes include:

- Street and traffic lights down by 57%
- Diesel and petrol vehicles down by 50%
- Gas and oil use in buildings down by 37%
- Staff commuting down by 30%
- Electricity use in buildings down by 25%

Nationally, the council is making impressive strides with its own estate, standing out as one of the three leading county councils in England for reductions on Scope 1 & 2 emissions, according to analysis of published reports.

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2025

Council agrees to full support for farmers

At its last full council meeting on 23rd January, Mid Suffolk District Council agreed unanimously to consider all "reasonable and practical measures" to support local farming communities. This comes in the wake of Suffolk farmers protesting against the changes to inheritance tax rules which some have said will threaten the future of the family farm. Andy Mellen, Green Leader of the Council spoke of his farming heritage, the difficult financial challenges being faced by farmers and the problems they faced from climate change.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils' Tree Canopy Survey

When the councils were named UK Council of the Year at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards last year it was recognised that they were the first rural UK council to conduct a tree canopy data survey. This fact came to the attention of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's statistics department who were so eager to learn about our approach to mapping and long-term tree management that they sent three of their officers to visit the councils at Endeavour House.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils Win Building Control Award

The LABC Building Excellence Award was given to the combined councils' Building Control Team as recognition of their commitment to embracing the changes imposed by the Building Safety Act 2022 by providing well-attended events, public and trade displays and online

initiatives. The councils were nominated for the award by customers of the service.

Funding to increase neighbourhood policing

On 31st January the Home Office announced funding for forces in England and Wales to increase neighbourhood policing teams:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/200-million-boost-to-transform-neighbourhood-policing>

This funding – increased from December's provisional £100 million of government funding commitment – will help strengthen local crime prevention and community safety.

Alongside funding for more officers, the upcoming Crime and Policing Bill will give officers the tools they need to keep the streets safe, including enhanced powers such as respect orders to tackle antisocial behaviour and shoplifting effectively.

Land use in England consultation

On 31st January the government launched a consultation on a new strategic approach to managing land use in England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/land-use-in-england>

to give decision makers the data they need to protect agricultural land and increase Britain's food security.

The consultation explores the land use changes implied by commitments to restore nature, support food production, improve climate resilience and deliver new housing and infrastructure.

It seeks views on the type and scale of land use changes that might be needed, as well as the actions government could take to support this.

The consultation closes on 25 April.

My Note: Whilst little notice was taken of the high value status of our local agricultural land when approval was given for solar farm and national grid developments I feel that we need to have engagement, particularly from farmers and other experts in land use, to put the best case for our future food security.

Reform of the planning system

On 26th January the government announced that land near commuter transport hubs will be unlocked to build new housing, as part of new steps to reform the planning system:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-goes-further-and-faster-on-planning-reform-in-bid-for-growth>

The government's next steps on planning reform include streamlining a set of national policies for decision making to guide planning decisions taken by councils and promote housebuilding in key areas.

The government has also committed to making 150 decisions on major economic infrastructure applications over this Parliament.

Reminder: Planning Reform Working Paper: Development and Nature Recovery

On 15 December 2024, MHCLG published [a paper inviting views on the government's proposed new approach to development and nature recovery](#).

The paper proposes a new approach which uses funding from development to deliver environmental improvements and moves more responsibility for these improvements onto the state rather than developers.

Please note that this is not a formal consultation and is instead intended to inform discussions with communities and the sector, to determine how the government takes these proposals forward.

My Note: If you are concerned about the level of house building proposed by the government and are concerned about maintaining the natural environment it may be worth reading this paper and commenting upon it. One paragraph sounds very much like "one size fits all", i.e.

"Moving responsibility for identifying actions to address environmental impacts away from multiple project-specific assessments in an area to a single strategic assessment and delivery plan."

Funding to help rough sleepers off streets

On 20th January the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced an additional £20 million to help more rough sleepers off the street this winter:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/emergency-cash-tripled-for-rough-sleepers-this-winter>

The Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures Funding, a government scheme to increase the use of emergency accommodation for rough sleepers, will go directly to areas with high levels of rough sleeping.

Over 280 councils will receive funding to support frontline workers providing services on the ground. The new funding will also continue supporting specialist programmes for vulnerable groups sleeping rough including veterans, care leavers and victims of domestic abuse.

Section 106 affordable housing: call for next level support to new clearing service

Homes England, the government's homes and regeneration agency, has today (28 January) announced that nearly 300 organisations in England have signed up to the new Section 106 Affordable Housing Clearing Service to help unlock housing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/section-106-affordable-housing-call-for-next-level-support-to-new-clearing-service-as-registrations-near-300-in-first-50-days>

More than 70 housebuilders have registered to provide details of affordable homes they have planning permission to build, alongside private homes, but have been unable to find a buyer for.

They join 140 Registered Providers and more than 70 councils which have already registered for the service as potential buyers, and are viewing available information about potential opportunities on a regular basis.

It is hoped the service, created and managed by Homes England in response to sector feedback, will help facilitate and accelerate the sale of uncontracted and unsold affordable homes in England, excluding London.

Action taken to protect households with poor-quality insulation

Thirty-nine businesses have been suspended by the government from installing new insulation in people's homes after TrustMark uncovered examples of substandard solid wall insulation fitted since 2022 under the Energy Company Obligation 4 and Great British Insulation Scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-taken-to-protect-households-with-poor-quality-insulation>

The government has demanded that installers fund any repair work themselves, under protections in the schemes. No household should be asked to pay any money by an installer.

Households should check what to do if they're concerned about the insulation they've had fitted through a government scheme:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-to-do-if-you-have-poor-quality-wall-insulation>

Reminder: Simpler Recycling in England – Beginning in March 2025: communications toolkit for councils

From next month (31 March), workplaces (businesses and non-domestic premises) in England with 10 or more full-time equivalent employees will need to recycle the following waste streams: plastic, metal, glass, paper and card, and food waste. Workplaces with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees will need to comply from 31 March 2027.

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published guidance to outline how this affects workplaces and waste collectors.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/simpler-recycling-workplace-recycling-in-england>

This includes guidance on how the dry recyclables can be co-collected in the same container.

Public health update

Flu and COVID-19 surveillance report published

Today (16 January), the UKHSA published the latest flu and COVID-19 surveillance report. The report is based on data up to week 2 of 2025 (between 6 January and 12 January 2025). This report summarises:

- influenza activity showed a mixed picture with some indicators suggesting that activity may have reached a peak, and was circulating at medium levels
- COVID-19 activity remained stable across most indicators and was at baseline activity levels
- respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity decreased across most indicators and was circulating at low levels of activity

Mid Suffolk District Council: current grant opportunities (Section 106, CIL Funding and Capital Grants also available).

See <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>

Sustainable Communities Food Fund

The Sustainable Communities Food Fund is funding that small scale food initiatives, such as community pantries, can use for capital and revenue costs such as training for volunteers, and buying equipment, planters or fruit trees.

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as voluntary and community groups, parish councils

What's available

Between £250 and £5,000

When to apply

Open for applications

Port One Legacy Biodiversity Enhancement Fund (POLBEF)

Community groups within Barham, Bramford, Claydon, Great Blakenham and Little Blakenham can apply for POLBEF funding. It can be used toward projects which create spaces for nature and wildlife.

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as voluntary and community groups, parish councils

What's available

Up to £3,750

When to apply

Currently closed, will re-open for applications in April 2025

Pride in your Place Grants

These grants are available for capital projects that enable community groups to enhance their local area and environment,

explore local identity and heritage, and engage in activities such as community clean ups

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as parish and town councils, voluntary and community groups

What's available

Between £250 and £5,000

When to apply

Open for applications

Social Enterprise Support Fund

This funding is available to support the development of social enterprises within the districts of Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as voluntary and community groups, sports clubs

What's available

Between £1,000 and £5,000

When to apply

Open for applications

Adrienne Marriott
Blakenham District Councillor
03/02/2025

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- b. Discuss who completes Internal audit – **Cllrs approved SALC to complete internal audit**
- c. Quarterly VAT return submitted – **Noted**
- d. Gipping Valley Bowls Club – **Councillors met with the bowling club committee to see the progress made and discuss remaining tasks. They recognised that the committee requires additional funding to finish the kitchen, heating, and flooring. The councillors suggested potential funding sources and ways to promote the new pavilion. They expressed admiration for the volunteers' accomplishments to date and are happy to continue their support in the future where it is needed.**

9. Allotments.

- a. Update on licence /signing – **Licence has been signed by all relevant parties. Clerk to notify plot holders of the situation.**
- b. Alternative site – **The Parish Council has communicated with the land agent regarding the possibility of an alternative site on Stowmarket Road. The agent indicated that the site might be utilised for community benefit, either through a licensing agreement or a freehold purchase. However, council members are struggling to envision potential uses for the land due to its frequent flooding and challenging access. The clerk will relay this feedback to the land agent.**

10. Village Maintenance

- a. Discuss Tender Contracts – Cllrs agreed draft contracts for maintenance litter picking clerk to send out to relevant parties
- b. Discuss Volunteer working party – The clerk will begin gathering information on the necessary tasks throughout the village to establish a specific date each month for a volunteer work party.

11. Churchyard and Cemetery –

- a. Churchyard maintenance report – . Report identifies some work on bus shelter, overgrown trees etc. Chair & clerk to visit churchyard/cemetery to assess potential work needed as mentioned in the report

12. Training and Development for Councillors and Clerk **None**

13. Finance

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

SALC	B	Invoice for payroll services ending Sept 2024 -29229	£57.60	LGA 1972 s111
Wave (Anglia Water)	DD	Charges ending 24.01.2025 - 14534455	£35.91	LGA 1972 s111
Payroll	B	Ending 31.01.2025	£1050.22	LGA 1972 s111
Nest	DD	Month 10 Ending 31.01.2025	£50.61	LGA 1972 s111
EE/K Grimwood	B	WIFI/mobile reimbursement	£28.04	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Maintenance/street cleaning as per tender Inv 2612	£507.50	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Hackneys Corner maintenance as per tender Inv 2613	£135.00	LGA 1972 s111
Shades	B	Street Cleaning as per tender Inv 2614	£1316.67	LGA 1972 s111
Headway Suffolk	B	Donation	£500.00	LGA 1972 s111
EAAA	B	Donation	£500.00	LGA 1972 s111
MidSuffolk CAB	B	Donation	£500.00	LGA 1972 s111
CommunitiesTogether (Chinwags)	B	Donation	£1000.00	LGA 1972 s111
Lloyds Bank	DD	Multipay card	£149.99	LGA 1972 s111
Three	DD	Clerk phone contract	£13.76	LGA 1972 s111

- b. Payments outside of meeting – **None**

- c. Money Received – **None**

Bank Balance @ 31.01.2025 - **Noted**

Unity Trust Current Account Balance - £177,746.86

Unity Trust Saver Account Balance - £9,706.30

14. Reports -To receive reports from Councillors assigned to the following:
- a. Village Hall – **Copies of the roof and asbestos surveys have been provided to the Parish Council. Sustainability images of the finished work will be distributed soon. The effort to gather quotes for fascia, guttering, soffits, and CCTV/fire safety measures is currently in progress. The Accounts and Trustee Annual Report has been submitted. A recent meeting focused on solar panels was productive for all participants, and a follow-up meeting will be arranged to maintain momentum.**
15. Correspondence
- a. Dog fouling – **Increase in complaints about dog fouling in the village. Parish currently has 16 dog litter bins in the village but some dog owners still not using them. Clerk to post some awareness posters on social media and in Intouch magazine**
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 13th March 2025 and any items for the agenda.

Karen Grimwood - Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Great Blakenham Parish Council
Email: pc@greatblakenham.suffolk.gov.uk
Phone: 07463329570
Date: 8th February 2025



Cllr Chris Chambers

**Gipping Valley
Division**

www.chrischambers.uk

**February 2025
Report**



/gippingvalleychris

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Council's budget prioritises vulnerable residents and essential services

Suffolk County Council has unveiled its proposed budget for 2025/26, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable residents across the county.

Under the proposals, the council's net budget would rise by 6.7%, from £752.9 million in 2024/25 to £803.7 million in 2025/26. Key allocations include:

- £18.1 million extra for children's services, ensuring continued support for young people and families in need
- £35.2 million extra for adult care, aimed at addressing the growing demand for social care services.

To help fund these essential services, the council is proposing a 4.99% rise in Council Tax. This would consist of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and an additional 2% specifically for adult care services.

This means the costs for a household would be:

- **Band B property:** £24.67 per week, a £1.17 increase from 2024-25 (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- **Band D property:** £31.72 per week, a £1.51 increase from 2024-25.

The council will also receive £12.1 million of the additional £880 million allocated by the government for adult and children's social care. It also expects to receive £2.2 million of the £263 million earmarked for a new Children's Services Prevention Grant.

To balance the books, the council has also identified £10.9 million in additional savings, building on the £17.5 million approved last year. This brings the total savings to £28.4 million for the 2025/26 financial year.

The budget proposals will be presented at a Scrutiny Meeting on Tuesday, 14 January 2025. The meeting will be live-streamed on [Suffolk County Council's YouTube channel](#), and relevant papers can be viewed on [the committee minutes page](#).

The final budget will be debated and voted on at a Full Council meeting on Thursday, 13 February 2025.

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Unique landscape to be changed forever by pylons

A large area of landscape on the Norfolk/Suffolk border with particular uniqueness, rivalling those of other nationally protected landscapes, is set to be decimated by pylons as part of National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury project.

In a letter to both Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council, and other local leaders, National Grid has outlined that it has decided to install overhead lines through the Waveney Valley, rather than running cables underground, as they had set out in their previous consultation.

This is a significant blow to local communities and the natural environment, especially following last year's Valued Landscape Assessment, a report jointly commissioned by Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council.

The report concluded that "the length of the Waveney Valley expresses many special qualities, and in the context of Suffolk and Norfolk, it is considered to be a valued landscape. Conserving and enhancing the special qualities articulated in this report is a key aspiration of existing planning policy."

The councils will now look to take up their concerns with National Grid and discuss the issue further.

Suffolk commits to devolution fast track

Following an invitation from ministers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet today agreed to recommend Suffolk for inclusion in the government's Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), which would see the creation of a directly elected Mayor (likely covering Suffolk and Norfolk) and the replacement of existing council structures with a streamlined unitary council being set up.

The decision followed a debate and vote at a meeting of all county councillors.

The government's English Devolution White Paper outlines plans for broader and deeper devolution, coupled with a programme of coordinated local government reorganisation.

Key to these proposals is the restructuring of councils in two-tier areas like Suffolk, shifting from district, borough, and county councils to unitary councils. The government argues that unitary councils can deliver better outcomes for residents and save money that can be reinvested in public services.

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Alongside reorganisation, the government is also proposing to create new Mayoral Authorities – with a single directly elected Mayor covering larger geographies (such as Norfolk and Suffolk) and with powers over strategic policy areas like transport infrastructure, health improvement and blue light services.

Suffolk County Council has now written to the government expressing its desire to be at the front of the queue for devolution and local government reorganisation. A decision is expected by the end of the month.

If Suffolk is approved as part of the DPP, more detailed proposals, engagement and Government-led consultation would follow.

Papers for the meetings can be viewed at <https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk>.

They are also available to watch back on the council's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SuffolkCC>

Detailed report provides blueprint for changes to Suffolk's SEND services

A report has been published that provides the most detailed assessment of need for SEND services in Suffolk and will be used as a blueprint for immediate change.

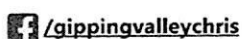
The forensic 177-page document delves into current arrangements, future anticipated need and looks at gaps and challenges in SEND provision. This assessment highlights the increasing demand for SEND services, the challenges faced by families and professionals, and the importance of improving service provision to ensure equitable outcomes for all.

As a result of this analysis, a series of recommendations have been made to further shape improvements to SEND services. Known as the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Needs Assessment, the report will be discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board on Thursday 16 January.

Some of the key findings and recommendations in the report include:

- A significant rise in demand for SEND services, with projections suggesting further increases in the coming years
- The importance of early intervention, timely diagnoses, and accessible services to address complex and multiple needs
- Strategic priorities emphasising communication, transition support, and whole system improvements to meet evolving demands.

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The report also captures the voices of children and young people, parents, and practitioners to ensure lived experiences inform future strategies. The Suffolk Parent Carer Forum was involved in collating the report.

The report and the recommendations made, will become part of the Local Area Priority Action Plan for widescale SEND reform and improvement. This plan was a requirement following the Ofsted and CQC inspection in November 2023.

The local area partnership which delivers SEND services is made up of Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

Ten recommendations have been made as a result of this needs assessment. One of those includes addressing delays in assessment, diagnosis and treatment for a wide range of SEND needs. Another recommendation looks at the future planning for the provision of SEND services in Suffolk, noting that the needs and numbers of children and young people with SEND are likely to increase further in the coming years.

Helpful comparisons are also drawn between Suffolk figures, other councils and England averages throughout the report. One of those includes the average spend on each SEND child or young person in Suffolk, which was £155 in 2022/23 (East of England £95 and England £100). Figures also look at the percentage of children and young people assessed and issued with an education, health and care plan for the first time. In Suffolk in 2023 this percentage was 99% of children, compared with 94% across England and 93% with comparable councils.

The report can be found here: [Suffolk SEND Needs Assessment](#).

Council making net zero gains, but still work to do

Suffolk County Council continues to bring down its carbon emissions, with significant reductions from council-owned street lighting, vehicles and buildings, but there is still work to do to reach its ambitious target of net zero by 2030.

A report going to the council's Cabinet (28 January 2025) reviews progress since the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019. The report finds that emissions across the areas within the council's direct control, such as energy consumption in council buildings and vehicles (categorised as Scope 1 & 2 emissions), have fallen by a further 8% over the past year, contributing to a 43% drop since 2019. When taking account of the council's switch to a renewable electricity tariff, this becomes a 75% reduction.

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However, when calculating its overall net zero progress, the council also reports on many emissions where it has influence but less direct control. These are known as Scope 3 emissions. These include things like home to school transport, home-working, and staff commuting and travel for work in their own vehicles.

These make up 65% of the council's reported emissions, which the council is currently projecting will reduce by 48% by 2030 showing the scale of the remaining challenge.

Since 2019, when it declared a climate emergency, the council's carbon reduction successes include:

- Street and traffic lights down by 57%
- Diesel and petrol vehicles down by 50%
- Gas and oil use in buildings down by 37%
- Staff commuting down by 30%
- Electricity use in buildings down by 25%

Nationally, the council is making impressive strides with its own estate, standing out as one of the three leading county councils in England for reductions on Scope 1 & 2 emissions, according to analysis of published reports.

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DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FEBRUARY 2025

Council agrees to full support for farmers

At its last full council meeting on 23rd January, Mid Suffolk District Council agreed unanimously to consider all "reasonable and practical measures" to support local farming communities. This comes in the wake of Suffolk farmers protesting against the changes to inheritance tax rules which some have said will threaten the future of the family farm. Andy Mellen, Green Leader of the Council spoke of his farming heritage, the difficult financial challenges being faced by farmers and the problems they faced from climate change.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils' Tree Canopy Survey

When the councils were named UK Council of the Year at the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards last year it was recognised that they were the first rural UK council to conduct a tree canopy data survey. This fact came to the attention of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's statistics department who were so eager to learn about our approach to mapping and long-term tree management that they sent three of their officers to visit the councils at Endeavour House.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils Win Building Control Award

The LABC Building Excellence Award was given to the combined councils' Building Control Team as recognition of their commitment to embracing the changes imposed by the Building Safety Act 2022 by providing well-attended events, public and trade displays and online

initiatives. The councils were nominated for the award by customers of the service.

Funding to increase neighbourhood policing

On 31st January the Home Office announced funding for forces in England and Wales to increase neighbourhood policing teams:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/200-million-boost-to-transform-neighbourhood-policing>

This funding – increased from December's provisional £100 million of government funding commitment – will help strengthen local crime prevention and community safety.

Alongside funding for more officers, the upcoming Crime and Policing Bill will give officers the tools they need to keep the streets safe, including enhanced powers such as respect orders to tackle antisocial behaviour and shoplifting effectively.

Land use in England consultation

On 31st January the government launched a consultation on a new strategic approach to managing land use in England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/land-use-in-england>

to give decision makers the data they need to protect agricultural land and increase Britain's food security.

The consultation explores the land use changes implied by commitments to restore nature, support food production, improve climate resilience and deliver new housing and infrastructure.

It seeks views on the type and scale of land use changes that might be needed, as well as the actions government could take to support this.

The consultation closes on 25 April.

My Note: Whilst little notice was taken of the high value status of our local agricultural land when approval was given for solar farm and national grid developments I feel that we need to have engagement, particularly from farmers and other experts in land use, to put the best case for our future food security.

Reform of the planning system

On 26th January the government announced that land near commuter transport hubs will be unlocked to build new housing, as part of new steps to reform the planning system:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-goes-further-and-faster-on-planning-reform-in-bid-for-growth>

The government's next steps on planning reform include streamlining a set of national policies for decision making to guide planning decisions taken by councils and promote housebuilding in key areas.

The government has also committed to making 150 decisions on major economic infrastructure applications over this Parliament.

Reminder: Planning Reform Working Paper: Development and Nature Recovery

On 15 December 2024, MHCLG published [a paper inviting views on the government's proposed new approach to development and nature recovery.](#)

The paper proposes a new approach which uses funding from development to deliver environmental improvements and moves more responsibility for these improvements onto the state rather than developers.

Please note that this is not a formal consultation and is instead intended to inform discussions with communities and the sector, to determine how the government takes these proposals forward.

My Note: If you are concerned about the level of house building proposed by the government and are concerned about maintaining the natural environment it may be worth reading this paper and commenting upon it. One paragraph sounds very much like "one size fits all", i.e.

"Moving responsibility for identifying actions to address environmental impacts away from multiple project-specific assessments in an area to a single strategic assessment and delivery plan."

Funding to help rough sleepers off streets

On 20th January the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government announced an additional £20 million to help more rough sleepers off the street this winter:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/emergency-cash-tripled-for-rough-sleepers-this-winter>

The Rough Sleeping Winter Pressures Funding, a government scheme to increase the use of emergency accommodation for rough sleepers, will go directly to areas with high levels of rough sleeping.

Over 280 councils will receive funding to support frontline workers providing services on the ground. The new funding will also continue supporting specialist programmes for vulnerable groups sleeping rough including veterans, care leavers and victims of domestic abuse.

Section 106 affordable housing: call for next level support to new clearing service

Homes England, the government's homes and regeneration agency, has today (28 January) announced that nearly 300 organisations in England have signed up to the new Section 106 Affordable Housing Clearing Service to help unlock housing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/section-106-affordable-housing-call-for-next-level-support-to-new-clearing-service-as-registrations-near-300-in-first-50-days>

More than 70 housebuilders have registered to provide details of affordable homes they have planning permission to build, alongside private homes, but have been unable to find a buyer for.

They join 140 Registered Providers and more than 70 councils which have already registered for the service as potential buyers, and are viewing available information about potential opportunities on a regular basis.

It is hoped the service, created and managed by Homes England in response to sector feedback, will help facilitate and accelerate the sale of uncontracted and unsold affordable homes in England, excluding London.

Action taken to protect households with poor-quality insulation

Thirty-nine businesses have been suspended by the government from installing new insulation in people's homes after TrustMark uncovered examples of substandard solid wall insulation fitted since 2022 under the Energy Company Obligation 4 and Great British Insulation Scheme.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-taken-to-protect-households-with-poor-quality-insulation>

The government has demanded that installers fund any repair work themselves, under protections in the schemes. No household should be asked to pay any money by an installer.

Households should check what to do if they're concerned about the insulation they've had fitted through a government scheme:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-to-do-if-you-have-poor-quality-wall-insulation>

Reminder: Simpler Recycling in England – Beginning in March 2025: communications toolkit for councils

From next month (31 March), workplaces (businesses and non-domestic premises) in England with 10 or more full-time equivalent employees will need to recycle the following waste streams: plastic, metal, glass, paper and card, and food waste. Workplaces with fewer than 10 full-time equivalent employees will need to comply from 31 March 2027.

The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has published guidance to outline how this affects workplaces and waste collectors.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/simpler-recycling-workplace-recycling-in-england>

This includes guidance on how the dry recyclables can be co-collected in the same container.

Public health update

Flu and COVID-19 surveillance report published

Today (16 January), the UKHSA published the latest flu and COVID-19 surveillance report. The report is based on data up to week 2 of 2025 (between 6 January and 12 January 2025). This report summarises:

- influenza activity showed a mixed picture with some indicators suggesting that activity may have reached a peak, and was circulating at medium levels
- COVID-19 activity remained stable across most indicators and was at baseline activity levels
- respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity decreased across most indicators and was circulating at low levels of activity

Mid Suffolk District Council: current grant opportunities (Section 106, CIL Funding and Capital Grants also available).

See <https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding>

Sustainable Communities Food Fund

The Sustainable Communities Food Fund is funding that small scale food initiatives, such as community pantries, can use for capital and revenue costs such as training for volunteers, and buying equipment, planters or fruit trees.

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as voluntary and community groups, parish councils

What's available

Between £250 and £5,000

When to apply

Open for applications

Port One Legacy Biodiversity Enhancement Fund (POLBEF)

Community groups within Barham, Bramford, Claydon, Great Blakenham and Little Blakenham can apply for POLBEF funding. It can be used toward projects which create spaces for nature and wildlife.

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as voluntary and community groups, parish councils

What's available

Up to £3,750

When to apply

Currently closed, will re-open for applications in April 2025

Pride in your Place Grants

These grants are available for capital projects that enable community groups to enhance their local area and environment,

explore local identity and heritage, and engage in activities such as community clean ups

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as parish and town councils, voluntary and community groups

What's available

Between £250 and £5,000

When to apply

Open for applications

Social Enterprise Support Fund

This funding is available to support the development of social enterprises within the districts of Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Suitable for

Charities and organisations such as voluntary and community groups, sports clubs

What's available

Between £1,000 and £5,000

When to apply

Open for applications

Adrienne Marriott
Blakenham District Councillor
03/02/2025