

WEST SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILLOR SUSAN GLOSSOP

RISBY WARD

Annual report 2020

West Suffolk Council

Following the elections on May 2nd, 2019 the new council is a District Council with a Chairman.

Councillors Total 64

38 Conservatives,

21 Independents = 13 Independents 7 West Suffolk Independents 1 Green

5 Labour

Committees on which I serve

Development control

Cabinet member for Economic growth

Outside bodies

Newmarket BID

Bury and Beyond Destination Management Organisation

West Stow Anglo Saxon Village Trust

East West Rail Consortium growth

One Haverhill Partnership Board

Attendance record for Council meetings

96% with 1 absence due to holiday

Locality budget spend from April 2019 – April 2020

Risby	wildlife project	£730.00
Icklingham	defibrillator	£800.00
River Lark Catchment volunteering partnership		
Flempton –	£800.00	Icklingham restoration project £800
St Edmundsbury Sailing club at Lackford lakes	funding for restoration of picnic area	£483.00

Council Tax Council

Council tax setting for the year 2020/21 and future years is based on the option to harmonise the two predecessor areas (St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath) using the average band D rate across both predecessor areas, harmonising the council tax bills by 2022/23 whilst maximising the council tax receipts to protect services and support the investment plans. For 2020/21 this represents an average band D monthly increase of 97p and 14p for the predecessor area of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury respectively. Noting that just over 70% of our residents are in bands A to C will actually see a lower increase.

Band D Forest Heath £163.98 an increase of £11.70 7.70%

St Edmundsbury £183.78 an increase of £1.62 0.9%

Suffolk Police Authority set its precept at £12,504,770.69 resulting in a Band D council tax of £222.75 a 4.7 % increase on the 2019/20 figure of £212.76

Suffolk County Council set its precept at £75,427,766.29 resulting in a Band D council tax of £1,343,61 a 4.0% increase including 2% increase in Adult Social C precept

Town and parish councils an average of £97.22 an increase of 6.8% on the 2019/20 of an average of £91.06

Overall Council tax breakdown

Forest Heath predecessor area

Suffolk County Council 73.5%

West Suffolk Council 9.0%

Suffolk Police Authority 12.2%

Parish/Town Council 5.3%

St Edmundsbury predecessor area

Suffolk County Council 73.9%

West Suffolk Council 10.1%

Suffolk Police Authority 12.3%

Parish/Town Councils 3.7%

Planning Applications

On a much smaller scale, but possibly of more importance to residents of Risby several individual planning applications have been made. The majority of the applications have been approved enabling people to build extensions or make alterations to their property. Not all applications go smoothly however, and I would strongly advise people wanting to put in an application to talk to the Parish Council who make comments pertinent to each application. It is worth having some pre-application advice from Planning Officers. I am also readily available to discuss any individual plans with anyone in the village and I frequently act as a go-between between resident and Planning Officer to try to resolve any problems on an informal basis.

Garden Waste Collection

The cost of a brown bin £43 per year with no increase for 2020. The link for signing up online is: www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/gardenwaste

This service is on hold due to Covid-19 and using the staff on essential services

The Waste and Street Scene Services department lost 43 of its staff (including 10 HGV drivers) in the space of 48 hours in the immediate aftermath of the Prime Minister's announcement on 23rd March to lock-down life in the UK (stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives). This followed clarification from Government as to exactly what underlying health conditions constituted a vulnerability for certain members of our staff or members of their families that required them to isolate at home. At this point we took the immediate decision to invoke our Business Continuity Plan (BCP) which, in the increasing absence of staff, identifies the garden waste (brown bin) service and some others as being able to be suspended in order to protect the more critical waste collection services required to

protect public health. After all, whilst an inconvenience, accumulations of garden waste outside one's home are unlikely to be potentially harmful to health.

It is with regret that this puts our residents to some inconvenience but in the context of the current national emergency it is the necessary steps we have been forced to take.

It is difficult for us to estimate when the garden waste service will be resumed. This is unlikely to be until infection rates have demonstrably fallen, and when sick and isolated staff are able to start returning to work. The composting plant where the material is processed has also been mothballed and requires 3 weeks' notice to get up and running again.

We are sorry that a more definitive answer can be given at this stage in terms of a timescale but trust that residents will bear with us for some further time and appreciate the position at this difficult time.

Clearly, we will keep our residents updated on the matter through our normal channels of communication.

Waste Hub at Hollow Road

Opened in October 2019 with the recycling opened in November 2019

Closed due to Covid-19

Civil Parking Enforcement

From the 6th April West Suffolk Council

Agreement has been reached between the Police, SCC, that West Suffolk Council will take on the role of control of street parking and also take this work on for Mid Suffolk District Council. It should run at a surplus but more importantly enable control of parking issues in conjunction with our off-street parking operations. This will enable West Suffolk Council to keep all on street income. The period will be from 2020 -2029.

Suffolk Business Park

Suffolk Business Park is a 68 hectares B1 and B8 employment allocation accessed via the Eastern Relief Road (opened September 2017)

The Park is divided into two roughly equal ownerships, Rougham Estates who own the eastern side and Taylor Wimpey who own the western side. West Suffolk Council has a small interest in the Taylor Wimpey land. Rougham Estates have engaged the development company Churchmanor Estates to promote and develop their land whilst Taylor Wimpey have engaged the developer Jaynic to promote their land interest.

On the western side of the site a number of planning permissions have been granted by the Local Planning Authority including an overall Outline consent for B1 and B8 uses. Two large warehouses have been constructed and Unipart who operate the NHS supply chain in the region have taken on one of these buildings. RC Treatts who have been operating from the Northern Way Industrial Estate in Bury St Edmunds from the 1970s have started construction on their new Headquarters, research and development and manufacturing facility. This is hoped to be completed by the end of the year with their relocation happening throughout 2021. Sealeys have purchased a parcel of land, as have the Ambulance Trust who also have planning permission for a new facility for their fleet. Jaynic have also submitted a reserved matter application for four smaller warehouses and this is expected to be approved before May 2020.

On the eastern side of the Park next to Junction 45 of the A14 Churchmanors appeal for a new BP Petrol Filling Facility which included a Marks and Spencer foodhall was upheld and construction on that facility is expected later this year. Festool have built a new headquarters building which was opened in 2019. Hopkins Homes have also submitted an application which was resolved to be approved by the Development Control Committee in March 2020 and they are expected to start construction on their new headquarters building later this year.

Both developers continue to have discussions with potential operators and the attractiveness of the park continues to generate significant interest owing to its relationship to the A14, Bury St Edmunds and the availability of Electricity.

The business park is a key opportunity for West Suffolk Council to attract additional companies; encourage new start-ups; raise salary levels; address the shortfall in unit types; and create links to Cambridge.

In the north west corner of the Taylor Wimpey parcel of land 14 hectares was granted Enterprise Zone status for a period of 25 years from 1st April 2016.

Business rates growth within the Enterprise Zone area is retained by the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership and shared with West Suffolk Council on a percentage share agreement.

Town Centre Master plan

Work has continued on the plans with a £8.4 million scheme to redevelop the Post office building with the redevelopment providing retaining the historic Victorian façade and the rear of the building developed into retail with 12 apartments above and the link between market place and the Arc being widened with new shop fronts onto St Andrews Street. The work to develop the site was due to commence in April however due to Covid -19 this has been put on hold.

Housing

Supporting people with their housing needs is at the best of times a complex area for the Council and partner agencies but COVID-19 has complicated this further with the restrictions on what help, and support can be given.

The Government issued instructions on 26 March that people should be housed if they present as homeless. This does not just include rough sleepers but includes categories such as people who may have been evicted or known as 'sofa surfers'.

Under usual circumstances many of these people could be in accommodation with friends or family and housing teams would negotiate on the homeless person's behalf. Due to social distancing this can no longer happen.

Equally the stagnation of the housing market means that people are unable to move and there are few vacancies in the private or social housing sector as people are staying in their homes.

Since the Government order there has been significant demands on housing services. From 26 March to 7 April the Council had 85 presentations for homelessness with 60 people being accommodated in temporary accommodation.

To cope with the increase in demand at the same time as limited options for accommodation the Council, like other authorities across the UK, has used hotels which are temporarily closed to the public but open to councils. This has also been supplemented with use of bed and breakfast where appropriate.

Some of the people are presenting with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles which requires the support of partnership agencies such as mental health, drug and alcohol as well as the Police. Our Council and the team are working closely with these agencies but during COVID-19 services are not running in the normal way and this remains a pressured area for the authority.

Community support

For those offering help in their community or needing help from the community more can be found at <https://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19community>

For Community Groups offering help and those who are vulnerable needing help there is now a countywide service.

The free app, called Tribe Volunteer, can be downloaded from the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. The telephone number for anyone that is vulnerable, at home and with no other support from family or friends available to them is freephone **0800 876 6926** and will be staffed from 9am to 5pm, seven days a week but should only be used for the most vulnerable in need of genuine help.

Anyone that is vulnerable, at home and with no other support from family or friends available to them

If you have any further queries please contact your Families and Communities officer or email families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk

More information

We constantly update our website at www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus and our social media. Please have a look or follow our social media for updates which has been incredibly popular.

Issues raised by the Community

Many of the issues have been highway issues which the Suffolk County Councillor addresses. There has been much concern about the speeding of the traffic and the very large lorries using the road through the village from Risby to Flempton.

Potholes
Fly tipping
Speeding traffic through the villages
Rural bus service
Maintenance of public rights of way
Dog fouling

Contact details for your District Councillor

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