

## **October County Councillor Report from Cllr Stuart Bird**

### **LOCALITY BUDGET GRANT**

I have awarded £1490 to “Cruse Bereavement”. This is a group offering bereavement support sessions for adults or children. This grant will enable them to provide support to 10 individuals in the local area.

### **SCHOOL PLACES FOR 2024**

Parents are invited to make applications for school places for the 2024 entry. The deadline for Secondary school is 31 October and for Primary it is 15 January 2024. Last year 94% received their first preference and 98.5% had an offer of one of their three preferences. Applications should be made at [suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://suffolk.gov.uk/admissions)

### **BUDGET SETTING FOR 2024/25**

I have been invited again to be part of a working group examining the County Council budget, as a first stage to setting the budget for the next financial year. I have attended a number of meetings to determine where efficiencies can be made, while continuing to provide excellent and vital public services. I recognise the need to spend as much as we can on Highways maintenance, to meet the public concern for our roads and footpaths. However, it is essential that we balance the books and spend a budget that we can afford. There are considerable demands on our finances- this year approximately £40 million was added to meet inflationary pressures alone. Increasing Council Tax by itself will not balance the budget, and we recognise the impact that even a small increase in Council Tax can have on household budgets.

You will have seen reports in the media of a Council issuing a Section 114 notice. This happens when a Council’s finances no longer add up, and the Council Head of Finance issues the notice. This means that all non statutory spending ceases immediately. The Council can only carry out its minimal legal duties, all discretionary spending and maintenance stops. The elected Councillors no longer have control over spending. The Conservative administration at Suffolk County Council is determined that we never get into that situation. By setting prudent and affordable budgets we can avoid having the decisions on what we spend and where taken away from us.

COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE NORTH AND TRIMLEY DIVISION

TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE PORT WARD