

August 2024 County Councillor Report

LOCALITY BUDGET AWARDS

I have awarded £2000 to Felixstowe Area Community Transport Service (FACTS) for a new portakabin at their Garrison Lane site.

I have awarded £1990 (along with £1000 from Cllr Patti Mulcahy) to Kirton Athletic Football Club for a shower cubicle at their facility at Trimley Sports Club.

I now have £2423 remaining until April 2025.

HOWLETT WAY FOOTPATH

I funded the clearing of the overgrown footpath in Howlett Way, from my Local Highways Budget. This work has now been completed. The path surface is not of optimal quality, but it has been widened to an acceptable width.

LOCAL HIGHWAYS BUDGET

I have £8383.65 remaining, which must be allocated by December 2024. I decided that I would spend this money in the Walton part of my Division, after funding a number of projects in the Trimley villages. It has now been agreed that this money will be used to repair potholes (including those that do not meet the Highways criteria for repair) in Ascot Drive and Treetops.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSING IN TRIMLEY ST MARY

On 11 July I convened a meeting with the Cabinet Member for Highways and several Highways Officers. Had this meeting not happened the project would have terminated. Highways considered the matter closed because the feasibility study concluded there was not a need for a crossing. I was vociferous, frank and robust with Highways. The key points of the meeting were :

- 1 The Officers stuck doggedly to the report conclusion that the Department of Transport criteria for a crossing were not met.
- 2 They claimed that if the crossing is constructed it will set a precedent for unnecessary crossings elsewhere.
- 3 I stated that common sense indicates a crossing is needed, despite it being contrary to their guidance and their statistical modelling.
- 4 I challenged the staff to safely cross the High Road at that point at any time of the day.
- 5 I emphasised that the population and traffic numbers are set to continue rising.
- 6 The proposed location is the focal point of the village, with the church, theatre, shop, pub, and allotments.
- 7 If a crossing at the school was justified in 2018, then this crossing is justified now.
- 8 Some spurious and absurd arguments were made to me – A) Not many pedestrians attempt to cross there- without a safe crossing they wont. B) Pedestrians can use alternative crossings. People will not go a great distance out of their way to use the St.Martin or School crossings. C) There has been no report of an accident. Does it take the injury or death of a pedestrian to get a crossing ?

I emphasised my extreme displeasure at the reluctance to proceed with this scheme, despite the Parish Council willingness to fund it. I said that I am not prepared to let the matter rest.

A compromise was reached. Highways will revisit the figures to explore if the additional housing at Reeve Lodge will support a crossing, and also an alternative to a formal crossing, such as a central island refuge. I pressed the staff for an anticipated timescale on this, unfortunately they were unwilling to commit to a date.

You have my assurance that I will pursue this until a successful outcome is achieved.

SUFFOLK HIGHWAYS CONDITION

On 23 July Scrutiny Committee (of which I am a Member) examined the condition of Suffolk's roads. I asked a question as to whether the overhead costs of highways repairs could be reduced. If less is spent on design costs and traffic management, there would be more money for actual repair work.

Despite all our understandable concerns about individual highways defects, the figures in the report we received showed that Suffolk's roads are improving. The following tables show the lengths of roads [in miles] in good (green) and poor (red) condition in 2012 and 2023. These are for the 4 road classifications (A/B/C/U).

RED	<u>2012</u>	<u>2023</u>	GREEN	<u>2012</u>	<u>2023</u>
A	14.4	9.2		309.6	324.8
B	36.4	12.0		303.9	361.4
C	112.2	44.9		752.3	848.5
U	587.7	397.0		1569.7	1760.4

COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE NORTH AND TRIMLEY DIVISION

TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE PORT WARD