

## County Councillor Report

December 2024

### **SCC BUDGET 2025 / 26**

I have now completed the meetings of the Budget Group. I have been a Member of this for a number of years, helping Cabinet Members and Officers in the early formulation of the County Council budget. The finalised budget will be presented to the Conservative Group on 06 December, and then to Scrutiny Committee in January, and approval by Council in February.

### **HOWLETT WAY BUS SHELTERS**

Both the bus shelters in Howlett Way have tree branches growing onto the roof. If these are not cut back then damage could be caused, both to the glass shelter on one side of the road, and the brick one on the opposite side. That shelter has a felt roof, which will be torn by branches. The glass shelter has been referred to County Highways, who have refused to take remedial action. I have referred the problem of both shelters to the Cabinet Member for Highways demanding that action is taken. Remedial action to cut back the trees now will prevent far costlier repairs later, if the roofs are damaged. I will continue to lobby on your behalf until a sensible decision is taken.

### **ACTIVE TRAVEL CONSULTATION**

Suffolk County Council are currently consulting on a number of schemes to promote cycling and walking. One project under discussion covers suggested improvements to Maidstone Road and Grange Road in Felixstowe. This covers part of the Division which I represent, and the adjacent Division. The scheme involves 15 elements, including roundabout changes and pavement widening. I attended a briefing on the scheme, and a public exhibition on 20 November.

In Maidstone Road the proposal is to widen the pavements, and therefore reduce the carriageway width. Vehicle parking would only be allowed on one side of the road, not both sides as currently. Residents in the area and other Councillors have expressed dismay at this proposal. I am vehemently opposed. I believe in promoting cycling and walking, but alongside car use, not in competition with it. Car use is an essential and vital part of life, and it should not be demonised in this irresponsible way. I have had it confirmed that the purpose of the proposals is not just encouraging pedestrians and cyclists, but to reduce the number of vehicles on the road. I cannot endorse this. Most residents in Maidstone Road have no off street parking, they have to park on the road.

People use their vehicles to get to their employment, visit relatives, shopping, leisure activity. I will not accept this being curtailed, or people's livelihood put in jeopardy. Are we to set residents against each other, competing for reduced parking availability ? I have contacted the Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, insisting that this particular element of the scheme in Maidstone Road and Grange Road be scrapped.

In addition, there is no intention to individually contact each household affected. Residents are expected to find out about this scheme online, and respond with their comments online. I have stated that this is unacceptable, and I have demanded that a leaflet or letter be sent to every home in the roads affected.

I would encourage any residents who have concerns to respond to the consultation, **which closes on 20 December.** Details can be found at [arcg.is/1z8uqr0](http://arcg.is/1z8uqr0)

## **CHRISTMAS**

I take this opportunity to wish all my residents and Parish Councillors a happy time during the festive period.

COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE NORTH AND TRIMLEY DIVISION

TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE PORT WARD