

County Councillor Report

November 2024

COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET 2025/26

For the fourth consecutive year I have volunteered to be part of a small group helping the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Officer Team to formulate next year's County Council budget.

LOCALITY BUDGET

I have awarded £1690 to Trimley Red Devils Football Club to purchase a new grass mower.

COMMUNITY SELF HELP SCHEME

You will recall that this scheme was introduced in 2019. It is designed to enable Parish Councils to undertake some highways work which County Council do not have funding to carry out. There are four options available – buying services from a commercial contractor, buying services from Suffolk Highways, using trained employees, using community volunteers. There are currently 32 active schemes across Suffolk.

It has been recognised that the scheme is overly bureaucratic and has constraints. The scheme will be reviewed and relaunched after the election in 2025, attempting to address some of the difficulties, and to re-engage with communities to widen participation. I look forward to seeing a revised scheme which is more practical and viable than the present offer.

HIGHWAY WORKS AT KINGSFLEET PARK

Bellway Homes are constructing the new homes at the site next to Reeve Lodge, called Kingsfleet Park. They are carrying out some highways improvements.

From 07 October to 14 October a section of footpath was reconstructed.

From 18 November to the end of December footpaths and verges on the Howlett roundabout will be reconstructed. The works will be protected by rails and signs, and no highway closure is required.

In January for three weeks (the dates are not yet finalised) utility connections will be installed and road resurfacing done. This will require partial road closure, with temporary traffic lights.

HIGHWAYS ISSUES

I have taken up a number of highways related issues in my Division area. Unfortunately I have had limited success.

The missing bollard on a traffic island on Walton High Road near the Exeter Road junction has been replaced. This was damaged some time ago. I reported it and the bollard was replaced.

The “T” junction sign on the single track road approaching the High Road junction was knocked down by a vehicle. I took the case up when a referral was declined.

Unfortunately Highways stated that it would not be replaced immediately as it is not a mandatory sign. It may be replaced in the next year, if funds are available.

I also lobbied to get blocked drains in Thorpe Lane cleared. With much recent rainfall the road was several inches deep in flood water. As this is not a strategic road and homes had not been flooded, it was deemed as not a priority for intervention.

At Scrutiny Committee today (24 October) we discussed highway flooding. I argued strongly for more funding to be put into Highways maintenance, so that more flooding and other highways defects can be addressed. The current situation of many referrals being declined due to not meeting criteria is unacceptable.

COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE NORTH AND TRIMLEY DIVISION

TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE PORT WARD