**County Councillor Report**

**July 2025**

**LOCALITY BUDGET**

I have an annual budget of £6000 for grants to charities, community groups and schools. This is for projects of benefit to the community. Last week I made three awards in one week. These are :

£2500 to Two Sisters Art Centre for replacement flooring.

£990 to Suffolk Mind, for a fire detector and “firedorgards” ( which shut doors in the event of fire ). This is at their premises on Felixstowe High Road.

£762 to Felixstowe Methodist Church. This will be for a bench at their St Martin chapel, which will be a public bench for everyone to use.

I now have £1748 remaining until March 2026.

**LOCAL HIGHWAYS BUDGET**

I also have a budget of £6000 which is for small scale highways related schemes which do not meet the criteria for work or intervention under Suffolk Highways rules. I have decided to fund some refreshing of cycle lane markings on the Trimley High Road. This will be on the westbound carriageway, from the primary school to Howlett Way. The cost is £2232, which will be shared between myself and Cllr Seamus Bennett, County Councillor in Felixstowe Coastal. The work is in my Division, but he has kindly agreed to contribute half the cost. The works were ordered on 03 June, with a 14 week implementation period – completion by 19 September latest.

**ROAD WORKS IN MILL LANE**

As you will be aware, an application for partial or full road closure by utilities and telecommunications companies cannot be refused by County Council. However, conditions can be imposed, and standards are expected to be maintained. Cadent have recently undertaken gas works in Mill Lane, Trimley St Martin. Two residents complained to me, and I made representations to our Network Assurance Team. Site visits were made on both occasions. Following the second complaint, the Senior Network Co-ordinator issued a Formal Defect Notice to Cadent. This requested improvements in specific areas – the condition and layout of signage, the size of the working area, and the tidiness of the site. I will endeavour to ensure that conditions and standards are met in such cases, and my intervention led to successful action in this instance.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

At Suffolk County Council we have appointed staff to oversee the work in preparation for local government changes. Our existing Director of Growth, Highways and Infrastructure ( Andrew Cook ) is handling preparation for a Mayor in 2026. To oversee the submission of our business case and other preparatory work for unitary government we have appointed Mark Ash. He was previously a Director with us, before moving to another Council.

The Cabinet has approved a budget of £1.9 million for the preparatory work. This has been allocated from an underspend in the 2024 to 2025 budget year, and will only be spent as necessary. It is a contingency budget, not all of which necessarily has to be spent. Furthermore, we have off set this with savings. Our Deputy Chief Executive has recently left and a decision has been made not to replace him. We are demonstrating that some of the benefit of having one council only for Suffolk will come from staffing savings at senior levels. Under the current 6 Council model, or the two or three council proposals, more senior staff will be needed, meaning less money for front line staff and front line services.

COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)

COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE NORTH AND TRIMLEY DIVISION

TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE PORT WARD