

District Councillor Annual Report: Debenham Ward May 25-26
Serving Ashfield-cum-Thorpe, Aspall, Bedingfield, Debenham, Kenton & Winston
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Recycling update	The new recycling regime is due to start in June 2026. The delivery of new bins for ‘Better Recycling’ has started. This means delivery of a new blue recycling bin, a new food caddy and food recycling bin. The bins you will have are:- 1. Food waste 2. Green recycling bin – paper and card 3. Blue recycling bin – glass, plastics, tetrapaks i.e. non paper recycling 4. Black bin – refuse bin (You might already have an optional brown bin which is a paid for service.) The planned schedule will be as follows: <table><tr><th>Collection</th><th>Week 1</th><th>Week 2</th><th>Week 3</th></tr><tr><td>Food Waste</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Refuse general rubbish</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Paper and Card</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>	Collection	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Food Waste				Refuse general rubbish				Paper and Card				Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons			
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Planning system	Mid Suffolk’s housing target has increased from 535 per annum to 734 (an increase of 37%). If you include a 5% buffer this amounts to a requirement of 15,414 for the next 20yrs from 2024 to 2044. 5,475 of these are in the current identified supply. It is vital to create a Local plan that meets government targets to prevent a planning ‘free for all’ similar to the one that happened prior to 2023.																				

	As part of this process the Council has carried out a call for sites. The published map of all sites submitted during the Call for Sites exercises is online:- https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites This is not a list of preferred development locations. Publication promotes transparency and ensures communities have early visibility of what has been suggested by landowners. No planning status is given to any submission. Sites do not benefit from any presumption of development. Submissions will be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria. Further communication of the local plan stages will follow soon.
Council Housing	Mid Suffolk has around 15% of Council Houses that do not meet the Decent Homes standard. We are planning to invest £19m in our Council Housing stock this year alone. Mid Suffolk was successful in obtaining a £1.5m government grant to supplement the £2m already committed by the council to install energy saving measures in social housing. This work not only helps households by delivering warm and energy efficient homes, but also aims to lift tenants out of fuel poverty by helping to save money on energy bills. Work is underway to tackle the 100 council properties with the lowest EPC (energy performance certificate) ratings by adding a range of improvements, including cavity and loft insulation, new windows, PV panels and air source heat pumps. The Council has also built about 250 new Council houses in the past 3 years.
Stowmarket Innovation Gateway	Construction work on a state-of-the-art skills and innovation centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket has now been completed. The purpose of the centre is to increase availability for those wanting to improve their skills to then obtain better paid jobs. New clients to facilitate this will be moving in from July 2026 and a set of training courses will be launched.
New fund for sports facilities in rural areas	A £1.5m fund for Sports provision outside of Stowmarket has been established. The aim is to develop sports infrastructure in the more rural areas of Mid Suffolk, outside of Stowmarket, by exploring upgrading or extending existing sites, as well as opportunities for new sports provision or facilities.
Temporary accommodation	Demand for temporary housing in Mid Suffolk rose by over 100% since 2020 and there are currently over 60 households in temporary accommodation in Mid Suffolk. Our aim is to increase the acquisition of temporary

	accommodation in Mid Suffolk by up to 30 units in the next two years. This is to provide better standards of accommodation, especially for families, and at the same time save the Council money on independent temporary accommodation.
Pylons	Leading councillors from Mid Suffolk District Council have told a public hearing, National Grid's plan for more pylons in the Suffolk countryside should be halted. (11 February). National Grid proposes 159km of new overhead lines between Norwich to Tilbury, with the route cutting through the Suffolk countryside. Mid Suffolk has called for a delay to the project so other options can be considered and costed – such as an undersea route or undergrounding of the entire length of the project. They cite serious concerns about the impact on the environment, communities and businesses.
Nature recovery budget & Flooding	Mid Suffolk District Council has allocated a budget of £1.8m to support nature recovery, including Natural Flood Management. This covers: • Grant funding for communities • Grant funding for river catchment and landscape • Habitat creation, management and monitoring on new sites • recovery • Pond creation and restoration • Tree planting • Meadow management • Public engagement and awareness / Schools programme
Sustainable Transport	Mid Suffolk District Council has allocated CIL funding to Network Rail to produce options to resolve the issues to prevent passengers having to physically cross the railway track at Thurston station. The Mid Suffolk Community Bus Pilot will soon come to a close in August with results coming through on what to do next. A £3.5m project funded via CIL and S106 working with Suffolk County Council's Local Cycling Walking team, will link Elmswell and Woolpit, which share key services and infrastructure such as Elmswell Railway station, Woolpit Medical Centre, Woolpit Business Park, village halls and sports facilities. Due to Elmswell Primary School being at capacity, Woolpit Primary School will be providing school places for some Elmswell children in the future. It is therefore essential for a safe walking/cycling route to be built between the two villages.
Stowmarket high street investment	Mid Suffolk District Council launched a dedicated £1.5m fund, and associated framework, to support a thriving Stowmarket high street and town centre area

	Funding has been recently agreed for £615k towards the John Peel Centre and £125k for the Community Darts Venue including a darts retail area. Some of you may have been to visit The Bull Room, it is excellent for all ages.
Cosy Homes	Cosy Homes is an energy efficiency initiative dedicated to making private sector homes in Mid Suffolk: • warmer • more economical to heat • more environmentally friendly Residents meeting certain criteria can have works carried out for free. The initiative aims to help residents in the district improve the energy efficiency of their home - which will help them save on energy usage (bills) and reduce their carbon footprint. The Cosy Homes scheme has been extended to include solar panels as well as insulation measures.
Solar for Business	Businesses can reduce their carbon emissions and save money on energy bills by signing up to have solar panels provided and installed on their premises, for free. Electricity generated by the panels is then sold to the business at a rate lower than their current tariff, helping to slash energy bills and improve their bottom line. Solar for Business has been running successfully in West Suffolk for nine years – helping more than a hundred companies to save a total of around £700,000 and 2,000 tonnes in harmful CO₂ emissions per year. The initiative has now being extended, with businesses across Babergh and Mid Suffolk also able to sign up to the scheme.
New REACT team now live	The two-person "respond, enforce and clean team" - or REACT – has been set up to patrol litter hotspot areas in the Mid Suffolk District Council area. It will be funded by £360,000 from the council-owned Gateway 14 development. Introducing REACT operatives means our Public Realm Team as a whole are more responsive and consistent in both emergency and regular work. In the area of Mid Suffolk District Council there were 399 reported incidents of fly tipping, with the majority of them being on highways.
Food Museum in Stowmarket	The Food Museum is now able to start a £5.5 million project thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Mid Suffolk District Council.

	The ambitious scope covers conserving and developing three historic buildings - the barn, the factory and the house and linking them together to create a coherent visitor experience. Many will have already visited and know how important it is to create an ongoing quality museum. It significantly benefits a town by boosting tourism, enhancing the local economy, fostering community development, and contributing to cultural enrichment.
Mid Suffolk budget and Council Tax	Mid Suffolk Budget for the upcoming year ahead In addition to the day-to-day provision of current services and activities the 2026/27 budget includes further funding for many things and the below are some highlights:- • Cost of living support and Council Tax Support scheme • Support for our towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket in the wider District • Enhancements to our current depot in readiness for Better recycling • Sports and leisure facilities in the wider district • Community Infrastructure projects • Stowmarket sports facilities - SHELF Project • Stowmarket regeneration • Cosy Homes scheme which has been expanded to offer solar panels • A Reach Retrofit Hub to be an advice centre for the district • Grant funding for nature resilience and community biodiversity groups • Support for new footpaths and cycle ways • Developing the skills offering for the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway • Funding for disabled adaptations and the disability action plan • New Temporary accommodation to avoid homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation • Neighbourhood Plans support • Support for local food production • Support for local energy production Mid Suffolk District Council increased their part of the Council Tax bill you get by 2.99%, for context, for a Band D property the increase for Mid Suffolk is about £5.23 for the whole year, or 10p per week.
Mid Suffolk Magazine	A regular magazine released in September and February has been introduced to keep residents informed of what is going on in the district.

Do get in touch if you have any queries or concerns

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