



Annual Report 2017/ 2018

Walsham-le-Willows Parish Council

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07714-597980 Twitter: @jesstfleming

State of the County – Districts and Boroughs in Suffolk are taking steps toward joining together (an East Suffolk Council ‘super-district’ was recently approved by Parliament) and a West Suffolk District is anticipated. The County is working with its partners to streamline services as Government’s current approach is to wean us from central support. The County has a new Chief Executive (Nichola Beach) as of 21st May, and a new Leader (Mathew Hicks) who took office on 24th May.

Budget – The Council continues to be fiscally solvent but is under increasing pressure as the revenue support grant reduces. Our contingency reserves are about £40m, however Adult Social Care and Young People’s Services (not education) take about £370m of our total current £498m annual budget. We have raised general council tax this year by 2.99% for the 1st time in 7 years and adopted an Adult Social Care precept which will continue until 2020.

Highways - Suffolk Highways established regional customer service centres at Rougham, Halesworth and Ipswich during 2017. The web based reporting system is now in place for road and drainage issues. More money has been allocated to pothole repair programmes during 2018.

As a reminder: Report a defect/ pothole <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/> To check on area roadworks - <https://roadworks.org/>

Home to School Transport – Consultation has recently closed about proposals to change the way Home to School Transport is supported in the County, the main changes would limit free transport to the nearest geographic school (rather than catchment) and remove subsidy for post-16 transport. The results of the consultation are under review, changes will be decided this summer.

Local Transport – Some commercial bus operators have reduced services over the past year, but Community Transport can offer an alternative. The Council sponsored Connecting Communities offers minibus and in some areas community cars, please contact Bury St Edmunds Volunteer Centre on 01284 766126 to arrange transport, or to volunteer as a local car driver.

Planning - Locally, the County Council advises and comments on District residential planning applications and Neighbourhood Plans. County decides applications relating to highways, most schools, mineral, waste and major infrastructure; it maintains traffic data and models congestion.

Over the past year the Council has received Government support for several large new projects including The Orwell River Crossings in Ipswich (below), the Lowestoft Third River Crossing, 2 new roundabouts on the A140 near Eye, and a new historic records repository, The Hold, in Ipswich.

An image of the Orwell Crossings scheme follows:

