

County Councillor Report

January 2023



Walsham-le-Willows Parish Council

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The 'County Deal' – Council Leader Matthew Hicks has signed a 'minded to' agreement with Government for provisional devolution of powers and funding. If it proceeds, this would provide new money for sustainable building, regeneration of brownfield land and other areas aimed to stimulate the local economy. Neighbouring counties Norfolk and Essex have signed the same provisional agreement and we are working closely with them. The 'deal' includes acceptance of different local governance arrangements including a directly elected County leader. Details and public consultation are planned before debate at full council where a decision will be made.

Domestic Abuse Update - Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls strategy was published last year and some funding set aside for victim support and training. Domestic Abuse Champion training is free to anyone who lives or works in Suffolk. To book training please visit Eventbrite's website and search 'Suffolk Domestic Abuse Champions Network' or email dachampions@suffolk.gov.uk

Warm Spaces - There are also more than 250 voluntary warm spaces across Suffolk, where residents can meet up with members of the community in a warm, safe space, at no charge. A map of warm spaces in Suffolk can be found on the Rural Coffee Caravan website: <https://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/map/> Also Suffolk Libraries are registered as warm spaces this winter. Information and opening times for Suffolk Libraries can be found at <https://www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/>

Communities can set up their own Warm Space for local residents, refer to the Rural Coffee Caravan and Community Action Suffolk at: <https://ruralcoffeecaravan.org.uk/winter-warmth/#warmspaces>

Sunnica Solar Farm – update - SCC has commented that the current proposal is (not close to being acceptable' at the first hearing of the formal Examination process (Tuesday 6 December 2022) which hears representations from all interested parties of the proposal. The planning inspectorate examination concludes on 28th March 2023, during which time more sessions will be held, a decision is expected by the end of the year.

Council Budget – A residents' survey of council priorities conducted in October shows that adult and young persons social care are highest priorities for council expenditure, with mental health services roads and pavements, and local transport following. Under the proposals, the budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% overall increase in Council Tax, 1.99% in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care. The budget will be debated at the February County Council meeting.

A Band D property would pay £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23).