

County Councillor Report

February 2023



Walsh-le-Willows Parish Council

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The 'County Deal' Update – Councillors were offered an opportunity to put questions directly to Michael Gove, MP which confirmed that if it proceeds a directly elected County Leader would be required, and that the likely time frame for election and implementation is 2025. Neighbouring counties Norfolk and Essex have signed the same provisional agreement and we are working closely with them. Details and public consultation are planned before debate and a decision at full council.

Council Budget - the council's budget will be debated by Council this Thursday 9th February. Spending in 2023-24 would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a 3.99% increase in Council Tax made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult social care. Council taxes per household would rise by:

- Band B property: total £22.32 per week (85 pence per week increase from 2022-23)
(Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: total £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23)

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service inspection rated "Good" - An independent inspection was undertaken last spring when inspectors conducted a comprehensive review of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, a report published on 20 January praised many aspects of the Service. Also the proposed 2023-24 budget allocates £5.3m for fleet replacement, including purchase of 20 new fire engines. Nine will be ready for use by the end of 2023.

The Hold / Suffolk Archives commemorating 'When the Sea Came in' 70 years ago - An event was held at The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront was on 4th February to mark 70 years since the great Ipswich Flood. For information about what is on at The Hold visit: www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/whats-on/

Fostering and Adoption – Currently there are 900 children in foster homes across the county and this increases each year and there is an urgent need to recruit more foster carers for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). To find out more about Fostering with Suffolk: visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/fostering call us on: 01473 264800. Or attend our virtual information event on Wednesday 22nd February, 7pm, Email fosterandadopt@suffolk.gov.uk to register.

Memorial Service for Councillor Graham Newman on Saturday 25th February - It is with great sadness that this council remembers Cllr Graham Newman who sadly passed away on 28 December 2022 following a short illness. Graham had been a County Councillor for Felixstowe Coastal since 2005. He was a Cabinet member and chaired several committees, and went on to become Chairman of the Council from October 2020 until May 2022 spanning most of the COVID pandemic. Graham will be long remembered for his calm assurance, humour and integrity.