

District Councillor Report: Walsham Le Willows Parish Council

February 2024

Mid Suffolk District Council Budget	<p>The draft budget includes a 2% council tax increase to ensure financial stability for day-to-day services in the wake of shrinking government grants.</p> <p>For every £ on your Council Tax bill 9p goes to Mid Suffolk.</p> <p>A financial reserve has been built up over the last eight years and this will be spent on areas to benefit Mid Suffolk residents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development of housing for specific social groups, such as key workers- Enabling community-led exemplar housing- Bringing disused land back into use for amenity or other uses- Land for biodiversity and to meet Biodiversity Net Gain- Regeneration for Stowmarket and other key towns- Sports facilities in the district- New foot/cycle paths to improve connectivity- Solar roof programme <p>In the housing budget, to be able to fund improvements to the Council's housing stock, it is proposed that rents increase by 7.7% (in line with the Government formula – CPI+1%). This isn't a rise that the administration wants to impose but government restrictions effectively enforce this rise. Many tenants receive housing benefit or universal credit and due to recent increases in the rent portion of this most tenants will not see an increase in rent.</p>
Skills and Innovation Centre	<p>The proposed Green Skills and Innovation Centre which will be based on Gateway 14 was approved by Council subject to funding from Freeport East.</p> <p>The funding is coming from central government via the Freeport scheme and will represent a substantial investment in the district.</p> <p>This facility will provide office space for innovative companies and provide skills training. The training will cover generic skills development but will also have a focus on the green economy providing practical training in areas such as heat pump installation.</p>
Recycling	<p>There are a number of changes currently being planned to recycling. This won't happen for a couple of years but just to let you know what is envisaged though the exact timings and details are tentative.</p> <p>From April 2026 a weekly food waste collection will be introduced. Households will be provided with food waste containers which will be emptied from your doorstep like the normal bin collection.</p> <p>At the same time the range of items that you can put in the recycling bin will be increased to include glass bottles and jars, and cartons.</p>

	<p>Flexible plastics such as bread bags, plastic films etc will follow a year later. At the moment you need to take plastic film to a supermarket if this is to be recycled.</p> <p>This will mean that from 2027 most day-to-day items can be recycled via the recycling bin. Larger or specialist items will still need to go to a recycling centre.</p> <p>There will also be publicity about reducing the use of packaging generally and the options for the reuse of products and materials.</p>
Community Rail Partnership	<p>A community rail partnership (CRP) is going to be set up. A CRP is an association comprised of the railway industry, local councils and the voluntary sector, working together to try to increase passenger numbers by promoting economic development, community engagement and sustainable travel.</p> <p>Across the Greater Anglia region, there are nine CRPs currently in operation, but the Ipswich to Cambridge line, which runs through the district, is yet to benefit from the scheme.</p>
Flooding	<p>All those who registered and were entitled received the initial recovery grant of £500 have now been processed.</p> <p>Residents have started to be contacted about the flood resilience grant of £5000.</p>

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