

District Councillor Report: Walsham Le Willows

February 2026

Devolution and local government reform – election cancellation	The County Council elections planned for May 2026 have been cancelled and we can assume there will never be any further County Council elections. So as predicted we have ended up in a position where the biggest change in local government in a generation will all be implemented with virtually no public involvement and with all elections over the period cancelled.
Community Nature Recovery Grants	Boosting biodiversity by funding nature in your neighbourhood Local groups are being urged to apply for new funding from Mid Suffolk District Council, designed to connect people with nature and restore natural habitats within communities. Mid Suffolk's new Community Nature Recovery Grant, which launched this week, offers up to £50k for projects that protect and expand wildlife corridors and habitats within the district – including tree planting, wildflower meadow creation, or other environmental initiatives to safeguard natural spaces for future generations. As well as boosting biodiversity by working in partnership with charities and organisations such as environmental groups, schools and town and parish councils, the scheme will help to restore natural ecosystems and create opportunities for residents to 'get back to nature'. To apply see https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/mid-suffolk-district-council-funding-1 There is a Launch Event on 4th March at The Mix, Stowmarket https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mid-suffolk-catchment-and-landscape-nature-recovery-grant-launch-tickets-1982290541371?aff=oddttdtcreator
Sewage sludge	Mid Suffolk District Council is calling for urgent action by the Government to tighten regulations governing the spreading of sewage sludge on agricultural land, citing serious concerns for public health, farming and the environment. Sewage sludge contains a mixture of harmful contaminants, including so-called "forever chemicals" (PFAS), microplastics, pharmaceuticals and hormone-disrupting substances – many of which are not regulated or routinely tested for under current legislation dating back to 1989.

	It follows growing concern in Suffolk after independent testing in late 2025 found water at a sewage sludge processing site near Wattisham air base, operated by contractors handling sludge from Thames Water, contained more than 170 times the recommended safe levels of ammonia, posing a serious threat to aquatic life in the area.
Veterans 'frustrated' and 'angry' with Trump comments	Green Party Mid Suffolk councillor James Patchett who served in Afghanistan as a sergeant in the 3 Army Air Corps and who now lives in Stowmarket has been outspoken in the press about Trump's remarks. Mr Patchett said : "Four hundred and fifty seven members of the United Kingdom's Armed Forces gave their lives in service during operations in Afghanistan, and thousands more sustained life-changing injuries . In light of this, the assertion that British personnel 'shied away' from the front lines is not only inaccurate but deeply regrettable."
Support for Ipswich to be City of Culture	Mid Suffolk Councillors unanimously agreed to support to Ipswich becoming the City of Culture in 2029 . The status is a competition run by the Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) every four years, with a £ 10 million prize. DanceEast is leading the development of Ipswich's 'Expression of Interest' for the 2029 City of Culture competition, with a deadline of 8 February, 2026. The government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport will then longlist up to eight bids, awarding each a grant of £60,000 to support them with developing and strengthening their full application over a three-to-four-month period from February until May/June 2026.
Young people and the arts	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, in collaboration with East Suffolk District Council and MENTA, have launched a brand-new initiative designed to ignite curiosity, confidence, and ambition in young people. Careeriosity is a dynamic series of workshops for young people aged 12–25 designed to open up the world of creative careers. It is targeted at young people who are interested in theatre, music, gaming, production or art. The aim is to give young people the chance to explore their passion, learn from professionals, and discover how creativity can lead to exciting job opportunities.
Mid Suffolk Magazine	The latest copy of the Mid Suffolk Magazine which highlights current work by Mid Suffolk District Council is about to be posted – electronic copy attached.