

Mid Suffolk Magazine

Spring 2026



Recycling revolution

Weekly food waste collections at the heart of improvements - Pages 8-10

INSIDE THIS EDITION

Bobby dazzler! New town centre venue hits bullseye

Page 3

Funding to enhance Mid Suffolk's wildlife and nature

Page 5

Free support to make homes and businesses energy efficient

Page 6



Helping you to recycle more than ever before

In our latest issue of Mid Suffolk Magazine, we outline the improvements coming to your household recycling collections later this year.

From June, you'll be able to recycle more from your doorstep than ever before, including food waste, glass and cartons - good news for you, and for the environment. Your food waste, for example, will be turned into a renewable energy source and fertiliser for farmers.

We cherish our green and naturally vibrant corner of the country, and inside

you'll also find out about Mid Suffolk District Council's work to protect and enhance our biodiversity and nature for future generations.

We also spotlight community projects we've supported across the district in the last year, and how we can help households and businesses to cut energy bills.

And it's a pleasure to pose a few questions to Jason from our REACT team, which helps to keep our district clean and tidy.

I hope you enjoy this latest issue, as we look ahead to spring in our beautiful district. A place we are proud to call home.

**Cllr Andy Mellen,
Mid Suffolk District
Council leader**

Contact us

Online - via our website www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

Phone - 0300 1234000 to be connected to any council service. Lines open 8.45am-5pm, Monday to Friday. On Tuesdays, our phone lines open at 10am.

To report an emergency repair, dangerous structure or homelessness outside opening hours, call 0808 168 7794

In person - our customer access point at 54 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket, is open 5 days a week.

- Mon - 9am-5pm
- Tues - 10am-5pm
- Wed - 9am-5pm
- Thurs - 9am-5pm
- Fri - 9am-4.30pm

Our new customer access point at Eye Library, alongside Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice, is open from 9.15am-12.30pm every Friday.

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www.instagram.com/midsuffolk

This magazine is distributed to every household in the Mid Suffolk district.

Would you like to offer feedback?
Email: communications@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

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Game on! Darts venue takes flight

Darts legend Bobby George joined local VIPs and dignitaries for the opening of new community darts venue, The Bull Room, in Stowmarket.

Business duo Stuart Huggins and Darren Moyes have opened the attraction in Tavern Street, featuring six bookable darts lanes, darts retail area and coaching space, at a time when the sport is booming.

It is the first new venture supported by the Stowmarket Town Centre Gateway Fund, an initiative by Mid Suffolk District Council, delivered with Stowmarket Town Council, to bring empty town centre units back into use.

Some £125k in matched funding was awarded to the venture, thanks to income from the council's investment in Gateway 14.

Stuart said: "Our vision is to be an accessible one-stop shop for anything darts related, offering facilities for hosting tournaments, community events, individual and team coaching and private functions."

Mid Suffolk's lead member for Stowmarket, Cllr Colin Lay, said: "We wanted the fund to bring new and exciting ventures to the town centre – this does exactly that."

For more details about the Stowmarket Town Centre Gateway Fund visit the council website.



New youth council

Young people in Mid Suffolk will be given 'a voice for change' with the creation of a new youth council.

Mid Suffolk District Council has agreed the initiative, which follows a recent Electoral Commission survey highlighting the disconnect between young people and politics. It aims to get young people involved and engaged with politics and help them shape their local communities.

Cllr Lucy Elkin, who proposed the idea, said: "We want to give more young people the tools, confidence and knowledge to use their voice for change."

There are hopes it will be established by September 2026.



Students taking action on waste

Our waste education officer, Sam, has been visiting local primary schools to run food waste reduction sessions for pupils.

One of those was Wilby Primary, pictured, where it was great to see the children so engaged and enthusiastic on the subject, with their eco committee putting a waste action plan in place to boost recycling rates and tackle lunch time waste.

Schools in Mid Suffolk which would like a free visit from our waste team should visit www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling-education

Get the support you are entitled to

Every year, over £24 billion in benefits go unclaimed across the UK. When money is tight, it can affect our health and wellbeing.

Mid Suffolk's cost-of-living team is here to help. We're working with local organisations so residents can get the support they need.

We're identifying households with lower incomes who may be missing out on support they're eligible for and helping them apply.

For example, we've been supporting residents with energy and housing costs.

We're also helping pensioners apply for Pension Credit and other support like Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, free TV licences, and Warm Homes Discount. On average, eligible pensioners have each received over £2,500.

If you get a letter, call or text from us, you can check with our customer service team to make sure it's real. To find out more, call us or scan the QR code.



How one local resident was supported:

"I got a letter and phone call from Mid Suffolk saying I might be eligible for Pension Credit. Citizens Advice helped me apply. I have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease so being cold is bad for my health, but I always worry about the cost of heating. Getting Pension Credit means I can keep my home warm without worrying."

Protecting our environment for the future



Nearly £2m will be spent by Mid Suffolk District Council over the next three years to accelerate work which enhances biodiversity and nature.

It is a major step towards reversing habitat loss, supporting wildlife across the district and increasing access to green spaces.

It includes the new Community Nature Recovery

Grant fund, open for applications to support local projects.

There will also be funding to restore ecosystems, create, enhance and protect wildlife corridors and habitats, and expand tree and wildflower planting.

Cllr Daniel Pratt, lead member for nature recovery, said: “The critical role of biodiversity to the healthy functioning of our ecosystems, wellbeing, economy, and wider environmental resilience is

increasingly well understood and acknowledged.

“This is a bold and ambitious investment that gives us the resources to make a real difference and deliver great benefits to our residents and communities.

“This is about safeguarding Mid Suffolk’s environment for future generations.”

For details of funding opportunities scan the QR code to visit our website.



Nature haven secured

Mid Suffolk District Council has acquired a 62-acre site near Thorndon (pictured) to unlock its potential for biodiversity enhancement, habitat restoration, and improved flood resilience.

The land is already rich in flora and fauna, but further plans could include habitat improvements - such as

enhancing wet grassland and grazing marshes, pond habitats, lowland meadows and hedgerows, and deciduous woodland.

The council is working closely with the community on a management plan. Public access arrangements will not change while this is developed.

Picture credit: Savills/Lacy Scott & Knight

Free support to keep your home warm and cut bills

Did you know that nearly 75% of homes in Mid Suffolk have poor energy efficiency, with EPC ratings below C?

This means they are harder to keep warm, produce more carbon emissions, and energy bills are higher.

We're here to change that. Mid Suffolk District Council is making it easier for you to access the help you need to make your home warmer and save energy and costs.

Launching this spring, our new REACH team will be here to guide you through the next steps and explore the possibilities for your home. We'll offer advice and support, connecting you with schemes and funding that fit your needs. By working in partnership with local and national organisations, we aim to remove barriers and make it easier for you to take action.

Local options for support include our Cosy Homes initiative and Warm Homes

Suffolk, both offering support for eligible households, with some pre-eligible postcodes in Stowmarket for Warm Homes Suffolk.

Cllr Tim Weller, cabinet member for environment, culture and wellbeing, said: "This new team mobilises officers and community champions to raise awareness and accelerate uptake of energy-saving actions and funding."

Details will be available on Mid Suffolk's website when the team launches. In the meantime, find out more about Cosy Homes eligibility and how to apply, by scanning the QR code or call us. For details about Warm Homes Suffolk, visit www.warmhomessuffolk.org or call 03456 037686



'Work was done perfectly'

Chris and Maggie, from Stowmarket, have seen big improvements after joining Mid Suffolk's Cosy Homes Plus scheme. Their home received cavity wall and loft insulation, mechanical ventilation in the kitchen and bathroom, and five solar panels free of charge.

"The work was done perfectly and we're already noticing a difference," said Maggie. Chris added, "The process was simple, the equipment is good, and the contractors were punctual, friendly, and tidy. We're very pleased with the system."

Solar for Business

Businesses can now reduce their carbon emissions and receive cheaper energy by signing up to have solar panels on their premises for no upfront costs. To find out more about how Mid Suffolk District Council can help, visit: www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/solar-for-business

Skills and innovation centre to open in June

The state-of-the-art Stowmarket Innovation Gateway is set to open at Gateway 14 in June.

Mid Suffolk District Council's development will provide office space for high growth start-ups, collaboration and innovation spaces, meeting rooms and a café. The centre will also provide exciting new training opportunities for people.

Cllr Richard Winch, cabinet member for housing and property at Mid Suffolk District Council, said: "This is going to be a fantastic facility, which will not just attract and support innovative businesses and entrepreneurs, it will provide a talent pipeline that allow firms to innovate and grow."

For more details about the £18million development –



The topping out ceremony on the centre's bio-solar roof

which will be highly sustainable and deliver significant energy and carbon savings - scan the QR code.



New 3G pitch will be boost for local sport

A new 3G football pitch is set to open this spring after Mid Suffolk District Council and Stowmarket High School secured 51% of the costs through the Football Foundation.

The pitch is located at the high school, pictured, but will also be made available for community use.

It will feature cork infill as part of research into sustainable pitch systems.

Cllr Tim Weller, cabinet member for environment, culture, and wellbeing, said: "This is going to be such a fantastic community facility and one that I am hoping can be utilised by sports teams and enjoyed by residents for many years to come."

This project forms part of the council's wider sports and wellbeing strategy, which has already delivered a trim trail, cricket nets, and upgraded grass pitches at Chilton



Fields, with a mini-athletics track and sports pavilion also planned.

The rest of the funding for the 3G pitch comes from Section 106 developer contributions.

Weekly food waste collections herald a recycling revolution



We've collected recycling from your home for more than 20 years. But now, as part of nationwide changes, we can significantly improve services. You'll soon be able to recycle more than ever before – better for you, better for the environment! New weekly food waste collections are at the heart of this.

Why do you want to collect food waste separately?

Every year in Suffolk, we throw over 50,000 tonnes of food into our rubbish bins – not just leftovers, but lots of other things such as fruit and veg peelings, meat, and out of date food. But we can now put this to good use.

What food waste will I be able to recycle?

All of the things mentioned above, plus items like fish and bones (cooked or uncooked), coffee grounds and teabags, egg shells, cheese, salad and mouldy food. Check out the graphic on page 9.

What containers will I receive?

You will get two food waste containers. One will be a lockable 23 litre food waste bin (39cm high) to leave outside for collection.

The other is a smaller 5 litre caddy (21cm high) for use in the kitchen.

What will happen to my food waste?

It will be taken to a facility in Suffolk and converted into biogas (a renewable energy source) and a nutrient-rich biofertiliser (to spread on farmers' fields across East Anglia).

But food waste collections are not the only improvement...

- ▶ From June, existing recycling collections will also accept glass bottles and jars, drinks cartons and a wider range of plastics, including bags and films.
- ▶ There will be a new, separate bin and collection for paper and card.

Why will paper and card be collected separately? New government policy requires all councils to do this. When paper and card

are collected along with items like glass and plastics, they can get damaged or contaminated. Keeping them separate means they are recycled more effectively and have a higher value.

What collections will I have?

Households will be provided with four collection services as standard:

- a weekly food waste collection
- a three-weekly refuse (general rubbish) collection
- a three-weekly recycling collection for glass, plastics, metal and cartons
- a three-weekly paper and card collection

When will I receive the additional bin and food waste caddies?

The rollout of new bins begins in Mid Suffolk at the end of February and is expected to take until the end of April.

Collections olution

From June 2026, you'll be able to recycle more than ever before in your household collections.

This is what it means for you

You'll receive the two food waste containers, and most households will receive one extra recycling bin.

This means you will have your existing green-lidded bin for paper and card. Plus, a blue-lidded bin for glass, plastics, metal and cartons.

What should I do with my new bin and food waste caddies?

Don't use them yet, simply store them somewhere safe. We'll let you know when to start using them.

What if I don't have room for extra bins?

As we currently do, we will work with residents to look at alternative solutions, such as using smaller bins, or providing sacks instead, where there is a genuine issue over space.

When these changes happen, why will you be emptying refuse bins every three weeks rather than fortnightly?

Nearly 60% of waste put in refuse (general rubbish) bins could be recycled instead. Eg. via the food waste and recycling collections. The bin will not fill up as quickly and will need emptying

What will go into each bin from June 2026

Paper & Card		 Cardboard  Books	 Paper  Shredded Paper
Containers		 Glass bottles & jars  Cartons	 Metal food & drinks cans  Plastic pots, tubs, trays, film & bottles
Food Waste		 Plate scrapings  Fish (inc bones)  Tea bags & coffee grounds	 Meat (inc bones)  Fruit & veg  Breads  Dairy
General Rubbish		 Soiled fast food containers  Nappies  Bagged animal waste	 Bagged vacuum contents  Other non recyclable waste

less often. And with food collected separately (and weekly), your refuse bin should be less smelly.

What if a three-weekly refuse collection will cause me difficulties?

We understand that the change to a three-weekly refuse collection may

be concerning for some households, such as those with larger families or medical requirements. Households may be eligible for extra bin capacity, and our waste services team will be happy to discuss any concerns.

Continued on page 10...



Will garden waste collections be changing?

No. Garden waste (brown bin) collections will remain a separate, optional, and charged for service, with collections continuing fortnightly.

Will my collection day change?

We try to avoid changing collection days wherever possible. However, it is sometimes necessary to do so due to service demands, such as new housing developments.

For most addresses, the food waste bin will be emptied weekly on the same day as your refuse/recycling collection day. The food waste will be collected by separate, dedicated trucks.

What about waste collections from flats?

We are reviewing bin provision for all flats/communal areas, as well as working with landlords and management companies. This will ensure that sufficient bins are in place ready for when the new collection services start.

Where can I find more information?

More information, including FAQs, can be found by visiting www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/future-changes-to-bin-collections. We will continue to share updates as we get closer to the rollout on our website, social media pages and in the local press. Households will also be posted information directly too.

Bin Collection Calendar

Collection Type	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Refuse general rubbish			
Recycling glass, plastics, metal and cartons			
Paper and Card			
Food Waste			

Visit our website for more info. If you still have any concerns relating to the upcoming changes, please scan the QR code to let us know.





Tenants help shape future

We are ensuring our tenants have a say about how we deliver housing services – and can effect real change and improvements.

If you are a council tenant or leaseholder, you can help shape our services by being part of our Tenant Board.

Meeting once a month, our Tenant Board holds our performance as a housing provider to account and helps to organise and oversee improvement projects based on what tenants tell us is important to them.

Find out more, including how to get involved, on our website.

£2m to boost energy efficiency in social housing

Mid Suffolk District Council has committed over £2m to make more of its socially rented homes energy efficient by 2030.

The initiative, supported by a £1m grant from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and match-funded through the council's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, targets the district's properties which do not meet EPC C rating.

The first phase has seen around 50 homes fitted with energy-saving measures, including loft and cavity wall insulation, new windows, mechanical ventilation, air-source heat pumps, and solar panels.

These improvements aim to cut carbon emissions and offer tenants warmer and more energy-efficient homes.

A further 84 homes are scheduled for upgrades in the next funding wave, reinforcing the council's commitment to tackling climate change and reducing household energy costs.



Plan ahead

Emergencies can strike suddenly, from severe weather to power cuts. We encourage households to consider a few simple steps to help you stay safe and reduce disruption.

Understand local risks and sign up for relevant alerts - eg. flood alerts. Your local town or parish council may have an emergency plan.

If you need extra support or additional care, you may be able to join your utility providers' Priority Services Register - visit: the-psr.co.uk

Make a plan: know what you and your family will do if there is a fire, flood or power cut.

Prepare your home: test smoke alarms regularly and know how to turn off gas, electricity and water.

Stay connected: share contact details with neighbours, support those who may need extra help.

Make an emergency kit: include a torch, power bank, first aid supplies, water and non perishable food.

Visit the government's website for more tips.



Museum work progresses

Major conservation work is under way on the Grade II* listed medieval barn at the Food Museum in Stowmarket - part of a £5.67m transformation project at the site.

The 13th-century barn, Stowmarket's oldest secular building, features massive timber frames that have been repaired and adapted over centuries.

The conservation focuses on restoring this historic structure, including repairing gaps in its tiled roof.

The project has been made possible thanks to a £1m grant from Mid Suffolk District Council and £3.95m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The barn restoration aims for completion this spring, becoming a centrepiece of the museum's food production story and ready to hold the museum's popular Beer Festival in July.



Mid Suffolk Disability Forum

The forum is a resident-led group which amplifies the voices of disabled people, their families, and local organisations to shape positive change.

It has recently developed an action plan focusing on key priorities:

- improving access to shops, leisure, and sports
- affordable and inclusive transport
- fully accessible council services
- embedding inclusion in housing, planning, employment, green spaces, and co-produced services.

It meets quarterly at accessible venues such as the Salvation Army Centre in Stowmarket or online via Zoom.

Membership is free and meetings are open to disabled Mid Suffolk residents and carers, local disability organisations, council and town/parish council representatives.

By joining, you can improve accessibility across the district, and build an inclusive Mid Suffolk for all.

To find out more, call 0300 1234 000 option 7, or visit www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/mid-suffolk-disability-forum



Behind the scenes with our REACT team

Our new street cleaning taskforce hit the streets of Mid Suffolk last year. The two-strong REACT team are 'first responders' to reactive cleansing incidents such as fly tipping, littering and graffiti, and are easy to spot in their special REACT van. We posed a few questions to team member Jason to find out more about their work.

How does your work impact the way people experience our district?

The works we do help improve the appearance and

even safety or access of a certain area, and people come up to thank us.

What part of your job makes you feel most proud at the end of the day?

I am proud that my work is improving the public's view of our council services, especially when we get personal thanks or complete works that have made a noticeable difference to an area.

What's one thing people could do to help you focus your time on the biggest issues?

Being responsible for their litter would be the most important thing, so we can focus our time as a service on the bigger issues.

That's not to say that litter isn't a big issue, but it is definitely time consuming – time we could divert to jobs with more impact and which noticeably improve an area.

What's one job you've done which had the most dramatic impact?

There's many! If I had to choose one, it would be a footpath that I cut back and widened in Woolpit (pictured below). An elderly disabled lady thanked me after, as the pathway was something that had affected her safety due to her walker getting caught in vegetation and brambles/ nettles catching her legs.

Do you have a favourite location to work and why?

I quite enjoy working in Eye. It's a beautiful little town with a rich history.

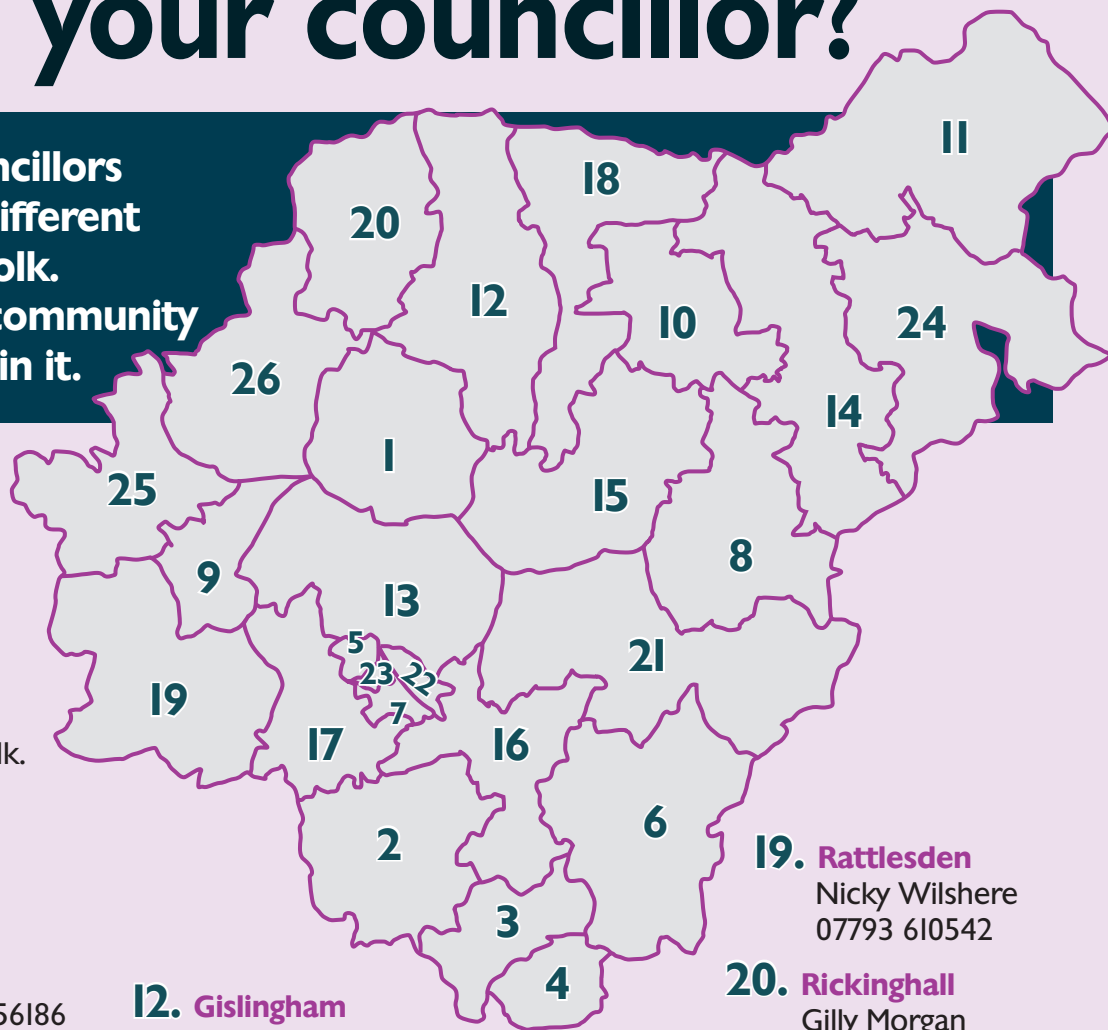
How do people report issues to REACT?

Mostly people report issues to us via our website (see the QR code below). However, I like the idea of an app, so this may be something we consider in future, so jobs come in more directly.



Who is your councillor?

There are 34 councillors representing 26 different wards in Mid Suffolk. They serve their community and people living in it.



1. Bacton

Andrew Mellen
07955 434435

2. Battisford & Ringshall

Dr Daniel Pratt
daniel.pratt@midsuffolk.gov.uk

3. Blakenham

Adrienne Marriott
07928 512583

4. Bramford

James Caston 07548 156186

5. Chilton

Lorraine Baker 07928 512580
Terence Carter 07548 153770

6. Claydon & Barham

David Penny 07761 319157
John Whitehead 01449 760521

7. Combs Ford

Miles Row 07928 512582
Keith Scarff 01449 770966

8. Debenham

Teresa Davis 07928 512588

9. Elmswell & Woolpit

Sarah Mansel 07860 829517
Jen Overett 07928 512591

10. Eye

Lucy Elkin 07928 512590

11. Fressingfield

Lavinia Hadingham
07860 829499

12. Gislegham

Rowland Warboys
07484 186121

13. Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden

Agnes Watson 07599 828819
Janet Pearson 07928 512592

14. Hoxne & Worlingworth

Matthew Hicks
07824 474741

15. Mendlesham

Andrew Stringer
07774 199061

16. Needham Market

Terry Lawrence 07928 512599
Dr Ross Piper 07928 512581

17. Onehouse

John Matthissen
07976 308128

18. Palgrave

Tim Weller 07928 512586

19. Rattlesden

Nicky Wilshire
07793 610542

20. Rickinghall

Gilly Morgan
07928 512578

21. Stonham

Nicholas Hardingham
07928 512584

22. Stow Thorney

Colin Lay 07928 512595
James Patchett 07928 512587

23. St Peter's

Ollie Walters 07514 951199

24. Stradbroke & Laxfield

Anders Linder
07928 512585

25. Thurston

David Bradbury 07514 951188
Harry Richardson
07842 322913

26. Walsham le Willows

Richard Winch
07931 709486

For more information, visit our website



Funding the future of our communities

We have many funding opportunities in Mid Suffolk open to the likes of parish councils, charities, voluntary groups, sports clubs and community organisations. These include:

- Gateway 14 Community Benefit Fund - Up to £5,000 for projects within 5 miles of Gateway 14.
- Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund - £20,000 - £250,000 for sports facility upgrades outside Stowmarket.
- Progress Power Community Benefit Fund - Up to £10,000 for projects in Eye, Mellis, Thrandeston, Yaxley, Brome & Oakley.
- Eye Wind Turbines Fund - Environmental projects within 10km of Mid Suffolk Business Park (amount varies).
- Locality Awards - Small-scale projects funded via district councillors (£10,000 annual budget per councillor).
- Sustainable Communities Food Fund - £250 - £5,000 for community food initiatives.
- Port One Legacy Biodiversity Enhancement Fund - Up to £3,750 for biodiversity projects in Barham, Bramford, Claydon, Great & Little Blakenham.
- Pride in Your Place - £250 - £5,000 for area improvements and heritage projects.



Our long-standing partnership with the Rural Coffee Caravan recently saw a £10,000 grant from the Community Development Fund awarded to the organisation.

- Mid Suffolk Rural Support Fund - to revitalise rural high streets, improve shop fronts, improve infrastructure, protect community assets, also supporting markets, food initiatives, arts and sustainable travel.
- Community Infrastructure Levy - up to £100k to make capital improvements to community facilities.



The Mid Suffolk Sports Infrastructure Fund helped Walsham Le Willows Sports Club install a new digital scoreboard.



To find out more details, including eligibility and how to apply, visit our community funding webpage.



Credit:
Ben Pooley

Kick off for 15 local projects

When homes are built in Mid Suffolk, developers must pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to Mid Suffolk District Council – which we reinvest back into our communities.

More than 100 bids for funding, totally £24.5m, have been approved in recent years to help infrastructure keep pace with housing growth.

In the last 12 months, here are 16 ways we have helped local towns and villages with CIL funds:

£100k for a new stand at Needham FC, opened by Ipswich manager Kieran McKenna (pictured)

£3m for a new footpath and cycleway linking Elmswell and Woolpit

£33k for new heating and lighting at Rattlesden Church

£100k for improvements at the Food Museum

£4.8m to expand Stowmarket High School, creating hundreds of new places

£93k to upgrade Fen View play area, Thorndon

£55k to upgrade a children's playground in Coddanham

£14k for an upgraded pathway in Debenham

£1.6m towards a new sports pavilion at Chilton Fields, Stowmarket

£517k to develop the Thurston rail crossing project

£100k to redevelop Stowmarket recreation ground play area

£51k to upgrade the Crown Mill play area, Elmswell

£30k for new heating at Debenham Church

£28k to upgrade Old Newton Village Hall toilets

£20k for a Gosbeck community village hall solar project

Plus **£1.45m** for town and parish councils to spend on local projects as they see fit.