

District Councillor Report: Walsham Le Willows

July 2026

Better recycling	The new recycling regime came into force in June 2026 for the whole of Suffolk. There have inevitably been a lot of issues, but most problems are getting resolved. There was a real challenge for the crews working in the extreme heat. I am not aware of any outstanding issues with residents not having their new bins and I have followed up any specific queries. The 16 Food Waste collection rounds picked up 162 tonnes of food waste across both districts. A 6% increase on the previous week. Any issues please email recycling@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk and copy me in.
Joint Local Plan scoping	Babergh and Mid Suffolk district councils launched a scoping consultation on Friday, to obtain input from businesses, community groups, stakeholders and members of the public on their new Joint Local Plan. The plan serves as an important planning document that will guide decisions on housing, jobs, infrastructure, town centres, the environment, transport and community facilities across both districts. To help determine what form the plan takes, the consultation is seeking people's views on the key issues affecting their area. No decisions are being made about specific development sites at this stage. https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/joint-local-plan-scoping-consultation
Housing inspection	Mid Suffolk had a detailed inspection of its housing service by the Social Housing Regulator. Details of the report will be issued in September.
Local Government Reform	There is still a lot of noise around this process. Until the Statutory Instrument is laid before parliament that will likely continue. Mid Suffolk District Council is focused on the delivery of services and supporting businesses and communities who are based in Mid Suffolk. Where any activities are required to prepare for possible new authorities we are proactively supporting this as we need to be mindful that we need to be as prepared as possible.
New nature reserve near Needham Market	A new nature reserve could soon become a reality thanks to a £50,000 funding boost from Mid Suffolk District Council via its Community Nature Recovery Grant. Chalkeith Conservation Ltd will oversee the purchase of a 20 acre site in

	Needham Market. Located off Chalkeith Road and Barking Road, the land will be managed long- term as a protected reserve, preserving a highly biodiverse habitat that has become scarce in the UK. Ecological surveys have identified numerous protected and endangered species on the site.
£45m investment in Gateway 14	Assan Panels a Turkish company has invested £45m on a new facility at Gateway 14. The building has been built using the same insulated sandwich panels it will be making at the giant Freeport East site at Gateway 14. This is a further company building high tech sustainable building materials locating in our district.
Maintenance work at Leisure Centres	A £1.2m maintenance programme at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centres will take place this summer at Stowmarket and Stradbroke. There will be work to the roofs, external lighting upgrades, and some changing room repairs. At Stowmarket the Leisure Centre will remain open throughout. At Stradbroke the pool will need to close for a couple of weeks over the summer.
Residents urged not to miss out on heating oil help	Mid Suffolk District Council has joined forces with local Citizens Advice services to reach residents who may be missing out on financial help with heating oil. The councils are now writing to residents who heat their homes with oil and may be eligible for help but have not yet accessed it. Heating oil support can be accessed locally through Suffolk County Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF), which replaced the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme on 1 April 2026. Residents struggling with essential costs or heating oil may be eligible for a crisis payment or a specific heating oil payment.
Strike action in Council Housing building services	More than 1,000 maintenance and repair workers for councils around the UK went on strike on June 17 18, 23 and 24 as part of a national dispute over pay and conditions. Those taking part are employed at Bristol, Southwark, Stoke - on - Trent, Newham, Leeds and Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils.
Locality grants	The locality grants for the following have been sent off awaiting final processing. Footpath maintenance permissive paths - £2620 Footpath signage and no cycling signage - £822.50