**Upper Gipping Division**

**Suffolk** **County Council**

**Mobile: 07774199061**

**Email:andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk**

# **Parish Report – March 2022**

# **Councillor: Andrew Stringer**

**Biodiversity Recommendations**

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county’s natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land by 2030. Our Group had a major influence in providing recommendations to SCC which are now a part of the Council’s ambitions moving forward to enhance biodiversity. Examples include planting more hedgerows, improving highway trees, and developing nature-based flood management solutions. For more information, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/councils-commitment-to-further-enhancing-suffolks-natural-environment>

**Changes to Highway Code**

Several new changes to the Highway Code are now in force as of the 29th of January. According to The Department for Transport (DfT) the new regulations are about recognising and protecting the most vulnerable road users and making the highway safer for everyone. Suffolk Roadsafe’s Quiz helps illustrate the changes that are necessary to know and includes a link to further information - <https://www.quiz-maker.com/QG20TF8NL>. For more Government information on the changes you need to know, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

**Devolution Deal**

The Government published its White Paper on Levelling-Up, within which it has agreed that Suffolk will be one of nine initial ‘County Deals’ up for negotiation. A new deal will potentially give local leaders more powers to make decisions for their communities for the first time. Our Group welcomes the idea of bringing more power to the communities of Suffolk. However, we are concerned about a potential Mayoral position created in Suffolk and the effect this may have on marginalising districts etc in Suffolk.

**Full Council Budget Meeting**

County Councillors met on the 17th of February to debate and vote on the Council’s budget for 2022-23. Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as an innovative project to reduce the energy bills of those most vulnerable, considering the current energy and cost of living crisis. Both ideas were rejected by the Conservatives, but our Group will continue to champion more investment into our social care and green technology. For more information on Suffolk GLI’s Budget amendment, visit: <https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(17-02-2022),%20County%20Council>

**Warmer Homes Suffolk**

Suffolk residents who are struggling to keep their homes warm can contact a new project, named ‘Warm Homes Suffolk’, which offers funding and free advice. The project can offer expert advice on reducing energy bills, energy usage and identify benefits that residents may be entitled to, to help keep their homes warm. Visit: [www.warmhomessuffolk.org](http://www.warmhomessuffolk.org).

**Council links to Gazprom**

Back in 2017, Suffolk County Council, outsourced its energy procurement to “Vertas” an SCC wholly owned but independent company. The energy deal Suffolk County Council funds has included buying gas from Gazprom, This unfortunate position has been pointed out to SCC, and in the last few days we have sought to extricate SCC from this contract, to enable us to no longer indirectly fund the war currently raging in Ukraine.

**Local Highways Matters**

Rights of way officer, we have had significant delays in dealing with rights of way reports recently, this has been mainly due to our local officer moving on to another career, we do now at last have an officer in place, is name is Ken Larcombe, and the backlog of issues are now at last being addressed, if there are any more outstanding issues please let me know.

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