

District Councillor Report: Andy Mellen - Bacton ward

Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone

February 2024

Flooding	<p>Another week of heavy rain has brought flooding back to several areas. I have been working with the community engineer to identify problem areas and some have been solved – but new problems have arisen. The county council is focusing efforts where flooding has entered properties. All landowners have riparian duties to keep watercourses, pipes etc on their land clear of obstruction – this includes gardens as well as farmland.</p>
MSDC Plan	<p>At the January Council meeting, the new priorities for Mid Suffolk District Council were agreed. There was extensive consultation to ensure a wide range of views were considered. The core of the plan is putting environmental and social responsibilities at the heart of everything we do, “helping to create thriving and resilient communities in Mid Suffolk”. This encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing and infrastructure• Resilience• Community wellbeing; and• Environmental sustainability. <p>A key principle is to work collaboratively with communities.</p>
MSDC 2024/25 Budget	<p>At Mid Suffolk’s cabinet and council meetings this month, the draft budget for 2024/25 will be discussed, and hopefully agreed. This includes a 2% increase in Mid Suffolk’s proportion of the council tax, to ensure financial stability for day-to-day services in the wake of shrinking government grants.</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">• Bringing disused land back into use for amenity or other uses• Land for nature and to meet Biodiversity Net Gain• Regeneration of Stowmarket town centre and other areas• New foot/cycle paths to improve connectivity. <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%). Many tenants receive housing benefit or universal credit and due to recent increases in the rent portion of this, the majority of tenants will not</p>
Gateway 14	<p>The proposed Green Skills and Innovation Centre business plan was approved by Council, subject to funding from Freeport East.</p>
Flooding	<p>The Council agreed a motion to support communities on flooding and to help with emergency plans.</p> <p>In Debenham a community meeting was held, organised by an MSDC Councillor, attended by the Environment Agency, Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council amongst others. From this, various initiatives are now underway.</p>
Locality Award	<p>I have now allocated all the funding from my 2023/24 locality pot – a full list of projects will be reported to annual parish meetings – however there is still some funds available in SCC locality</p>
Former Bacton Middle School site	<p>We are still waiting for a date when this will come before the planning committee</p>

Cllr Andy Mellen

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