

# District Councillor Report: Bacton Ward – June 2023

Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe and Wyverstone

Annual Council meeting	At the Annual Council Meeting held on 22 <sup>nd</sup> May, the 24 Green Party councillors elected on the 4 <sup>th</sup> May officially became the administration at Mid Suffolk. I was elected leader, and in my first speech outlined our initial priorities to lead and work with other bodies to address the challenges faced by our communities, cost of living, affordable homes, local services, public transport and climate change. There will be initially a cabinet of 6 councillors. Cllr Rowland Warboys was elected as Chair of the Council, with Cllr Dan Pratt as Vice-chair.
Council priorities and programme	The new cabinet and administration are working through our priorities with senior officers in order to produce a programme of work – some short-term, others medium and long-term projects. We want to deliver the council's services to a high standard and also have cross-cutting themes of environment, biodiversity and social justice applying to all that the council does.
Charity support	The outgoing Chair, Cllr James Caston raised over £4k for his chosen charity – Stowmarket ASD Saturday clubs during the past year. Cllr Warboys' chosen charities for this year will be Street Forge Workshops in Thornham Magna and 'Beyond the Wall', a charity based in the Walled Garden at Thornham Estates.
Half Term activities	A number of activities for children and young people were organised for half term. These include family cooking sessions, fencing and dance classes, kids clubs. Children who receive free school meals were able to swim for free at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre. Details of all the activities are available on the website <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/whats-on/holiday-activities-fund/">https://www.babergh.gov.uk/communities/whats-on/holiday-activities-fund/</a>
Planning enforcement issues	There continues to be a steady trickle of enforcement issues related to the various development sites in Bacton. The planning enforcement team at MSDC now have a full complement of officers and I have found them much more responsive recently – any issues can be reported on the online form at <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/enforcement/report-it/">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/enforcement/report-it/</a>
Planning committee	Following the elections, we have reduced from two planning committee down to one, with a change to the schedule: The first daytime planning committee will be held on Wed 21 <sup>st</sup> June and then every 4 weeks. In between those main meetings provisional meetings will be scheduled for 17:30 on the intermediate fortnightly Wednesdays.
Locality grant awards	I have £7,350 available in Locality funding for this financial year. Parish and community groups who would like help with particular projects should get in touch with me directly to discuss any applications.

Cllr Andy Mellen

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