

District Councillor Report: Andrew Mellen, Bacton Ward (Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe & Wyverstone)

June 2025

Annual council meeting 15 th May	The annual council meeting of MSDC took place last month, with appointments to various roles confirmed for the next municipal year. This included the appointment of a LibDem, Cllr Keith Scarff as Chair of the council, and Cllr Lorraine Baker as Vice Chair. In addition, a new role was created, Cllr Dan Pratt was appointed Lead member for Nature Recovery to oversee the council's work in biodiversity etc.
Local government reorganisation	Two plans for Suffolk are being worked up: The County Council is promoting a single unitary council for the whole county. Alternatively, the district's and borough, working together, are seeking the views of residents to inform their choice of two or three unitaries. A survey has been released, which allows residents across Suffolk to voice their opinions and concerns. Project: Have Your Say on the Future of Local Government... Mid Suffolk District Council This shake up of local government across the country is something that the government has initiated, and local councils are being forced to do. However, it does present opportunities to align services and provide better, joined-up provision for residents – if designed right. Final submissions go into the government by the 26 th September – then we await the minister's decision.
Haughley, Stowupland & Wetherden by-election	This by-election is to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Councillor Rachel Eburne, deputy leader of the council. Polling day is Thursday 12 th June, and there are three candidates, Conservative, Green and Liberal Democrat. Whatever the result, it will not change the balance of power on the council, due to the Green majority.
Solar for business	A new pilot partnership is set to turn solar energy into savings for businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. Businesses can reduce their carbon emissions and save money on energy bills by signing up to have solar panels provided and installed on their premises, for free. Electricity generated by the panels is then sold to the business at a rate lower than their current tariff, helping to slash energy bills and improve their bottom line. Solar for Business has been running successfully in West Suffolk for nine years – helping more than a hundred companies to save a total of around £700,000 and 2,000 tonnes in harmful CO2 emissions per year. The initiative is now being extended, with businesses across Babergh and Mid Suffolk also able to sign up to the scheme.
Improving our council housing services	<p>To help further improve performance and tenant satisfaction, the councils have now launched their 'repairs pledges', reflecting what tenants say is more important to them, to help guide decisions and day-to-day activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timely appointments: ensuring appointments are prompt and convenient ➤ Communication: keeping tenants updated at every stage of their repair ➤ Tidiness: always leaving the work area clean and tidy – respecting their homes ➤ Right first time: The goal is to get the job done correctly the first time, every time. ➤ Respectful and friendly: ensuring our team members are courteous and respectful ➤ Good quality of work: taking pride in delivering high-quality workmanship on every repair

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Mid Suffolk Culture fund	Thanks to the new Mid Suffolk Culture Fund, nine organisations have received a share of £100,505 for projects that contribute toward Mid Suffolk's rich cultural scene. Recipients include DanceEast for its dementia support classes – encouraging those affected by the condition to share in the joy of dancing, as well as East Anglian Traditional Music Trust, who promote the region's musical roots through traditional instruments and dance. There's also an opportunity for the district's youngsters to discover a new passion, with grants given to the Stowmarket Culture Group for the 'Jubilant' youth summer arts festival, which involves 10 schools, and to ERD Connection for the 'Thrive and Flourish' youth theatre group, also in Stowmarket. Further funding has been awarded to the John Peel Centre and The Food Museum as part of their long-standing partnership with Mid Suffolk District Council, ensuring that these important hubs of art and creativity can continue to provide unique and exciting experiences in the future. Other organisations have also benefited from a contribution to their core costs, such as the Association of Suffolk Local Museums, Stowmarket Arts CIC and Suffolk Artlink, with each now able to appropriately recruit and resource in order to continue their work in the community.
Retirement Homes in Stowmarket	McCarthy Stone has submitted its bid to Mid Suffolk District Council to build 61 retirement living homes in Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket. The construction would follow the demolition of the site's existing buildings, which belonged to the former TruckEast head office before the expanding business relocated to a new site in 2022. If approved, a new three-storey building would accommodate 47 apartments and a further 14 two-bedroom bungalows. The development would include a communal homeowners lounge, a guest suite, reception area, refuse storage, mobility scooter storeroom and communal gardens.
Locality budget 2025/26	The next round of locality funding is available, so I am able to consider applications for grants to community organisations. The total amount per councillor has increased to £10,000. Full details available https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards

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