FINNINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes for the ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on
Tuesday 10th May 2022
in St. Bartholomew's Church, Finningham, starting at 7:30pm

Present: Cllr A**.** Kilbee, Cllr C. Winter, Cllr J. Miller, Cllr L. Charter, Cllr P. Trew

In attendance: Miss. N. Hill (outgoing Clerk), Miss J. Challis (new Clerk), DC & CC Cllr Mellen, Mr D. Aiken - Footpath Warden, and 2 members of the public.

22.27 To appoint the Chair of the Parish Council for the year 2022/2023 and sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office

The Clerk asked if there were any nominations. Cllr Charter nominated Cllr Kilbee which was seconded by Cllr Miller, and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Kilbee).
Cllr Kilbee signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed and signed by the Clerk.

22.28 To appoint the Vice Chair of the Parish Council for the year 2022/23 and sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Kilbee asked if there were any nominations. Cllr Charter nominated Cllr Winter which was seconded by Cllr Trew, and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr Winter).
Cllr Winter signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office which was witnessed and signed by the Clerk.

22.29 Visiting speakers

The Footpath Warden read out his report, a copy of which can be found as an addendum at the end of the minutes.
Cllr Mellen's DC and CC reports can be found as addendums at the end of the minutes.

22.30 Contribution by Members of the Public

A member of the public asked if there was an update on the development of Green Farmyard. Cllr Kilbee said it would be addressed in his Chairman's report, agenda item 9.

22.31 Apologies and approval of absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Black (working late) and Cllr Arthur (on holiday), and approved unanimously. Apologies were also received from Cllr Black for the meeting held on 12th April 2022 (working late) and approved unanimously.

22.32 Approve minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12th April 2022.

Cllr Charter asked for item 22.13 to be amended to state that 'the Emergency Plan prepared by Cllr Charter in May 2021 needs resending to councillors as a reminder for their further consideration/input'. Cllr Charter proposed approving the minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2022 as a true and correct record, taking into account the above amendment, which was seconded by Cllr Trew, and approved unanimously with one abstention (Cllr who was not present at the meeting). The Chairman then signed the minute book.

22.33 To receive any pecuniary or non-pecuniary declarations of interest from Members and any Gifts of Hospitality.

Cllr Trew declared a pecuniary interest against agenda item 28; DC/22/02033.
Cllr Miller declared a pecuniary interest against agenda item 28; DC/22/02242.

22.34 Matters arising from the meeting held on 12th April 2022.

None.

22.35 Chairman's Report

Apart from items on the Agenda, I have been pursuing the situation regarding the development of Green Farmyard.

As you know, I reported that the previous owner had sold the property last year but no further action had taken place. Speaking to the Architects who were involved with the initial planning application, I have discovered that the owner is now Poppyfields Developments Ltd., a new company incorporated in March 2021.
There are some documents shown under reference number DC/22/01785 on the MSDC Planning website. Although the original Architects have received instruction from the new owner, nothing much has happened recently. The application under this reference number is for Discharge of Conditions. The architect is surprised that no movement has been made on site to keep the Planning Permission up to date.
It seems that something is happening, albeit slowly.
I should like to thank you all for your support and assistance as members of the Council over the past year, even if it seems as though we are in a vacuum half the time and working for the benefit of the community without the residents knowing who we are or understanding what we do. I am hopeful that the proposed Information Booklet will go a long way to alter that mindset.
Finally, I wish Natalie well in the future and thank her once again for carrying out her duties as Parish Clerk so well.

22.36 Clerk's Report

MSDC cut the grass prior to the Flower Festival as requested but are yet to provide a cost to remove the grass cuttings.
The Parish Council's insurance provider has confirmed that the lighting of the beacon on Thursday 2nd June 2022 is covered for public liability by the policy, subject to a risk assessment being conducted which Cllr Trew is completing.
ACTION – Cllr Trew to send risk assessment to the Clerk for forwarding to the insurance provider.

22.37 To discuss MSDC's Community Governance Review

MSDC are carrying out a Community Governance Review of Parishes, Town Councils and Unparished areas. The deadline for submissions to the first stage of the review is Friday 27th May 2022.
After discussing councillors agreed unanimously that they do not wish to request any changes to the current parish arrangements.
ACTION – Clerk to respond to MSDC as above.

22.38 Update from the Village Footpath Map Working Group

The Footpath Warden said that he needs to liaise with Cllr Black to progress with the leaflets. Cllr Kilbee will arrange a meeting of the working party (Cllr black, Cllr Kilbee and the Footpath Warden).
ACTION – Cllr Kilbee to arrange meeting

8:00pm Cllr Mellen arrived.
Cllr Kilbee proposed returning to agenda item 3. Approved unanimously.

22.29 (Visiting Speakers)

Cllr Mellen read highlights from his DC and CC reports including the Government's White Paper on Levelling-up which will see Suffolk as one of 9 initial 'County Deals' up for negotiation.
Cllr Kilbee thanked Cllr Mellen for his reports.

22.39 To discuss flooding within the village.

There is no further update to Suffolk Highways case ref CR355552 regarding the flooding on Westhorpe Road.

22.40 To discuss the emergency plan.

Cllr Charter will update Version 1 of the Emergency Plan and forward to the Clerk to resend to councillors for their further consideration/input.
ACTION – Cllr Charter/Clerk

8:12pm a member of the public arrived

22.41 To discuss and approve an Annual Newsletter to everyone in the village.

The Annual Newsletter will not be ready in time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, so Cllr Kilbee said that the lack of time constraints now meant there was no reason to rush. He asked councillors and the Clerk to forward a photograph of themselves with a short autobiography to be included in the first newsletter. Councillors discussed what else should be included and agreed they would like to let residents know what the Council has been doing, and what the Council plans to do, as well as requesting input on what residents would like to see happen in the village. MSDC Infrastructure Team have confirmed that CIL funds can be used for the newsletter.
ACTION – Clerk/all councillors

22.42 To discuss the footpath from the crossroads to the green

Ongoing; SCC have said the work requires a minor works licence which will cost £1,000.00. This is not included in the quotation received from the contractor, which was believed to be inclusive of all costs. SCC would like to conduct a site visit prior to any works being started.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee to arrange site visit with SCC and the contractor.

22.43 To discuss and approve plans to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022.

Cllr Winter reported from a recent Friends of Finningham meeting, that FOF have plans to hold a picnic on the green on the Sunday afternoon. Residents will be invited to bring their own food and chairs/blankets, and live music is planned.

Cllr Kilbee will organise a village walk starting and ending on the green, prior to the lighting of the beacon on the Thursday evening. Residents will be able to collect their free commemorative mugs before the official lighting at 9:45pm.

The Suffolk Torch Procession will pass through the village on 24th May at approximately 11:40am.

The commemorative mugs approved at the April meeting have been ordered, and will be delivered to Cllr Trew in time for the Jubilee. The cost will be less than the £2,000.00 maximum spend approved at the April meeting, but the Clerk is awaiting the final invoice from the supplier.

The Clerk has applied for locality funding of £1,200.00 towards the costs of the mugs from Cllr Mellen.

Cllr Miller will arrange for the beacon to be installed in the agreed staked spot on the green, and the Clerk will ask MSDC if they can cut the grass on the green again before the Jubilee weekend.

ACTION – Cllr Kilbee/Cllr Miller/Clerk as above

22.44 To discuss and approve training on how to use the defib

Cllr Winter confirmed that training has been organised for a Saturday in the Church, and advertised in the Friends of Finningham newsletter.

22.45 Correspondence received

An email has been received from Westhorpe Parish Clerk regarding the 387 bus service to Stowmarket which is ceasing on 27th May 2022. They are requesting help for a resident who is now unable to get to work. Cllr Mellen said that he believes a neighbouring parish has been able to help with this one day a week. The Clerk asked councillors to please let her know if they knew anyone who might be able to help, or were aware of alternative transport services.

22.46 East Anglia Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) Consultation

The National Grid is proposing to reinforce the high-voltage electricity transmission network from Norwich Main substation in Norfolk, to Tilbury substation in Essex, by way of an overhead line of 50m high pylons. The proposed route passes to the east of Finningham. The current non-statutory public consultation runs until 16th June 2022.

There is a public information session being held by the National Grid in Palgrave on 14th May 2022, and BMSDC are holding an online Energy Developments information session on 23rd May 2022.

Councillors discussed the proposal raising their concerns over the environmental and socioeconomic implications. Cllr Kilbee said he will attend both the public information session and the BMSDC online session and encouraged other councillors to so as well. It was agreed to discuss the consultation further at the next meeting, and finalise the Council's response, prior to the 16th June deadline.

22.47 Walsham le Willows Food Bank donation request

A request for financial support has been received from Walsham le Willows Food Bank to help with the costs of food purchases and fuel for deliveries. After discussing Cllr Winter proposed a donation of £250; seconded by Cllr Charter, and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to advise Walsham le Willows Food Bank and organise payment of the donation

22.48 Adoption of the new Code of Conduct

In December 2020 the Local Government Association (LGA) approved its new Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020, with the aim for it to be adopted by all levels of local government. The main difference to the Suffolk Code of Conduct, is that it addresses disclosable pecuniary, and local non-pecuniary interests.

A copy of the new Code was prepared by the Clerk and sent to councillors prior to the meeting, along with a copy of the guidance notes provided by the LGA.

After discussing, adoption of the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 was proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Winter, and approved unanimously.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange for Code to be updated and published

22.49 To approve the comments made during the internal audit, completed by Mr A. Strickland
A copy of the comments were circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. Cllr Kilbee thanked the outgoing Clerk, Natalie Hill, for her work completing the accounts and arranging the internal audit. Cllr Kilbee proposed approval of the comments; seconded by Cllr Trew and approved unanimously.

8:49pm the Footpath Warden left the meeting

22.50 To approve the Annual Governance Statements for 2021/2022
Approval of the Annual Governance Statements for 2021/2022, and the Certificate of Exemption for Smaller Authorities, was proposed by Cllr Miller, seconded by Cllr Kilbee, and approved unanimously.
ACTION – N. Hill to submit forms

22.51 To approve the Accounting Statements for 2021/22
Approval of the Accounting Statements for 2021/22 was proposed by Cllr Trew, seconded by Cllr Charter, and approved unanimously.

22.52 To discuss frequency of SALC payroll services
SALC currently run the payroll for the council on a quarterly basis at an annual cost of £38 plus VAT. They have advised that a bimonthly service would be £45, and monthly £90 (both plus VAT). Alternatively the council could use the free HMRC compliant RTI SAGE payroll software, which would enable the payroll to be run monthly at no cost.
After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously to start using the RTI SAGE payroll software. Natalie Hill will be officially leaving the council on 31st May 2022, so the Clerk will ask SALC to complete the payroll to that date and, start using the RTI SAGE software from 1st June 2022.
ACTION – Clerk as above

22.53 Finance
a. RFO's report (bank balance, receipts, and payments)

Balances as of 29/04/2022
Community Bank Account
Balance as of 29 April 2022: £26,929.30
Receipts (since 29 March 2022): £4,465.12
Payments (since 25th Feb 2022): £127.40
Deposit Account
Balance as of 29 April 2022: £3,330.18

General funds: £14,131.51
Reserves (1/2 of precept & election costs): £4,721.00
Restricted funds (CIL & grants not spent): £11,406.97

b. Requests for payment
Clerk expenses (J. Challis mileage & stamps) - £42.20
N. Hill expenses (mileage & various 09/03/22-10/05/22) - £24.32
T. Kilbee expenses (oil) - £25.38
SCC (50% of Finningham/Gislingham sign posts) – £836.82
Finningham PCC (internal audit fee) - £30.00
Finningham PCC (use of Church for PC meetings 21/22) – £135.00
TOTAL payments - £1,093.72

Cllr Charter proposed authorisation of the above payments; seconded by Cllr Kilbee, and approved unanimously.
Cllr Kilbee and Cllr Winter signed cheques for the above approved payments.

22.54 Planning
a.To consider applications.

9:00pm Cllr Trew left the meeting room having previously declared a pecuniary interest against planning application DC/22/02033.

DC/22/02033 – Application for Planning Permission. Householder Application – Erection of garage with office above. Conversion of chimney with internal wood burner flue. Riverside, Gislingham Road, Finningham, Suffolk, IP14 4HY
After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they have no objection to this application.

9:03pm Cllr Trew re-joined the meeting

9:04pm Cllr Miller left the meeting room having previously declared a pecuniary interest against planning application DC/22/02242.

DC/22/02242 – Application for Planning Permission. Full Application – Erection of agricultural building for the drying, cleaning and storage of combinable crops, machinery, and agricultural inputs. Rob Hall, Walsham Road, Finningham, Suffolk, IP14 4JL.
After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they have no objection to this application.

9:05pm Cllr Miller re-joined the meeting.

DC/22/02300 – Application for Works to Tree(s) in a Conservation Area – Reduce 1No. Walnut Tree by 3m (T1). Fell 1No. Walnut Tree (T2). Reduce 1No. Conifer by 3m (T3). Orchard House, Gislingham Road, Finningham, Suffolk, IP14 4HT.
After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they have no comment against this application.

DC/22/02359 – Application to determine if Prior Approval is required for a Proposed: Erection, Extension or Alteration of a building for Agricultural or Forestry Use. Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended Schedule 2, Part 6 – Erection of a steel framed open dutch style barn with a corrugated roof to protect farm machinery and cropped hay. Mill Farm, Station Road, Finningham, Stowmarket, IP14 4TH.
This application was received after the agenda was published, and marked urgent; reply needed in 7 days.
After discussing, councillors agreed unanimously that they have no comment against this application.

ACTION – Clerk to add comments to MSDC Planning Portal as above.

None to consider.
b. Decisions & to consider planning matters coming forth.
APPROVED – DC/22/01587 – Discharge of Applications for DC/22/00382 – Condition 3 (Materials) – The Old House, Church Path, Finningham, Suffolk, IP14 4JD
GRANTED - DC/22/00906 – Erection of detached double garage with workshop over (following demolition of existing) – School House, Walsham Road, Finningham, Suffolk, IP14 4JF.

All planning applications received up to the date of the meeting will be discussed.

22.55 Questions to Chairman
None.

22.56 Items to be discussed at the next meeting and included in the June agenda.
None.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.11pm

Footpath Warden's Report

Well, we did have a very dry April, so our footpaths etc. have been in good condition, and as far as I have seen, all signs for p.r.o.w. are still standing!

Ref. Report 4357811 January 2018/ email 9th April 2022 regarding barriers at footbridge.

I have had a reply from Ken Larcombe (area rights of way officer, SCC) with regard to the footbridge across the tributary of the river Dove at Eastlands Lane.
In brief, he believed that due to funding, any remedial work or replacement may possibly be shelved for the time being.

I have since been in touch with Stuart (Hill?) of SCC Ipswich who had been forwarded my enquiry. He wished to ascertain ownership of the footbridge as there was no footpath shown in that position? I pointed out that according to my map 'Finningham 246 derived from the definitive map relevant date 03/04/1987' that footpath no. 11 did run alongside Eastlands Lane west of the road, connecting byway 22 to the C569 highway and access to bridleway 12, and that a diversion of footpath 11 at a later date, to take a route off Eastlands Lane east through the plantation, was further south than where the footbridge is sited, so I felt that the footbridge was originally placed as being on the footpath network, but without seeing the documentation leading to the re-routing of that footpath 11, we have to assume that the footbridge was deemed to be sitting in 'no man's land'.
If my understanding is correct after contact with these gentlemen, the footbridge will remain closed, and may be more securely closed off than at present with the temporary barriers.
I will forward any further information that I might receive.

Doug Aiken

District Councillors' Annual Report (2021/22) – Councillor Andy Mellen

Mid Suffolk District Council – Bacton Ward
(Bacton, Cotton, Finningham, Westhorpe & Wyverstone Parishes)

For Annual Parish Meetings Spring 2022

- **Governance**

The Council remain hung, with a Conservative administration. The Green party had a successful by-election result in Thurston Ward in February, retaining the seat. Many decisions are therefore being decided on the Chairman's casting vote and there has been limited collaborative working between the administration and the Green and Liberal Democrat opposition group.
Council meetings are now being held in person, but virtual platforms continue to be used for briefings and internal meetings. It is hoped that the Council will in future be able to hold 'hybrid' meetings where voting Council members need to be physically present at meetings, but some officers and members of the public will be able to make presentations and representations online.

- **Budget and investments**

Mid Suffolk's general fund budget continues to be in a healthy condition, and so there will be no raise in the district council's portion of the council tax. The council agreed the proposal from the Green and Liberal Democrat group to spend some of the Growth and Efficiency Fund to purchase 2 electric bus services to help residents get into Stowmarket, and support this service for a 2 year period. The Council's wholly-owned investment company CIFCO continues to provide revenue despite the value of the assets deteriorating.

- **Climate Change and Biodiversity**

The Council has recently adopted a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to encourage more residents to travel sustainably in the district. This plan lists various schemes across the district and prioritises these so that, where funding is available, improvements to footways and cycle paths can be made.
As part of the Tree and Hedgerow planting scheme over 200 trees and around 2,500 hedgerow plants have been delivered to parishes. Over 250 trees were given to celebrate births during 2021 as part of the 'Tree for Life' scheme.
The construction of solar carports is well underway at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre and the new visitor centre at Needham Lake will open this summer – an eco-friendly building.
The waste collection lorries are now all operating on hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) instead of diesel, which should cut carbon emissions by 90%.
MSDC adopted a Net Zero Carbon Toolkit as technical guidance for both developers and homeowners to help reduce the carbon footprint in new and existing buildings.

- **Housing**

The Housing Revenue budget was agreed by full Council, and as the Government has lifted the rent cap, Council tenants will see a 4.1% increase in their rent. The HRA business plan is to be developed and will include a programme of improvements to existing Council house stock as well as building and acquiring dwellings.
Part of the housing development on the old HQ site in Needham Market has been completed and this included 3 new council homes, and a further 15 affordable homes were acquired across the district in 2021. Over 100 residents were prevented from becoming homeless and the Council provided 16 dedicated beds for Rough Sleepers courtesy of grant funding. As part of the response to the Ukraine crisis, MSDC officers will be carrying out housing checks on the properties which will be offered to Ukrainian refugees, once the applications have been processed by the Home Office.

- **Planning**

Following the inspector's examination of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local plan last autumn, the inspector and the two Councils have decided to proceed with a 2-part local plan. This will enable the important social, economic and environmental policies to be published in a Part 1 Joint Local Plan which will be adopted first, whilst the remaining work on spatial strategy matters and housing allocations will be addressed in a Part 2 Joint Local Plan. MSDC currently has over 9 years housing land supply (permissions granted or in the process).
Locally we have seen work commence on three of the large developments in Bacton, with three further sites close to starting. This will inevitably result in lots of disruption and HGV traffic in the area over the next few years. We aim to minimise this by Bacton parish council holding regular coordination meetings with all the developers, and including myself as District Councillor and Andrew Stringer as County Councillor.

- **Wellbeing**

The council adopted its first Wellbeing Strategy this year. A number of initiatives across the district took place during the year including Family Park Cooking session in Stowmarket, free Christmas Holiday activity sessions, Our Parks (free outdoor fitness sessions) in Stowmarket and the Active Schools programme.
Mid Suffolk District Council together with Suffolk County Council and Stowmarket Town Council supported the launch in July of the Chilton Fields parkrun held every Saturday morning.

- **Economy**

The Council continues to support the development of Gateway 14 business park which is now part of Freeport East. The business case has been agreed by Cabinet.
Almost 200 young people attended the Careeriosity event in Stowmarket at October half-term, focussing on jobs in STEM and cultural industries. The Council held its first Local Energy Showcase event, which attracted over 200 visitors and several local businesses. BMSDC's Virtual High Street project won a Gold IESE award.

- **Communities**

Almost £400,00 worth of grants were distributed to support the communities across the district.
I was pleased to be able to allocate locality grants to parish councils and community groups across the five villages. These included: support for the good neighbours scheme, garden club, Bacton bowls club, contribution toward sound equipment for Bacton PC, a new coffee machine for Cotton community café and support for various jubilee-related activities.
The next tranche of locality funding is now available and I welcome applications from any community group, in particular any who have not benefitted previously.

Mid Suffolk District Council information is available via www.midsuffolk.gov.uk or by phone **0300 123 4000**

I would like to thank all the Parish Councils for their work done throughout the year.

Andrew Mellen

Mid Suffolk District Councillor – Bacton Ward

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Annual Parish Report – 2021/22

Division: Thedwastre North

Councillor: Andy Mellen

Councillor contact details:
Mobile: 07790 992619
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Monday 18th April 2022

It is almost a year since I was elected to be your County Councillor in the May 2021 local elections. Since then I have sought to represent these communities to the best of my abilities. I have attended all Parish Council meetings unless a clash prevented it. I always try to find an answer to residents' queries, and continue to follow up on long-standing issues of concern. The subject that I get the most e-mails and phone calls about is Highways: potholes, flooding, signage, speed and safety. There is clearly a shortage of funding for Highways work at this time, which can cause an enormous amount of frustration for communities who want their problem resolved straight away. However, I am learning how to get things done, and with strategic use of my limited local highways budget I have been able to progress a few small projects.

Please do contact me if you have an issue where I can help.

May 2021 elections

At last year's elections, the Conservative gained a large majority on the County Council: 55 of the total 75 Councillors, so they continue to lead the Council. In total 9 Green Councillors were elected, and joined with 4 Liberal Democrats and 2 Independent Councillors to form the official opposition group (Green, Liberal Democrat & Independent, GLI). Our role is to scrutinise what the administration is doing, hold them to account and also bring forward ideas and motions of our own. Opposition members also sit on various committees: I myself am a member of the Scrutiny committee and the Constitutional working group.

Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined

Suffolk County Council voted in their budget for 2022-23 earlier this year. Our Group were concerned that the budget relied too heavily on transformation savings, and that the Conservative's did not increase the social care precept to the maximum amount allowed by Government.

The GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as putting forward 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 that can lower bills.

No Carbon Budget for Scrutiny

The Conservatives brought forward the first Carbon Budget for Suffolk, but it wasn't part of the main budget, so wasn't put through the Scrutiny process in the same way. The Carbon Budget is aimed to help us understand the level of emissions the Council are responsible for and helps to achieve the Council's ambition of being carbon-neutral by 2030. It is important the Carbon Budget is scrutinised, as there are many issues with data collection and performance measures that weren't

addressed. Our Group raised concerns about this and has been assured that this will form part of the general budget process for next year.

Levelling Up: A Devolution Deal for Suffolk?

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 in Suffolk.

Report into SEND Provision: Review & Recommendations

Suffolk County Council commissioned an independent review into Special Educational Needs and Disability provision. The report found severe failings in the delivery of Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plans for children, serious issues in communicating with parent/guardians, as well as an inefficient work environment within the service. The scrutiny committee have met since the report to listen to lead officers within the service and parents, debate necessary changes, and submit recommendations for improvement. This included extended training, newly appointed managerial posts, and new accountability structures to help deal with the issues outlined in the previous report.

Bus Back Better: Initiative from the Department for Transport (DfT)

The Bus Back Better scheme was launched this year, aimed at updating, expanding, and improving our bus services in Great Britain. The Cabinet at Suffolk County Council approved a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submitted to Government. All proposals of the BSIP that were passed by Cabinet can be viewed here: https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet

Unfortunately, in the last couple of weeks the DfT has announced its funding allocations, and Suffolk has not received any extra funding. Officers are now working out how the limited existing funding can be best deployed.

Biodiversity Recommendations to Enhance

Suffolk County Council will be doing more for the county's natural environment, as it confirmed 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

Sizewell C: Where are we now?

A final decision on going ahead with this project is expected this summer> Our Group has asked searching questions regarding this project, arguing that the environmental and socio-economic impacts on local communities are far too great. The Government announced their strategy to retain investors, by shifting the costs of Sizewell C onto consumers, in the form of a taxpayer subsidy known as a 'Regulated Asset Base' funding strategy. We have questioned this strategy, and strongly recommended that the Government reconsiders before it puts the burden of cost onto our local communities, and instead looks into investing in cleaner, cheaper, and quicker forms of renewable energy available to Suffolk. Suffolk County Council have announced their general support for Sizewell C but have taken up 'important concerns' to the Secretary of State.

New Investment in Drainage and Footway Infrastructure

The Cabinet approved £10m to replace broken pipes and new installations, as well as an additional £10m to increase the maintenance of selected footways in Suffolk.

Lorry Route Map Review in Suffolk: Interactive Map to be Published

Suffolk County Council undertook a review of recommended lorry routes across the county; the first major review of the network since 2011. Suffolk County Council invited parish and town councils to submit their views, and to provide up to three routes where they believe HGV traffic has the highest impact on their communities. The review will be completed in Spring 2022 and the County Council will publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For further information, please contact lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk

Local Electricity Bill: Suffolk GLI Motion Passed by Council

A motion submitted by our Group ask Suffolk County Council to support the Local Electricity Bill, which is a proposed Bill waiting to be debated in Parliament for its Second Reading, was passed unanimously by the Council. The Bill seeks to localise energy supply, making local electricity cheaper, more reliable, and community based. Details of the motion and Local Electricity Bill can be found here: https://powerforpeople.org.uk/local-electricity-bill-briefing-for-councillors