

County Councillor Report



Parish Councils, January 2025

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division. Tel. 07714-597980 Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk

Buses Routes 70 and 73/ 73A – The Save Our Buses Task Force Group along with SCC and Simonds Buses has been successful in their applications for Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Funding for services 73 and 73A. The current route 70 and 73 timetables in effect for 2025 are: <https://bustimes.org/services/70-diss-bury-st-edmunds> and <https://bustimes.org/services/73-garboldisham-bury-st-edmunds>. The final timetable from Simonds to route 73/73A is expected at the Feb half term. However, it may be possible to run a mini-bus service for after-work passengers from Bury if there is sufficient demand in the interim. Please let me know.

Devolution – The new Government issued its [English Devolution White Paper](#) on 16th December, requesting a commitment from interested County Councils by 10th January to enter into negotiations regarding local authority reorganisation – that is - forming unitary authorities within a Mayoral Authority Area (in our case Norfolk and Suffolk). The Council must also agree to postpone County elections for at least one year. This will be debated at an Extraordinary Meeting of the County Council on Thursday 9th January and a decision formalised at a subsequent cabinet meeting on the same day. A link to the agenda and papers for the Meeting follows: [Extraordinary Meeting of County Council - 9 January 2025](#)

Budget Proposals - Suffolk County Council's proposed (draft) 2025/26 budget would rise by 6.7%, from £752.9 million in 2024/25 to £803.7 million in 2025/26. The budget will be debated at full council in February. Key allocations include:

- £18.1 million extra for children's services
- £35.2 million extra for adult care, aimed at addressing increased demand for care services.

A 4.99% rise in Council Tax is also proposed consisting of a 2.99% increase in general Council Tax and an additional 2% specifically for adult care services. This means the costs for a household would be:

- Band B property: £24.67 per week, a £1.17 increase from 2024-25 (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: £31.72 per week, a £1.51 increase from 2024-25.

Civil Airport Authority Propose Closing Airfield Advisory Team - The CAA is intending to close down its Airfield Advisory Team which would not be available to provide advice to planning officers or inspectors after March 2025. SCC has written to Mike Kane MP, Minister of State for Aviation, to review the proposal. Suffolk County Council's letter to Mike Kane MP, Minister of State for Aviation, can be read on suffolk.gov.uk

The AAT has helped shape improvements to infrastructure projects including the proposed Norwich to Tilbury pylon project, wind turbines and solar farms. Without this team, there could compromise scrutiny of their design and delivery.

The impact of obstructions such as pylon and turbine placement, glare from solar farms can influence commercial and recreational air operations across Suffolk and regionally.

Suffolk is seeking a new Armed Forces Commissioner - The successful candidate will play a key role in supporting the UK Armed Forces community in the county for a three-year period from mid-March 2025. This voluntary, non-political role includes chairing the Suffolk Armed Forces Covenant Board, set up by Suffolk County Council and partners to ensure that military or ex military personnel and their families, are treated fairly.

Applicants must be able to volunteer 16 days (split into 32 half days) of their time in total each year, it is not a prerequisite to have directly served in the UK Armed Forces but a keen interest would be expected. Applications for the voluntary position will be accepted until 5pm on Friday 17th January 2025, to enable the successful candidate to start their three-year appointment in mid-March 2025.

Further information on the vacancy, application process and Suffolk's Armed Forces Covenant can be found at: www.suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk

Highways Issues – please do report any highways or flood issues to the reporting web site in order to log the problem and enable a response, if a response is not satisfactory please contact me about it : <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

Happy New Year to everyone.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk
Tel: 07714-597980 Twitter: @jesstfleming