

## District Councillors' Report – February 2024

**Badley, Baylham, Creting St Mary, Creting St Peter, Darmsden, Needham Market Town**

MSDC Plan	<p>At the January Council meeting, the priorities for Mid Suffolk District Council were agreed. There was extensive consultation to ensure a wide range of views were taken into account. 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"> <li>• Housing and infrastructure</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Community wellbeing; and</li> <li>• Environmental sustainability.</li> </ul> <p>A key principle is to work collaboratively with communities.</p>
MSDC 2024/25 Budget	<p>The budget for 2024/25 is due to be discussed on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. This includes a 2% council tax increase 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"> <li>• Bringing disused land back into use for amenity or other uses</li> <li>• Land for biodiversity and to meet Biodiversity Net Gain</li> <li>• Stowmarket town centre regeneration</li> <li>• New foot/cycle paths to improve connectivity</li> </ul> <p>In the housing budget, in order 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 see an increase in rent.</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>
Local issues	<p>National government is introducing a requirement for nationally standardised recycling and refuse collection. This will include kerbside collection of glass bottles and jars. Although not required to be implemented until March 2026, kerbside collection could have an impact on the income earned by the village hall from the bottle banks. We are therefore raising this now in case there is a wish to consider advanced planning.</p>
Locality Award	<p>A reminder that this year’s locality awards are still open for applications. Any group or organisation can apply for amounts of £250 or more. Please contact one of us for an application form. Applications need to be submitted this month.</p>

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