

Nedging Parish Council report by Robert Lindsay county cllr 13.1.26

Parish councils asked to bid for some of the £27m for improving bus services

Last year, with a bus improvement grant of £4m to Suffolk, I together the parishes of Bildeston, Hitchan and Finborough bid for a new daily bus between Stowmarket and Hadleigh. That will now launch on April 13th.

If the parish council is interested in bus improvements in your area, Suffolk has now been awarded £27m of funding for bus services for this year, from the government's Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG). The council is again asking parish councils to suggest improvements on bus services – whether extra capacity on routes, new routes or bus stops and shelters via the Suffolk on Board website:

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/>

...and Sustainable Travel

The council has also been awarded just over £12m from Active Travel England to promote sustainable travel in the county. This can be used to invest in footpaths, cycle lanes and other infrastructure. Examples of this could include new pavements, road crossings, or better surfacing of offroad footpaths/bridleways.

20mph limits

The county's cabinet on Friday 9th Jan approved a new set of rules over 20mph limits, which should make it easier for communities to get approval for them. The only criterion which must now be met is the level of average speed. Average speeds below **28mph** – signs only scheme allowed. Average **speed 28 – 32mph** – gateway signing and "traffic calming throughout the area" though this may not mean anything expensive, just more signs and lines. **Above 32mph** road humps, cushions, buildouts, chicanes required.

However communities must still fund the schemes once they are approved. And the rules have not been simplified for areas of national speed limit. There is also a requirement for parish councils to show that communities want the scheme.

Suffolk Conservatives choose to cancel county council elections

Yesterday, Monday, 12 January, the county council held an egm to debate whether to delay county council elections, due this May, for the second year running. I and my political group (Green, LibDem, independent) spoke against delaying the scheduled election. The Conservatives claimed they were not making a decision but they voted to write to the minister to say they had capacity issues. The minister has said that councils telling her this will be allowed to scrap their May elections.

Although, legally, a delay can be only 12 months, (to May 2027) the Government is expected to cancel the county council elections altogether since the county will be dissolved in May 2028.

The new election timetable (obviously subject to no more last minute Government decisions) will be:

May 2027 “shadow” unitary council elections

May 2028 Norfolk/Suffolk Mayor elections – Suffolk County and Babergh District dissolved, unitary councils start.

More Warm Homes Grants funding

Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly for £1.38million in Warm Homes Local Grant funding secured at the end of November last year as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026.

It is only available to those with household income at or below £36k pa. and homes with an EPC below C. (you can find this out when you apply).

You can find out more and apply using this link:

<https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/>

Winter Warmth Packs

In addition, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk council have teamed up to provide Winter Warmth Packs to help vulnerable residents stay warm and healthy at home even if they are struggling with rising living costs. Referrals are via community groups, food banks, GP surgeries or hospitals and each pack includes items such as thermal hats, gloves, blankets and gilets, tailored as necessary – for example, children’s winter coats can be included. Although the Warm Homes Healthy People programme is delivered by East Suffolk Council, it is a county-wide programme.