

District Councillor Report: Hunston Ash Parish Council

September 2023



Mid Suffolk District Council has launched a campaign to clean-up neighbourhoods, build community pride and tackle the doorstep issues that voters said mattered to them. The new 'Pride in Your Place' campaign will give every town and village the opportunity to apply for funding for projects which improve the appearance and cleanliness of their community.

Once awarded, the money can be used for initiatives like litter picking, sign cleaning, graffiti removal, the maintenance/enhancement of open public spaces and more.

These projects will complement routine grounds and maintenance work already carried out by the council and partner authorities, but Mid Suffolk's new administration also wants to help communities to tackle local frustrations and issues that voters said were important to them during the recent local elections.

Under the funding scheme, parishes with a population over 1,500 are eligible to apply for up to £400 in funding. For those with a population below 1,500, up to £250 can be applied for. Applications can also be made by voluntary, community and social enterprises with support from their local town or parish council. They must be received by the council by 31 October 2023 and awards and payments will be made within 21 days of receipt of an eligible application.

New business grants

Businesses in Babergh and Mid Suffolk are set to benefit from a new round of funding thanks to the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF). Mid Suffolk District Council was allocated £821,658 over the next two years. Grants are available between £5,000 - £10,000 per application and will fund a maximum of 50% of total project costs up to the maximum value of £10,000.

Eligible projects include net-zero developments, agriculture and farm diversification, visitor economy business expansion as well as SME investment and diversification or investment in community facilities in our rural areas.

Free trees, hedgerows and wildflowers scheme

This scheme is open for applications that both help wildlife and have public access. Applications can be for individual trees, tree planting schemes, small community woods, hedgerows, community or scattered orchards and wildflower meadows.

MSDC also want to increase tree canopy cover across the district, currently well below the national average. We want to help get 30% of our land managed for wildlife by 2030 (30 by 30 national initiative). We are doing what we can on the council's land, but need help on other land to be really successful. This can include parish land, school grounds, recreation grounds, land open to the public regularly, millennium greens and community spaces.

Support for residents struggling with the cost of living

The following support was provided for residents in Babergh and Mid Suffolk who were struggling with the cost of living during 2022/23. £100,000 was awarded to tenants through the household support fund, £150,000 to households struggling with the cost of their rent through Discretionary Housing Payments and a reduction in council tax for low-income households. During last winter, a total of £110,995 was provided to 62 organisations through Winter Warmth grants. Over 588 homelessness applications were received in Mid Suffolk. Additionally, Mid Suffolk Citizens Advice received a 30% uplift in funding.

Change to use of District CIL for Highways projects	District CIL money can now be used for projects which are carried out by Suffolk Highways and which are defined in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Some villages have just received grants to join some sections of the village which currently have no pavements.
Planning application DC/23/1154/OUT – Warehousing Shepherds Grove	<p>Equation Properties have indicated they plan to bring forward proposals to redevelop Shepherd's Grove Industrial Estate. This plan is in addition to the Jaynic / Copart development. This development will potentially involve 4,000 - 4,500 traffic movements in a 24 hour period.</p> <p>Walsham le Willows has proposed a Liaison group made up of all interested parties which should include impacted parish councils. Key to the success of any such liaison group will be winning <u>a legal agreement on traffic routing</u> as part of the conditions on the development.</p> <p>MSDC planning will also put pressure on Suffolk Highways to require traffic restrictions to be imposed for the interests of the impacted Mid Suffolk villages.</p>
Insulation programme	MSDC is about to launch an insulation programme aimed at private home owners and the private rented sector. This will give residents a summary of their overall insulation requirements and some immediate action in improving their insulation e.g. via loft insulation, cavity wall insulation
20's Plenty Campaign	This campaign is gathering momentum in Suffolk with a lot of villages getting involved. Walsham Le Willows and Badwell Ash are about to carry out resident engagement to canvass opinion in their villages.
Rural bus services	MSDC are reviewing rural bus services to work out the best way they can be supplemented to improve public transport accessibility.

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