

**Reports – Annual Parish Meeting – 9 May 2022**

**Suffolk Police**

Occold Annual Police Report for Period 1 March 2021 to 25 April 2022

Total recorded investigations for Occold addresses:

5 x Violence & Sexual Offences

2 x Anti-Social Behaviour

1 x Theft

1 x Drugs

This compares with the same period in 2020 /2021 when there were 17 recorded investigations for Occold. This is a positive picture for Occold as the preceding twelve-month period was during much more stringent Covid lock-down restrictions when crime reduced nationally, the majority of parishes in the Halesworth locality seeing an increase in 2021/22, not a reduction. To see a reduction of 18.9% is very promising.

Crime trends in the Halesworth policing locality most recently have seen an increase in theft offences where items which have seen their value escalate in recent weeks have become especially attractive to criminals.

These include the theft of domestic heating oil, catalytic converters and scrap metal. Heating oil theft in particular is an offence which usually occurs at the beginning of the winter season when oil tanks are full. With the increase in the cost of heating oil, it is now worth the time of criminals to steal smaller quantities.

Of the more unusual crimes, we have seen the theft of ‘heritage post boxes’ in the west of our area, not for scrap value, but as historic items sold on auction sites. Prices can be as high as £500.

The lighter evenings are now seeing an increase in ASB and the Halesworth policing locality has launched an internal operation in an attempt to curb increases before the summer months when ASB traditionally reaches its peak. We are trying to ensure ASB incidents are dealt with speedily and their investigation incorporates all means at Police and partner agency disposal to deal with them.

I’d like to take this opportunity to remind you of the Suffolk Constabulary on-line crime reduction resource, ‘First Principle, which can be found via this link to our website <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/crime-prevention-z>.

If trying to contact Suffolk Constabulary, please opt for the on-line reporting tool from our website first, before using the 101 telephone number here <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/contact-us/report-something>. Reports are dealt with in exactly the same way and you will avoid being placed in a queue.

Always dial 999 if you are reporting a crime being committed.

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**County Councillor Andrew Stringer**

**GLI Group becomes Official Opposition**

Since last year’s County Council Elections, the 15 members of the Suffolk Green Liberal Democrat & Independent Group have been tasked with trying to hold the Conservative administration to account. The Conservatives having a strong majority with 55 seats out of 75, but we have been able to bring forward questions & motions throughout the year and challenge them to do the best for Suffolk.

### **Budget Meeting: GLI Amendments Declined**

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

Suffolk GLI Group highlighted the need to invest more in adult social care, as well as 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 Scrutiny for Carbon Budget**

The administration brought forward the first Carbon Budget for Suffolk, but it wasn't part of the main budget. So wasn't put through the usual Scrutiny process. 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, the DfT has confirmed the final funding, and Suffolk had failed to secure any funding at all in this round, 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](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(12-10-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

### **Biodiversity Recommendations**

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?**

Our Group has asked searching questions regarding this project, arguing 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.

Our Group rejected 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 for 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 where the County Council plan to publish a new interactive Lorry Route map. For further information, please contact [lorry.routes@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto: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>

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**Report from Redlingfield and Occold WI**

We have 22 members, although we lost a couple of longstanding members during covid some residents new to Occold have joined.

So far this year we have had some very interesting speakers.

We started the year with Jane Hogger talking about her years as a Bluebell Girl. Several members bought her book which is a very interesting read.

In February Cathy Smith talked about Gardening for Wildlife, another good evening.

In March members decorated a bottle with serviettes, as demonstrated by two of our members.

Our future events include a trip to Sutton Hoo, joining in the village jubilee events, the Atlantic crossing of the R34 Airship, a children's author, a talk on Tango 2, walking Suffolk Churches and our yearly Harvest Supper.

We also have 4 members attending the AGM in Liverpool.

This year our WI also celebrates 100 years old-we are planning to celebrate in October.