

APPENDIX

Reports given to meeting of Occold Parish Council held on Monday 7th April 2014

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1. County Councillor's Report

Councillors Allowances

We have once again had another round of the charade that is Councillors allowances, once again an independent panel has looked into our scheme of allowances and suggested that a rise is in order,

and we have been faced with voting for our own rise.

I voted against this, and proposed an amendment that would have meant the Council as its last act of this term then vote for any rise in allowances for the incoming council, this would have meant that we at last would not be voting for our own rises while in office, something that Parliament might have copied.

Leadership Challenge

You may have heard that Mark Bee's leadership of the ruling conservative administration has been brought into question by fellow cabinet colleagues; Critics have suggested that Mark Bees leadership has led to a disproportionate focus on the East of the County at the cost to the rest.

This has reignited the debate regarding local governance of Suffolk.

I personally find this challenge is ill founded Mark bee has been a very inclusive leader; under his leadership we have had numerous examples of back bench members being at the forefront of setting future policy, one example is the working group looking into the future of County Farms.

Education Scrutiny

Following the County Council's recent inspection by OFSTED, the central office has had the inspection results of its own Education service, I have sent you a copy of the report.

The Education Scrutiny Committee has met and discussed in detail the approach the Council has to supporting schools that are challenged, and how fast our support team intervene when various issues schools suffer from time to time, trying to just rely on structural change to lift standards is not the only answer. The councils "raising the bar" initiative is attempting to raise attainment, by schools learning from partner schools good practice, this project will forge partnerships between schools but with more and more Academies for which the County Council has responsibility for standards but no influence on governance.

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2. Community Police Officer's Report

Reported Crimes

There has been no reported crime in the Parish of Occold since our last report.

IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION OR ARE SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING REPORT IT ON 101 and IF YOU THINK A CRIME IS BEING COMMITTED ALWAYS DIAL 999.

GENERAL

We have recently had a spate of Catalytic Converter thefts in the area particularly from high sided vehicles.

We have also had a series of oil tank thefts predominantly in the north of the patch, close to Eye.

There has also been a series of house burglaries in the area. Please take time to lock your doors and windows and report anything suspicious to 101

Outbuildings have also been targeted. Please take time to ensure that your sheds and garages are secure.

Please be vigilant and report anything suspicious.

If you would like any crime prevention advice please feel free to contact us through 101.

We have had some good results with burglaries in the area east of the A140 recently closing off a spate of burglaries reported in June and July time of last year. We've managed to apprehend 2 separate groups of offenders and detect several burglaries in the area.

One of these was fairly unique in that the offender was not known in this country and we identified him via a DNA hit in Lithuania resulting in an arrest when his feet hit the tarmac at the airport a few weeks ago.

Ongoing Crime Prevention Advice.

Take pictures of valuable items and record their identification numbers or register them on the National database "Immobilise." If you have valuable mobile equipment consider having tracking device fitted.

Police Direct.

Police Direct is the way to find out what is going on in your neighbourhood. You can get the latest information about crime and policing in your area by, text, email or telephone by registering free at www.suffolk.police.uk or telephone 01473 613997.

TWITTER

You can follow us @midsuffpolice.

HOW ARE WE DOING

Priorities

- Along with our partners, we are committed to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour across the county. Together we have developed Minimum Standards of service for victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour, ensuring a high level of service is provided across the county.

The current Priorities for Mid Suffolk Central are:-

- To identify Damaged and missing road signs and to work with partner agencies to repair or replace as required.
- To provide crime prevention advice and patrols to minimize theft from and damage to outbuildings.

Have Your Say

The Community Priority Setting Meeting is now open to the public and is where our priorities for the following month will be set, please come along and raise any issues. The next meeting will be on 7TH April 2014, at Wyverstone Village Hall, Rectory Road, Wyverstone IP14 4SH.

The Meeting starts at 7.00pm and finishes at 8pm. All members of the Parish Council as well as the public are invited to attend when they can bring any issues/concerns to the meetings attention.

Please contact us to find out when later meetings are, alternatively the information is on our website.

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Quality of service

If you would like to tell us your views on the service that you have received from us or just to say how nice it is to see a Police Officer in your village, please let us know. We appreciate all feedback & comments from residents within our SNT area.

Contact us

Tel: 101 & ask to speak to the Mid Suffolk Central Team

E-mail: midsuffcentral.snt@suffolk.pnn.police.uk

Website: www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/midsuffolkcentral - please visit our website which is

Kind regards

PC 70 Jayne Gardiner and PCSO 3294 Edward Wright

Mid Suffolk Central SNT
Debenham Police Station
Low Road
Debenham
IP14 6QU

3. District Councillor's Report

1. How to organise community events

An inspirational day of talks, forums and activities has been arranged for anyone who wants to develop the towns and villages where they live.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Communities Team has organised two free events where people can come along and find out how to organise activities such as a community festival, events and activities for the local village hall, recruit new volunteers, start a community group or run a sports club.

The Community Roadshows will be a jam-packed day including inspirational speakers talking about community success stories, informal forums to discuss ideas and share best practice and an information market with community professionals on hand to tell you about their work.

As well as providing no shortage of ideas, toolkits will be provided, full of information, contacts and ideas on how to get your ideas off the ground.

The first roadshow will take place on **Saturday 17 May**, 10am-12.30pm or 1.30pm-4pm at Stutton Village Hall, Manningtree Road, Stutton, IP9 2TA.

Some of the topics that will be covered on the day by guest speakers include how to start a volunteer group, help on applying for funding and funding forms explained, how to apply for money from the Section 106 pot and the importance of promotion online.

On top of this full day of activities, there will also be an opportunity for people to apply for on the spot speed-funding for any ideas they may have to help kick start them. These sessions will run between 12.30pm-2pm.

The idea behind these events is to encourage and help people put on more events and be more active in the village or towns in which they live. There are so many things that people could do – such as setting up their own Digital Cinema Club, organising a festival or community event, taking on the management of a local green space or setting up a sports club for young people within the village.

The second roadshow will take place in September at Woolpit Village Hall. Details about this event will follow later in the year.

To find out more, or to book your place on the event, contact Jo Beever in the Communities Team by emailing: jo.beever@midsuffolk.gov.uk or 01449 724654.

2. Babergh and Mid Suffolk – great places to live!

Both Babergh and Mid Suffolk have been placed in the top 50 rural areas to live across the UK in the latest Halifax Rural Areas Quality of Life Survey.

Both districts featured in a national survey that monitors the quality of life in rural areas and announces the best places to live in the UK - with Mid Suffolk ranking as the 18th best nationally (compared with 34th the previous year), as well as being highest placed in Suffolk.

Councillor Derrick Haley, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, said "Of course, the survey is just proof that what all of our residents already know - Mid Suffolk is a great place to live and work".

The survey tracks where living standards are highest in Great Britain by taking a wide range of factors into account, including residents' health and life expectancy, crime rate, weather, employment, school results, broadband access, and personal wellbeing. The survey also examines all 119 rural local authority districts and is based on data at local authority district level.

3. Proposal to install solar panels on Council housing

Mid Suffolk's Executive Committee is to decide on the business case for this in April. The proposal is to secure Public Works Loan Board loans to fund the installation of solar panels in order to:

Provide a guaranteed income stream to the Council's General Fund for the next 20 years, deriving income from the Government-backed 'Feed in Tariff' (FiT) framework, which makes payments to individuals, organisations and businesses that invest in renewable technologies and export the generated electricity to the National Grid. The FiTs are fixed, guaranteed for 20 years and linked to inflation. Modern solar panels are likely to last longer than 20 years and continue to operate relatively efficiently for some time after the loans would be paid off. The Committee report will present a breakdown of the investment required and expected returns for each Council to enable independent decisions to be made.

An initial screening survey has identified 2,150 Council houses (of which 900 are in Mid Suffolk) that are potentially suitable. Details of the factors which will determine the final number of properties are given below, but the business case is financially profitable on a "per property" basis.

The benefits would be to:

- Make a significant contribution to the Councils' stated objective of alleviating fuel poverty. Under the scheme, Council tenants would be able to use the electricity generated by the solar panels on their roofs. 57% of Council properties house residents in receipt of Housing Benefit and as a proxy indicator of fuel poverty, this would mean assisting approximately 1,200 homes with known financial issues.
- Make a significant contribution to achieving the Councils' stated objective of protecting the environment by securing the removal of 39,000 tonnes of Carbon dioxide from the National Grid mix over the lifetime of the scheme.

The following are some key messages about the proposed scheme, which you may find helpful if you do receive enquiries from your constituents:

- i. If approved, we would hope to begin installing solar panels in May-June.

ii. The aim of the programme is to generate income to maintain Council services, and to save both energy and the environment by generating electricity from the sun rather than using fossil fuels.

iii. Unfortunately, it will only be possible to fit solar panels to a limited number of homes due to several technical constraints including:

- the direction that homes face (which determines how much sunlight it gets throughout the day - the closer this is to south the better);
- the pitch of the roof;
- any excessive shading from trees or buildings; and
- the capacity of the local electricity grid to receive all of the power generated from all the properties fitted with solar panels in the area.

iii. We have already identified those homes which might be suitable. However, if the scheme goes ahead, a company will need to carry out surveys on our behalf to check each property individually. If a home is suitable, we will write to the occupier in due course to provide more information.

iv. Residents would benefit through a reduction in their annual electricity bills of an average of £150 per year (depending on how much electricity they use).

v. While we recognise that only a limited number of residents can benefit from this scheme, we are always looking at alternative ways to find greener energy solutions and save residents money. Examples include the programme of installing air source heat pumps, loft and wall installation.

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