

County Report

April 2021

Akenham, Barham, Bramford, Claydon, Henley and Hemingstone.

A Carer's database

A LDGI Group motion received unanimous support from the Council. It will see the Council working with Suffolk Family Carers to create an opt-in register for all carers. They will cease to be invisible! Increased support will be offered and the option to be consulted on key policies which affect carers.

Automatic number plate recognition (ANPR)

Four years ago, Great Blakenham asked me to get an ANPR camera on Stowmarket Road. Now, at last, Suffolk County Council is following our lead and working with the police to run a 2-year trial in speeding hot spots. Cameras will be used to detect and deter speeding offences. It will be possible to target driver education on the importance of road safety.

Local councils, with support from their county councillor, will identify sites with a problem with speeding or rat-running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit. The devices will be moved between sites and will remain in situ for up to one week per site.

The scheme will operate like community speed watch but on a 24/7 basis. It is a pity there will be only 10 cameras, one per 70,000 of the population, but if this can be used to deter the few drivers who risk our lives and not to target the occasional mistake, it will be valuable.

I have proposed a camera to be shared between the villages in Gipping Valley plus Somersham and hope to be able to cooperate with my successor and the other district councillors to move this forward. I suggested, subject to your agreement the following locations for its placement. Given the low number of devices we may need to go to a wider area.

Parish	Mounting Post location		Station Road at river Bridge
Henley	Henley Road	Great Blakenham	Stowmarket Road
	Ashbocking Road by school		Gipping Road at entrance to Hackney's Corner
Hemingstone	??	Little Blakenham	Leather Bottle Hill
Barham	Old Norwich Road by Co-op		B1113 at The Common/ Pound Lane junction
	Church Lane by Barham Hall	Bramford	Paper Mill Lane
Claydon	Church Lane by High School		Ship Lane, River Hill?
	Edinburgh Road by Primary School		The Street by Co-op?

Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund

As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Suffolk Public Sector Leaders have established the £1.65m Suffolk Inclusive Growth Investment Fund.

The fund is open to projects which address the significant impact of Covid-19 on Suffolk's businesses, employees, and the local economy. Projects must be sponsored by either a Suffolk local authority and/or the New Anglia LEP. Thus far £367,292 of the money has been allocated to town centre improvements in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, a multi-media improvement hub in Ipswich, and flexible retail 'pods' in West Suffolk.

Highways improvements near schools

Locations around schools across Suffolk have benefitted from new road markings and signs, following an investment of £500,000 from the Highways Investment Fund. Work has been focussed on improving the safety of pupils and parents travelling to and from school, refreshing lines and cleaning and repairing signs in and around school zones. 146 locations had new signs to replace those that were damaged or missing and 218 areas with faded road markings are receiving a refresh. They can find the money at election time!

New sustainable travel website

The Way To Go Suffolk provides information and advice on walking and cycling, public transport, car sharing and electric vehicles. The new website will feature up to date information on how people can travel more sustainably across the county.

SCC plants 102,586 trees in five months

Suffolk County Council committed £228,000 from its Suffolk 2020 Fund to protect biodiversity, working with its farm tenants, The Woodland Trust, Giles Landscapes, The Suffolk Tree Warden Initiative, and local communities. This has ensured that 102,586 saplings have been planted in the best places.

Valley Ridge

The new proposals are more focussed on family breaks and less on mythology around Olympic sporting facilities. The ski slope is 200 metres, down from 400 metres, and the top is now 15 metres above ground level. Social media posts suggest this is more acceptable to residents but the cost at £500m is still enough to challenge any business plan. I feel this is more likely to go ahead but it needs another trip through planning.

The jobs the development would bring would be useful, but most will not be highly paid and would complement those at Port 1. Traffic remains a concern but that would largely be on the A14. However, Claydon roundabout is congested now and clearly needs action. Perhaps wider slip roads to cope with Valley Ridge, Port 1 and all the housing being approved in the area. Both lanes need to be reinstated under the bridge and traffic lights installed. It will be difficult to get Highways to agree.

The Harwich-Felixstowe free port.

The freeport applications by Felixstowe and Harwich has been agreed. It covers a 40km radius just out to Stowmarket and Gateway 14 and Port One at Great Blakenham is covered.

There are business rate benefits. Companies will get 5 years relief and councils will get 100% of business rates for 25 years. There are also National Insurance reliefs, tariff benefits, tax incentives, and regeneration funding for companies who invest in production and logistics.

The hope is that there will be a massive impetus for investment and some 13,000 new jobs created in high value industries. The risk is that jobs will just move for the taxation and grant benefits.

Goodbye

As you are I am sure aware, I will remain a district councillor Blakenham Ward but as I am not standing for the County again after 20 years, I will not see you again. I want to wish those in Akenham, Barham, Bramford, Claydon, Henley and Hemingstone, well.

If you have queries, please phone me on 07545423808 or email me at: john.field@suffolk.gov.uk