Report from your District Councillor Jan/Feb 2024

* There is a ‘Community Ownership Fund’ for which the government has provided £150 million covering 4 years. When a local pub, Community Centre or post office is under threat of being lost money can be applied for by local groups, voluntary and community based.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus) is where more info can be obtained.

* All the grants re damages caused by storm Babet have been paid out it was announced by the Leader of Mid Suffolk on the 25th of January.
* Half Year Treasury Management report presented, it had already been reviewed by the Joint Audit and Standards Committee. All was, as expected, found to be in order.
* The ‘Public Engagement’ survey, ‘Have your say’ was discussed. In all there were 680 responses from Mid Suffolk. Key areas were ‘Housing and infrastructure’, Resilience, ‘Community well being and ‘Environmental sustainability’
* A Polling Districts review ha been done and was presented. Regarding Stradbroke, Laxfield, Wilby and Brundish there are no changes.
* The SHELF project is rolling ahead, still uncertainty re any financial commitment from the NHS. It seems likely that this undertake will be done in phases as the financing becomes more clear. Given that this is Stowmarket based project the impact is likely to be very limited in our area.
* The Skills and Innovation Centre, also Stowmarket based will go ahead as previously proposed. The cost will be in the range of 19 million pounds. The intended benefits would be to enable different enterprises to network, sharing ideas and to develop these. Special emphasis is put upon the hope of generating and promote skills in ‘Green’ technologies’. It will be in the vicinity of Gateway 14 and it is hoped that this will attract new investment. In itself the build is not seen as ‘financially viable’ in itself. Thus there is financial risk. Council reserves will be used in part to pay. A green roof is expected to be put in place, I asked about the price difference between this and a standard roof but at this occasion no one seemed to know.
* One motion was presented by Cllr Weller/Matthisen proposing that **all** Parish Councils would be required to present a report to the Mid Suffolk Council highlighting the risk of flooding in their areas. External experts in the field would be expected to be recruited for this undertake.

There was some debate and I argued that some Parishes may not have a flood risk to merit mandatory and expensive assessment like this Parishes know their areas very well and care about those a great lot. Thus this ought to presented as an opportunity without any coercive element. This view was accepted and the final text will amount to simply ask Parishes to assess and report to the Mid Suffolk Council. They would then be very willing to provide help and advice. ( I can’t get access to the minutes so can’t give you the precise text)

Best Wishes,

Anders Linder