

**Thorndon Parish Council 1.3.2012**  
County Councillor Report

**Better Broadband**

The county backed project to deliver better broadband for Suffolk is slowly gaining momentum, Last year we secured government backing for the £41.7 million fibre optic backbone planned for Suffolk. The tender for the contract to deliver this is due to go out in the spring, with upgrades to the existing network being programmed shortly.

It is hoped, that we would have been letting the contract by the summer, and I will be pushing the County management to make sure this project's timing does not slip, and will be attending a conference in Suffolk later this month to get detailed information regarding the timeline of this investment.

Meanwhile to help draw in match funding etc from potential bidders, householders and businesses can register their support at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/broadband)

I would urge everyone to please register your support.

**Policy Development Panels**

Suffolk County Council has embarked on two policy areas to be reviewed, using policy development panels to look into the locality budget arrangements and what was branded the "our place" initiative.

The panels will meet for two consecutive days and interview officers and members of the voluntary sector and parishes, to find out how we could improve things.

I have a place on both of these panels and look forward to testing the current working arrangements and help in making changes that will make the Locality working of Elected members and officers better able to deliver the future needs of our communities.

I have also been assigned an officer to work with me in developing the working relationships between the County Council and the Parishes. Although only being allowed a few hours a month of officer time to work on this, I feel we could get a many issues moved forward allowing us to forward plan a little more, rather than just responding to the latest issues, as at present. The first issue we will jointly work on, is the issue of a permissive footpath at fishponds way.

**Budget Setting.**

The County Council has agreed to a zero % increase proposal again this year, this is in response to a grant offered from central government to make this the case, but in accepting the grant, we have to sign up to zero increases in subsequent years without any assurance of these grants beyond this year, leaving us not being able to guarantee higher future increases. The County is not using this grant to bolster its core budget, a position the Districts do not have the luxury of.

**Household Waste site Closer**

It is deeply concerning that the household waste site at Bramford has been closed by the new operator Boltons, after only 6 months of the trial period.

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