

## District councillor's report, July 2013

### 1. Fairer Funding campaign

As a result of the campaign, the Government has recognised the cost of rural services, so that the gap between funding rural and authorities has been bridged to the tune of 14%. This is a significant improvement, and the campaign's success is undoubtedly due to the response to the original consultation from local authorities. However, we believe there is still a need to press for fairer further funding distribution.

### 2. Car parks

The new car park rates came into force at the beginning of June, with the initial charging period increased from 90 mins to 2 hours for the same charge of £1. This should provide shoppers and visitors with better quality time in Stowmarket. In addition, season ticket prices have fallen from £500 to £300, a 40% reduction, which should reduce the cost of working in Stowmarket for those who drive to work (and we hope will also move cars from residential streets into car parks). Throughput in Stowmarket's car parks had increased by 20% over the last year, and we hope that with these reductions a further significant increase will follow, such that overall fee income from car parks will not fall.

### 3. Suffolk Growth Strategy

The delivery plan has been developed and is out for consultation. It is the first step in realising the goals set out in the strategy that was agreed by all local authorities in Suffolk earlier this year. It sets out clear actions to tackle the skills issue, deliver our key development sites, secure investment in infrastructure and establish growth hubs to coordinate support for business across the county.

### 4. Power station, Eye

Mid Suffolk (and SCC) have responded to the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report that was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, and we expect the preliminary Environmental Information Report and Statement of Community Consultation in August. A period of formal public consultation and public exhibitions will follow in September/October.

### 5. Corporate grants

Among other projects currently receiving capital grant funding from Mid Suffolk are a new community swimming pool for Debenham (co-located with the primary school), increased storage at the Red Feather Club in Denham, and acoustic improvements at Occold village hall to help overcome noise problems. Village halls in Hoxne, Norton and Wyverstone, as well as better sports facilities in Woolpit, Battisford and Mendlesham are being considered for grants.

6. Housing fraud

A strategy for tackling social housing fraud is currently being drafted. So far this year four properties have been recovered as a result of housing fraud.

7. Planning enforcement

There are currently 183 live cases, which represents a significant reduction over the past year and means that the caseload is now becoming manageable (and will be more so once current vacancies in the team have been filled).

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