

District councillor's report, March 2014

1. Community grant scheme

The community grant scheme continues to help our communities in their planned projects. To date £152,000 of capital funding and £24,000 of minor funding has been allocated to local schemes, including Hartismere High School, Debenham swimming pool and Eye Town Hall.

2. Waste services

A new direct debit scheme is being planned to enable subscribers to the garden waste scheme to do so by direct debit.

A new, user friendly software system is being introduced to provide a more efficient service to our residents as well as the waste team. An upgraded telephone system is being introduced at the same time which will enable callers to leave messages (especially important at busy times), over weekends and in times of bad weather, and also for the waste team to leave pre-recorded messages so that residents can obtain real time information in the event of varying conditions.

We are working with the Suffolk Waste Partnership on several new projects across the county. These include reviewing the glass collection service, with a view to provision by a single provider. We are examining ways of making collection and disposal of organic waste more efficient. And the "Waste Less and Save More" campaign across Suffolk will preferably alert residents to be more responsible with their waste, in order to waste less and reduce, reuse and recycle, not only to minimise the impact on the environment, but also encourage more community involvement and to save money by sending less to landfill.

3. Affordable housing

Phase 5 flats at Steele's Road, Woolpit have been completed and were offered to new tenants in January.

Orbit East have obtained planning permission for the first tranche of the Unity redevelopment work for the replacement of the non-traditional "Unity" houses in Stowmarket, Woolpit and Haughley, and building is progressing with their 9 new homes on the former MSDC garage site at St Edmunds Road, Stowmarket.

4. Credit union to open in Stowmarket

People living in and around Stowmarket will soon have a new place to save and borrow money, which should be particularly useful to those excluded by the high street banks. The Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union will be launched on Thurs, March 6th and every subsequent Thursday from 1pm to 3pm, offering an information and collection point, operating in the Adult Learning Centre in Ipswich Street.

The Credit Union provides a safe place for modest savings, including Christmas and holiday clubs, 100% backed by Government. It also offers borrowing at far lower interest rates than payday loan companies and illegal loan sharks. One popular scheme is for loan repayments to be linked to Child Benefit payments, easing the initial expense of a new baby arriving, for example. In keeping with modern retailing, a pre-paid Visa debit card is available which works just like other bank cards.

The Mid Suffolk Financial Inclusion Project team from Mid Suffolk District Council have been working closely with ISCU; they are funding the cost of the room in Stowmarket and are helping with initial set up costs for printing and advertising. In the next few months Mid Suffolk will be looking for tenant volunteers to help with promoting the work of the ISCU.

Charles Tilbury
01449 767857

cmw_tilbury@btinternet.com
07710 376555