

Thorndon Parish Council 6.3.2014 County Councillor Report

Highways Issues

Please let me know of any outstanding potholes and highways issues please, we have a review of the performance of the Kier May Gurney Contractors at the moment, it would be good to have your feedback. It seems that many of the day to day repairs that used to get done have been "lost in translation" an email with accurate descriptions would be great.

Broadband Update

I have received an important update from the Better Broadband team at Suffolk County Council and there are some significant developments regarding broadband in our area. This is, in part, due to the overwhelming pressure placed on the Council, BT and others by members of the public.

The 2 major issues for our area has been we were told BT would include us in their commercial upgrade but the reality is that for most of us this has not happened (as many suspected at the time). Additionally some areas in Suffolk were not covered either by a commercial upgrade or the publicly-funded intervention area.

These two areas are now being addressed by a new procurement process which starts now. The public consultation for this will be in the Spring with the new contract being signed in the Summer and work commencing before the end of 2014. We will do all we can to bring these dates forward as much as the procurement rules allow but, in the meantime, will advise you when the public consultation is open to help bring this about.

20mph Zones

Last week's cabinet finally approved the criteria that communities can forward 20mph zones, this is not the 20's plenty which is an unenforceable advisory scheme but areas that could be enforced by the Police, where communities have agreed that the need and support is demonstrated.

To date only a handful of areas have statutory 20mph limits, the nearest is Occold, Occold has had an "experimental" 20mph limit for a number of years, recent speed tests have revealed that like 30mph areas over 70% cars do speed, but in the 20mph zone the mean speeds are 9mph slower than in a comparable 30mph zone.

Stoke Ash/ Badwell Ash Primary School

Stoke Ash Primary School has had its closure orders published, and the County Council is now programming the official closure, I have had a meeting with officers at the county council to make sure the pupils moving from Stoke Ash, are catered for in catchment area.

Badwell Ash Primary School has had its closure programme published, along with the closure of Bacton Community Middle School, it is a huge time of change in education in Suffolk At the moment.

The County Council has been inspected by OFSTED, the central office is having an inspection of its own Education service, I have sent you a copy of the report.

The report make for very sober reading as it rates Suffolk internal service as "ineffective" this does I hope make sure that the county council supports our schools before issues arise, rather than trying to just rely on structural change to lift standards.