

# Thorndon Parish Council County Councillor Report 7.9.2017 . .

## Highways Changes

As I reported at the most meeting SCC are changing the way we operate, Suffolk Highways is finishing a period of major restructuring. This is designed to integrate Suffolk County Council and Kier staff into a single team, remove duplication and ensure that the service is efficient and effective. The new service will be launched on Monday 4th September. As always, the first point of contact for standard defect reports should be the Suffolk Highway reporting tool via <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/> or over the telephone on 0345 606 6171. There are three main roles in the New Customer Service team:

### 1. Customer Co-ordinators

Customer Co-ordinators will be responsible for reviewing reports and enquiries and ensuring that residents receive clear updates. They will also manage the main team email inboxes, manage direct calls to the Service Delivery Centres (SDCs) in order to direct your enquires to the right individual or team.

### 2. Community Wardens

The Community Wardens will spend the majority of their time out on the road network inspecting reported defects, delivering advance warning letters/leaflets and engaging with some town and parish councils when required. They will ensure action is taken when a defect meets our intervention criteria, as set out in the Highways Maintenance Operational Plan:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highwaymaintenance/how-highways-are-maintained/>

### 3. Community Engineers

For more complex issues, the Community Engineers will be able to support and help to identify potential solutions within the budget limitations, they will be the conduit to guide you through the structure and processes within the service. Our Service Delivery Centre, is at Phoenix House in Ipswich.

## Changes in School Transport

The County Council is about to consult on whole sale changes to School Transport provision. In an attempt to save from the £21.3 million spent each year on this service the Council is suggesting only funding pupils that attend their nearest school, this might seem reasonable enough on the surface, but when you learn that over 3000 students from rural areas, whose "catchment" school is not the "nearest" you begin to see the reason for concern. We have in the past run a similar policy for post 16 provision, and this had caused concern from some residents of Old Newton Haughley, whose Catchment Upper School is Stowupland, but the nearest Upper school is Stowmarket. There is also ambiguity on this policy regarding parents that chose to send their child to a school that is full, so are given their second or third choice place, if this place is not the nearest school then through no fault of their own they will now have to pay circa £700 per year. The council is asserting that the reformed school bus service will be able to take the general paying public on these routes, this is fine if there is capacity, for instance if a bus usually has 40 pupils on it and has a capacity of 50, if 12 passengers get on at the earlier stops do we then refuse a journey to the students?

## Bus Route Rethink

You may have seen the recent media coverage regarding the recent change to the 113 service and the about turn the County Council oversaw, These changes happen every year and with little or no notice, due largely to the way that buses are regulated in this country, Bus companies are naturally wary of publishing potential changes to bus routes in a competitive environment, and the regulator (SCC) has often little time to respond and check that changes will not have a huge impact, in the case of the 113 the proposed new routing included addresses that appeared to still serve villages such as Thwaite, but in reality they did not. The situation with the 113 is that it is returning to its original timetable, but it will be reviewed in the next 6 months. Let's hope we get a bit more notice next time around.

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