

# Parish Report – February 2021

## Councillor

Andrew Stringer (Upper Gipping)

'Robin'  
Blacksmith Road  
Cotton, Stowmarket  
IP14 4QN

07545423842  
[andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk)

## Suffolk County Council Budget

The Suffolk County Council Budget has now been presented to Scrutiny and to Cabinet, and will be presented to Full Council on February 11<sup>th</sup>. Questions from the public must be submitted by 12 noon on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February. Key points include:

- This year's budget strategy focuses on responding to COVID-19, delivering transformation savings, making use of the risk reserve for this year only to deal with one-off pressures, and looking ahead while continuing to adapt.
- The net expenditure budget is £597.877m.
- Basic council tax will be raised by 1.99%, the maximum amount allowable without a referendum.
- The Social Care Precept will be raised by 2%, rather than the full 3% allowed.
- £16.702m from risk reserves will be used to balance the budget.

**Table 5: Recommended Council Tax 2021-22**

Band	General Council Tax £	Social Care Precept £
A	834.25	97.19
B	973.30	113.38
C	1,112.34	129.58
D	<b>1,251.38</b>	<b>145.78</b>
E	1,529.46	178.18
F	1,807.55	210.57
G	2,085.63	242.97
H	2,502.76	291.56

The full detail can be found in the Cabinet papers from January 26<sup>th</sup> 2021. Link: [https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=\(26-01-2021\),%20The%20Cabinet](https://committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk/DocSetPage.aspx?MeetingTitle=(26-01-2021),%20The%20Cabinet)

## LDGI Group Budget Amendment

The LDGI Group has constructed a Budget Amendment which will be submitted to Full Council on February 11<sup>th</sup> alongside the administration's Budget. The key change proposed by the LDGI Group would be to authorise the use of the full 3% social care precept, unlocking the maximum available funding without impacting SCC's reserves. This would generate an extra £3.452m for social care at a cost of only £13.41 per year to a Band D household, freeing up general council tax funds to be spent on other projects and investments including:

- £700k for establishing a COVID-19 grant scheme for Suffolk charities and arts & culture venues.
- £500k for a solar energy scheme for Suffolk businesses.
- £200k for creating an electric bike rental scheme for Ipswich and Lowestoft.
- £500k to re-enable the use of concessionary bus passes on community transport and demand responsive transport across Suffolk.
- £1m for a 30mph scheme to convert residential 30mph zones to a default speed limit of 20mph over four years.
- £15k for a citizen's assembly on how Suffolk can build back better while recovering from the pandemic.

- £75k to enable community reviews of highways signage in the local area.
- £50k to expand the flood management team to ensure SCC is applying for all flooding grants it is eligible for.
- A demand-scoping exercise on where demand is for bus routes, a priority list for where future routes need to be, and a feasibility study on establishing an SCC-owned bus company to serve rural areas if commercial bus companies cannot.

By opting not to take the full 3% social care precept, the administration is voluntarily giving up £3.452m of funding for adult social care that must be made up from the general council tax fund, meaning that worthwhile projects such as those above cannot be pursued.

### **Elections May 2021**

The government has confirmed the elections for the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the County Council will go ahead as planned. This will present a challenge for the District Council to organise as we have to book venues etc as well as organise a count of the vote with all party's verifying the vote while socially distancing etc.

There is also an issue regarding the delivery of leaflets and canvassing, at present these activities are prohibited, unless the leaflet delivery is paid for, but paying to have leaflets delivered could put candidates the wrong side of the spending limits for local elections. but a sitting councillor is allowed to deliver literature to communicate to their constituents.