

Shimpling Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Monday 21st November 2022, 7:30pm at Shimpling Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: Katie Haselhurst, Gerry Shrimpton, Nathalie Brown (Chair), David Dunkley, Hans Engstrom

District Councillors: Michael Holt, Stephen Plumb

County Councillors: Richard Kemp

Clerk: Natasha Byford

- 1.1 Election of Chair:** The Clerk opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. Cllr Brunwin stepped down as Chair last week. The Clerk then asked for nominations for election of a new Chair. A nomination was received for Cllr Brown to Chair the council. This was seconded by Cllr Shrimpton. There being no other nominations, this proposal was voted on and confirmed. Cllr Brown signed the acceptance of office declaration.

Action: Clerk to send the declaration of acceptance of office to the monitoring officer.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllr Liz Brunwin all sent her apologies, this was noted and accepted.

2. Declarations of Members Interest(s):

- a) To receive disclosure of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest(s) including gifts of hospitality in excess of £25:** None received.
- b) To consider requests for dispensation for the agenda item(s) under discussion:** Chair Brown asked to opt out of the vote on Item 9c as one of the quotes that were to be discussed were from her son. This was agreed and noted.

3. Public Participation session

Two members of the public (MOP) attended.

4. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 12th September 2022 were approved.

Action: Clerk to publish these on the website and Social Media.

5. Chair's report:

The Clerk read out Cllr Brunwin's report from her last couple of months as Chair:

A relatively quiet time since I took on the Chair.

A resident reported an issue with the pavement issue at Barnfield and a quick response was received from Suffolk Highways who have confirmed that they will sort out the issue within 20 days.

The manhole in The Street is again loose despite being repaired around 2 years ago. This has been reported. Cllr Shrimpton noted that he was informed that the Council are now not mending manholes. Cllr Kemp kindly said he would get in touch with Highways on our behalf regarding this matter.

Suffolk Highways also responded quickly to the request to clean our bus shelter in The Street. We were delighted to hear that there is a possible tenant for the pub following the sad departure of Jess who had been the landlady since April. A public meeting took place at The Bush on the 15th November with residents and the prospective new landlord.

Finally, a working party met earlier this month to set a proposed budget for 2023 which will hopefully be approved tonight. As always, the Parish Council are very mindful of the current economic situation when setting the budget and continue to ensure that residents get good value for money.

6. District Councillors report: Cllr Plumb read out their report and there were no further questions on this. The report is in Appendix A below.

Cllr Plumb and Cllr Holt left the meeting at 7:40pm.

7. County Councillors report: Cllr Kemp read out his report and there were no further questions on this. He added that there will be a Mayor of Suffolk elected. The report is in Appendix B below.

Cllr Kemp left the meeting at 7:45pm.

8. Crime matters:

The new county wide newsletter available was dated September 2022 and is available online: <https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>

The Clerk reported that the September newsletter was circulated to Councillors along with the papers for the crime update. Nothing Shimpling specific. Suffolk Constabulary was represented at a lot of events over the last couple of months including Sudbury's Thursday market and Town Hall. There is a new Inspector. Leavenheath have set up a Community Speed Watch.

9. Village Hall:

- a) Village Hall Committee** – Update given from the VHC PC representative Cllr Brown as below;

The Village Hall are now having regular Zumba and Pilates classes as well as a men's table tennis on Friday nights which is proving very popular and raised £119. There will be wreath making in the Village Hall, a Christmas Market and hopefully film nights. The VHC hope to be able to work with the new owners of The Bush and provide more entertainment for the whole Village.

- b)** Cllr Brown gave members the quotations for the MPLC umbrella licence which ensures a licence for playing films in the Village Hall with the new AV equipment. The cost is £218.42+VAT per year, however you cannot charge for viewings. The other option was a STSL license which was around £83 per film. Members discussed the options and agreed to go with the MPLC licence and to pay this out of the Covid Fund. It was noted that the PC would like to review this each year and that the end goal is that the VHC could fund this themselves.

Action: Chair Brown to apply for the MPLC Umbrella Licence and get the invoice for the PC.

- c)** Cllr Brown shared the quotations for the installation of the AV equipment into the Village Hall. Members discussed and agreed to go with the lower quote of £750 from George Bower. The money will be taken from the Village Hall reserves. It was discussed that hopefully the VHC could make a donation towards this cost, Chair Brown said she would look into this and let the PC know if they could make a donation and if so, how much this would be for.

Action: Chair Brown to let George know to go ahead with this and invoice the PC.

- d)** Members discussed the extension and renovation ideas for the Village Hall, ideas such as gazebos out of the double doors were considered as well as a restructure of the internal layout of the hall. It was mentioned that an extra toilet would be a good addition. Members discussed that they were happy to be a small Village Hall and weren't looking to compete with much larger halls. The one villager who did attend said that he was happy with the Village Hall. Members also discussed purchasing a Village Hall gazebo which could be used at other events as the current one is fairly old and difficult to assemble. Members decided that to make a more informed decision on anything, costs and finances were required, so it was agreed to bring back quotes to the January meeting.

Action: Cllr Brown to get quotes for gazebos and quotes from builders for some internal restructuring of the Village Hall. Cllr Shrimpton to look into finances and grants available for such works. Clerk to add this to January agenda.

- e)** Members discussed the running costs of the Village Hall and Cllr Brown explained that currently the VHC breaks even but they are hoping to increase their income and the goal is to eventually be self-sufficient.

10. Responsible Finance Officer's Finance Report:

10a) The Clerk gave a finance report, details of which were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk stated which invoices (please see below) needed to be paid.

Leaving balances as follows:

Treasurers Account	£3,607.10
Business Account	£34,899.14

Including CIL of	£3,941.26
Earmarked Reserves of	£11,284.61
General Reserves of	£4,698.00
COVID Grant of	£10,718.12

10b) To acknowledge payments made outside the meeting

• SID Membership	£203.94
(LGA 1972, s.111)	
• AV Equipment	£1,800.00
(LGA 1972, s.145(1)(b))	
• CAS Website Hosting	£60.00
(LGA 1972, s.111)	
• G Cann – Fencing	£595.00
(Public Health Act, 1875, s.164)	
• Zen Internet (16 Sept-15 Oct)	£38.99
(LGA 1972, s.111)	
• Zen Internet (16 Oct-15 Nov)	£38.99
(LGA 1972, s.111)	
• Zen Internet (16 Nov-15 Dec)	£38.99
(LGA 1972, s.111)	
• SALC Payroll	£27.00
(LGA 1972, s.111)	

10c) The following amounts were approved for payment:

• Clerk's Net salary after Tax	£570.06
• HMRC Tax payment	£142.60
• Clerk's expenses (Fuel)	£17.10
LGA 1972 s. 111 (ancillary Powers)	
• Lark Valley Willow Grass Cutting	£1,068.00
(Public Health Act 1875, s.164)	

The above payment schedule was approved by members.

10d) The Clerk noted that The Council have received money from bank interest of £1.48.

10e) The Clerk noted that the Council had received the VAT refund claimed for of £1,282.71.

11. **Clerks Report:** A full copy of the Clerk's report was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The following matters were considered for resolution:
- 11a) Summary of Progress:** During the period (5th Sept – 13th Nov), I have worked 1 hour and 30 minutes under the given time frame of 5 hours per week, this included organising all the paperwork for the November meeting, agendas, actions from the September meeting, organising payments, quotes for insurance and budget planning, as well as general administration and taking some Annual Leave. The Clerk's record of work was reviewed and accepted.
12. **Insurance**
- Members discussed the renewal contracts for the insurance and it was agreed to renew the current insurance policy with BHIB for 1st December 2022 – 30th November 2023.
- Action: Clerk to renew the insurance policy.**
13. **Noticeboard**
- Members discussed placing an additional noticeboard by the playground. It was decided to postpone this conversation until the January meeting.
- Action: Clerk to add this to January agenda.**
14. **Footpaths:**
- Clerk updated members that we are awaiting Mortimer Contracts to do this works, the last update they sent was that they were short staffed and Chris has jury service in December so they couldn't be precise on when they could get this work done. Members discussed and were concerned that maybe they did not want to do this now and asked the Clerk to touch base with Chris and see what the situation was.
- Action: Clerk to call Chris and have a discussion regarding the footpath.**
15. **Playground:**
- a) Mortimer contracts could not carry out the raising of the swing and resurfacing underneath as he couldn't obtain the correct tool to alter the height of the swings, so there is no point putting the matting down. Members discussed and decided to see if we could get other quotes for this works.
- Action: Clerk to contact Gary Cann and Eastern Play services for quotes.**
- Gary Cann did the work on the posts on the fence.
- b) Members received quotes for the football goal with basketball hoop on and a quote for the football goal with basket ball hoop along with a tree top tangle trail and fitness trail. It was discussed how another local Parish had installed the same piece of equipment from the same supplier around 6 years ago and they really like it and it gets well used. Members discussed and decided that the football goal with basketball hoop did sound like a good

idea in principle. It was agreed to look into this further and perhaps see if anyone would be able to make something similar or we could get a reduction on the price we have already been quotes.

Action: Clerk to ask Gary Cann if this would be something he could make. Cllr Haselhurst to go back to the person who quoted and see if there is any movement on the price. Clerk to add this to the January agenda.

16. Planning:

The Clerk gave an update on planning applications:

Planning Decisions:

- a. AP/22/00010 Land Opposite To Stone Cottages, Bury Road, Shimpling, Suffolk - Appeal - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing Use or Operation or activity including those in breach of a planning condition. Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Section 191 as amended by section 10 of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. Town and Country Planning (General Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Conversion and use of former second world war building as a dwellinghouse – Appeal in progress
- b. DC/22/03414 - 2 West View, Gents Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HP - Householder Application - Erection of single storey side, rear and front extensions and front dormers (following demolition of existing garage) – Granted
- c. DC/22/02240 - Flint Barn Thorne Court Shimpling Road Shimpling Bury St Edmunds Suffolk - Discharge of Conditions Application Condition 1 (Detailed Photographic Recording), Condition 4 (Electric Vehicle Charging) and Condition 5 (Cycle Storage) – Granted
- d. AP/22/00071 - Aveley House Aveley Lane Shimpling Part In The Parish Of Alpheton IP29 4HB - Planning Application - Erection of 1No detached holiday let. – Appeal Valid
- e. DC/22/04282 Gatefields Farm, Stanstead Road, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HD - Erection of steel-framed cart-lodge for the storage of vintage tractors and cars; also change of roof materials to clay tile-effect sheet, installation of doors to the front and shortening and repositioning of building as per submitted drawings. Reference to new drawings to be included in Condition 2 of DC/20/02127 – Granted

Planning Applications:

None

17. Covid19 Emergency Fund

There was an application from the PCC for a grant to hire the Village Hall for making Christmas wreathes, members discussed and it was agreed that the VHC would let them hire the hall for free.

Action: Clerk to let Cllr Brunwin know.

Members received quotations and discussed purchasing a gazebo and this was discussed in Item 9d.

18. Ditch Clearing:

The Clerk informed members that she had been unable to get quotes for ditch clearing as no one would do it. Cllr Haselhurst had also had no luck getting a quotation for this. The PC discussed whether this was something they should be doing and decided to see if Cllr Kemp could help as it is possible that the ditch is owned by the Council.

Action: Clerk to email Cllr Kemp for assistance with this.

19. Tree Planting:

Cllr Haselhurst reported that she found a grant to get the Cherry Tree planted and that the company would even come out and plant it for us.

20. Village Newsletter:

Sarah had trouble with printing the Village Newsletter this month due to her laser printer playing up. Members discussed and agreed the newsletter was a great asset to the Village and decided that they would perhaps be able to donate some money towards or purchase a new laser printer. This money would come out of the laptop/computer reserve funds and up to a cost of around £300.

Action: Cllr Shrimpton to discuss with Sarah what she would need.

21. Councillor Vacancy:

This was discussed after Item 4. Members invited Hans Engstrom to talk about why he would like to join the PC as a Councillor. Members then voted to co-opt Hans. Hans Engstrom of Cricket Barn, Mount Farm Vineyards, Blooms Hall Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds, CO10 9BY was voted to serve on the council by unanimous vote.

Action: Clerk to ensure acceptance of office and other mandatory forms are completed within 28 days and send any details required for new Councillors.

Action: Cllr Engstrom to set up a PC gmail account to use he.shimpling@gmail.com

22. Budget:

- a) The report from the Budget Setting Working Group was previously circulated to members. Members discussed and agreed to the budget proposed for 2023/24. It was noted that Members has concerns over costs for struggling families and that the PC would look into more ways that they could support more vulnerable families within the Village.

Action: Chair Brown to liaise with Cllr Haselhurst regarding foodbank idea.

- b) Members approved the recommendation that the precept for 2023/24 would be set at £11,265.00.

Action: Clerk to publish the budget and papers on the website.

Action: Clerk to add getting the Precept form signed to the January meeting.

23. Village Hall Lease:

Members discussed how we go about renewing the Village Hall lease, which is due for renewal around August 2023. Members suggested contacting John Pawsey to see if this is something he may be able to do on our behalf as he renewed it last time.

Action: Clerk to speak with John Pawsey and see if this is something he would be prepared to do for the PC.

24. Correspondence Received:

The email regarding SCC Passenger Transport. It was discussed and felt that we should try and have a presence in the meeting where they discuss the bus route from Bury St Edmunds to Sudbury.

Action: Cllr Shrimpton and Cllr Dunkley to look into dates and to attend the meeting if possible.

25. Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the council

Keith from Quiet Lanes got back regarding the sign. Members agreed to collect it ourselves and see if we can find someone to put the sign up.

Action: Clerk to contact Keith and find out where the sign can be collected. Members to post on the Village Whatsapp group to see if anyone would install the sign.

Cllr Shrimpton had looked into storyboards and members were happy to progress this and try to get some firm quotations for them.

Action: Cllr Shrimpton to get quotations for this and Clerk to add this to January agenda.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9:50pm.

Appendix A: District Councillors Report:

Residents urged to have their say over whether council tax bills should be reduced by up to 100% for those on low incomes

A public consultation is underway over a plan to cut council tax for the poorest households in Babergh and Mid Suffolk. The consultation, which runs to November 24, asks for views on how the councils should run their Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2023/24, and whether bills should be reduced by up to 100% for working age adults with the lowest incomes.

Winter warmth funding for community causes

Thousands of pounds were made available to grassroots groups last month to keep the doors of their activities open for longer this winter. The [Winter Warmth Support Grant](#), offered groups and non-profit organisations between £250 to £5,000 to cover the rising costs of energy, rent and food, and to keep operating without passing on increased costs to residents across Babergh and Mid Suffolk.

Winners announced for the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Innovation Awards 2022

The winners of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council Innovations Awards have been revealed.

New Innovate to Elevate programme launches for businesses

Businesses in Babergh & Mid Suffolk are set to receive an innovation boost as a new 12-month partnership between the University of Essex and the District Councils launches in the region.

Councils' commercial property arm continues to generate income for districts

Babergh and Mid Suffolk's commercial property company CIFCO made a £6.7m profit last year and generated £3.7m in net income for the councils to plough back into services, councillors heard during October.

Residents to help name Babergh and Mid Suffolk's new bin lorries

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have launched a competition to help them name their new environmentally-friendly bin lorries – in the biggest upgrade to their fleet in almost 10 years.

Residents across Babergh and Mid Suffolk are being invited to submit names for 22 brand-new bin lorries at www.babergh.gov.uk/binlorrycompetition. The competition closes at midnight on Sunday 13 November, with winners contacted later in the year.

Bird flu outbreak

Information on the recent bird flu outbreak in Suffolk.

First stage of Women's Tour brings more than a million reasons to celebrate

The Women's Tour 2022 has revealed the fantastic impact of the first stage of the UK's biggest women's cycling event, with more than £1m of net economic benefit poured into the regional economy.

Anyone can become homeless

In recognition of World Homelessness Day, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils encouraged residents to challenge their view of what homelessness looks like.

Campaign launched to improve metal packaging recycling rates across Suffolk

A new initiative encouraging households to recycle food and drink cans, aluminium foil and trays, empty aerosols and metal screw caps has been rolled out by the Suffolk Waste Partnership, which includes Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils.

Three finalists for Babergh and Mid Suffolk at Building Excellence Awards

The councils' Building Control Team has won three regional awards in the annual Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Building Excellence Awards for Angel Court, Hadleigh (Best Small Social Housing Development), The Regal, Stowmarket (Best Non-Residential Extension or Alteration) and Low Street, Glemsford (Best Small New Housing Development). They now move onto the national final in London in January 2023.

Global bank to give students unique careers advice in jobs clinic

Young people looking for help, advice or an insight into a new career were able to take part in a careers session last month, with advice from global employer and high street bank HSBC as part of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk's Careeriosity programme.

October half-term fun to keep the kids active

Dozens of council-funded activities took place across Babergh and Mid Suffolk during October half term, keeping children and families, happy, healthy and active.

Gipping Construction appointed to deliver new homes at Corks Lane, Hadleigh

Babergh District councillors joined directors from Babergh Growth and project leaders from Gipping Construction to review progress of the development of new homes at Corks Lane, Hadleigh.

Babergh Chairman tours new Breast Care Centre

Babergh Chairman Cllr Kathryn Grandon recently took a tour around the new Breast Care Centre being built at Ipswich Hospital, with Sandra Gosney - community fundraising manager and Emily Marsh - senior project manager.

Appendix B: County Councillors report:

Information Updates

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk or ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Avian Influenza - Statement

Suffolk has declared an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone to mitigate that risk of further outbreaks of disease occurring. The disease has been detected at more than 70 premises since the beginning of October, as well as multiple reports in wild birds. The Zone, meaning mandatory housing measures for poultry and captive birds, will be in place until further notice and will be under regular review.

Bird keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to Defra's national Dead Wild Bird Helpline on 03459 33 55 77 and keepers should report suspicion of disease in their birds to the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA) on 03000 200 301.

For more information on your local area, visit the Government's Interactive Avian Influenza Disease Map at

<https://defra.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8cb1883eda5547c6b91b5d5e6aeba90d>

Cost of Living Budget Survey - SCC Open up for your thoughts

SCC has released a survey to local residents, asking for their thoughts on the upcoming 2023/24 budget. A summary of responses will be considered when deciding how to spend your money. With inflationary pressures, our Group expects government to seek spending cuts – meaning public services could be cut and council Reserves may have to be used.

Our Group fully recommends you share your thoughts on how the Council should spend their money, as well as highlight vulnerabilities you see in your communities that need further addressing.

For a link to the online survey, click here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/7BQY0J/>

Cost-of-Living Leaflet: Updated to Show Support

Over 85,000 leaflets, highlighting information and guidance during the crisis, were distributed amongst Suffolk communities. The leaflet shows all the help Suffolk offers with finances and household expenses, as well as how to stay warm this winter. Our Group strongly suggest anyone vulnerable to take a look at how Suffolk can help.

For a link to the leaflet, click here: <https://suffolk.pagetiger.com/cost-of-living-support/scc1>

SCC's Launch of 'Winter Matters' Campaign

SCC have launched their Winter Matters campaign, which aims to help ease the pressures of winter for Suffolk residents. This is a signposting campaign that centres around five key themes: Finances, Safety, Environment, Health and Wellbeing, and Highways.

For more information and advice on how SCC can support you during winter, visit:

www.suffolk.gov.uk/wintermatters

Suffolk's Launch of 'Childhood' - short film to raise awareness of the need for foster carers

In a ground-breaking national collaboration, 56 Local Authorities across England have worked together to create a short film to raise awareness of fostering.

It is aimed at finding more people who may be interested in becoming foster carers and providing nurturing, positive homes for children and young people across the country who need them.

The new film, simply called 'Childhood', highlights the impact of neglect on children, particularly brothers and sisters who may be left at times to try and care for each other. It shows the journey of 'Sophie' and 'Charlie' who are in a very difficult home situation where their needs are not being met, to being nurtured and supported through foster care to attend school and be able to enjoy their hobbies and interests. In other words, have a childhood. [Watch the short film on YouTube.](#)

The aim is that this film will be shared on all 56 participating council's social media and other platforms, right across the country, reaching many more people and leading them to consider whether the rewarding role of fostering could be an option for them.

If you think you might be interested or know someone who might be interested in becoming a foster carer, then please don't hesitate to get in touch on **01473 264800** or alternatively [visit our the Fostering page](#) on our website for more information.

Suffolk's Superheroes scoop top awards

Worthy winners from across Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards received recognition at a glittering awards ceremony. The Fire Awards – honouring the bravery and commitment of those looking after Suffolk's communities – made a welcome return after a two-year hiatus due to Covid. Over 50 awards were presented, including those for long and outstanding service, as well as acknowledgement for some of the newest recruits.

Amongst them were firefighters from Newmarket and Mildenhall Fire Stations who received the Miles Hammond Trophy for their response to a road traffic collision earlier this year, when they worked tirelessly to prevent a person badly injured and trapped in a vehicle from having their legs amputated. They weren't alone in being honoured for their commitment, with Station Manager Darren Cooper and the LEJOG team awarded the Derek Northey Trophy for their Land's End to John O'Groats cycle ride earlier this year, which saw them raise over £54,000 for The Fire Fighters Charity whilst raising awareness of mental health support.

Trading Standards also received a Certificate of Merit from the High Sheriff of Suffolk, Jamie Lower Pinkerton, for their response to the significant outbreak of Avian Influenza in Suffolk and ongoing efforts to work with partners to slow the spread of the disease and protect the county's birds. In addition, inspiring individuals from across Public Protection were recognised, including Holbrook firefighter Charlotte Bird who was crowned Recruit of the Year and awarded the prestigious Silver Axe for her dedication to completing the 'Approved to Ride' training last year despite facing illness.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Neil Elmy, Fleet and Equipment Manager, for his service of over 20 years, during which he has overseen the design, delivery, and procurement of all 150 vehicles within Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's modern fleet.

Watch Manager Brian Stringer from Long Melford also received this award in acknowledgement of his 34 years working as a firefighter in west Suffolk, which has sadly been brought to a premature end following a terminal illness diagnosis. Brian sadly passed away soon after the award ceremony.

The evening concluded with the presentation of Her Majesty The Queen's Long Service and Good Conduct Medals and Clasps by Clare, Countess of Euston, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk. It was the first time that the long service clasps had been presented after Wil Tel, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Group Manager, campaigned for these to be introduced nationally for those in Fire and the Police who achieve 30 or 40 years of service. Wil began lobbying Government for this change back in 2013 and his dogged determination saw him write to numerous MPs, ministers, lords, baronesses, the Home Office and even Buckingham Palace to ensure that the change could come into force.

Next round of new SEND places agreed by Cabinet

The Council's Cabinet has agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND.

The £3million agreement marks the start of Phase 3 of the Capital Programme to create three additional specialist units providing 42 additional places for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This follows Phase 1 of the programme which created 825 new places across Suffolk and Phase 2, which was signed off in June 2022, and will create up to 73 new places. So far,

£45million has been allocated by Suffolk County Council to deliver the new places for Phase 1 and Phase 2 - £15million of which has been provided by the Department for Education.

In addition, Cabinet also agreed to support the Department for Education's High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) for 2023/24 of £7million to be spent on the development of units attached to mainstream schools to support students with social, emotional and mental health problems and speech, language and communication needs. This will create up to 168 new spaces, and is an addition to previous funding agreed from the Department for Education in 2022/23 for up to 78 new places.

The third item signed off today was Cabinet's support for the application for funding for two free schools from the Department for Education. One of these will be in east Suffolk and support children with severe learning difficulties and the second will be built in Sudbury for those with autistic spectrum disorder and complex social, emotional and mental health problems. If the bids are successful, both schools will teach children and young people from across Suffolk.

In total, Suffolk will deliver up to 1,317 new places for children and young people with SEND by 2025/26. The next step for Phase 3 is for schools across Suffolk to express an interest in having a specialist unit and, following these expressions of interest, the most suitable sites will be chosen. This programme for improved provision is informed by the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2022-25.

New special schools opened in Suffolk include Castle EAST, a communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

Full Council - 20th October - GLI Motion

Suffolk GLI submitted a motion calling for Suffolk County Council to reject the idea of an "Anti-Growth Coalition". The term, coined by former PM Liz Truss, suggests anyone who criticised the government's economic policy was part of a coordinated group against growing our economy.

Our Group wanted Suffolk County Council to denounce this term and acknowledge the importance in different opinions – including the view that growth should consider social responsibilities, community voices, sound financial policy, and environmental limits. Something we believed this government was not adhering to.

The Conservatives voted against our motion, however we still feel it is important that our local authorities reject untruthful and divisive claims made by a Prime Minister.

Cabinet Meeting - 11th October

The Cabinet met for the first time since the summer political recess. The Cabinet agreed to spend £2m on new care provision for Children and Young People in Felixstowe. In addition, SEND services received £10m to provide more specialist units in Suffolk. Our Group was hugely supportive, as we want to remove the pattern of families travelling cross-county for support.

The Suffolk Local Access Forum submitted their annual report, which included their concerns about Sizewell C and its effect on green networks and Rights of Way. Our Group have strongly campaigned in support of the Forum's position, and we will continue to voice concerns over the damning effects of nuclear power on our coastal landscape and biodiversity.

In addition, the Cabinet endorsed Transport East's new 2050 strategy, which focusses more on green travel and linking rural communities to local economies. Our Group recognises the importance of connecting isolated residents for both profession and pleasure, and we will ensure SCC adopts all priorities into its own policy.