

## District Council Report for Annual Parish Meeting 2024

Dear Residents

The May 2023 District elections brought about a seismic change in the running of West Suffolk District Council. The new administration called the West Suffolk Working Partnership contains 19 Independent Councillors. 17 Labour, 1 Green and 1 Lib Dem.

The new Chairman of the Council is myself Roger Dicker. The new Leader of the Council is Cliff Waterman.

The new administration immediately worked on issues that were previously not considered important.

The 1st success was introducing the Decarbonisation Fund which would upgrade all Parish owned street lights to LED thus saving the Parishes thousands of pounds in new equipment and running costs. This was particularly advantageous for the villages in the old Forest Heath Area.

The Council has also introduced its new strategic priorities:

- Supporting thriving communities
- Sustainable growth
- Delivery of affordable, available and decent homes
- Environmental resilience

Further improvements introduced include the £200,000 investment for a better grass cutting regime after previous years appalling service.

It has also been decided not to carry on with £60 million plus Bury St. Edmunds Leisure Centre whilst interest rates are currently so high.

The District portion (10%) of your Council tax bill has been set at a government advised 2.99% thus enabling a balanced budget for the next 2 years.

West Suffolk is coming towards the end of the new Local Plan process .All 3 stages have been consulted on and a final plan will be eventually presented to a government inspector for approval.

As of this moment there is still no decision regarding the huge Sunnica Solar Farm.

During this year the Council has obtained a number of government grants to invest in local services and helped many different community groups thrive through the cost of living issues.

I myself have helped various local groups with my locality budget including Gazeley children's play area , village newsletters and websites , supported village events, help fund speeding traffic equipment and signage.

Once again I will have new a locality budget for this year so if I can help let me know.

In the 19 years I have represented the ward, without doubt this is the most excited I have been with this current administration.

Councillor Roger Dicker

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