

# Parish Report – February 2021

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## 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.

### **Streets Guide Consultation**

Suffolk County Council is currently running a consultation on a new Streets Guide, which will assist designing streets for new residential developments especially by promoting walking and cycling. The consultation closes at 5pm on 10th February 2020. Parish Councils can submit responses at the link below:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-development-advice/suffolk-design-streets-guide/>

### **Suffolk County Council Elections**

With a strong possibility that the election will still take place on the 6th May, I would like to inform you all that I will not be seeking re-election. It is a decision that I made after the last election. I made a promise to my late wife Rita that it would be the last election I would contest and it is a promise I intend to keep.

It seems an age ago that I was elected to represent you all back in early 2000 and I would like to thank you all for the welcome and support you have given me. My successes and failures are too numerous to list here but perhaps the achievement that I am really proud of is the extension we obtained to Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it is also the project that took the greatest amount of time to complete some 21 years! I am also proud of the fact that the AONB have launched the "David Wood National Landscape Award" an award that will be presented annually to recognise volunteer contribution.

I will not be disappearing completely as I intend to pursue some volunteering opportunities that may/will come my way in the not too distant future and hopefully these will keep me in contact with the happenings on the Peninsula. So whoever is successful in succeeding me at the next election I hope you will give them the same welcome that you have all afforded me.

In the words of a well known song "Thanks for the memories".