



Annual Report 2018/2019
Botesdale Parish Council

By County Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

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State of the County – A new administration took over running the Council last May. The administration now includes Leader Cllr Mathew Hicks, a new Deputy, Cllr Mary Evans who is also Cabinet Member for Highways, and a new Chief Executive, Nicola Beach. Improving local roads and infrastructure and using limited funds efficiently have been the main focus over the past year.

Major Road Improvements –The Council has started detailed design for the Lowestoft Third River Crossing, the Beccles Southern Relief Road was officially opened in September; and planning approval is expected shortly for upgrades to the A140 near Eye (2 new roundabouts and a link road).

The Council is considering options for an Ipswich Northern Fringe Road. Public consultation on possible routes and junctions with the A14 and A12 will begin in the Summer 2019.

'The Hold' Historic Records Centre, Ipswich - construction has commenced and the new centre is set to open in Spring 2020. It will replace the existing Ipswich Record Office in Gatacre Road, the Lowestoft and Bury Record Offices will remain open. On this basis Suffolk Record Office was on March 28th awarded Archive Service Accreditation, a quality standard which allows records of national importance to be retained in the County in the long term.

Upgrades to Suffolk Recycling Centres – The County is investing £6m into upgrades or replacement at Foxhall, Haverhill, Ipswich and Stowmarket; a suitable new site is needed for the latter. Construction is expected to get underway in 2019/20.

Highways - Suffolk Highways service centres at Rougham, Halesworth and Ipswich are now well established and community wardens have been working with parishes. In January Suffolk Highways purchased three Nu-phalt Thermal Patching machines aided by a central government grant. This enables Highways teams to carry out more effective, durable road repairs in poor weather.

The web-based reporting system is now widely used for road and drainage issues - as a reminder:

Report a defect - <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>

To check on area roadworks - <https://roadworks.org/>

Broadband – The Council, in partnership with Districts, has secured £1.725m from DEFRA to help provide Superfast Broadband access to rural businesses currently excluded from fibre broadband rollout, and to enable additional non-business premises to upgrade. This will help connect some of the remaining 2% of the County not covered by existing contracts, although more work is needed to reach all premises. Connections for the qualifying rural areas will begin later in 2019.

Planning and Major Projects – Suffolk County Council works closely with applicants and comments on national scale projects, it determines applications for waste, minerals, highways and some schools and is a consultee on local planning proposals.

In the past year the Council has reviewed and objected to several aspects of EDF's Stage 3 plans for Sizewell C namely road transport, effects on protected species and landscapes, and construction logistics. Similarly, it has objected to plans for land-based infrastructure associated with off-shore wind farms over harm to the natural environment and cumulative effects on the East Suffolk coast.

Nationally the Government issued an updated National Planning Policy Framework in July and new guidance on Neighbourhood Plans. The Council has begun work on its own Design Guidance which will be available later this year to help influence and improve the quality of new development.

Council Budget Challenge – With the reduced government revenue support grant the Council needed to raise council tax this year to help pay for needed services, particularly health and social care which now take $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total budget of £519m.

If you have comments or questions about this report or any other matter please get in touch as I would like to hear your views.

Thank you for your support and participation over the past year.