

Stradishall Parish Council Meeting Monday 1 March 2022

Joint report from Nick Clarke, Karen Richardson and Marion Rushbrook, West Suffolk Councillors for Clare, Hundon and Kedington Ward.

The council's year end is 31 March 2022 so not too much to report. A lot of work has gone into getting the budget set for 2022/23.

Public meeting re HMP Highpoint

Nick chaired the meeting with around 40 residents talking. Bobby Bennett spoke regarding Suffolk County Council issues. Karen and Marion were in attendance. Nick will give a verbal update this evening.

Input for the meeting came from Victoria Atkins MP (Ministry of Justice), Matt Hancock MP and Ian Gallin (Chief Executive of West Suffolk Council), Cllr Peter Stevens (West Suffolk Council) and Phil Stead (Civil Servant, working with Victoria Atkins).

Locality budgets

Our annual locality budget is due to finish 31 March 2022, but we need to have the details submitted to our locality officer by 15 March. We can take some funds over but if we do not spend a certain amount, we will lose it. Please contact us as soon as you can if you have any requests, many of the local parish/town councils are using the funds for their Jubilee celebrations.

Council Tax

The annual budget was passed at a Council meeting on 22 February to help West Suffolk be greener, healthier and more prosperous area to live.

Residents in West Suffolk will see their council tax rise by £11.52. Homes in band D, (which represents the national average cost of homes) will pay £1.71 (for former St Edmundsbury Borough Council residents). Most homes will pay less however as the majority in the district are in bands A-C

More than £450,000 to be invested into community projects

A Community Chest investment of more than £450,000 into the work of charities and voluntary groups across West Suffolk has been agreed by the Council's Cabinet.

The Council's Grant Working Party recommended 30 projects and organisations receive funding, offering residents in West Suffolk help with their health and wellbeing, family support as well as counselling and specialist services. Advice and

advocacy services, projects designed to help build confidence and skills in young people, community activities, and support groups and support services have also been put forward for funding.

West Suffolk Council's Cabinet agreed the recommendations of the Grant Working Party when it met on 8 February.

An example of how the funding is used - Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre is working with Haverhill Town Council and other partners to deliver The Freedom Programme, they received £16,225 in funding from WSC. The project should be running by May and will provide a weekly coffee morning and creche. Recorded domestic abuse offences has nearly doubled in Suffolk in the last 5 years figures up from 5,122 to 9,700.

Levelling up

Suffolk, with eight other county areas has been offered the opportunity for a County Deal as part of the levelling up, more detail on www.gov.uk.

This follows on from last year when Suffolk County, district, and borough councils, in partnership expressed an interest to Government to take this forward.

Suffolk is recognised as a forward-thinking area in this respect, the 'Suffolk System' of working is already collaborative and indeed was one of the main reasons our COVID-19 response has been so good.

Funding

West Suffolk Council has opened applications to the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF) We have been allocated a little over £4m for the scheme which is for businesses who have been affected by COVID-19 but have not so far been eligible for any of the other business rates relief given to retail, hospitality, leisure and childcare nurseries. Applications close 15 March 2022. For further details visit www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19business

Applications for Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG) for hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses in the business rates systems and Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) to help some types of businesses, including those outside of the business rates system, who do not qualify for OHLG are now closed.

Some of the above may overlap with Cllr Bobby Bennett's report –this is due to the West Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council working together.