

**Gislingham Ward
Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham Parva, Thornham Magna, Wortham &
Burgate, Wickham Skeith.
District Councillor Report**

May 2026

<p>Devolution and local government reform</p>	<p>New website - jointly created by Suffolk’s county, district and borough councils - providing simple and clear information and updates about Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk.</p> <p>The <i>Future Suffolk</i> website will go live Friday 15 May at www.suffolklgrhub.gov.uk</p> <p>It has been developed in-house by the councils’ communications teams, and will evolve as plans progress, but it already includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explainers about LGR • a timeline of the LGR process and key milestones • maps showing the new council boundaries • details about the 2027 shadow authority elections. <p>The site also includes an interactive map showing provisional ward names and boundaries, as well as details of councillor numbers. These have been shaped, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's guidance, by cross party groups of councillors with support from our democratic services and elections teams.</p> <p>Elections to the new ‘shadow’ unitary authorities will take place in May 2027. The unitary councils will take over formal responsibilities on ‘vesting day’ in May 2028. Until then, the existing County and District Councils will continue to deliver services as normal. This transition period is to enable detailed work on reorganisation to take place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections to the new unitaries – expected May 2027 • Mayoral elections – expected May 2028
<p>Council funding for neighbourhood plans</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council has introduced new funding to support Parish Councils to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans and Reviews. A Neighbourhood Plan is written by the local community to help ensure that the right types of development are built in the right place.</p> <p>As government funding has been withdrawn Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have agreed alternative funding for our area, with grants of up to £20,000 to support groups to prepare Neighbourhood Plans.</p>

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<p>Clarification Joint Local Plan</p>	<p>The new Joint Local Plan is proceeding in response to significant changes in national planning policy (December 2024) and updated Government housing requirements. The most recent Call for Sites exercise, held from 20th October 2025 to 9th January 2026, was an essential early evidence-gathering stage. This followed an earlier Call for Residential Sites exercise undertaken between 5th January and 2nd February 2024.</p> <p>What is being published and why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Councils are publishing a map of all sites submitted during these Call for Sites exercises. This will be published on Friday 27th February and can be accessed here from Friday https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites and https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites • This is not a list of preferred development locations. • Publication promotes transparency and ensures communities have early visibility of what has been suggested. <p>Key Messages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No planning status is granted by submission. Sites do not benefit from any presumption of development. • Submissions will now be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria. • Residential sites previously submitted in 2024 are still included in the assessment process. • Assessment outputs will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in Spring 2026. <p>Officer assessment does not determine allocations — that occurs at the draft plan stage, which will be subject to full public consultation.</p>
<p>Changes to waste collection and recycling start in June</p>	<p>The Better Recycling scheme is starting in June. This will see the collection of food waste and additional items for recycling, with more frequent collections overall. Until the start of the new scheme in June, residents should continue to use their existing bins as normal.</p> <p>Information packs are being sent out with further details, and information can also be found here: www.suffolkrecycles.org.uk and on social media @suffolkrecycles</p>
<p>Solar for Business</p>	<p>Over 250 solar panels were installed last month to the rooftops of sister companies Wrightfield and Wrightform at Mid Suffolk Business Park in Eye, as part of a new council scheme – offering businesses the opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and save on energy bills by signing up to have solar panels provided and installed on their premises for free.</p> <p>Electricity generated by the panels is then sold to the business at a rate lower than their current tariff, helping to slash energy bills and improve their bottom line.</p>

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	<p>In its first month of operation, the installation has already generated 15,000kWh of renewable electricity and is on track to not only save the firms more than £10,000 in electricity bills in its first year, but also save up to 25 tonnes of CO2 emissions.</p> <p>Solar for Business has been running successfully in West Suffolk for more than nine years, but has only recently been extended, with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils joining forces with West Suffolk Council to allow even more businesses to benefit.</p>
<p>NSIP's</p>	<p>The Inspectors for Norwich to Tilbury have already visited the Waveney valley on the unaccompanied site visits, there are no MSDC visits on the accompanied site visits on 27th May. We have already made submissions to the examination about impacts on the Waveney Valley and preferences for undergrounding, both in writing and verbally at the recent hearings. The Inspectors have asked for some more viewpoint assessment in this area but it focusses on the setting of a listed church in South Norfolk rather than the valley landscape as a whole. We are still pursuing compensation for the Waveney Valley impacts.</p> <p>I asked the following at the last meeting: “The amount of infrastructure needed to connect the different solar installations is in my opinion disproportionate to the benefits of the scheme? Is there any guidance on how much the impact of connection of a Solar Farm to the Grid can be tolerated?”</p> <p>From Bron: “Regarding EcoPower – there’s no specific guidance as such, it’s each case on its merits as with other planning decisions. But, we can raise this concern at the upcoming statutory consultation which will go to joint cabinet briefing for member review and amendments sometime in June or July. We have also already raised concerns about the cumulative impacts around the substation and will be pursuing this point further. I have copied Cllr. Dan Pratt into this email as he is taking over the lead on the EcoPower project with my support so, between, us we can make sure we are representing the concerns of communities effectively.” Statutory Consultation starts 22nd June for 8 weeks.</p> <p>Bron Curtis Principal Planning officer (NSIP's) is continuing to run the expanded Norwich to Tilbury regular drop in session that includes all NSIPs including Ecopower Suffolk. The sessions will be held via Teams using the existing meeting invite and is open to anyone with queries about any NSIP. The next session is at 11.00. 11th June Link to join: Norwich to Tilbury NSIP: Babergh and Mid Suffolk drop in surgery Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams</p>

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