

## Gislingham Ward

Mellis, Gislingham, Thornham Parva, Thornham Magna, Wortham & Burgate,  
Wickham Skeith.

### District Councillor Report

February 2026

<b>NSIP's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Norwich to Tilbury examination in public has started. Agendas and application details are available here: <a href="https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027">https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027</a> . MSDC are continuing to offer a regular drop in support session for this project which all ward members and Parish Councils should have received an invite for. This is open to anyone, and the invite can be shared. The next session is on 12<sup>th</sup> March.</li><li>• Cllr Stringer attended on behalf of Mid Suffolk District Council. He made clear that we believe these plans must be halted so alternative options - such as an undersea route or undergrounding of the entire length of the project - can be properly considered. We remain seriously concerned about the project's impact on the environment, communities and businesses.</li><li>• Consultation on the scoping report for the EcoPower project has been received.</li><li>• Ecopower Suffolk Scoping report now published can be found on the Government's website:</li><li>• <a href="https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110019/documents">https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110019/documents</a></li><li>• Useful maps in Part 9. Very detailed but a great deal has been produced by consultants so reviewing by residents with local knowledge is very important, for example it appears that red deer have not been mentioned despite disturbance to their migratory routes being raised.</li></ul>
<b>Elections update</b>	<p>The Mayoral elections will be postponed until May 2028, and that means they will probably be held under a Supplementary Vote System rather than First past the Post.</p> <p>SCC received permission to cancel the May County Councillor elections after claiming that holding the elections would compromise the ability to deliver LGR on time. Reform UK lodged a judicial challenge – to be heard 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Feb.</p> <p>Following legal advice County elections will be held in May. Mid Suffolk did not pause preparations for the elections so they will be able to proceed as normal.</p>
<b>LGR updates</b>	<p>We are expecting the Government to publicise the final decision by the end of March 2026.</p>
<b>Local Plan</b>	<p>Late last year MSDC &amp; BDC carried out a "call for sites" this process is to identify land that could potentially meet the housing requirement identified, if enough sites come forward can then set policies that direct the development to the most appropriate locations. (including potential new settlements)</p> <p>Between Mid Suffolk &amp; Babergh we had over 1100 sites put forward, these sites have now been plotted on an interactive map which will be shared with you all very soon.</p>

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	<p>The Councils will be beginning a five-week consultation on a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) Scoping Report commenced 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026, which will run until Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The Scoping Report is a key early document supporting the preparation of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan Review.</p> <p>This will be published on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February and can be accessed here from Friday <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites">https://www.babergh.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites</a> and <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites</a></p> <p>This is <b>not</b> a list of preferred development locations.</p> <p>Planning policy officers will begin work to assess all these sites for their suitability for development and inclusion in the joint local plan.</p> <p>Comments can be made via the online consultation system or to <a href="mailto:localplan@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk">localplan@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>Sustainability Appraisal helps the councils understand the social, environmental and economic impacts of the plan and the different options we could take. This Scoping Report explains how they propose to carry out that assessment.</p>
<b>Biodiversity and Nature Recovery</b>	<p>At its November meeting, Mid Suffolk District Council approved a package of funding of £1.8m over the next three years for nature recovery and biodiversity. The funding will be used to carry out the plans of the cross-party biodiversity working group, as well as meeting government proposals for biodiversity and nature recovery.</p> <p>Around half of the funding is going towards a new community Nature Recovery Grant fund. The fund will be split equally between both community-led projects and projects for the restoration of rivers and their catchments. The funds will support communities to create and manage habitat and nature recovery schemes, including natural flood management.</p> <p>This is the link to the introduction: <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk/boosting-biodiversity-by-funding-nature-in-your-neighbourhood">Boosting biodiversity by funding nature in your neighbourhood - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk</a> And there is a link to the funding page: <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk/funding-opportunities-and-support">Funding opportunities and support - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Scrolling down the page there are several schemes that fall under “Boosting Biodiversity.”</p>
<b>Better Recycling update.</b>	<p>The new bins are now arriving in parts of the district. Every home across Mid Suffolk will be receiving a new blue lidded bin and a smaller food waste bin during the next 2-months. The blue-lidded bin will be for glass bottles, jars, tetra pak, plastic bags, cans and plastic bottles. Paper and card will go in the existing green-lidded bin.</p> <p>The new bins will not be collected until June.</p>

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<b>Neighbourhood development plan funding</b>	<p>At the end of last year, the government cut the funding for neighbourhood development plans! Mid Suffolk has now looked at what is left in the pot, as well as added new msdc funding to have a revised offer for parishes wishing to bring forward their plans.</p> <p>The revised offer will be communicated with our communities once it has been through the cabinet for approval, the new policy will put ward member support at the heart of any funding being sought.</p>
<b>Council budget 2026-27</b>	<p>At the Council Meeting Thursday Feb 26<sup>th</sup> the Budget for 2026/27 was discussed and approved.</p> <p>The Government settlement has not been favourable for Mid Suffolk, creating a cliff edge in 2029/30 and the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation will have costs that will accrue to the current Council (whilst anticipated savings will accrue to the successor authorities). As the council's reserves are still robust there was some discussion in favour of not increasing the District council's share of the Council Tax however going forward the Medium-Term Financial Position forecasts the Council switching from having a significant surplus on the revenue budget to a significant deficit from 2029/30 onwards, mainly due to reduced funding from Government as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement. This position is not sustainable over the longer term. As part of demonstrating responsible financial management, a series of efficiencies and staff reductions form part of the overall £13.808m of savings and it was decided to increase the DC council Tax by 2.99% – the govt. recommendation. The budget assumes a gross expenditure of almost £40M (up about 15% from the current year) and gross income of £43M (up about 16% from current year).</p> <p>For the Housing Revenue account there is a proposal for a 4.8% (CPI + 1%) increase in social rents, and a 4.5% increase in garage rents. Utility charges and service charges in sheltered accommodation is continuing to increase to reach full recovery over 4 years.</p> <p>There are still long term concerns regarding the sustainability of the HRA account and financial constraints on building new social housing (940 families on the waiting list for social housing in MSDC) without significant government reform but it is financially stable, has a clear road map for bringing properties pu to a good standard and will continue to play a vital role.</p>
<b>Council Grants</b>	<p>For information on Mid Suffolk council grants available to support community projects and organisations, please see: <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/community-funding</a> or email</p> <p>BMSDCgrants@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk for advice on funding options. My Locality budget will be renewed in April so if you have a project that you feel would qualify for funding please contact me then.</p> <p>Further information on Locality Grants: <a href="https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards">https://midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/locality-awards</a></p>

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