

## District Councillor Report: Earl Stonham Parish Council January 2026

<p>Devolution and local government reform – election delays</p>	<p>The government has delayed the election for a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk until May 2027. The government has also offered the option for Councils undergoing reorganisation to further delay local elections i.e. the County Council election currently planned for May 2026. There is a County Council vote on this on January 12<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>The Green Party position is that we must have elections at the allotted time not decided by politicians when it's convenient for them. You might be interested in Cllr Mellen's opinion piece in the EADT. <a href="https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/25737171.suffolks-voters-denied-democratic-rights/">https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/25737171.suffolks-voters-denied-democratic-rights/</a></p>
<p>Skills and Innovation Centre at Gateway 14</p>	<p>Construction work on a state-of-the-art skills and innovation centre at Gateway 14 in Stowmarket has reached a key milestone, with core construction now complete. The centre is due to open later this year.</p> <p>The centre will provide meeting spaces and support to assist local businesses. The centre will also provide training and skills development to fill local skills gaps, in partnership with local colleges and universities.</p>
<p>New Youth Council for Mid Suffolk</p>	<p>The November Council meeting agreed unanimously to set up a new Youth Council for Mid Suffolk. The Youth Council aims to provide an avenue for young people to have their views heard, and to enable young people to better understand and engage with the political process. It is hoped the Youth Council will be operating by September 2026, the beginning of the next school year.</p>
<p>Cost of Living Support</p>	<p>A reminder that residents can seek help and support with the cost of living, here: <a href="https://www.babergh.gov.uk/midsuffolk.gov.uk">Help and support for you - Mid Suffolk District Council - babergh.gov.uk / midsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Council staff and Citizen's Advice are also available in person for advice on debt, bills, and lots more – residents can drop in to Eye Library on Friday mornings.</p>
<p>Changes to bin collections – to improve recycling</p>	<p>A reminder that there are upcoming changes to bin collections in the area from June 2026. To ensure residents get the latest updates and correct information, please signpost people to this website <a href="https://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/recycling-composting/recycling-at-home/better-recycling">https://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/recycling-composting/recycling-at-home/better-recycling</a> where the details are clearly laid out.</p>
<p>Rural Support Fund</p>	<p>A reminder that the Mid Suffolk Rural Support Fund is still open for applications. This is a fund created to support towns and villages outside of Stowmarket. More information can be found on the Mid Suffolk website. <a href="https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/-300k-per-year-to-revitalise-rural-communities">https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/w/-300k-per-year-to-revitalise-rural-communities</a></p>

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