

District Councillor Report: Earl Stonham

March 2026

Devolution and local government reform – election reinstatement	<p>The County Council elections planned for May 2026 have now been reinstated.</p> <p>The current plan is for: County Council elections in May 2026. Unitary elections in May 2027. Mayoral Elections in May 2028.</p>
Call for sites	<p>The Council has published a map of all sites submitted during these Call for Sites exercises.</p> <p>https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/web/babergh/w/call-for-sites</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>This is not a list of preferred development locations. Publication promotes transparency and ensures communities have early visibility of what has been suggested.</p> <p>No planning status is granted by submission. These will now be assessed against planning policy, constraints, evidence and deliverability criteria.</p> <p>Assessment outputs will be published through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) in Spring 2026.</p>
River Gipping Trust	<p>The River Gipping Trust has announced it has secured a £ 16,000 locality award grant from Mid Suffolk District Council. This will go towards improvements along the Gipping footpath, including two new footbridges.</p>
A14 litter	<p>Concerns about Health and safety (including a fatal accident in Norfolk) have meant litter picking along fast routes such as the A14 have had to be re-assessed. Contractors are about to be employed to address the litter. The A14 and slip routes will get cleared within a few weeks.</p> <p>Ultimately, this problem is caused by an irresponsible minority of people who think it is acceptable to throw rubbish out of their car windows.</p>
Pylons	<p>National Grid's plan for more pylons in the Suffolk countryside should be halted, leading councillors from Mid Suffolk District Council have told a public hearing (11 February).</p> <p>National Grid proposes 159km of new overhead lines between Norwich to Tilbury, with the route cutting through the Suffolk countryside.</p> <p>Mid Suffolk has called for a delay to the project so other options can be considered and costed – such as an undersea route or undergrounding of the entire length of the project. They cite serious concerns about the impact on the environment, communities and businesses. This is consistent with the position taken as under previous governments.</p>

<p>Former HQ site in Needham Market</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council has announced the sale of the remainder of its former office site in Needham Market to Hatch Homes – in a deal that supports the town’s regeneration and realises funds for reinvestment into council housing.</p>
<p>Armed Forces Day, Stowmarket</p>	<p>Plans are beginning to take shape for Armed Forces Day, which will be held in Stowmarket on 27th June, supported by both Mid Suffolk District Council and Stowmarket Town Council. Armed Forces Day is a chance to show your support for the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community. There will be a number of attractions such as climbing wall, assault course, and hopefully a helicopter from Wattisham. It is shaping up to be a great family day out. Please support if you can.</p>
<p>Bins</p>	<p>The delivery of new bins ready for the rollout of Better Recycling has now started. This means the delivery of a new blue recycling bin and the new food caddie and food recycling bins.</p>
<p>Mid Suffolk budget and Council Tax</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk Budget Scope In addition to the day-to-day provision of the current services and current activities the 2026/27 budget includes further funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major implementation of food waste collection and better recycling • Enhancements to our current depot in readiness for Better recycling • Further support for recycling education • Cost of living support and Council Tax Support scheme • Support for our towns and rural communities outside of Stowmarket in the wider District • Support for sports and leisure facilities in the wider district • Sorting out various long standing property issues in the District • Communities Infrastructure projects • Leisure centre maintenance • Stowmarket sports facilities - SHELF Project • Support for Stowmarket regeneration • Support for the Cosy Homes scheme which has been expanded to offer solar panels • Funding for the Reach Retrofit Hub to be an advice centre for the district • Grant funding for nature recovery and community biodiversity groups • Support for new footpaths and cycle ways • Completing the build of the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway • Developing the skills offering for the Stowmarket Innovation Gateway • Funding for disabled adaptations and the disability action plan • Expansion of temporary accommodation to avoid homeless residents being put into bed and breakfast accommodation and save on costs going to private providers • Use of Land Transfers and/or Capital Receipts to alleviate the pressure in the HRA • Support for planning such as neighbourhood plans • Support for local food production • Support for local energy production

Mid Suffolk District Council is increasing Council Tax by 2.99%.

About 8% of the total Council Tax bill is attributable to Mid Suffolk District Council and this % has been reducing. For context for a Band D property the increase attributable to Mid Suffolk is about £5.23 per year or 10p per week.

Cllr Nick Hardingham

Nicholas.Hardingham@midsuffolk.co.uk

07848007758