

## **Notes taken at Parish Councillors meeting with Chris Chambers**

**Wednesday 15 October 2025 at 12.00**

**Packhorse, Moulton**

### **Attendees:**

Suffolk County Councillor Chris Chambers  
Suffolk County Councillor Andy Drummond  
Ben Greening (representing Nick Timothy MP)  
Matthew Fox (Community Liaison Engineer for Suffolk Highways)  
Cllr Richard Mather (Moulton PC)  
Joanne Kirk (clerk to Moulton PC and Risby PC)  
Cllr Jeremy Muller (Lidgate PC) (chair)  
Cllr Ian Hutchinson (Stradishall PC)  
Cllr Mel Karunaratne (Wickhambrook PC)  
Cllr John Gale (Ousden PC)  
Cllr Brian Fry (Worlington PC)  
Cllr Gwyn James (Great Barton PC)  
Justin Hook (clerk to Icklingham PC and Fornham All Saints PC)  
Cllr Jessica Hale (Little Thurlow PC)  
Cllr Garry Corcoran (Whepstead PC)  
Cllr Julie Duckett-Brown (Fakenham Magna PC)  
Cllr Peter Crofts (Horringer PC)  
Cllr Fergus McCoig (Freckenham PC)  
Cllr Sandra Dwan (Red Lodge PC)  
Cllr Antonia King (Hargrave PC and Dalham PC)  
Cllr Peter Clarke (Coney Weston PC)  
Cllr Rosalind Hamill (West Row PC)  
Cllr Nigel Curtis (Barton Mills PC)  
Christine Eastell (clerk Kentford PC)  
Cllr Philippa Winter (Newmarket TC)  
Cllr Bodek Grzeck (Exning PC).  
Luke Barber (SCC Strategic Transport and Policy Manager).

### **Apologies**

Cllr Margaret May (Great Wratting Parish Council)

### **1. Introductions.**

### **2. Opening statement by the chair Cllr Jeremy Muller explaining why parish councils in West Suffolk have joined together and what the issues are for them.**

Cllr Muller explained that the meeting was called due to concerns amongst parish councils about speeding and community safety and the realisation that parish councils are all in the same position. They can do so much but ultimately are constrained by Suffolk County Council's current policies.

He gave a brief explanation about Lidgate which is on the busy B1063 with narrow or no footways and an ongoing problem with speeding. They created an 'action plan' which included a 40mph buffer at the two entrances to the village and traffic calming to slow traffic down. Highways Community Liaison Engineer Matthew Fox had written a comprehensive response as to why Lidgate would not be able to do these things and for those that were possible the cost would have been prohibitive for a small rural parish. The cost quoted for a buffer zone alone was £15,000.

The purpose of the meeting is to understand why it is so difficult to get things done in Suffolk, when neighbouring county councils like Cambridgeshire are much more proactive in supporting local communities, and to make Suffolk County Council aware parish councils want this to change.

Cllr Muller also said that traffic and speeding is top of the One Suffolk agenda in setting new relationships with parish councils and residents, so he is aware that this message is beginning to be heard.

**3. Response from Cllr Chris Chambers.**

Cllr Chambers explained that he came to the meeting to listen and understand what the issues are. He also explained that with Local Government Reform transport strategy will be one area handed to the Mayor.

He acknowledged that the current 20mph policy is too restrictive but Suffolk County Council is looking to change this and empower communities to have 20mph speed limits. The current policy is being revised and he hopes to take this to cabinet by the end of the year. He also recognised that costs could be simplified to support parish councils.

He explained about the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which is in place in mid Suffolk. This is money from developers which is reinvested in the local neighbourhood where the development occurs to fund services like schools and infrastructure like roads. With devolution this should be introduced across Suffolk as CIL funding is not currently available in West Suffolk.

**4. Questions and comments from parish councils present.**

**The main issues raised were:**

**a) Inconsistencies between Suffolk County Council's approach and neighbouring county councils.**

Cllr Hale (Little Thurlow) asked how is it that Suffolk Policy prevents us from introducing measures when neighbouring counties encourage parishes to do things?

Joanne Kirk (Moulton PC) said that this is a Suffolk, not a national issue as other county councils like Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire are governed by the same national policies. Suffolk County Council is still basing its decisions on outdated policies and until now there has been no will to change this. Parish councils do not want to wait for devolution as there is no reason why change cannot happen now.

Ian Hutchinson (Stradishall PC) said that there needs to be a loosening of bureaucracy.

Cllr Bodek Grzeck (Exning PC) asked if SCC could liaise with Cambs CC to find out how they have managed to do what Suffolk can't. Cllr Chris Chambers said that in Cambridgeshire work is funded by CIL.

**b) Costs**

Cllr Drummond mention the possibility of using S106 money. Smaller parish councils explained that they do not have access to S106 money because they are not allowed development other than single properties of limited infill. This was the case for many of the parishes present. These parishes generally have low precepts and do not have access to the large sums of money required to cover the cost of things like traffic calming and legal fees.

Luke Barber explained that costs like legal fees for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) are the same for every county (and community). The suggestion was made that rather than requiring individual TROs the cost could be reduced by having one TRO for each community or possibly even between parishes. Luke Barber said that this is possible already but if someone objects, it would hold up all the parishes involved.

Joanne Kirk (Moulton PC) asked if weight is given to village surveys which evidence the support of the local community. Luke Barber said it did.

Joanne Kirk (Moulton PC) said that one way to reduce costs for Suffolk County Council and to improve local communities would be to allow Community Liaison Engineers to have the flexibility to carry out minor works such as replacing road signs, refixing signs or cutting back vegetation around signs. This would improve the perception of Suffolk County Council and the appearance of local areas at the same time. Making it easier for parish councils to use their own highway approved contractors would also help reduce costs. Matthew Fox agreed that minor works could be managed and implemented less expensively by his own teams.

Joanne Kirk (Moulton PC) also spoke about a recent accident in Moulton where a resident tripped on a root growing up through a pavement and was badly injured. The resident reported it and was told it did not meet the criteria for repair. This is the sort of local issue where a solution might be found by parish councils working with Suffolk County Council.

Cllr Philippa Winter (Mayor for Newmarket) said that she found CLE Matthew Fox very helpful but it is frustrating that his hands are tied.

Cllr Chambers also mentioned Suffolk County Council's Community self-help.

Cllr Brian Fry (Worlington PC) suggested that there should be a fund or grant for smaller villages which do not have access to S106 money to apply for to help support road safety measures.

**c) Traffic calming/buffer zones**

Aside from being very expensive, it is very difficult to get any sort of agreement from Suffolk County Council to allow traffic calming.

Cllr Chris Chambers said he wasn't aware that Suffolk County Council had prevented traffic calming however a number of parish councils present confirmed that they had attempted to pursue this option and had been told that it would not be possible.

Cllr Jeremy Miller (Lidgate PC) said it would help to have an overall and common process for all parishes for matters like buffer zones.

**d) Speeding and enforcement.**

Peter Clarke (Coney Weston PC) said that Norton has a very proactive Speedwatch team. Smaller parishes said they struggle to get volunteers.

Cllr Brian Fry (Worlington PC) said they can only afford one SID which is rotated around 4 locations. A new SID costs £2.5K. Cllr Chris Chambers said that county councillors have a locality budget which can be used to fund new SIDs.

Cllr Ros Hamill (West Row PC) said that they are trying join with Beck Row to set up a speed watch group. Their issue is problems with drivers from the nearby airbase. The worst time for speeding is at night outside the window when Speedwatch checks can be carried out. Other parishes confirmed that they have the same issue with some frightening speeds being recorded. Cllr Hamill said that they are lucky enough to have a very supportive community police officer who comes to meetings and carries out speed checks.

One councillor said that they voted against pursuing the option of a 20mph limit as there is no point as it would not be enforced. Enforcement is the key. Other parish councils present agreed that there is not enough enforcement.

He also asked if there is any evidence that SIDs help with reducing speed limits. Cllr Muller pointed to evidence from London, where all TfL roads are 20mph, as is the case throughout Wales, where the 20s Plenty evidence is clear.

Cllr Chris Chambers said that enforcement was a Police issue as Suffolk County Council does not have the power to enforce.

Cllr Mel Karunaratne (Wickhambrook PC) suggested organising a similar meeting with the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore.

A question was asked about average speed cameras which one parish council had seen in a different village.

Lackford PC said that they had asked for this on the A1101, but the Police said it was an SCC issue and vice versa and that they do not have the money to install them anyway.

The consensus amongst parish councils present is that technology is the way forward provided it is enforced.

Cllr Gwyn James (Gt Barton PC) said that they sometimes put their SIDS in spy mode. 90% comply. 10% don't and enforcement is needed to target that 10%. He said over time as people get used to the SIDS compliance reduces. He also said it is worth sending the data to the Police.

**e) HGVs**

Cllr Antonia King (Hargrave PC) said that they have a huge issue with HGVs which are not complying with their lorry plan.

Luke Barber said that if the HGV traffic relates to anything that requires planning permission, West Suffolk Council can say there is a set route which needs to be followed and enforce. He also spoke about Lorry Watch which is a voluntary scheme where volunteers note down details of HGVs and give them to Trading Standards.

Cllr Jeremy Muller (Lidgate PC) and Cllr Ian Hutchinson (Stradishall PC) said that they have had success by targeting the individual lorry companies and contacting them.

**f) General comments**

Ben Greening who was representing Nick Timothy MP wants to see parish councils have more power. Community safety comes up regularly when he is out and about. He has launched a campaign to promote this.

**g) Chair's closing statement.**

Cllr Jeremy Muller said that Cllr Chambers will need to now consider the matters which have been raised, and present them to Cabinet at the next opportunity. He said that we need common aims, better mechanisms and fewer or no obstructions. The time for change has come and for colleagues at Suffolk County Council to deliver.

He thanked all those present and in particular Cllr Chambers and we will await feedback from him.