

Report for Lavenham Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor 14.12.23

First of all may I please wish the Parish Council and residents of Lavenham a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

20mph Lavenham

It was interesting to attend the public meeting on this organised by the Parish Council. As I said at that meeting, I'm fully aware of the issues of speed on Melford Road and elsewhere and indeed I and the Parish Council asked for the whole village to be 20mph. But that is not what the current County Council policy is going to give us. They are not going to change their policy any time soon. But after much arguing by me and the Parish Council we are being offered something that covers far more of the village than they original proposed. I have asked Highways to push ahead with the TRO consultation with the existing design. It is already paid for.

Melford Road footway overgrown

This was first raised with me by a resident and Cllr Maybury in early October. The response from Highways was that they had assessed the footway and found that the "useable width of the footway is between 0.5m at the narrow point and around 1.0m or over at the widest point." Their policy on prioritising intervention states that "only vegetation forcing pedestrians into the carriageway requires cutting back". They believe that these widths are useable, so they won't be doing it. Though they say it will "continue to be monitored as part of our routine inspections."

I have written back to highlight the point that elderly who may use walking frames or sticks and people with buggies use this footway and asked that it therefore be moved up the priority. But this is a political decision by the administration of the County Council on how to prioritise their limited money, which they are unlikely to change.

Resurfacing minor roads before May 2025 County Council election

The Conservative administration is borrowing £10m to spend resurfacing minor roads up to end of March 2025 when County Council elections are held. At Cabinet on Tuesday 7th November, we heard the detail that the Council plans to use reporting of poor road surfacing on quieter residential roads and cul de sacs where residents live to plot a programme of repairs over that period. This would seem to indicate that the more people report the need for resurfacing the more likely the road is to be resurfaced.

Flooding Investigations and Repairs

Following the Storm Babet flooding around the county, Suffolk County Council teams have cleared 8,412 drains of storm debris and removed over 100 trees blocking roads. The County, with Babergh District Council, will be administering funding recently announced by the government:

- A grant (£500 for homes and £2,500 per business) to assist with initial recovery costs.
- Households and businesses that suffered internal flooding between 19th - 25th October due to Storm Babet may be eligible for 100% discount to council tax / business rates for a minimum of 3 months.
- Flooded property owners will also be able to apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding. Details of this latter are due to be posted on the council website week beginning 18th December.

Details so far are here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>