

Report for Lavenham Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor for 5 Oct 2023

Footway Green Willows

The County has received permission to build a footway across a small strip of land owned by Babergh and the engineer is putting together a “commissioning document” which should give us an estimate of costs in the next few weeks.

County Policy on Funding footways

I have asked about this. The director of Growth Highways and Infrastructure has replied telling me that there is no actual written policy not to fund new footways from the county’s budget. It is just that every year, the administration effectively decides not to include anything in the budget for them, leaving funding up to councillors discretionary budgets, grants and developer contributions. He also implied that DfT guidance is to prioritise maintenance over creation of new infrastructure when the budget is tight, despite the Highways Act talking about a duty to provide footways.

Lower Road flooding

Because the road is lower than the river level when the river is high, blocking the gulleys will not stop flooding but will prevent the water draining away. A potential option is to have permanent signs but there is obviously a cost to this. Having spoken to Highways, finding a site where the signs do not get run over may be difficult. In addition permanent signs for temporary flooding tends to get ignored after a while. Another, and I would suggest more effective option is to form a Self Help Scheme with the County whereby resident volunteers – who live near Lower Road are trained and provided equipment and signs by Highways to put out when there is a flood. Details here : [Community Self-Help Scheme - Suffolk County Council](#)

Weed treatment programme

I’ve asked for urgent advice on why this has slipped and when it is likely in Lavenham, having not received a reply as I write. I will update via email if I get anything further.

20mph Lavenham

I am chasing for an update on the design for this scheme so that we can get as quickly as possible to a finalised plan. There will be an inevitable delay because the contractor drawing up the design had to change, on 1st October, from Kier to the new county council contractor Milestone. I am waiting to hear whether the project manager who was handling this has transferred to Milestone and has kept the Lavenham work. She was optimistic this would happen. I will update as soon as I hear. To clarify a few queries on support for 20mph in the village. The first neighbourhood plan survey in 2016 asked the question “Do you support a 20mph speed limit in Lavenham?” 64% of the village responded to this survey and 63% of the respondents answered yes. In the second survey the proportion of respondents saying yes increased, although there was a lower return rate.

20mph - Bildeston being installed

20mph signs are half way through being installed in Bildeston. There will, once work recommences with new contractor, be an extended 30mph buffer zone a few hundred metres out of the built up part of the village at the north and south ends.

Lower speed limits A1141 Hadleigh to Semer

Earlier this year I commissioned an officer report on reducing the speed limit on the road between Stone Street and Letts swimming pool from 60mph to 40mph. The officer's report says the issue is "finely balanced" but allows that it could be possible. It will be submitted for decision by end of September. Coincidentally, a separate request to change the speed limit on Stone Street, at the Hadleigh end of the A1141, from 40mph to 30mph has recently been approved. I will send the report to your clerk in case it is helpful for your situation.

Ground source heating project for Bildeston school and surgery

I have contributed £666 from my locality budget towards the cost of a pre-feasibility study of powering Bildeston School and the next door Surgery through a bore hole and a ground source heat pump. Energy bills are the largest cost for both operations and a bore hole project, while costly to install, would massively cut the energy bills for both.