

## **Lavenham Parish Council report by Robert Lindsay, County Cllr 5.3.26**

### **Access over Railway Walk re allotments**

I'm waiting to hear from the County's property officer who was apparently on leave last week about what the access status across the Railway Walk.

I reminded them again on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. I will let you know when I have something.

### **Clay Lane**

After District Councillor Clover raised the issue of part of Clay Lane being made impassable apparently by construction vehicles, the Rights of Way Officer tells me that Highways are investigating the causes and potential enforcement.

In the meantime Brent Eleigh Parish Council has expressed a desire for funding to improve the surface of Clay Lane. I passed this request on to Babergh CIL team, who have received it favourably and have added the Lane to their LCWIP list (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan).

A bid for CIL funding for improving the surface of the Lane from Brent Eleigh PC is expected shortly.

### **County Council elections back on**

As you probably heard, last month the Government suddenly U-turned on its move to scrap County Council elections and they are now back on with v little notice.

This is owing to a legal challenge which the Government found it could not defend against, although before its lawyers saw the challenge the government was adamant that it had legal precedents on its side.

All in all, this strikes me as representative of the cavalier way local government mergers are being pushed through. It is of a piece with the revelation last August that the Government never did its own review of what the cost savings from the merger of the councils might be. It instead relied on an out of date 2020 report by the County Council Network for its claims about massive cost savings. In fact, CCN had revised its findings last year to say there may well be substantial costs and it would be cheaper to keep the councils as they are.

### **Vehicle Removal Trial for Resurfacing Works**

Often road works have been delayed and extra costs added because people fail to heed the warning to move their cars beforehand.

Suffolk Highways have announced that they will trial towing away vehicles that have not been removed between March and June this year for about 19 specific planned resurfacing works.

The Council will, a fortnight before, place cards placed under windscreens and through residents' doors. Two days before the works are due to begin, cones will be put out along with signage warning that it will become a towing zone on the day. If there are cars parked on the road on the day, officers will knock on doors to try and find the owner and as a last resort, vehicles will be moved. There is a £70 fine to get it back.

Essex County Council has been doing this for about a decade and found that it has worked to cut costs of road works.

### **County Council Chief Executive quits with no new job to go to**

On 13<sup>th</sup> February, it was announced that Nicola Beach, the Chief Executive of Suffolk County Council, would be resigning after six years at the end of March.

Because the Council will be dissolved in May 2028, the administration will be appointing two existing directors – Andrew Cook (currently deputy CEO) and Mark Ash (currently director of local government reorganisation) – into new joint chief executive roles for the remaining two years of the council's existence.

### **Suffolk Sustainability Initiatives Nominated for Awards**

Suffolk County Council is one of 24 UK local authorities to be shortlisted for the first APSE Energy Awards, which are held in partnership with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The nomination recognises the council's Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme, and the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group's Home Energy Efficiency Assessment Scheme (administered by Reed In Partnership).

Both these schemes were a result of declaring a climate emergency. However, the County has removed the word "climate" from its policy to deal with national strategic infrastructure projects.