

**May '25 report to Bungay and Wainford villages from
County Councillor Judy Cloke**

May has been a quiet month , partly because of taking a holiday , but also because there have not been many scheduled meetings. I missed full Council because of sinusitis, which can be quite debilitating and plagues me at least once a year.

In Bungay I attended the Town Reeve's VE day tea party, not as a guest , but because I was running the bar. Everyone seemed to have an enjoyable afternoon.

I also attended the drop in session at the Library, where again there were no residents. The annual Parish council meeting and Civic awards event was very well attended though and it is really encouraging to see so many volunteering groups in the town, quietly getting on behind the scenes with their chosen task – and to see this acknowledged by the Town Council. I was delighted the team at the Library won a well-deserved award

Barsham and Shipmeadow – the bus stop flags have finally been installed – and there is a timetable attached to one of the posts, which is a great result. I believe we have also reached agreement over the funding for a new sign to indicate the turn into Viewpoint Mews , which it is hoped will have a calming effect on traffic. The residents have already had some of the undergrowth around the entrance cleared to improve visibility, as suggested by our Highways engineer. I am arranging for the installation of traffic monitoring equipment on the B1062, possibly partly funded by the Parish Council .

Mettingham – I have registered on the portal the pot holes in Muck up lane and I have been dealing with a request for traffic calming measures in Low Road.

Ringsfield – I understand the 'Slow' signs have been painted in the road near King's Lane and I have ordered a traffic surveys at Ringsfield Corner, these are booked for September.

Suffolk generally:

Local Government Review

Work will continue on proposals to scrap Suffolk's six councils and replace them with a new, single, fit for purpose, authority delivering all public services - after the Government encouraged further work on the plan.

The proposal, which independent analysis by accounting firm PwC shows would save over £104 million in just five years and £26 million a year thereafter, has been reviewed by the Government. The money saved could be reinvested in vital public services. Ministers have urged the proposal to be developed further ahead of the final plan being signed off in September 2025.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for devolution, local government reform and NSIPs, said:

“The Government is encouraging all councils in Suffolk to continue to develop proposals for reorganisation. It’s clear from their interim feedback that our single unitary council for Suffolk proposal best meets the criteria, and any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services like social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes.

“This is all quite apart from the significant extra cost of having more than one council. All the evidence shows that one council for Suffolk is the only viable option to deliver significant savings that can be reinvested into frontline services. In the first five years, early independent figures suggest a single council will save £104 million, while breaking Suffolk into three, as the districts and borough suggest, will cost taxpayers an additional £52 million. To be clear - their proposal would cost more than the current 50-year-old system!

“The savings from creating a single unitary council can be reinvested into frontline public services that benefit residents and ensure their council tax is as low as possible. The funding could be reinvested in services like pothole repairs, waste collection and disposal, housing, social care, planning, parks and leisure, supporting town centres, school placements and travel and street cleaning.

“But this isn’t just about money, it’s about people too. A single council will absolutely be able to reflect and serve the whole of Suffolk, rural and urban, and our plans will clearly show how local priorities and residents’ voices can and will be central to decision making.

“If we’re going to create a truly sustainable and effective council structure for Suffolk, then one new council is not just the only viable option, but also the best one.”

More than one council would cost more

Creating two or even three councils for Suffolk, including a Greater Ipswich, has also been proposed by the five district and borough councils in Suffolk. If three were created, it would mean expanding Ipswich’s current boundaries to include areas like Felixstowe, Woodbridge and possibly even Needham Market – as well as the villages in between. But having multiple councils would actually cost money, not save it, and the costs will take years to get back. A key part of this calculation is the cost of breaking up critical public services such as social care. The national report by PwC has shown that the financial cost of breaking up services into three councils would be over £150 million, not to mention the risk to vulnerable people caused by the upheaval.

Solar Farming

The 250-megawatt solar farm and battery energy storage system will be spread out over 1,500 acres at multiple sites in the parishes of Occold, Eye, Brome and Oakley, Stuston, Thrandeston, Mellis, Burgate, Thornham Parva, Gislingham and Yaxley.

The report outlines many concerns, including:

- Numerous parcels of Grade 2 agricultural land to be lost
- Significant impacts on multiple communities and sensitive habitats and landscapes, such as Mellis Common
- Numerous sites of high archaeological sensitivity
- Cable corridors causing irreversible damage

“Frankly, there are serious questions about whether [this scheme] should ever have seen the light of day.” said Councillor Richard Rout.

Furthermore, the county council strongly recommends that EcoPower publishes an interim design report by the end of June 2025. This would provide refined plans in light of further assessment work to be conducted, and the responses to this non-statutory consultation.

This would go some way to providing reassurance and clarity regarding the proposals to the local community. It will also allow all concerned to review more details, in timely fashion, ahead of the statutory consultation expected later this year.

“My primary concern remains for the many local communities, who are already feeling the direct impact of the proposals of this scheme – which hasn’t even been given approval, let alone been built. Frankly, there are serious questions about whether it should ever have seen the light of day.

“It seems that the aim of this project is for it to be delivered as fast as possible, encouraged by the government’s unrealistic obsession to decarbonise the grid by 2030.”

[Suffolk County Council recently expressed its concerns](#) in response to government proposals concerning reforms to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

One of the proposals is to remove the duty on project promoters to consult and engage with communities before a project is presented to the Planning Inspectorate. Further, the duty to have regard to any comments on voluntary consultations undertaken by a promoter is also proposed to be removed.

Suffolk Community Awards

The Suffolk Community Awards 2025 will recognise and celebrate all those who have improved the quality of life for communities across Suffolk.

The Suffolk Community Awards, now in its sixth year, is brought together by Community Action Suffolk, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Association of Local Councils.

This year’s award ceremony is set to be another prestigious, heart-warming event showcasing the excellent work and achievements of individuals and groups across Suffolk, being recognised by 18 awards, including a new entry which will recognise one local councils’ response to climate change.

Other award categories range from youth participation and young person of the year to community building, contribution to volunteering, most active communities and council, councillor, young councillor and clerk of the year.

Nominations are now open and must be made by **Sunday 13 July** at www.suffolkcommunityawards.co.uk

Once received, all nominations are carefully considered and judged by an expert panel before being announced at the award ceremony which will take place on Tuesday 23 September from the Museum of Food in Stowmarket. The event will be hosted by former BBC Radio Suffolk breakfast presenter, Mark Murphy MBE.

Dementia Marketplace

On Wednesday 25th June 2025, Care Development East, in partnership with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB), will host the third annual Dementia Marketplace—a free, one-day event offering practical advice, support, and information for anyone affected by dementia.

Held from 10:00am to 3:30pm at [Trinity Park Conference & Events Centre, Ipswich](#).

Dementia is the UK's biggest health and social care challenge—and it's growing. One in three people born in the UK today will develop dementia in their lifetime. By 2040, 1.4 million people are expected to be living with the condition. Early diagnosis is key—it unlocks treatment, support, and care that can make a real difference.

What to Expect:

- Marketplace – Information and advice from over 40 dementia-related services and support groups
- Expert Speaker Sessions – Short, accessible talks throughout the day
- Innovation Room – New for 2025, come see, and try out a range of equipment and digital care technology to help keep people as safe and independent for as long as possible. It will also include the launch of Reverie a new cutting-edge Virtual Reality (VR) app designed with and for people with dementia featuring customised Suffolk film content
- Supervised Activities Room – A safe space for people with dementia while carers explore the event

Opening at 10:00am with a short welcome from:

- Gareth Everton, Executive Director for Adult Social Care
- Eugene Staunton, Deputy Director, SNEE ICB

Event Details:

Venue: Trinity Park, Ipswich, IP3 8UH

Date: Wednesday 25th June 2025

Time: 10:00am – 3:30pm (drop-in)

Entry is free, [please book your ticket today via Eventbrite](#).

Judy Cloke

11 June 25