

Nedging with Naughton PC 6.7.20 Report from County Councillor Robert Lindsay

Cycling

On 16 June, the county council cabinet approved a new costed, prioritised list of cycle routes around the county following on from a motion I proposed two years ago. The funding has not been secured but some at the top of the list will go ahead using the emergency Covid funding from Government for cycling which coincidentally was announced at about the same time. The cabinet asked officers from Highways to engage with district councils, including Babergh, to develop the rolling five year plan for cycling. If the parish council has known routes in the area it would like to see improved or created it would make sense to submit a suggestion/recommendation early. It may not end up being prioritised but at least it will be registered as a desired route. The email to use for submissions is spokes.people@suffolk.gov.uk.

Suffolk Pension fund saves £20m getting out of oil stocks in time

At the last pension committee meeting on June 1 we heard that the value of the Suffolk Pension Fund fell by £327m in the quarter January to March 2020, to £2.802bn, a drop of just over 10%, as stock markets, led by oil stocks, plummeted in the wake of the pandemic I had been urging the pension committee for some time to cut its exposure to fossil fuels and in January, before the plunge began, we completed the transfer of £260m from three ordinary tracker funds into a low carbon "Climate Aware" tracker. The low carbon tracker lost 16% in the quarter while the 3 funds we transferred from lost 21%, 17% and 21%.. This makes for a saving of about £20million.

Climate emergency – Suffolk

Suffolk declared a climate emergency just over a year ago. A cross party panel's recommendations have in the past few days been published and are today (14 July) due to be agreed by cabinet. They focus on council carbon reductions alone but there is also a Suffolk Climate Partnership – a body of environment officers from all councils in Suffolk that will look at reduction measures from the wider community. I and my group are pressing that this body have councillor representation and a higher profile.

Funding and pandemic

Suffolk's latest estimate of the costs to it of the pandemic for this financial year are £70m for 2020. It has received a £34m grant from Government for Covid so this leaves it with a £36m shortfall. There is

further Covid funding coming but a total £500m pot but it is unclear what Suffolk's share of this will be.

Test and trace Suffolk

I have been assured by the Director of Public Health that he is now getting the data on local community testing from central Government that he needs to enable local lockdowns should there be a local outbreak. However, I am not clear whether enough testing is yet being done, outside care homes, to pick up outbreaks in time.

Sizewell C

Earlier in July a motion to end support for Sizewell C my group brought to Suffolk county council was defeated by Conservative and Labour councillors. They argued that they first wanted to absorb the arguments from EDF in their application.