

## District Councillor Report – Palgrave April 2025

<p>Aura Solar Development</p>	<p>MSDC Planning Committee gave approval to this application on 9 April. As your ward member, I represented the range of views of residents at committee. For residents that were unable to attend, view the livestream or watch again (available on the Council’s YouTube channel <a href="#">Mid Suffolk Planning Committee - 09 April 2025</a>, I have attached my statement to committee. The developer advised that work should commence on the Marsh Farm site in Spring 2027. I will continue to work with residents and the developer to ensure the conditions imposed by Planning are implemented, and disruption during construction state is minimised.</p>
<p>Death of Cllr Rachel Eburne</p>	<p>With great sadness the Deputy Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, Cabinet Member for finances and resources, and Ward Member for Haughley, Stowupland &amp; Wetherden, Rachel Eburne, sadly passed away on the 14 March after a long illness. Since being elected as a councillor in 2010, Rachel had been a champion of her local community and was deeply committed to Mid Suffolk. She will be deeply missed.</p>
<p>Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation updates</p>	<p>District and Borough Councils in Suffolk have published their joint proposal on how local government in Suffolk should be re-organised. The joint proposal is for two or three unitary authorities across the county, the exact boundaries for these authorities yet to be determined. This proposal has been acknowledged by the Secretary of State. More detailed business plans for the proposed new authorities will need to be developed, finalised and agreed by September 2025.</p> <p>A government <a href="#">consultation</a> on devolution and establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority is being conducted online by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Consultation closes on 13 April 2025.</p>
<p>CIL Charging Structure</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk’s updated CIL charging structure proposals will be subject to a 6-week public consultation. CIL charging rates had not been changed since introduction in 2018. It is proposed that these are now increased and they have been viability tested before going out to consultation. Details of the proposed new charging structure can be found on the website in due course.</p>
<p>EcoPower Suffolk</p>	<p>The developer has now delivered a range of presentation events outlining their proposals for the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) impacting most villages within Palgrave ward as well as villages within neighbouring Eye and Gislingham wards. An informal consultation is in progress until 22 April and feedback on initial proposals has been invited. Details are available on the developer’s website: <a href="#">EcoPower Suffolk - Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage</a>.</p> <p>I have invited all relevant Parish Councils to consider nominating a representative to a joint community group which will form a liaison with the developer during this and subsequent planning phases. As an NSIP, the local District Planning authority (MSDC) is not the decision-maker, but a consultee. It is highly likely that this proposal will be progressed, so along with expressing opposition to it (if that is your position), there is merit in considering and forwarding mitigations, both at this informal stage and when the statutory consultation phase commences in the autumn.</p>
<p>Housing Allocation</p>	<p>Following the Deputy Prime Minister’s announcement of significant new housing requirements, details of the initial calculations have been completed by MSDC and circulated in a briefing to all Town and Parish Councils. The indicative new housing allocation for Palgrave is 130 (less 6 for which planning consent has been approved, commenced or not yet commenced) to be delivered over the next 20 years. Parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan are encouraged to consider developing one. MSDC will provide support.</p>

Locality budget 2025/26	The next round of locality funding is due to be launched in the next month or so, but we can now begin to accept applications. The total amount per councillor has increased to £10,000.
Village Hall and Community Centre Sustainability Grants	Following examples of I have requested that a dedicated space is created on the Council's website to signpost grants available to Village Halls and Community Centres to support the installation of energy saving and sustainable energy sources (e.g. insulation, solar, battery and air heat source installations where appropriate), reducing their environmental impact and the running costs associated with operating those buildings.

Tim Weller

Ward Member Palgrave

Cabinet Member Environment, Culture & Wellbeing