

## **Bawdsey Parish Council SCC News Update – March 2015**

### **SCC freezes council tax for fifth year in a row**

SCC's share of council tax is to be frozen for a fifth year in a row, so Suffolk residents will not pay any more than they did in 2010/11. The council has successfully delivered savings in excess of £130m over the last four years. However, with the government's deficit reduction programme set to continue until at least 2018/19, there is a forecast of a further £120m budget shortfall that will need to be addressed over the next three years. The council tax freeze was agreed as part of the budget proposals for 2015/16, which include savings of £38.2million, to be made across services delivered by the council during the financial year 2015/16. The bulk of these savings (£24.6m) will be delivered through wide-ranging transformation programmes which will result in the council becoming a leaner and more focused organisation. The remaining savings will be made by reducing previous contingency budgets, set aside for major projects and change management as well as making other budgetary savings from within service areas. Meanwhile, over the last five years, there has been a reduction of around 47% in workforce numbers across council services.

### **Changes to children's centres get green light**

Children's centre services in nine areas across Suffolk will be made more accessible for those most in need. A review of children's centres in Suffolk, including a wide-ranging public consultation, was concluded earlier this year. It recommended that services in nine children's centres be moved from their existing locations to different settings, either using other local community facilities or neighbouring children's centres. There would also be additional outreach work included, to ensure that our excellent children's centre services really get to those most in need of them. At the same time, the changes would allow the council to dispense with buildings that were either too expensive or not fit for purpose and so save money for the Suffolk tax payer. The decision, which was confirmed at a meeting of SCC's cabinet last month, will save up to £265,000, thus putting the services on a more sustainable footing. The nine centres affected are at: Brett River, Hadleigh; Jigsaw, Thurston; Meredith, Ipswich; On Track, Haverhill; Quayside, Ipswich; Reydon and Southwold, Reydon; Roman Hill, Lowestoft; Sea Breeze, Felixstowe; and Woodlands, Glemsford. As Gordon Jones, SCC's cabinet member for children's services, said: "This decision will allow us to deliver more services for the community, from more locations. The needs of children and their families have changed over time and we must continue to develop our services accordingly."

### **Public meeting on Lowestoft third crossing sees debate of options**

250 local people gathered last month to learn about an independent report regarding the potential crossing options for Lake Lothing. The discussion took place at Orbis Energy in Lowestoft. SCC leader Mark Bee was on hand to answer questions and respond to audience comments, alongside Waveney MP, Peter Aldous, and Graham Newman, SCC's cabinet member for roads and transport. They all spoke on aspects of the independent report, produced by international engineering experts WSP. In particular the point that the easterly option is the most cost-effective in relation to project cost and benefits to the economy and traffic flow. All three representatives agreed that a third crossing is needed to re-invigorate the economy in Lowestoft and on the basis of the independent report, the easterly crossing option should be pursued and taken forward as the preferred option. As Mark Bee said after the event: "There is a need for us to follow the best course of action that gives us the best chance of making this project a reality. We are not alone in our view, a number of businesses and people who understand the dynamics of environmental protection and business generation in Lowestoft, including ABP, believe an easterly option

would be the best option for the long term sustainability of the town.” For more information visit the [consultation page for the proposal](#) on the Suffolk County Council website.

### **Applications invited for the Leading Lives Benefit Fund**

Applications are currently being encouraged for the Leading Lives Community Benefit Fund for 2015. Leading Lives is a Suffolk-based social enterprise, formerly part of SCC, which provides support for a wide range of people. This year, they are awarding grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 to Suffolk-based charities and community groups who support people with learning disabilities, older people with dementia, people with autism, young people in transition and family carers. This year’s fund has been doubled in value to £30,000 to enable larger grants to be awarded and more projects to be supported. The fund has been set up to further Leading Lives overall vision to enable vulnerable people to lead the life they choose. The fund will support projects that allow vulnerable people to live more independently, to gain new skills, to stay safe and to participate in the life of their communities. Criteria for funding and an application can be found on our website [www.leadinglives.org.uk](http://www.leadinglives.org.uk) . Please share this information with organisations and individuals who you believe may be interested in applying.

### **Have your say: County-wide adult autism survey launched**

SCC’s autism survey has been launched as part of the council’s commitment to empowering adults in Suffolk to live independent, healthy and fulfilled lives. The survey can be completed by adults with autism themselves, their carers, or, of course, together. Responses will help the county council learn more about what is important for people living in Suffolk with autism and help to ensure there are innovative and accessible local community-led support networks available. As Alan Murray, cabinet member for health and adult care, said: “We would like to hear about experiences in accessing local services and through this raise awareness of the voluntary community support groups in place that will help those affected by autism to lead a healthy and fulfilling life. Responses to the survey will help to identify new and exciting ways that will inspire Suffolk people to work together and support each other to build ‘autism friendly communities.” The survey can be found on-line at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/adultautismsuffolk](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/adultautismsuffolk) If a paper copy of the survey is required please contact: **Steven Emmerson** on **01473 265350**, or email [steven.emmerson@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:steven.emmerson@suffolk.gov.uk).

**Andrew Reid – County Councillor Wilford Division**

**Email: - [andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk)**

**Mobile: - 07545 423799**