

West Suffolk District Councillor Report for Hargrave Parish Council AGM May 2025



Key events from WSC over the previous year

- The cancellation of the Western Way Development (WWD), the WSC administration considered the project unaffordable. intention was to retain the main frame of the former NHS supply building in Olding Road to incorporate a new leisure centre with a public service hub. The existing Leisure centre in Beetons Way is now being modernised.
- A £1million decarbonisation fund was created to support third-party organisations to reduce their net power consumption has been widely supported and aids West Suffolk Councils carbon neutral target.
- Brandon has received £500K funding to explore expanding business and housing in Brandon and the A11 corridor
- Sunnica Solar Farm
- The Administration at West Suffolk Council, withdraw from the legal challenge regarding the Government's decision to impose this vast Solar Farm partly in West Suffolk.
- Incidentally there is a current planning application for Solar Farm between Whepstead and Horringer.
- The WSC Local plan is currently being ratified by the Government, the statutory necessity will decide on future development within WS. All Parish Councils were consulted and contributed to the final result.
- Provincial House – Haverhill. Adult learners are new skills and at this new education centre open in Haverhill High Street. West Suffolk College, part of the Eastern Education Group, is to open its Personal and Professional Learning Centre at Provincial House under a phased opening. It follows major investment by West Suffolk.
- Increasing demand on the WSC welfare budget for housing support and rough sleeping.
- Newmarket's new Cinema is now open with support from WSC.
- There's more detail in all my reports submitted to Depden PC and are on the PC website.
- By far, the most recent to proposal to effect not just WS, but the whole County, is Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation. Where Suffolk and Norfolk will have a single Mayor with powers such as control of the Police and Fire Brigade but not local Government.

All of the existing Councils (not Parish or town Councils) within Suffolk, that is WSC, Babergh, Mid Suffolk, Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk Coastal will disappear and be replaced by one, two or three Unitary Councils with the same process happening in Norfolk. This is National Government policy and is happening in a very compacted timescale. Much is evolving at this time and exact detailing is scant.

Mike Chester



District Councillor for the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward