
West Suffolk District Councillor

March 2022 report

Ousden Parish Council

Report Covers three main topics

- West Suffolk District Council setting of the annual Budget (Statutory requirement)
- National and Local Funding in connection with the Queens Platinum Jubilee year
- Events throughout West Suffolk in 2022

1. **At the Meeting of West Suffolk District Council (WSC)** on Tuesday February 22nd, the substantive of an eleven-item agenda was to agree the budget for the next financial year, Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council said: -

A budget is of course not just a set of numbers on a balance sheet. It contains within it the thousands of ways in which WSC delivers services and improvements to the lives of our residents every day. It is also the means that WSC can deliver our vision and the ambition West Suffolk has to, put simply, help to continue to deliver a healthier, more prosperous, and greener West Suffolk.

This budget also supports our continuing economic growth work to encourage and support new and existing businesses in West Suffolk – and connecting to our colleges and other business support organisations to make sure people have the right skills and training. We are investing ourselves as well as creating the right environment for business and the growth of the local economy to help provide people the opportunities for better and more employment and skills. In addition, we continue to invest very significantly in other areas - from car parks to our parks - helping our towns and villages and bringing more people to our area.

The health of our communities is also vital. If the pandemic has taught us anything it is not only the importance of the wellbeing of our residents but also the ways the public, private and volunteer sectors can work together to improve outcomes for people. We are already at the forefront of this work with LifeLink and the creation of our hubs, bringing health and leisure services together with education and better access to services. We have already invested millions of pounds into this work and this budget illustrates how we will continue this, while continuing to provide the many day-to-day services we do. We continue to invest in our award-winning parks and open spaces, which people turned to through the pandemic for their physical and mental wellbeing. Equally we are making sure we support and protect the most

vulnerable, building on the successes we have already had in reducing rough sleeping and homelessness.

We will also continue this strengthened partnership working by engaging with our Parish and Town Councils in tailoring our services, so they are delivered to have the best effect locally. One of the reasons West Suffolk Council was created was not only to be large enough to champion our communities but small enough to find local solutions to issues. We recognise one size does not fit all and I look forward to moving this work on and extending our already successful families and communities' work.

This is of course not an easy balancing act. The pandemic has had a financial impact both on our income and the need to continue to support our residents and businesses through this challenging time. In addition, like all local authorities, we have to deal with the historic reduction in national funding. Government policy requires that councils meet any funding gap through income and other means such as Council Tax; and I am sure I have no need to remind you that Council Tax only pays for 20 percent of our cost of delivering services and that we get just 11 percent of people's overall Council Tax bill. It is also perhaps worth noting that we have been harmonising Council Tax for the two former areas of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury since West Suffolk Council was created, and this is the final year of that process. We will continue to invest in our area to bring financial and other benefits but also lobby Government with partners for better funding.

2. **Funding opportunities** that may assist groups with delivering initiatives and events for the Platinum Jubilee

National Funding

- [Sport England's Queen's Platinum Jubilee Activity Fund](#), which will open at the beginning of 2022, will focus on the role of sport and physical activity in tackling inequalities and building stronger communities. Throughout the year community organisations will also be able to apply for grants from the Arts Council's [National Lottery Project Grants programme](#)
- [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) who will support communities to take action to help natural green spaces flourish as a legacy of the Platinum Jubilee.
- The National Lottery Community Fund's Platinum Jubilee Fund will provide grants of up to £50,000 to 70 impactful community projects across the UK **NOW CLOSED**. In addition, grants of up to £10,000 from [The National Lottery Awards For All programme](#) will be available for community-led events throughout 2022.

Local Funding

Suffolk Community Foundation 'Let's Create Jubilee Fund'

- Grants of between £750 and £10,000 are available to voluntary and community groups to develop creative and cultural activities as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022. Applicants to develop creative and cultural activities through music
- Theatre Dance Visual arts Literature Combined Arts – including festivals and carnivals Museum, library activities Film/Digital

- Projects must be delivered in June 2022, preferably taking place over the 4-day Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend from 2-5 June. All grants must be fully spent by the end of June. **Closing date for applications 28 February 2022**

The Suffolk Canopy Fund

- A tree planting and preservation campaign that will leave a lasting legacy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. To support tree planting, ongoing maintenance and community access to associated green spaces across the County.

West Suffolk District Council Locality Budget Funding

- Funding available for planning local community celebrations from this financial year March 2022. Please note, financial assistance available from April 2022, funds can be used for activity and operational/delivery. Please contact your Families & Communities Officer for further details.

I hope you find the above helpful. For information regarding local and national funding for the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations please contact jon.eaton@westsuffolk.gov.uk

3. The Abbey of St Edmund 1000th Anniversary Celebrations

A year of celebrations has been planned for 2022 to mark 1,000 years since the founding of the Abbey of St Edmund in Bury St Edmunds by King Canute. The celebrations are being coordinated by the Abbey 1000 Group (made up of different organisations in the town), alongside The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership.

Delayed by the former Covid restrictions, this event, will really put this region on the map. More detail follows below. My main focus is the Community Day on July 16th which is organised by West Suffolk District Council and is a 'Celebrations for All' community picnic in the Abbey Gardens will be accessible allowing hundreds of people with mobility issues to take part. Many groups are invited to participate.

This event, free to the public to attend, has the wonderful Abbey Gardens as the venue, along with the remains of the Abbey and history of St Edmund which also feature as a central pillar to the yearlong celebrations. West Suffolk Council is the Community Day sponsor, but funding is very limited, and the Community Day must be largely self-financing.

The event will be held on the bottom field near the river and Mustow St entrance. We are lining up various entertainment to perform on a stage and looking for stallholders to accompany local organisations to celebrate the Abbey of St Edmunds 1000th year.

Whether you wish to share your group with the community, provide an activity, perform on stage or anything else,

all organisations are welcome and as with the public, no charge is made.

Please note, we aim to keep the costs of the event at a minimum so if you can provide your own pop-up gazebos, chairs, and other infrastructure that would be a huge help. However do let us know if you need any support.

The site is accessible for vehicles; however, they will need to be removed prior to opening the event. A power supply, if required, will also be available at no cost.

More details will follow as the event evolves however if you wish to join the celebrations, please let us know how you can be involved.

“A thousand years is such a long time that it's hard to imagine how much the town has changed since 1020, but the wonderful events planned this year will bring to life the history and human stories connected with the once all-powerful Abbey. The programme is still growing and we would welcome ideas from groups and organisations who want to get involved in some way. It will be some while before we get this opportunity again after all!”

Anne Jenkins, Director, England, Midlands & East at [The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#) said, “We are delighted to support this project, which thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, will mean that more people will be able to get involved with, protect, and learn about the exciting heritage right on their doorstep.”

Supporting nine events

The Heritage Grant will support nine of the planned events for the Millennium Celebrations together with funding for marketing, access for people who couldn't otherwise take part and project evaluation. These include:

Exhibition of seven Abbey Manuscripts in the Cathedral Treasury (2 May–9 June 2022). This will be the first time that the manuscripts are reunited in their place of origin since 1539. Hand written and decorated by monks in the Abbey, they are on loan from Pembroke College, Cambridge where they were donated by William Smart (Portreeve of Ipswich) in 1599.

Pilgrimage and Town Tours (May 2022)

A group of walkers will make a pilgrimage from St Benet's, Norfolk to Bury St Edmunds arriving on 14 May. Another pilgrimage group will walk from Ely to Bury St Edmunds in the spring to mark the historic anniversary. Uvius, the first Abbot at the Abbey of St Edmund (1020-1044) came from St Benet's accompanied by 20 monks, believed to be 13 from St Benet's and seven from Ely.

Abiding Wisdom and procession of Benedictines (14-15 May 2022)

One hundred Benedictine monks and nuns from communities across Britain, and possibly abroad, will gather in Bury St Edmunds for the first time in 500 years since the dissolution of the monasteries. They will be joined by 400 other people and Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, who

will also be attending. The gathering will take part in a procession into the ruins of the Abbey Church; there will also be talks and workshops in the Cathedral and Ecumenical Vespers with monastic chanting.

Abbey Crypt Sculptures exhibition (May – November 2022)

A monthly changing display of sculptures will be installed between May and November in the crypt within the Abbey ruins, where the shrine of St Edmund would have stood. The first sculpture to be installed will be a giant monk (7ft 6ins tall), made from 2mm thick steel and weighing some 250kg, designed by Nigel Kaines and made by blacksmith Kevin Baldwin from Designs on Metal (see photo above).

Moyse's Hall Museum exhibition (1 July – 30 September 2022)

Helping to tell the story of St Edmund and the Abbey, The Abbey of St Edmund: Artisan and Pilgrimage exhibition will include new and original stained glass and original pilgrims' badges. There will also be touch screen displays plus family workshops and master classes in medieval craft skills.

Community Celebrations for All (16 July 2022) Organised by West Suffolk District Council

Travelling Exhibition and online presentation (from December 2020)

A travelling exhibition will tour heritage attractions, cultural venues, local schools, West Suffolk College and the town centre during the Millennium Celebrations and again in future years. It will explain the heritage of the Abbey of St Edmund and encourage people to visit the Abbey ruins to understand the history of the last 1000 years. It will also be available online.

St Edmunds' Day Spectacle of Light (17 – 20 November 2022)

A three evening Spectacle of Light show projecting images of illuminated manuscripts from the Abbey onto historic buildings plus a light trail through the Abbey ruins in partnership with West Suffolk College.

St Edmund Lecture (19 November 2022)

Details and guest lecturer to be announced.

Other event highlights

The Millennium Celebrations will boost the momentum for the various improvements to the Abbey of St Edmund that the Heritage Partnership aims to progress during the next ten years. Some of these events have been brought forward from 2020, when they were postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, others are new for 2022.

In addition to the nine events supported by The Heritage Fund, the Abbey 1000 year of celebrations will begin with the St Edmund's Day mass on 20 November. Other highlights include a concert by the Suffolk Philharmonic Orchestra on 28 May which will include a new work, Into The Light, by composer Paul Carr for soloists, a large choir and full symphony orchestra, commissioned especially for the Abbey's anniversary year.

There will also be a new Heritage Trail around the town centre created by Our Bury St Edmunds BID and historian author Martyn Taylor (see photo above) running from 21 May until 20 November. Bury in Bloom and the Cathedral Flower Exhibition (20-29 June) will focus on displays to mark the Millennium Celebrations, while a fly through video of the Abbey ruins showing how the great Abbey Church and the Shrine of St Edmund would have looked during its heyday is being produced using cutting edge CGI.

New events for 2022 include an invitation to nature lovers from Bury Water Meadows Group to join BioBlitz, a hunt for as many species of plant, insect and animal that can be found in the Abbey Gardens and water meadows on May 20 and 21, and an Education Heritage project led by Community Artist and Educator, Louise Gridley culminating in a Schools Celebration event in the Abbey Gardens on 29 June.

For all Abbey 1000 events as they are announced visit www.abbeyofstedmund1000.co.uk.

Mike Chester



District Councillor for the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward

Vice-Chair of West Suffolk District Council