

District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

1 June 2025

<p>New Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council</p>	<p>Cllr Keith Scarff (Liberal Democrat) has been elected as the new Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council, choosing Stowmarket Relief Trust as his charity for the year.</p> <p>He succeeds Cllr Dan Pratt, following last month’s Annual Council Meeting vote. Cllr Lorraine Baker was elected Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Chair's duties include civic responsibilities and selecting a charity for fundraising efforts. Cllr Scarff has chosen to support Stowmarket Relief Trust.</p>
<p>Local Government Reorganisation feedback</p>	<p>In May the government provided its response to the proposals submitted for local government reorganisation in Suffolk.</p> <p>Final proposals must be submitted in September this year, after which the government will make its final decision. The government’s letter to the local authorities in Suffolk can be found here: interim-feedback-suffolk.pdf</p>
<p>Armed Forces Covenant</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council has reaffirmed their commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, benefiting thousands of local families.</p> <p>The commitment is set out in an action plan, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special consideration is given to armed forces individuals and families when it comes housing, to ensure they are not at a disadvantage. • As part of wider work, the councils will consider how tenants and their families who are vulnerable as a result of military service are identified along with support options. • Raising awareness of opportunities to join the organisation among service leavers and supporting the needs of service families and reservists who work for the councils. • Council suppliers and local markets will also be encouraged to take action to support the covenant. <p>The councils will also be raising further awareness of the covenant with staff, including employer-supported volunteering opportunities relating to the armed forces.</p> <p>The covenant outlines actions to support current and former Armed Forces members and their families, ensuring they face no disadvantage compared to other citizens.</p> <p>While the councils have always supported the covenant, they are now restating their commitment and presenting a refreshed action plan to achieve its goals.</p>
<p>Tree for Life</p>	<p>Applications for the free Tree for Life scheme are now open for families in Babergh and Mid Suffolk celebrating new arrivals. The program is available to families welcoming a newborn or adopted child in 2025.</p> <p>Each year, parents can plant a fruit tree to mark their child's arrival, or apply for a memory tree if they have lost a child during this period. Over two thousand</p>



trees have been given out since the initiative started, with 300 families participating last year.

The scheme helps commemorate special moments and boosts tree coverage across the districts, encouraging environmental interest. Applicants can choose their tree and receive expert advice on planting and care.

CLr Harry Richardson

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