

District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

1 August 2025

<p>Local government reorganisation</p>	<p>The Districts and Borough in Suffolk have confirmed they intend to submit proposals for three unitary authorities in the county: West Suffolk, East Suffolk, and South Suffolk. Final plans are due to be debated by MSDC on 25 September, ahead of a submission deadline of 26 September.</p> <p>Though unconfirmed, it is likely that Thurston ward will be included in <i>West Suffolk</i>, should the Government support the three unitary option. A final decision is expected to be made either later this year or early next.</p>
<p>Update on refuse collection changes</p>	<p>Work continues to plan for the changes to refuse collection due to come into effect next year. It was confirmed by the Cabinet at MSDC that, although the number of bins provided will increase – and the nature of waste services will change – bin collection days themselves will not change.</p>
<p>Rural communities fund</p>	<p>The new Mid Suffolk Rural Support Fund has been established, offering a total of £300,000 for towns and villages outside Stowmarket. These grants aim support local businesses and community organisations for projects such as purchasing at-risk community assets, shopfront improvements, local markets, environmental upgrades, arts and culture events, sustainable travel, and digital infrastructure.</p> <p>Originally designated for sport initiatives outside Stowmarket, this funding was expanded following a Conservative proposal to include broader community projects in rural areas.</p> <p>The application process, funding limits, and precise eligibility requirements have not yet been confirmed by MSDC.</p>
<p>Tour of Britain event</p>	<p>Britain’s largest professional cycling race and the UK’s biggest free live sporting event will return to Suffolk in September, with the opening stages of the race scheduled for Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 September. East Suffolk will host the first stage, marking the third consecutive year that the district welcomes the world’s top male cyclists. Woodbridge and Southwold will serve as the start and finish locations for stage one.</p> <p>The second stage will begin and end in Stowmarket the following day, organised by both Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils. This is the first time two stages of the Lloyds Tour of Britain Men are being held in the county.</p> <p>Stowmarket will host the Lloyds Tour of Britain Men for the first time, having previously been the finish location for the women’s race in 2019, when Jolien D’hoore took the win.</p>

<p>Update on the Stowmarket Health, Education & Leisure Facility</p>	<p>Mid Suffolk District Council has approved £5.2 million for a new sports pavilion at Chilton Fields in Stowmarket. The facility will feature 8 changing rooms, social areas, a bar, sports viewing terraces, and a large multi-purpose space, offering enhanced amenities for local clubs and the community.</p> <p>It will replace the current 35-year-old pavilion used by Stowmarket Rugby and Cricket Clubs. Work is set to begin in spring 2026 and should take about a year, with the old building demolished once the new one is complete.</p>
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