

Report for Bildeston Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor for 11 Sept 2023

20mph limit Bildeston

I was told on 30th August that the work is still on schedule to commence next Monday (18 September) provided materials arrive on time. Road space has been booked.

Lower speed limits A1141 Hadleigh to Semer

Earlier this year I commissioned an officer report on reducing the speed limit on the road between Stone Street and Letts swimming pool from 60mph to 40mph. The officer's report says the issue is "finely balanced" but allows that it could be possible. It will be submitted for decision by end of September. Coincidentally, a separate request to change the speed limit on Stone Street, at the Hadleigh end of the A1141, from 40mph to 30mph has recently been approved.

Footpath between Nedging and Chelsworth

This Thursday, (14th September) I will speak at the county council's footpath committee in favour of legally protecting public access to a footpath that runs from Nedging Mill to Parsonage Lane, Chelsworth. The officer is recommending that a Ramblers Club application to define it as a public footpath be refused.

The route is already, probably mistakenly, on the council's own list of maintainable highways, but this means it does not have to be signposted as a footpath and public access is not as protected as it would be if it was put on what is known as the statutory "definitive list" of public rights of way.

Council warns over £30 million deficit predicted for current financial year

The latest prediction, based on the first quarter of the year is for a 4% deficit on the £688m budget the council set itself in February. This is not unexpected but the council has chosen to press release this now and state that their current answer of seeking more cuts and dipping into reserves to finance shortfalls is not sustainable. All the cost pressures, inflation and interest rates were known about when the council set its budget in February and raised council tax by 4% rather than the full 5% allowed, as the Green and LibDem opposition had proposed. Our amendment was voted down by the Conservatives. The overspend comes largely in costs for children in care with complex needs and for taxi transport to special needs schools, also growing costs of elderly care.

Hadleigh High School one of four in Suffolk so far affected by concrete problem

The county council's cabinet member for education said on Friday that three Suffolk schools were affected by the aerated concrete "RAAC" issue are East Bergholt High School, Hadleigh High School and Claydon High School. Since then Farlingaye High School in Woodbridge has also identified a problem. Hadleigh High School said it would update parents today [Monday] on whether or not it would have to delay opening for the new school year. They were aiming to do a survey over the weekend. They said they had only been made aware (presumably by the Dept of Education) that they needed to close areas where RAAC is present at 3pm on Thursday 30th September.