

Report for Bildeston Parish Council by Robert Lindsay, Suffolk County Councillor for 4 Dec 2023

Buses to Stowmarket and Bury

With much interest in a daily Stowmarket bus from a post I put on Bildeston noticeboard, and a survey by Hitcham parish council, and support from Gt Finborough PC It is plain that there is some demand for a daily bus that takes people from Hadleigh and villages north to Bury St Edmunds and/or to Stowmarket.

I have asked West Suffolk College to make an expression of interest for a route from Hadleigh to Stowmarket and from Hadleigh to Bury. They would not be the operators of the bus but they have data about demand from pupils. There are 21 pupils of West Suffolk currently who live in the IP7 postcode that covers Hadleigh, Bildeston, Hitcham, Nedging, Thorpe Morieux, Wattisham, Kettlebaston, Elmsett, Aldham and Brettenham. Suffolk One in Ipswich has 150 pupils from that postcode.

Hadleigh Community Transport is interested in running a bus daily from Hadleigh to Stowmarket at peak times to meet the college bus in Stowmarket, subject to demand and funding. I think it makes sense for Bildeston PC to also make an expression of interest and my thanks to Cllr Tuck for taking this up.

If we get expressions of interest in to the county council as early as possible we then just have to leave it to the county council whether they prioritise it and if they do, they can open talks with operators to run it.

Deadline for bids is 20th December. Details and online form here

<https://www.suffolkonboard.com/news/bus-service-improvement-plan-where-should-the-money-be-spent/>

Newberry Farmhouse

I am prepared to contribute £2k towards the c. £4k feasibility study that Highways is offering to do. I hope that the parish council and the farmhouse owners will be able to provide the balance. I do not know if SCC will find a solution. I should also emphasise at this stage that a solution that involves a build out on the High Street will be expensive and SCC will not be prepared to fund it from their own Highways budget. I am unlikely to have enough in my discretionary budget to do more than contribute to its cost. However spending a smallish sum now should at least give us a clear answer as what we can do, how much it will cost and can allow the community to make a decision about it.

Lavenham 20mph design completed

Lavenham's 20mph limit design is about to go to consultation. A few roads, including Melford Road, is not included in the limit. I will leave it to Lavenham PC as to whether they want to push ahead or delay it still further in the hope they can get more of the village included in the scheme.

Union Hill, Semer 60mph to 40mph

My application to reduce the limit here from 60mph to 40mph has been approved. But the scheme must be funded by the communities of Kersey and Semer since there is no money from SCC. At this stage it is not clear whether they will be able to fund it.