

District Councillor Report: Gislingham Ward

Mellis, Gislingham, The Thornhams, Wickham Skeith, Wortham & Burgate

November 2024

Affordable Housing on former Stowmarket Middle School site	38 new affordable homes have been constructed on the site that was previously occupied by the former Stowmarket Middle School, which closed in 2015. These houses include a wide range of sizes and rents, in order to increase affordability.
Council meeting	The monthly council was due to take place on the 31 st October, however it was cancelled due to agenda items being deferred to later meetings. The next meeting is due to take place on the 21 st November.
New Progress Power Community Benefit Fund	Mid Suffolk District Council has opened applications to a new fund which will make £270,000 available to community organisations and projects over the next three years. The Progress Power Community Benefit Fund has been provided by power generation business Drax as part of the development of the Progress Power Station on the former Eye Airfield site. £90,000 has been made available by the company each year to support local projects in the vicinity of the power station, with the fund and grant applications administered by Mid Suffolk District Council.
Stowmarket Town Centre revitalisation	At this month's cabinet meeting, funding was agreed for a list of new measures to help revitalise Stowmarket Town Centre. Measures discussed included a £400k grant scheme to assist with existing retailers, £100k to increase sustainability from the Wayfinding project, and £16k at developing overnight accommodation within the town.
Solar Together Scheme: Deadline extension	The extension for the Solar Together scheme has been extended to the 15 th November. The scheme is available for all residents for free.
Living Well in Winter Grant	The annual Living Well in Winter Grant was launched this year in order to support communities through the winter months. This includes assistance with financial management, improved accessibility for recreational activities, and the creation of new connections to allow community ties to flourish during the winter months.
White Elm Solar Farm	<p>The proposed White Elm Solar Farm has submitted a scoping report to the Planning Inspectorate. A scoping consultation has been sent by the Planning Inspectorate to the relevant consultees, including Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council and the following Parish Councils:</p> <p>Details of the scoping can be found at https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN0110003-000004-White%20Elm%20Solar%20Farm%20-%20Scoping%20Report.pdf</p> <p>From MSDC Principle Planning Officer responsible for NSIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) scoping was submitted to PINS today. We should get a consultation from PINS in the next few days.

- They intend to start informal consultation with communities in March 2025. I am expecting a draft statement of community consultation and timetable for review and feedback in the next few weeks.

Statutory consultation is expected at the end of 2025 and submission of the DCO application by the end of 2026

The deadline for responses to PINS is the 27 November.

“White Elm Solar Farm has a grid connection offer from National Grid. This provides that the White Elm Solar Farm will connect into the existing Norwich to Bramford circuit via a new National Grid 400kV substation. This new National Grid substation will be known as “Elmya Grange”. The Elmya Grange substation is to support planned upgrade works to the Norwich to Bramford circuit, part of which crosses the site in a north-east to southwest direction.”

