

Report for Lavenham PC 4/10/18

Water Street weight restriction.

As you are probably aware, Highways have at my request amended the start date from December to January 7th to avoid potential disruption to the Christmas fair.

Finger posts, village trail

These can be done on highway property, provided contractor used is approved by SCC Highways, or is Highways itself. Clare have just completed their town trail using a specialist trail contractor.

Mud Lane

Highways have sent me a map which shows that they still legally have the path as a maintained highway, though they are uncertain as the extent of the highway (the width of it). Which means that they need to keep it clear of vegetation. However they do not own the ditch and are very unlikely to ever have owned it. This means that and say they should be able to clear tree blocking path. But will not do the ditch. I understand Lower Road gullies have now been cleared.

Further £25m cuts for next year

Since warning of an £8.6m overspend in the current 2018/19 financial year, Cllr Richard Smith (Cabinet Member for Finance) has announced that there will be a further £25m of cuts in the 2019/20 budget.

Grit bins – New policy is not to supply grit heaps but only to refill yellow bins. This is owing to damage to hedges etc caused by rain washing salt away. This also makes the grit ineffective at melting ice. Grit bins have to be bought by parish council privately (£42 from gritbins.net). Have to be yellow unless in a conservation area.

Rise in schools rated inadequate or requires improvement

Suffolk County Council has revealed a sharp rise in the number of schools rated inadequate or requires improvement by Ofsted, to 1 in 5 Suffolk schools. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education has admitted that some academies in Suffolk are not improving as quickly as he would like, or have deteriorated further. This is reflected in the data, which showed that only 65% of academies achieved "good" or "outstanding" ratings, compared to 79% of maintained schools. This has raised questions over the Council's

“Raising the Bar” strategy, which was launched in 2012 with the express aim of ensuring all schools in Suffolk were rated “good” or “outstanding”.

Orwell Crossings in doubt

In July it was announced that the Upper Orwell Crossings project had been put on hold following concerns about escalating costs. Since then, Suffolk County Council has commissioned an independent review of the costs associated with the project. This analysis concluded that cost will soar by another £43m which central Govt will not pay for. Cabinet will be asking officers to “investigate additional external funding opportunities” before reporting back in December.