

County Councillor December 2023 Report

REMEMBRANCE EVENTS

It was an honour to attend the Remembrance event in Trimley on Saturday 11 November, and the Remembrance Sunday services in Felixstowe.

COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET 2024/25

The final budget proposals will be agreed at a meeting on Friday 01 December, before being presented to Scrutiny Committee in January, and to Full Council for approval in February.

ROAD MARKINGS IN TRIMLEY ST MARY

Following the repainting of faded white line markings at the footpath outside the Mariners public house, a site inspection was conducted throughout the village. A total of 16 sets of markings were identified which warranted refreshing. This included cycle lane markings, give way lines, bus stop markings and keep clear markings at the school. These were submitted to County Council Highways for assessment. A decision has been made that all 16 will be repainted, including some which did not meet the threshold for repainting, as well as those that did. This is a very welcome and flexible decision from the County Council, which will ensure continued safety for road users.

NEW HIGHWAYS CONTRACTS

In October a new contract for highway maintenance and repair commenced with MILESTONE and a street lights contract started with J McCANN. A further contract for intelligent street lights will be awarded from October 2024. On 23 November these contracts were reviewed at Scrutiny Committee, of which I am a Member. This was to examine the structure and terms of the contracts. A further scrutiny of the quality of service being provided will be carried out at a future date.

At the Scrutiny we were given details of significant changes from how previous contracts were structured. Under the former contract, payment was made for the resources, material and staff used for each job. There was no incentive to work quickly or efficiently. The new contracts are based on a "cost per defect" model. There is a fixed price for each job. The contractors will therefore be incentivised to complete work quickly, and to cluster as much work as possible for one visit in a geographical area. In addition, after an initial period the contracts will be subject to a financial penalty scheme. After 12 months for the street light contract and 18 months for the highways contract, a system will operate where clawbacks are imposed for failing to meet targets. Work will be judged against targets for 4 areas- strategic performance, operational performance, management performance and client performance.

I am convinced that these new contracts, and the way that they have been formulated and agreed, will lead to significant improvements in the County Council Highways service.

I take this opportunity to wish all Councillors and residents a happy Christmas and new year.

COUNCILLOR STUART BIRD B.A.(HONS)
COUNTY COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE NORTH AND TRIMLEY DIVISION
TOWN COUNCILLOR FOR FELIXSTOWE PORT WARD