

Report for Lavenham PC 5.9.19 Robert Lindsay, County councillor

Water Street Weight Restriction

I met the project manager last month on site and we looked at options for signage and moving the plastic island. There are one or two sites possible for extra weight restriction warning signs on Church St and High Street, though it might work out simpler and cheaper to revert back to having a huge sign on the post that is already there. The signs he says are required are massive – about a metre wide and 2 metres tall. He said he would provide costings for different options, including repainting the double yellows at the top of Water Street but I have yet to see these. He supported the idea of a sign at Cross Green, where the A134 turns off for Lavenham direction. But all will cost extra. The plastic island can not be moved further west because it would block rubbish trucks and other vehicles' turning circle. However he was prepared to remove island completely and have the bollard fixed directly onto the road and up to the edge of the "pavement". This should free room for buggies etc to get through.

Hundreds of children still unsure about school transport arrangements

In September 2019, Suffolk County Council's new Home to School transport policy will be implemented. Children moving to a new school will only receive free transport from the council if it is their nearest school and more than 2 miles from their homes. All eligible parents were asked to opt-in and apply for transport, and those who were not eligible for free transport were offered the opportunity to buy a spare seat on SCC school buses.

However, 472 applications for home-to-school transport remained outstanding at the end of August, with families unsure of whether they would be allocated a seat on an SCC school bus in time for the start of the new school year. I attended a meeting in Nayland for parents caught by this, five of them were from Lavenham and waiting to hear whether they had a paid for seat. I gather that they all now have been told they have one.

First stage of Boundary Commission review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently undertaking a review of Suffolk County Council, to determine both the number of councillors and the boundaries between divisions.

For the first stage of the review, the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group submitted a proposal to keep councillor numbers in Suffolk at a minimum of 75, with the potential for an increase to 80. This was based on the need to ensure proper local representation – the fewer councillors there are, the less representation residents receive - and encourage diversity amongst councillors, which consequently requires a more manageable workload. Furthermore, given the predicted population growth in Suffolk and the reduced funding that local government is receiving, it is likely that councillor workloads will only continue to increase in the future.

The Conservative and Labour Groups submitted a joint proposal asking for a reduction to 70 councillors.

The next stage of the review will determine the new division boundaries and will include two public consultations. The review is expected to be completed by July 2020.