Boxford Parish report by Robert Lindsay county cllr 28.10.26

New Double Yellows - Church St, Stone St, School Hill

The TRO consultation finished on October 9th. However the "decision report" - the officer's assessment of the responses - has yet to be submitted for approval. With luck this will be submitted next week to the cabinet member for Highways, he will sign it off quickly, after which Highways can raise a construction order for the contractors.

However, the contractor, M Group, then has a 14 week window within which to deliver the works. I'm told this means that it is unlikely to be done this side of Christmas. Installing road marking in winter - with wet conditions and a lot of salt of the roads can be difficult.

I have urged Highways to do everythuing can to expedite this given how long it seems to be taking. The design engineer directly in charge is not back till next week, and I will update if I have further details then.

Invoice for design phase of 20mph Scheme

I have asked Highways to start the ball rolling with this and I see they have written to your clerk asking for confirmation of your postal address so they can send an invoice for the design phase.

Signage changes entrance to Stone Street

I have sent the parish council by separate cover the officer's proposal, please feed back to her on this.

County to consult on closing up to 12 of its 32 Best Start family hubs

On 15 October, the council's Cabinet voted to consult on changes to its early help services provided by Family Hubs (formerly known as children's centres).

The plan is to use existing libraries and other community spaces to provide some downgraded family services – known as "Best Start Network Sites" - replacing the hubs that will close, saving the council £425k a year in property costs.

The county argues that outreach work and staff numbers will actually increase, however there is concern that many people without access to transport will find it even harder to get help.

Special committee to look at county's legal breaches when launching its judicial review

Back in June, council leader Michael Hadwen, took the decision to launch a judicial review of the Government's decision on unitary councils in Suffolk.

In September the council's monitoring officer took the step of publishing what is known as a "section 5A report" – a very rare public warning that Suffolk's Reform administration broke the law over the way it the review was launched.

There were two breaches, the officer found. One was that the written record of the leader's decision was not published as rapidly as the law required and the second was that documents asked for the by scrutiny committee were not provided within ten days.

Councillors on the scrutiny committee have now voted to set up a task and finish group to look into these breaches and recommend any actions. Their report will likely be tabled at the February 2027 Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Fire fighter recruitment surges following Dunwich blaze

Following the wildfire at Dunwich Heath this summer, Suffolk fire service has seen a record

number of volunteer applications for its most recent on-call firefighter recruitment campaign. The service received 219 applications, more than double the 70 to 100 applications it would typically receive across all six annual recruitment campaigns combined.

Suffolk Fire chief retires and calls for more investment

Suffolk Fire chief Jon Lacey, who has just announced his retirement, warned MPs at a committee on Tuesday 27 October that cut backs meant there were too few firefighters and that rural services in particular had to depend on “on call” firefighters with day jobs. He said many were being sent to “another fire or back to the fire at Dunwich only a few hours after they had just left…You can only rotate them around a shift so many times."