

To all electors in the Parish of Woodbridge

Notice is hereby given that the

Annual Town Meeting

Will be held at the

Woodbridge Town Football Club, Fynn Road, IP12 4LS

on

Tuesday 12th May 2026 at 7.00pm

Opportunity to meet your MP and Councillors from 6.30pm.



WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk: Mr G E Diaper

Shire Hall, Market Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4LP

Telephone: 01394 383599 | Email: townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk | Website: woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk

The Local Government Act 1972 provides that a Town Meeting shall assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June in every year. It is a meeting of Local Government Electors of the Parish for the purpose of discussing the town's affairs. The Town Mayor presides at the meeting and the Council's Standing Orders apply. The under-mentioned business will be conducted – local government electors for the parish of Woodbridge are qualified to attend and participate in this meeting.

Agenda

1. Welcome.

Introductions from the Mayor of Woodbridge, Cllr. Nigel Phipps

2. Consideration and approval of [minutes](#) of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 8th May 2025.

3. To receive a report from the Town Mayor on the Civic Year 2025/26 (limited to 10 minutes)

4. Public question time – phase one focused on issues for the Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal, Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP.

To receive questions and comments from the public and reports from local organisations. (Each contribution limited to 3 minutes).

5. To receive a response from the Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal, Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP. (Limited to ten minutes)

6. Public question time – phase two continuation to include issues for the Town Councillors, County Councillors and District Councillors.

To receive questions and comments from the public and reports from local organisations. (No time limit). Contributions limited to 3 minutes

7. To receive a response from the Town Mayor. (Limited to five minutes)

8. To receive a response from the County Councillor for Woodbridge, (Limited to five minutes)

9. To receive a response from the Suffolk County Councillor and the East Suffolk District Councillors for Woodbridge, Cllr. Ruth Leach and Cllr. Stephen Molyneux. (Limited to five minutes per speaker)

10. Closure.



Councillor Nigel Phipps

Mayor of Woodbridge

30th April 2026

8 May 2026

Dear resident

2026 – Annual Town Meeting

I look forward to meeting many of you at our annual town meeting on Tuesday 12th May.

My first year as Mayor of Woodbridge is now complete. And, with a slight feeling of trepidation, a second year may begin shortly! It is a privilege to be Mayor of a town like Woodbridge. I have had the opportunity to meet a huge number of people and get a very wide range of views and help as I try to fulfil my role both as Mayor and Chair of your Town Council. If this town is to continue to thrive it needs a strong local democracy that has ambition and the willingness to pay for that ambition.

In my year as Mayor, I have been exposed to a number of challenges including:

1. The **cost-of-living crisis** and whether we can find more local answers to this crisis and not just hope that someone else will step in.
2. **The transformation of East Suffolk** into one of the UK's main centres for the generation and transmission of electricity – with Sizewell C and the national grid projects to link wind, solar and the interconnections with continental Europe. Unfortunately, the need for a radical upgrade to our road and rail infrastructure was not given sufficient weight in the planning phases and was generally seen as an unnecessary cost. We are now paying the price as construction ramps up and the infrastructure begins to fail. We see rising mental health issues and frustration and costly delays in getting around East Suffolk. We need to continue our road & rail campaigns and insist that this is fixed.
3. **The underfunding of local government.** The economic pressures on Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council are real with the spiraling cost of adult social care and children's services coupled with the diminishing support from central government. East Suffolk is a relatively wealthy part of the UK and central government's fiscal position is tight. Are we as a community prepared to share more of the burden so as to enhance our town and support its continued development?



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4. **Active Travel Woodbridge.** How do you improve the road system in an historic town like Woodbridge so that it becomes more friendly, and safer, for pedestrians and cyclists while allowing sensible vehicle use for residents and businesses? A compromise is within reach but it is hardwork arriving at solutions that benefit the most, and inconvenience the least. The first road crossing has gone in outside St Mary's School and more should be following shortly. Recently we've had issues with reckless joyriders causing excessive danger & noise and these new traffic schemes and our greater engagement with the police should help.

In my year as Mayor, I have met many volunteers and business people who all play a big role in making the town what it is - thank you for all you do. And do keep reminding the Town Council and your Councillors where we could be doing moreor doing less. We will always need more volunteers and more people willing to create and run businesses for the Town to thrive. The recent bank closures and the devastating loss of Barretts just last week leaves some big holes in the Thoroughfare, and the Town will need to pull together going forward.

I have also benefited enormously by having in place a full set of Councillors willing to work, in a voluntary capacity, for the town. It is also pleasing to note that when a vacancy arises for health, work, family or other reasons, we have been able to co-opt excellent new Councillors. I would like to thank all for their contribution of time, expertise, insight and humour. And a reminder to you all as residents - the Town Council elections will be in May 2027. Do think about standing to help your town find ways forward in the face of the challenges I have set out above.

A thank you also to our "office" - Greg, the Town Clerk and the rest of the staff at the Shire Hall. It is currently a very small unit that faces enormous demands and I am pleased that the Council has agreed to increase the size of the team in 2026. We simply cannot have public officials running ever faster to try and keep the weakened state afloat. They need to have the capacity to deliver what we ask of them. This has included bringing our gardening team in-house with Jess, our head gardener, and Frankie, our assistant gardener. Not renewing our unsatisfactory out-sourced model for gardening is one of the decisions I am proud that this council took in 2025, and just take a look at Elmhurst Park to see some early results of an ongoing transformation

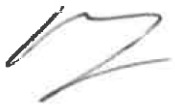
And talking of the Shire Hall - the first stage of our long-awaited repairs are almost complete, but the bigger project of internal renovation & bringing the upper floors back into public use is yet to start. We continue to work with local experts & interested groups to try and secure grant funding to fully revitalize this Grade I listed landmark of Woodbridge.

This last year, we also shook up the way we let Woodbridge know about our council projects and progress with our "Mayor's Monthly Update" videos, which I hope you've seen online, on

social media and in the Riverside cinema. The videos are produced by one of our Councillors, and scripted, directed & edited by a Woodbridge film maker – so it's a proper local enterprise! You can see all our efforts so far on our YouTube channel – <https://www.youtube.com/@WoodbridgeTownCouncil>

Finally, I would like to send my best wishes to all of our residents, workers and visitors as we look forward to the summer. For those who need help and support, I do hope you can find it within the Community that is Woodbridge.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nigel Phipps', written in a cursive style.

Nigel Phipps

Mayor of Woodbridge.

Together we have a great opportunity to shape our future and your Town Council can play its part in this.



REPORT TO WOODBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP, Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal Annual Town Meeting 2026

1. Introduction

Representing Suffolk Coastal as your Member of Parliament remains a real privilege. Over the past year, I have continued to spend as much time as possible out across my large and diverse constituency - through workshops, community coffee mornings, surgeries and meetings with residents.

It has always been important to me to be visible, accessible, and rooted in the day-to-day lives of the villages and towns that I represent. Each of the conversations I've had over the past year have been invaluable in shaping my work in Westminster and in trying to bring change here in Suffolk Coastal.

I am grateful to Woodbridge Town Council for the opportunity to provide this written update. Woodbridge is a town with a strong sense of place and community, and throughout the year I have heard from residents on a range of issues including energy infrastructure projects and their coordination across Suffolk coastal, the protection of the natural environment, local infrastructure, access to services, and the importance of ensuring that rural communities continue to have a strong voice in national decision-making.

This report provides an overview of some of the work I have undertaken over the past year both in Parliament and across the constituency. If there is anything you would like to know more about, or if you need any support, please do email me at jenny.riddellcarpenter.mp@parliament.uk.

2. My Work

My work in Parliament has been shaped by the issues facing communities right across Suffolk Coastal, including Woodbridge. That has included education, healthcare, farming, transport, the environment, energy costs and access to services - all areas where decisions made in Government and Whitehall are felt very clearly in rural communities like ours.



You may be aware that in Parliament I founded and now chair the Labour Rural Research Group, which brings together more than 40 rural and semi-rural Labour MPs from across England, Scotland and Wales. Through that work, I have been pushing to make sure the realities of rural life are far better understood at the heart of Government and Whitehall, and that rural communities are no longer treated as an afterthought in national policymaking. The LRRG is focused on developing the research, evidence and policy ideas needed both to unlock the potential of rural communities and to confront the challenges they face. Our recent report, *Poverty in Rural Britain*, made clear that hardship in rural areas is too often overlooked or misunderstood, and set out the case for policies that reflect the higher costs, and reduced access to services that many rural residents face. You can read more about the Labour Rural Research Group and its work online here: <https://www.labourruralresearchgroup.com/>.

Elsewhere, this year I was pleased to secure a new SEND school in Saxmundham, after campaigning hard both locally and in Government departments to secure the necessary funding. This new school will provide 126 places for children with the most severe mental or physical needs who can't be taught in mainstream school. I think that this is one of my personal top achievements over the past 12 months and means the most to me personally.

More recently, I have been working hard to mitigate the impacts of the conflict in the Middle East. We have seen sharp rises in heating oil and LPG prices, as well as energy prices more generally. In Parliament and with Ministers, I have been leading the calls for stronger protections for households reliant on heating oil and LPG – and I have been calling for these markets to be capped. Working with rural colleagues, I am determined to see change and protections for customers that match the same standard “gas-grid” customers enjoy. I have been clear throughout that this is not just an economic issue, but a matter of fairness for rural communities.

I have been pushing Suffolk County Council to make sure that the £1.5 million that the Government has allocated to support the most vulnerable households who are reliant on oil and LPG is delivered as quickly as possible. I am also pushing for that support not to be restricted to those in receipt of benefits but made available to households that are struggling – either in work, retired or otherwise.



In March, I was delighted to host a roundtable in Suffolk Coastal with the farming Minister, Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP, and local farmers – allowing local farmers and growers to speak directly with the Minister and share the challenges (and opportunities) facing farming in east Suffolk.

Elsewhere, road safety has been a major priority in my parliamentary work this year. In November, I brought forward the Road Safety (Schools) Bill as a Ten-Minute Rule Bill to create a legal duty on councils to work proactively with schools to improve safety outside school gates. You may be aware that, in my constituency, Bucklesham School had been campaigning for 25 years to get the road that their school sits on, reduced down from 60mph to 40mph. Once I got elected, I supported their campaign and took it to Parliament, and we finally saw action this year. I have been very clear in challenging the myth that councils can only act after a serious incident occurs on our roads. There is no truth to this at all – and all councils can make roads safer without waiting for an accident to happen first.

As part of my work on rural transport, I am campaigning for major improvements to local rail services, including better early morning and late evening trains, a regular half-hourly Ipswich–Lowestoft service, and a renewed effort to reinstate the Lowestoft–London line. I have already received over 450 responses to my rail survey and will be publishing a report shortly. I have also launched a rural bus survey, which is gathering evidence about the impact of infrequent and unreliable services. I will be convening a roundtable with local bus operators to discuss these issues directly, as I continue pressing for more reliable and accessible transport across rural communities.

3. Energy Infrastructure Development

One of the other key issues I have focused on over the past year has been the coordination of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) across Suffolk Coastal. I have consistently raised concerns about the cumulative impact of these developments and the need for a more joined-up approach, rather than decisions being made in silos without proper consideration of what that means for the communities affected. I have repeatedly made the point that residents are being asked to shoulder the combined impact of multiple major energy projects, without the coordination or strategic oversight that should come with that. I have led two Westminster Hall debates on this issue, where I set out the lack of coordination along the Suffolk coast and called for a stronger national framework to move away



from what I have described as a fragmented “whack-a-mole” approach to development.

Alongside that, I have held a significant number of private meetings with developers, Ministers and officials in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to raise constituents’ concerns directly and press for better coordination, communication and accountability. I also convened a coordination meeting bringing together senior representatives from the main energy projects, to press for better alignment of delivery, less disruption for local communities, and clear accountability to local residents.

I have been clear throughout that I will continue to challenge developers and hold them to account, both individually and collectively, and I will keep using every parliamentary and ministerial route available to me to push for better coordination and to ensure that communities are properly heard and protected here in Suffolk Coastal.

As part of my wider work on energy infrastructure, I continue to raise concerns about the pressure being placed on the A12 and local road network as a result of the major energy projects being developed across Suffolk Coastal. If local communities are being asked to host these projects and face this level of disruption, they need to see clear and lasting benefits. I am working hard to hold developers to account, including by pressing for stronger mitigation and real investment in local roads and infrastructure so that these projects leave lasting benefits for residents.

4. Local Casework and Support

Over the past year, my team and I have supported thousands of residents across Suffolk Coastal with a wide range of casework, including housing, access to healthcare, SEND provision, pensions, local infrastructure, and difficulties navigating public services. As well as a significant volume of casework relating to the energy infrastructure projects and engagement with developers, where my team hold regular meetings with Sizewell C to raise constituent concerns directly.

In towns such as Woodbridge, that often means helping residents work their way through systems that can feel slow, frustrating or difficult to navigate — whether by contacting public bodies directly, following up on outstanding issues, or pressing for answers where they are needed.



In October, I was pleased to welcome the Nature Minister, Mary Creagh MP, to Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Martlesham Wilds, and used the visit to raise concerns with her in the context of national planning and policy. This included reinforcing the importance of holding energy developers to account and ensuring that major infrastructure delivery is properly coordinated and responsive to local community impacts and concerns.

5. Anti-social behaviour and “boy racers” in Woodbridge

I have recently launched a campaign to tackle anti-social behaviour linked to motorcycles, cars and other vehicles in Woodbridge. Residents have raised with me serious concerns about so-called “boy racers” speeding around the town, carrying out dangerous manoeuvres, and causing disruption late into the evening. This is not just a noise issue — many people are rightly worried that, unless action is taken, someone could be seriously hurt. I have been raising these concerns with Suffolk Police and other local partners, and have launched a survey to gather residents' experiences, identify where and when incidents are taking place, and strengthen the case for proper action.

If you have been affected by dangerous driving, excessive noise, repeated speeding, or other anti-social vehicle use in Woodbridge, please complete the survey that can be found here: <https://www.jennyforsuffolkcoastal.org/boyracers>.

6. Future priorities

Looking ahead, my focus will remain on the issues that matter most to rural communities and towns like Woodbridge.

That means continuing to press for a planning system that respects local communities and rural character; protecting Suffolk Coastal's rivers and the wider natural environment; holding water companies and regulators to account; continuing to hold energy developers to account where major infrastructure is being delivered; and lobbying Government for further legislative change to better reflect the cumulative impact of development, alongside standing up for farming and the rural economy.



Jenny Riddell-Carpenter
Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

I will also continue to make the case in Parliament and with Government that rural and coastal communities must not be an afterthought in national policymaking. Too often, the needs and realities of towns like Woodbridge are overlooked or poorly understood, and I will keep working to ensure that rural voices are heard clearly and consistently at the heart of decision-making.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide this report. It is a privilege to represent Woodbridge and the wider Suffolk Coastal constituency in Parliament.



Update for Woodbridge Town Council on 15 Tide Mill Way.

The Art Haven CIC (community interest company) has been set up to run 15 Tide Mill Way as a dedicated multi-disciplinary hub designed to build a bridge between creative expression and environmental stewardship.

The Art Haven is facilitating inclusive, accessible arts programming that prioritises individual development and expression, well-being and awareness of nature.

The Art Haven's mission is built upon a sustainable business model that reinvests in the community, where it will offer subsidised workshops, heritage craft training, and contemporary exhibitions through the CIC.

The organisation's commitment to community-led growth was recently validated during an open day held on March 14th, which saw an exceptional turnout of over 200 attendees.

Throughout the opening event, which ran from 11 am to 4 pm, participants contributed over 60 positive suggestions regarding the specific activities and services they wish to see integrated into the site's future programming.

This momentum has translated directly into operational successes; since opening the doors to private hire, the venue has already become a centre for diverse engagement.

Current events at The Art Haven include professional art classes, rhythmic drumming workshops, and specialised movement sessions for the elderly, demonstrating The Art Haven's immediate capacity to serve as a vital asset for social cohesion and physical well-being. Plus we are delighted to be the headquarters for this years Ambient Music Festival!

This is just a beginning as Claire and Mary-Anne know that it will take time to develop the CIC, as they make applications to grants that will widen the venue's reach into the community and make contact with the people who will make the building used, interesting and vibrant for the community. Slow but sure...

Sign up for The Art Haven newsletter [here](#), or to find out more, please phone Mary-Anne Bartlett on 01394 382235 or Claire Staddon on 07827 779190.

Fairtrade for Woodbridge – Town Meeting 2026

The Fairtrade for Woodbridge group would like to thank the Town Council for their help in promoting Fairtrade in the town. This support is vital for us as we apply to renew the town's status in June.

It is especially important at this time of global turmoil that we support the producers of goods which we enjoy but cannot grow successfully in the UK. The producers are often at the forefront of climate change. The support Fairtrade brings gives the producers access to health care, education, and good agricultural practices, to name a few.

In the last three years, Fairtrade for Woodbridge has been present at most of the Town events and has made good links with local community groups who serve refreshments by encouraging them to use Fairtrade tea and coffee. There maybe groups we have missed. If you know of a group or individuals who would like to know more, please type Fairtrade for Woodbridge into your search engine. It will bring you to our informative website where you can direct message the group.

Chris Adelson
Co-ordinator, Fairtrade for Woodbridge

Coastal Accessible Transport (CATS)

For those unfamiliar with us, we are CATS; we are a registered society with charitable status based in Leiston, but we operate one of our buses from Woodbridge. We are a transport provider, providing minibus, door-to-door, and community car services to the East Suffolk/Suffolk Coastal area.

We operate within the Woodbridge area with our "South" bus with our drivers Jacqui and Siobhan and occasionally our relief drivers. Our bus operates on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday between 9-5 (dependent on location and availability) with Saturdays running 9-3pm. We operate under two permits, section 19, which allows us to take people with mobility issues and others who cannot usually get on normal commercial transport. The other, section 22, means we can take people where they have no public transport available.

We also take groups around the Woodbridge area, such as the Britten-Pears Participate group to the Methodist church, as well as others.

We also run the Community Car service that takes passengers to and from hospitals/doctors' appointments. In past years we only had one or two volunteers in the area, but thankfully we have got a couple more volunteers in the area now, and so more passengers can get to their necessary appointments. However, with the tightening of non-emergency patient transport, more and more people have enquired about us taking them to hospital. Unfortunately, with the small number of volunteers we have, we can't take everyone. If anyone is willing to volunteer to drive people either locally or to the hospital/doctors, contact us!

Our contact details are <https://cats-paws.co.uk/> and 01728 830516.