

District Councillor Report – Harry Richardson

August 2026

Stowmarket Innovation Gateway	The new £18m Stowmarket Innovation Gateway has now officially opened. The centre is intended to support local skills, innovation and business growth, and was launched at an event attended by more than 100 local businesses, organisations and dignitaries. This is a significant investment for Stowmarket and the wider district, and should help strengthen links between education, enterprise and employment locally.
Stowmarket town centre investment	Investment from the £1.5m fund to enhance Stowmarket town centre continues to move forward. The latest funding includes support to transform the former fire station into community facilities and to expand the town's art gallery and studio. These projects should help improve the town centre offer, bring vacant or underused space back into community use, and support Stowmarket's wider regeneration.
Community funding	Applications have also reopened for the Council's Pride in Your Place grant, which supports projects that strengthen community pride and celebrate the heritage of towns and villages across the district. Further details are available on the Council's website.
Summer activities and open spaces	Free community fun days are returning across Babergh and Mid Suffolk this summer, with activities available for families and residents of all ages. Needham Lake has also received the Green Flag Award for the second year running, recognising it as one of the country's best green spaces. The Council has also set out steps being taken to manage meadow land and reduce fire risk during hot weather, while continuing to protect wildlife, given the recent wildfire at Dunwich Heath.

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