



REPORT TO HUNTINGFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP, Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal

Annual Parish Meeting – 14 May 2025

1. Introduction

It continues to be an immense privilege to serve as the Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal. Over the past ten months, I've had the opportunity to meet hundreds of constituents across Suffolk Coastal at surgeries, coffee mornings and on the doorstep. These conversations have helped guide my work both locally and in Westminster, and I am grateful to every individual and organisation who has taken the time to share their views and concerns.

As part of my ongoing work, I have made it a priority to be as visible and accessible as possible across our large and diverse constituency. From hosting NHS workshops, community coffee mornings, regular surgeries and more, I am committed to staying rooted in the day-to-day lives of our towns and villages.

I'm grateful to Huntingfield Parish Council for the opportunity to provide this written update ahead of the Annual Parish Meeting, and to outline the work I've been doing on behalf of the parish and the wider constituency

2. Parliamentary Work and National Issues

In Westminster, much of my attention over recent months has been directed toward those policy areas where national decisions have a clear and immediate impact on our rural communities.

I led a Westminster Hall debate on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in February. The debate followed a detailed survey I launched across the constituency, gathering evidence from nearly 100 families. The findings were stark: more than half of respondents said their children had missed out on school because their needs could not be met, and 13% had been out of education for over a year. I have challenged the Department for Education to respond urgently, and the relevant Minister for SEND will be visiting Suffolk Coastal shortly to meet affected families and professionals on the ground.

Energy infrastructure has also been a major area of focus. I have spoken out in Parliament and submitted formal responses to consultations on Sea Link, LionLink, and Nautilus. These projects, taken together, represent a significant transformation in our region but their planning has been fragmented. I have called for a coordinated offshore grid approach and urged developers to work with rather than around local communities. I have made clear that respect for our landscape, and for the people who live here, must be at the heart of any national infrastructure rollout.

I brought forward several amendments to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that would have helped ensure national development better reflects rural realities. One would have required cables to be laid at least 1.8 metres deep under farmland to protect its long-term use. Another would have



created a statutory duty for developers to coordinate their projects, reducing disruption and empowering local authorities to demand joint planning. A third aimed to promote biodiversity by requiring features like swift bricks and hedgehog highways, while discouraging artificial grass. These small but targeted changes were designed to support sustainable, community-minded planning. I'll continue to work on trying to make improvements to legislation that protect our countryside and respect local communities.

I've also spent a lot of time listening to farmers across Suffolk Coastal, hearing directly about the challenges they're facing. One of the key concerns raised with me is the imbalance in the supply chain, with farmers too often being squeezed by large retailers. In Parliament, I was part of a group of MPs who wrote to the UK's major supermarkets to demand fairer treatment for farmers and an end to misleading "farmwashing" practices. While these retailers reported billions in profits last year, many of our local farms are struggling to remain viable. I've been clear that supermarkets must play their part in building a fairer, more sustainable food system, and I'll continue to use my voice in Westminster to stand up for those who put food on our tables.

I've also been an advocate in Parliament for the vital role that churches have in our rural communities, not just as places of worship, but as hubs of social connection, community support, and cultural heritage. Across Suffolk Coastal, village churches are not only architectural treasures, but also provide essential community services and host events that bring people together. I was therefore incredibly proud to support the successful campaign to extend the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. I raised the issue with the Minister during a Westminster Hall debate earlier this year, highlighting the role churches play in hosting foodbanks, adapting their spaces to serve wider community needs, and offering essential support to those around them. These buildings are more than places of worship, they are often living centres of rural life.

The Government has now confirmed that the scheme will be extended into the next financial year, with £23 million allocated to support thousands of historical buildings including churches, to carry out urgent restoration works. The scheme allows places of worship to reclaim VAT on repairs, helping preserve our built heritage for future generations. The extension of the scheme is a real win for rural areas like ours, and I will continue to back policies that protect our historic churches, chapels and community spaces. These buildings matter, not only for their architecture and history, but for the life and connection they support within villages across Suffolk Coastal. This is an example of what representing rural communities in Westminster looks like, ensuring that the needs of villages like ours are not overlooked in national decision.

Parliamentary work has also included efforts on healthcare, rural transport, farming, and digital infrastructure, all areas that directly affect residents in our rural communities. I have spoken on the floor of the House about the need for more investment in rural NHS services and community GPs, about fairer treatment for farmers in the supply chain, and about supporting BT's work at Adastral Park to develop new digital opportunities, especially for young people in Suffolk.

1. Future Priorities

Looking ahead, my focus will remain on the core issues that matter most to Huntingfield and similar villages across Suffolk Coastal. I will continue to focus closely on energy infrastructure and



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farming. I will keep pushing for an overhaul of how energy projects are coordinated, with stronger protections for rural communities, better consultation with resident, and smarter, offshore-led planning to reduce environmental harm. These projects must deliver for the National Grid, but not at the cost of our countryside or our communities.

Supporting farmers will also remain a priority. I will continue holding supermarkets to account over their treatment of suppliers and pressing government to do more to support sustainable British agriculture. That includes fairer regulation, clearer labelling, and backing our next generation of farmers to succeed. Our rural economy depends on a strong farming sector, and I will keep standing up for it.

As we look ahead to the coming months, one of the areas I will be placing particular focus on is rural road safety and transport links. Far too often, villages like Huntingfield are left out of wider conversations about transport and infrastructure. Yet the risks on narrow country lanes, the lack of reliable public transport, and the condition of rural roads are raised with me time and time again by residents. I am working closely with Suffolk County Council and the Department for Transport to press for practical improvements: better signage, clearer speed enforcement policies, and maintenance that reflects the daily use and importance of rural routes. I have also been calling for a new cross-departmental focus on rural transport, so that communities like Huntingfield are no longer treated as an afterthought when infrastructure investment is planned. This is about safety, but also about fairness. Everyone should be able to move safely and confidently through their own village, whether on foot, by bike, or by car. I will continue to push for the investment and attention that rural roads deserve.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide this report. I am proud to represent Huntingfield and Suffolk Coastal in Parliament, and I look forward to continuing our work together in the months ahead.