

Suffolk County
Councillor
March 2023
Town and Parish
Newsletter

98% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred secondary schools on National Offer Day

98% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 93% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 8,083 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2023. This is approximately 300 more applications than received last year.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post today (1 March 2023).

Councillor Rachel Hood, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills, said:

“Starting secondary school is a big step in a child’s education so it is really positive that the vast majority of families have once again been offered a place at one of their preferred schools.”

“Published criteria was used to decide who has priority for places so that the process is fair and clear. We do appreciate that not all families will have received a place at their preferred school. If a parent or carer’s preference for a Suffolk school is refused, their child’s name will automatically be added to the waiting list for that school. We will also advise them about how to lodge an appeal should they wish to do so.”

Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel, they will receive an email by the end of March 2023 with details of how to opt-in.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Fees waived for communities to celebrate His Majesty the King’s Coronation

To mark the celebration of His Majesty The King’s Coronation, Suffolk County Council has waived fees associated with applications to close roads for street parties and other local authority led public events.

Charles III's coronation will take place at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May, where the King will be crowned alongside Camilla, the Queen Consort. This is the first coronation of a monarch in the UK since the late Queen's ceremony which was staged on June 2, 1953.

Events will be taking place across the country, between 6 and 8 May 2023. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours. Many of Suffolk's residents will also be giving up their time as volunteers to bring people together as part of The Big Help Out. For all events planned over the weekend, which is being referred to as The Coronation Big Lunch, Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures for events.

Similarly, to the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, if you are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or if you would like to apply as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park, you can view more information at www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation

As part of the main criteria for a road to be closed, the road must be residential and not on A or B roads and/or those roads which have a bus route operating during the proposed event.

To be allocated Traffic Management to assist organisers/residents with an event, all applications must be received before 11pm on Sunday 2 April 2023. Traffic management will consist of 4 traffic cones, 1 road closure sign, which may be collected from a local highway depot. An online booking system will be shared with those successful applications.

If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 2nd April 2023, these may still be processed. However, Suffolk County Council cannot cover the costs of Traffic Management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of Traffic Management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands.

For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation

State-of-the-art emergency services hub opens in Stowmarket

A new police and fire station off Needham Road, Stowmarket, has now opened – providing the facilities needed to enable efficient, effective, and environmentally responsible emergency services for Suffolk.

Local dignitaries, including Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable, the county's Chief Fire Officer, councillors from Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council, and Stowmarket's Mayor, attended the official opening of the shared site earlier today (Friday, 3 March).

Collaborative working remains a priority for Suffolk's emergency services, who recognise that this provides excellent value for money and further benefits for the county's communities.

Stowmarket's new station, situated on the A1120 junction with the B1113 Needham Road, is the latest in a programme of joint blue light hubs across Suffolk. However, it is the first new build, as the other 12 combined fire and police facilities comprise of existing sites which have been extended or refurbished.

The building has a range of green credentials, including photovoltaic panels to convert the sun's rays into electricity, an air source heat pump system, 14 electric vehicle charging points, and insulation informed by thermal modelling to ensure this is of the highest standard and reflects the needs of the hub's users.

In addition, the station's location will enable easy access to the A14, the local road network, and in and around Stowmarket, one of Suffolk's largest market towns, helping to ensure a swift response to whatever emergencies may arise.

Suffolk-based business Concertus designed the new station, which Morgan Sindall began constructing in July 2021. The project was made possible by funding of £1.24m from central government and a £431k contribution from Mid Suffolk District Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Space has been provided within the station to accommodate the Salvation Army charity, which continues to provide welfare support to response staff during major incidents.

The hub may also be used in future by the East of England Ambulance Service as a drop-in facility for their crews, enabling truly joined-up working for Suffolk's three emergency services.

Suffolk backs national campaign to tackle food waste

Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) is backing a national campaign highlighting the problem of food waste and encouraging people to take action.

Food Waste Action Week runs from March 6th– 12th and is run by the international action charity Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

This year's theme is 'Bin. Don't Win', which encourages everyone to make the most of their leftovers and to understand financial saving by doing so.

In Suffolk, there will be information events organised by the SWP at libraries in Ipswich, Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Haverhill and Stowmarket.

Visitors will be given Food Savvy leaflets, recipe cards and food-saving giveaways such as spaghetti measures and rice scoops to help get portion sizes right.

There will also be a short film on YouTube throughout the week featuring The Nuffolks, the SWP's own cartoon family, who support the [FoodSavvy](#) campaign on how to plan meals, store food and use leftovers.

There will also be a competition on the Food Savvy Suffolk Facebook page, and a [FWAW information page](#) on the [Food Savvy website](#).

A food waste session will also take place with youngsters at Tudor Church of England Primary School in Sudbury on Thursday 9 March.

WRAP [estimates annual food waste within the UK households](#) is at around 9.5 million tonnes, with a value of more than £19 billion a year and equivalent to 36 million tonnes of greenhouse gas.

In Suffolk, food waste accounts for:

- 36% of the total household waste disposed
- Costs approximately £4.5 million to dispose of
- Creates 52,500 tonnes per year, of which 19,500 tonnes is still unopened and 22,500 could be composted in a standard home compost bin

The SWP is a partnership between the county, district and borough councils within Suffolk working together to improve waste management services.

For more information about WRAP [go to its website](#).

Deadly heaters detained by Suffolk Trading Standards

Over 300 electrical heaters have been detained at the Port of Felixstowe following the Imports Surveillance team discovering the products pose a serious risk of electrocution.

Officers raised concerns about the heaters after finding that the grills used on them didn't require tools to open, meaning live and hazardous parts could be accessed by hand.

The supply voltage requirements stated on the heaters were also incompatible with the UK power network, posing a danger of explosion or electric shock.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, commented:

I am incredibly grateful to Suffolk Trading Standards for their continued work to protect consumers by intercepting harmful products at the port before these can enter the UK's marketplace.

Even legitimate heaters can pose a fire risk if not used sensibly, so I would urge all Suffolk residents to follow safety precautions when heating their homes during the colder temperatures forecast across the county over the next few days.

The popularity of electric heaters has increased significantly during rising energy costs, with a recent survey carried out by Electrical Safety First finding that 22% of respondents had purchased a heater during the past year, often from an online marketplace.

Anyone who believes they may have purchased a dangerous heater should stop using it immediately and contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133**.

First look at the new ceremony room in Sudbury

Couples who opt for a register office ceremony in Sudbury are now tying the knot in a new ceremony room within Sudbury's Town Hall.

All Register Office ceremonies taking place at Sudbury Town Hall will now take place in the Mayor's Parlour, previously The Assembly Rooms.

Overlooking the market square, the Mayor's Parlour is a beautiful space for couples to get married or to form a Civil Partnership. The new room's ground floor location offers improved access for guests and the smaller space offers couples a much more bespoke and intimate experience than the larger Assembly Rooms.

The Mayor's Parlour offers seating for 28 guests plus the couple and a photographer or videographer.

The first Wedding Ceremony in the Mayor's Parlour took place on Saturday 25 February.

The Assembly Rooms will continue to be available for private hire from Sudbury Town Council and continue to be used for Town Council business.

Couples wishing to enquire about ceremony availability should contact Suffolk Registration Service on 0345 607 2080 or via www.suffolk.gov.uk.

Suffolk Walking Festival returns for 15th instalment

Tickets are on sale now for The Suffolk Walking Festival 2023 as it celebrates its 15th year.

This year's festival boasts a 16-day programme and offers over 70 walks across 350 miles of Suffolk's beautiful landscapes. With lots of weekend, evening and family walks. The programme has accessible, short, medium, long-distance walks, and more challenging walks – so there is something for everyone.

From learning about the ancient tradition of 'Beating the Bounds' to exploring the heart of The Brecks with its gorse-covered sandy chalk soils characterised by purple heathland, tall pines and rare wildlife, this year's festival appeals to a wide range of individuals.

There is a range of shorter urban strolls, and for those looking to stretch their legs, several spectacular riverside walks and valley yomps. Also returning this year are ever the popular Walk n' Water River trips with a boat in Sudbury; an exclusive walk with Sweep the sheepdog on Orford Ness; a twilight safari in an ancient woodland; and the intriguing stories of ancient smugglers and shipping routes on Dunwich Heath.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:

The Suffolk Walking Festival returns more diverse than ever in its 15th year since beginning, holding its title as one of the longest running festivals of its kind in the UK.

The festival highlights some of Suffolk's most beautiful locations so it's a great way to explore, get active and meet others doing the same.

The festival kicks off at Thornham Walks on Saturday 13th May with refreshments and 5 launch jaunts. It then runs every day until 28th May.

Visit www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk for more details on the programme, to sign up to newsletters, and to buy tickets.

Suffolk's Creating The Greenest County Awards: Winners announced

The votes have been counted and judges have chosen the winners for Suffolk County Council's Creating The Greenest County 2023 Awards.

Nine awards have been presented to schools, businesses, community groups and this year's Green Hero: Jason Alexander from Ipswich.

The awards were presented today (Wednesday 8th March) at an event at The Hold in Ipswich, hosted by Mark Murphy from BBC Radio Suffolk, with guest speaker Christine Luxton, Chief Executive Officer at Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

With over 100 nominations for all our awards, and 2,200 votes cast for our Green Hero, there is so much energy and passion in Suffolk to care for our local environment.

Huge congratulations to all our award winners, but all our nominees should feel proud for inspiring others around them. They help us all to understand the changes that we need to make in our lives, to protect our natural environment, reduce carbon emissions, make our homes more efficient, and reduce our energy and water use.

This desire is replicated at the council through our ambitions to become net zero by 2030, to increase the levels of biodiversity on our property, and to work with partners across the county on Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan. As we face continual rising prices, I believe that a cleaner future is not enemy of the cost-of-living, it is a huge part of the answer to it.

The winners of the Creating The Greenest County 2023 Awards, are:

Green Hero: Jason Alexander - Rubbish Walks (Ipswich & across Suffolk)

Jason raises awareness about littering, recycling and waste in general across Suffolk and far beyond. In the last year or so, he has completed a 24 hour Litterthon, been involved with over 340 litter picks and beach cleans, filling 900 bags with Rubbish Walk volunteers. He has also partnered with Ipswich Borough Council, Ipswich Town FC and Suffolk Libraries.

Jason received over one-third of all 2,259 votes cast by members of the public.

Waste Reduction and Recycling Still: Good Food

Still Good Food rescues surplus food and redistribute it to the public through their shops in Bury St Edmunds and Great Barton.

Green Community: Bury Bike Train

The Bury Bike Train is a way for children to ride their own bikes to and from school in a group, supported by adult cyclists.

Green School (Secondary): Sybil Andrews Academy

Based in Bury St Edmunds, the school runs many environmental projects, including a Gardening Club, growing flowers for local residents, and organising trips with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

Green School (Primary): Birchwood Primary School

Based in Martlesham, the school has held the Eco School's Green Flag for the eight years running, is a DEFRA egg production unit, has their own school of horticulture, Birchwood Bee hive and rare breeds flock.

Green Business: University of Suffolk

By 2030, the University will be recognised for the major contribution it makes to the health and wellbeing of the people in the region and acknowledged for lasting social and sustainable economic transformation.

Green Tourism: Ivy Grange Farm

Ivy Grange Farm Barn is a newly renovated 17th century grain store and milking parlour, set in the heart of the Suffolk countryside close to the fabulous beaches of Southwold and Walberswick. It offers a luxurious holiday experience, with a sprinkling of adventure all within a sustainable wrapper.

Biodiversity and Landscape: Long Melford Biodiversity Group

The group examines ways in which the village could be made more environmentally friendly, and how more land, both public and private, could be dedicated to nature. They also actively seek deliverable opportunities to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Green Small Business: Depden Care Farm

Depden Care Farm offers therapeutic placements to adults with learning disabilities, acquired brain injuries and those recovering their mental health.

To read more about the Awards, visit www.greensuffolk.org/awards

Public's chance to name new waste lorry fleet

Eight new waste trucks are on their way to Suffolk and the public is being asked to help name them.

Suffolk County Council's waste management partner FCC Environment has ordered the new articulated trucks, which will take to the county's roads in April.

The public is being asked to come up with names for seven of the vehicles while the eighth will be done so through a competition for the crews that will be driving them.

The fleet has cost a total of £1.5 million and consists of Mercedes Actros tractor units towing Legras articulated trailers.

They will operate from Suffolk County Council waste facilities at Lowestoft, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, and can carry up to 25 tonnes of material at a time.

The new vehicles will be put to a variety of uses:

- Three blue trucks will carry recycling to be separated into bales of plastic, aluminum, steel, card and paper before being transformed into new materials.
- Three green trucks will take garden waste to be composted into a soil improver to help farmland by enriching the soil.
- Two black trucks will be used for taking away waste that cannot be recycled, with messaging urging residents to cut down on single use plastic, plan meals to avoid food waste, and to compost fruit and vegetable peelings to help reduce waste.

The trucks may not always contain the type of waste the vehicle says it is carrying as they may be used to collect other forms of refuse should the operational need arise.

The vehicles will take to the roads in April and are the final piece in Suffolk's network of waste transfer stations, which are used to bulk up the waste and recycling collected by district and borough collection vehicles from homes across Suffolk.

Larger trucks mean more waste can be carried, which in turn reduces the number of miles it is transported before reaching its sorting or reprocessing facilities.

The new vehicles feature optimised driving, allowing the on-board GPS system to anticipate the local conditions and automatically select the best driving mode to give maximum fuel efficiency and helping reduce driver fatigue.

They also feature sophisticated exhaust systems to reduce emissions and a built-in 'anti-collision' system.

All entries must be less than 25 characters and should be submitted by midnight on Sunday March 26th.

Entries should be made [online](#) through the Suffolk Recycling website, with winners selected on a 'first come' basis in the case of duplicate names.

Entrants must live in Suffolk and, if aged under 18, will need the permission of an adult.

For full terms and conditions go to the [Suffolk Recycling](#) website.

[£10.8 million plan to deliver Ipswich bridges and key town improvements](#)

Two new bridges on Ipswich's waterfront, and a swathe of projects around the town, look set to benefit from almost £11 million of funding from Suffolk County Council

Next week, councillors will be asked to reaffirm the county council's multi million pound commitment to two new bridges, alongside creating a £2 million programme to support regeneration and community improvements across the town.

Two reports are being considered by the county council's cabinet which outline the council's proposed financial commitment and support towards:

- delivering two footbridges and related works on the waterfront; with the overall aim of enhancing connectivity, encouraging walking and cycling and improving the environment;
- recommendations brought forward from the Ipswich Policy Development Panel (PDP) - a cross-party councillor working group, convened in order to consider the council's role in ensuring Ipswich meets its aspirations as Suffolk's county town.

The allocation of the proposed £10.8 million would be split between these projects, as follows:

- **Delivery of Prince Philip Lock pedestrian and cycle bridge at Ipswich Wet Dock project** - circa £6 million with an additional £1.31 million secured from the Government's Town Deal Funding

If approved, the delivery of the Prince Philip Lock bridge would result in the completion of a circular route around Ipswich Wet Dock and help facilitate the broader regeneration of Ipswich Waterfront. It would provide public access onto the Ipswich Island site via a new pedestrian and cycle bridge and would link in with established Public Rights of Way, in particular the link to Helena Way.

- **Commitment of a contribution towards delivering New Cut Bridge** - £2.8 million

If approved, the county council would commit a contribution of £2.8 million towards the delivery of the New Cut Bridge, which would provide additional walking and cycling benefits and reduced journey times. However, further external funding would be required to deliver this project.

- **Recommendations from the Ipswich PDP** - £2 million

If approved, £2 million is earmarked to support the delivery on a range of recommendations which have come forward from the Ipswich PDP who engaged with a wide range of local partners and stakeholders. These recommendations include boosting employment opportunities for young people, working with partners to develop the town's arts, culture and leisure offer, improving connectivity via 5G technology, enhancing sustainable travel options and much more. This funding would be allocated to projects to be delivered as appropriate.

[Help design a new Virtual Reality app for people living with dementia](#)

Suffolk County Council is looking for people to help develop a new Virtual Reality (VR) app for people living with dementia in Suffolk.

The county council is inviting people living with dementia, their family carers, as well as health and social care professionals, who live or are based in Suffolk, to join a user group to help co-create the bespoke platform.

The group will be called 'Synergy' and members will have input into all aspects of the look, design, and structure of the new VR app.

Over the last 10 years clinical research has demonstrated that not only do people with dementia tolerate virtual reality, but they can actually derive a wide variety of

benefits from it, including improvements in well-being, cognition and communication.

The app is being produced in partnership with Spark Emerging Technologies Ltd, who were awarded a contract by Suffolk County Council in December last year.

To learn more about the user group and to apply visit suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/virtual-reality-project

Council's Centre of Excellence upskills authorities across the country

Suffolk County Council has held its inaugural conference as a Centre of Excellence, to support local authorities with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

Last year, Suffolk County Council was recognised as a Centre of Excellence by the Government for its knowledge and expertise when engaging with NSIPs such as Sizewell C, the Gull Wing, National Grid upgrades and offshore wind farms.

Held at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds on 15 March 2023, over 100 representatives from 46 local authorities and organisations across the country heard from expert speakers including the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

There was a focus on how to get the best out of these large projects for local communities, such as increasing skills, jobs and funding.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's deputy leader and cabinet member for finance and environment, said:

National infrastructure projects are complex and controversial, and Suffolk is one of the most experienced authorities, living through 18 past, current and future projects.

As a result, we're delighted to have been recognised as a Centre of Excellence, and able to share our knowledge and experience with colleagues from across the country.

Local communities are always at the heart of these ventures, so it's important that this was at the core of today's agenda. We also heard about the latest national policies, as well as practical advice on managing engagement with developers, and how to resource these huge schemes.

The council's Centre of Excellence was established thanks to the Government's Innovation and Capacity Fund providing £54,000.

As a result, it has created a collaborative network across local authorities across the East, to share good practice and knowledge.

A programme of monthly seminars has culminated with this conference, increasing the skills and expertise of local authority officers and politicians across the eastern region, to deal with these complicated projects.

Children's expert brought in to strengthen council's focus on real-life experiences of children with special educational needs

An independent special advisor has been commissioned to further strengthen reform of special educational needs and disabilities services (SEND) at Suffolk County Council.

Well-respected senior leader in children's services, consultant Anthony Douglas CBE, will work with SEND system leaders and the SEND networks to support the reforms already underway. He will draw on his years of experience to focus on how services are impacting upon the everyday experience of children and young people with SEND.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills, at Suffolk County Council said:

The challenge of transforming the way we deliver SEND services is extremely complex. We can all agree that effective improvement is being felt in parts of the system – and it is reassuring that the Department for Education confirms that progress is being made.

However, we also recognise that there are some areas, especially those lived experiences of families, where improvement is not being clearly felt.

This is where Mr Douglas, an experienced and much respected professional in children's services, will add significant value and strengthen the existing work of the SEND team. My thanks goes to staff who work tirelessly to improve our SEND services.

In chief executive and director roles for the last 20 years, Anthony Douglas has supported children and young people with SEND and their families, across health, care and education. He also carried out a major inquiry in 2020 within a local authority about inclusive education practices in schools and colleges. He works with organisations internationally about the service developments needed for children with special needs of all types, with a view to improving those services. Anthony has chaired the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership since 2019.

Mr Douglas said:

I will be offering local SEND leaders a continuous second opinion about the quality of SEND services across Suffolk.

I will be using co-production principles in my work and will be judged on whether - by the end of this project - I have added value for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in Suffolk and for their families who need and deserve the very best support possible within the resources available.

SEND services nationally are under phenomenal pressure and Suffolk is no exception. That is why I will only be looking at what can be done better.

Mr Douglas will work with the council initially for six months beginning in April 2023.

Ipswich Re-use shop returns to Foxhall Recycling Centre

The popular Re-use shop had temporarily moved out as part of the ongoing £7.8m refurbishment of the centre.

A popular shop selling items diverted from Suffolk's recycling centres has moved back to its Ipswich home.

The Re-use shop has re-opened at Foxhall Recycling Centre after temporarily relocating as part of a £7.8 million refurbishment of the complex.

The new shop design at Foxhall makes it more accessible for customers and it will be the first thing the public will see when entering the site.

It will have dedicated customer parking and more outside space, along with a canopy.

The shop sells furniture, sports equipment, kitchen supplies, books, toys, and bric-a-brac, collected at the 11 recycling centres across Suffolk and which would otherwise have been disposed of as waste.

Its average footfall was 1,500 a month and since the shop first opened in 2016 it has sold a total of 343,721 items, equivalent to 2,429 tonnes of material.

There is a sister shop at the Bury St Edmunds site.

The shops are run by local charity [The Benjamin Foundation](#), which has been supporting young people in Suffolk and Norfolk for more than 25 years.

The new shop is part of the £7.8 million refurbishment of Foxhall Recycling Centre.

Active Suffolk to lead Physical Activity efforts in Suffolk

From April 2023, collective efforts in Suffolk to promote physical activity will be led by Active Suffolk.

This comes as Suffolk County Council's Most Active County (MAC) programme is due to end on 31 March 2023.

Most Active County was established by Suffolk County Council as part of Suffolk's legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Its purpose was to support the excellent work that takes place across the county, by many organisations, to support people to be active and address stubborn levels of inactivity.

Since 2012, the programme has been successful in engaging many more people, young and old, from different backgrounds and locations, in physical activity through supporting initiatives, such as parkrun, the Daily Mile, Doorstep Sport Clubs, Suffolk Walking Challenge, Sporting Memories Groups, Suffolk Care Home Olympics and major sporting events like the Great East Swim, Great East Run, The Women's Tour and the Tour of Britain.

Since the MAC Programme began, levels of inactivity have been steadily falling in Suffolk. According to Active Lives Survey data, between November 2015 and November 2019, inactivity levels in adults fell by 4% and remain below the national average. Suffolk saw the biggest increase of any English County in the number of adults meeting recommended physical activity guidelines during this time.

Active Lives data also shows the number of children meeting the recommended levels of physical activity increased by 5.1% between the 2017/18 and 2021/2022 academic years.

More recently the MAC programme was a finalist in the 2022 UK Active Awards for the Keep Moving Suffolk campaign. The campaign was established just 9 days after the first lockdown, specifically to support people to become active and remain active during and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign consisted of a wide range of online resources to support people to become more active at home, alongside 20,000 'Active at Home' booklets distributed and 3,500 activity packs to digitally isolated older people.

The programme also invested £500,000 to support sports clubs and groups to restart after the coronavirus pandemic.

The Council recently invested £26,000 for Active Suffolk to extend the Daily Mile programme and £30,000 to extend the Fit Villages initiative for a further 12 months.

More information about the physical activity offer in Suffolk can be found at www.activesuffolk.org

The following provides a snapshot of some of the key activities of the Most Active County programme.

- Finalist - UK Active Awards 2022 for Keep Moving Suffolk Campaign
- Finalist – Local Government Chronicle Awards 2017 for ‘Partnership of the Year’
- Over £3,000,000 of investment into physical activity in Suffolk.
- Over 18,500 Suffolk schoolchildren given access to the Daily Mile.
- 17,700 participants in the Great East Swim.
- Over 20,000 attendances at Doorstep Sports Clubs in Ipswich and Lowestoft.
- £2,000,000 generated for good causes through the Great East Run and Great East Swim.
- 22 parkrun’s, including 7 junior parkrun’s, supported to establish across the county.
- 10,400 participants in the Great East Run.
- 12,000 young people received movement and mental health resources.
- £19,500,000 combined economic impact of the Tour of Britain, Great East Swim and Women’s Tour.
- 130 primary schools took part in Walk to School Week Suffolk Walking Challenge from 2019-22.
- £500,000 invested in sports clubs and groups to restart after the coronavirus pandemic.
- 20,000 ‘Active at Home’ booklets distributed to isolated older people during the coronavirus pandemic.
- 3,500 activity packs distributed to digitally isolated older people during the coronavirus pandemic.

Further support for Homes for Ukraine Sponsors

Suffolk County Council will provide additional financial support for Homes for Ukraine Sponsors who are hosting Ukrainian guests, up to a value of £900.

From April, Sponsors who have hosted guests for a minimum of six months, will receive an additional £150 each month from the council.

This is in addition to the £350 monthly thank you payment Sponsors receive from the UK Government, whilst their guests are staying with them.

The Government’s monthly payment rises to £500 after their guests have been in the UK for 12 months, at which point the council’s additional payment will stop.

All sponsors who currently host guests that arrived under the Homes For Ukraine Scheme will receive an email from Suffolk County Council asking them if they wish to opt in to the offer of a top up.

Payments will begin from April 2023, paid one month in arrears.

Suffolk County Council secures £2.65m government funding for children's homes

Suffolk County Council has secured £2.65m of funding from the government for the county's children's homes.

The fund was set up by Department for Education (DFE) to enable local authorities to provide more placements within council run children's homes, as many councils have to commission residential provision which is costly.

£1.9m of funding will go towards repurposing two children's homes. One children's home will be reconfigured into two separate wings to accommodate complex young people, this will provide 2 additional placements. The other children's home is to be developed into a provision for young people preparing to exit the care system. A wholly separate independence/training flat with its own external entrance will be created. This will be additional capacity at the home.

The remaining £0.7m funding will be used, in addition to the £2m already approved by cabinet in November, towards the development of a new residential home for children and young people with disabilities at the Felixstowe Ferry Centre building in Felixstowe. The home will include three residential care places and two shared care beds. Shared care is when a young person spends a portion of time living with parents or carers and the rest at the home.

James Reeder, Cabinet member for Children's and Young People Services, at Suffolk County Council, said:

[This investment is the first step to increase the amount of residential placements we have available to enable children and young people to stay closer to their families, friends and existing support networks whilst realising cost savings as a result.](#)

The £2.65m grant funding has been combined with additional resources to make a total investment into new residential provision for children and young people of almost £4.4 m in the months ahead.

[Conservatives are delivering on our ambitions for Suffolk.](#)

Column by Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council.

In the County Council elections of May 2021, the Conservative Party had our best result since the 1970s.

The County Council's administration, which I lead, was given a firm mandate to pursue the four main priorities in our manifesto; looking after the health and wellbeing of our residents, protecting and enhancing the environment, strengthening the local economy, and providing value for money.

This has been a difficult time for us all. At the time of the County election, we were still in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and, just as we began to emerge, Vladimir Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine sent further shockwaves across the globe. These twin shocks have made it doubly important that we support the most vulnerable people in our communities. Since 2021, we have distributed over £15.3 million of funding to residents in hardship through our Household Support Fund. To date, over 160,000 people have been supported. In the last year, we have helped more than 1,200 Ukrainian refugees via Homes for Ukraine sponsorships. We've also increased our funding to Suffolk's Citizen's Advice service to recognise all they're having to do during this challenging period.

75p in every £1 we spend goes on people's services, looking after those most in need. A major part of this has been our determination to see children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have access to suitable school places here in Suffolk and to see them and their families receive the service they deserve. On too many occasions that service has not been good enough and I offer my heartfelt apologies to those who have been let down. We're working hard turning things around; £55 million pounds is being spent delivering over 1,200 new specialist places here and over the last two budgets we have invested nearly an additional £2 million into the service to try to keep pace with the increase in need. We're not yet where we want to be but the investment is there and with the appointment of Anthony Douglas, as our Special Advisor on SEND, our focus will be on seeing improvement in the lived experience of families here in the county. This year alone we have increased the total budget for Children's Services in Suffolk by £13.5 million.

It's not just Suffolk's young people that need our support. This year the Conservative administration provided Adult Social Care services with an additional £36 million in funding. Beyond that we are a leading authority in using the power of digital care. Through our Cassius digital care programme, we are using new technology to help people maintain their independence and stay safe and healthy in their own homes for as long as possible.

Turning to the environment, we continue to ensure that our aspiration to be the Greenest County does not falter. On Sunday, we opened the 100th Plug in Suffolk EV charging location in Risby near Bury St Edmunds. This scheme is attracting national recognition and recently won an additional £1.4 million of funding from the Government. Since November 2020, we have planted over 225,000 new trees, while our project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs is nearing completion and has saved the Council nearly £2.5 million already. Under Conservative leadership, Suffolk is at the forefront of environmental innovation.

In other services, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has just been inspected again and rated “Good” for its effectiveness and how well it manages staff. We’ve also just approved £5.3 million to be spent on new Fire Service vehicles, including the replacement of 20 fire engines with state-of-the-art alternatives. Turning to Highways, we have just been awarded an additional £4.8 million from government to tackle road maintenance and potholes and in October of this year our new £1 billion 20-year contract with Milestone will commence and begin to bring further innovation to Suffolk.

We are rightly proud of this track record of success and have ambitious capital projects underway like the Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft, new and refurbished household waste sites in Ipswich, Stowmarket and Haverhill and the recently announced £10.8m for Ipswich to name but a few.

For Conservatives, providing our residents with value for money is of the utmost importance and all of this has been possible without increasing Council Tax by the maximum open to us.

This is just a snapshot of what we have achieved over the last couple of years and there is much more we plan to do. I’m grateful to the people of Suffolk for the faith they have put in us and to my Conservative colleagues for helping drive forward this success. Our ambition for Suffolk will not relent.

[New exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo telling the story of royal Anglo-Saxon Rendlesham](#)

Rendlesham Revealed: The Heart of a Kingdom AD 400-800 is a new exhibition opening on Thursday 23 March 2023 at the National Trust’s Sutton Hoo, in Suffolk.

The exhibition takes visitors on a 400-year journey to reveal how the Anglo-Saxon royal settlement at Rendlesham grew and developed, and celebrates the many volunteers from the local community who uncovered the long-lost archaeological remains.

This story is brought to life with over 150 archaeological finds from the settlement, ranging from food remains to gold jewellery, many of which have never been on public display before.

Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service is curating the exhibition to celebrate "Rendlesham Revealed", a community archaeology project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Councillor Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Protected Landscapes and Archaeology, said:

I'd like to thank the National Trust and Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, for supporting this exhibition, as well as the many partners, the local landowners and farmers who have allowed access to their land, and National Lottery players, without whom, funding for this project would not have been made possible.

Over 400 volunteers from the local community have been involved in uncovering Rendlesham's past, including young adults from the Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk Mind, and local school children from Rendlesham, Eyke and Wickham Market primary schools. Volunteering has had a positive impact on many of those who took part.

The exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo on 23 March 2023 and will run until 29 October 2023. Entry to the temporary exhibition will be included in the normal admission charge to Sutton Hoo, which is free for National Trust members.

Smaller displays will also be on show at Norwich Castle and the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Museum in 2024.

To find out more about the Rendlesham Revealed project visit: heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham

New Haverhill Recycling Centre another step closer as preferred bidder announced

A new recycling centre for Haverhill has taken another step closer to fruition as a preferred bidder to carry out the work is announced.

A new recycling centre for Haverhill has moved another step closer with the announcement by Suffolk County Council of the contractor for the development.

DXI Construction Ltd is the preferred bidder to conduct the development of a brand-new facility at Homefield Road to replace the current Chalkstone Way Recycling Centre.

The new Recycling Centre will be within the current Waste Transfer Station operated by FCC Environment, the council's partner which manages all of Suffolk's 11 recycling centres.

Planning permission was granted in November 2021 and an environmental permit to operate has also been granted by the Environment Agency.

Pre-construction planning conditions have been discharged in preparation.

The county council is now concluding landowner negotiations before construction work can begin.

Providing this is achieved construction should commence in June 2023.

Councillor Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said:

People can be assured that we are working hard to bring this new site into being, and I am confident that this time next year Haverhill residents will have a new site with much better facilities and access, serving the area for many years to come.

The benefits of this scheme will be:

- A new, purpose-designed recycling centre
- A raised mezzanine platform to provide customers with an elevated position from which to safely dispose of waste - removing the need for steps
- An easy-to-use layout allowing customers to access clearly marked recycling bays
- Removing the need to close the facility to service the containers
- Improving accessibility and increasing capacity
- Introducing greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles

The new design will provide queuing capacity within the site and improved access from the public highway compared to the Chalkstone Way site.

The replacement recycling centre will overcome increasing demand at Chalkstone Way and meet the needs created by forecasted housing growth in the area.

The waste transfer station – which takes waste collected locally and bulks it for onward reprocessing – will continue to operate at Homefield Road alongside the new recycling centre.

The raised level construction will improve access to the containers for site users by removing the need for stairs.

It also means containers can continue to be emptied without the need to close the site.

The project sees FCC Environment and Suffolk County Council working as part of the Suffolk Waste Partnership with West Suffolk Council.

Suffolk County Council secures £7.9 million for active travel schemes across county

Suffolk County Council has been awarded £7.9 million to boost active schemes across the county.

The money has come from Active Travel England (ATE) and will be spent on seven projects encouraging cycling and walking through measures such as cycle lanes, shared-use paths and improved crossing points on roads.

The money from Active Transport England will fund schemes promoting walk and cycling across Suffolk.

They include two mini-Holland schemes totalling more than £5m for Woodbridge, £1.3m for Grange Road in Felixstowe, and £1.2m for the route between Ipswich Hospital and the University of Suffolk.

Mini-Holland schemes prioritise cyclists and pedestrians over motorised vehicles. £4m will be spent on a scheme in Woodbridge town centre which would see measures including:

- Quay Street junction pedestrian friendly surfacing and crossings
- Cumberland Street – one-way reversal
- Church Street – one-way northbound and pedestrian friendly surfacing
- Reorganisation of parking to create traffic calming on Burkitt Road
- One-way only system on Theatre Street
- Improved signalisation to prioritise cyclists at Thoroughfare junction
- Reversal of one-way direction on Thoroughfare
- Pedestrian/cycling crossing on Ipswich Road

A further £1.1m will be for a similar scheme in the south of the town including filter systems at Sandy Lane, Bilney Road/Grunisburgh Road junction, and Bullards Lane, installing a pedestrian/cycle crossing at Ipswich Road/Old Barrack Road, turning Peterhouse Crescent into a school street for Kyson Primary School, and an area wide 20mph speed limit.

Separately, Suffolk County Council is about to submit a feasibility study to the government which, if accepted, could see millions of pounds spent on expanding the mini-Holland system across the town and neighbouring Melton.

Some of the schemes, such as Ipswich Hospital to the University, have previously had improvements made under previous ATE funding rounds but this new money will link up and enhance that previous work.

The full list of schemes is:

- Woodbridge (Town Centre) Mini-Holland - £4,005,000
- Grange Road Felixstowe- £1,318,000
- Ipswich Hospital to University of Suffolk - £ 1,227,950
- Woodbridge (South) Mini-Holland - £1,125,000
- Ipswich - £105, 149 to be spent on 12 schemes including the east-west Ipswich town centre route, Crown Street to Ipswich Waterfront and general travel to school in the borough
- Bury St Edmunds East/West Route - £105,149
- Capel St Mary to Copdock - £46, 967

The council will consult with the public throughout 2023 with a view to starting work on all schemes in 2024.

Councillor Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said:

This is money that Suffolk County Council bid for and will fund projects in Ipswich, Woodbridge, Bury St Edmunds, Capel St Mary and Felixstowe.

We welcome this funding and look forward to investing it in projects that will help protect and enhance our environment whilst, at the same time, helping people to travel sustainably.

Council outlines “serious deficiencies” with vast solar farm proposal

Suffolk County Council has once again deemed the Sunnica solar farm proposals “unacceptable”, as final comments are presented to the Planning Inspectorate.

In a joint submission with other local authorities, responding to the proposal for the large solar farm on the Suffolk-Cambridgeshire border, the councils say that “several key items of mitigation still have serious deficiencies”.

The report has been submitted as the Examining Authority closes its examination process on 28 March. They will now write a report and recommendation, to be sent to the Secretary of State, who is expected to make the final decision whether to approve the project or not, later in 2023.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

I previously stated that this was the poorest application I have dealt with to date. There has been some positive progress with the applicant, but unfortunately the proposals still do not meet the standards we, and local communities, would expect from a project on this scale.

Suffolk County Council is fully behind the Government’s ambitions for a low carbon future, and we have our own Net Zero by 2030 target. But as it stands, this application is not the answer, which would permanently change a unique landscape shaped by agriculture and horse racing.

Areas of concern for the councils include:

- The geographic scale of the proposal which will permanently transform the landscape
- The impact on local communities of the 24 month construction period
- Sunnica’s serious shortcomings in terms of both evidence and methodology
- Sunnica’s presentation of proposal which makes it, and impacts on local communities, unclear
- Mitigation proposals do not appear to be tailored to the local context