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May 2024 Town and Parish Newsletter

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To promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk



To strengthen our local economy



To provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer



To protect and enhance our environment



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Pupils champion active travel in Suffolk schools

Pupils from four Suffolk schools have been awarded nearly £2,000 worth of funding to deliver projects that promote active travel to and from their schools.

Suffolk County Council and sustainable travel experts Modeshift invited pupils from Beccles SET, Claydon High School, Farlingaye High School and Thomas Gainsborough School to pitch their active travel ideas at the Active Travel Ambassador (ATA) Campaign Junction event last week.

The event gave the pupils the opportunity to suggest solutions to transport challenges affecting their school community and to answer questions from an expert panel.

The pitches included ideas to increase walking and wheeling by making crossings safer, introducing walking and cycling competitions and running a 'Park and Stride' promotion.

All of the participating schools were successful in their pitches and have been awarded up to £200 from Modeshift, with a match fund contribution from Suffolk County Council, to deliver their projects.

Cllr Alexander Nicoll, Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy at Suffolk County Council, sat on the panel. He said:

“It was a pleasure to sit on this panel and hear the innovative ideas these young people had for promoting active travel at their schools. I was encouraged by their enthusiasm and creativity.

“Promoting active travel is integral to the county council’s ambition to look after the health and wellbeing of our residents. Programmes such as these play an important part in establishing long-term habits of active travel and I hope these young people reap the numerous benefits for many years to come.”

Keith Woodward, Active Travel Ambassadors Coordinator for the East of England at Modeshift, said:

“The Campaign Junction for me is the highlight of the ATA Programme. It is wonderful to be able to get the schools taking part together to share their ideas and experiences, and this year the pitches from the students were exceptional.

“They confidently gave their presentations and answered questions from the panel of experts, with such precise and well thought out answers that it made it seem like they had worked in active travel for years. The students were inspirational, and I look forward to seeing the impact they have within their school community.”

Funded by Active Travel England, the ATA programme works with schools and Local Authorities to increase and promote active travel to and from schools. An ATA Coordinator works with a group of pupils in participating schools to develop an area of active travel on which to focus their pitch.



New Haverhill recycling centre on target for summer opening

A new £2 million recycling centre is on target to open on Homefield Road in Haverhill in summer 2024.

It will replace the recycling centre at Chalkstone Way and is more than three times the size of the existing site.

The construction works are being completed by FCC Environment and its contractor DXI Regeneration Ltd, on behalf of Suffolk County Council. The facility will be operated by FCC Environment, which manages all of Suffolk's 11 recycling centres.

Visual of what the new recycling centre will look like once complete.

The new centre will feature:

- A raised platform giving visitors an elevated position from which to safely dispose of waste - removing the need for steps
- A one-way system and easy-to-use layout, allowing customers to access clearly marked recycling bays
- No need to close the facility to replace full containers
- Improved accessibility and increased capacity for recycling and donating items for reuse
- Greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles
- Queuing capacity within the site and better access from the public highway compared to the Chalkstone Way site.

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Skills, Transport Strategy and Waste said:

“Excellent progress has been made on the replacement recycling centre at Homefield Road, and we are confident that it will be ready to open to the public in the summer.

“The new facility is much larger, safer and more accessible, and will be fit to serve Haverhill and the surrounding area for years to come.”

Simon Hale, FCC Environment Area Manager, said:

“It is great to see positive progress being made to this new site which will provide benefits to the local community helping residents to recycle ever more of our resources. We are looking forward to the site opening in due course.”

The waste transfer station on Homefield Road will continue to operate on the same site alongside the new recycling centre.

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



Free compost, expert advice and bargain compost bins to help Suffolk residents

As part of International Compost Awareness Week (from Saturday 4 May), Suffolk Waste Partnership is supporting several initiatives aiming to help residents get composting.

Ipswich residents, schools and community groups have the chance to win compost for their project with their new compost competition 'Make it Grow with DiGBY!'

For those interested in making their own compost, the Suffolk Waste Partnership is continuing its successful compost bin promotion, which helps residents buy compost bins and other food digesters at discounted prices to suit most resident's needs and budget. Prices start from only £19.98 for compost bins and £26.50 for food digester systems.

On average, more than a third of the contents of Suffolk's rubbish bins could easily be composted at home. Each household in Suffolk could compost 150kg of organic material a year, turning this waste into free soil improver for their garden.

Craig Renton, Suffolk County Council Waste Advisor, said:

"Home composting is the cheapest and most environmentally friendly way to deal with compostable material, as it requires no transport or processing and is an environmentally friendly alternative to peat-based compost.

"Our Compost Awareness Week events and activities provide the opportunity for people to discover the many benefits of compost, whether it is made at home or through the councils' green waste recycling services."

For details of all the discounted items available to Suffolk households through the offer, and to order, please visit <http://www.getcomposting.com/> or call 0800 316 4454. Information about discounted compost bins will be available at all events listed. Further details on Compost Awareness Week and home composting please visit www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk

Significant Suffolk Anglo-Saxon archaeology to be celebrated

Rendlesham Revealed is the Suffolk community archaeology project which uncovered a 1,400-year-old royal settlement of the East Anglian Kings in the Deben Valley.

Rendlesham Revealed is run by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service and funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund thanks to National Lottery players, who awarded a grant of £517,300 for the four-year project.

Rendlesham Revealed has been an incredible success and has added such a wealth of new understanding to Anglo-Saxon life in East Anglia.

Three years of excavations, not far from Sutton Hoo, were completed in the summer of 2023 but work continues to analyse the findings.

Faye Minter, Suffolk County Council’s Archaeology Archives and Projects Manager, said:

“South-east Suffolk was the power centre of the early East Anglian kingdom, and Rendlesham was the place from which it was ruled. Rendlesham’s archaeology gives a unique insight into what a royal centre of international importance was like at that time.

“What has been excavated during this project shows how wealthy and powerful the East Anglian kings were in Suffolk – from the discovery of a timber hall and possible temple, to the evidence of feasting that took place.”

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

“*Rendlesham Revealed* has been an incredible success and has added such a wealth of new understanding to Anglo-Saxon life in East Anglia.

“But none of this would have been possible without the many volunteers from the local community who have spent hundreds of hours field-walking, excavating and cleaning finds. This celebration event is just as much about recognising them and their incredible achievements.

“This fantastic project led by the council’s archaeological team means Suffolk’s history and this new knowledge is available for generations to come.”

Further items from *Rendlesham Revealed* can be seen in a temporary display at West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Museum until 23 July 2024, and a virtual interactive tour of the original exhibition at Sutton Hoo is available online at heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham

Six new projects announced for Ipswich as £2 million investment fund progresses

A new viewing platform on Stoke bridge, lighting and sound equipment for music gigs and a theatre project to bring together young people from across the town are among six projects which have secured funding from Suffolk County Council.

The funding, totalling over £500k, will go to half a dozen projects in Ipswich:

- **Stoke Bridge viewing platform** (£125,000 - Ipswich Central / LOCUSMS)

New seating and planting will be installed with new permanent interpretative displays and a viewing gallery on the bridge.

- **London Road premises work** (£100,000 - Lofty Heights)

Work to complete a fit out of London Road premises so that bespoke training courses for young people not in education, employment or training can be run through the Trade Skills Academy, giving young people practical skills in the construction sector.

- **Lighting rig and tour-grade PA for music venue** (£76,674 - Sounds East)

Supporting a local music venue to purchase its own lighting, PA and DJ set up enabling them to promote more events on a regular basis and attract local and national promoters and artists.

- **Achieve Vocation project** (£137,862 – Inspire)

Designed to engage with young people who are facing various challenges within school or are already disengaging from school. The project supports personal development, employability skills, well-being, and vocational experiences.

- **Risk Avert programme** (£16,095 – SCC Public Health)

Funding for a Risk Avert one-year pilot to 8 secondary schools and 4 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in Ipswich. Programme explores ways of helping young people understand and manage risk.

- **Our Town Heritage theatre project** (£50,000 – Red Rose Chain)

To create a new heritage theatre project, 'Our Town', which will bring together disadvantaged and disabled young people and young adults from diverse communities in Ipswich through exploring the heritage of the town. A programme of drama workshops working with different groups across Ipswich which will feed into the creation of an illustrated book and inspiring celebration of the untold history of Ipswich, written and directed by Artistic Director Joanna Carrick.

The money comes from Suffolk County Council's £2 million Ipswich Investment Fund. This fund was established following the council's Cabinet approving recommendations from the Ipswich Policy Development Panel (PDP) back in March 2023. It was set aside to support the delivery of projects across the town, following engagement 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 and enhancing sustainable travel options, on a project specific basis.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

"During what is a very exciting time for Ipswich, I am glad to announce the next six projects forming part of the £2 million Investment Fund for the town.

"Following the recent announcement of the first project to upgrade the streetlighting on the waterfront, these new projects look set to boost opportunities for young people in the town and improve on our growing arts and music offer.

“Our driving force behind this fund has focussed on the council’s key objectives to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and to strengthen our local economy – we will continue to keep residents updated with dates and progress related to these projects.”

Norwich to Tilbury pylons: council to object to plans and call for pause

Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet will formally object to National Grid’s current proposals for pylons between Norwich and Tilbury.

The total length of pylons would be 183 kilometres, consisting of around 158 kilometres of new overhead line supported by 520 pylons. There would be also four sections of underground cabling running through, and in the vicinity of, the Dedham Vale National Landscape and Waveney Valley.

A paper to be presented by Councillor Richard Rout at the Cabinet meeting on 21 May 2024, will recommend that the council’s position is to call for a pause to consider alternative options, such as an offshore solution, or High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) undergrounding.

It will also object to the current proposals for a number of reasons, including:

- the need for additional undergrounding of cables in the Waveney Valley and elsewhere along the route
- the need for much greater clarity regarding the relationship between the proposed project and proposed solar projects, and the cumulative effects
- potentially serious implications for at least six airfields, including pylons close to runways and, in some cases, possibly stopping all flying


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

“Our message to National Grid and Ofgem is that the current proposals must be put on hold so that the alternative solutions, which do not involve pylons, can be properly explored.

“We support the government’s desire for energy security for the UK but this must be achieved appropriately and fairly where our communities, and the local environment, will feel the impact from energy projects.

“Our work so far has helped change the proposals, by introducing more undergrounding of cables and altering the location of parts of the scheme. But this does not go nearly far enough, and in our opinion, there are significant issues which remain - not least adequate research into offshore solutions or HVDC, as well as more clarity around the cumulative impact of other energy projects. Therefore, we have no choice but to object to the proposed scheme.”

A number of recent reports help to support the council’s position:



The [ESO East Anglia Network Study](#) by The National Grid Electricity System Operator, explored better ways to connect offshore wind in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex. The council previously stated that it was critical for National Grid to take these findings into consideration as they continue planning their Great Grid Upgrade, including the Norwich to Tilbury project.

The “[Valued Landscape Assessment](#)” of the Waveney Valley, commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, acts as a timely reminder to National Grid, of the need to respond effectively and robustly to the sensitivities of Suffolk’s landscapes and communities.

The [Hiorns Smart Energy Networks report](#), also commissioned by Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, suggested that it is possible for the Norwich to Tilbury project to be paused in order to consider alternatives.

The Norwich to Tilbury project is currently in a statutory consultation phase until 18 June 2024, and it is expected to submit its application to the Planning Inspectorate in 2025.

Ipswich man sentenced following social care payment fraud

An Ipswich man, who admitted committing fraud to steal £20,000 worth of social care payments, was sentenced today at Ipswich Crown Court following a successful prosecution by Suffolk County Council.

Andrew Leacock of Coronation Road Ipswich, admitted to creating and submitting false documents and expense claims totalling £20,046.60 between October 2017 and February 2021. The claims were made on behalf of his partner, who was in receipt of direct payments from the county council to provide additional support due to her disability.

A social care financial review raised concerns over how the direct payment had been used. These concerns combined with inconsistencies relating to claims being made for cleaning, ironing, and gardening services, led to an investigation by the County Council's Counter-Fraud Team who found Mr Leacock had assumed full control of his partner's direct payments, receiving funds into his own bank account. He had alleged that payments were being made in cash to three individuals to provide those services, who in fact did not exist and he kept the funds for himself.

He was sentenced to two years custody suspended for two years, 30 days of rehabilitation activity and ordered to pay £1,800 in compensation.

Speaking after the sentencing Cllr. Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care said:

"This is a good result for adult social care in Suffolk, and I want to thank the Counter-Fraud Team and Legal Services for their hard work in successfully prosecuting this case. I hope this outcome serves as a clear warning to others who may be thinking of trying to defraud social care. Suffolk

County Council will always vigorously pursue and prosecute people who steal from the tax payer.”

Suffolk Business Board named

A new Suffolk Business Board has been established to represent the local business community, help steer Suffolk’s economic strategy and create a stronger, higher-skilled local economy.

The Business Board takes over the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in providing a voice for business in Suffolk. It will start meeting later this month.

Mark Pendlington, local business leader and former High Sheriff of Suffolk, will serve as interim chair for the first year. Cllr Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, will serve as deputy chair.

Representatives from business, education and local government will join them on the Board and bring experience in key Suffolk sectors including agri-food, retail, technology, ports and logistics, and the visitor economy.


The other board members are:

- Doug Field, East of England Co-Op
- Oliver Paul, Suffolk Food Hall
- Lisa Perkins, Tech East
- Peter Brady, Orbital Global
- Kelly Boosey, Oxford Innovation
- Leanne Gittins, LME Recruitment
- John Dugmore, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Ball, Ipswich Town Football Club
- Hannah Reid, Community Action Suffolk
- Paul Ager, Associated British Ports
- Gurpreet Jagpal, University of Suffolk
- Nikos Savvas, Eastern Education Group
- Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council
- Cllr Andy Mellen, Mid Suffolk District Council
- Cllr Neil MacDonald, Ipswich Borough Council

The Board will be supported by Suffolk County Council’s Economic Development team. One of its key objectives in the first six months will be to define a refreshed economic strategy for Suffolk.

Mr Pendlington said:

“I am delighted to have been invited to chair the Board and to work with senior leaders from business, education and local government to create a new economic strategy for Suffolk. Our



county is full of talent, ideas and innovation, and our job is to harness all of that expertise and experience to help secure a long-term sustainable future for our county in the competitive national and international economy.

“We have inherited from the New Anglian LEP a strong legacy of inward investment, improved skills and new jobs. Suffolk is home to many world-class businesses, with thousands more that have big ambitions for growth. The Board will be looking to deliver a strategy that underpins this success and establishes the county as one of the best places in the UK to live, work and learn.”

The Suffolk Business Board has been established following the government’s decision to bring the function of Local Enterprise Partnerships into local authorities from April 2024.

New cabinet changes announced as Council Leader sets out plans for next year

In the Annual General Meeting, Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, announced changes to his Cabinet at Suffolk County Council with immediate effect.

The new Cabinet and Deputies will now consist of:

- **Richard Smith** – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Economic Development and Skills
- **Beccy Hopfensperger** – Cabinet Member for Adult Care
- **Paul West** – Cabinet Member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding
- **Andrew Reid** – Cabinet Member for Education and SEND
- **Bobby Bennett** – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services
- **Philip Faircloth-Mutton** – Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality
- **Chris Chambers** – Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste
- **Steve Wiles** – Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection
- **Alexander Nicoll** – Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy
- **David Roach** – Deputy Cabinet Member for Fostering and Adoption
- **Nadia Cenci** – Deputy Cabinet Member for Property and County Farms
- **Debbie Richards** – Deputy Cabinet Member for SEND
- **Heike Sowa** – Deputy Cabinet Member for Transformation
- **Richard Rout** – Deputy Cabinet Member for NSIPs
- **Judy Cloke** – Deputy Cabinet Member for Flooding
- **Craig Rivett**, former Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, has resigned his position as county councillor for the Pakefield Division. Richard Rout has also stepped back from his Cabinet position.

As is customary for the Annual General Meeting, Councillor Hicks, who begins his seventh year as Leader of Suffolk County Council, set out his plans for the year.

You can [read the speech](#) from the meeting.



Funding secured to boost digital tech innovation

Suffolk County Council, working with Norfolk County Council and Connected Innovation, has secured funding from Barclays Eagle Labs Ecosystem Partnership Programme to boost support for the region's digital technology sector.

The funding will be used to deliver 'The Future', a joint project which aims to support and scale digital technology innovation in Suffolk and Norfolk in three critical ways:

- Developing a local ecosystem with stronger connections between experienced entrepreneurs and the next generation of regional startups
- Developing a process for identifying, engaging and supporting early-stage startups and integrating them into the community
- Creating more opportunities for founders from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds by offering stipends to those who would not otherwise be able to commit to their venture full-time.

The project is bolstered by further funding from Connected Innovation as well as match funding from Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils.

The project will be delivered by Akcela in Norfolk and Innovation Labs in Suffolk.

Cllr Richard Smith MVO, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Economic Development and Skills, said:


"I would like to thank Barclays for recognising the vision of this project, which aims to address some critical barriers to digital technology innovation locally. Currently, the region does not generate enough tech startups that are able to scale to the UK and the rest of the world.

"Our vision for 'The Future' is to create closer collaboration and knowledge sharing between established businesses and entrepreneurs and those who are still near the start of their journey, and to strengthen our local economy by creating an ecosystem in which startups can achieve their ambitions to scale and thrive."

Amanda Allan, Director of Barclays Eagle Labs, said:

"We are excited to be facilitating this funding to help Connected Innovation, alongside and both Suffolk Council and Norfolk County Council, launch 'The Future' project. We are very much looking forward to seeing this support reach tech businesses in the region.

"Using our Ecosystem Partnership Programme, we are allocating funding to organisations like Connected Innovation that are already plugged into their regional ecosystems. We are proud to be able to support such projects, which are designed to help early-stage tech entrepreneurs. Our support for Connected Innovation and similar organisations highlights our ongoing commitment to support tech start-ups and scale-ups, which are vital to growing local economies throughout the UK."



East of England local authorities collaborate to appeal for more foster families to work with their council

Eleven local authorities across the East of England have joined forces in a bid to collectively recruit more foster carers to look after some of the region's most vulnerable children.

Suffolk is taking part in a new initiative for fostering under the banner Foster East. There is an urgent need for foster carers in the East of England with more than 7,000 vulnerable children already in the care of their local authority, and a further 150 children coming into care every month.

The Foster East initiative which is funded by the Department of Education and launched today Wednesday 29 May 2024, is a new, collaborative approach to foster carer recruitment and support. Councils will work together to provide more comprehensive training, support and best practice. Each applicant will be nurtured through their fostering journey with their local council and via a buddy network. Foster East advisors will help people find out how fostering can become part of their life.

In Suffolk there are more than 900 children and young people ranging from babies to 18-year-olds who need safe, loving and nurturing homes where they can thrive and develop. Every local authority aims to keep children and young people local to their support networks, but a shortage of foster families in our area means this is not always possible.

Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children.


Councillor Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Children and Young People's Services, said:

"Through the Foster East Partnership, we are united in our ambition to provide more loving foster families for children in their local area.

"By fostering with your local council, you are supporting children, teenagers and families from your own communities. This means you are helping to minimise the disruption to their lives: staying local means that children can continue to attend their usual school, see their friends and family members, and participate in their usual activities, whilst having the support they need in a safe home environment.

"We always have opportunities to foster children of any age, including sibling groups, but we currently have a particular need for carers to look after teenagers who are 11+. Welcoming a young teenager into your home means becoming their role model and guide. You will help them navigate their teenage years through to their independence.

"We provide in-depth training and support to ensure our foster parents can care with confidence. Because we know our children and our carers, we can take care to match the right child to the right family, where they can thrive."



Foster carers working for independent fostering agencies are also invited to transfer to their local council via Foster East. They will benefit from local training, and a linked foster carers support network which will offer support for foster families needing a short break.

Foster East will give people considering fostering the opportunity to speak to an advisor from 8am to 8pm daily, and the chance to talk to an experienced foster carer to find out more about what the role involves and ask any questions they may have. More information can be found on the [Foster East website](#).