

From:
Cllr Keith Robinson
and
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September 2020 Monthly Parish Newsletter



Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools' guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on Covid-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Council announces £300,000 for electric vehicle charging points in rural Suffolk

100 fast charging points for electric vehicles will be installed in rural parts of the county by Suffolk County Council.

The council will be reaching out to interested parish and town councils and non-profit organisations to put in fast chargers where there are currently none. The funding will cover the installation and set-up costs, meaning very little expense for the hosts and possibly creating a source of income for them.

This project is the first to benefit from the council's Suffolk 2020 Fund, which was announced earlier this year. This is a £3m fund for the council's own projects to bid into. Projects must help address the council's climate emergency declaration and must improve Suffolk for all residents in years to come.

The £300,000 award will link into the council's existing Plug In Suffolk project, which was launched in February 2019. It is the UK's first 'fully open' public fast charging network for electric vehicles, meaning drivers simply pay by contactless payment with no need to register their details.

Councillor Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council, said:

"Ultra-low emission vehicle ownership has nearly trebled in the last three years in Suffolk and I want to this to continue by making it even more convenient to charge

up across the county. I'd like to see fast charging points at our rural village halls, community buildings, sports clubs, places of worship and in small villages. We can now make this a reality and hopefully provide the host with a source of income too.

“If you look at a map of existing charging points in the county, there are big gaps – and one of the barriers to people switching to an electric vehicle is lack of confidence about finding a place to charge. This funding will help fill those gaps and give people that confidence. Once these charging points are installed, Suffolk will have one of the best rural charging networks in the country.

“We will be contributing to better air quality, reducing carbon emissions and cutting down our reliance on fossil fuels – all supporting our climate emergency declaration and ambition to create the greenest county.

“A better charging network can also help Suffolk economically. The UK's electric vehicle owners can look fondly on Suffolk as an even more welcoming destination, as they will be able to charge their cars right across the county.”

The fast charging points supplied by Plug In Suffolk do not require any registration, membership or apps - drivers simply park, plug in and charge using contactless payment.

There have already been expressions of interest for charging points from around 20 suitable sites. In the coming weeks, officers from Suffolk County Council will be contacting town and parish councils to investigate more possible locations.

For further information on Plug In Suffolk or to apply to join the network, visit www.greensuffolk.org/plug-in-suffolk

Plotting the road to COVID recovery – Leaders agree £3.4 million investment in Suffolk's future

On 25 September, Suffolk's public sector leaders met to agree collective action as part of Suffolk's recovery from COVID-19 over the coming months.

To kickstart the process, the group agreed in principle to a significant investment of £3.4 million towards key priorities to support Suffolk's communities and businesses, addressing some of the challenges people currently face, including isolation, hardship, exploitation and the uncertainty of the economy.

As part of the first phase of supporting Suffolk's recovery, the following funding was agreed to support some of Suffolk's immediate areas of focus:

- **Driving inclusive economic growth** – investing in recovery (visitor economy/local investment) and the Suffolk Growth Partnership - £1,302,500m (over three years).
- **Supporting the most vulnerable** – hardship funding - £800,000.
- **Community safety** – tackling gangs and county lines – £1,352,202m (over three years).

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Chair of Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group, said:

“On behalf of all members of this group and the organisations we represent, I want to pay tribute to everyone involved in Suffolk’s response to COVID-19. Over the last few months, we have all seen how Suffolk is blessed with so many people willing to volunteer their time to support one another, and businesses which have found ways to adapt and continue through incredibly tough times. Across Suffolk’s public sector we have dedicated staff who have all risen to the challenge to maintain essential services under immense pressure and develop innovative solutions to get help to those who need it when they need it most.

“Whilst we continue to respond to the pandemic, now is the right time to begin thinking and planning for what Suffolk’s recovery from COVID may look like. Today’s meeting was all about moving forward together and setting the focus on our strengths and weaknesses to understand how we can complement the work of one another. The way in which Suffolk’s public sector has risen to the complex challenges in responding to Covid-19 so far is testament to our approach, and that’s how we wish to continue into recovery.

“We now have the opportunity to develop collaborative plans that provide a clear direction for Suffolk’s recovery, supported by active engagement and consultation with all of our communities. Many of us now work, socialise and go about our lives in different ways to how we did before COVID and there are opportunities as a result of this that we need to give consideration to. We need to think about a bigger conversation in time through which our communities can help shape the delivery of services as we hopefully move through a recovery from COVID-19.”

As the national response to COVID-19 continues, it is important for Suffolk to establish an approach to recovery that is inclusive, people-focussed, and sustainable during these challenging times. Suffolk’s public sector leaders are committed to driving the services and support that communities and businesses across Suffolk need as the first steps towards recovery from the pandemic begin.

Every leader and their organisation has been at the forefront of the local response, playing a key role throughout the last seven months. The response through Home But Not Alone has proven a real success, bringing together services and volunteers with those who need support. The established PPE team, which formed part of the Suffolk Resilience Forum’s response, has successfully sourced and supplied vital equipment where it is needed most.

Whilst it is essential that individual organisations across Suffolk’s public sector have their own recovery plans and processes in place, agreeing funding for these key areas is another clear sign of the collaborative focus that all of Suffolk’s Public Sector Leaders recognise in supporting their priorities, including: creating strong communities, supporting the most vulnerable, inclusive economic growth, tackling climate change, improving health and care, improving community safety, and securing fairer funding for local public services.

Preliminary work begins on Lowestoft's Gull Wing

Preparations for Lowestoft's new Gull Wing bridge have started with an archaeological survey.

Now that Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has given the final green light for the project, Suffolk-based company, Archaeological Solutions Ltd, is digging trial trenches to find out if there are any archaeological remains relating to activity on the river's edge.

There are deep layers of more recent material beneath the current site surface, which was bought in to level the site.

A council spokesperson said:

"We are undertaking this archaeological work at the earliest possible stage, so that we give ourselves plenty of time to manage anything that might be discovered. This means that we can keep to our timetable of beginning construction work in Spring 2021."

An archaeological survey of the site is a formal requirement before any work on the main construction can start. The council's own Archaeology Service will oversee the works to ensure that the site is properly mapped and that any finds are recorded.

The project's full business case has now been submitted to the Department for Transport and once reviewed will enable the government's £73.39m funding to be accessed. Details of the company which has secured the construction contract will be announced shortly, with the Gull Wing scheduled to open in the summer of 2023.

County Council unable to support plans for Sizewell C

Suffolk County Council has stated it cannot support EDF Energy's plans for Sizewell C in its current form.

A report, and accompanying supporting documents, discussed at the Cabinet meeting on 22 September, focussed on significant concerns regarding transport impacts, site design, and the environmental impact on the Suffolk coast which remain unanswered by EDF Energy. Details of the council's position will be shared as Relevant Representations with the Government's Planning Inspectorate, which is overseeing the process for this proposed development.

It is very clear from the Council's representations that the current proposals do not sufficiently avoid, minimise, mitigate or compensate impacts of the proposed development. Many issues raised in previous rounds of consultations remain outstanding, and the lack of improvement and progress regarding many of these issues is very disappointing considering how early in the development process the council raised its concerns. The Relevant Representation document fully details the council's proposed position and lists the areas where it believes EDF Energy needs to undertake further work.

Suffolk County Council has always supported the principle of a new nuclear power station at Sizewell and recognises that Sizewell C would offer an important

contribution to the national energy strategy. The council would also welcome the benefits of new jobs and skills. However, it cannot support the current proposals presented by EDF Energy as they stand today.

The council does not support EDF Energy's proposed transport strategy as it remains predominantly lorry-based and, in the council's view, is unsustainable. The authority strongly believes that an increased proportion of rail and sea transport is reasonably achievable and, in its current form, the transport impacts on Suffolk's highway network are unacceptable.

The Relevant Representation document published goes into greater detail on other areas of concern, including:

- Proposals to have additional pylons on site.
- Ecological damage.
- Suitable mitigation to protect local wildlife species.
- Appropriate levels of funding for mitigation measures and compensation to support the impact on the local community and related infrastructure.

Councillor Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council, said:

"I cannot support EDF Energy's proposal as it currently stands. I have huge concerns regarding a number of impacts that I do not believe EDF Energy has appropriately addressed.

"On behalf of the communities around this area of East Suffolk and the wider county, we have repeatedly asked EDF Energy to explore alternative methods of delivering key aspects of this development to reduce the impact on local people and wildlife. We remain very disappointed that the transport strategy presented by EDF Energy relies heavily on road-based haulage for materials. In its current form, we don't believe it is a sustainable solution with its massive impact on the environment and our communities and a much higher number of heavy goods vehicles taking to Suffolk's roads than our existing infrastructure can handle.

"We believe there needs to be much more work done to increase rail or sea transport to alleviate some of the pressure due to be put on our road network and our communities.

"We cannot look past the significant environmental impacts that have not been mitigated nearly as much as we would expect. We believe the proposed use of pylons is an unnecessary blight on the landscape and the effects on local wildlife and wider environment have not been mitigated to our satisfaction. Therefore, we believe serious discussions are required to explore what further avoidance, mitigation and compensation can be offered should the Secretary of State decide to give his approval at this point."

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, added:

"Suffolk County Council has always supported the principle of a new nuclear power station at Sizewell, recognising the important contribution to the national energy strategy and the large economic boost such a development could bring to our

county. Our position has always been that we needed to see if the advantages could outweigh the disadvantages. Unfortunately, as these plans stand, the disadvantages heavily outweigh the advantages. There is much work for EDF to do in addressing our concerns and the concerns of our communities.”

The council accepts that EDF Energy has addressed some of the authority’s previous concerns following successful representations from both Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council, alongside local stakeholders. These areas include; improvements to the design of non-nuclear buildings on site, moving the training centre away from its proposed location at Goose Hill in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and a Public Services Fund to mitigate costs for county council services.

To view the Cabinet report and accompanying draft Relevant Representation document, visit committeeminutes.suffolk.gov.uk.

Successful £4.4m adaptive street lighting project celebrates first year

On 17 September, Suffolk celebrated a successful first year of its £4.4m Live Labs project – ‘A Smarter Suffolk’.

Suffolk’s Live Lab project is part of the ADEPT SMART Places Live Labs Programme - a £22.9m project funded by the Department for Transport. Suffolk was one of nine local authorities to successfully bid for funding.

The main aim of Suffolk’s Live Lab is to use its existing street lighting infrastructure to provide a showcase of innovative technologies that bring efficiencies to Suffolk County Council now, and potentially to other local authorities in future.

Benefits from these technologies are set to revolutionise the way services are delivered by local authorities through the collection of data from sensors placed on street lighting columns throughout the county. As well as working with the University of Suffolk and BT, Suffolk has spent the last year negotiating with potential providers of a wide range of such sensors so that they can be deployed in different environmental conditions - namely urban, rural and coastal locations.

The project will enable local authorities to monitor aspects such as weather, air quality, road surface temperatures, and traffic volumes, as well as create on-street electric vehicle charging and support the deployment of 5G infrastructure by the mobile network operators.

So far, Suffolk has installed 43 sensors, with plans to install hundreds more over the coming months.

The data being gathered can help to provide a picture of road use. This will be particularly valuable in areas where COVID-19 related initiatives such as cycle lanes have been implemented, as data for before and after implementation can be analysed. The original two-year timescale for the Suffolk Live Labs project was recently extended by six months to account for the impact of COVID-19. This allows a greater time period to analyse incoming data from the deployed sensors.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member responsible for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

“Our Live Labs project in Suffolk is going from strength to strength and I’m delighted with the progress made to date. Although seemingly complex, the placement of these sensors, and the data we are receiving from them, will help make council services run smoother and more efficiently now and in future.

“We have also been able to ramp up activity during the recent months and use the data we are receiving to help paint a local picture of highway use during lockdown.

“The Live Labs project and related funding has given us the opportunity to test innovative and pioneering technology in a live environment, meaning the data we receive can be put to good use, providing real and tangible benefits.”

Window now open to apply for primary and secondary school places

Parents and carers can now apply for primary and secondary school places for September 2021.

The deadline for applications to secure a place at a Suffolk secondary school is Saturday 31 October 2020 and for primary schools it is Friday 15 January 2021. Secondary schools include high and upper schools and primary schools include infant, junior and middle schools. All applications received by these dates are processed at the same time, using the schools’ oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications where necessary. Late applications are processed after all of those received on time.

Last year, Suffolk County Council received just over 16,000 applications from parents and carers indicating at which school they would prefer their child to be educated from September 2020. Nearly 93% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and almost 98% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools.

Before making a school application, parents and carers need to consider how they will get their child to and from school. School Travel eligibility is based on a child attending the nearest suitable school that would have had a place available. This might not be the catchment area school. To find out more about SCC’s school travel policy please visit suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Councillor Mary Evans, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills, said:

“Making the right school choice is one of the most important decisions a parent makes on behalf of their child. It is important that parents and carers complete and submit their application by the closing date to give their child the best chance of getting a place at one of their preferred schools. We also recommend applying for more than one school and you can list up to three schools on the application form.”

“Parents and carers also need to consider carefully how their child will travel to school before they apply for a school place. I would strongly recommend that you

check which school is your nearest suitable school on our Nearest School Checker because this might not be your catchment area school. This can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/school-catchment-areas.”

Parents and carers should apply for a school place online at suffolk.gov.uk/admissions as they will then receive confirmation that we have received their application. If for any reason parents and carers are unable to apply online, they should apply on a paper CAF1 application form. Suffolk County Council is unable to acknowledge receipt of paper applications and therefore suggest that proof of posting is obtained.

If families are planning to move house, or think their circumstances may change before September, it is still important to make an application on time. Advice and guidance about the application process is available at suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Families who apply online will be able to log on to the Online Service on the National Offer Day, which is Monday 1 March 2021 for secondary school places and Friday 16 April 2021 for primary school places, to see their offer of a school place. They will receive an email to confirm this offer on the same day. Offer letters will be sent by second class post to applicants who made a paper application.

Information to help parents and carers make their application is available at suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

1,500-year-old cemetery discovered near Suffolk coast

On 16 September, it was reported that a large Anglo-Saxon cemetery, dating back as early as the 6th Century, has been revealed in Suffolk.

Excavations took place at Oulton, near Lowestoft, ahead of a housing development being built by Persimmon Homes Anglia. Over 200 sets of remains were discovered, with some graves containing copper-alloy brooches, wrist clasps, strings of beads made of amber and glass, small iron knives and silver pennies.

The excavation of such cemeteries in their entirety is rare in England. The site has similarities with nearby Sutton Hoo and Snape, with the unusual phenomenon of many skeletons only visible as ‘sand-silhouettes’, a delicate form of preservation.

Andrew Peachey of Archaeological Solutions Ltd, who carried out the excavations, said:

“Our archaeologists painstakingly excavated the delicate remains of 17 cremations and 191 inhumation burials. Due to the highly acidic soil the skeletons had mostly vanished and were luckily preserved as fragile shapes and shadows in the sand. These shadows also revealed traces of the wooden coffins that some of the individuals were buried in.

“Unusually, many graves also included fragments of pottery and in some cases complete decorated pots. Weapons were rare, with a sword in one grave, iron spear heads in three others, and at least one shield – the metal fittings of the shield remained in place around the silhouette of the dissolved wooden boards. Many of the artefacts were so fragile they had to be block lifted for micro-excavation in the

labs at Norfolk Museum Service for analysis and conservation – they were even able to recover pieces of textiles and leather.”

The site appears to represent a small farming community buried over several generations with male, female, child and infant burials. Interestingly, the cemetery was in continuous use during a time which saw major changes in burial practice and the conversion to Christianity.

The work was monitored by officers from the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, a spokesperson said:

“This is a nationally significant discovery and continues to evidence what a historic place Suffolk is. The site lies within the 7th Century Kingdom of the East Angles, made famous by the royal burial ground at nearby Sutton Hoo. It is important we oversee and record this work so that we can understand the community buried here and its connections to other finds in Oulton and the nearby settlements and cemeteries at Carlton Colville and Flixton.

“The work here would not have been possible without the generosity of Persimmon Homes, the expertise of Archaeological Solutions Ltd and the work of our officers to make sure that the cemetery was recorded and excavated to the highest standards.”

All remains have now been fully excavated ahead of the development and are undergoing post excavation analysis. The area has been fully mapped and recorded and building work has now begun. The finds and remains will now undergo specialist analysis, details of the site will be documented, and the entire archive will be deposited with Suffolk County Council’s Archaeology Service. Once this work is complete, they will be available for researchers and local museums to borrow on loan for display to the public.

Suffolk County Council welcomes public consultation on improving rail capacity at Ely

Suffolk County Council supports Network Rail’s proposal to unlock rail capacity at Ely for passenger and freight services.

Achieving an hourly Ipswich to Peterborough passenger rail service and enabling more freight to travel by rail has moved a step closer with the announcement that Network Rail will be seeking the public’s views on a proposed scheme that will unlock rail congestion at Ely Station.

The railway track through Ely Station forms part of a key rail corridor for passenger services running from Suffolk to Peterborough, the Midlands and the North. It also forms part of the Freight Rail Network that links freight rail services from the Port of Felixstowe to the Midlands and to the North of England.

Network Rail will be gathering views from members of the public by hosting a series of online events. The results of the consultation will then be used to develop a business case for investing in rail infrastructure that will unlock the congested area at Ely Station.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs at Suffolk County Council, said:

“This is a big deal for Suffolk and East Anglia. Unlocking rail capacity at Ely will go a long way to enabling Suffolk to achieve an hourly passenger rail service between Ipswich and Peterborough (which currently operates two-hourly), and to provide additional train paths for more freight rail services to travel from the Port of Felixstowe. Ely currently acts as a blocker to Suffolk achieving both of these things.

“Suffolk County Council has worked with the Ely Taskforce to ensure that the rail capacity issues at Ely Station receives the recognition they desperately deserve, and most importantly that solutions are found to address the capacity constraints.”

Network Rail launched their public consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme (EACE) on Monday 21 September. The consultation will run for six weeks. [Details of the rail project and the public consultation can be found at networkrail.co.uk](https://www.networkrail.co.uk).

Have your say on a new political map for Suffolk County Council

New boundaries are being proposed for council divisions in Suffolk County Council.

The Local Government Boundary Commission wants to hear what residents and local organisations think about the proposals. A 10-week consultation on the proposals will run until 23 November 2020.

The Boundary Commission is the independent body that draws these boundaries. It is reviewing Suffolk County Council to make sure councillors will represent about the same number of electors, and that division arrangements will help the council work effectively.

The Commission has published proposals for changes to Suffolk County Council. It is proposing that there should be 70 councillors in future: five fewer than now. The recommendations also outline how those councillors should represent 70 single-councillor divisions across the county. The boundaries of all existing divisions should change except for one.

Launching the consultation Professor Colin Mellors, Chair of the Boundary Commission, said:

“We have drawn up proposals for new divisions in Suffolk County Council. We want to make sure these new electoral arrangements reflect communities. We also want them to be easy to understand and convenient for local people.

“Residents and local organisations can help us do that. We would like them to let us know whether they agree with our proposals before we take final decisions.

“It’s easy to get involved. Go to our website. Or you can e-mail or write to us.

“Just tell us what you think and give us some details why you think that. It’s really simple, so do get involved”

The Commission has a dedicated section on its website where people can see the detail of the proposals and comment on the names of divisions, their boundaries and the number of councillors per division: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/18495>

People can also give their views by e-mail at reviews@lgbce.org.uk, and by post to:

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