



# District Councillor's Report to Playford Parish Council

For September 2022

Carlford and Fynn Valley Ward.

Rushmere Village, Great Bealings, Little Bealings, Playford, Bredfield, Grundisburgh & Culpho, Witnesham and Swiland, Westerfield, Hasketon, Clopton, Charsfield, Dallinghoo, Tuddenham, Boulge, Burgh, Debach, Otley.

From District Councillor

Cllr Colin Hedgley

## . Helping East Suffolk ease the squeeze on cost of living



As the UK continues to face a cost-of-living crisis, households are seeing huge increases in their outgoings.

As we head into the colder months, East Suffolk Council has a responsibility to help residents find the support they need.

That is why we have launched Ease the Squeeze – a comprehensive scheme which helps connect those needing help to those helping.

We are working closely with key partners on a number of local schemes, while also directing people to other available support and services.

All the information, including practical support, funding and advice, has been gathered on our website, at [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze). This page is continuously being updated as more schemes, services and support becomes available, so please share this with others.

We will also be running a social media campaign to raise awareness of the website.

Customer Services, Communities and Housing are working closely together to provide a wide range of support and advice.

Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities, will host live online information sessions about Ease the Squeeze, on Teams, from 11.30am-12.30pm on Tuesday 6 September and from 4pm-5pm Wednesday 14 September.

Email [Joanna.jonas@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Joanna.jonas@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) to book a spot.

## Felixstowe's Seafront Gardens has once again been officially recognised as one of the country's best parks after receiving a Green Flag Award.

The serene Victorian cliffside site was today awarded the international quality mark for parks and green spaces for the seventh successive year. This uninterrupted string of awards followed East Suffolk Council's four-year restoration project,



launched in 2011, to return the Grade II listed greenspace to its former glory as part of a town-wide regeneration programme.

The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Judges reported being very impressed by the well managed and maintained Seafront Gardens, which they called a “credit to the town” and deserving of the Green Flag Award. They also praised the site’s links to numerous community groups and the strength of the Friends of Felixstowe Seafront Gardens.

### **East Suffolk Council’s long-serving Chief Executive Stephen Baker has announced that he is to retire.**

After a career in local government which has spanned four decades, culminating in 17 years at the helm of East Suffolk and its predecessor councils, Stephen will step down from his post at the end of this year. As Chief Executive of the biggest district council in the country by population, representing 250,000 people across an area covering 487 square miles, Stephen has been at the forefront of local government innovation, becoming one of the country’s first ever joint Chief Executives when taking up the reins at Waveney District Council alongside his role at Suffolk Coastal.

He then oversaw more than a decade of successful, cutting-edge partnership working, culminating in the creation of East Suffolk Council, delivering the best possible services for local people. His leadership helped demonstrate that councils can deliver reform, innovate and transform themselves - with the streamlining and strengthening of local government principles and the delivery of a model for others to follow.

### **Embedding good design into future developments**

To ensure high-quality design is at the forefront of new developments in East Suffolk, a new role has been created within East Suffolk Council’s Planning Team.

Believed to be one of the first local authorities in the country to do so, East Suffolk Council has recently appointed a Design Champion to join its Planning Team. The new role will ensure high quality design is considered when determining planning applications, as well as when creating future planning policies and in the Council’s wider place shaping projects and its own developments.

Chris King, an urban designer and landscape architect, has been appointed to the role. Chris is experienced at promoting design quality in place making around the UK and will provide expert design advice, as well as advocating for high quality design.



The Design Champion role heads up the Planning Team's newly created Specialist Services Team, which comprises highly skilled landscape, heritage, design, and ecology experts.

### **Glass Tipping Problems**

You may be aware in early February there was a fire at the Transfer Station on Ransomes Industrial Estate, Ipswich. This unfortunate event resulted in the Transfer Station being closed entirely until the end of March. Whilst most of the site is back up and running, the waste bays for glass tipping remain unavailable. SCC who manage the site have recently informed us that the site should be fully reinstated in early September.

Due to this closure, Norse have been unable to tip at this facility and have had to make the journey to the alternative tipping point in Lowestoft. This has obviously had an impact on the collection on glass bins, which we have tried to minimise, but which I know has been frustrating.

We are aware that there may be further problems during the holiday season . The message here is we are working on resolving the issue ASAP but if the bank is full please don't leave your bottles, but return another day.



### **Free meals and summer holiday activities for schoolchildren**

Numerous organisations signed up to provide fun and food as part of a programme of experiences for children and young people over the holiday weeks.

The Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme is funded by the Department for Education through an annual budget from Suffolk County Council.

The local programme was targeted at those eligible for benefits-related free school meals, and other vulnerable children, or those with additional need, that would benefit from accessing the programme.

Local authorities have discretion to use up to 15% of funding to provide free or subsidised holiday club places for children who are not in receipt of benefits-related free school meals but who the local authority believe could benefit from HAF provision.

Among offerings were Operation Camouflage, organised by the Army Welfare Service and East Suffolk Council, at Sutton Heath, near Woodbridge, and sporting activities provided by leisure partner Everyone Active, in Lowestoft.

### **'Efficient, clean and super green' refuse lorries hit the streets of East Suffolk**

East Suffolk Council has welcomed the addition of 'efficient, clean and super green' biofuel-powered trucks to its fleet of refuse collection vehicles.

The arrival of the vehicles on the streets of East Suffolk is the latest move towards switching the entire fleet to eco-friendly fuel.

Last year, the Council approved plans to switch its diesel fleet to be fuelled by HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) and reduce total carbon emissions by more than 30%.

An advanced renewable and sustainable fuel, HVO offers up to 90% reduction in carbon emissions compared to diesel.

The 246-vehicle fleet, mainly operated by waste management partners East Suffolk Norse, was the biggest single contributor to the Council's carbon footprint last year. A third the vehicles will initially be converted to HVO, including 60% of heavy goods refuse lorries.



## **Charity cycling event returns to East Suffolk**

A popular cycling event is set to return to East Suffolk following a two-year break brought on by the pandemic.

The first Women on Wheels (WOW) event in the district since 2019 will set off from Ipswich School Sports Centre, in Rushmere St Andrew, on Sunday 4 September.

The mass participation, female-only events focus strongly on the fun, friendly and inclusive aspects of cycling – with each ride featuring routes of an achievable distance for any level of ability and experience.



Any profit from entry fees for the ride, organised by East Suffolk Council and Plomesgate Cycling Club, will be shared between two nominated charities, Lighthouse Women's Aid and Fresh Start new beginnings.

## **Hospital pressure-easing patient scheme wins national recognition**

In innovative partnership scheme, delivered by East Suffolk Council to support hospital patients returning home from hospital, has been highly commended by national award judges.

Stepping Home was launched in 2018 as a way of recognising the impact of housing on the health, wellbeing and independence of communities, and to provide support for patients awaiting hospital discharge or at risk of admission.

A partnership covering the five Suffolk local authority areas, as well as the West Suffolk and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, Stepping Home launched as a pilot service but proved successful enough to be adopted permanently to support all agencies and service users.

Total estimated service savings, after running costs, are in the region of £404,220 – equivalent to almost 1,700 hospital bed days, 16 band five nurses, or 700 ambulance call-outs.

The service received high commendation from judges in the Health and Social Care category of the annual Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards at Grosvenor House, London.



## **Parking review launched to evaluate changing demand and meet local need**

This Council has pledged to conduct a detailed review of parking management regulations and introduce new schemes to meet changing local demand.

The review will encompass regulations such as resident parking, short term parking bays and double yellow lines, and consider a variety of factors, including shifting patterns of town centre use and growth in housing.

Cabinet members approved recommendations for the review of existing rules and the allocation of a supplementary budget for the appointment of a Highways Technician/Engineer to provide the necessary resource and capability.

The recommendation for a review follows the transferral of parking enforcement powers from Suffolk Constabulary to individual local authorities in April 2020.

The review will involve consultation with relevant town and parish councils, Business Improvement Districts, Suffolk County Council and other bodies, such as the Lowestoft Place Board and local business associations.

## **Holiday accommodation owner fined for environmental breaches**

An East Suffolk business owner has been ordered to pay £5,160 in fines and court costs after he admitted failing to properly dispose of rubbish at premises near Halesworth.

Richard Boddy was due to face trial at Suffolk Magistrates' Court on Monday 8 August over two counts of failing to comply with requirements imposed by East Suffolk Council, under section 47 of the Environmental Protection Act, between 7 June and 28 September 2021.

But the holiday accommodation owner chose to admit he breached requirements by failing to provide suitably sized receptacles for the volume of waste produced at Holly Tree Farm Barns, in Bell Green, Cratfield, and thereby allowing rubbish to collect around the bin compound.

Mr Boddy, of Bottesford, Scunthorpe, and now of Barbados, was issued a section 47 notice by East Suffolk Council in October 2020 following a number of complaints concerning overflowing bins and excessive waste – in some cases attracting wild animals – at the Cratfield holiday let site.

The notice directed that all waste products be placed in receptacles of a suitable size and type; that no waste be left on the ground around the bin compound or on the public highway, and that a trade contract for regular removal of waste be arranged.



During subsequent site visits, conducted in June and July 2021, a waste management officer discovered loose litter and black refuse bags full of rubbish on the ground around overflowing bins.

Councillor James Mallinder, East Suffolk Council cabinet member for the Environment, said: “We are always striving to support local businesses, and economic growth is one of our most important values as a local authority – but so is the environment. Local businesses therefore have a duty of care to ensure waste is properly dealt with.

“There was simply not enough capacity for the waste being produced at these premises, and although this business had a trade waste agreement in place with East Suffolk Norse, it only covered the removal and disposal of waste from April to September.

“The Council advised Mr Boddy about the need to increase the capacity for storing rubbish and to extend the existing trade waste agreement but was not prepared to accept his requests for an ad hoc service and empty the bins on request during the winter months.

“This shameful behaviour is just not acceptable to East Suffolk, the local community and our residents, and I hope this prosecution serves as a reminder of people’s responsibilities and that East Suffolk Council takes these matters very seriously.”

Mr Boddy was fined £900 for each offence and ordered to pay £3,180 in prosecution costs, as well as a £180 court surcharge.

The court heard that a contract has since been put in place to provide suitable receptacles for the site.

Magistrates acknowledged that Mr Boddy had taken some steps to resolve the issue, and that correspondence between parties had, at times, been strained.

They said the offences had been aggravated by the duration and number of complaints and could have been avoided by Mr Boddy taking proper advice at an earlier stage.

### **Dare you enter the Little Fort of Horrors?**

Tickets are now on sale for the hugely popular ‘Little Fort of Horrors’ at Landguard Fort, Felixstowe, this Halloween. On the 500th anniversary of the sinking of the notorious pirate ship, Black Raider, off the shores of the Landguard Peninsula, Blackbeard and his motley crew of cut-throats will rise again to try to take revenge on those brave enough to visit the fort. Get ready for a scary night of shocks and surprises on Friday 28 and Saturday 29 October, as you scream your heart out, with live actors, special effects and a spooky atmosphere at one of the ‘most haunted places in Britain’.

Entry to Blackbeard’s Bloody Revenge is for over 14s only, by ‘timed ticket’, and you can book a 10 minute arrival time slot between 7pm and 10.30pm. Book now for early bird admission until Tuesday 13 September, with all tickets at £13 per person. From Wednesday 14 September, all tickets are £15 per person. . “With Pirate King



Blackbeard and his crew back from the dead for revenge, who knows who you might meet in the dark and eerie passageways and rooms of the fort. Come prepared for screams and shocks at the Little Fort of Horrors”.

### **Free Wi-Fi launches in two more East Suffolk towns**

Following recent launches in Felixstowe and Lowestoft and as part of a range of exciting digital projects taking place across East Suffolk, free-to-use public Wi-Fi has now been launched in Southwold and Woodbridge.

To support local towns and businesses, East Suffolk Council is delivering a range of digital projects which aim to strengthen the local economy and improve connectivity within the district’s market towns.

One of these projects is the East Suffolk Digital Towns programme which will digitally transform market towns through the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms alongside a business support programme. It was initially piloted in Framlingham in 2019.

Supported by funding from the Getting Building Fund and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership’s Innovative Projects fund, this new technology will be combined with bespoke business support, helping local businesses and the towns in which they are based, to grow.