



# District Councillors Report to Great Bealings Parish Council

For November 2022

## Carlford and Fynn Valley Ward.

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

### From District Councillor

**Cllr Colin Hedgley**

#### Retrospective planning,

Quite a few residents have approached me regarding the number of retrospective planning applications that have been made locally. I share their concerns. On checking we are not getting more than usual although it sometimes seems so. There are other councillors that share my concerns. However, the law says we must treat 'Retrospective' in exactly the way we do normal applications. If we refused an application purely because it was retrospective and the applicant appealed and won, then the Council would have to pay the costs. That's your money down the drain so to speak.

#### Major funding boost for efforts to end rough sleeping in East Suffolk



East Suffolk Council has welcomed the allocation of £2.5million in government funding towards additional support for people at risk of sleeping rough.

The £2,434,258 funding settlement will be awarded across three years in support of a long-term, strategic programme to end rough sleeping.

East Suffolk Council is among 303 local authorities, charities and other organisations to have received a share of up to £500m as part of the government's flagship Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) – designed to help provide emergency beds, off-the-street accommodation and wrap-around support.

It follows publication of the £2bn cross-government Rough Sleeping Strategy by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) to drive forward a manifesto commitment to tackle homelessness.

In East Suffolk, RSI funding will go towards additional emergency accommodation and resources, providing valuable services across the district in conjunction with Access Community Trust.

Funding will also facilitate partnership work with Suffolk County Council on developing a Housing First model of support – piloted in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands –



for not only rough sleepers, but also young people requiring a pathway plan towards independent living.

**East Suffolk Council has confirmed that it will engage with local communities about two major energy projects which are commencing consultations.**

Today, both National Grid Ventures (NGV) and National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) have launched their consultations on the EuroLink and Sea Link projects respectively. Sea Link is a domestic interconnector between Suffolk and Kent required for network reinforcements. EuroLink is an international multi purpose interconnector between the Netherlands and Suffolk.

Both are informal and non-statutory consultations, however they will be followed next year by formal, statutory consultations. NGV and NGET are seeking comments and feedback on their potential landfall, cable route and converter station options. The consultations will last eight weeks finishing on 18 December 2022. They will include some face to face events and webinars, details of which will be published by the developers and viewable on their individual project webpages. [EuroLink consultation | National Grid Group](#) and [Sea Link | National Grid ET](#).

East Suffolk Council alongside other stakeholders will be reviewing the material published in relation to both projects and considering our response. During the consultations we will look to invite representatives from the affected Parish and Town Councils to hear and understand their views on the proposals. Details are to follow.

**Council backs First Light Festival with three-year commitment of support**

East Suffolk Council has demonstrated its commitment to the First Light Festival in Lowestoft by pledging continued financial support to the annual event.

Cabinet members recently backed plans to help support festival organisers in securing Arts Council funding over the next three years.



Tens of thousands of people descended on Lowestoft's South Beach for the return of the First Light Festival in June.

In 2019, the Council's investment of £90,000 resulted in a £900,000 return on investment in terms of direct local financial benefit, while the £200,000 invested for 2022 delivered approximately £690,000 of visitor spend (with the overall direct local financial anticipated to be significantly larger).

We have now promised to provide First Light Festival with £500,000 of funding to support the community interest company's National Portfolio Organisation application to the Arts Council. If successful in its application, First Light Festival will receive £660,000 from the Arts



Council, which, along with funding from East Suffolk Council and other sources, will help secure its future for the next three years.

Funding will be drawn from the New Homes Bonus Reserve and provided on a sliding scale over the three years – with £180,000 for 2023/24, £170,000 for 2024/25 and £150,000 for 2025/26 – as the community interest company generates additional income through both the festival and as operators of the regenerated East Point Pavilion venue.

### **Design team appointed for Cultural Quarter project**



A major project to redevelop the Customer Services Centre and Battery Green car park, in Lowestoft, has taken a step forward with the appointment of a design team.

Norwich-based architects Chaplin Farrant and design studio HemingwayDesign will produce detailed designs to be submitted for planning in spring 2023 for the 'Cultural Quarter' project.

The Cultural Quarter project is one of five transformational regeneration projects detailed within the Town Investment Plan, and which received £24.9m from the Government's Towns Fund. The project will see the redevelopment of the Council's current Customer Services Centre to provide a new cultural facility with associated eatery, and the redevelopment of the former Battery Green multi-storey car park to provide a new leisure offer. Along with the other Towns Fund projects, the Cultural Quarter project is expected to be complete by March 2026.

### **Roadshows provide advice across East Suffolk on rising cost of living**

A series of roadshows have taken place across East Suffolk to help provide advice to people concerned about the rising cost of living.

Free professional advice is available for dealing with rising fuel costs, money saving, benefits and debt management, as well as information on the financial support available.

Support is also on offer from local groups and organisations.

### **New food support scheme launched to help those in need**

A new food support scheme has launched in Beccles to provide those in need with hot meals and drinks. Inspired by the successful Thin Ice project in Lowestoft, Beccles Comfort Food has launched to provide free hot meals and drinks to households who are struggling with the cost of living. The scheme is part of a wider set of cost-of-living support projects being developed by East Suffolk Council. See "Ease the Squeeze" below

## Funding provides wheelchair access at care farm

A local care farm has received a funding boost from an East Suffolk councillor.

Cllr Linda Coulam, East Suffolk councillor for the Gunton and St. Margarets ward, donated £3,000 from her Enabling Communities Budget to Pathways Care Farm to support the installation of new wheelchair access.



An opening event was held at Lowestoft-based Pathways, attended by Cllr Coulam, representatives from Pathways Care Farm and members of the Waveney Suffolk Help in Multiple Sclerosis (SHIMS) group.

Waveney SHIMS is a self-help group for people with MS, run by people with MS, and offers support and friendship, complimentary therapies, information and social events. The group meets at Pakefield Church Hall on the first and third Friday of each month.

## Surveys and consultations

As always, East Suffolk Council wants to encourage participation in surveys and consultations, as feedback from people in East Suffolk is invaluable and helps us ensure we're making the right decisions for our communities. If a survey is brought to your attention then please consider taking part.

## Resident fined for abandoning rubbish-filled caravan in street

An East Suffolk resident has been fined over £2,000 after being found guilty of abandoning a caravan in a Felixstowe street.

Craig Friston from Felixstowe appeared at Suffolk Magistrates' Court on 26 September, having been charged with breaching section 2(1) of the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978.

On 20 October 2021, East Suffolk Council's Customer Services team received a report of an abandoned caravan on land off Reedland Way in Felixstowe.

A site visit was carried out on 21 October and the caravan, which was in poor condition, was found to be filled with rubbish. Waste was also present on the surrounding ground.

Subsequent visits found that the caravan had been abandoned by Mr Friston and on 6 December, Craig and Samantha Friston were sent notices to remove the caravan within seven days.

The caravan was not removed and in January, the caravan and waste, which included a double mattress, was removed by East Suffolk Council from Reedland Way. In total, the



Council removed 1,520kg of waste from inside and around the caravan - some of the waste showed Mr Friston's name, and the names of family members.

Cllr James Mallinder, East Suffolk's cabinet member for the Environment said:

"There is absolutely no excuse for shamelessly dumping a caravan in a residential street for someone else to clear away, and to then fill it with piles of rubbish is simply unacceptable."

Mr Friston did not attend sentencing and the court found him guilty in his absence, fining him £660 for the offence, £66 for the victim surcharge and £1,380 in costs, totalling £2,106.

## **Work begins on new Seashore Village and activity park in Felixstowe**

Work has begun on the construction of a new Seashore Village and activity park in Felixstowe. The Seashore Village will feature 27 traditional-style beach huts, provided by East Suffolk Council, as well as a single-storey accessible hut, built from self-insulating panels and capable of being split into smaller rooms or pods for hire.

The site will be entirely re-landscaped, with ramp access installed from Sea Road and the Prom, where new fully accessible public conveniences will also be added and open year-round. Further improvement will also be made to the surrounding South Seafront area, following the relocation and renovation of the 'Trim Trail', with the addition of a new activity park, set to include a climbing wall, concrete table tennis tables, pétanque piste, accessible picnic benches, chess tables and an outdoor space for workouts.

The creation of the public spaces will be made possible by funding generated by the sale of the huts.

The development was approved by East Suffolk Council's Planning Committee South last October and forms part of wider ongoing investment in the South Seafront area, where the Martello Park has already delivered new homes, a play area and new car parking facilities, while East Suffolk Council has also invested in the development of a contemporary café, the refurbishment of two public shelters, and the long-term maintenance of an historic Martello Tower. Work is being led by main contractor, Gipping Construction, and is expected to continue until next summer.

## **National award for innovative Deben Fields development**

A major council-owned development in Felixstowe has won a prestigious national award for its high-quality and innovative design.

Deben Fields, also known as the Garrison Lane project, is a significant development on the site of the former Deben High School in Felixstowe. This four-hectare site, which is being developed by East Suffolk Council, will provide new leisure and community facilities and new private and affordable homes.

Following a submission by architects TateHindle, the scheme was shortlisted in the national Housing Design Awards earlier this year and has now been chosen as the winner of the Project Award.



The scheme comprises a highly sustainable new neighbourhood of 61 high-quality, innovative homes designed to achieve Passivhaus certification, including 41 affordable homes, and a range of community amenities.

The design repurposes the school sports field to create a new cricket pitch and pavilion edged with walking and cycling routes connecting the proposed development with Valley Walk Park – simultaneously preserving green space and providing active, edge-to-edge connectivity.

The proposed homes have access to outside space and living spaces are 5% larger than prescribed standards to accommodate home working.

The former school assembly hall is reimagined as a community hall, opening out onto a communal garden and allotment which, along with the new cricket pitch and leisure facilities, create opportunities for social interaction.

As well as delivering energy-efficient homes, the construction process will be low carbon using durable, low maintenance materials. The homes will be highly insulated with triple glazing to lower running costs.

The buildings also maximise natural light and solar gain and are futureproofed to allow for sustainable technologies, including heat pumps and air filtration. Solar panels will provide renewable energy to power common areas.

Planning permission for Deben Fields was granted in 2021, and work is due to start in 2023. Information about the properties can be found at [www.debenfields.co.uk](http://www.debenfields.co.uk)

## Hat-trick of awards for building excellence in East Suffolk

A stylish new café in East Suffolk has again been nominated for a top award – along with a locally based building contractor and architect.

Felixstowe's Martello Café was named 'best non-residential new build' at the regional LABC Building Excellence Awards – just a few months after being highly commended by local design judges.

Felixstowe based architect, Robert Allerton was also recognised as the region's 'best residential and small commercial designer', while Woodbridge firm Chapel Properties won 'best residential and small commercial builder'.

The regional winners will all go forward to the Grand Finals of the LABC Building Excellence Awards 2022 – the UK's largest business-to-business awards in the building control sector – taking place at Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, in London, on Friday 27 January.

The awards cover all local authorities in England and Wales, across 12 regions, and recognise the work of building control surveyors, builders, site managers, architects, designers, and anyone involved in a construction project where building control was provided by a local authority team, such as East Suffolk Council's Building Control team, which ensures that building work carried out in the district meets minimum regulations.

Opened in May 2022 as part of the continued wider redevelopment of Felixstowe's South Seafront area, The Martello Café was funded by East Suffolk Council (ESC), with grant



funding of £950,000 from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund and a further £30,000 from the Coastal Revival Fund.

The £1.5 million project and its architects, Plaice Design Company, were also 'Highly Commended by judges at the RIBA Suffolk Design Awards 2022.

## Free Wi-Fi service launched in two more East Suffolk towns

Free-to-use public Wi-Fi has been launched in another two East Suffolk towns as part of a variety of digital projects for the district.

The East Suffolk Digital Towns programme has now been rolled out to Beccles and Halesworth, following previous launches in Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Southwold and Woodbridge.

East Suffolk Council is delivering a range of digital projects to support market towns and businesses by strengthening the local economy and improving connectivity.

The Digital Towns programme, initially piloted in Framlingham in 2019, will transform market towns through the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms, alongside a business support programme.

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

It will enable the Council to understand the number of visitors to towns, the busiest periods, the average time people spend in the town centre and much more – enabling the Economic Development team to provide tailored support for local businesses and provide data-based evidence to support other ongoing projects.

Cllr Craig Rivett, East Suffolk Council's Deputy Leader and cabinet member for Economic Development, said: "It's great to this initiative being rolled out to another two towns; each now able to make use of free public Wi-Fi access and a whole package of digital benefits.

"We're passionate about enabling our communities and local businesses to thrive with projects such as this."

East Suffolk Council has also been working in partnership with an interactive walking app provider, Go Jauntly, to develop outdoor adventures across all of East Suffolk's principal 12 towns and villages.

Following the latest launches, East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi is also scheduled to be available in, Bungay, Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham very soon.



## 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.

## East Suffolk pays tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



The Councillors and Officers of East Suffolk Council were deeply saddened by news of the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

As a mark of respect, flags at our council offices were flown at half-mast, while books of condolences were opened at offices in Melton and Lowestoft to allow local people to pay their respects.

Following quiet and careful preparation, the Council was able to provide exceptional support as communities mourned the death of Her Majesty The Queen and observed the Proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III, while a number of delicate decisions were properly made around the continuation or postponement of normal activities during the mourning period.