

**August 2023 Parish Report**  
**East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update**

Calling all village halls and other community facilities! See below about new money available for upgrades and improvements.

And congratulations to Saxmundham, Rushmere St Andrew and, Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough which have all had their neighbourhood plans adopted by East Suffolk Council. Those communities that have not yet drawn up a neighbourhood plan should give it some thought. Not only does it allow parishes to have an influence on local development but once a plan is adopted that parish gets a larger chunk of the community infrastructure levy (CIL) that developers must pay.

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***Fund Launched to Help Reinforce Community Hub Network***

Community groups in East Suffolk are being invited to apply for up to £30,000 in capital grant funding for upgrades and improvements to facilities. East Suffolk Council is accepting applications from local voluntary and social enterprise groups, as well as some small to medium sized businesses, for a £15,000-30,000 share in the newly launched Rural Business and Community Hub Fund (RBCHF).

The fund is part of the Government's wider Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and aimed at organisations that provide, or wish to provide, a multi-purpose community hub or for-public-benefit facility offering access to a range of quality, cost-effective services.

The £110million REPF was launched by the Government last September to complement the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and help to improve productivity and strengthen the rural economy and rural communities. East Suffolk was allocated £1.129m, to be delivered via two separate strands – the Rural Business and Community Hub Fund (RBCHF) and the Rural Business Investment Fund (RBIF) – to small, rural businesses and community organisations between 2023 and 2025.

Applicants could include existing village halls, local skills providers, business and co-working spaces, health, wellbeing and mental health providers, sports and recreation providers, and arts, culture and heritage providers. Applications should meet at least one of the three main priorities of net zero, small and medium-sized enterprise investments and diversification, and agriculture and farm diversification.

Prospective applicants can contact Community Action Suffolk for further support via: [info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

### ***Three Neighbourhood Plans Adopted***

Plans for Saxmundham, Rushmere St Andrew and, Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough have all been formally adopted by East Suffolk Council.

The Rushmere St Andrew and Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plans were adopted at a Full Council meeting on 28 June, with the Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan adopted on 26 July. These three plans will now form part of the development plan for East Suffolk and will influence future planning applications within each neighbourhood plan area.

A neighbourhood plan gives communities the opportunity to shape development within their local areas. Neighbourhood plans are based on extensive public consultation to ensure that residents have their say on how development will take place. Plans are subject to a local referendum to ensure public support before being adopted by East Suffolk Council. Referendums for Rushmere St Andrew and, Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough took place on 4 May and for Saxmundham on 29 June.

Cllr Kay Yule, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Planning and Coastal Management said: "Neighbourhood planning gives residents the opportunity to get directly involved in shaping their local areas, determining the location of any new development, and providing guidance for how new buildings should look. Through the hard work of these communities, these three newly adopted plans will now be required to be used by anyone making or deciding a planning application in these areas."

Five neighbourhood plans have now been made this year, following the adoption of both the Halesworth and Oulton plans in February.

The plans can also be viewed at libraries and the Council's Customer Services desks local to each Neighbourhood Plan area.

### ***New Play Area in Beccles Officially Opened***

A children's play area at Beccles Common has been officially reopened following the completion of refurbishment work.

Designed by eibe play Ltd, and aimed at toddlers and juniors, the play area features a basket swing, cradle swing for toddlers, a me-to-you swing, a cargo climbing net, a toddler climbing unit with slide, and a junior climbing unit, with a climbing wall and slide.

The refurbishment has been made possible thanks to a partnership between East Suffolk Council and Beccles Town Council and an official opening took place on Friday 11 August, attended by representatives from both councils and eibe play Ltd.

GLI Cllr Katie Graham, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Communities, Leisure and Tourism said: "This is a wonderful new facility providing modern, fun and engaging equipment for local families and visitors to enjoy. I'm delighted to see the final transformation and am sure this will continue to be popular play area for years to come."

### ***GLI Group Meet with Forestry Commission and Anglian Water***

The GLI Group recently met with Forestry Commission and Anglian Water to explore ways of

protecting the outstanding natural environment of East Suffolk. East Suffolk Council and GLI Group Leader Cllr Caroline Topping is pleased that they were able to discuss important issues with both organisations. She said: "We are determined to develop and maintain a constructive dialogue with key environmental stakeholders and these two recent meetings really got the ball rolling.

"The presentation from the Forestry Commission was incredibly engaging and I am keen that we really do spread the word about the importance of tree planting and the range of grants that are available to do so.

Meanwhile the meeting with Anglian Water was also incredibly useful although I was disappointed by representatives' suggestion that sewage discharge into rivers was a low priority issue for the public. It was also interesting to that they are not statutory consultees with regards to planning applications which is a concern when it comes to the issue of ensuring appropriate supply to new developments.

These meetings mark our commitment to deliver on our campaign promises and prioritise residents, communities and the environment in everything that we do. The GLI Councillors are enthusiastic about improving quality of life across the district, and this is just the beginning - so watch this space!"

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:  
**[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk)**