



# District Councillors Report to Rushmere St Andrew Annual Parish Meeting

For May 2025

**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**

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Looking back over the past 12 months I am not sure it has given me grounds for saying the next year is looking better than the last. However, let's look on the bright side.

A brief look at last years' local news.

## **Westerfield Quarry.**

This will be a major blight on the community. Plus, it will last for 16 years. The additional Traffic along the A1214 and the experience of Little Bealings residents is a good reflection of some of the problems that will arise if this planning application is passed by SCC. If it goes all the way through to Appeal and/or Judicial Review it will be very costly as I am sure you are all aware. At the time of printing this, I have no further news.

**Last year Suffolk beaches** were voted some of the best in the country.

**We can now park** using any number of on-line parking apps. (But the cost of parking has gone up). ESC is investing £1 million in modernising our car parks including contactless payments which residents have been pressing for some time..

**Fly tipping** is still a problem, but there is a phone number for reporting a case- 0333 016 2000. If you see fly tipping, please report it as soon as you can. East Suffolk Services endeavour to deal with it within 24 hours.

**There are plans** to regenerate the Deben River.

**The ESC tax fraud team** are always at work and last year took a woman to court where she was given a suspended prison sentence and fined £1200.



**We had a “Well Bus”** driving around East Suffolk last year where you could walk on board for blood tests, blood pressure tests, and Heart Rate checks. The bus visited various towns and villages in East Suffolk. It is intended to do the same this year.

**The annual Operation Camouflage** took place during the school summer holidays. This action packed activity taking place at Sutton Heath, near Woodbridge is available to children and young people aged 8 – 16 years old, that live in or go to school in East Suffolk with certain pre conditions for registration.

**Voters** elected two new ESC, councillors one in Rushmere St Andrew and Woodbridge by-elections

The Rushmere St Andrew seat was won by Conservative candidate Robert Cawley as you all know.

The Woodbridge seat was won by Liberal Democrat candidate Ruth Leach.

So there is no change in the political make up of East Suffolk Council.

#### **District Councillors Community Fund**

Each year I have £7.5k to spend on worthy causes in Carlford Ward. It does not go far with 17 parishes to look after. Nevertheless, if you know of a group or voluntary organisation that needs financial help towards a project it may be possible for me to help. (Although I cannot give money towards running costs.) I of course cover the Village only but Robert will no doubt help in Tower Ward where he can.

#### **This year**

**Devolution.** As you are aware this government (as was the previous) is intent on pushing forward with its devolution plans. The aim will be to have a Unitary Authority for Suffolk, so in effect making the District Councils redundant. This will obviously mean increasing the number of County Councillors, probably doubling from 75 to nearly 150.

Also, there will be one mayor to cover Norfolk and Suffolk. (Responsible for Transport, Major Investment, and business among other things)

Therefore, the County Council Elections due May this year have been cancelled.

The unitary Council Elections will probably be held in 2027.

More information can be found on the Suffolk County Council website and the Local Government Association website.



## Devolution -District Councils answer.

### Joint press release issued on behalf of the Suffolk District and Borough Councils

*Suffolk Councils deliver report to Government: Best for democracy, delivery of services and meeting diverse demands of county.* In a report submitted to government, Suffolk's five district and borough councils have united to present an interim plan which would revitalise local government and put the needs of local communities first.

A clear message is being sent to Government that multi-unitary authorities are vital in Suffolk, for services to work and for residents to be heard, in a county with a range of rural, coastal, industrial, agricultural and urban demands. The Councils are clear: a one size fits all 'mega-council' covering a vast geographical area could not possibly focus on the competing needs of three-quarters of a million people as effectively as two or three unitary authorities.

Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk Council have each signed off the report following a series of council, cabinet and executive meetings where councillors from across the county examined and helped shape the proposals. In a joint statement the leaders of Suffolk's borough and district councils said: "Multiple unitary authorities, will produce services designed with residents in mind to meet local need, drive improved outcomes, create value and save money in a sustainable way.

"Our joint proposal argues that a one size fits all mega authority will not solve the existing issue of large countywide services that will continue to drain money, requirement improvement and potentially lead to further cost cutting. Crucially, more than one unitary authority is the best way to meet these issues and would ensure strong democratic representation as one would be too remote for residents to be heard.

"It is the best solution to ensure decision makers, and the communities they represent would be as close together as possible. This ensures that services are designed and delivered in a tailored way built on local knowledge to meet the unique need of an area, its residents and businesses. A structure able to deliver both value for money and better outcomes.

"This is a generational change to the way local government and services are delivered and something we should seize. It is a real opportunity to think holistically about how services such as leisure, housing and social care could help residents to thrive. This is about starting with a blank page and not simply bolting council services together. "Our collective solution is the best way to deliver services, value for money and make sure the 'local' stays in Local Government for Suffolk."

The interim report says multi unitary authorities will provide:

- Cost effective and high-quality services for Suffolk residents
- Long term financial sustainability
- Economic growth and support to local industry



Stronger democratic representation, community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment  
Governance and support systems which can adapt to future aspirations and sustainable growth  
Ambitions to drive progress, innovation, and long-term success  
Structures to support and enable thriving communities and economies.

It also supports a more balanced solution for the governance of the Mayoral Combined Authority which is being set up next year for Norfolk and Suffolk. This interim report does not constitute a final decision, and councils will have further time to develop options to redesign and reinvigorate Local Government for the future. Critically, the views of local communities will be at the heart of this work.

In response to the Government's English Devolution White Paper Suffolk Borough and District Councils have worked together to look at the best unitary solution for the county, while taking into account Government guidance.

(The Latest Devolution news can be progressed by accessing the East Suffolk Council and Suffolk County Council websites.)

### Road Repairs

**Orwell Bridge** repairs will be carried out starting in mid to late June for about 7 weeks. A Contraflow system will be in force but there may be the odd nighttime full closure.

**Snape** area roadworks will be carried out starting 22 May for 6 weeks as part of the East Anglia 2 project.

**Lowestoft Temporary prom closure** to enable major development to progress.

To enable construction work to progress on a major seafront development in Lowestoft, a section of the lower promenade will be temporarily closed to vehicles for four weeks.

As part of the construction work of a two-storey complex at Jubilee Rise (formerly known as Jubilee Parade), a section of the Lower Promenade adjacent to the site will need to be closed to vehicles from Tuesday 22 April.

Pedestrian access will remain available during this time, however pedestrians, including wheelchair and pushchair users, will be redirected onto the promenade extension which has been constructed in front of Jubilee Rise. An access platform and handrails will be installed for user safety and the diversion will be signposted accordingly.

The temporary promenade closure will enable the installation of an underground pump, pumping station and connecting drainage system. This system will allow sewage and foul water from the complex to be pumped up into the existing sewer system on the Upper Esplanade.



## **Reducing litter beside East Suffolk's major roads**

As part of an ongoing programme of work to reduce roadside litter and improve the appearance of the district for residents and visitors, litter picking will take place alongside the A14 later this month.

During week commencing 28 April, Highways Assurance will remove litter from the verges beside the A14 on behalf of East Suffolk Council.

This clearance will require overnight lane closures to allow contractors to work safely will be carried out over several nights, covering the roadside from Seven Hills to Dockspur roundabout, including any slip roads.

East Suffolk Services Limited, who carry out litter picking on the Council's behalf, is currently reviewing safety procedures for working beside major roads, including the A14, A47, A12 and A146 to ensure future litter picking and other maintenance can be carried out as safely as possible. The roads themselves are managed by National Highways and Suffolk Highways (part of Suffolk County Council) respectively- however East Suffolk Council is responsible for litter clearance beside these roads. Once the safety review is complete, it is expected that the Council will permanently adopt twice-yearly litter picks beside these main roads, as well as a regular schedule of litter picking and emptying of bins within laybys. This new approach will maintain a litter free network of laybys and help reduce the risk of littering in future.

## **East Suffolk Council – HERE For You!**

Following a successful series of events last year, East Suffolk officers and councillors will be visiting towns around the district again this summer, chatting to local people about council services and asking how they feel about what we do.

The first event takes place in Saxmundham on 14 May, followed by Lowestoft and Kesgrave in June, Beccles in July, Felixstowe and Southwold in August and finishing in Framlingham in September. Councillors and senior officers will be present to listen to local people and chat about our plans, our services and how we are looking to improve lives and outcomes not only in the towns we visit but throughout East Suffolk.

**Contact:-** If any Village Parish Councillor or Resident have a query or problem, they think I may be able to help with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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