

July 2017 Monthly Parish Newsletter

My round up - Thingoe South

As Chair of the Audit Committee I signed off the accounts for Suffolk County Council on the 26th June 2017.

I have recently been offered the opportunity of becoming Deputy Portfolio Holder to Gordon Jones, Education, Children's Services & Skills. My special responsibility is for Suffolk's children with special educational needs.

I am looking forward to this new challenge but am aware of it's magnitude and complexity.

Suffolk Highways continues to be a challenge this financial year. The reorganisation of the highways department structure should be completed by the 2nd week of sept. The new post of Warden will be the first point of contact for parishes after the online reporting tool.

They will be assigned geographical areas.

Please continue to use the reporting tool www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads for any issues on our roads or verges'. I will report further when new information becomes available.

The Highway's dept. is needing to find savings during the next 12months. There will be some difficult decisions to be made this year on where to prioritise the repairs in West Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council launches its new Strategic Priorities

On the 20th July Suffolk County Council adopted its new Strategic Priorities document. This outlines SCC's Priorities for the next four years building on the Conservative manifesto from the recent County Council elections, in addition to several carefully considered strategies already in place. At its heart are three core principles – inclusive growth, health care and wellbeing and efficient and effective public services. The Council will focus energy and resources on these priorities, now and throughout this administration. Sound financial management, careful planning, and a passion for finding new ways to deliver and protect frontline services are all fundamental to the approach. These priorities are deliverable because of the hard work and commitment of councillors and staff - working with partners, businesses and residents to make Suffolk a healthier and more prosperous place to live and work.

The document can be found at

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/assets/council-and-democracy/our-aims-and-transformation-programmes/Suffolk-County-Council-Priorities.pdf>

Suffolk County Council accepts Independent Panel Recommendations for Councillor allowances.

Suffolk County Council voted to accept the proposals made by an independent body called the Independent Remunerations Panel, to increase allowances of the Cabinet, Deputy Leader and Leader.

Every 4 years any Council is required to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to look at and report on the Allowance scheme for Councillors.

Last year the monitoring officer of the Council to put together an independent panel to undertake the work. The panel is unpaid and seeks to balance the need to make sure the scheme reflects the work undertaken with the need to keep costs down. They were asked to look at how the role of a Councillor has changed since the last review and the workload some of the members take on.

The panel is made up of Sandra Cox who chaired the Panel and is a local government expert, Dame Lin Homer who has had a long career in Local and National Government roles, Mark Pendlington a Director of Anglian Water and Chairman of the NALP and Andy Wood CE of Adnams. By any one's measure this is an expert panel who are all recognised as leaders of industry with years of experience in making tough decisions in large organisations. The panel met 7 times between November 2016 and June 2017 to fully consider the scheme which will apply for the next four years.

The Panel recommended no change to the level of basic allowance county councillors receive but is suggested an increase to the level of allowance for the roles of Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet by raising the way this is calculated which is by a multiplication of the basic allowance. Leader – from 2.5 to 3, Deputy – from 1.75 to 2, Cabinet – from 1.5 to 1.75. These recommendations put Suffolk County Council in line with other county councils.

The panel also felt that in comparison to other Councils Suffolk County Council had too many Committees and so have recommended mergers of some with the removal of two Committee Chairmen and less Members with Special Responsibility which have been reflected in the number that have been appointed down to 4. The overall effect of the proposals is cost neutral and that means they will not cost the Council tax payers of Suffolk any more money.

These recommendations offer a revised allowance scheme with no additional costs to local tax payers.

Special Olympics Send-off for Suffolk's Athletes

In preparation for the Special Olympics Great Britain National Summer Games 2017, Suffolk County Council is to host an official send off for the athletes from Suffolk, who have been selected for the Games.

This will be the 10th National Summer Games and will take place in Sheffield from 7th to 12th August. Around 2,600 athletes with intellectual disabilities will come together from all over the country to compete in 20 different sports. 24 Special Olympics Suffolk (SOS) athletes from the sports of athletics, gymnastics and badminton will be part of the Eastern Region team.

This is the first time that athletes from Suffolk will have had the opportunity to compete at this level. The Games will involve teams from all regions of England, Scotland and Wales. Our SOS representatives have been training hard with their clubs and have qualified through competitions in places such as Bournemouth, London, Eton, Kent and Sheffield.

SOS will also be well represented in terms of volunteers, providing 7 coaches including the Head Coaches for the Eastern athletics, gymnastics and badminton teams, in addition to general Games volunteers

The official send off for the Suffolk athletes will take place on Tuesday 1st August in the Atrium at Endeavour House.

Further information about Special Olympics Great Britain National Summer Games can be found at <http://sheffield2017.org.uk/>

Cycle link connecting West Suffolk Hospital to Bury St Edmunds town centre unveiled

A new route designed to provide a quick, safe and easy route for cyclists to West Suffolk Hospital to Bury St Edmunds town centre has officially opened.

The 620 metre cycle path, which begins in the Hardwick Lane/Cullum Road area of Bury St Edmunds, was officially opened by representatives from Suffolk County Council, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Suffolk Highways and the Bury Local Links team.

The link, which was previously a footpath, underwent conversion works funded by Suffolk County Council to create a cycle path. To facilitate cycling along the route, dropped kerbs have been provided at crossing points, guard rails have been replaced with new ones, which have sufficient space between them to allow a bike to pass through, and new signs have been added to highlight the route across the water meadow. In addition, vegetation along the route has been trimmed back and, where needed, the cycle path has been resurfaced.

The work has been carried out by Suffolk Highways, as part of Suffolk County Council, and the project cost in the region of £30,000.

It is hoped this improvement to the cycling infrastructure in Bury St Edmunds will encourage more employees and visitors to travel to and from the hospital by bicycle, leading to a greener, healthier Bury St Edmunds.

Getting your Recycling Right

The Suffolk Waste Partnership is today launching a campaign in two of the county's towns to tackle the cost of people placing the wrong items in their recycling bins.

'Getting your Recycling Right' will be working with around 1800 homes in the Chantry area of Ipswich and a further 1800 homes in central Lowestoft to help residents understand what can and can't go in their recycling bin, while also aiming to reduce the £500,000 annual taxpayer cost of removing the wrong items from recycling bins. The two areas identified are being targeted as historically they have had higher than average levels of recycling bin contamination.

In Suffolk, more than half of our household waste is recycled, but contamination levels have been rising as people increasingly put unsuitable items such as food, glass, electrical items and used nappies in their kerbside recycling bins. These items are potentially dangerous, can have a negative impact on the environment and ultimately cost the taxpayer extra money to clean up.

Homes in the campaign area can expect to receive a new information pack through their door as well as a helpful information sticker on their bins. In addition, contractors from Groundworks, working on behalf of the partnership, will be visiting homes to raise awareness and ask people to get their recycling right.

All recyclable waste collected from Suffolk households is taken to the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Great Blakenham, where it is sorted and baled before being sent on for recycling. This facility is designed to only accept and process certain materials. If the wrong items are delivered they have to be removed, sometimes by hand.

To ensure the correct items are put into their recycling bins, residents are being asked to remember the following points to combat contamination:

- Food waste, glass, electrical items, and batteries are just some of the common contaminants found. These items can't go in your recycling bin at home but they can be recycled elsewhere. Information on where they can be recycled are in the leaflet and online.
- Textiles and clothes can no longer go in the recycling bin, either bagged or loose. Instead people are asked to donate their clothing to charity shops, or to take it to their nearest recycling banks.

- Some people are even putting used nappies in their recycling bins. These must always go in the rubbish bin.
- Anything smaller than 4cm, such as loose bottle tops or shredded paper, won't get recycled they fall through the sorting process. However, bottle tops can be recycled by simply washing and squashing plastic bottles and putting the tops back on.
- Aluminium foil needs to be rolled into a tennis ball size before being placed in the recycling bin.

Suffolk County Council calls on EDF Energy to think again about accommodation campus location

Suffolk County Council is today publishing a report that highlights possible alternative locations for providing accommodation for 2,400 of the workers that would be needed for the construction of the proposed Sizewell C power station.

As part of our joint response to EDF Energy's second stage of consultation earlier this year, Suffolk County Council, together with Suffolk Coastal District Council, raised concerns around its preferred location for an accommodation campus close to the small village of Eastbridge because of concerns about its environmental impact: The Councils wanted EDF Energy to carry out a thorough review of potential alternative sites for the accommodation campus, to consider whether or not there are credible alternative sites in proximity to the development site, which may be considered to have less environmental impact, more legacy potential and/or better community integration.

As a contribution to the review we have asked EDF Energy to undertake, Suffolk County Council commissioned local consultant firms, Boyer and Cannon Consulting Engineers, to provide an independent study of potential alternative sites for the accommodation campus. They looked at locations adjacent to existing developments in Leiston and Saxmundham, together with other options further away from the two towns.

The study looked at EDF Energy's preferred campus location, along with the alternative locations against a series of criteria. These included the need for an efficient location for construction workers, but also environmental impacts and legacy opportunities for the period once the power station is completed.

The county council understands it will be EDF Energy's final decision to make. However, the council commissioned report demonstrates there are other locations for the development that could achieve better outcomes both for local communities and the environment and the council is calling on EDF Energy to carry out further examination of the suggested location for the campus, which could include these sites or others. The council is aware there could be some additional uncertainty for local areas in the short term while this work takes place, but considers that, because of the scale of the proposal, it is important the right decision for all parties is taken.

Suffolk County Council continues to raise awareness of motor neurone disease to support those living with the condition

At this month's Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting, Suffolk County Council, reiterated its support of the motor neurone disease (MND) charter in support of local people living with this terminal disease and their carers.

At the meeting, both Beccy Hopfensperger, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Care, and Tony Goldson, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Health and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, reiterated their support for the charter and asked the board for their support in increasing awareness of this disease.

MND is a fatal, rapidly progressing disease that can leave people locked in a failing body, unable to move, talk and eventually breathe. It kills around a third of people within a year of diagnosis, and more than half within two years. There is no cure.

Little is understood about the disease and this contributes to many people not receiving the care and support they need. The MND Charter was launched to change this, comprising a number of rights for those with MND.

Suffolk County Council, who committed to the charter in December after all councillors voted unanimously in favour of supporting it, is one of only 14 county councils to adopt the charter. As part of the charter, Suffolk County Council will promote the charter, campaigning to recruit volunteers to help support people affected by MND.