



District Councillors Report to Otley Parish Council

For March 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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Westerfield Quarry.

At the time of printing this, I have no further news.

Free holiday activities and food available this Easter

Theatre, sport and filmmaking are just some of the free activities on offer during the school holidays this Easter as part of the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme – and bookings are now open!

Numerous organisations across the district will be providing fun and enriching activities and food for children and young people over the Easter holidays. Running from Monday 7 April to Sunday 20 April, there are over 35 programmes on offer with over 4,000 places available to book.

The HAF programme has been funded by the UK Government for an additional year following four years of delivery. The programme provides activities for children and young people, particularly those in receipt of free school meals and is overseen by Suffolk County Council and coordinated locally by East Suffolk Council.

Holiday activities are varied and can introduce young people to new experiences and skills, such as teamwork and problem solving, as well as providing opportunities for physical and social activity. Each funded holiday activity also offers a free meal.

In Suffolk, the programme is targeted at those eligible for benefits-related free school meals, and other vulnerable children, or those with additional needs who would benefit from accessing the programme.

Places are redeemed by eligible families through the online booking system Eequ, which has replaced the old system of HAF codes that were issued to schools.

Booking is simple:

- Families can select the programmes and dates they wish to attend.
- Once you have selected a programme, Eequ will ask about HAF eligibility, such as being in receipt of benefit-related free school meals.
- The booking will be reviewed and approved by the HAF team at Suffolk County Council and by the provider.
- You will then receive reminders from the provider of the activity about your chosen activities.



Book your place now at <https://eastsuffolk.co/haf>

For any queries, please contact HAF@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

Energy efficiency funding to help make social housing greener and warmer

East Suffolk Council has secured a provisional allocation of £5.9million to help improve the energy performance of social housing as part of the Government's Warm Homes Plan.

The Council was announced among the local authorities and housing associations offered a total £1.29bn to retrofit properties, across 144 nationwide projects, under the latest wave of the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund.

Funding will contribute to a total £12m programme to allow the installation of energy efficiency upgrades and low-carbon heating measures in social homes across East Suffolk – supporting climate goals and helping to protect tenants from risk of fuel poverty.

East Suffolk Council has been offered a provisional allocation of £5,905,116 as one of 127 'Challenge Fund' projects announced in the third wave of the programme, administered by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, and formerly known as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

The programme aims to raise the energy performance of England's 1.2m social homes currently below EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) band C.

An East Suffolk Council spokesperson said: "This funding will allow us to upgrade a significant amount of social housing stock to be more energy-efficient – helping to drive down emissions and bills, supporting lower income families, and improving the health and wellbeing of tenants.

"This is an important step towards addressing fuel poverty and achieving net zero ambitions."

Minister for Energy Consumers, Miatta Fahnbulleh said: "Living in a warm, comfortable home should not be a luxury. It is a right that has been out of reach for too many people for too long.

"By giving this funding to local authorities and social housing providers we are delivering on our promise to improve the homes of thousands of people across England.

"As part of our Plan for Change, we are powering on with our Warm Homes Plan, upgrading cold and draughty homes so they are warmer, cleaner, and cheaper to live in."

East Suffolk's Amazing

East Suffolk Council Leader Caroline Topping is asking local people to take pride in where they live [with the launch of a brand new campaign: "East Suffolk's Amazing – Let's Keep It That Way!"](#)

A cross-party working group of councillors is looking at different ways that we can all work together to maintain the beauty of East Suffolk, and this includes encouraging more residents to take active pride in their local area. This includes reducing fly-tipping, recycling properly and even, where possible, looking after the spaces outside residents' own property.

There is already an incredible network of volunteers who help keep our district beautiful, with regular litter-picks, planting, and an all-round effort to keep their local area clean. East Suffolk Council is encouraging more people to get involved and to really do their bit to keep East Suffolk Amazing.

The Council will support local communities and groups by lending out equipment for litter pick events, including hi-viz vests, litter pickers, bags and bag hoops. With this in mind, a range of information about how communities can get involved in schemes, as well as a range of tips and advice, can be now found online.

[East Suffolk's Amazing](#)



Voters elect new councillors in Rushmere St Andrew and Woodbridge by-elections

Two new district councillors have been elected to East Suffolk Council following by-elections in Rushmere St Andrew and Woodbridge wards.

Voters went to the polls on Thursday 27 February, with counting taking place on Friday morning at East Suffolk House, in Melton.

The Rushmere St Andrew seat was won by Conservative candidate Robert Cawley with 377 votes. Green candidate Julian Cusack came second with 373 votes, Reform UK candidate Alistair Jeffreys third with 347 votes, while Labour candidate Laurence Bradley received 166 votes. Turnout was 35.6%.

The Rushmere St Andrew by-election was held following the resignation of Conservative councillor, Deborah Dean.

The Woodbridge seat was won by Liberal Democrat candidate Ruth Leach with 1,023 votes. Conservative candidate Alan Porter came second with 391, Reform UK candidate Garry Debenham third with 274 votes, while Labour candidate Des Waters received 219 votes. Turnout was 30%.

The Woodbridge by-election was held following the resignation of late Liberal Democrat councillor, Kay Yule, who sadly passed away a few weeks later.

The political composition of East Suffolk Council remains unchanged, comprising 16 Green councillors, 15 Conservative councillors, 12 Labour councillors, 10 Liberal Democrat councillors and two Independent councillors.

The full results will be posted on the elections pages of the East Suffolk Council website.

Last Air Quality Management Area in East Suffolk removed

The last remaining Air Quality Management Area in East Suffolk – located on the A12 within Stratford St Andrew – has been removed following significant improvements in air quality. To meet national air quality objectives, local authorities must regularly review and assess air quality in their areas. If a location is found where the objectives are not being achieved, the local authority must declare the area an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and develop an Air Quality Action Plan to reduce air pollution.

The AQMA, located at four properties close to the A12 within Stratford St Andrew, was established in 2014 after high levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) were detected. Studies undertaken suggested that southbound traffic accelerating just prior to the end of the 30mph speed limit in Stratford St Andrew – originally located at the end of the Long Row houses – was a cause of increased emissions and a large part of the problem. In 2017, after the



30/50mph speed limit change was moved further south out of the village and away from the houses by Suffolk County Council, NO₂ concentrations within the AQMA fell below the national objective level and have continued to decrease year-on-year.

As a result, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) requested that the AQMA be revoked, and an assessment was carried out in 2024 to establish whether removal of the AQMA was appropriate. The revocation assessment considered the historical monitoring data, projected NO₂ concentrations over the next five years, local and national trends in NO₂ emissions, and local and regional factors that may impact on the AQMA. This included the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) expected to commence within East Suffolk – including Sizewell C, and the East Anglia One (North) and East Anglia Two offshore windfarms. The findings were discussed by East Suffolk Council's Cabinet on 1 October 2024, and following a six-week public consultation, the AQMA was revoked on 18 December.

Funding top up for families most in need

Uniform banks in East Suffolk are invited to apply for additional support through a new funding scheme. Following previous successful rounds of funding, East Suffolk Council has now allocated further funding to its East Suffolk Uniform Bank grant scheme and applications for 'top up' funding are now open.

Grants of up to £1,000 per application are available and can be put towards vouchers for shoes worth up to £15 per child and/or the purchase of new, branded uniform where supply is limited.

The funding is available for all existing uniform banks in East Suffolk, regardless of whether or not they have previously received funding from the grant scheme.

This is a rolling grant scheme, and a panel will meet each month to discuss applications. The scheme will continue until all funds are spent or the scheme is reviewed.

To apply for this funding, please visit www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/uniform-bank-grant-scheme.

Successful applicants will be notified via email within five working days of the panel assessing their application.

Repair works to begin at Southwold promenade

Repair work to fill voids under a collapsed section of promenade at Southwold will begin later this month, ahead of planned repairs to the seawall. East Suffolk Council's repairs and maintenance contractor, the Water Management Alliance, will begin work on the damaged section of promenade north of Southwold Pier from Monday 24 February. This follows the partial collapse of the promenade in December. The WMA will be filling the voids under the promenade and replacing the collapsed slabs. This work will last approximately three weeks and will precede the planned repairs to the 'toe' of the sea wall. Erosion damage to the toe, which is usually underneath beach material, had previously been identified and repairs were scheduled for later this year. However recent erosion had exposed this area more quickly



than expected, which resulted in the partial collapse of the promenade and the repair works have been brought forward as quickly as possible. Work on the sea wall will begin from Tuesday 22 April and is intended to be complete before the start of the school summer holidays. A works compound will be sited in the council-owned car park at Southwold Pier, and whilst this will reduce the number of available parking spaces, both car parks north of Southwold Pier will remain open. There will be no access to the promenade or the beach in the area where the works are taking place.

Council agrees balanced Budget to protect key services and invest in future

East Suffolk Council has pledged more than £64million towards delivering quality key services for residents while continuing to invest in projects for the benefit of local communities.

On Wednesday, East Suffolk Council's agreed a balanced Budget which allows for vital day-to-day services to be delivered alongside programmes developed to help improve the quality of people's lives. The annual Budget is set against the framework of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to ensure effective management of resources and support delivery of the Council's strategic action plan.

More than £64m has been budgeted within the Council's General Fund to pay for services such as planning, leisure, housing and environmental services, waste collection and parking.

The General Fund also allows for projects to help improve the lives of people in East Suffolk, including a new three-year Town Development Programme to build on the successes of the preceding East Suffolk Towns Revitalisation Programme, as well as a three-year extension to the innovative Youth Employment Service (YES), providing routes to employment, education and training for young people aged 16-24.

Funding has also been pledged for the transformation of Lowestoft Town Hall into a multifunctioning, community building, as well as the return of the First Light Festival to the town for the next three years.

Further investment will fund the continued provision of a mobile community pantry and advice hub, and the extension of the 'Ease the Squeeze' cost-of-living support programme for another two years.

The Council is committed to securing a balanced budget.

Council tax is one of the Council's most important and stable income streams. However, district councils generally collect the smallest share of overall council tax income and will gain the least from the government's annual Local Government Finance Settlement.



East Suffolk Council only ever receives around 9% of a total Council Tax bill, with the remainder, going to Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Police and our Town & Parish Councils.

This year, the total amount of council tax paid by average households (Band D) for East Suffolk Council services will increase by only £5.58 for the whole year - this works out at less than 47p per month. However, as in previous years, people on low income, or those in receipt of benefits, can apply for a reduction in council tax.

A balance budget will be achieved for 2025/26 by using reserves, currently estimated at £5.3m. Meanwhile, a council tax premium on second homes, to be introduced from April, could generate around £9m in East Suffolk.

Winners of 'East Suffolk Through the Lens' photo competition announced

Organised by East Suffolk Council, the competition was open to photographers of all ages and experiences, with the aim of celebrating the district's unique appeal. Entrants were encouraged to capture the essence of the district by photographing the buildings, landscapes, wildlife, people, and all that makes East Suffolk amazing.

More than 230 entries were submitted during the seven-week competition between 9 December and 30 January – with one amazing photo eventually chosen by a panel of judges as overall winner, along with three runners-up and an under-16 winner.

The overall winner was Jenifer Everett-Day's image of a family on Lowestoft beach. (see below). This photograph unanimously impressed the judges with its brightness and colour, perfectly capturing the joy of spending summer days on an East Suffolk beach with loved ones.

The judges were wowed by the three runners-up, including Daniel Brand's unforgettably beautiful image of a misty Shingle Street, Alison Colmans' simplistic but inviting image of Aldeburgh beach showcasing the different ways people come together to enjoy East Suffolk, and Mike Bowden's dynamic action shot of a motorcross scene, which captured a unique element of life in East Suffolk.

In the under-16's category, Summer Rose Crowe came out on top with an image of the newly built Gull Wing Bridge, an embodiment of Lowestoft's tradition and progress.

Jenifer Everett-Day's winning photograph will grace the cover of the next East Suffolk magazine when delivered to every household in the district next spring.

High street retail vouchers are also on their way to the overall winner, under-16 winner and three runners-up. To see all the incredible photos specially selected by the judging panel, [visit the East Suffolk Through the Lens webpage](#).



Modernist home of celebrated composer gains special heritage status

The former home of eminent composer Imogen Holst has been granted special protection following an application by East Suffolk Council's Heritage team.

The modernist, single-storey property, in Church Walk, Aldeburgh, has been Grade II listed in recognition of its architectural and historic interest.

Imogen Holst arrived in Aldeburgh as Benjamin Britten's musical assistant, and later went on to become Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival. Designed by Aldeburgh neighbours Jim and Betty Cadbury-Brown, and built from 1962 to 1964, the property still contains furniture belonging to Imogen and her composer father, Gustav Holst.

Now owned by music education charity Britten Pears Arts, and available as a holiday let, Nine Church Walk can also be visited by the public for Heritage Open Days each year. Following a visit from a member of East Suffolk Council's Heritage team in September 2023, an application was made to Historic England for the building to be recommended for listing by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



Principal Design and Heritage Officer, Robert Scrimgeour said: “It was apparent to the Heritage team that Holst’s house was of special architectural and historic interest, by virtue of its intact, unaltered interior; interesting design by well-respected modernist architects; and association with a nationally eminent composer with very strong links to Aldeburgh, including Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and the Aldeburgh Festival.

“The Heritage team concluded that this special house, with its unique associations, represented a very special survival in the centre of the thriving seaside town of Aldeburgh, and deserved recognition and future protection. It was on this basis that the team submitted the house for listing and is very pleased at the outcome.”

**citizens
advice**

**East
Suffolk**

Help with your energy bills this winter

We can help in a number of ways -

- **Winter fuel payment**
We recommend you check your eligibility for Pension Credit as soon as possible - we can help you with this
- **Check if you can get a fuel voucher**
If you can't afford to top up your prepayment meter, you might be able to get a fuel voucher.
- **Check if you can sign up to the Priority Services Register**
You can get extra help from your gas and electricity supplier by signing up to the Priority Services Register.
- **Help with Energy grants**
You might be eligible for grants or schemes run by your local council or charitable organisations.
- **Check if you are able to access any other forms of support**
Other forms of support may be available to help you keep warm or pay your bills

We're also here for general advice on managing debt and money

Get in touch if you need advice or help

Call advice line 0808 278 7866 • Email us at caes.org.uk