

April 2025 Parish Report

Rendlesham and Orford Ward Councillor Wilson Update

Two years! How have we been doing?

I just wanted to put a few of our highlights, in the Strategic Aims headings:

ENVIRONMENT:

We founded the Four Rivers Recovery Programme to clean up our four main rivers

We created a new Resilience Fund to respond to extreme weather events

We committed to planting a Tree for every person in the district – that's 250,000!

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

We made a new company, East Suffolk Property Investments Ltd, to deliver better, and affordable housing

We ringfenced more money for play areas across the district

We funded Safe Suffolk Renters, to improve the rental market for everyone

We wrote our first ever Developers Charter to push housebuilders towards better standards

TACKLING INEQUALITY

We voted to continue funding Community Partnerships and Hubs, and Ease The Squeeze, when they lost county funding

We funded Mobile Community Pantries, helping people in need to access good, affordable food

We rolled out more Advice and Wellbeing Hubs than ever before, helping residents with issues from mental health to personal finances

THRIVING ECONOMY

We started East Suffolk's first Town Council Conference, developing the visions for our important population centres

We held three 'town hall' style meetings to listen to your thoughts on the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood

We promoted Lowestoft Power Park to become a national centre for renewable power practice and excellence

AND ALSO!

We rewrote our *entire* constitution to make Council more accessible and democratic

We established the very first Youth Council

We continue to get ready to deliver Better Recycling, the national improvement to our kerbside recycling service.

But we are also dealing with the biggest local government reorganisation in fifty years, as well as an unprecedented devolution plan, and trying to present properly democratic solutions to both. (more below!)

In more recent news:

Supporting Heritage Open Days in East Suffolk

East Suffolk Council is proudly supporting Heritage Open Days, the UK's largest free festival of history and culture, taking place this year from 12 to 21 September.

East Suffolk Council is encouraging local groups, societies, venues, and organisations to get involved in this year's Heritage Open Days, by opening a historic building, leading a walk, running a workshop, or

sharing untold stories. This year's theme is architecture and no matter how big or small, every event adds to the festival's rich celebration of East Suffolk's heritage.

To encourage local participation, East Suffolk Council is offering small grants of up to £500 to help voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise organisations to host events as part of the festival. The grant application deadline is 4pm on 1 May.

GLI Cllr Sarah Whitelock, East Suffolk's Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture, Leisure and Tourism said: "We recognise the importance of enabling more people to engage with East Suffolk's rich heritage. The small grant scheme will help more venues across the district to take part in this year's Heritage Open Days festival and broaden the activities on offer to increase participation. We especially welcome applications from projects aiming to increase visitors to our towns, those which provide interactive or educational experiences and those which contribute to the growth of the local cultural and creative economy."

Liam Montgomery, Marketing and Projects Manager at Heritage Open Days, said: "For me, architecture is just as much about people as it is about buildings themselves. While I'm just as captivated by awe-inspiring spaces as anyone (and we certainly have plenty of those across Heritage Open Days), I think this theme offers a great way to tell powerful stories about how buildings and places are used and shape our lives. I can't wait to see what our community will spotlight this year."

For grant guidance and application details, visit: **eastsuffolkmeansbusiness.co.uk/culture-in-east-suffolk/**

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 during the week commencing 28 April, with Highways Assurance removing the litter 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.

GLI Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk's Cabinet Member for the Environment said: "We have listened to public concerns regarding the appalling amount of litter beside major roads in the district and agree that this looks unsightly and is also detrimental to the local environment. We are working with East Suffolk Services Ltd to introduce a regular programme of clearance and maintenance to ensure litter in these areas is removed and the risk of future littering reduced. Working beside these major routes is extremely dangerous and the safety of the staff undertaking this work is paramount, therefore it is essential for East Suffolk Services Ltd to have correct safety procedures in place before this work can begin.

"Litter picking on this scale is expensive, with the one-off clearance being carried out by our contractors in late April costing at least £28,000. These costs are ultimately borne by the taxpayer and most of this rubbish is deliberately thrown from vehicles using these roads. The easiest way to reduce the need for

costly litter picking and associated road closures is for people to dispose of their litter properly when travelling on the roads, by using one of the many layby litter bins or by taking it home with you. East Suffolk's amazing and we can all play our part to maintain the beauty of the district for the benefit of all those who live, work and visit here."

To report concerns about roadside litter, or any matters relating to refuse and cleansing services in your area, please contact East Suffolk Council's Customer Services team: **0333 016 2000**
/ customerservices@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Councils deliver report to Government: Best for democracy, delivery of services and meeting diverse demands of county

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.

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 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.

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 demonstrates 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. It creates new councils 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 existing council services together.

"Our collective solution is the best way to deliver great services and value for money. It makes 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.

Cllr Deborah Saw, Leader of Babergh District Council, Cllr Caroline Topping, Leader of East Suffolk Council, Cllr Neil MacDonald, Leader for Ipswich Borough Council, Cllr Andy Mellen, Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council Leader and Cllr Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council signed the interim proposal sent to Government.

You can read the report at: tinyurl.com/573r5d2k

Wild spaces return to support nature across East Suffolk

A conservation scheme which will create over 100 spaces for the benefit of wildlife is returning for another year, with a new name and a brand-new look.

116 wild spaces will be left to grow during the spring and summer as part of East Suffolk Council's 'Nature at Work' scheme, which is being delivered in partnership with environmental charity Groundwork East.

New signs have been installed on council-owned land across the district to help identify the wild areas where grass cutting will be limited to twice per year for the benefit of pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The signs feature a QR code directing people to further information about the scheme, including how residents and community groups can get involved. A map of all the sites is available online, and photos from the locations will be added throughout the year; to view this, please visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/5d63wvy9>

Additionally, Groundwork East will be visiting local schools to help them create their own Nature at Work sites in their school grounds, and later in the year, Groundwork East will be working with town and parish councils to build awareness of the sites. Town and parish councils will be encouraged to help monitor the sites to better understand what species are present and how the sites are changing.

GLI Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk's cabinet member for the Environment said: "Nature at Work aims to respond to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis by supporting nature at small-scale community sites across East Suffolk. We are delighted to be bringing this scheme back with a new refreshed look and a renewed focus on supporting local schools, town and parish councils and community groups to get involved. Since the 1930s, the UK has lost over 97% of its wildflower meadows and grasslands which has had a devastating effect on the species that depend on these habitats for food and shelter.

"I would encourage people to check the online map and find their nearest Nature at Work site, and to use the resources on our dedicated webpage to find out more about the importance of leaving spaces to go wild and learn how to get involved in your own garden."

Ten East Suffolk schools will be supported by Groundwork East to create native wildflower meadows and habitats for wildlife on their school grounds. These spaces can then be used for learning activities, encouraging future generations to be conscious of and inspired by the natural world.

Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet: tinyurl.com/9xhka624