

Leader's monthly bulletin - December 2023



Welcome to the last issue of my monthly bulletin for 2023. The bulletin aims to keep councillors, officers, and town and parish councils up to date on the month's main news stories and any emerging issues from the district. I would like to wish every single one of you a happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.
Caroline

Our Direction

Our Direction 2028, the new Strategic Plan that will underpin the services delivered by East Suffolk Council for the next four years, has been adopted.



[‘Our Direction 2028’](#) presents the Council's key ambitions and priorities with an overarching aim to promote a bright, green, open, free, and fair future for all East Suffolk.

Its four main priorities, Environmental Impact, Sustainable Housing, Tackling Inequalities and Thriving Economy reflect the political ambitions of the new Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Administration, and set the path the Council will embark on, collaboratively, for the four years until 2028.

The plan was officially launched following Full Council on Wednesday 22 November. I would like to thank everybody who took the time to fill in the consultation and helped to shape this document. We look forward to working with you all in moving this forward.

Further erosion at Pakefield

Following further erosion to the cliffs at Pakefield, we are continuing to assess the situation and determine the next steps for the local community.

Following high tides on 24 November, officers from Coastal Partnership East and the Council's Building Control team have been at Arbor Lane carrying out inspections, having been present over that weekend to cordon off areas of concern and liaise with members of the public to keep people safe.

Earlier in November, Building Control and Coastal Partnership East oversaw the demolition of three chalets at Arbor Lane which had become at risk of being lost to shoreline degradation. The Council has supported the property owners with the demolitions including utility terminations and grant applications to avoid personal costs.

Following further cliff fall, the Building Control team have advised the caravan park owners that more caravans and their bases will need to be removed from the receding cliff top.

This is an upsetting situation for all concerned and I would like to express my sympathies to anyone whose property has been affected. I would like to thank our officers for responding so quickly - they are continuing to work with the local community; both to deal with the immediate impacts of this most recent incident but also on longer term options. I would also like to thank Cllr Peter Byatt and officers from Coastal Partnership East for walking me around the area and explaining the challenges we face.

Flood recovery funding

East Suffolk Council is continuing to help flood-hit communities and has written to affected households with details about how to access available funding support.

Eligible residents can apply for a £500 Community Recovery Grant and council tax discount for a minimum of three months to help with immediate needs following Storm Babet.

Letter and emails have been sent to over 100 households which reported flooding impacts to Suffolk County Council – who in turn undertook initial eligibility checks for the Community Recovery Grant and council tax discount. The letters direct residents to complete an online claim, or to contact the Council by phone if they require further assistance.



Anyone impacted by the flooding as a result of Storm Babet, but who has yet to report it to Suffolk County Council, can do so by visiting [the Suffolk Highways reporting page](#) or calling 0345 606 6171.



War in Gaza

On 15 November, a statement was issued from Cllr Jan Candy, Cabinet Member for Community Health, on behalf of East Suffolk Council's Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent administration; Cllr Craig Rivett, Conservative Group Lead and Cllr Peter Byatt, Labour Group Lead.

"Here in East Suffolk, watching the appalling scenes in Israel and Gaza from afar, we are deeply distressed by the continued conflict and the loss of thousands of innocent lives.

"Though we cannot begin to imagine the extent of suffering, we are sending our deepest condolences to every family who has been affected, and also to anyone in East Suffolk who has suffered loss, or who is worried about friends and loved ones caught up in this conflict.

"There is never any justification for the killing, injuring and abduction of civilians and children who must be protected at all times, and international humanitarian law establishes rules which cannot be ignored.

"In line with the United Nations, we are urging leaders in Israel and Palestine to do everything within their powers to avoid further loss of innocent life. We call for peace, we call for a diplomatic solution and we call for the cessation of the violence and horrors visited on so many communities."

'No' to oil and gas

East Suffolk Council has responded to the Government's decision to create more oil and gas licences by confirming that it will no longer accept new tenancies from companies committed to its production.

As part of the King's Speech on Tuesday 7 November, it was confirmed that hundreds of new oil and gas licences will be granted in the UK by the Government.

However, the Council, which owns considerable commercial land in Lowestoft as well as business parks in Beccles and Leiston, has stated that green companies will now be 'at the front of the queue' for tenancies.

The Nexus



A new development in the heart of Lowestoft's PowerPark has taken a vital step forward, with the start of demolition work on the site.

Two disused buildings which currently occupy the site will be demolished and the site will then

be redeveloped [to provide 16 purpose-built contemporary business units](#). It is hoped that The Nexus will become a natural hub for clean energy companies, appealing to both start-up and more established businesses.

Funding boost for community hall

East Suffolk councillors George King and Graham Parker are supporting an ambitious local group with grants from their Enabling Communities Budget.

Organisers at [Gunton Estate Community Hall in north Lowestoft](#) have big plans to make their venue the hub of the area, providing the community with a space for social events, youth groups with a homework club, indoor sports activities, a wi-fi zone, community coffee shop and warm space.



Councillors are encouraged to [contact the Communications Team](#)

with details of their Enabling Communities Budget allocations to help promote their projects across the district.

Lowestoft Healthy Habits

Children in Lowestoft and the surrounding area are being encouraged to make healthy changes through a new project funded by the Lowestoft and northern parishes Community Partnership.



The Community Partnership, working with Lowestoft Rising, has created Lowestoft Healthy Habits booklets which have been delivered to 1,750 students in Years 5 and 6 in primary schools across Lowestoft, Pakefield, Carlton Colville, Oulton Broad and the surrounding villages.

[Lowestoft Healthy Habits is an activity booklet](#) which encourages children and their families to make healthier food choices and be more active, leading to an overall improvement in their physical and mental health. The booklets contain contributions from the National Literacy Trust, Suffolk Mind, Active Suffolk and the Community Dental Service.

Free festive parking

To coincide with Christmas lights ‘switch ons’ and other festive events across the district, East Suffolk Council is offering [free parking in council-owned car parks](#) from 3pm on selected dates. Free parking will also be available from noon to 6pm on Saturday 16 December across the district.

Winter support grants

Voluntary organisations, community groups and faith networks have been encouraged to apply for grant funding for projects that help ease cost of living pressures around food and heating this winter.

The [East Suffolk Cost of Living Winter Grant Fund](#), made possible with funding from the Suffolk Collaborative Communities Board, offers grants for projects that help East Suffolk residents to stay warm and fed during the colder months.

Organisations can apply for up to £2,500 for a wide range of projects – as long as they support individuals and families to stay warm and/or to access healthy nutritious food, particularly between the end of December and the end of March. Applications closed on 6 December and the grant panel will meet on 13 December.

Community action in Beccles

People in Beccles were invited to show their pride in the town during a three-day community event, held last month.

East Suffolk Council and Beccles Town Council asked people to volunteer between Friday 17 and Sunday 19 November to clear litter or weeds from outside their homes and businesses. Equipment was available to borrow and rubbish and green waste was collected during the event. Thank you to Beccles Community Gardeners, volunteers from the Salvation Army Hall and Thirst Youth Group, as well as members of the public who came out and supported the local ward councillors over the weekend.



The initiative is part of East Suffolk Council's recent renewed drive to help people show civic pride and contribute towards the appearance of their local areas.

Consultations



Easton and Playford Neighbourhood Plans

[Residents of Easton and Playford are invited to comment](#) on their Neighbourhood Plans, ahead of them being submitted for independent examination. The Council is publicising the plans and inviting representations, which will be forwarded to the examiners for consideration alongside the plans.

Representations must be received by 22 December.

Supplementary Planning Documents

East Suffolk Council is [seeking views through a public consultation](#) on two supplementary planning documents - the draft Rural Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the draft Healthy Environments Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The consultation closes on Wednesday 10 January 2024.



Stay up to date with the latest East Suffolk news!

The Communications Team shares [all media coverage daily on SharePoint](#), so you can easily stay up to date on media stories relevant to East Suffolk Council, whether on local, regional or national news outlets, tv, radio, print or online.

We do a lot of great work in East Suffolk, and we want everyone to know! I would therefore like to encourage all Councillors to share their own good news stories with the Communications Team so they can help showcase some of this work, whether this is from projects funded through your Enabling Communities Budget or supporting an initiative which will benefit our local communities.

We keep our communities up to date in a variety of ways and social media has an important role to play. Please follow us and share our posts with your audiences.

[Facebook X \(formerly Twitter\) Instagram](#)

If you have any questions or need any help with communications and promotion, you can email the team on communications@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Diary dates

- 12 December at 2pm - Planning Committee North (Conference Room, Riverside)
- 13 December at 10am - Community Partnership Board (Orbis Centre, Lowestoft)
- 18 December at 6pm - Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth and villages Community Partnership (Beccles Town Hall)
- 19 December at 2pm - Planning Committee South (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 20 December at 6pm - Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula Community Partnership (Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House)
- 21 December at 6.30pm - Scrutiny Committee (Conference Room, Riverside)