

BROMESWELL PARISH COUNCIL
SCC NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2023

Suffolk Information Partnership Celebrates 100 Partners

The Suffolk Information Partnership is a network of organisations offering information, advice, and services to support people's health and wellbeing in Suffolk.

The partnership was formed in 2010 with five key voluntary sector organisations in Suffolk - Age UK Suffolk, Optua (now Avenues East), Suffolk Family Carers, Suffolk Libraries and Suffolk Mind - alongside Suffolk County Council's Adult Social Care services. Now we have more than 100 statutory, voluntary and independent sector organisations delivering services to support all groups across Suffolk.

The 100th partner to join the network was *Our Special Friends*, a Suffolk based charity that works to help people to benefit from animal companionship during illness, bereavement, or other crises.

The Suffolk Information Partnership helps thousands of Suffolk Residents access the services they need every year and we are proud of how the partnership has grown. "I want to say a huge thank you to all the partners that have joined the Suffolk Information Partnership over the years, for your invaluable support in making the partnership the success that it is today. We couldn't have done it without you!"

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities

The partnership meets regularly to share updates on its services and discuss topics of interest as well as providing peer support and informal mentoring. Being in the partnership also gives organisations access to a toolkit of resources and the Warm Handover referral scheme. The Warm Handover referral scheme allows partners to refer clients directly to another organisation, where they identify that the client would benefit from other support.

The process *supports vulnerable clients* and those who may struggle to contact another organisation if they are signposted to that organisation.

For more information about the Suffolk Information Partnership and Warm Handover, visit: <http://suffolkinformationpartnership.onesuffolk.net/>

The Suffolk Information Partnership is open to statutory, voluntary and independent sector organisations operating across or within local communities in Suffolk. If your organisation would like to join send a short paragraph about what your organisation does, your logo and contact details to suffolkinformationpartnership@suffolk.gov.uk

The Suffolk Information Partnership and Warm Handover Referral Scheme are free to join.

More funds confirmed for children's services, adult care and the environment

The £687.6m budget package for 2023/24 was approved at a Full Council meeting on Thursday 9 February 2023, with a focus on children's services, adult care and the environment.

In an online survey, Suffolk residents said that they would like to see more spent on adult services and children's services, and these areas will receive an additional £35.7m and £13.5m, respectively.

In addition, the council's net zero carbon budget, which had previously been approved by Cabinet, sits alongside the financial budget. It is a report on how the organisation is progressing to its ambitious target of being net zero by 2030, enabling the council to measure its carbon emissions, monitor its environmental impact, and identify actions and costs needed to reduce those emissions.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment, said:

"Despite the challenges in the national and international economy, and the significant increase in demand for our services, we have successfully delivered a balanced budget. We are protecting the services that people rely on the most and we will be able to continue caring for the most vulnerable in Suffolk.

"We have identified over £15m of savings across the organisation, but this will not see any reductions in services, and some areas will see investment. We are committed to always providing the best value for everyone in Suffolk."

The council's budget will increase by nearly 10% (from £625.3m to £687.6m), the additional money largely generated by a 3.99% increase in the council's share of Council Tax, and more funds from Government for adult and children's social care.

The increase of 3.99% to Council Tax is made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care. This will see the council's share of a Band B property's bill rise by 86 pence per week, compared to last year.

Hundreds of illegal vapes seized in Suffolk

Suffolk Trading Standards has stopped the sale of dangerous vapes at premises in Ipswich, Felixstowe, and Lowestoft in their bid to tackle one of the top threats on the high street.

Officers recently discovered over 370 vapes which did not meet the legal requirements, including some which offered as many as 10,000 puffs when a legal vape would offer around 600.

Thanks to the tireless work of Suffolk Trading Standards, hundreds of potentially deadly vapes have been withdrawn from sale in our county.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection

When used properly, vapes and e-cigarettes can be a successful way of helping people to stop smoking. But criminals are capitalising on this, leading to a rise in illegal vapes, which can contain high levels of nicotine, contaminants, or banned ingredients such as taurine or caffeine.

In addition, some retailers are increasingly selling vapes to underage children, who are often enticed by the colourful packaging and sweet flavours used by some vaping manufacturers.

Consumers can protect themselves by looking out for the following to ensure the vape that they are purchasing is legal:

- The tank of a vape is a maximum size of 2ml, and the largest refill bottle is 10ml in size or less
- All liquids should come in childproof bottles displaying nicotine warnings and have an accompanying safety leaflet
- Vapes should have a nicotine strength of no more than 20mg/ml or 2%
- A maximum number of around 600 puffs is offered

Anyone who suspects that a shop is selling unsafe e-cigarettes and vaping liquids or making sales of age-restricted products to children can report this in confidence to Suffolk Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer helpline on **0808 223 1133**.

Suffolk Trading Standards secures compensation for customers of callous company chief

David Waters, 74, of Manwick Road, Felixstowe, was the sole director of Anchor

Mobility, a company found guilty of 15 counts of unfair commercial practice by Ipswich Crown Court.

His offences included fraudulent trading, poor customer service, and misleading consumers by taking large deposits with the promise of delivering goods without ever doing so, resulting in Waters being sentenced to 32 months in prison and fined £15,000 at a hearing in December 2019.

The conviction would not have been possible without the intervention of Suffolk Trading Standards, who discovered more than 20 victims when investigating Anchor Mobility after receiving numerous consumer complaints.

Suffolk Trading Standards also sought additional compensation for all known victims, leading to Waters appearing at Ipswich Crown Court again last June, when a judge ruled that he must repay £50,000 in proceeds from his crimes, reflecting the assets available to him.

Compensation ranging from £600 to over £5,000 is currently being paid out, much to the relief of victims and their loved ones, who praised Suffolk Trading Standards for its efforts in securing a successful outcome.

Graham Crisp, Head of Suffolk Trading Standards, said: “Although no compensation can undo the distress caused by David Water’s actions, I am delighted that 25 of his victims will be given a share of £50,000 from the proceeds of his crimes.

“Officers from Suffolk Trading Standards have worked tirelessly to deliver the compensation to victims, with many victims receiving thousands of pounds as a direct result of our involvement.

“Bringing Mr Waters to justice would not have been possible without the assistance of our colleagues from Norfolk Trading Standards and the National Trading Standards Tri Regional Investigation Team, and I am grateful for their help in protecting Suffolk residents and ensuring a level playing field for our county’s legitimate traders.”

Anyone who believes they may have fallen victim to a fraudulent trader should contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133**.

Suffolk’s exemplary commitment to retrofitting homes

While the Warm Homes Suffolk initiative is ensuring that the most vulnerable households receive support, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership is tackling the shortage of trained installers in the county.

Almost 50 people have been trained in retrofitting through Skills Bootcamps, providing a much-needed boost to the workforce needed for the delivery of warmer homes.

The skilling-up of 46 people in Norfolk and Suffolk in three levels of retrofitting through the Government funded initiative comes after Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders agreed to create a Fuel Poverty Retrofit team to support those struggling most with their energy bills.

A Fuel Poverty Retrofit Team will work with residents living in energy inefficient properties to address funding issues and ensure a consistent supply of installers.

An extension of the Warm Homes Suffolk Scheme, the move is expected to lead to around £50m worth of work and deliver almost £4.8m in combined potential savings for households through insulation, air source heat pumps and the replacement of single glazing.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is a key determination of Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan, as doing so will help the county to address climate change and achieve its goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

New highways services arriving in Suffolk as multi-million-pound contract awarded

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023.

Following an extensive procurement exercise, Suffolk County Council has confirmed Milestone will be its new contract partner for up to 20 years. The new partnership, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will be delivering highway projects and improvements across Suffolk, including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

When searching for its new highways partner, the county council worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace, and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk.

The council wanted the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment.

A rigorous procurement exercise was carried out over many months, with various stages of discussions with service providers, to evolve their solutions to meet the various contractual requirements and deliver an effective and efficient highway service for Suffolk. Final submissions were evaluated and extensively moderated before the final winning contract was awarded.

Fire service finalises plan to protect Suffolk's communities

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, brought the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to Cabinet (Tuesday, 21 February) to seek approval for its adoption from April 2023.

“We have listened to residents, businesses, partners and stakeholders about what matters to them and where they feel we should direct our resources; without this being to the detriment of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service staff, who already work tirelessly to prevent and respond to emergencies.”

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection

The CRMP details Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's priorities until 2027, including:

- Updating how response times are reported to include from the time of call and focus on the areas of highest risk, such as dwelling fires
- Addressing climate change to support Suffolk County Council's ambition to be a carbon-neutral authority by 2030, with a view to introducing more non-fossil fuel vehicles in the fleet
- Developing preventative safe and well visits, including continued work with the National Farmers' Union to tailor advice to rural and farming communities
- Assessing how the service works with partner agencies, such as supporting the ambulance service when appropriate and if capacity and resources allow for this
- Reviewing the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters and specialist support staff to ensure Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service remains a diverse employer of choice

These priorities were identified during extensive research and pre-consultation engagement with staff and stakeholders. In addition, hundreds of Suffolk residents helped to inform the final document by providing feedback on proposals during the CRMP public consultation, which ran from October to December 2022 and included a series of public events held at six supermarkets across the county.

Suffolk County Council will support Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service with implementing its CRMP and has allocated over £5.3million to fleet replacement in its 2023/24 budget, which includes the purchase of 20 state-of-the-art fire engines to ensure that firefighters have the equipment needed to help meet the service's priorities.

The new CRMP replaces Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's previous Integrated Risk Management Plan, which was implemented following approval by Cabinet in July 2019.

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