



Somersham Annual Parish Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Parish Meeting held at the Village Hall on Wednesday, 10th May 2023 at **7pm**

PRESENT: Cllr J Rook (PC), Cllr S Wright (PC), Cllr S Burrell (PC), Cllr P Jousiffe (PC), Cllr J Caston (PC), A MacFadyen (Comm. Ass.), D Thorne (Pub), K Dines (Church / The Link), M Newcombe (Baptist Church) and one member of the Public.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs J Blackburn (Clerk)

SPC020/23/24 - CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Vice-Chairman of Somersham Parish Council, Cllr James Rook, welcomed those present.

SPC021/23/24 - APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr T Hallett, Colin Burrows (Neighbourhood Watch) and Leah Chinnery (Primary School).

SPC022/23/24 - MINUTES 5th MAY 2022

The minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting, held on 5th May 2022, were approved as a true record and were duly signed by the Chair.

SPC023/23/24 - REPORTS RELATING TO THE PARISH

Representatives of the following organisations were invited to speak and answer any questions. Where received, their reports are attached to the Minutes.

- a) Report of the Chairman of the Parish Council – *Cllr Thomas Hallett*
(Full Report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Rook read through the Chairman's report, which would be published on the village website.

- b) Report of the County Councillor – *Cllr Kay Oakes*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Cllr Oakes' report was circulated prior to the meeting and would be published on the village website.

- c) Report of the District Councillor – *Adrienne Marriott*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Newly elected Cllr Marriott was not present at the meeting. A report had been received from the previous District Councillor and would be published on the village website.

- d) Report of the Duke of Marlborough Public House – *David Thorne*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

David Thorne briefly went through his report, which would be published on the village website. He reported that whilst the pub was struggling, he thanked the Parish Council for their past support.

- e) Report of the Community Shop – *Kate Dines*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Kate Dines briefly went through the report, which would be published on the village website. She added that the shop would soon be decorated. She explained that the increase in energy costs would soon hit the shop and as a result solar would be considered. She thanked the Parish Council for their continued support.

- f) Report of The Link Magazine – *Kate Dines*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Kate Dines briefly went through the report, which would be published on the village website. She added that costs for printing had been cheaper by using coloured ink rather than coloured paper. She thanked the Parish Council for their continued support.

- g) Report of St Mary's Church PCC – *Kate Dines*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Kate Dines briefly went through the report, which would be published on the village website. She added that there was a lot of support from a small congregation and also thanked the Parish Council for their contribution towards grass cutting.

- h) Report of the Baptist Church – *Mark Newcombe*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Mark Newcombe went through his report which would be published on the village website. He added that the Baptist Church enjoyed a loyal and generous congregation of 23-25 people and had received a lot of support for projects.

- i) Report of the Somersham & District Community Association – *Anne MacFadyen*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Anne MacFadyen read through her report, which would be published on the village website. She added that the activities on the playing field had always been well attended, the shed had been well used, the Youth Team Football Club were doing really well and the Youth Club was working well with over 30 children attending. The bridge access to the field was working well. Lastly, the football club's 1st Team were at the top of the division.

- j) Report of the Tennis Club – *Penny Pearson*

Penny Pearson was not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

- k) Report of the Neighbourhood Watch – *Colin Burrows*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Colin Burrows was not present at the meeting but his report would be published on the village website.

- l) Report of the Wheelie Day – *Terry Fordham*
(Full report attached to these Minutes)

Terry Fordham was not present at the meeting but his report would be published on the village website.

Cllr Caston reported that the Wheelie Day would be held on 8th July 2023 and asked for any volunteers to help.

- m) Report of the Primary School – *Leah Chinnery*

Leah Chinnery was not present at the meeting and a report had not been received.

SPC024/23/24 - PUBLIC FORUM

David Thorne reported that the Pub was due to hold a Eurovision Song Contest with the drinks being £2.50 a pint.

The meeting closed at 7.28pm.

Chairman Date

Chairman's Report – Parish Council

I am pleased to present the Chairman's Report for Somersham Parish Council's Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 10th May 2023.

The past year has been filled with various challenges, successes, and learning opportunities for the Council, and I am proud to have led the team through this journey. I am grateful for the commitment, support, and hard work of our Councillors, our Parish Clerk and volunteers.

This past year, the Parish Council have supported organisations and community groups, in improving the quality of life in our Parish.

The Parish Council has managed its finances prudently throughout the year, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and responsibly. We have maintained a healthy financial position, with a balanced budget and sufficient reserves to cover any unforeseen expenses. Our financial management practices have allowed us to invest in important community projects while keeping the precept increase to a minimum.

We recognize that there are ongoing challenges that require our attention, and we are committed to addressing them in the coming year. Some of which will be discussed at tonight's meeting.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Councillors, our Parish Clerk, volunteers, and residents who have supported the Parish Council throughout the year. Your dedication, hard work, and passion have helped to make Somersham a great place to live.

We look forward to working together in the coming year as we continue to build a strong, resilient, and sustainable community for all.

Thomas Hallett
Chair of the Parish Council

Contents

April 2022	
£350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.	Page 4
Suffolk Highways will resurface 150 miles of new roads across 173 different sites across the county.	Page 5
May 2022	
Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years.	Page 7
June 2022	
New scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water.	Page 8
Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.	Page 9
July 2022	
Authorities in Essex and Suffolk have united to condemn the current proposals for a 180km network of 50m tall electricity pylons.	Page 11
Suffolk County Council will focus on ensuring that the county sees the maximum benefits from Sizewell C project.	Page 12
A new map for hauliers plotting routes for journeys across Suffolk has been drawn up.	Page 13
August 2022	
The council submitted a bid of £1,362,000 to the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme.	Page 15
September 2022	
Mobile number plate recognition system to be rolled out across Suffolk.	Page 17
October 2022	
Work on a major expansion of the Foxhall Recycling Centre near Ipswich to begin.	Page 19
The Council agreed a new wave of funding to provide places for children and young people with SEND.	Page 20
November 2022	
A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion.	Page 22
Ground-breaking new guidelines for developers to help them design sustainable and low-carbon neighbourhoods have been launched by Suffolk County Council.	Page 23
Suffolk Archives Service has received its Provisional Archive Service Accreditation from The National Archives.	Page 24
A new initiative named Multiply Suffolk, which will offer adults an opportunity to improve their numeracy skills, has launched in Suffolk.	Page 25

Almost £300,000 of funding has been allocated to six new projects which aim to support victims and prevent violence against Women and Girls.	Page 26
December 2022	
A landmark devolution deal, which puts money and power over building, regeneration and skills into the hands of leaders in Suffolk will be signed.	Page 29
January 2023	
Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals.	Page 32
Suffolk County Council has reduced its carbon emissions by 15% in the last two years.	Page 33
February 2023	
Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023.	Page 35
CRMP was brought to Cabinet to seek approval for its adoption from April 2023.	Page 35

April 2022

Violence Against Women and

Girls funding announced

Suffolk County Council has announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022.

This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

Organisations will be able to apply for this funding to support initiatives that are synonymous with the objectives of the strategy and aim to stop violence against women and girls.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, and chair of the Safer, Stronger Communities Board said:

This funding cements our continued commitment to protecting our communities. Our focus for these projects is women and girls, due to the gendered nature of the crimes, but there is also scope to include projects to support men and boys as well as those that are transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming. This is a real opportunity to boost funding across Suffolk to harness creativity and innovation to help tackle this very important issue.

The fund is to be launched in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation. Any organisations wishing to make an application can do so by visiting [Suffolk Community Foundation](#) or contacting them on grants@suffolkcf.org.uk or 01473 602602.

Organisations can make an application for funding for up to £5,000 for pilot projects or up to £50,000 for projects which have already been piloted. These grants are available for up to 3 years.

Suffolk has launched its 3-year strategy for Violence Against Women and Girls, in line with the Government's plan to reduce and prevent this type of crime, improve collaboration between services and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. The strategy has been prepared collaboratively by the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) – consisting of representatives from Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk's Police & Crime Commissioner, community safety partnerships, health and probation services, the Norfolk & Suffolk Criminal Justice Board and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

The SSCB have a shared commitment to tackle the incredibly important issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which includes, but is not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and revenge porn – all of which have a devastating impact on victim-survivors, families, and communities.

The Strategy is available to view online at: [Suffolk VAWG Strategy 2022-25](#)

150 miles of new road surfaces in Suffolk

Suffolk Highways begins its programme to resurface and surface dress 150 miles of new roads across 173 different sites across the county this year.

The two separate programmes provide new surfaces for vehicles to travel on, with the treatments expected to last between 5 and 20 years; depending on the type of treatment and volumes of vehicles using the roads amongst many other factors.

Road resurfacing is a process where the old surface is either overlaid with a new surface or removed to a certain depth and a new surface is applied, whereas surface dressing is a preventative process that is used to seal and improve the surface of the roads, slowing down the deterioration of the road surface and improving its skid resistance. The rapid speed of this process means that disruption to road users, local businesses and emergency services is minimised. The process involves an application of hot bitumen emulsion, followed by a layer of stone chips. Sites may be patched and prepared in advance of the surface dressing.

Following several trials across the UK, it has been demonstrated that the removal of some road markings can have a positive effect on road safety by reducing vehicle speeds. Therefore, road markings may not always be replaced like for like. This approach also supports the need for Suffolk Highways to reduce its ongoing maintenance liabilities.

As part of the surface dressing process, it is essential that once the road is reopened to traffic, the 20mph speed limit is adhered to, this avoids damage to vehicles and the slow-moving traffic further embeds the chippings. The road is swept at regular intervals to remove any excess chippings.

- First sweep: within 24 hours after completion of the works
- Second sweep: within 7 days after works are completed
- Third sweep (if required): within 14 days of works being completed.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:

Each year Suffolk Highways uses a range of data to identify a number of roads across our county that are in need of a new surface. This process covers over potholes, stops them from forming in future and provides a new surface for all to travel on. These programmes are extensive and weather-dependent, so regular progress updates will be issued via Twitter @Suff_highways and on the Suffolk County Council website. I appreciate that these works can be disruptive to Suffolk residents, however these improvements do provide long-term benefits to all and are very much welcome across the county.

For further details, including the programmes of work, please visit the [road resurfacing](#) and [surface dressing](#) pages. Both programmes are subject to change due to the operations being weather dependent. Therefore, they will be updated regularly.

May 2022

Council on course to plant 200,000 trees

Suffolk County Council has planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years (at an average of 272 per day).

Much of this was possible thanks to £400,000 of the council's own Suffolk 2020 Fund, to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county.

In one year, 198,547 average adult trees could absorb the equivalent CO2 emitted by:

- 8,845,898 miles travelled in a typical petrol car
- 903 typical household gas boilers running for a year
- 199 Suffolk residents each year

The planting includes 12 miles of new mixed native species hedgerows across 15 county farm holdings, delivering new wildlife habitat, ecological corridors and enhanced landscapes.

The council worked with many partners to make the tree planting a success, including The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Warden Network, county farm tenants, landowners, local authorities and communities, and contractor Giles Landscapes.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Environment and Public Protection, said:

This amazing achievement would not have been possible without all the partners we work with, to whom I'm grateful for getting these trees in the ground. From the support of our exceptional Suffolk Tree Warden Network volunteers, through to the children at local schools, we really have put Suffolk on the UK map for tree planting. Once the healing wood is completed at Howard Community Academy later this year, we will have surpassed our target of 200,000 trees for Suffolk.

All the trees have been registered as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and contribute to the continuing Suffolk-wide ambition of Creating the Greenest County.

June 2022

Suffolk leading the way in UK's water conservation

New scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water.

Since its launch in February 2021 a unique scheme to the UK, based in Felixstowe, has saved over 800,000 tonnes of water being lost to the North Sea - and reused it to grow Suffolk crops.

Drainage water has traditionally been pumped away to the River Deben and North Sea, damaging saltmarsh along the way. Instead, it is now pumped back inland, conserving the saltmarsh and refilling 14 reservoirs, which six local farms are using to irrigate their crops.

Last week (9-10 June 2022) local landowners and national organisations were invited to visit the site, to hear first-hand from the scheme's operators, Felixstowe Hydrocycle, and from farmers who are benefitting from the scheme.

Organised by Suffolk County Council, working with the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia as key partners of the project, the event aimed to inspire more schemes to be trialled around Suffolk, the UK and Europe.

Councillor Steve Wiles, County Councillor for Felixstowe Coastal and Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways, said:

I'm extremely proud that Suffolk and the council is a national leader with projects like this. I'm grateful for the vision and commitment shown by all the partners and landowners who are making this a success. Our region is a dry place and already faces challenges with its water supply – it's estimated that by 2050 we'll need to double our supply if we continue to use water at the current rate. Any way that we can conserve water is crucial and if we can do this whilst supporting our farmers and landowners, then it reaffirms Suffolk's importance to providing for the UK. This project epitomises the council's ambition to protect and enhance our environment. It also complements our aim for the authority, and Suffolk, to be Net Zero by 2030. Sustainable projects like this really do confirm how Suffolk can be the greenest county.

The Felixstowe scheme is one of only four being trialled across Europe, overseen by FRESH4Cs, a cooperation project between 10 UK, Belgian and Dutch partners. FRESH4Cs has received funding from the Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The drainage water is sourced from the Kingsfleet near Felixstowe and travels along a 12km pipeline to local farms where it is stored in existing reservoirs ready for irrigation. The pipeline route has been carefully plotted to avoid areas of conservation and archaeological sites.

Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has today agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for education, SEND and skills at Suffolk County Council, said:

I have had the privilege of visiting some of these new units and seeing first-hand the significant difference they make to children and young people and their families. It is vital that we continue to increase not only the numbers of places we offer, but also the mix of help and support we offer so we can continue to meet the varied need of lots of young people. This significant investment shows our ongoing commitment to improving our SEND provision and making sure all children and young people in Suffolk have the best education to suit their needs.

Plans for new SEND places under phase 3 will come before Cabinet from September. The newly-approved £15.9million includes £6million to complete phase 2, £4.6million to cover overspend and a grant from the Department for Education of £5.3million.

The special schools include Castle EAST, a new communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a new social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

July 2022

County Councils unanimously agree “no” to damaging pylons proposal

Authorities in Essex and Suffolk have united to condemn the current proposals for a 180km network of 50m tall electricity pylons.

Essex County Council and Suffolk County Council have passed motions at their full council meetings in July, to oppose the East Anglia GREEN proposal put forward by National Grid for a 180km network of electricity pylons between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury.

Norfolk County Council is expected to consider the motion at its next full council meeting, following a planned debate yesterday (19 July 2022) being postponed.

The councils agree that the plan for pylons is destructive and outdated, and will cause irreversible damage to the countryside, wildlife habitats and local communities.

A new electricity network is needed to transmit the ambitious 50 GW of offshore wind that the Government aims to be delivered by 2030, and to connect new projects like Sizewell C. So much of this ambition falls on East Anglia, to provide energy for much of the country.

The councils fully support the need to generate this renewable and low carbon electricity, to meet local and national Net Zero ambitions. However, they believe that more suitable, sustainable and modern alternatives for the network have not been properly investigated and presented, such as undersea cable routes around the coastline of East Anglia.

Formalising their long-standing positions on the East Anglia GREEN proposal, the two councils join a group of 13 MPs who recently signed a letter criticising the consultation, along with a growing public petition with thousands of signatures

Councillor Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

We are sending a strong message with the councils coming together to reject this completely unacceptable project to get electricity onshore. There is significant momentum against the pylon proposal from our residents, businesses, and our MPs. There has been no clear and detailed information presented on alternatives, particularly an offshore solution. In Suffolk, we have been lobbying for strategic electricity networks since 2011 and we will continue stand firm alongside our neighbours to ensure that Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex are not damaged by the serious shortcomings in these current plans.

National Grid completed the East Anglia GREEN non-statutory consultation in June and later this year, it is anticipated they will publish a report outlining the key themes from the feedback

received and explain the next steps. They expect the first statutory consultation to take place in early 2023, with an application to the Planning Inspectorate in late 2024.

Council looks to protect Suffolk following Sizewell C decision

Suffolk County Council will now focus its attention on protecting Suffolk, ensuring that the county sees the maximum benefits from Sizewell C project.

Today (20 July 2022) the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy granted the Development Consent Order to build and operate a new nuclear power station, Sizewell C.

The council remains disappointed that a number of key issues have not been fully resolved, but is now looking ahead to the boosts for the local economy and protecting the local environment.

Whilst the council has been successful in securing many improvements to the scheme, it had raised several concerns where the impact on the natural environment could have been improved:

- The blight of the additional pylons at the main site
- Unnecessary and damaging outage car park at Goose Hill
- Sizewell Link Road should be removed after construction to prevent lasting damage to the environment.

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

During the process, the council's voice has been strong, and our influence has resulted in a number of significant improvements to the proposals, to make them more acceptable for Suffolk. We have taken the concerns of Suffolk residents to the highest levels, from the Planning Inspectorate to the Secretary of State. We are disappointed that, in our opinion, some of these have not been listened to. It is now our role to ensure that as Sizewell C proceeds, it does so with the least possible impact on Suffolk's residents and unique natural environment, whilst doing all we can to maximise the economic opportunities for our county.

The council has been instrumental in recent changes made to the proposals, which will see Suffolk benefit from nearly £200m of investment to mitigate the impact on communities, the environment and infrastructure. Assurances have also been secured to see a far greater quantity of construction materials will be delivered by rail and sea, reducing the number of lorries on the county's rural roads.

Following the decision to grant the Sizewell C Development Consent Order, there is now a six week period in which judicial review challenges may be made. Subject to any legal challenges, Suffolk County Council will work with EDF Energy, local communities and local authorities, to ensure that the scheme is constructed accordingly and that opportunities for Suffolk are maximised.

A new map for hauliers plotting routes for journeys across Suffolk has been drawn up.

The Suffolk County Council Lorry Route Plan now incorporates new developments and roads, schemes such as Air Quality Management Areas, and changes in road safety on lorry routes.

Changes to the map include utilising new by-passes and link roads at Beccles, Eye and Haverhill to divert traffic away from town centres, and downgrading of routes at Leiston and Stowlangtoft. The new edition also features, for the first time, routes in Ipswich.

The map, compiled following a three-month consultation with all parish and town councils in Suffolk, was last updated in 2011 although a minor review was held in 2017.

While hauliers are not compelled to use the routes it does help them identify the best roads for their journey. It also discourages them from taking routes that can cause disruption, road safety concerns and environmental concerns to local communities.

Councillor Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said:

We have consulted with town and parish councils across Suffolk to establish what changes they would like to see. Where possible and practical to do so we have made changes but, inevitably, some people are going to be disappointed that changes they proposed could not be implemented. Suffolk is a predominantly rural county and we can only work within the road network available to us to accommodate modern-day traffic requirements.

Councillor Smith advised that parishes who feel that local HGV weight restriction traffic orders were not being adhered should sign up to the [Suffolk Lorry Watch](#) scheme. This is run by Trading Standards, in partnership with Suffolk Highways, who ensure weight restriction orders are enforced. These orders are in place to protect old or weak structures and minimise use of a route unless access is necessary.

[Read more about the review and view the new map here.](#)

August 2022

Council to boost electric vehicle charging across Suffolk

The council submitted a bid of £1,362,000 to the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme.

Suffolk's residents and visitors will see further improvements to the county's electric vehicle (EV) charging network, following Suffolk County Council's successful bid to fund more charging points.

With additional contributions such as commercial funding, the project will see a total investment of around £2.75m.

The new LEVI funding will allow the council to develop the county's EV charging network by:

- PV solar power and battery storage upgrades to approximately 10 existing sites
- Installing community EV charging, PV solar power and battery storage at over 30 further sites in urban and rural areas
- Identifying key commercial sites for 7kW, rapid and ultra-rapid chargers, which will benefit the local community

Suffolk County Council has led the way in electric vehicle charging, following the launch of Plug In Suffolk in 2019. It was the UK's first 'fully open' public EV fast charging network and has seen other local authorities around the country follow that model.

Plug In Suffolk has now installed 100 charging points around the county, with an emphasis on installations in rural locations and supporting households without off-street charging capabilities.

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

This is excellent news for those living in Suffolk, and those who are visiting to enjoy everything our county has to offer. We have had over 70 expressions of interest for potential sites, which will offer over 200 new charging points, including proposals for installations of solar carports, as well as regular charging points. These are places such as community centres, village halls, sports clubs and park and ride sites, many of which are within walking distance of people who do not have access to off-street parking. Through Plug In Suffolk we have a history of successfully creating these EV charging community hubs, for example at the Coddendam Centre. We will now be able to create more sites like this, and working with parish councils and local groups makes the installations a real community effort.

This project contributes to Suffolk's commitment to be Net Zero by 2030. The Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan identified that decarbonisation of vehicles in Suffolk was a key aspect of meeting that target.

September 2022

Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership rolls out ANPR devices to target speeding motorists

Speeding motorists are to be targeted with a mobile number plate recognition system to be rolled out across Suffolk.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) will be rotated around sites where there is a problem with speeding or rat-running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

The devices, 10 in total, will display the speeds of drivers to them as they approach, encouraging them to slow down.

If they continue to ignore the speed limit the ANPR camera will take a picture of them and record the date, time, speed, vehicle registration and a photo of the vehicle.

In certain cases, persistent offenders will be reported to Suffolk Constabulary and, while no one will be prosecuted as a direct result of the devices, they may be visited by a police officer who will speak to them about their driving.

The information shared with the police may also influence the deployment of speed enforcement vans to problem areas.

This project is part of the Suffolk Roadsafe Partnership between Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Constabulary.

Suffolk County Council provided £400,000 from the 2020 Fund to support a two-year trial.

A grant of £30,000 has also been awarded by the Road Safety Trust to evaluate the project and establish whether the camera scheme is effective in reducing speeding.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

Speeding traffic is a danger to everyone and a blight on the community it passes through. This scheme tackles this problem by reminding drivers that they need to slow down - and if they don't, they can expect to be contacted and told their driving is unacceptable. If it makes motorists reflect on how fast they drive and understand the need to slow down, then it has done its job.

Tim Passmore, Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk, said:

As a member of Suffolk Roadsafe I am very pleased to support this County Council initiative to improve road safety across the county. Speeding is one of the main issues the public raises with me, so anything we can do to remind drivers to keep to the speed limit is to be applauded.

October 2022

£7.8 million redevelopment of
Foxhall Recycling Centre to begin

Work on a major expansion of the Foxhall Recycling Centre near Ipswich is set to begin.

RG Carter Ltd has been appointed by Suffolk County Council as contractor for the £7.8 million project, with work scheduled to start on October 17.

The new design will increase capacity for cars on site, reduce queuing and improve access from Foxhall Road, and provide greater capacity to meet future growth.

The site will have a raised level construction, giving better access to the containers for users without the need for stairs.

Containers can also be emptied without the need to close the site.

The funding includes £794,414 from East Suffolk Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy collected from new housing developments in the East Suffolk area.

Work is scheduled to complete in early 2024 and the site will remain open to the public during construction.

RG Carter will work alongside [Concertus Design and Property Consultants](#) on the scheme.

The project will be conducted in phases to keep the centre operational throughout the build, but at certain times this may result in fewer booking slots being available to the public.

The Re-use shop will change location in the new layout and will need to be closed for a period early next year to allow this to take place.

The project will also see the installation of a feeder lane from Foxhall Road, making access into the site safer.

Of the 11 recycling centres around the county Foxhall accounts for 19% of recycling and waste, collecting more than 12,500 tonnes a year.

Councillor Richard Smith, Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said:

This is a significant investment in Foxhall recycling centre that will bring benefits to its users for many years to come. Whilst the centre will remain open during work this will be a complex project which will, inevitably, result in some disruption at times, so I would ask the public to be patient while improvements are being made. Foxhall is the busiest recycling centre in the county, so once complete this really will be a flagship site for Suffolk residents.

Councillor James Mallinder, East Suffolk Council's cabinet member for the Environment, said:

We are committed to making it as easy as possible for residents to dispose of their waste correctly, so it is fantastic to see Community Infrastructure Levy funds – which we collect from developers - support these essential improvements. Once completed, the work will help ensure the site is more user-friendly, accessible, and safe for everyone. Caring for the environment is one of East Suffolk Council's priorities and making the right choices when it comes to disposing of our waste makes a really positive contribution towards dealing with our climate concerns.

For more details about the scheme go to the [Suffolk Recycling website](#).

Next round of new SEND places agreed by Cabinet

The Council's Cabinet has this afternoon agreed a new wave of funding to continue its programme to provide places for children and young people with SEND.

The £3million agreement marks the start of Phase 3 of the Capital Programme to create three additional specialist units providing 42 additional places for students with special educational needs and disabilities. This follows Phase 1 of the programme which created 825 new places across Suffolk and Phase 2, which was signed off in June 2022, and will create up to 73 new places.

So far, £45million has been allocated by Suffolk County Council to deliver the new places for Phase 1 and Phase 2 - £15million of which has been provided by the Department for Education.

In addition, Cabinet also agreed to support the Department for Education's High Needs Provision Capital Funding (HNPCF) for 2023/24 of £7million to be spent on the development of units attached to mainstream schools to support students with social, emotional and mental health problems and speech, language and communication needs. This will create up to 168 new spaces, and is an addition to previous funding agreed from the Department for Education in 2022/23 for up to 78 new places.

The third item signed off today was Cabinet's support for the application for funding for two free schools from the Department for Education. One of these will be in east Suffolk and support

children with severe learning difficulties and the second will be built in Sudbury for those with autistic spectrum disorder and complex social, emotional and mental health problems. If the bids are successful, both schools will teach children and young people from across Suffolk.

In total, Suffolk will deliver up to 1,317 new places for children and young people with SEND by 2025/26.

Rachel Hood, Cabinet member for Education, SEND and Skills at Suffolk County Council, said:

We are seeing a continued increase in demand for specialist places for children and young people with SEND in Suffolk and it is vital we continue to stay ahead of this increased demand. I have seen first-hand the positive impact that these units have for children with additional needs, and their families.

The next step for Phase 3 is for schools across Suffolk to express an interest in having a specialist unit and, following these expressions of interest, the most suitable sites will be chosen. This programme for improved provision is informed by the SEND Sufficiency Plan 2022-25.

New special schools opened in Suffolk include Castle EAST, a communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

November 2022

[£2.5 million saved on energy costs as LED streetlight project nears completion](#)

A project with the aim of replacing all 43,400 streetlights across Suffolk with sustainable, longer-lasting, and cost-saving LED bulbs nears completion.

It has saved more than £2.5 million pounds so far.

The change to LED streetlights supports Suffolk County Council's aim to reduce carbon, light pollution, and bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the council, all whilst providing the best value to residents.

It was expected that the council would reduce costs by around 76%, however, the target was exceeded, with 77.64% savings made to date.

In June 2021, Bouygues Energies and Services were announced as the partner to deliver the project to upgrade 43,400 Suffolk streetlights with new, reduced energy LED lanterns. The total number of upgraded streetlights is currently at 40,692 excluding any of the Ipswich Borough

Council, or Town/Parish council owned streetlights. There are approximately 1,700 upgrades outstanding, which includes any remaining heritage lantern upgrades. It is hoped that around 1200 of the remaining lanterns will be completed by the end of the year.

Prior to the commencement of the project, Suffolk Highways contacted towns and parishes to provide them with the opportunity to have their parish-council owned street-lighting upgraded at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns are also being upgraded as part of the project.

The upgrade of the lighting system will include a further rollout of SCC's central management system which will allow lights to be switched on or off and dim individual or groups of lights.

This smart technology will increase the control the council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs. The system will also automatically flag any lights that are not working which reduces the need for night-time inspections.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

It has been very exciting to see the incredible progress made on the LED streetlight replacement over the past 15 months. Our partner contractor, Bouygues has shown such resilience throughout which has resulted in a very well-managed programme and successful project. The shift over to these new LED lanterns has enabled the council to save a considerable amount on energy costs and supported our organisation's ambition to become carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. I would like to extend my congratulations and thank you to all those working on this project and ensuring its resounding success. I look forward to seeing its continued positive impact in the coming years as we reap the benefits of stronger, cheaper and more environmentally friendly streetlights.

Suffolk County Council adopts new Streets Guide for building more sustainable, people-first developments

Ground-breaking new guidelines for developers to help them design sustainable and low-carbon neighbourhoods have been launched by Suffolk County Council.

The [Suffolk Design: Streets Guide](#) is the first document of its kind to prioritise walking and cycling in the routes people will use - and the infrastructure required to make them safe and attractive - over the needs of private vehicles.

The guide can also be used by highway engineers, drainage engineers and Public Rights of Way officers in responding to planning applications and in the technical review and approval of new highways infrastructure.

While not compulsory, the guide has been prepared with Suffolk's other authorities using [government policies, guidance and best practice](#).

It replaces the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas, last updated in 2000, and has been drawn up with [Stantec – a global leader in sustainable design and engineering](#).

In 2019, every local authority in Suffolk declared or acknowledged a climate emergency.

The design of streets has a significant role to play in the reduction of carbon emissions by prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling and access to public transport, as well as managing the effects of flooding through effective sustainable drainage systems.

By placing greater priority on designing for people as pedestrians - whether wheeled or walkers - and cyclists, the council is contributing to its ambitions for reducing carbon.

Councillor Richard Smith, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Economic Development, Transport Strategy and Waste, said that as the authority responsible for public rights of way the council has an important role in helping the planning system support transition to a low-carbon future.

Streets are more than just routes to travel or park, they provide places to enjoy, where people meet and socialise, they define the character of our towns and villages and support how our utilities are provided underground to our homes and businesses. All these different elements need careful consideration as we look forward to a low carbon future and adapt to climate change, so in this context, a street design guide needs to be much more than a prescriptive guidance document. It needs to provide a basis for designers to interpret and deliver streets and places that reflect much broader objectives such as increasing social value, better accessibility, helping to achieve a low carbon future, ensuring better air quality and enhanced biodiversity.

Suffolk Archives receives national accreditation

Suffolk Archives Service has received its Provisional Archive Service Accreditation from The National Archives.

Representatives from The National Archives visited The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront on Friday 11 November, where they met staff from Suffolk Archives and were given a tour of the new archives and heritage centre building. The Hold is a partnership between Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk and was partly funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Members of partnership organisations, heritage groups and volunteers from across the county also attended the celebratory event, which showcased the work that has been achieved in transforming and diversifying the archives service.

The visit comes just over a year since the building was officially opened by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester and provided an opportunity for Suffolk Archives to be officially presented with their Provisional Archive Service Accreditation.

The accreditation defines good practice and agrees standards for archive services across the UK. It allows archive services to participate in a scheme supporting the ongoing development of their service against a nationally agreed standard.

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities said:

I am delighted that after being delayed by the pandemic, Suffolk Archives has now been officially presented with their certificate of Provisional Accreditation. Suffolk Archives preserves our local history so that people of all ages and backgrounds can discover more about their heritage, and this national accreditation formally recognises the important work they do.

New scheme ‘Multiply Suffolk’ to offer adults a chance to improve their numeracy skills

A new initiative named Multiply Suffolk, which will offer adults an opportunity to improve their numeracy skills, has launched in Suffolk.

The scheme is for those who do not already have a GCSE grade C/4 or higher in Maths or equivalent.

Adults can sign up for free courses and activities including Money Management and Numeracy for Parents/Carers. Unaccredited, informal learning as well as Level 1 and Level 2 accredited learning is available to residents on either a part-time or intensive basis and are offered in flexible settings to fit around people’s lives.

Multiply Suffolk has been created thanks to a £3.7m government investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund aimed at boosting opportunities for more people to progress and secure well-paid jobs. SCC’s Multiply Suffolk Team will work with subcontractors Realise Futures and Menta to deliver the scheme.

Councillor Rachel Hood, Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills said:

This is an exciting new initiative that will help adult learners across the county. The scheme is aimed at improving numeracy skills, and it has been widely shown that people who improve their numeracy skills are more likely to be in employment, have higher wages and have better mental well-being. We are pleased to be delivering Multiply Suffolk alongside Realise Futures and MENTA and I hope that adults in Suffolk take full advantage of the scheme.

Multiply Suffolk was officially launched during the adult learning engagement event at Trinity Park, Ipswich on 9 November 2022.

For more information and/or to sign up for the scheme visit: <https://learnsuffolk.org/multiply-coming-soon/>

Funding awarded for projects to stop violence against Women and Girls

Almost £300,000 of funding has been allocated to six new projects which aim to support victims and prevent violence against Women and Girls.

At the beginning of 2022 Suffolk, launched its [Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy for 2022-2025](#).

Alongside the strategy, Suffolk County Council released more than £350,000 of funding, to be allocated across two phases, so that bidding organisations could help progress the aims and ambitions that had been identified in the Strategy including preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system.

The fund has been administered by the [Suffolk Community Foundation](#) with all decisions carefully considered and made by the county's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Steering Group. The VAWG Steering Group includes representation from Police, Police & Crime Commissioner, Health, County Council, District & Borough Councils, Anglia Care Trust, Probation and representatives for Voluntary & Community Sector organisations representing victims and survivors.

The VAWG Steering Group are pleased to announce that the following organisations have been successful organisations and three-year projects have been awarded as follows in phase one:

Families Together Suffolk - To provide 1:1 emotional support through the keeping safe programme. The programme also offers practical support around patterns of domestic abuse and forming healthy future relationships. Families Together Suffolk (FTS) also run a Dads Group which allows them to build trusting relationships with those who attend and start conversations as men often have abusive partners too. Visit [Families Together Suffolk to find out more](#).

Fresh Start - new beginnings - To reach children and young people who are slipping through the net. The request will pay for an outreach worker to raise awareness of sexual abuse, sexual violence and exploitation of children and young people with staff and managers of supported accommodation, children's homes, and education facilities. In addition to this, Fresh Start New Beginnings will run workshops with CYP and families to raise awareness and help through the disclosure process. Visit [Fresh Start new beginnings to find out more](#).

Lighthouse Women's Aid - Grant request towards a newly developed children and families service for women and children suffering Domestic Abuse. The programme includes advice sessions (including legal, debt and child contact arrangements); Emotional Literacy Support Assistants; Stronger families' programme. Visit [Lighthouse Women's Aid to find out more](#).

Suffolk Law Centre - The grant will help to fund a caseworker, supervisor, and paralegal to support domestic abuse survivors in Suffolk to access legal advice and representation. Visit the [Suffolk Law Centre website to find out more](#).

Terrence Higgins Trust - This grant will expand current Relationships and Sex Education service for children and young people to tackle VAWG problems through six, eight or twelve week programmes, one off workshops, weekly zoom meetings and drop-in clinics at schools and pupil referral units. The sessions will focus on healthy relationships, wellbeing, consent, empowerment, safety planning, signposting, support, and information. In addition to this, there will be professional training around these topics including online safety, safety planning, how to support young people in abusive relationships. Visit [Terrence Higgins Trust to find out more](#).

The Mix Stowmarket - To expand the diadem project; a group of up to 12 young people aged 13-23 where topics are discussed, including healthy friendships, the fine line between banter and bullying, safe romantic relationships, spotting the signs of exploitative relationships, coercion, consent, and body image. The project aims to increase confidence and self-esteem and will be offered to females, non-binary people, people with special educational needs, those from LGBTQIA+ community and the programme will be developed and offered to males to recognise their role in VAWG. The mix will also develop posters, short films (for use in schools and other venues) and 121 support. Visit [The Mix Stowmarket to find out more](#).

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, said:

It is so important that many valuable projects will be supported through this fund. I have no doubt that they will succeed in making a difference to those that need it throughout the lifetime of the current strategy and its objectives. This is another positive step in our efforts to prevent Violence Against Women & Girls in Suffolk.

Successful projects for phase two funding will be announced in January 2023. Suffolk's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for 2022 – 2025 can be viewed on the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

December 2022

Historic half a billion pound devolution deal hands Suffolk regeneration and skills powers to level up

A landmark devolution deal, which puts money and power over building, regeneration and skills into the hands of leaders in Suffolk will be signed today.

Suffolk will be devolved power over their Adult Education budget, so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of the local community and will receive immediate support to

build new affordable homes on brownfield sites, as well as more capital funding to improve energy efficiency in houses.

The deal will also see Suffolk County Council handed control over a £480 million investment fund – this will be guaranteed for the next thirty years. This will enable the county to drive growth and plan for the long-term with certainty as it looks to level up and unlock its full economic potential.

Suffolk will also get a directly elected leader of the council. This not only provides a single person who is accountable to the people of Suffolk but gives the county a local champion who can attract investment and be a stronger voice in discussions with central government.

The Levelling Up Secretary will today attend a ceremony in Bury St Edmunds with Cllr Matthew Hicks to officially sign the deal. Michael Gove will also visit Norfolk to sign a devolution agreement with Norfolk County Council, which will transfer further money and power out of Whitehall. The deals follow Cornwall Council who just last week signed their own devolution deal with the government, unlocking powers and long-term funding of £360 million.

With three new devolution deals signed in the last seven days, 50% of England will now be covered by a devolution deal and reaffirms the government's commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to offer a devolution deal to any area that wants one by 2030.

The deal also sets out the government's plans to devolve more power to Suffolk County Council through:

- **Investment:** It will bring decades of funding worth £480 million to improve the lives of Suffolk's residents and spend on their local priorities.
- **Housing:** The deal will provide £5.8 million to regenerate brownfield land into beautiful, affordable homes and drive economic growth across the area; Suffolk will also receive greater compulsory purchase powers.
- **Education:** The agreement devolves the Adult Education Budget so they can shape provision in a way that best suits the needs of residents and the local Suffolk economy.
- **Transport:** An integrated transport settlement starting in 2024/25, to support the area to improve key transport infrastructure priorities.
- **The Environment:** The new deal will help Suffolk deliver on its ambitions to be the country's greenest county with £3 million to improve energy efficiency in homes.

Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove, said:

I said we would give devolution deals to all that wanted them and today we are keeping that promise by putting power into the hands of the people who know best what Suffolk needs so they can level up the county and unleash its full economic potential.

It is now people in places like Ipswich, Felixstowe and Newmarket who will have a greater say on how their areas are run. Because we know important decisions are best taken by those who know their areas inside out, not by those many miles away in Whitehall.

This new deal will empower leaders in Suffolk to shape policies and direct spending to address issues that are unique to them, and I will commit to working with them even further to help drive through that change.

Cllr Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

This devolution deal is the first of its kind between the Government and a county council, making it a truly historic moment for Suffolk. The deal recognises Suffolk’s ambitions, would put more powers in the hands of local people and bring more than half a billion pounds of investment into the county.

On the table are greater decision-making powers around transport, infrastructure, skills and more resources to help us achieve our net zero ambitions. Ultimately, this significant additional investment will improve the lives and outcomes of Suffolk’s residents.

Devolution is a journey, not a one-off event. This deal for Suffolk is the first step towards an exciting future for our great county.

These deals are just the first steps in transferring power away from Whitehall into areas that want them. The East Anglian agreements mean that six of 13 places invited to negotiate devolution deals in the Levelling Up White Paper have now signed agreements with government. Suffolk and Norfolk join Cornwall – who signed their own deal just last week - York and North Yorkshire, and the East Midlands who have already signed devolution deals this year - these deals equate to another five million being covered by a devolution deal in 2022 alone.

The deal is now subject to local consultation, a council resolution to change their governance model so that electors directly elect the council leader, and elements, such as the transfer of new powers, require parliamentary approval to secondary legislation. The deal envisages the election of a directly elected leader in May 2024. Subject to the passing of the relevant measures in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, Suffolk and Norfolk would call the directly elected person the “elected leader” of the County Council.

[Proposed agreement for a devolution deal between the government and Suffolk County Council \(gov.uk\)](#)

January 2023

Council to protect frontline services and increase funding in budget proposal

Adult care services and children’s services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council’s £685m budget proposals, published today.

Adult care services and children's services will receive £47m more funding as part of Suffolk County Council's £685m budget proposals, published today.

Despite an incredibly challenging economic climate, the council has been able to produce a balanced budget. This will protect the services that people rely on the most and continue to care for the most vulnerable, which accounts for 75% of the whole budget.

Adult care services will have £34m more in their budget, and children's services will have a further £13m. This will help with the extra expense needed to meet the huge increase in demands for services, as well as higher costs due to inflation.

The budget-setting has been achieved with input from the council's partners, officers, departments and notably, Suffolk residents. Over 2,600 local people contributed to an online survey and focus groups, asking where they would spend more money, spend less money, and their views on Council Tax.

The top service areas where people wanted to spend more, were social care services for adults and children.

Some of the service areas where people also said they wanted to see more money spent, will receive additional funding:

- £700,000 for SEND services to support new recruitment, which is on top of the £1.1m invested this year
- £500,000 for Highways: to use environmentally friendly weed treatments, and stop using glyphosate which can damage wildlife
- £110,000 for tree management: to support the 'right tree right place' policy, having an appropriate inspection regime and supporting the resulting tree management requirements.
- £45,000 for Citizens Advice: to support work during cost of living challenges

A budget gap for next year - the difference between what money is available and what needs to be spent - had already been identified, resulting in savings of £15.5m for next year.

Under the proposals, the council's budget would increase by 9.6% (from £625.3m to £685.3). Additional funds would come from a total 3.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in funds from the Government for adult and children's social care.

Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 3.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 2.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

This means costs for a household would look like:

- Band B property: £22.32 per week (85 pence per week increase from 2022-23)
(Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)
- Band D property: £28.70 per week (£1.10 pence per week increase from 2022-23)

The proposed budget will be discussed at the council's Scrutiny meeting on 10 January 2023, then presented at the Cabinet meeting on 24 January, with the final budget debated and voted on at Full Council on 9 February.

The Scrutiny meeting will be available to stream on [Suffolk County Council's YouTube channel](#), and public questions can be submitted in advance, details available at www.suffolk.gov.uk

Read [papers for the SCC Scrutiny meeting on 10 January 2023 here](#).

Council's net zero plans making progress

Suffolk County Council has reduced its carbon emissions by 15% (or 4,000 tonnes CO2e) in the last two years, on its ambitious journey to net zero by 2030.

The council has been keen to lead from the front with its ambition to reduce its own emissions and energy costs, while inspiring and supporting others to do the same.

It is one of only a few local authorities in the country to publish a 'Carbon Budget'. This looks in detail at its environmental impact, to identify actions and costs needed to reduce emissions.

Calculating the council's carbon emissions is a complex process. Papers released last month, ahead of a Council Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 January, explain the work that the council has been doing in the last year, as it works towards net zero by 2030.

The council is reducing the emissions that it is directly responsible for, following a £12.8m 'spend to save' investment to decarbonise its buildings, making them more energy efficient and cheaper to run.

Changes it is making include moving its small vehicle fleet to fully electric by 2025, it has upgraded street lighting across the county, changed to a renewable electricity tariff, and is increasing the number of solar panels across its estate.

But one of the elements that will determine the council's progress to net zero, is the ambition shown by the businesses in its supply chain. Although these are not carbon emissions directly produced by the council, its suppliers and contractors still affect the council's target.

The Carbon Budget will be presented at a Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 January, and will then be discussed at the Full Council meeting on 9 February 2023.

More information on support available to businesses and residents can be found at www.greensuffolk.org

February 2023

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 CRMP to Cabinet to seek approval for its adoption from April 2023.

The plan 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.

Jon Lacey, Chief Fire Officer for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, said:

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has a fantastic reputation both regionally and nationally, as demonstrated by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recently rating us as "Good" for our effectiveness and well we manage staff.

Our new CRMP will allow this great work to continue, with it identifying risk and how we can reduce this to ensure that Suffolk is a safe and healthy place to live.

The document also considers emerging challenges for our county, including an increase in wildfires and floods as a result of climate change, helping us to plan ahead and remain a resilient service that is there for you when you need us most.

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

Duke of Marlborough, Somersham
Update for Somersham Parish Council, May 2023

Introduction

The Duke of Marlborough reopened in April 2017, having been bought by the local Community; we have therefore now been trading for more than 6 years. While the pub is increasingly popular, we are still not back to the pre-Covid turnover, and we are still losing money, albeit at a much reduced rate.

We had to go back to Shareholders just before Christmas and raised about £14k in new Share Capital which enabled us to get through the Winter. We are very grateful for the continuing support of the Parish Council and have submitted a bid for some CIL money which focuses on reducing our energy consumption.

Opening Hours and Service Offer

We are currently open 5 days a week. Wednesday-Sunday.

- There is a drinks-only service on Wednesday.
- Food is available on Thursday quiz nights, and there is a monthly food truck on the third Thursday of the month. Other Thursdays are drinks-only.
- Food is available Friday, Saturday and Sunday
 - Friday – open from 4pm with a 6-7pm Happy Hour. Dinner service 6-8:30pm
 - Saturday – open 12-11pm but with breakfast on the first Saturday of the month. We offer lunch every Saturday from 12-2:30pm. (9-11am).
 - Sunday - open from 12-8pm with roasts available between 12 and 4pm.
- We have continued with the Friday/Saturday takeaway service.
- Kids eat for £1 is offered at the Friday and Saturday Dinner Service

We would like to open more, but this is constrained by staffing costs and lack of proven demand.

Activities and Events

We continue to offer an extensive programme of regular events as well as one-offs.

The regular events include:

- Wednesday Darts Night. This is very popular, we have 2 teams in a local league and host various competitions.
- A Monthly Book Club
- A wide variety of music
- Quizzes – now very popular, booking is essential.
- Film/Music quizzes
- Cocktail evenings (in the Birch Bar)
- Games night (Thursday) – slow to take-off

Special events such as:

- Beer Festivals
- Wine tasting
- Art Courses
- Discos
- Whisky tasting
- Halloween Party

- Valentine's Weekend
- Mothers Day
- St. George's weekend
- Themed food nights
- Wakes – a sad but important part of our role as a Community pub.

There are also major special events such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee (for which we acknowledge financial support from the Parish Council) and the Coronation weekend, both of which were very successful. We are also breaking new ground with a Eurovision party on the 13th May.

While we enjoy putting on events they involve a lot of work, and we really need to increase our core revenue so that events are just the icing on the financial cake.

Our Loyalty Scheme is still running but has been slow to take off.

Staffing

We continue to provide significant local employment with ~8 full and part-time staff. We regard providing a first employment/training opportunity for local young people an important part of our role. We have a loyal band of Volunteers but are always on the lookout for a few more.

Challenges

Neither we nor are customers are immune from the cost of living increases. Our input food costs have gone up significantly, and our electricity costs will go up dramatically in July which is why we are bidding for some CIL money.

We need to:

- reduce our electricity consumption
- improve profitability, especially the food margins
- increase turnover
- increase footfall
- reduce Staff costs.

Summary and Conclusions

We think we have done well just to still be here, unlike many pubs, although we will face some increased local competition from the revamped Limeburners and the Barking Fox reopening. The long-term survival of the pub will depend on our shareholders, and the wider local community, patronising the pub on a more regular basis.

We feel that the pub is increasingly the centre of the local community, and Somersham would be a lesser place without it. The sense of Community during the Coronation Weekend was palpable.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people:

- The Chef and Manager, Aaron and April Douglas
- The rest of the loyal staff
- Our Volunteers
- Our Customers
- Our Shareholders
- The Management Committee

We are very grateful for financial support from the following:

- Somersham Parish Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Power to Change
- The Plunkett Foundation

David Thorne

MC Chairman, Somersham Community Pub Ltd.

Somersham and District Community Shop May 2022 – May 2023

2022-23 has been a busy and successful year for the community shop in Somersham.

We were very happy to celebrate our 10th birthday celebrations throughout the month of July, with several different offers and competitions and a celebratory gathering to say thank you to all our volunteers, customers, suppliers and friends. This celebration was however also tinged with sadness, as it came at the same time that we had to unexpectedly say goodbye to one of the shop's strongest supporters, Janet Hodge, who passed away in early summer. Janet was an integral part of the development of a community shop in Somersham, and she stayed closely involved throughout its ten years of operation, as a volunteer, committee member, and a director, and we will be forever grateful to her.

In 2022, the shop found itself in need of new Directors, to ensure fair decision making and management. After a push to find new volunteers, Tom Robinson, Richard Toone and David Mayes all agreed to take on this role. The shop management committee feel strongly that it would be appropriate for a Parish Councillor to also be part of this team, to ensure a stronger connection and understanding between the two organisations, which are intrinsically linked.

We are proud of the fact that the shop in Somersham has been open for more than 10 years and are very happy that the last twelve months have seen the financial situation improve significantly. We now regularly cover our overheads each month and are in a much more secure and viable position, which is a great relief to all involved.

We believe this is, in part, thanks to a number of improvements that we have been able to make this year, including changing the position of some of the display units, purchasing new furniture (thanks to the East of England Co-op Lunch Club/Warm Hub fund, administered by Suffolk Community Foundation), and extending our opening hours to 9am – 4pm every week day, with the addition of two early morning 8am openings (Monday and Thursday), and a 6pm close on a Thursday.

We have been pleased to boost our reliable volunteer base with several new faces throughout the year, which has helped with extending our hours. We regularly approach potential new volunteers and will continue to do so, as even with these new additions, we still struggle to confidently cover the hours we are open, particularly in 'holiday season'.

We have continued to expand our product ranges, which has also contributed to higher and more frequent footfall. In addition to developing existing ranges such as our specialist cheeses, during 2022-23 we have welcomed a number of new suppliers including Suffolk Fresh strawberries, Pinney's of Orford and Lane Farm cooked meats (via our cheese supplier), Chalky Bottom Orchard cider and vinegar, Oak House Farm butchers, Tosier chocolate, Helen Maxfield prints and cards, and frozen ready meals from The Walnut Tree at Thwaite.

We have introduced a 'gift corner', featuring Fleece to Feet's handmade slipper socks, beeswax candles, melts and other items from uMeltz (made using the wax from the same bees whose honey we sell), novels by Coddensham-based author Tom Boles and books by other local writers, and prints and greetings cards from several local artists and craftspeople. We have also developed a relationship with local florist, Pollen and Petals, who provided a selection of bouquets for Mother's Day and who are happy to take orders via the shop for bouquets and other arrangements.

With the agreement of the Somersham & District Community Association we have arranged for Paul Biggs, a Lowestoft fishmonger, to add Somersham to his weekly Friday afternoon round. This has proved popular so far and is seeing the added benefit of bringing more customers into the shop.

The shop is very much a community hub, and we are pleased to support local events and activities, such as the church's Christmas Tree festival, and to advertise through our events diary, our noticeboards, and our social media presence, as well as being a ticket sales point for local events.

We have a good relationship with Somersham School and during 2022 we were pleased to have the opportunity to display artwork produced by the children – first their jubilee bunting, and then Christmas drawings. We were also pleased to welcome 30 pupils from Key Stage 1 for a school outing recently, as part of their learning about fruit and vegetables in their Green Fingers topic.

We are very pleased to work alongside the Rural Coffee Caravan (RCC) and to have been part of their warm spaces campaign, offering a warm and friendly welcome whenever we are open, to anyone who needs us. Our Meet up Monday and Petrol Heads sessions have restarted after the break due to Covid and are well supported. We now participate in four of the RCC's activities and campaigns – Meet up Mondays, c-a-f-e (coffee and friends' events), More Than A Shop, and Warm Spaces, as well as promoting the regular visits to Somersham by the Rural Coffee Caravan itself. In addition to these events, the Suffolk Libraries van also visits monthly.

Each year, we are a collection point for Christian Aid Week and the Poppy Appeal, we join in with the annual Macmillan coffee morning, and we are pleased to support our own volunteers fundraising efforts for example displaying plants, jams and chutneys to raise money for a variety of charities. We have also introduced a Food Bank Collection Point for Ipswich based charity, FIND (products do not have to be purchased in the shop to be donated), and a Battery Recycling Point.

We have more ideas and plans for further improvements and developments to the shop for the future, including introducing more new products, redecorating the interior, installing solar panels (dependent on funding), resurfacing the car park (dependent on funding), sourcing new signage, and making further display improvements.

We hope that the members of the Parish Council will continue to support the shop, with financial support from the CIL fund, but also with their custom and time. We would love you to come in and see for yourselves how things have changed, and for you to encourage your friends, family and neighbours to do the same!

Report to the Parish Council, 2023

The LINK magazine has continued to be produced throughout the year, with the usual double editions in August-September and December-January. We are pleased that Somersham School continue to take up our competition for the Christmas cover picture.

Our chief source of funding is from advertisers but we have also received donations from some regular contributors and organisations, including the generous support of the Parish Council, and are very grateful for this. Printing costs, like everything else, are going up and each issue, depending on size, currently costs approximately £400. Our current print run totals 800 copies, including the new housing development. The LINK is distributed to every house in Somersham and 3 neighbouring villages, plus several mailed copies where past residents are glad of this means of keeping in touch with local events and are happy to pay the postage for it.

The magazine distributors - 10 in our village - and editorial team are all volunteers, who are pleased to be able to help this community outreach and communication to continue into the future.

Kate Dines,
Chair of committee

Parish Council AGM 2023 – Report from St. Mary’s Church PCC

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) continues to support Rev. Daniel Harrison in managing and maintaining the Church of England presence in the village, including providing for the spiritual needs of the population and maintaining the historic building. In addition to our regular services the church conducts baptisms, weddings and funeral services when required.

Dan is responsible for 8 parishes in all. As a result, we perhaps don’t see as much of him in Somersham as we would like but his telephone number and email address are included on the back cover of the Link magazine each month so anyone can contact him if they want/need to.

Everyone is welcome at our services and we regularly hold 2 per month; a communion service at 9.30am on the second Sunday and a less formal ‘Family Service’ at 10am on the 4th Sunday. Details are published in the Link magazine. Attendance at the regular services is generally quite low but loyal and enthusiastic. Rather more people attend the ‘big’ services such as Harvest Festival and Carol Service and our Service of Remembrance which we share with the Baptist Church.

It’s not all about services and any church needs to be outward looking which we try to do in a number of ways. In addition to normal ‘Sunday collections’ we benefit from, amongst other things, gifts given at special services such as Harvest and the Christmas Toy Service. These are passed on to charitable organisations (in our case, usually the Women’s Refuge charity ‘Lighthouse’). In recent years, some members of the church have also tried to brighten Christmas for some of the most hard pressed families with a small gift. Further afield, we play our part in the annual ‘Christian Aid Week’ (this year’s is next week) when invitations to contribute to this very worthwhile cause are issued via the ‘Link’ with a number of collection points in the village.

We have also continued to maintain links with the school through our regular (weekly) ‘Open the Book’ sessions in which members of a team drawn from both St. Mary’s and the Baptist Church read and explain bible stories to the children. The children always seem to enjoy these sessions and we are grateful to the school for continuing to allow us to do this. This year, we also managed to organise an after school ‘Easter workshop’ which was well attended and enjoyed by those who came along. Children from the school are also welcomed into the church from time to time to support the RE curriculum.

We are very grateful to people in the village for the support that they give to our fund raising activities throughout the year. Even so, we continue to struggle to meet all of the costs of the day to day running expenses and are once again very grateful to the Parish Council for their generous help towards the cost of maintaining the churchyard. We hope that you will be able to continue this support in the future.

Every 5 years, the church is subject to a ‘quinquennial’ inspection into its physical condition and measures are identified to ensure that it remains in a good and safe condition. A number of repairs to items classed as ‘category A’ (the most urgent) have recently been completed and we are again grateful to those who have given financial support, including Suffolk Historic Churches Trust and the Russel Quinton Trust.

We are currently looking at the possibility of laying on water to the church, having raised a sum of money for the purpose. This will necessarily have to be done in stages as funds become available.

Steve Dines
7th May 2023

Somersham Baptist Church Parish Council Report 2022,23

Our Sunday congregation averages 23 people, half from the village, half from outside. Sadly there are no primary school children attending, we have two teenagers, we could do with more in their twenties and thirties.

In 2022 giving was a healthy £35000, some of which was designated for the refurbishment project, nearly £4000 was passed on to other Christian Ministries.

Like many other Churches we use courses produced by the director of Evangelism at All Souls, Langham Place, London. 'Christianity Explored' introduces Jesus, who he is, why he came and what he asks for. 'Life Explored' examines the character of God from Genesis to Revelation and shows in giving us Himself it is the best gift we can ever receive. We have hosted these course both in the Duke of Marlborough and at the Chapel. Last year we were able to baptise two mature people from the village who have come to believe and joined us in membership.

It has been like living out of a suitcase this year, yet thanks to the Village Hall, Church life has not been interrupted, but it is nice to back now. We have a nice shiny new exterior to our buildings and the more environmentally friendly interior that should make it more pleasant in winter (and quieter for our neighbours). The total cost should be in the region of £55 000. We have been able to make use of grants and an interest free loan and people have been most generous in their giving.

Friends and Neighbours has suffered most from the refurbishment, now we have settled back we hope numbers will pick up.

Lunch and Listen has been unaffected by the building work, we regularly get 11 guests who do not attend church or chapel.

We continue to look for mature Christians to start a new children's ministry, and also for mature and gifted Christian workers to join our four church officers in leading the Church.

Mark Newcombe (Pastor)

SOMERSHAM & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
The Pavilion, Somersham Playing Field

May 2023 report

The Community Association is very pleased to say that the activities on the playing field are being well attended.

The shed purchased last year to assist with the storage issue is extremely useful. This is being used by the Youth Club and the football teams.

The Football Youth session on Saturday mornings are always very popular, even when it is pouring with rain! The senior Football teams are doing well with the 1st team placed near the top of the 1st division. The Youth Club is now well established with excellent attendance and will be restarting on May 11th. They now have a usual attendance of around 30 children.

The bridge access to the playing field near the car park has now been replaced.

A separate committee has been looking at refurbishment/replacing the play equipment. A new piece of equipment has been chosen by the pupils of Somersham School. A preferred supplier has been selected and applications have been made for grants for the new capital expenditure.

Anne Macfadyen
Secretary - Somersham & District Community Association

Somersham Wheelie Fun Day

The idea of a fundraiser was conceived by Terry Fordham in 2016 when an additional income stream was needed by the Somersham & District Community Association. It had been many years since the village had run a fete and it was felt that it would be good to give the community an event to enjoy and at the same time supporting the work of the Community Association.

Events were run in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2022 (two year break for Covid) which achieved funding for the Community Association of over £12,000. This funding contributed to several projects including bridge maintenance, shed storage, tree care and ensures that the Community Association has sufficient funds to cover the cost of running the playingfield.

The event has broad appeal and includes classic vehicle show, live music on our stage, local and commercial stalls, prize raffle, hot and cold food, traditional fete games and childrens entertainment, alcohol and soft drinks bars.

Wheelie's 2023 is on Saturday 8 July. A planning team of 12 people work hard over many months to create the event and are supported by volunteers on the day. We always want more volunteers on the day and so would welcome any councillors who would like to join us.

Terry Fordham
07733226898