

January 2025 Parish Report
East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

A very happy new year to those I haven't seen yet at parish council meetings. We have a very challenging year ahead of us. Devolution is one of the many issues we will have to deal with. As you know, we are waiting for the criteria to come from the government. Until we know more about possible boundary changes etc, I cannot answer questions you may have at the moment. That said, I think we can conclude that times of uncertainty are ahead!

Sizewell C are steaming ahead with groundworks in several parts of the district, I am told that their priorities for 2025 are both park and rides, the two-village bypass, the link roads and the green rail link. Final funding has still not been agreed and this will be reviewed in the spring. It seems unlikely that the project will not go ahead, at least for the time being....

In February, you will start to see our new Nature at Work signs around the district. The QR code takes you to our website and there will be a page dedicated to what the project is all about, updates etc. We are on the hunt for more sites and Groundworks East will be engaging with local schools and parish councils to expand and provide more sites for nature to thrive. Little Glenham and Ufford parish council have already expressed an interest in providing possible sites/projects.

In Melton, travelling along Woods Lane you may have seen 4 large wooden planters on the verges of Hall Farm Road. The Bee Café planters will be planted up in March with pollinator friendly plants from Katies Garden and rare native plants grown at Maple Farm. The planters are the work of Paul Martin the project aims to allow Bees to feed as they follow the National Bee Line. Rachel Smith-Lyte and I are very pleased to be able to fund the Melton planters and look forward to seeing them in full bloom! The planters will also have places for amphibians to hide as well as added solitary bee hotels.

That's all for now.

I look forward to seeing you soon with more updates.

Sally

Trial scheme to divert unwanted household items to charity

Unwanted items collected through East Suffolk Council's bulky waste scheme are now being made available for reuse through a local charity.

A trial scheme is now underway in the north of East Suffolk which will enable East Suffolk Services Ltd, who collect bulky items on the Council's behalf, to divert items in good condition to the Benjamin Foundation. Items can then be sold through the charity's furniture and electricals store at Phoenix Enterprise Park in Lowestoft.

GLI Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk's cabinet member for the Environment said: "Diverting good quality furniture and household items collected via our bulky waste scheme to the Benjamin Foundation allows these items to be reused and repurposed. Many items collected through the scheme are in good condition with plenty of life left in them and so it is an excellent opportunity to prevent these items from going to incineration and instead prolongs their life. We are keen to promote a circular economy in East Suffolk and are encouraging residents to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible. As well as reducing waste, buying these pre-loved items is far cheaper than buying new and the proceeds go towards helping our local young people."

Paul Sinclair, Operations Manager at Ben's Social Enterprise said: "The Benjamin Foundation are excited to be supporting East Suffolk Council with their continued efforts to reduce waste and ensure items which can be reused find a new home. We have been overwhelmed by the support our new store at Phoenix enterprise park in Lowestoft has received, with hundreds of furniture and electrical items being sold in the first six months providing vital funds to further support our work supporting children, young people and families. We are on Facebook, so if you're not following us yet click like and ensure you keep up to date with new items, events instore and more information about how your purchase and donations can have a positive impact in your local area."

If successful, the scheme may be introduced in the south of East Suffolk in future.

The Benjamin Foundation is one of East Anglia's largest charities, focused on tackling youth homelessness, providing Early Years education, youth and family support, and emotional wellbeing and mental health services to children, young people and families.

The Benjamin Foundation also has re-use shops at the Foxhall and Bury St Edmunds Recycling Centres, which are operated by Suffolk County Council.

The Council's bulky waste service allows residents to dispose of up to three items for a fixed cost of £51.50, and includes the collection of sofas, beds, washing machines, televisions, cookers, bicycles and more. Additional items can be collected at £17.50 per item.

Council 'frustration' at Government response to energy project concerns

Councillors in East Suffolk have expressed frustration with the Government's unwillingness to discuss the cumulative impacts of delivering multiple, national energy projects affecting communities throughout the district and beyond.

In a letter sent to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero the Leader of East Suffolk Council, Caroline Topping, invited the Rt Hon Ed Miliband to see, first hand, the close proximity of a range of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the area or, at the very least, to begin a dialogue on the matter. She also expressed concerns about an apparent lack of project co-ordination, and the issues this raises.

However, in a three-line response to the letter, Cllr Topping was informed that the Secretary of State was too busy and no discussions would be considered.

GLI Cllr Tom Daly, East Suffolk's Cabinet Member for Energy Projects expressed the Council's deep frustration with the Government's lack of interest in the concerns of local communities. He said:

"East Suffolk is rapidly becoming the Energy Coast of the UK. Multiple NSIPs including new nuclear, multiple offshore wind landfalls and solar power sites are being developed. Therefore, the cumulative impacts, the problems they raise and how these are managed in the best interests of the environment and communities, should be of primary interest to the SoS.

"If host communities of these highly impactful developments are not to feel completely ignored by central government in the rush to hit targets, a commitment to understanding local concerns must be taken seriously. I appeal to the SoS to take advantage of this invitation to see the reality on the ground and show the respect our communities deserve."

In the letter, GLI Cllr Topping outlined East Suffolk's critical role in the nation's progress towards Net Zero, with projects already planned or under construction, contributing to an eventual estimated 30% of the country's electricity to be generated in, or pass through, our district.

However, she made it clear that local communities "are straining under the lack of a coherent strategy around these multiple NSIPs.

"While Sizewell C is under construction, two offshore wind farms (ScottishPower Renewables' EA1N and EA2) have been given planning consent to build three substations (ie two for ScottishPower Renewables and one for National Grid) just four miles away in the medieval hamlet of Friston. A further two interconnectors and one grid reinforcement (all National Grid) are in the planning stages, also looking to connect in the same village (LionLink and Sea Link)," she continued.

"If all are consented, LionLink and Sea Link will connect into the consented National Grid substation at Friston which, collectively with the two ScottishPower Renewables' substations, will be larger than the footprint of Wembley Stadium, taking their own cable routes, each with their own converter station and on their own timelines. Incomprehensibly, each developer holds their own project's consultations in isolation from the other projects and does not adequately take into account the cumulative impact of all of the other NSIPs.

"Since forming the administration in 2023, we have been calling for a pause in the chaotic planning process of these five projects and the case for a cost-benefit analysis of all the options available or, as a minimum, a government-led mandatory requirement for projects to work collaboratively to ensure the least amount of harm to the hosting community.

"I cannot emphasise enough the importance of this matter to our district and similarly affected communities across the country. I am sure we are in agreement that at this historic crossroads of doing things differently and better, a truly green and just transition away from fossil fuels requires a properly planned approach, where the costs to the developers are not borne by our communities and our already threatened environment."

East Suffolk's Amazing

We invest every single penny we can in services to help maintain the beauty and cleanliness of East Suffolk but sometimes admit that it can never necessarily be enough.

A cross-party working group of councillors is already working on different ways we can work to maintain the beauty of East Suffolk, which includes encouraging more residents to take active pride in their local area.

This includes reducing fly-tipping, recycling properly and even, where possible, looking after the spaces outside your own property. We are also working closely and collaboratively with Suffolk County Council who have responsibility for weeds on roads and pavements, potholes and road signs.

There is already an incredible network of volunteers who work to help keep our district beautiful, with regular litter-picks, planting, and an all-round effort to keep their local area clean. If East Suffolk matters to you, if you want to play your part, we would love you to get involved. East Suffolk's Amazing... let's keep it that way!

The Council will support local communities and groups by lending equipment for litter pick events, including hi-vis vests, litter pickers, bags and bag hoops. A range of information about how communities can get involved in schemes, as well as a range of tips and advice, can be found at: eastsuffolk.gov.uk/waste/litter/amazing/

East Suffolk photo competition – capture the amazing!

We're excited to announce the return of 'East Suffolk Through the Lens' – our popular photo competition which celebrates how amazing East Suffolk is.

From picturesque coastlines and charming villages to vibrant towns and tranquil nature reserves, East Suffolk is brimming with stunning sights just waiting to be captured.

Whether you're an experienced photographer or just love taking photos, this is your chance to showcase what makes our district such a special place to live, work and visit.

Your shot could win you high street vouchers worth up to £100 and may even feature on the cover of East Suffolk Magazine, which is delivered to thousands of households across East Suffolk. Entries close at 11:59pm on Thursday 30 January 2025. So, what are you waiting for? Submit your best photos now at: my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Photo_competition

Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

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

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

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

