



June 2018 Monthly Samford Division Newsletter

Councillor Matthew Hicks takes the helm at Suffolk County Council

On 24 May, Councillor Mathew Hicks was elected as the new leader of Suffolk County Council. Councillor Hicks has promised a new era of working in partnership and listening.

In a speech following his election, he pledged to work with district and borough councils, other public sector partners, businesses and residents to find the best ways of delivering services to the people that need them most.

He also confirmed Suffolk County Council's focus on major infrastructure including the Ipswich Northern Relief Road, A12 four village bypass (SEGWAY), Sudbury Relief Road, Beccles Relief Road, A1307, the A140 and A47 schemes and of course the Lowestoft Third Crossing and the Upper Orwell Crossings. Councillor Hicks stressed the need for a co-ordinated and strategic approach to bring these into the 30 plus year vision so there is clarity on how major infrastructure projects can be delivered when funding is so tight.

One of his first duties was to appoint the Cabinet who, with him, will be responsible for almost £500 million of public services each year.

Councillor Hicks will take personal responsibility for economic development and major infrastructure projects in addition to his leadership duties, and has appointed:

- Councillor Mary Evans as deputy leader and cabinet member for highways, transport and rural affairs
- Councillor Gordon Jones as cabinet member for children's services, education and skills
- Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger as cabinet member for adult care
- Councillor Richard Rout as cabinet member for environment and public protection
- Councillor Richard Smith as cabinet member for finance and assets
- Councillor James Reeder as cabinet member for health
- Councillor Paul West as cabinet member for Ipswich, communities and waste.

Councillor Hicks has reserved his ability to appoint a ninth cabinet member, pending a review of the new leadership arrangements.

Councillor Hicks has also appointed deputy cabinet members to support the delivery of the council's 2017-2021 priorities:

- Councillor Louis Busuttil as deputy cabinet member for highways strategy
- Councillor Alexander Nicoll as deputy cabinet member for transport
- Councillor Craig Rivett as deputy cabinet member for children's services
- Councillor Chris Chambers as deputy cabinet member for education
- Councillor David Ritchie as deputy cabinet member for adult care
- Councillor Robert Whiting as deputy cabinet member for property.

Councillor Hicks paid tribute to Councillors Colin Noble, Jane Storey, Tony Goldson and Robin Millar for the commitment they have given to their roles over the last few years.

Suffolk Waste Partnership trial litter campaign starts

On 30 May it was announced that 15 smart litter bins are about to be installed in trial locations across Suffolk to reduce littering on the county's trunk roads.

The customised bins are designed for roadside use with a lit sign saying 'Litter', a wider than usual aperture to make disposal of rubbish easier, bright orange bodies, reflective white signage and the clear message 'Keep Suffolk Beautiful'.

The illuminated word 'Litter' at the top of the aperture will be powered by a solar panel. The design aims to make the new litter bins more visible to any drivers using the trial laybys during the day and night.

The bins will also be fitted with new remote monitoring devices to help councils coordinate the emptying of these bins more efficiently and effectively. The devices will be able to monitor bin fill levels and will send an alert once a pre-set level has been reached so that they can be emptied at the most optimum time.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership's project is also asking local businesses to support 'Keep Suffolk Beautiful' by displaying banners and signs on fuel forecourts across the county.

More standard bins are also being installed as part of the campaign at other trial layby locations along the A11, A12 and A14 in Suffolk, to see if the increase in number and the type of litter bin provided results in less litter. New remote monitoring technology will also be installed in these litter bins.

Council to deliver 51 new affordable homes for low income families in rural community

On 22 May, it was announced that Suffolk County Council is looking to develop a 4.5 acre site which is owned as part of its County Farms estate in Cockfield village near Lavenham.

The plan is for 51 affordable homes to be built to offer local people on low incomes the opportunity to get on the housing ladder. This follows a decision on 21 March at Babergh District Council Development Control Committee which approved a planning application for such a development.

To do this the county council is planning to work closely with design and property partners to achieve a good financial return and delivery of homes for a range of people, with a particular focus on local needs. The development is expected to take around two years to complete.

By taking the lead on this project, the council can ensure the development delivers the proposed benefits for the local community in a timely fashion including provision for community space, powers to adapt local speed limits as required and improvements to local footpaths.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Finance and Assets, Councillor Richard Smith, said:

“We are a largely rural county and we want to see local rural communities thrive. We are treating this as a pilot project and as we move forward with this work, we may find other sites that offer similar potential opportunities to deliver the housing that's needed as our population continues to grow in the future.”

For commercial reasons, it is not possible to disclose the exact value of the land or the financial benefit. However, the decision to develop this land will bring a significant financial boost to the authority upon completion that will go some way to meeting the ongoing financial challenges faced by the authority as it continues to support the most vulnerable members of society.

The council will now progress plans for this project, working closely with industry partners and will continue to engage collaboratively with the local parish council.

More children get the free school meals they are entitled to

On 16 May, it was reported that four Suffolk councils have worked together to try to ensure more children get the free school meals they are entitled to.

Changes to the benefit system in the wake of the introduction of Universal Credit mean that some families are missing out.

The free school meals team at Suffolk County Council is urging parents and carers to apply for the meals – which could save a family more than £400 a year. In addition, each application could bring what is called Pupil Premium Funding to the respective school.

The school can decide how to spend this windfall – as much as £1,300 a year over six years for each extra child applying - and could use it to pay for more books, cut the price of school trips and uniforms or bring in more teaching aids.

The County Council has worked with Babergh and Mid Suffolk district councils and Ipswich Borough Council to identify the scale of the shortfall and to urge people to apply for what they are entitled to.

The Councils believe they have already encouraged 800 families to make new applications but want to reach out to even more.

The message is clear: your child could be entitled to free school meals from now until the end of the phase of education they are in at March 2022 if you receive certain benefits, regardless of any change of circumstances. Find out more at www.suffolk.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

Suffolk residents urged to sign up as Dementia Friends

OneLife Suffolk is asking local people to consider how they can support people with dementia by becoming a Dementia Friend. The campaign launch coincided with the National Dementia Action Week (15-21 May).

OneLife Suffolk is the free healthy lifestyle service commissioned by Suffolk County Council. Dementia Friends is an Alzheimer's Society Initiative which aims to give people a better understanding of what it means to live with dementia, through a short online training course.

There are an estimated 850,000 people currently living with dementia in the UK, which costs the NHS around £26 billion each year. The training offers advice and guidance about how simple lifestyle changes can reduce the risks of dementia, as well as inviting people to consider how they can support and improve the lives of those living with dementia.

OneLife Suffolk are working with GP practices, pharmacies and other local organisations across the county to spread the word and encourage people to sign up. The Dementia Friend training takes no more than 20 minutes to complete. For more information and to sign up as a Dementia Friend, visit <http://onelifesuffolk.co.uk/dementia2018/>

Suffolk Day 21 June 2018

Thursday 21 June is the annual celebration of all things Suffolk, with a variety of events being held across the county to show off everything Suffolk has to offer!

Get out and about on the longest day of the year and make the most of this beautiful county. From guided walks and treasure hunts to live broadcasts and competitions, there is something for everyone to enjoy and get involved with.

Go to <https://suffolkday.co.uk/> to find an event near you.

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