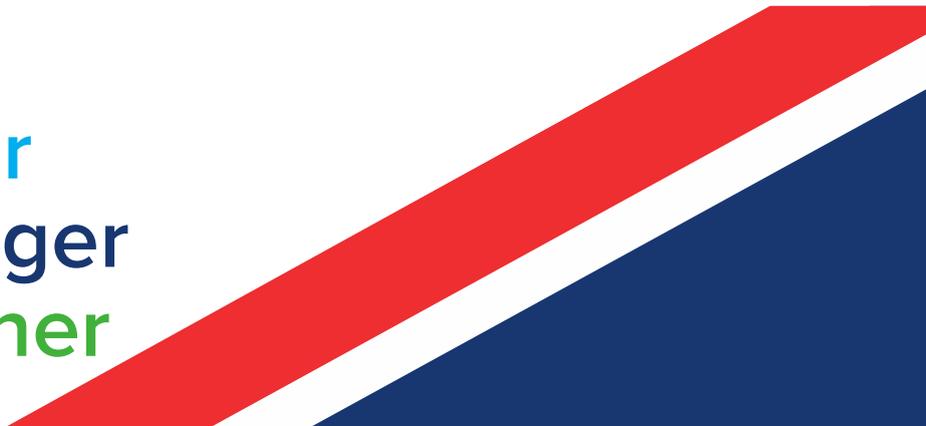


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# Samford Division Annual Newsletter Cllr Georgia Hall



Build Back **Better**  
Build Back **Stronger**  
Build Back **Greener**

*March 2021*

## **Automatic number plate recognition cameras to be installed in villages across Suffolk**

In March 2021, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner and Suffolk Constabulary, launched the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras.

The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras are being used to help detect and deter speeding offences that have been highlighted in Suffolk villages, and educate drivers on the importance of road safety.

An ANPR camera will be installed at a site where it has been identified by a parish council, with support from their county councillor, there is a problem with speeding and / or rat running on roads with a 20 or 30mph speed limit.

An ANPR camera will identify a speeding vehicle by capturing an image of the number plate of the vehicle. Data will then be shared with the Police and the County Council. The County Council will write to the owner of the vehicle on behalf of both parties explaining that their vehicle has been registered as speeding. Repeat offences at a particular location could prompt the deployment of speed enforcement vans and subsequent fines to those who breach the speed limit.

Ten ANPR cameras will be purchased and each one will remain in situ for up to one week per site. There is the option of extending this period if needed.

The project received funding from the Suffolk 2020 Fund, which is a programme of work all about investing in community projects and improving Suffolk for all residents now and in years to come. The funding secures the ANPR project for a two-year pilot where its impact to reduce speeding will be monitored before it receives a further financial commitment.

*April 2021*

## **99% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day**

In April 2021, 99.15% of children were offered a place at one of their parents' three preferred schools and 95% were offered a place at their first preference school.

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Suffolk County Council received 7207 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2021.

*May 2021*

## **Schools across Suffolk recognised for their efforts in encouraging active travel**

In May 2021, pupils from Great Barton Primary Academy and Stowupland High School were recognised for their efforts in encouraging active and sustainable travel.

The Pupils received Bronze Modeshift STARS accreditations for their efforts. Exning Primary School who first received a Bronze accreditation in 2019, became the first primary school in Suffolk to receive a Silver Modeshift STARS accreditation for their ongoing commitment and hard work.

- Great Barton Primary Academy – encouraging road safety, by working with local councils to relocate and promote the puffin crossing near the school. This includes designing new street signs and a Park & Stride campaign
- Stowupland High School – encouraging active and sustainable travel and road safety. A group of sixth form students set up a walking bus to help new Year 7 students build confidence walking to a new school
- Exning Primary School – received their silver accreditation for their ongoing hard work promoting sustainable travel, road safety and improving air quality outside the school gates by running an anti-idling campaign.

The Modeshift STARS Accreditation scheme encourages schools across England to implement their own travel plans to increase levels of sustainable and active travel in order to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. More information on Modeshift STARS can be found at – [www.suffolk.gov.uk/adviceontravel](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/adviceontravel) as well as top tips and advice on travelling to school.

The accreditations further support the county council's Let's make a change for the future campaign which is encouraging residents to consider more active and sustainable travel options during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid overcrowding the county's transport network, and longer term to experience the benefits of improved health and wellbeing, less congestion and cleaner air.

*June 2021*

## **Independent review of aspects of Suffolk's SEND services to be carried out**

It was announced in June 2021 that A multi-agency team from Lincolnshire will carry out an independent review into SEND provision.

The SEND (special educational needs and disability) review will focus on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of SEND services within Suffolk County Council. It will not look at specific cases or the provision given to specific children.

The review will start next week and will be completed within six weeks. The report, with any recommendations, will be published on Suffolk County Council's website, shared with those who contributed to it and also scrutinised, in public, by the council's Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

The review team from Lincolnshire will consist of two senior officers from Lincolnshire County Council, performance analysts and the chair of the county's parent carer network.

SEND services in Suffolk are delivered in partnership by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk's NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and education settings.

The review looked at:

- The effective flow of cases
- Communication with young people and families
- Processes for dealing with incoming enquiries from young people and families in a timely manner
- A focus on the family-facing elements of the service
- The allocation of provision and, where appropriate, placement in a timely way for children

Suffolk County Council is eager to work collaboratively and productively with the Campaign for Change group, and parents and carers not involved or represented by the group, to make improvements in SEND services.

*July 2021*

### **Suffolk County Council begins procurement process for next Highways Service contract focusing on developing local skills and talent**

In Early July 2021 Suffolk County Council began the process of finding its next long term Highways Services partner.

The council was looking for a partner to deliver key operational projects after the current contract ends on 30 September 2023.

As part of preparations up to this point, the council has 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 based on the range of outcomes the council wants to achieve from any new contract process.

The council is looking to develop a contract that utilises a blended 'hybrid' approach, enabling the council to enter into one contract that covers the majority of Highways Service functions and two contracts with specialist providers for streetlighting and traffic signals (ITS). The council will be looking for 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.

The whole contract development process will take just over two years to complete. Once the appropriate tender documents have been prepared outlining the council's requirements, initial advertisements will go out in December 2021. Discussions will begin with any interested prospective contractors in early 2022. Following such a rigorous tendering process, the council hopes to be able to award its chosen contract in early 2023 with the new service provider beginning in October 2023.

The procurement process needs to begin now to provide enough time to go to the market to seek relevant specialist companies which may be interested in tendering for the contract which is worth in the region of £800m - £1 billion over a projected 20 year period.

*August 2021*

### **Suffolk homeowners can cut carbon emissions as successful solar panel buying scheme returns**

It was announced in August 2021 that Suffolk residents can come together to invest in renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

Solar Together Suffolk, in conjunction with Suffolk County Council, helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on three years of the highly successful Solar Together programme run in Suffolk. Since 2018, the scheme has installed solar panel systems in 1,028 households across the county. On average, homeowners have saved 33% on installation costs, £263 on energy bills in year one, and stopped harmful carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Suffolk County Council brings [Solar Together Suffolk](#) to residents as part of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, on behalf of all of Suffolk's local authorities. This is in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. Across the UK, iChoosr has delivered almost 5,000 installations to date and over 80,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

*September 2021*

## **Suffolk's first 'healing woods' locations announced**

In September 2021, four locations were announced by Suffolk County Council as 'healing woods and spaces'.

They will offer people better access to nature and provide a positive legacy to the pandemic.

The healing woods and spaces will be located in:

- Bury St Edmunds
- Combs and Little Finborough
- Eye
- Hopton

The council's healing woods project connects with the motion unanimously passed by the county's councillors earlier this year, to commit to developing mental health support in Suffolk, in response to the impacts of the pandemic.

Research, such as that recently published by the University of Essex with The Green Light Trust, demonstrated that access to woodlands and green space can significantly improve people's wellbeing.

The four sites will develop unused spaces and existing green areas, to make them more accessible and offer dedicated places for peaceful reflection and a positive focus.

## **New Suffolk Recycling Centres online booking system improvements to deliver greater customer experience**

It was announced in September 2021 that Suffolk County Council has developed a new, more user-friendly booking system which enables residents to book slots for recycling.

For bookings from 27 September, people can view all available time slots in real time, to see which booking slots are free at any given moment. The system allows you to book up to seven days in advance. If circumstances change, you can easily cancel your slot up to one hour beforehand or equally, you can click to amend your booking if required.

The system is also able to advise customers on which sites accept specific materials, such as plasterboard to ensure the correct type of booking is made to save customers' time, and it can also be used to share real time messages with customers, for example if any site needs to close due to adverse weather or emergency situations. The new booking system is connected to automated numberplate recognition to allow for a trial of automatic entry gates.

Customer survey results show overwhelming support for the use of a booking system and the Council has gathered feedback from customers and site staff on how the booking system can be further improved, which have shaped the design of this new system. Through the use of bookings the council can avoid the frustration of long queues at peak times and increase the overall throughput and efficiency of the service for residents.

## **Rachel Hood, Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills at Suffolk County Council**

Published in September 2021:

I want to dedicate this column today to the situation with Suffolk's special educational needs and disabilities (known as SEND) provision.

I was newly elected in May to this Cabinet position and SEND became my first priority.

You will have seen coverage in today's paper about an Independent Report into our services. This report follows a review carried out by a team from Lincolnshire, including Lincolnshire County Council and a parent carer network, and was commissioned by ourselves after a significant increase in correspondents from concerned parents and carers earlier this year.

This wasn't a review of everything we do, but focussed on the processes, communication protocols and family-facing elements of our SEND services. I would like to share with you the outcomes and actions we are taking following publication of the review yesterday. The review has found that we must change what we are doing in a number of areas.

I would like to say sorry for the difficulties that some families have experienced as a result of how we have been doing things. We recognise that we have let down some children and young people as certain aspects of our services have simply not been good enough.

Our priority now is to implement wide-scale improvements, and to do this with pace, impact and efficiency. We have already started to make improvements to the way we do things and whilst, wide-scale improvement will take time, we are determined to make things better. There have been many positive changes to the way we deliver SEND services in the past 18 months and we are proud of these, but clearly there is some way to go.

The review made nine recommendations and we have used these to draft an action plan, which can be read online. One of the recommendations made in the review was to work with a third-party organisation to deliver improvements. The council has since secured Impower as a strategic partner, who will bring capacity and extensive experience of working on SEND systems across the country. This partnership work began yesterday. Other recommendations include staff training, reviewing the process for allocating specialist placements and working with education leaders and parents and carers to understand the demand for specialist provision and use of data and local intelligence to inform sufficient planning.

We have already made significant longer-term improvements within SEND, which we continue to build upon. We have agreed a £45.1m capital programme to create an additional 870 specialist education places over a 5-year period to 2024. Two hundred and ten places opened last year with a further 310 opening this academic year and includes new specialist schools in Bungay, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. We have also improved the time in which it takes us to issue Education Health and Care Plans from 18% in 2016 to 95% in 2021. £1million has also been invested into speech and language therapies by Ipswich & East Suffolk and West Suffolk CCGs.

At the moment, more than 6,000 children in Suffolk currently have a health and care plan to identify what support they need to help with their special educational needs. The number has nearly doubled from 3,000 in 2014. A further 12,000 pupils have special educational

needs and do not require a health and care plan. Currently, there are 2,000 places at either special schools or specialist units for those with more complex needs. We continue to increase the number of places.

Your children's education and welfare is fundamental – I fully recognise this as a parent myself. We want to work together to give your children and young people the very best chance in life.

We accept without reservation the findings of the review and are grateful to the Lincolnshire team for their attention to detail, professionalism and advice. We have learnt very valuable lessons from this review, and we will act on these recommendations in the best and quickest way.

You can [read the report and action plan here](#).

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the report or action plan please contact us via email at [SendReview@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:SendReview@suffolk.gov.uk)

*October 2021*

## **MPs from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex and County Councillors, unite to protect the countryside and communities from the worst impacts of new pylons and cables**

In October 2021, the Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) was set up to review and respond to the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR).

A new group of MPs from across the region, under the chairmanship of Sir Bernard Jenkin, and including County Councillors from the region, has been set up to ensure that the emerging proposals of the Government's Offshore Network Transmission Review (OTNR), and proposals to change the Nationally Significant infrastructure Planning regime, are effectively scrutinised.

The Offshore Electricity Grid Task Force (OffSET) supports the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050, and the aspiration to deliver 40GW of Offshore Wind, by 2030. However, this will result in a succession of electricity generation and connection projects in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, over the coming decades, which will have significant impacts on the environment and communities of the region.

The group believes that these ambitions and targets cannot be met, on an "at any cost" basis. Therefore, the further development of the onshore transmission system, and the connection of offshore wind farms, and interconnectors, will require a new deal for communities and the environment. It remains a key priority that we speed up the Government's timetable to transition to the offshore transmission system, in order to protect our communities from the damaging effects of multiple cable corridors.

As well as scrutinising and responding to new policies and initiatives, the group will be a contact point for Ministers and senior officials, as well as for the National Grid, Crown Estate, and Ofgem, to engage with Regional Leaders. The group will also be inviting key stakeholders and community groups to meet with them, to better understand the impacts, and opportunities, of Net Zero transmission and generation infrastructure in the region.

**OffSET's mission statement:**

“OffSET exists to promote strategic leadership of the development of a coordinated offshore electricity grid, to address the need for increased grid capacity which off-shore wind, coastal new nuclear, and international interconnectors will demand, while standing up for the countryside of East Anglia so that the welcome transition to net zero electricity generation does not do unnecessary damage to our communities or the environment.”

*November 2021*

### **Suffolk's Greenest County Awards Winners Announced**

In November 2021, Suffolk celebrated the people and organisations making the biggest environmental difference in the county.

As COP26 came to a close, Suffolk celebrated the people and organisations making the biggest environmental difference in the county. An innovative food recycling company, a nature reserve and the county's Tree Warden Network are among those collecting awards at The Hold in Ipswich today (Friday 12 November 2021).

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

“Once again, our Greenest County Award winners demonstrate that Suffolk has some of the most innovative, passionate and forward thinking people and organisations in the UK. We hope these stories inspire everyone to think hard about how they can help, as they not only address the climate emergency here in Suffolk, but set a standard for all organisations and industry, leading the way to a greener country and more sustainable world.”

Full details of the winners can be found here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/council-news/show/suffolks-greenest-county-awards-winners-announced>

*December 2021*

### **Suffolk County Council approves extra £20m investment in highway drainage and footpaths**

In December 2021, Cabinet members committed an extra £20 million over the next three years into further improving Suffolk's highway drainage systems and footpaths.

In recognition of the increasing maintenance demand on these areas, councillors approved the use of £10 million to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes that deal with problems that affect larger numbers of people, and a further £10 million to improve footpath quality and access.

Suffolk Highways will use the drainage investment alongside funding from the Department for Transport to increase the number of highway flooding sites which are resolved, providing a highway network that is more resilient and accessible during heavy rain and severe weather events.

The footpath investment will be focused on urban areas and busy footpaths in rural areas - providing a safer and more accessible network that supports people accessing local bus services, health care services and local shopping precincts.

*January 2022*

## **Council prepares budgets for its finances and the environment Suffolk County Council waives fees for Platinum Jubilee events**

To mark the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Suffolk County Council will be waiving street party road closure fees.

On Sunday 6 February 2022, Her Majesty the Queen celebrated her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service. To celebrate this milestone, events will be taking place across the Country, particularly over the four-day Bank Holiday weekend, between 2 and 5 June 2022. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours.

For all events on Sunday 5 June 2022, which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures.

The following website has been set up for those who are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>.

If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022, these may still be processed. However, Suffolk County Council cannot cover the costs of traffic management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of traffic management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands.

For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>

If you have any queries, please contact Suffolk County Councils Customer Services team on 0345 606 6171 or email [customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk)

Find more information on how to get involved in celebrating Her Majesty's historic reign, at [platinumjubilee.gov.uk](http://platinumjubilee.gov.uk).

February 2022

### **Council's commitment to further enhancing Suffolk's natural environment**

It was announced in February 2022 that Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment.

Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land and assets, by 2030.

This means it will be progressing its work around managing highway trees, planting more hedgerow, nature-based flood management solutions, roadside nature reserves, and much more.

The council already planted 100,000 trees last year, and is on course to plant another 100,000 this year. It has also put in around 20 kilometres of mixed species hedgerow.

The plans will also help work towards the council's ambitions of being a Net Zero organisation by 2030, with Suffolk's nature being an integral part of the carbon cycle.

The policy's ambitions stretch across the whole organisation, from looking at the impact of street lighting, to how it procures goods and services.

One example of the positive changes that the council will make, is to stop using Glyphosate in all highway maintenance operations. This will happen as soon as it is able to deploy a suitable alternative, and at the latest by 2023 for routine weed treatment programmes. The council will work with other local authorities, both locally and through the Local Government Association, in reaching this goal as soon as possible.

The proposals were agreed at Suffolk County Council's Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022, following the work undertaken by the Policy Development Panel which was set up in July 2021.

March 2022

## Suffolk County Council's leaving care service receives high praise from Ofsted

In March 2022, Suffolk County Council's leaving care service received high praise from Ofsted.

Ofsted inspectors assessed the local authority's arrangement for care leavers as part of a focused visit to the service. The visit follows on from the Outstanding rating received by SCC's Children's Services department in 2019. The services for children in care and care leavers was the only area at the time to be rated 'Good' and therefore was an area of priority for the council.

At the recent visit inspectors concluded that care leavers are successfully helped to transition to independence and reach their full potential. The service was seen to have a culture that is "determined, ambitious and creative" with practitioners who build trusting relationships with care leavers. Practitioners were seen accessing a wide range of specialist expertise to provide services to care leavers that are individualised and responsive.

Inspectors also said that "Many care leavers achieve well, exceeding their own expectations. All are valued and their achievements are celebrated. Persistent efforts are made to reach out to those who are difficult to engage."