

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

East Suffolk Council - HERE For You!

Following a successful series of events last year, East Suffolk officers and councillors will be visiting towns around the district again this summer, chatting to local people about council services and asking how they feel about what we do.

The first event took place in Saxmundham on 14 May, and will be followed by Lowestoft and Kesgrave in June, Beccles in July, Felixstowe and Southwold in August before finishing in Framlingham in September.

Councillors and senior officers will be present to listen to local people and chat about our plans, our services and how we are looking to improve lives and outcomes not only in the towns we visit but throughout East Suffolk.

East Suffolk Council - HERE For You! Come and find us at:

11 June - Lowestoft

25 June - Kesgrave

16 July - Beccles

6 August - Felixstowe

27 August - Southwold

24 September - Framlingham

All events are from 10am until 1pm.

District and Borough Councils' clear message to communities: "Let's shape the future of Suffolk together!"

Suffolk's five district and borough councils are launching a county-wide survey asking people for their views on the future of vital local government services.

The move comes as part of the government's Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) initiative which would see county, district and borough councils replaced and all their services delivered by one or more new unitary councils covering a specific area in the county.

District and borough councils believe that Suffolk would be best served by more than one unitary council. They have submitted their interim report, which sets out the benefits of a multi-unitary model. In a letter sent earlier this month to all Suffolk councils, the government offered clear encouragement for the districts and boroughs to continue developing their proposals.

With this in mind, they are now seeking to further develop the best possible case for a multiple unitary solution in Suffolk, creating councils that are big enough to deliver, but local enough to care; councils that will be efficient and financially sustainable, delivering genuine value for money.

This is the most dramatic change to local government in 50 years, and the Leaders of the borough and district councils are committed to ensuring that every community is involved in shaping the new councils and their services.

As part of the wider engagement work the district and borough councils are carrying out, residents, businesses, community groups and other organisations can now have their say on what is important to them, in the areas in which they live and work.

Encouraging as many Suffolk people as possible to take part, the Leaders of the five district and borough councils, Cllr John Ward, leader of Babergh District Council, Cllr Caroline Topping, leader of East Suffolk Council, Cllr Neil MacDonald, leader of Ipswich Borough Council, Cllr Andy Mellen, leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, and Cllr Cliff Waterman, Leader of West Suffolk Council, said:

“We want to transform public services, so they work for all our citizens and communities, and we want you to help us shape them.

“Suffolk County Council has only one plan – to create a single mega-council, which we believe would be out of touch with communities and residents. It would cover a vast geographical area seeking to save as much money as possible, no matter how perilous the impact on local democracy, the quality of services provided or proper accountability where you live - whether it's Hadleigh, Sudbury, Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket, Felixstowe, Lowestoft or Ipswich.

“We can't let that happen and we want to hear what you think, to understand the challenges and opportunities, and to ensure that all of Suffolk is listened to and properly represented in the generational changes which are taking place.

“We are absolutely certain that a multiple unitary model, with each new council delivering all services to different, recognisable parts of Suffolk, is vital to meet the differing needs of our diverse communities.

“With this in mind, we are greatly encouraged by the government's recent feedback which makes it absolutely clear that we can make a case for local unitaries focused on meeting the needs of all our communities, embodying a true sense of place and local identity. It also supports our argument to have greater representation in the Mayoral Strategic Authority to ensure local voices are heard from across Suffolk.

“Creating more than one unitary council in Suffolk will ensure strong local leadership and democratic representation, better community engagement, neighbourhood empowerment and more responsive councils. We want more locally targeted, modern and flexible services, to drive better outcomes and value, rather than a basic and unimaginative 'one size fits all' option which simply bolts district and borough services on to an old and tired county council system.

“This is a fantastic opportunity to work with communities, service users and organisations to rewire how services are delivered and drive better outcomes to meet local needs. For example, the needs and challenges for people living in Ipswich are different to those in rural Suffolk. For the first time your council will be able to deliver services tailored to meet local needs when previously it was a one size fits all approach that only worked for the few.

“It's particularly important that we can make a strong financial case for change – not only highlighting how we can deliver savings in the short and medium term, but how we can absolutely guarantee the future sustainability of the services people depend on.”

The survey, which closes on 25 July 2025, can be found at: www.babergh.gov.uk/devolution-and-lgr

Four East Suffolk beaches amongst the best in country

Four of East Suffolk's beautiful beaches have once again received national awards, ranking them amongst the best in the country.

Environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy has today announced the winners of the prestigious Blue Flag and Seaside Awards for 2025, and once again, four of East Suffolk's beaches have been selected.

Both Felixstowe (Felixstowe South and Pier) and Southwold (Southwold Pier) have again received combined Seaside Awards and Blue Flags whilst the beaches at Lowestoft South of Claremont Pier (bathing / resort) and Kessingland (non-bathing) have received Seaside Awards, consistent with recent years.

GLI Cllr Sarah Whitelock, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Communities, Leisure and Tourism said: "We are pleased to once again receive these prestigious awards which highlight all the hard work which goes into maintaining the cleanliness of our beaches and their facilities for the benefit of residents and visitors and helps bring them up to such a high standard. East Suffolk has miles of beautiful coastline, and these awards continue to position our beaches as some of the best in the country."

Keep Britain Tidy's Chief Executive, Allison Ogden-Newton OBE said: "In England we are lucky enough to have some of the best beaches in the world. It's wonderful to see the flags flying proudly over East Suffolk's beaches, demonstrating their quality to residents and visitors alike.

"Visitors to a beach flying a Blue Flag can be assured the beach will be clean, safe and meet the highest environmental standards."

The Blue Flag and Seaside Awards are aimed at improving the quality of England's coastline and promoting the country's best beaches.

Accessible beach chalets are available to hire at Felixstowe's Seashore Village, as well as traditional beach huts. Each chalet has a kitchenette including sink with hot/cold water and facilities to make your own hot drinks, chairs and tables, electric heating and access to an accessible, Changing Places toilet.

In Lowestoft, beach huts are available to hire throughout the year, from the new Eastern Edge huts or chalet style huts further along the seafront. There is also a range of accessible huts, with a beach boardwalk, beach buggy and Changing Places facilities nearby.

Hire is available at: hirebeachhuts.co.uk

Supporting young people with mental wellbeing

Primary school children across East Suffolk will shortly receive a new resource to help support their mental wellbeing.

Developed by local parent and author Jen Rose, and funded by East Suffolk Council's Community Partnership Board, Me (and My Mind) aims to be a relevant, accessible, and supportive resource for children during a key transitional stage in their lives.

Over the coming weeks, every Year 6 pupil across East Suffolk will receive a copy of Me (and My Mind) – an engaging, interactive colouring journal designed to support young people in beginning to understand and manage their mental health. This unique resource (each with its own pack of colouring pencils) is fully funded by the Community Partnership Board.

The journal offers a fun and creative way to help children explore who they are, understand their emotions, and learn strategies to recognise and manage when they might not be feeling ok. They are designed to complement PHSE lessons in schools and can be used in class, in smaller groups, or individually. They are also suitable to take home and be shared with parents, carers, and family members.

GLI Cllr Sarah Whitelock, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Communities, Culture, Leisure and Tourism said: "The Community Partnership Board together with other public, voluntary and business sector partners work together to find solutions to local issues. With mental health challenges among young people on the rise, this project is a vital step in equipping them with the knowledge and skills to care for their mental wellbeing."

This initiative reflects East Suffolk Council's ongoing commitment to supporting young people's mental health and fostering resilient communities.

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