

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – AUGUST 2022



Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division

• **SUPPORT OUR FIRE SERVICE AND STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER**

A COLUMN WRITTEN BY ANDREW REID, CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

According to the Met Office, Suffolk is one of the sunniest areas in the UK, and it's certainly felt that way over recent weeks when our county has been able to benefit from some glorious weather.

We're incredibly fortunate to have some fantastic places to enjoy when the sun starts to shine, including Southwold beach and Constable Country, but we must make sure that we do all we can to protect these open spaces from the risk of fire.

On a warm day, litter and grass can become very dry, leading to an increased likelihood of a fire catching and spreading. Sadly, we are not immune to this in Suffolk, with firefighters recently attending a large heath fire in Rushmere.

Please help our fire service this summer by following some simple steps to minimise the risk of fires in the open. You can make a real difference by:

- Putting your litter in the bin when out and about
- Avoiding barbecues and campfires in public open spaces
- Ensuring that any cigarettes are totally put out and disposed of properly
- Not leaving any glass items lying around after a picnic

Of course, the good weather may also tempt you to take a dip in a lake or river in the hope of cooling down, but before you take the plunge you should be aware that around 85% of drownings take place in open water. Many people don't realise the danger to life posed by the shock from cold water temperatures, strong currents and uneven banks and riverbeds, and I'd urge everyone to follow guidance from the Royal Life Saving Society to help prevent death or serious injury.

Hopefully, with your assistance, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service won't need to attend as many water rescues and fires in the open this summer – but responding to incidents is just part of their invaluable role. A lot of the service's work involves preventing fires from happening in the first place by educating people on what they can do to stay safe, including testing their smoke alarms weekly and taking care when cooking. They are also on hand to provide fire guidance to local businesses and organisations to ensure the safety of customers, those attending events, and residents of shared buildings such as apartment blocks.

Whilst Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service always looks to work with companies in the first instance – offering them the opportunity to make necessary adjustments to comply with fire regulations – sometimes we are left with no option but to prosecute. There have already been two significant prosecutions this year because of the service's tireless efforts to protect Suffolk. Recently, the company responsible for Worlingham Hall – a popular wedding and events venue in Beccles – pleaded guilty to a string of serious fire offences and will face sentencing later this year. Their blatant disregard for safety put hundreds of people at risk and the intervention of our Protection team will have doubtlessly prevented injury, or even death, in the event of a fire at the property.

• **HUNDREDS OF LOCAL BUSINESSES SHOW SUSTAINABILITY IS ACHIEVABLE AND PROFITABLE**

462 businesses are leading the way across Suffolk and Norfolk, actively reducing their carbon emissions.

All of these companies are holders of a Carbon Charter award, a scheme which recognises businesses across Suffolk and Norfolk which are actively reducing their impact on the environment.

These businesses were acknowledged at the annual Carbon Charter event (6 July 2022), organised by Suffolk County Council, and held at Anglia Car Charging's base in Broome - themselves a recent recipient of a Silver

Carbon Charter Award. Denny Brothers Printers, based in Bury St Edmunds, were presented with their Gold Carbon Charter award at the event. They have long been a vocal advocate of the low carbon technologies that all printers should utilise to stay competitive in an increasingly green-conscious market.

Beckett Invest Management Group received a Silver Carbon Charter award, which was presented to Director, Samantha Owen. The hosts, Anglia Car Charging, also received their Silver award.

The event was funded by the BEE Anglia project, which has provided free consultancy and £1.6 million in grants to over 1,000 businesses across Suffolk and Norfolk, to support them in leading the way towards a Zero Carbon economy.

For more information on the Carbon Charter scheme, visit www.carboncharter.org

- **UNPAID FAMILY CARERS URGED TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON NEW ALL AGE CARER STRATEGY**

On July 14th, Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board received a report outlining progress of a new All Age Carers Strategy for Suffolk. There are an estimated 98,000 carers across Suffolk who provide unpaid care for their loved ones. In the UK, according to research from Carers UK conducted in 2020, this figure rises to 13.6 million. Their contribution is believed to have saved the country somewhere in the region of £193 billion during the Covid-19 pandemic alone – during a time when many have faced unprecedented pressure, taking on new caring responsibilities for some of the most vulnerable in our society.

These carers give up their time, money, education, careers and relationships to support those they care for, often impacting their own health too. The All Age Carers' strategy will also help support young carers in their current roles and through transition to adulthood, so they can continue their education, employment and goals in life.

A consultation on the draft strategy has been launched and it is hoped carers of all ages will have their say on the strategy and its five priorities which focus around; early identification of unpaid or family carers, improved information and advice for carers of all ages, ensuring younger carers have the same priority as adult carers, creating systems which work to support carers and help to improve the health and wellbeing of carers.

Details of the consultation, including a downloadable version of the draft strategy and both surveys (for adult or young carers) is available on the County Council's website.

- **WHAT I WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEXT YEAR AS CHAIRMAN IF SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

By Councillor Robert Everitt, new Chairman of Suffolk County Council

When I entered local government in 1981, as a parish councillor in the village of Wickhambrook, I learned a very important lesson: you only get out of life what you put in. I spent over 20 years living in Wickhambrook with my family, getting involved in many aspects of village life, and enjoying every minute of it.

In 2000, we moved to Bury St Edmunds, and in 2003 I was elected on to St Edmundsbury Borough Council. I have spent the last 19 years trying my best to improve the environment and lives of my Minden Ward, Tower Division residents. I also had the great privilege of becoming Mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council between 2014-15. While Mayor, I launched the Love to Read campaign, in which we invited grandparents and other people with free time to go into schools across the borough to read with pupils. Encouraging children and young people to take up reading from an early age is so important, not only because it can lead to greater opportunities, but also because it can be very enjoyable.

The next honour of my local government career is my appointment as Chairman of Suffolk County Council on 19 May 2022. This is a neutral, non-political, and non-executive role, which I will hold for one year, the main responsibility of which is the upholding of the council's constitution. I will do this by presiding over council meetings, ensuring business is carried out efficiently, and maintaining a proper forum to debate local matters. It is also an ambassadorial role.

As Chairman, I will represent the Council at civic and ceremonial events, encourage greater partnership working with various private, public, and voluntary agencies, and act as an ambassador and champion for Suffolk generally. It will be my pleasure to represent the council across the whole of Suffolk, meeting as many residents and businesses as time will allow and promoting public involvement in council activities.

I have already had many engagements since my appointment two months ago. I was pleased to take part in the Jubilee Parade at the Suffolk Show and to attend the lighting of the beacon to celebrate the Jubilee at the Abbey Gardens in Bury St Edmunds. On Suffolk Day, I attended the proclamation and Suffolk Medal Investiture at Framlingham Castle. In June, I put my sea legs to the test by joining one of the lifeboats in the Festival of the Sea flotilla, made up of more than 70 boats that set sail to cross the River Orwell and River Stour.

During their term of office, the Chairman chooses a charity to support, and I have chosen to support the Bury Deaf and Hard of Hearing Association. They offer support and advice for people with various levels of hearing impairment and help to put those who require specialist assistance in touch with the appropriate organisation. Please visit their website to find out more about the brilliant work they do.

I will also be looking for opportunities to support other worthy organisations and causes during the year. For example, I am also interested in promoting the universal dyslexia screening bill proposed by Matt Hancock. I have dyslexia myself and I know how important it is for children to have their dyslexia identified as early as possible so that they can get the support they need.

Finally, I want to encourage young adults to consider careers in local government. There are hundreds of paths available. Firefighters help to keep us safe, carers provide vital support to those who need it, and culture and library staff strengthen community life. There are careers available in public health, looking after our collective health and wellbeing; in town and county planning, shaping how local areas develop; and in our parks, protecting and enhancing our environment. A career in local government can be profoundly meaningful and rewarding.

- **COUNTY COUNCILS UNANIMOUSLY AGREE “NO” TO DAMAGING NEW PYLONS**

It was announced on July 20th that 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 (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.

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. On July 20th, 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.

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.

• **NEW ROUTES ADDED AS SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES UPDATED HGV MAP**

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. Cabinet Member 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.

• **UK'S LEADING DIGITAL CARE TECHNOLOGY SEES HUGE RESULTS FOR SOCIAL CARE & THE NHS**

The data, released on July 25th by the Cassius service, highlights the benefits of a digital care technology service, which is the most advanced in the country. Launched in July 2021, Suffolk County Council's Cassius service has:

- Changed the lives of 1,600 people with over 2,600 pieces of digital technology installed
- Avoided 118 ambulance call-outs at a time when pressure on the NHS is at an all-time high*

- Prevented hospital admissions saving 170 hospital days, freeing up beds for those most in need*
- Estimated saving to social care of £4.2 million and cashable savings of £430,000 and £160,000 to the local NHS

Cassius has exceeded all expectations and social work practitioners are quickly becoming the most digitally advanced in the country. We have developed this service from scratch and this data is a testament to how you can transform services and continue to provide positive experiences and benefits to all. We are very pleased to see the added value to the wider health system too. Cassius provides digital care technology to people in Suffolk to help them to remain independent for longer and to support them to live safe and well at home. The types of technology includes movement sensors, smart watches, wearables, falls prevention devices and technology to address specialised needs. One of the success factors is that the technology is customised to a person's individual circumstances ensuring that addresses specific requirements.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Stephen Burroughes

County Councillor for the Framlingham Division

Deputy Cabinet Member for Children & Young Peoples Services

SCC Mobile: (Phone or Text) 07714 598003

Twitter @CllrStephenB