

November 2023 Ward report from Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris

Flooding across Framlingham Ward

Both Owen Grey and I were personally affected by, and responded at the 'coalface' to this terrible event across our ward. As you all know, the flooding struck around 10:30am on Friday morning, 26th October and chaos ensued. From that Friday evening, for the next 60 hours I set up a centralised emergency response office in the Town Council Offices, coordinating needed actions and responses and using the Town Council website as the vital information point.

Framlingham's residents, local organisations and surrounding farmers were simply magnificent in their response. The Hour Community, East Suffolk Services, East Suffolk Council, the Town Clerk and Councillors and the emergency services all rapidly kicked in to help and help they did! The town council office was inundated with donations of clothing, toys, cleaning materials and numerous volunteers offering their help, from house cleaners to electrical engineers.



I want to personally thank Nick Corke at *Hour Community* (his set up of emergency accommodation at Castle Community Rooms, with camp beds donated from the Scouts and Girl Guides was inspired), Nick Khan (*East Suffolk Council - Strategic Director*) in our Town Council Office from Saturday to Monday was invaluable (*he ensured rapid coordination with the Chief Executive/East Suffolk Flooding Recovery Group, the responses by East Suffolk Services and he brought ESC community and housing officers into the town office to directly assist affected residents*). The Town Clerk and several Town councillors who offered me sustained and close support when we really needed it, thank you.

Ward Flooding Letter Councillor Owen Grey has managed to visit and collect flood information for many of the ward parishes. We have consolidated this with the Framlingham Town flood information, into a jointly signed document, shared with relevant government Ministers, MPs, Councils and Council officers. The information that we have collated thus far is a 'work in progress'. It is as exhaustive as we could make it in a short time span, but it will need to be updated as we collect more data about flood damage.

Framlingham Flood Resilience and Recovery Working Group

The Town Council has established this group to ensure that residents and businesses are supported to recover and return to normality. The group will communicate its work with residents and monitor and support the efforts of the District (ESC) and County Councils (SCC). We will also be reviewing and strengthening our current emergency response plan. To follow our progress please refer to the [town council website](#).



FloodRe ([see link](#))

What do I need to know? Short for Flood Reinsurance, this is a government led initiative (launched April 4th, 2016) to help people who live in flood risk areas to get affordable home insurance.

Why is Flood Re needed? People buy home insurance to ensure they can repair or replace their property and belongings if they are damaged in events such as fires, storms, floods. There are lots of different insurers and policies to choose from. For people who live in places where there is a high risk of flooding it has become harder to shop around. Fully drying out, repairing and restoring a flooded home often costs between £20,000 & £45,000 so buying insurance for properties which are likely to flood a lot often costs more and people who live in these properties don't have as much choice.

Flood Re is not a home insurer itself. It works behind the scenes with existing insurance companies, helping to offer more affordable flood insurance to areas at risk of flooding. It means people can more easily shop around to find policies with more affordable premiums & excesses.

Is Flood Re relevant to me? Only people who live in flood risk areas will benefit, and even then it will depend on how much you pay for the flooding part of your home insurance. Many people who live in a flood risk area will already be aware of it. If you're not sure, your current insurer or broker will be able to tell you if your property is considered at risk. There are also free online maps showing flood risk for different areas of **England**. Remember to check for your risk of surface water flooding as well as your risk from rivers & the sea.

FloodRe is designed to help people who buy buildings or contents insurance for properties which are at risk of flooding, providing they own and live in them. There is also a rule meaning you won't be eligible if your property was built after January 1st 2009.

How do I benefit from Flood Re? If you live in a property where there is a high risk of flooding you may be contacted by your insurer directly about the scheme. You can also call your insurer to find out if they can offer you new options. **Shop Around:** As well as finding out what your existing insurer can offer, it's a good idea to shop around, as the existence of Flood Re should mean you have more choice of affordable flood cover, **even if you are at high flood risk.** Comparison websites may not be the best way to do this if your home is at risk. These sites generally suit people with standard needs & insuring a property at flood risk may be best done by dealing directly with an insurer or broker so they can consider your individual circumstances.

Flood Re is regularly updated on the website and there is an online broker finding service provided by the British Insurance Brokers Association (BIBA). **Remember not to focus purely on the price of the premium** but make sure the policy gives you the cover that suits you best. You should take account of how much excess you would be prepared to pay (that's the amount of any claim that you have to cover yourself) and whether you want to have additional protection against problems such as accidental damage. Remember to always answer all questions you are asked honestly.

Remembrance Day

The Royal British Legion set up in the town square on Saturday morning, 11th November. My small band, Flaxen, played some poignant war ballads about the Somme (Green Fields of France), Gallipoli (Band Played Waltzing Matilda), Vietnam (Only 19) and Pete Seeger (Where have all the flowers gone) to help with fundraising.



Parish Information

Saxstead: The parish council recently agreed to fund 25% of the costs of reducing the speed limit from 60 to 40 from the A1120 across the Green to Church Road. The Parish Council is grateful to the County Councillor for funding the other 75% of the project. This has been in the pipeline for 3 years and which we now hope will make it safer for pedestrians and motorists who live across this stretch of road.

Brandeston: and Cretingham East Suffolk Council has placed enforcement notices on the pub, which I will follow up. Farm building in Cretingham have also been recently visited by an enforcement officer.

Suffolk and East Suffolk Press Releases

Suffolk Councils Joint News Release

For immediate release: Friday 10 November 2023
For further information contact: Lloyd Jones, Communications Manager, 07904 972584,
lloyd.jones@suffolk.gov.uk

Financial aid for flood-affected properties in Suffolk imminent as number of reports hits 750

Suffolk residents who experienced exceptional property flooding during Storm Babet will start receiving financial support during November. Following the recent Government announcement of grants and council tax reductions through the Flood Recovery Framework, councils in Suffolk have received 750 reports of internal flooding to homes or businesses, and this number is expected to increase. Suffolk councils are working together, with Suffolk County Council collecting information and assessing the reports, and the district and borough councils distributing the funding to eligible property owners. All reports of property flooding need to be submitted via the Suffolk County Council reporting tool now.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Suffolk County Council's leader, said: "We are committed to ensuring this vital financial support finds its way into the hands of those who need it. I encourage those who have not yet submitted a report via the reporting tool to do so as soon as possible."

Households and businesses that suffered internal flooding between 19 - 25 October 2023 due to Storm Babet may be eligible for:

- A grant (£500 for homes and £2,500 per business) to assist with initial recovery costs.
- Households and businesses that suffered internal flooding between 19 -25 October due to Storm Babet may be eligible for 100% discount to council tax / business rates for a minimum of 3 months.

- Flooded property owners will also be able to apply for up to £5,000 to help make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding. Suffolk County Council is working to set this scheme up at the earliest opportunity, but it is not currently available.

Suffolk County Council is working in partnership with Babergh & Mid-Suffolk, East Suffolk, Ipswich and West Suffolk councils to ensure these discounts and payments start during November.

Reporting your flood damage is the first step to receiving a potential payout.

If you have experienced flooding to your property as a result of Storm Babet, you need to:

1. Visit: <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk>
2. Click on: 'Report It'
3. Then click: 'Drainage and Flooding'
4. Then click: 'Flooding inside residential / non-residential property'
5. Please include as much information as you have, there is also an option to upload photos.
6. Once your report has been submitted, Suffolk County Council officers will contact you to gather further information and prioritise those locations that meet the criteria for an official investigation.
7. Someone from the district or borough council will then contact you to arrange payment, if eligible.

For those who aren't able to submit their report online, please call 0345 606 6171.

Councillor Contacts:

Councillor Matthew Hicks (Con), Leader of Suffolk County Council, 01728 628176, 07824 474741, matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk

Councillor Andrew Stringer (Green), Leader of the Green, Liberal Democrat, and Independent Group, 01449 780339, 07545 423842, andrew.stringer@suffolk.gov.uk#

Councillor Sarah Adams (Lab), Leader of the Labour Group, 01473 402605, 07907 979520, sarah.adams@suffolk.gov.uk

Council calls for assurance on energy infrastructure projects

East Suffolk Council has strengthened its commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes and minimal impact for local communities from the construction of Sizewell C.

The renewed pledge comes with an expectation of developers, in conjunction with all stakeholders, to identify long-term solutions to a number of key issues. It comes in response to a motion brought to Full Council on Wednesday 27 September by Councillor Tom Daly, cabinet member for Energy and Climate Change, and seconded by Councillor Sarah Whitelock, ward member for Aldeburgh and Leiston, called for a resolution to strongly represent East Suffolk communities to maximise the benefits and minimise the impacts of development. The motion formalised the Council's position in advocating for true green renewable energy in preference to Sizewell C but recognised the reality of the Development Consent Order (DCO) decision. Cllr Daly added that development should only commence following identification of long-term solutions by Sizewell C Ltd to issues concerning water supply, sea defences and coastal dynamics, long term local storage of highly radioactive spent fuel, marine biosphere impacts, and satisfactory confirmation of the size of the development site with associated impacts on Minsmere and other precious habitats.

The motion further proposed a written request for the Secretary of State to sanction a full cost-benefit analysis of options for connecting all electricity generation to users in the UK, rather than the current piecemeal approach, and to mandate a community compensation scheme for those directly impacted by hosting the energy infrastructure, as a matter of urgency, as per recent consultation, in addition to provisions in the DCO process.

The two-part motion also sought the Council's acknowledgement that, alongside better design and reduced energy consumption, the future of carbon reduction lies in truly renewable energy,

such as offshore and onshore wind, solar, community energy schemes and micro generation, with options for offshore to brownfield connections justifying further exploration as a means of providing a cost effective & sustainable solution to the UK's energy supply & security challenges.

It called on the Council to formalise its belief that “offshore options for connecting offshore renewables into an existing brownfield location have not been sufficiently investigated and provide a better long-term more cost effective and sustainable solution to the UK's energy supply and security challenges”.

Addressing Full Council, Cllr Daly said: “These issues are extremely important to our communities. “This Council requires greater surety on these issues now, not sometime in the future, when the actual nuclear elements are due to be installed, licences issued, and options much diminished. The risks are too great.”

“We cannot claim to be able to resolve these issues. We can, though, as a Council, add our voice to the growing demands for a more rational, planned, properly costed future for our energy coast – and so for the country as a whole.

“East Suffolk will not be silent on the interests of our residents, on the environment, on the local economy, and on our future.”

East Suffolk Council says ‘no’ to oil and gas

East Suffolk Council has responded to the Government’s decision to create more oil and gas licences by confirming that it will no longer accept new tenancies from companies committed to its production. As part of the King’s Speech on Tuesday 7 November, it was confirmed that hundreds of new oil and gas licences will be granted in the UK by the Government. However, the Council, which owns considerable commercial land in the North Sea port town of Lowestoft as well as business parks in Beccles and Leiston, has stated that green companies will now be “at the front of the queue” for tenancies.

East Suffolk Council has today welcomed leading renewable energy service company RMI Renewables to their flagship PowerPark development in the port of Lowestoft, and Cllr Toby Hammond, who is Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Transport as part of the Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent (GLI) administration, hopes there will be many more.

He said: *“This is a hugely retrograde step from the Prime Minister and a Government which is clearly only paying lip service to environmental concerns. We are in the midst of a climate emergency and things must change. We already have a thriving renewable energy sector in East Suffolk, and we are simply not going to allow the Government to take us backwards.”*

“We see huge potential for more high-quality jobs and prosperity especially servicing offshore wind. We are totally focused on clean, green industry to drive the winds of change in East Suffolk and companies which reflect our own priorities and ambitions will be at the front of the queue for future tenancies.”

RMI Renewables, whose parent company started out in 2005 servicing oil and gas industry within the North Sea, have now almost fully transitioned to working with offshore wind, rail infrastructure and other clean energy businesses. Scott McMillan, RMI Renewables Director, said: *“Being part of the PowerPark allows RMI Renewables to work collaboratively with our clients, supply chain, colleges as well as the Council to develop infrastructure, which will create new job opportunities in the area. This is a great opportunity to attract the best companies and*

skilled resources, which in turn will provide greater opportunities to the younger generation who are looking for a long-term career and cleaner future.”

This decisive move by East Suffolk Council also follows recent decisions by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to delay targets on decarbonisation.

Councillors at East Suffolk have written to Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Rt Hon Claire Coutinho MP stating their opposition to any new oil and gas licenses. Cllr Rachel Smith-Lyte, Cabinet Member for the Environment said:

“Opening up new oil and gas is an entirely reckless thing to do in the face of the climate emergency and our net zero commitments. The people of this country deserve so much better.”

Voice Over Internet Protocol - Rural Service Network speaks out for rural landline customers as the switch to digital phones continues

BT has announced the next phase in the rollout of its new home phone service, Digital Voice moving **analogue** to **digital** landlines (calls are now being made over a broadband line instead). The company has now announced the remaining regions and nations set to make the switch over the next year: Spring 2024, East Anglia. BT says Digital Voice will have no impact on how customers use their home phone and will not cost any more than people pay today. However, with the current state of the connectivity and mobile coverage in rural areas and following the report from Age UK on connectivity in the older generations, the RSN has been working with BT to ensure rural communities aren't left behind in the switch over. As part of this, ***BT has said it will not be proactively switching anyone who they know: has a healthcare pendant; only use landlines; has no mobile signal; has disclosed any additional needs.***