

# District Councillors Report to Swilland and Witnesham Grouped Parish Council

For January 2023

**Carlford and Fynn Valley Ward.**

Rushmere Village, Great Bealings, Little Bealings, Playford, Bredfield, Grundisburgh & Culpho, Witnesham and Swilland, Westerfield, Hasketon, Clopton, Charsfield, Dallinghoo, Tuddenham, Boulge, Burgh, Debach, Otley.

**From District Councillor**

**Cllr Colin Hedgley**

**Cllr Tony Fryatt**

Firstly, I hope everyone had a good Christmas and I wish everyone a Happy, Prosperous and Peaceful New Year.

*Some news that came out in late December that you may have missed.*

## **Kate Blakemore appointed to new Strategic Director role**



Kate has been in an equivalent role at Great Yarmouth Borough Council for more than five years.

Her appointment follows a thorough recruitment process and will make an outstanding addition to the Strategic Management Team.

A recent Local Government Association Review indicated that ESC were making tremendous progress as an authority but lacked sufficient capacity and resilience at a senior level. We are very pleased to have addressed one of the key recommendations by bringing in someone with a track record of success, delivering genuine outcomes for local people.

## **£2.75m funding agreed for levelling up in East Suffolk**

Following a submission to the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund, East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m, which will be used to support high streets, local businesses,



workforce and community skills development, as well as support for those struggling with the cost of living.

In April 2022, the Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support its Levelling Up agenda. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, focusing on communities and place, supporting local business, people and skills.

East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m to invest across two-and-a-half years (2022/23-2024/25) in initiatives that will address inequality and contribute to levelling up.

Additionally, East Suffolk Council has also been allocated a further £1.129m from the Government under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), which is part of the UKSPF and aims to support small business and community infrastructure in rural areas.

Final approval for this element of funding is expected in the new year, following submission of an investment plan addendum, with funded programmes to commence in April 2023.

### **East Suffolk Awards 2023 to celebrate community success stories**

Nominations for the East Suffolk Awards 2023 are now open.

Last staged before the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2019, the awards celebrate the best in local businesses, people and community groups.

Run by East Suffolk Council, the awards recognise contributions, celebrate successes, and give people the 'round of applause' they deserve for improving local lives.



Find out more by visiting the [awards website](#).

## Network of Warm Rooms launched to support residents



A network of Warm Rooms has opened across East Suffolk to provide a safe, welcoming space for anyone struggling with heating costs during the colder winter months.

Locations include everything from community halls and churches to leisure centres and pubs, each providing a warm space, hot drinks and an opportunity to connect with other members of the local community.

The network of 30 Warm Rooms has been part-funded by the Government (through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund), with more than £70,000 set aside from East Suffolk Council's wider Ease the Squeeze programme of advice and support around the rising cost of living.

A number of additional rooms are also being funded from Community Partnership budgets, with grants provided to cover heating, lighting and basic refreshments for a minimum of three warm rooms in each CP area.

Several venues are planning free, independently funded activities, ranging from books and games to film showings, allowing people to not only stay warm but also connect with others in the community, reducing isolation and loneliness.

Help and advice will be available on subjects such as reducing energy costs and managing finances, while East Suffolk Council will also be working with the Rural Coffee Caravan to identify and support Warm Spaces in more rural communities.

## Grant funding scheme to help people grow their own produce

A new grant funding scheme has been launched to help people to get involved with growing their own food.

To tackle rising food and energy prices, East Suffolk Council has launched the 'Field to Fork' grant scheme. The scheme will provide grants of up to £2,000 to community farms, allotments and gardens to expand their capacity and engage local people with 'grow and eat' projects that will feed communities and help people stay active and connected.

Field to Fork is one of a number of programmes supported by a £2.75m allocation from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and is part of a three-year programme to develop an East Suffolk Community Food Network which will bring together food producers, suppliers and community food projects to address the cost-of-living crisis as well as reduce food waste.

## Cycling and Walking Strategy will ensure access to quality infrastructure



A new planning document has been officially adopted to enhance the district's cycling and walking network.

After gaining Cabinet approval in October, and following the prescribed 'call-in' period, the new East Suffolk Council Cycling and Walking Strategy will now be implemented to ensure that communities have access to high quality infrastructure across the district.

The strategy sets out to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion and support economic growth.

In order to create these environments, the strategy identifies cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk, including in the Broads Authority Area. Two rounds of consultation informed preparation of the strategy. An initial consultation in October/December 2020 was followed by public consultation on the draft strategy between November 2021 and January 2022.

The strategy can be viewed [here](#) in a webpage-based, interactive form. Alternatively, a PDF version can be viewed [here](#).

## Further funding on offer to help ease cost of living pressure



A new grant funding scheme has been launched in East Suffolk for voluntary organisations and community groups to help people struggling to meet the cost of living.

The East Suffolk Cost of Living Community Grant Fund has been set up with funding via the Suffolk Collaborative Communities Board, from the Suffolk Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

Funding is available to enable community, voluntary and social enterprise organisations, or town and parish councils, to support individuals and families who are struggling due to the current cost of living crisis.

The scheme is designed to help keep people warm, well-fed, safe and connected, with a particular focus on reducing incidents of respiratory conditions this winter.

The fund will provide grants of between £500 and £5,000 for projects which support local residents struggling due to the rising cost of living.

Full guidance for applicants can be found [online](#), along with a dedicated [application page](#).



In addition to the East Suffolk Cost of Living Community Grant Fund, the Council's overall [Ease the Squeeze programme](#) is worth more than half a million pounds. More than £70,000 of the programme will be invested in a network of 'Warm Rooms' across the district in a range of locations, including community and church halls, leisure centres and pubs. Part-funded by the UK Government (through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) and East Suffolk Council, with a number also funded from Community Partnership budgets, the sites will provide a warm space and tea and coffee, with free activities, ranging from books and games to film showings, also being planned and funded independently by venues.

### **East Suffolk Community Partnerships**

#### **Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley**

Road Safety continues to be a priority...and National Road Safety Week was a chance to collaborate and take practical action on a larger scale than in 2021, utilising £1,500 of CP funding.

It not only acted as a means to spread the message of safer driving in the local area, but also strengthened school connections, created new ones, and broadened the discussion for the CP going forward.

- Five primary schools engaged, using their junior road safety officers to educate peers in assemblies and other lessons. Three of the schools relaunched their hi-vis jacket provision (a CP project from January 2022), while Broke Hall and Grundisburgh Primary joined the scheme. With two new schools on board, this will mean another 850 jackets provided, taking the total to almost 3,000 – a 40% increase.
- Bikeability support was launched to primary schools in the area to fill a learning gap caused by the pandemic. Within four days of launching, requests for another 140 spaces were received.
- Officers from Suffolk Constabulary attended Community Speed Watch sessions and visited schools, while our own Communities officers also visited Suffolk Rural (formerly Otley College) to speak with students about using roads safely, with their corresponding views to be presented to the Community Partnership meeting in January and to help inform future decision making.
- Roadside banners were installed at nine sites across the CP area, targeting busier roads, including those in the rural area and one on site at Suffolk Rural, with the message 'Safe Roads for All'. More than 170,000 vehicles are estimated to have passed at least one of the banners during the week, not yet including data relating to Rushmere St Andrew.



## **New and improved beach access ramp unveiled at Felixstowe seafront**

Local residents and visitors to Felixstowe can enjoy improved access to the seafront following completion of a new ramp. Work began in autumn to install a replacement ramp at the South Seafront, linking the pavement along Sea Road and Orford Road to the beachfront, over the sea defence wall. Located within Flood Zone 2, to the northern extent of Martello Park, the ramp will also provide a safe escape route in the event of the sea wall gates being closed in bad weather.

## **Suffolk councils' successful bid for housing fund pot**

Suffolk's local authorities have been awarded funding by the Local Government Association to commission a vital, county-wide housing strategy review. The £20,000 pot will kickstart a programme which aims to increase the number of genuinely affordable properties available to meet those in housing need.

The Housing Advisers Programme grant is designed to support councils seeking to innovate and will fund the provision of bespoke expert support to councils. Suffolk's successful bid was led by East Suffolk Council, which will work with Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk Council – identifying opportunities to bridge the gap between supply and demand.

## **Government approval given for £2.75m funding**

Funding from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund has been officially approved. East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which will be used to support high streets, local businesses, workforce and community skills development, as well as support for those struggling with the cost of living crisis.

In April 2022, the Government launched the UKSPF to support its Levelling Up agenda. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, focusing on communities and place, supporting local business, people and skills.

Following approval of an Investment Plan detailing to Government how the funding would be spent, East Suffolk Council has been allocated £2.75m to invest across two and a half years (2022/23 - 2024/25) in initiatives that will address inequality and contribute to levelling up. Additionally, East Suffolk Council has also been allocated a further £1.129m from the Government under the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), which is part of the UKSPF and aims to support small business and community infrastructure in rural areas. Final approval for this element of funding is expected in the new year, with funded programmes to commence in April 2023.





## Using open fires and wood-burning stoves responsibly this winter

East Suffolk residents are being reminded of the importance of using their open fires or wood-burning stoves responsibly this winter to help reduce air pollution and improve their health. Many homes in East Suffolk have open fires or wood-burning stoves however people may not be aware that these can contribute to air pollution and reduce indoor air quality, which can be damaging to health.

Long-term exposure to air pollution, over many years, reduces life expectancy, mainly due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, strokes and lung cancer. And even short-term exposure, over hours or days, can impact on lung function, worsening asthma, and increasing respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions.

To help reduce emissions, both indoors and into the environment, there are simple steps which homeowners can take:

- **Consider burning less –.**
- **Only burn dry (seasoned) wood** - burning wet or unseasoned/green wood is inefficient.
- **Buy 'Ready to Burn' fuel** – look for wood marked as 'Ready to Burn' sold by a Woodsure Certified Supplier. [www.readytoburn.org](http://www.readytoburn.org).
- **Do not burn treated waste wood (e.g. old furniture or pallets) or household rubbish** – wood which has been treated with paint or preservatives can emit harmful fumes.
- **Consider using an approved smokeless fuel** – a list of approved smokeless fuels is available at [www.hetas.co.uk](http://www.hetas.co.uk)
- **If you are buying a new stove** - check it is Defra approved and have it installed by a qualified person.
- **Check how to operate your appliance efficiently** - always operate your stove in line with the manufacturer's guidance.
- **Regularly maintain and service your stove** – servicing your stove annually means it will work better and will generate more heat from what you burn.
- **Get your chimney swept regularly (up to twice each year)**
- **Make sure you are using the correct fuel for your stove and flue** – some stoves are specific to the type of fuel to be burnt.

Cllr Colin Hedgley and Cllr Tony Fryatt