

## Leader's monthly bulletin – September 2022

Welcome to the September edition of my monthly bulletin, aimed at keeping you up to date on the main news stories from East Suffolk and, where possible, giving you a view of upcoming events and projects.

**Steve Gallant**  
Leader of East Suffolk Council

### Helping East Suffolk ease the squeeze on cost of living



As the UK continues to face a cost-of-living crisis, households are seeing huge increases in their outgoings.

As we head into the colder months, East Suffolk Council has a responsibility to help residents find the support they need.

That is why we have launched Ease the Squeeze – a comprehensive scheme which helps connect those needing help to those helping. We are working closely with key partners on several local schemes, while also directing people to other available support and services.

All the information, including practical support, funding and advice, has been gathered on our website, at [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze). This page is continuously being updated as more schemes, services and support becomes available, so please share this with others.

Customer Services, Communities and Housing are working closely together to provide a wide range of support and advice. We will also be running a social media campaign to raise awareness of the website.

## **£24.9million regeneration programme given final go-ahead for Lowestoft**

A £24.9m programme to transform Lowestoft has received final Government approval, enabling work to progress on five major regeneration projects.

In 2019, Lowestoft was one of 100 towns invited by the Department for Levelling Up to develop a bid for up to £25m of the £3.6bn Towns Fund.



The Lowestoft Town Investment Plan, developed alongside the Lowestoft Place Board, setting out the ambitions, opportunities, and challenges of the next 10 years, was submitted to the Government in 2020 as the basis of a £24.9m application, focusing on five projects:

**The Station Quarter:** Full restoration of the former Post Office and front of Lowestoft railway station building.

**The Cultural Quarter:** Improvements to the Marina Theatre, redevelopment of the East Suffolk Council's current Customer Services Centre to provide a new cultural facility, and redevelopment of the former Battery Green multi-storey car park to provide a new leisure offer.

**The Historic Quarter:** Redevelopment and refurbishment of the Town Hall, along with enhancing the historic 'Scores'.

**The Seafront Vision:** Redevelopment of Royal Plain, including the Royal Plain fountains, Royal Green and associated public realm to complement the recently refurbished East Point Pavilion.

**The Port Gateway project:** Supporting development of the Lowestoft Eastern Energy Facility (LEEF) to secure Lowestoft's future as an Operations and Maintenance hub for the offshore renewables sector.

Full funding was provisionally secured in March 2021 before detailed businesses cases were submitted for each of the five projects in March 2022.

Businesses and visitors will be able to view proposed designs and learn more about each project in the coming months, with all five projects having now received final approval and due for completion by March 2026.

## Free Wi-Fi programme expands to another two East Suffolk towns



Free-to-use public Wi-Fi has now been launched in Southwold and Woodbridge following recent launches in Felixstowe and Lowestoft and as part of a range of exciting digital projects.

To support local towns and businesses, East Suffolk Council is delivering a range of digital projects which aim to strengthen the local economy and improve connectivity within the district's market towns.

One of these projects is the East Suffolk Digital Towns programme, which will digitally transform market towns through the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms alongside a business support programme. It was initially piloted in Framlingham in 2019.

Supported by funding from the Getting Building Fund and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Innovative Projects fund, this new technology will be combined with bespoke business support, helping local businesses and the towns in which they are based, to grow.

New technology will enable the Council to understand the number of visitors to the towns, the busiest periods, the average time people spend in the town centre and much more. This will enable the council's Economic Development team to provide tailored support for local businesses and provide data-based evidence to support other ongoing projects.

We are also working in partnership with an interactive walking app provider, Go Jauntly, to develop outdoor adventures across all East Suffolk's principal 12 towns and villages. Following these latest launches, East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi is provisionally scheduled to be available in Beccles, Bungay, Halesworth, Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham by October.

## **Holiday accommodation owner fined for environmental breaches**

A business owner has been ordered to pay £5,160 in fines and court costs for failing to properly dispose of rubbish at premises near Halesworth.

Richard Boddy admitted two counts of failing to comply with requirements imposed under section 47 of the Environmental Protection Act, between 7 June and 28 September 2021.

The holiday accommodation owner failed to provide suitably sized bins for the waste produced at Holly Tree Farm Barns, in Cratfield, allowing rubbish to collect around the bin compound.



Mr Boddy was issued a section 47 notice by East Suffolk Council in October 2020 following a number of complaints concerning overflowing bins and excessive waste – in some cases attracting wild animals – at the Cratfield holiday let site.

The notice directed that all waste products be placed in receptacles of a suitable size and type; that no waste be left on the ground around the bin compound or on the public highway, and that a trade contract for regular removal of waste be arranged. However, during subsequent site visits, conducted in June and July 2021, a waste management officer discovered loose litter and black refuse bags full of rubbish on the ground around overflowing bins.

## Appointment aims to further embed good design into future developments



A new role has been created within the Planning team to ensure high-quality design is at the forefront of new developments in East Suffolk.

East Suffolk Council is believed to be one of the first local authorities in the country to appoint a Design Champion.

Urban designer and landscape architect, Chris King is experienced at promoting design quality in place-making.

The Design Champion role heads up the newly created Specialist Services team, which comprises highly skilled landscape, heritage, design, and ecology experts.

The creation of the Design Champion role also aligns closely with the national planning agenda, with recent and anticipated future changes to national planning policy placing an increased emphasis on achieving high quality design in new development.

## Festival-style market to take place in Halesworth in September

The 'Heart of Halesworth' market on Saturday 3 September (10am – 2pm) promises to be a family-orientated, celebratory event.

Stretching along The Thoroughfare to the Market Place, the event will include live music and dance, street performers and a town trail, as well as family activities, celebrating Halesworth's truly independent high street.

Heart of Halesworth follows the successful markets in Saxmundham, Beccles, Leiston and Lowestoft earlier this year as part of the Market Place project run by First Light Festival Community Interest Company, funded through East Suffolk Council and the Suffolk Growth Partnership.



First Light also delivered a consultancy package of support to another four East Suffolk towns on best practice for event development. Bungay, Felixstowe, Framlingham, and

Lowestoft all received a masterclass on place-making with director and co-founder, Wayne Hemingway.

## Books and beach days – community benefitting from Eastern Edge



Residents and visitors have been enjoying the striking new Eastern Edge beach huts on Lowestoft's South Beach – and community groups are also getting involved.

Organisations can hire one of the huts for a community event or special get-together, with some huts able to be linked together, by arrangement, for groups needing a larger accessible space.

Disability Advice North East Suffolk recently held a beach day at one of the accessible Eastern Edge huts – another of which was sponsored by Southwold-based Adnams and made available to local residents through the company's Community Heroes project, which acknowledged individuals and organisations that made a difference in their communities during the pandemic.

As part of the Adnams sponsorship, Suffolk Libraries held a week of free events in a pop-up beach library, including a children's book giveaway, colouring, and storytelling.

## Community celebrates opening of redesigned and modernised play area



An updated and improved play area has reopened to the local community that helped shape its new design.

Among many new features, the play area in Purdis Farm now includes seating and sculpture based on clay models handcrafted by local youngsters.

Funded through East Suffolk Council's Outdoor Playing Space Fund, the redevelopment of the Murrills Park play area has been a community effort from as early as its inception.

In the summer of 2020, East Suffolk Council consulted residents of Purdis Farm for their views on how to spend available funds for 'sports and active play' from the Outdoor Playing Space Fund for Parishes. The responses helped to create a tender – awarded to successful bidder, Groundwork East, ahead of a series of community events earlier this year to give residents an opportunity to see the new designs and offer feedback.

Young people casted clay models which provided inspiration for the hare and bunny seating and the moon-gazing hare sculpture that now serve as way markers around the park – indicating an existing walking route and information boards about the area.

The park also now boasts a new accessible roundabout, part funded by county councillor Patti Mulcahy, along with a new circular group swing, a wobble sheep, and five new pieces of outdoor gym equipment.



## Surveys and consultations

As always, we want to encourage participation in surveys and consultations, as feedback from people in East Suffolk is invaluable and helps us ensure we're making the right decisions for our communities.

- **Saxmundham Neighbourhood Plan**

Representations are invited ahead of Saxmundham's Neighbourhood Plan being submitted for independent examination. Representations must be received by 5pm on Friday 2 September.

- **Shadingfield, Sotterley, Willingham and Ellough Neighbourhood Plan**

Representations are invited ahead of Saxmundham's Neighbourhood Plan being submitted for independent examination. Representations must be received 5pm on Wednesday 7 September.



- **Lowestoft Railway Station refreshments building public consultation**  
Proposals for the redevelopment of a derelict part of the station building, detailed within the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan. Open until Friday 9 September.

### Follow us on social media

We keep our communities up to date in a variety of ways and social media has an important role to play. Please follow us and share our posts with your followers!

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/eastsuffolkconservatives/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/easuffolktories?lang=en>

**East Suffolk Conservatives website:** <https://www.eastsuffolkconservatives.org.uk/>