

## Ward Councillors Report – November 2022

Dear All.

Welcome to the November report hope all is well in your patch, please do not hesitate to contact us with any matters that you believe we can be of assistance with.

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### East Suffolk pays tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II



The Councillors and Officers of East Suffolk Council were deeply saddened by news of the death of Her Majesty The Queen.

As a mark of respect, flags at our council offices were flown at half-mast, while books of condolences were opened at offices in Melton and Lowestoft to allow local people to pay their respects.

Following quiet and careful preparation, the Council was able to provide exceptional support as communities mourned the death of Her Majesty The Queen and observed the Proclamation of the Accession of King Charles III, while a number of delicate decisions were properly made around the continuation or postponement of normal activities during the mourning period.

### Council backs First Light Festival with three-year commitment of support



East Suffolk Council has demonstrated its commitment to the First Light Festival in Lowestoft by pledging continued financial support to the annual event.

Cabinet members recently backed plans to help support festival organisers in securing Arts Council funding over the next three years.



Tens of thousands of people descended on Lowestoft's South Beach for the return of the First Light Festival in June.

In 2019, the Council's investment of £90,000 resulted in a £900,000 return on investment in terms of direct local financial benefit, while the £200,000 invested for 2022 delivered approximately £690,000 of visitor spend (with the overall direct local financial anticipated to be significantly larger).

We have now promised to provide First Light Festival with £500,000 of funding to support the community interest company's National Portfolio Organisation application to the Arts Council. If successful in its application, First Light Festival will receive £660,000 from the Arts Council, which, along with funding from East Suffolk Council and other sources, will help secure its future for the next three years.

Funding will be drawn from the New Homes Bonus Reserve and provided on a sliding scale over the three years – with £180,000 for 2023/24, £170,000 for 2024/25 and £150,000 for 2025/26 – as the community interest company generates additional income through both the festival and as operators of the regenerated East Point Pavilion venue.

### **Design team appointed for Cultural Quarter project**



A major project to redevelop the Customer Services Centre and Battery Green car park, in Lowestoft, has taken a step forward with the appointment of a design team.

Norwich-based architects Chaplin Farrant and design studio HemingwayDesign will produce detailed designs to be submitted for planning in spring 2023 for the 'Cultural Quarter' project.

The Cultural Quarter project is one of five transformational regeneration projects detailed within the Town Investment Plan, and which received £24.9m from the Government's Towns Fund.



The project will see the redevelopment of the Council's current Customer Services Centre to provide a new cultural facility with associated eatery, and the redevelopment of the former Battery Green multi-storey car park to provide a new leisure offer.

Along with the other Towns Fund projects, the Cultural Quarter project is expected to be complete by March 2026.

### **Major funding boost for efforts to end rough sleeping in East Suffolk**



East Suffolk Council has welcomed the allocation of £2.5million in government funding towards additional support for people at risk of sleeping rough.

The £2,434,258 funding settlement will be awarded across three years in support of a long-term, strategic programme to end rough sleeping.

East Suffolk Council is among 303 local authorities, charities and other organisations to have received a share of up to £500m as part of the government's flagship Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) – designed to help provide emergency beds, off-the-street accommodation and wrap-around support.

It follows publication of the £2bn cross-government Rough Sleeping Strategy by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) to drive forward a manifesto commitment to tackle homelessness.

In East Suffolk, RSI funding will go towards additional emergency accommodation and resources, providing valuable services across the district in conjunction with Access Community Trust.

Funding will also facilitate partnership work with Suffolk County Council on developing a Housing First model of support – piloted in Manchester, Liverpool and the West Midlands – for not only rough sleepers, but also young people requiring a pathway plan towards independent living.

### **Roadshows provide advice across East Suffolk on rising cost of living**

A series of roadshows are taking place across East Suffolk to help provide advice to people concerned about the rising cost of living.

Free professional advice is available for dealing with rising fuel costs, money saving, benefits and debt management, as well as information on the financial support available.



Support is also on offer from local groups and organisations at the money roadshows, organised by East Suffolk Council and the East Suffolk Community Partnerships.

Events have taken place in Leiston, Wickham Market, Lowestoft and Kessingland, with the following still to come:

- Halesworth St Mary's Church – Tuesday 1 November (11am-2pm)
- Felixstowe St Philips Community Hub – Wednesday 2 November (10.30am-1.30pm)
- Carlton Colville\* Uplands Community Centre – Friday 4 November (10am-12noon)
- Reydon Village Hall\* – Friday 11 November (2pm-4pm)
- Framlingham St Michaels Church – Tuesday 15 November (11am-2pm)
- Saxmundham Smile Café (Fromus Centre) – Wednesday 16 November (10am-2pm)

### **New food support scheme launched in Beccles to help those in need**

A new food support scheme has launched in Beccles to provide those in need with hot meals and drinks.

Inspired by the successful Thin Ice project in Lowestoft, Beccles Comfort Food has launched to provide free hot meals and drinks to households who are struggling with the cost of living. The scheme is part of a wider set of cost-of-living support projects being developed by East Suffolk Council.

This Beccles scheme is funded by councillors Caroline Topping, Sarah Plummer and Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, and by Suffolk County Councillor for Beccles, Peggy McGregor, and is voucher-based, meaning a household must be issued with a voucher from a referral hub in the town. Once the household has the voucher, they can redeem the voucher at local cafés.

The local community is being invited to help support this initiative by spreading the message and providing a small donation at the Beccles Community Hub.

### **East Suffolk Explorer walking challenge launched for October**



A new walking challenge has been launched in East Suffolk – with vouchers and digital tech up for grabs as prizes for taking part.

East Suffolk Council has teamed up with community-based walking app Go Jauntly to create the month-long challenge.



Challengers are asked to walk a minimum of 20 minutes a day – with digital badges to be collected at key milestones and prizes to be won in a weekly draw.

The initiative is designed to promote the positive physical and mental health benefits of walking.

As part of the Digital Towns programme, East Suffolk Council has been working with Go Jauntly to develop outdoor adventures across all 12 of the district's principal towns and villages.

The programme has already seen the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms, alongside business support, in towns including Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Southwold and Woodbridge.

The East Suffolk Explorer challenge runs until Sunday 31 October on the Go Jauntly app, which can be downloaded for free from the Apple Store or Google Play.

### **Funding provides wheelchair access at care farm**

A local care farm has received a funding boost from an East Suffolk councillor.

Cllr Linda Coulam, East Suffolk councillor for the Gunton and St. Margarets ward, donated £3,000 from her Enabling Communities Budget to Pathways Care Farm to support the installation of new wheelchair access.



An opening event was held at Lowestoft-based Pathways, attended by Cllr Coulam, representatives from Pathways Care Farm and members of the Waveney Suffolk Help in Multiple Sclerosis (SHIMS) group.

Waveney SHIMS is a self-help group for people with MS, run by people with MS, and offers support and friendship, complimentary therapies, information and social events. The group meets at Pakefield Church Hall on the first and third Friday of each month.

### **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.



- **Leiston Town Centre Masterplan**

Consultation on high-level concept designs for the future of Leiston town centre, including improvements to public spaces, better connectivity between key locations, and enhanced cycling and walking routes. Consultation events take place in Leiston on 5 and 6 October, with an online survey open via [Leiston Town Centre Masterplan » East Suffolk Council](#)