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Suffolk County Council Report for Clare Division August 2024

Fire service urges people to stay safe this summer

With summer well and truly here, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is asking everyone to be fire safety aware.

Last summer firefighters from the service responded to more than 200 fires in the open, which includes woodland, heaths, farmland, and fields, between July and September.

For the same period in 2022 there were 500 fires due to extreme temperatures which resulted in the service declaring a major incident for the first time in decades.

While such incidents are thankfully rare, Suffolk's senior fire officer is asking people to stay vigilant and play their part in reducing the risk of fires.

During hot and dry weather, people are encouraged to:

- Put litter in the bin when out and about.
- Avoid barbecues and campfires in public open spaces.
- Ensure that any cigarettes are totally put out and disposed of properly.
- Pick up any glass items instead of leaving them lying around after a picnic.
- Report any fires in the countryside immediately by calling 999.

Farmers are also urged to slow the spread of fires by storing hay and straw with a break between stacks and away from other buildings, especially those housing livestock or containing fuels and chemicals.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has been working closely with the National Farmers Union and county-based agricultural machinery manufacturers to ensure effective team working and knowledge sharing.

The service also recently provided training and advice at an NFU health and safety event.

The service also offers Home Fire Safety Visits, which involves specialist staff and operational crews visiting Suffolk residents in their homes to provide bespoke fire safety advice, including designing a fire escape plan to help people safely evacuate their property in the event of a fire, and fitting smoke, carbon monoxide and sensory alarms.

The service uses Safelincs – the online Home Fire Safety Check - which helps prioritise the most vulnerable in our communities. More details are available at www.safelincs.co.uk/hfsc/

Fire safety information can be found on the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service

Guidance is also shared regularly on the service's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) channels.

250 young people take part in Suffolk Youth Climate Conference

250 local schoolchildren have pledged to write to their local Member of Parliament about climate change having been inspired by guest speaker, Chris Packham.

This year's Suffolk Youth Climate Conference, held on 3 July 2024 at Suffolk One Sixth Form College, was organised by the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership.

It is just one way that the partnership is engaging with schools, charities, and community groups to bring about positive change, not just for the environment, but also for the health and wellbeing of Suffolk residents.

Speakers such as Chris Packham, Lord Deben, Kids Against Plastic and Scarlett Westbrook inspired the students with messages of urgency and hope. Chris Packham's talk looked at the power young people have to shape the future.

A range of workshops allowed the children to discuss topics such as electric vehicles, nature-based solutions, the global food system, coastal adaptation, plastic pollution, flood and water management, sustainable fashion and climate anxiety.

Students also had the opportunity to engage with 30 charities and organisations, that are all working to improve the natural environment in Suffolk.

Suffolk and Norfolk awarded joint Local Visitor Economy Partnership Status

Suffolk and Norfolk have joined the new national framework of VisitEngland-accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP) after a successful bid by Visit East of England supported by Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils.

Developed and administered by VisitEngland, the national portfolio of strategic and high-performing LVEPs support collaborative working locally and nationally on shared priorities and targets to grow the local visitor economy.

The creation of LVEPs was part of the UK Government's response to the recommendations of The de Bois Review: an independent review of DMOs in England, to reshape destination management across England, reducing fragmentation and bringing coherence to its DMO landscape.

As well as a nationally recognised official status, LVEPs have access to resources and guidance from VisitBritain/VisitEngland in areas including expert advice, dedicated toolkits and training programmes in areas ranging from product distribution, accessibility and sustainability to business support and marketing. An important strand of support will be highlighting available Government funding streams as well as developing and providing a 'toolkit' to help LVEPs with bids to those streams.

The new Suffolk-Norfolk LVEP joins the likes of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, the Peak District, Kent, Cumbria, the Cotswolds and Yorkshire as well as cities including London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool.

VisitEngland welcomed the first three LVEPs, NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI), Visit County Durham and Visit Northumberland, into the programme in 2023. They form the pilot Destination Development Partnership (DDP) in the North East of England, led by NGI, first announced by the UK Government in November 2022. The pilot is a valuable opportunity to prove the DDP concept and the impact the model can have on growing the visitor economy, strengthening the case for future funding.

To reinforce its application for LVEP accreditation, VEE received many letters of support from stakeholders including Lord Leicester of Holkham, the Broads Authority, Stansted Airport, Norwich International Airport, Greater Anglia, National Trust East, English Heritage, Transport East, the VENI Skills Group, Norfolk and Suffolk Tourist Attractions group, Gt Yarmouth Tourism and Business Improvement Area, Bury St Edmunds BID, Discover Newmarket, local authorities and businesses such as English Distillery and Maids Head Hotel Norwich.

Suffolk County Council Backs Youth Justice Plan with a focus on keeping families together

Suffolk County Council has backed the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 at a meeting of the Full Council on the 11th of July 2024.

The plan has a focus on supporting young people into education, training and employment and reducing the numbers of young people offending, supporting the council's ambition to keep more families together and to keep Suffolk safe.

Each year the Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board produces a Youth Justice Plan for Suffolk. The Board includes representatives from: Suffolk Constabulary; Suffolk Probation Service; NHS Suffolk and North-East Essex and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Boards, and Suffolk County Council. The Youth Justice Service also consults with staff, children, and volunteers.

With the new plan, the partnership is aiming to support more children that the service works with into education, training, or employment. This year the service is running a pilot project with specialist staff to work with education providers and children to support them to remain at, or return to, school or college. The service also offers children short, accredited courses, which have been proven to have positive outcomes for young people and can encourage young people into further training.

Another key theme of this year's plan is to take a restorative approach to Youth Justice. This is when The Youth Justice service works with victims of youth crime to find out how they think the harm caused to them can best be put right. The service then supports the young person involved to understand how their own behaviours impact on others and to re-engage with their community and society by repairing harm and restoring relationships.

As well as helping to prevent re-offending we know this approach improves outcomes for victims. This year the service is aiming to deliver more restorative approaches including within families where relationships have been fractured by the child's contact with the youth system.

The plan also outlines how the service will be looking in detail into the reasons why some groups of children are more likely to enter into the youth justice system, to inform interventions which aim to reduce the number of young offenders in Suffolk.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services said:

“I am pleased that Suffolk County Council has endorsed the Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25.

“Suffolk’s Youth Justice Service takes a child first approach – children are at the heart of all that we do. The service and the partnership can be most effective if they understand the children and young people they work with, as this means we can deliver the interventions they need to stop offending.”

“This year we have a strong focus on understanding the reasons why young people offend and supporting more young people to stay in education, training and employment. All of this strengthens our ambition of keeping families together and providing the best outcomes for our young people.”

Outcomes will be measured against four national key performance indicators:

- To reduce the numbers of children entering the formal youth justice system for the first time
- To reduce the numbers of children already in the system who reoffend
- To reduce the number of reoffences they commit
- To reduce the use of custody for children.

Councillors recommended to approve an extra £9.1 million for SEND services

Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet will discuss a further investment of £9.1 million over three years to expand special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services at its meeting next Wednesday 24 July.

- Funding would pay for new permanent SEND staff to support children and young people
- If approved, this year more than £20 million would have been committed to expanding the service
- Investment to be discussed at Cabinet next week

The additional investment would mean that more than 30 new permanent members of staff could be recruited to help the council keep up with expected need for SEND services and deliver its important improvement plans. It would also pay for contracts to secure more educational psychology capacity – key to helping children and young people access the help they need.

This investment is in addition to the £11.2 million over three years agreed by Cabinet in February 2024, which is being used to grow the SEND team by 15% or around 60 members of staff.

In total, the council is proposing to commit more than £20 million over the next three years to bolster SEND services.

Of the £9.1 million, £2.6 million will be spent in 2024/25. This investment in permanent staff will recur in subsequent years as they continue to support children and young people with SEND. In 2025/26, £500,000 will be added to the SEND budget and in 2026/27, a further £500,000 will be added – both of which will be recurrent in subsequent years.

This investment follows an Area SEND inspection by Ofsted and CQC in November 2023, which found widespread failings across the Local Area Partnership. As a result of this, the partnership, which delivers SEND services and is made up of Suffolk County Council, the NHS Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB, published a Priority Action Plan. One of the actions in the plan includes increasing the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care plans and Annual Reviews. The proposed new staff would, in part, support the delivery of this work.

Opening date for Haverhill's new recycling centre announced

Haverhill's new £2 million recycling centre at Homefield Road, will open to the public on Thursday 8 August 2024.

It replaces the centre at Chalkstone Way and will make recycling and disposal of waste even easier and safer.

Features of the new centre include:

- A raised platform giving visitors an elevated position from which to safely dispose of waste - removing the need for steps
- A one-way system and easy-to-use layout, allowing customers to access clearly marked recycling bays
- No need to close the facility to replace full containers
- Improved accessibility and increased capacity for recycling and donating items for reuse
- Greater separation between public vehicles and larger vehicles
- Queuing capacity within the site and better access from the public highway compared to the old Chalkstone Way site
- The new site is 3.5 times bigger than the old Chalkstone Way site

The Chalkstone Way recycling centre will close permanently to the public on Tuesday 6 August 2024. The booking system will be updated in due course to reflect the move, but as usual customers can still book their slot to drop off waste and recycling at www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk

The project sees FCC Environment and Suffolk County Council working as part of the Suffolk Waste Partnership with West Suffolk Council. The facility will be operated by FCC Environment, which manages all of Suffolk's 11 recycling centres.

Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's Community Health Service Gains Baby Friendly Award

Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's Community Health Service has been awarded the prestigious Baby Friendly Award and is the latest UK health care service to gain recognition from the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) Baby Friendly Initiative.

The service, which is funded by the council's Public Health and Communities Directorate has gained Stage 3 accreditation, which means that the service is fully accredited.

The accreditation stages have involved comprehensive training around infant feeding for all staff using training resources based on UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative's 'Breastfeeding and Relationship building' material. The service achieved Stage 1 accreditation in July 2017, Stage 2 in March 2021, and following the most recent assessment from UNICEF, which included the experiences of mothers interacting with the service, Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's Community Health Service has achieved Stage 3 accreditation.

The award was presented by Cllr Bobby Bennett at an award ceremony on Tuesday 16 July at The Orangery, Holywells Park, Cliff Lane, Ipswich.

The Baby Friendly Initiative is a global programme which aims to transform healthcare for babies, their mothers and families as part of a wider global partnership between UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). In the UK, the Baby Friendly Initiative works with public services to better support families with feeding and developing close, loving relationships in order to ensure that all babies get the best possible start in life. The award is given to health services after an assessment by a UNICEF UK team has shown that recognised best practice standards are in place.

New All-Age Autism Strategy launched in Suffolk

A joint strategy and action plan has been launched today to help support autistic people of any age and their families.

Produced by Suffolk County Council, Suffolk and North-East Essex and Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Boards, the vision of the new strategy is that all autistic people in Suffolk, their parents, friends and carers are able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives in a county that accepts and understands them.

The strategy and action plan were both co-produced with autistic people, and their families, and includes their experiences and voices. Autistic people can often experience differences in how they process information, their sensory environment and how they interact with other people. While autistic people share some similar characteristics, they are also all different from each other, it was therefore important from the outset that this strategy looked to capture those differences.

Alongside the strategy an action plan was also published which looks to take the priorities outlined by the strategy, and autistic people in Suffolk, and deliver them. The priorities are:

- Improving acceptance, awareness and understanding of autism within society
- Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care
- Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people with a focus on needs lead by diagnostic pathways
- Improving autistic children and young people's access to education, and supporting positive transitions into adulthood
- Supporting more autistic people into employment Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems.

The strategy and action plan are available on the county council's website with hardcopies being sent to libraries across Suffolk.

Council bringing more community EV charging points to Suffolk

Over 60 new community venues across Suffolk will have new electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints, as Suffolk County Council's 'Plug In Suffolk' project continues to grow.

Fast charging facilities will be installed at 63 new sites, including community centres, village halls, scout huts and other community hubs, plus 25 existing chargepoints from an early iteration of Plug In Suffolk, will be adopted under a new contract.

The county council has successfully bid for £7.3 million from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, which supports local authorities to plan and deliver charging infrastructure for residents without off-street parking.

£1.4 million of the LEVI funding will go towards the community charging infrastructure, with a further £5.9 million allocated for on-street charging, which will be developed later this year.

Connected Kerb is an award-winning electric vehicle charging company, which has been awarded the contract to install the new community chargepoints and adopt the existing ones.

All costs associated with the chargepoints will be covered by Connected Kerb, including the cost of the electricity used to power them and any maintenance and repair required over the lifetime of the contract. Host venues will receive a net profit share of every kilowatt sold, from activation until their contract term ends.