

Suffolk County Council Report December 2022

Dear All,

Please see below an update for December 2022. As always please email or telephone me if you have an issue that you would like my help with and please do not hesitate to share my contact details with anyone if they need to get in touch.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy Christmas and very best wishes for 2023.

Kind regards

Bobby Bennett

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‘Winter Matters’ campaign aims to help ease the pressures of winter for Suffolk residents.

As with so much of our work, the council has partnered with organisations and services from across the county who are already providing support for people in Suffolk, such as the Rural Coffee Caravan and Community Action Suffolk, to help us reach those who need help the most this winter.

The campaign centres on five key themes:

- **Your money matters this winter:** The cost of living is a big issue for people in Suffolk and across the country – our cost of living page and leaflet (attached) has a range of advice to help households and businesses through these pressures.
- **Your safety matters this winter:** There are things we can all do to protect our home from the risk of fire this winter and avoid the threat of scams and dangerous products.
- **Your environment matters this winter:** Suffolk Recycling has a wealth of advice on how you can reduce and re-use your waste, and Food Savvy offers guidance on reducing food waste whilst saving money.
- **Your journey matters this winter:** Find out more about Suffolk Highways winter service plan and follow @suff_highways for regular updates. Everyone can play their part in keeping the roads

safe by ensuring tyres are in good condition, allowing extra time for their journey, and only travelling during adverse weather if it is essential.

- Your health and wellbeing matters this winter: Vaccinations are still our best defence against severe illness. Those eligible for a Covid booster should visit sneevaccine.org.uk to book a booster or find a nearby walk-in clinic.

To enable those in your area to get the support they need this winter, we would welcome your assistance with sharing our messaging on Twitter and Facebook, signposting people to our dedicated website www.suffolk.gov.uk/wintermatters, and raising awareness of 'Winter Matters' at any meetings that you attend.

Statement following Chancellor announcing a devolution deal for Suffolk

Cllr Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

"We welcome the Chancellor's announcement that the Government has committed to agreeing a truly historic deal for Suffolk – the first county deal of its kind in the country. This deal will be a significant step on our county's journey towards devolution and more control over our future.

"If agreed, this provisional deal would deliver decades of significant additional investment into local priorities that will improve the lives and outcomes of Suffolk's residents; secure greater decision-making powers around transport, infrastructure and skills; and give us the powers we need to achieve our net zero ambitions and create the Greenest County.

"The powers and funding on offer have changed since we made our initial bid in August 2021. The Government is actively progressing only the most ambitious devolution deals but, in return, is seeking greater changes to the way local government is led. Therefore, in exchange for the greatest freedoms and funding, we are now minded to pursue a model whereby the Leader of Suffolk County Council is directly elected by the people of Suffolk. This proposed change would not add any new levels of bureaucracy nor create any new offices.

"In keeping with Suffolk's collaborative way of working, we have developed this deal in partnership with our district and borough colleagues, the Police and Crime Commissioner and our MPs. It will now be taken forward to public consultation with Suffolk's communities and businesses."

Suffolk County Council Launch All Age Carers' Strategy

Suffolk County Council has launched its All-Age Carers' Strategy at today's Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy which has been developed with young carers and adult carers across Suffolk aims to support carers across Suffolk in their roles and will lead to the development of an action plan in the coming months. This will help SCC to provide carers with the right kind of quality support at the right time, in the right place, and in the right way.

Many carers do not identify themselves as carers for approaching 2 years - they are reluctant to do so - therefore a key goal within this strategy is to reduce this timeframe and help them access the support they need. The five key priorities are;

1. Early identification of carers
2. Improved information and advice
3. Young carers to have the same priority as adult carers
4. Systems and services that work for and support all carers
5. Improved health and well-being for carer

An action plan will be developed in the coming months which will provide more detail how the priorities will be delivered and raise the profile of carers in Suffolk.

The strategy can be read here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/caring-for-someone/suffolk-all-age-carers-strategy/>

Celebrating Suffolk's environmental champions

Creating the Greenest County Awards 2023 launched

The Creating the Greenest County Awards return for a 12th time to celebrate the achievements of Suffolk's residents, businesses, schools, communities and organisations who are protecting our environment and reducing their carbon emissions.

Nominations are now open online and close on 1 February 2023, with an environmentally-friendly ceremony to be held in March.

As Suffolk continues to work together in pursuit of being net zero by 2030, the Awards recognise those who are connecting with people, sharing best practice and collaborating to help make Suffolk the greenest county.

To go alongside awards such as Greenest Business, Greenest School and Enhancing Biodiversity and Landscape, this year a new category has been introduced - The Greenest Tourism Award. This Award recognises the good work being done across the county by the numerous organisations in this vital sector, from visitor attractions to accommodation providers.

One of the most popular categories, the Green Hero, will be returning; turning the spotlight on those individuals who have taken it upon themselves to lead the way in working for the environment. It's the only award for which both the nominees and the winners are chosen by the public.

Nominations can be submitted online at www.greensuffolk.org/awards

Suffolk supports significant scams settlement

Suffolk Trading Standards is helping to compensate victims across the county who lost thousands of pounds to an online fraudulent sweepstake scheme discovered by the United States Government.

The Next-Gen sweepstake sent tens of millions of personalised documents to unsuspecting recipients across the world promising prizes of up to \$2 million in exchange for a fee of between \$9 to \$140.

Many victims made several payments before realising they had been scammed, and it is estimated that consumers collectively lost more than \$110 million since Next-Gen began its operation in 2013.

Upon discovering the fraudulent activity, the US Federal Trade Commission worked with international partners, including the UK's National Trading Standards Scams Team, to enable them to obtain the evidence needed to take Next-Gen to court.

Almost \$25 million will be returned to victims of the scam, with over \$631,000 (£523,075) paid out via prepaid Mastercard debit cards to those in the UK.

These payments include \$10,000 (£8,291) for Suffolk residents who were scammed, and Suffolk Trading Standards has recently hand-delivered refunds ranging from £30 to £1,000.

To help tackle this, the Friends Against Scams Team is running a [SCAMnesty campaign](#) to encourage everyone in the UK to send any unwanted scam and nuisance mail they receive to the National Trading Standards Scams Team free of charge.

Postal and email scams can also be reported to Suffolk Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133**.

Suffolk Public Sector Leaders pledge another £913,000 to tackle climate emergency

Suffolk's ambition to be net-zero by 2030 has been bolstered by an almost £1million pledge for more initiatives to reduce carbon emissions and tackle the effects of climate change.

Suffolk Public Sector Leaders today agreed £913,458 funding for the next phase of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan.

New projects include making more homes energy-efficient, development of Suffolk's EV charging infrastructure to support taxis, energy audits for businesses and developing sustainable itineraries for the visitor economy.

New projects in the pipeline include:

- Development of Suffolk's EV charging infrastructure, including support for rapid charging for taxis in strategic locations.
- Making more homes energy-efficient with retrofitting of measures like loft insulation and draught excluders. This could also link with Suffolk Climate Change Partnership's thermal imaging cameras project, which uses the cameras to carry out heat loss surveys, and also signpost people to schemes like Warm Homes Suffolk.
- Targeted support for Suffolk firms, including energy audits and advice, with 5 to 10 exemplar projects funded.
- Further improvements to the greensuffolk.org website; evolving it into a green Suffolk hub and offering more useful information on how people can reduce their carbon footprint.
- Develop sustainable itineraries for the visitor economy, reducing demand for car use.

£300 thank you payment for those hosting Ukrainian guests over Christmas

Households hosting Ukrainian guests over the Christmas period are being offered an additional one-off thank you payment from Suffolk County Council, of £300.

The payment will be made in January to those hosting Ukrainian guests via the Homes for Ukraine scheme, over the Christmas period.

This payment is in addition to the monthly payment of £350 from the UK Government to hosts on this scheme.

The £300 thank you payment will be made automatically in January to any hosts already signed up and hosting guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme by 25 December. If hosts wish to opt out of receiving the additional payment, they can do so by contacting refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk by 16 December 2022.

The County Council is also asking anyone with spare space to consider signing up to host a Ukrainian Family.

Sponsors of the Homes for Ukraine scheme originally signed up to host guests for at least six months, with the option for those who are willing and able to continue beyond this.

Whilst some guests are able to move on at six months into independent accommodation, some are not yet ready or able to. The county is therefore now in need of new hosts to offer them a safe haven while the war in Ukraine continues.

Visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/ukraine to sign up and to find out more. The website also includes guidance about hosting and some of the experiences of people who have hosted Ukrainian families in their homes.

New hosts matched with guests before Christmas will be eligible for the £300 winter thank you payment. Those able to continue to host guests up to 12 months from when they arrived in the UK will also continue to receive the £350 monthly thank you payments.

Suffolk Highways gritters prepared for cold snap

Over 24,000 tonnes of salt is stocked at locations across Suffolk ready to help keep Suffolk moving this winter gritting season.

Suffolk Highways, who treat Suffolk's road network when road surface temperatures drop below 1°C, has been carefully planning for the arrival of the winter gritting season; including establishing gritting routes, hiring drivers and preparing the gritting lorries for action.

During the 2021/2022 winter season, Suffolk's 40 gritting lorries used around 9,388 tonnes of salt to treat a total distance of 129,367 miles – which equates to travelling the circumference of Earth over five times!

The highways teams are responsible for gritting 36 Priority 1 (P1) routes, which amounts to around 1,259 miles, including all A and B roads, roads to fire stations, hospitals, main bus routes and rail stations.

They also have 34 Priority 2 (P2) routes, which amounts to around 843 miles of the network, this includes other bus routes, roads leading to rural villages and access to schools.

The P1 routes are completed when road surface temperatures are forecast to drop below 1°C and P2 routes are carried out when the forecast predicts there to be a longer period of hazardous conditions.

But gritting the priority network isn't all that the teams do to prepare our county for wintry weather; Suffolk Highways has also refilled the 2,100 grit bins across the county at registered locations, such as the bottom of hills, or on junctions of minor roads. Grit bins are owned by parish and town councils and to ensure that the contents of grit bins are used to make roads safer, our communities are encouraged to monitor how and where the grit is used and if more is required to contact Suffolk Highways.

Suffolk Highways' winter gritting efforts forms part of the county council's wider 'Winter Matters' campaign, to provide Suffolk's residents with tips and advice on how to help look after their money, health, wellbeing, and safety during the colder months. More information can be found by visiting www.suffolk.gov.uk/wintermatters.

Our new and improved Suffolk County Council website is now live

I'm very pleased to inform you we have launched the redesigned suffolk.gov.uk website. The new look site is easier to use, more reliable and more accessible.

As our main website it is used by more than 100,000 people a month to access council information and services. In fact, it is the first point of contact with Suffolk County Council for around 90 percent of people.

The new website is:

- **faster** - pages load much quicker
- **more accessible** - improving the user experience for everyone, but especially for disabled people
- **simpler and easier to use** - with new features to help people search and navigate information
- **more reliable and secure** - minimising website outages and security risks
- **designed for the future** - as technology changes we will be able to present content in many ways across different digital devices

You will also notice the site has a new look and feel: it is modern and more visual to engage with our residents, and features more images of Suffolk's people, places and services.

To make sure that the site meets the needs of our users we have done lots of user testing, including sessions with councillors, staff, website users and disabled people. We will continue to improve the website based on the feedback we receive.

[You can read more about our new site on \[suffolk.gov.uk\]\(https://www.suffolk.gov.uk\)](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk), including more detail on what's changed and how you can give your feedback.

We want to hear what you think of our new website. Your comments will help us to continually improve. You can click the 'Give feedback' link at the top of every page to complete the feedback form.

Record number of residents help shape county council budget

Nearly 3,000 residents across Suffolk gave the county council their views during its 2023/24 budget planning, making it the biggest, most engaged with budget survey to date.

Each year, councils everywhere engage with their residents about how much money they plan to spend on public services, in order to set their annual budget. Suffolk County Council is no different with a budget that funds services from gritting roads during the winter, to providing Family Hubs and keeping the most vulnerable people safe and well. The budget for Suffolk County Council services in 2022/23 is £625 million.

Between early October and the start of December, the county council collected a total of 2,617 responses. From this feedback which was made up of a wide range of individuals, it saw that social care for both adults and children were the two top areas where people feel the council should be spending more, with mental health services the next most important area. Just behind these areas, residents want more to be spent on the county's roads and pavements and local bus services.

The proposals will first be considered by Suffolk County Council's Scrutiny Committee in January 2023, before being debated, and voted upon, by all Suffolk County Councillors in February 2023.

Help us record how Suffolk mourned the death of Queen Elizabeth II and proclaimed His Majesty King Charles III

Suffolk Archives wants to hear from communities across the county to help record how Suffolk marked the momentous events of the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III.

Whether it is programmes from proclamation events, or photographs from a community coming together to watch The Queen's funeral, these are all an important record of these historic occasions.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, said: "Suffolk Archives holds records of historical moments in our county's history. The death of a monarch and proclamation of a new sovereign are events most Suffolk residents will not have previously lived through.

"Collecting and preserving records of these events for future generations is so important, and if we don't receive these from Suffolk residents soon, the information and documents could be lost forever."

Earlier this year Suffolk Archives collected records from the celebrations for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, adding to the county's archive of royal events and providing valuable research content for future generations.

Bridget Hanley, Senior Archivist at Suffolk Archives, said: "Suffolk Archives is the county's memory box and earlier this year we saw many items deposited with us to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

“Now that Queen Elizabeth II’s reign has come to an end, it is important that we gather material about how people from all backgrounds across Suffolk have marked her death, as well as the Proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III. Suffolk’s archives cover more than 900 years of history, and it is essential that through our ‘contemporary collecting’ we continue to add to our collections.”

Suffolk Archives already holds many documents about [royal celebrations in the county](#) – including Queen Victoria’s Golden and Diamond Jubilees, the Coronations of Edward VII and George V, as well as Queen Elizabeth II.

To submit your records and information online visit: [The death of Queen Elizabeth II - Suffolk Archives](#). If you are planning to donate your records in person, please email archives@suffolk.gov.uk or telephone the Bury St Edmunds Branch on 01284 741212 or The Hold in Ipswich on 01473 296666 to make an appointment – so we can ensure an archivist is available to take them in and record your details.

Suffolk County Council is also collating Books of Condolence from across the county, so that these can also be preserved and stored in The Hold. If you have a Book of Condolence, please contact communications.team@suffolk.gov.uk for more information.