

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – JUNE 2021

### *Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division*



#### • COUNTY COUNCIL LEADER VOWS TO “BUILD BACK BETTER, STRONGER, & GREENER AFTER COVID”

On May 27<sup>th</sup>, Suffolk County Council held their 2021 AGM. Leader of the Council Matthew Hicks laid out his vision for the future. Protecting vulnerable residents, strengthening Suffolk’s economy and a strong focus on the environment are at the heart of council's new priorities. Protecting and supporting vulnerable residents, strengthening Suffolk’s economy, a strong focus on the environment and delivering value for money for the taxpayer is at the heart of priorities outlined by Suffolk County Council’s leader today. Councillor Matthew Hicks said that in the next 4 years, Suffolk County Council will:

- Drive up educational standards through a project led by the National Literacy Trust.
- Maintain the Outstanding rating for Children’s Services from OFSTED
- Launch a £20m programme to spend £10m tackling highways flooding and a further £10m improving and upgrading 500 miles of pavements and footpaths.
- £14.5m in upgrading or building new waste recycling centres.
- Continue investing £45m building over 800 new school places for children with Special Educational Needs

#### **On education and children’s services he said:**

“We are already investing £45m building over 800 new school places for children with Special Educational Needs. Working with our partners, we will drive up educational standards through a project led by the National Literacy Trust and we will create a network of Family Hubs.”

#### **On adult social care and supporting vulnerable people he said:**

“The reality is by 2031, a fifth of Suffolk’s residents will be aged over 70, and we must be prepared for that. We will harness new technology, like we did when we supported the Digital Care Phone project last year. We will also continue our unwavering support for our fantastic care workers, who do so much to make sure people get the care and support they need.

“Since 2017 we have spent over £1bn on caring for vulnerable residents. This huge level of support will continue.”

“On the post pandemic economic landscape in Suffolk, He outlined his vision for an economic recovery looking to build an economy fit for the next 30 years, describing an economy that “embraces new greener technology, that invites investment in the right training and skills and benefits everyone equally.”

On the environment, Councillor Hicks stressed that the people of Suffolk had made it clear during the election that environmental issues matter to them, along with other concerns around housing, infrastructure and their quality of life. He stressed that the environment would continue to be at the forefront of his administration’s agenda.

#### **Councillor Hicks said:**

“In 2019 this council [declared a climate emergency](#) – and since then we have been working hard to meet our responsibilities to become a carbon neutral authority by 2030.

“£3m to improve heating systems in council offices, fire stations and schools. And we are investing £14.5m in upgraded or new waste recycling centres and we are promoting greater biodiversity.”

He also celebrated the increase diversity of the county council, noting that 39% of councillors were now women and the election of one of the youngest county councillors in the country. He confirmed his new cabinet and noted significant changes to some portfolios.

These were:

- Combining Finance and Environment into a single portfolio
- The creation of a new Cabinet member for Education, SEND and Skills
- A new portfolio focusing on Ipswich, Operational Highways and Flooding; and separately a portfolio that links Transport Strategy with Economic Development and Waste
- Bringing together Public Health, Public Protection and Communities into a single portfolio

In explaining these changes, Councillor Hicks said that placing Finance and Environment together reflects the fact the council now publishes a carbon budget alongside the financial budget. He also hoped that by splitting Operational Highways from Transport Strategy, more focus could be given to addressing issues with highways maintenance.

Finally, by merging Public Health, Public Protection and Communities into a single portfolio, this would enable these areas to continue working closely together, as they have since the pandemic began.

**In a speech dominated by COVID, Councillor Hicks said:**

“We have seen COVID 19 disrupt every part of our lives.”

He paid tribute to the those who have died of COVID in Suffolk, noting that county council’s plans for healing woods, approved in July 2020, were now under development.

**Councillor Hicks added:**

“I promise that their memories will not be forgotten. Our plans for healing woods will, I hope, help the healing process for all those that suffer the pain of grief.”

“He went on to thank all those organisations and individuals involved in delivering the vaccination rollout across the county, noting that “the vaccine continues to represent hope for us all.”

Closing his speech, Councillor Hicks looked ahead to the proposed ending of COVID restrictions next month, noting that the new post pandemic world will come with its own challenges and opportunities, he said.

“we will not stumble back and carry on as if nothing happened – we will learn from some of the new ways of working that have emerged. With this strengthened Conservative administration - we can build back better, we must build back greener, we will build back stronger.”

Additionally, the Cabinet and Cabinet Deputy appointments were announced:

- **Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & Environment** – Richard Rout
- Cabinet Member for **Adult Care** – Beccy Hopfensperger
- Cabinet Member for **Children & Young People’s Services** – James Reeder
- Cabinet Member for **Education, SEND & Skills** – Rachel Hood

- Cabinet Member for **Economic Development, Transport Strategy, & Waste** – Richard Smith

- Cabinet Member for **Ipswich, Operational Highways, & Flooding** – Paul West
- Cabinet Member for **Public Health, Public Protection, & Communities** – Andrew Reid
- Deputy Cabinet Member for **Fostering and Adoption** – Stephen Burroughes
- Deputy Cabinet Member for **Highway Drainage** – Steve Wiles
- Deputy Cabinet Member for **Property** – Craig Rivett
- Deputy Cabinet Member for **Protected Landscapes & Archaeology** – Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro
- Deputy Cabinet Member for **SEND** – Chris Chambers
- Deputy Cabinet Member for **Transport Strategy** – Alexander Nicoll

- **SCHOOLS ACROSS SUFFOLK RECOGNISED FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN ENCOURAGING ACTIVE TRAVEL**

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, Pupils from Great Barton Primary Academy and Stowupland High School were recognised for their efforts in encouraging active and sustainable travel. The Pupils have received Bronze Modeshift STARS accreditations for their efforts. Exning Primary School who first received a Bronze accreditation in 2019, has become the first primary school in Suffolk to receive a Silver Modeshift STARS accreditation for their ongoing commitment and hard work.

- Great Barton Primary Academy – encouraging road safety, by working with local councils to relocate and promote the puffin crossing near the school. This includes designing new street signs and a Park & Stride campaign
- Stowupland High School – encouraging active and sustainable travel and road safety. A group of sixth form students set up a walking bus to help new Year 7 students build confidence walking to a new school
- Exning Primary School – received their silver accreditation for their ongoing hard work promoting sustainable travel, road safety and improving air quality outside the school gates by running an anti-idling campaign.

The Modeshift STARS Accreditation scheme encourages schools across England to implement their own travel plans to increase levels of sustainable and active travel in order to improve the health and well-being of children and young people. More information on Modeshift STARS can be found at – [www.suffolk.gov.uk/adviceontravel](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/adviceontravel) as well as top tips and advice on travelling to



school. The accreditations further support the county council's Let's make a change for the future campaign which is encouraging residents to consider more active and sustainable travel options during the COVID-19 pandemic to avoid overcrowding the county's transport network, and longer term to experience the benefits of improved health and wellbeing, less congestion and cleaner air.

- **WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ANGLO-SAXON KINGS ON NEW SUFFOLK COUNTRYSIDE TRAIL**

On May 11, it was announced that a new seven-mile walking trail near the site of Sutton Hoo had been created in Suffolk's Deben Valley revealing the hidden archeological secrets of the area. Walkers will be transported back 1,500 years and experience the landscape once home to a long-lost Anglo-Saxon settlement at Rendlesham where the East Anglian Kings once lived. Hidden gems from other periods of history will also be unveiled, such as a medieval priory, a stately home, a decoy pond and ancient woodland. The trail has been created by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service (SCCAS) and is one of the activities made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. SCCAS received a grant of £517,300 to fund "Rendlesham Revealed: Anglo-Saxon Life in South-East Suffolk", a community archaeological project to uncover hidden history in the area.

To guide them, walkers can download an online guide, which will point out the history along the way, as they take in meadows, open fields, woodland and riverside paths. The guide is available on the Suffolk Heritage Explorer website: [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham](https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham)

We know that our physical and mental wellbeing benefit greatly from being outdoors and being in touch with nature. As the weather starts to improve, and we are able to travel in accordance with Government guidelines, getting outside for a walk is a really positive thing to do.

This new 'In the footsteps of Kings' trail in the peaceful Deben Valley countryside offers these benefits perfectly, as well as a unique and immersive experience exploring the local history. It is a great addition to the Discover Suffolk series, and available in time for the virtual Suffolk Walking Festival which begins on 22 May.

- **NEW CYCLE PARKING INSTALLED THANKS TO GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND**

It was announced on May 12<sup>th</sup> that four new cycle parking stands had been installed in Hadleigh town as a result of the Government's Active Travel Fund to help make cycling safer and easier. One of the positives to come out of the COVID-19 crisis is the noticeable increase in people cycling. Whether that is for commuting to work to avoid overcrowding the transport network, for leisure or as part of an exercise routine. This has resulted in reduced congestion and improvements in air quality as well as supporting people's health and wellbeing. The installation of the cycling parking stands follows community consultation by Hadleigh Town Council and Hadleigh Cycling Club, working in partnership with the county and district councils.

The stands can be found at the following locations in Hadleigh:



- On the corner where Angel Street joins the High Street
- Outside Pedal House, on the concourse on the High Street
- At Hadleigh Church
- On Maiden Way, just off the High Street

Hadleigh Cycling Club is also looking to produce a map of the cycle routes around the town and the surrounding countryside.

#### • **A NEW ELECTRIC TAXI-BUS SERVICE LAUNCHED IN EAST SUFFOLK**

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, Suffolk County Council launched Katch – a new sustainable, electric taxi-bus service in the East of the county. Katch provides a travel solution for local residents and visitors in Wickham Market and Framlingham, as well as for those who need to meet their rail connections at Wickham Market train station in Campsea Ashe. With support from East Suffolk Council, Framlingham Town Council, Community Rail Network, East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership, Greater Anglia and CarsSmart, Katch delivers on the commitment Suffolk councils have made to grow the region's passenger transport in a sustainable way. It also plays a part in cutting carbon to help reach the Government's ambition of zero emissions by 2050 and Suffolk County Council's own target of being carbon neutral by 2030. Katch started on **Monday 17 May 2021** and will run as a trial for 12 months. The service will be available seven days a week from:

- 6.30am to 10.30pm on Monday to Saturday
- 9am to 7pm on Sunday

All journeys must be booked in advance via the Katch App or telephone by calling **01728 55 44 55**. The cost of a return journey is £7 and a single journey is £4. If successful and is regularly used by commuters and rail passengers, Suffolk County Council is keen to facilitate further schemes across the county.

Suffolk County Council is delighted to be able to offer the new sustainable, electric taxi-bus service in the East of the county. The service will provide a travel solution for local residents and visitors in Wickham Market and Framlingham as well as for those who need to meet their train connections at Wickham Market train station in Campsea Ashe. It is also hoped the service will encourage more people to consider using public transport rather than relying on the car. Following a successful trial, there is an opportunity for this type of flexible and green alternative travel to be considered across other communities in Suffolk.

#### • **LONG-AWAITED PRIDE IN SUFFOLK'S PAST EXHIBITION OPENED AT THE HOLD**

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, it was announced that the long-awaited Pride in Suffolk's Past exhibition will open on May 17<sup>th</sup>, in line with Covid-19 regulations. This will be only the second exhibition to open in this brand-new venue - which partially opened for the first time last September - and is a fantastic opportunity for visitors to come and get a taste of what is on offer – all for free!



The Pride in Suffolk's Past exhibition, which is the culmination of an in-depth two-year project, uses original documents found in Suffolk Archives and local collections to explore the hidden histories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender non-conforming people in Suffolk's past.

Due to legal and social repression these stories have all too often gone untold but now these experiences can be shared for future generations to understand how things have changed over time, as well as what work there is still to be done. Complementing the archival materials on display, the exhibition also contains contributions shared by the thriving LGBTQ+ community in Suffolk today.

The exhibition is open seven days a week from Monday 17 May until Sunday 4 July. Tickets are free of charge but must be booked in advance: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/suffolk-archives](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/suffolk-archives)

The Hold is able to reopen its doors with the Pride in Suffolk's Past Exhibition. This is such an important exhibition reflecting the lives of the LGBTQ+ community in Suffolk both past and present. I'd also like to thank everyone involved in the project who has shared their stories and supported the exhibition, ensuring that these voices can be heard. The Pride in Suffolk's Past exhibition is the result of a wider project forming part of Sharing Suffolk Stories, the countywide National Lottery Heritage Fund supported programme of activities which enables communities to discover more about the history of where they live and to share it in new and engaging ways.

- **PROJECT TO SHARE STORIES OF NEWMARKET'S WW2 JEWISH REFUGEES**

A new heritage project was announced on May 17<sup>th</sup> which aims to uncover stories of Jewish refugees who were housed in Newmarket during World War 2. The joint heritage project is being run by Suffolk Archives and the National Horseracing Museum. The project has been inspired by the memoir of one of these refugees, Fritz Ball, who with his wife Eva was among 25 Jewish refugees living at Palace House Stables (now part of the National Horseracing Museum in Newmarket) in September 1939. Fritz's memoir gives a fascinating insight into the life of the refugees sent to Newmarket at this time, highlighting the kindness they initially experienced from the locals and how this changed with the outbreak of war. It also helps us to understand the challenges faced by those arriving in a new place and adjusting to the cultural differences experienced.

As well as his memoir, Sandra is also the proud owner of one of Fritz's cellos, which he succeeded in bringing with him on the long journey to Newmarket from their home in Berlin. The instrument features strongly in Fritz's memoirs and it is hoped it can play a part in how these stories can go on to be shared more widely. The project team are exploring the possibility of working with local schools and the wider community to create a new piece of music which responds to the stories being researched.

This project forms part of Sharing Suffolk Stories, the countywide National Lottery Heritage Fund supported programme of activities which enables communities to discover more about the history of where they live and to share it in new and engaging ways.





- **DISCOVER SOMETHING NEW WITH SUFFOLK WALKING FESTIVAL 2021**

Suffolk's Walking Festival returns in 2021 for its 14th instalment, but this year as the very first Virtual Suffolk Walking Festival. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the guided Suffolk Walking Festival cannot take place, instead the new virtual festival will include self-guided walks with fun facts about Suffolk, family activity sheets, podcasts and videos from around the county. The festival will also include a 'My Suffolk, Your Suffolk' feature of favourite walks, and a competition where you can win 4 tickets to next year's festival and a year's subscription to the Suffolk Magazine.

The 10-day Virtual Walking Festival will take place between Saturday 22 May and Monday 31 May and all information can be accessed at [suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](https://suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk) and by [facebook.com/suffolkwalkingfestival](https://facebook.com/suffolkwalkingfestival).

You don't have to be an avid walker to join the fun as the activities range from short strolls and gentle rambles to some more challenging hikes. Following the increase in popularity of walking over the last 12 months, the festival this year aims to nurture members of the public's newfound interest in Suffolk's countryside and the positive impact walking has had on our physical health, mental wellbeing and the environment. In a year when many events and group gatherings are cancelled or considerably reduced it is fantastic that the Suffolk Walking Festival 2021 is able to happen in some form. The pandemic has encouraged many more of us to go out walking and discover our county's beautiful countryside. Walking has so many known benefits for our health and wellbeing. Suffolk's Walking Festival is supported by Suffolk councils, many partners and charities including BBC Radio Suffolk, Suffolk Magazine, National Trust and RSPB, and community groups such as Shotley Open Spaces and Clare Country Park.

Members of the public are being encouraged to share their photos and experiences of the festival this year online by using the hashtag **#SWF21**.

- **STATE-OF-THE-ART VEHICLES JOIN SUFFOLK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S FLEET**

On May 20<sup>th</sup> it was announced that Suffolk Fire and Rescue had unveiled three new vehicles, packed with the latest technology, to support firefighters at emergency incidents. The Command Support Vehicles will typically be used as a hub at large, complex incidents, from which officers can manage operations and work with other emergency services. Some of the new features on the vehicles include:

- Dedicated WiFi, enabling officers at the scene to quickly stream and share data, images, footage and plans with colleagues who are based remotely, for example at the Combined Fire Control Room
  - LCD display built into the side of the vehicle, allowing officers to share content with other agencies attending an incident, such as live drone footage and plans
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- Latest communications and computer technology with access to live information, weather reports, data on substances and chemicals, and direct contact with other agencies and services

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has invested £360,000 in the new units, which replace the three existing Command Support Vehicles. With these new, more advanced vehicles in the fleet, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has even better tools at its disposal to take command of incidents. It's important that the service continues to invest in such equipment, so that staff and crews can carry out their jobs to the best of their abilities, and are safe whilst doing so. In turn, this helps us to protect Suffolk's residents.

In the last couple of years, our firefighters have been kitted out in new uniforms and we've introduced three new appliances to the fleet. We are currently refurbishing Princes Street station in Ipswich and planning the construction of a brand new blue light station in Stowmarket. Our next projects include bringing in four new appliances which have enhanced tools to support at road traffic collisions, as well as updating breathing apparatus sets, handheld radios and IT.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

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