



Ward Councillors monthly newsletter – November 2020

Welcome to the November edition of our monthly newsletter – keeping you up to date with the main news stories from East Suffolk and, where possible, a head's up on issues which are emerging.

Regards,
Melissa and Richard

Housing Issues

As expected, the housing list has had an increase, however this is not due to evictions from the private sector it is just housing need. We are pressing on with our own development programme which includes the old Deben School Site, purchasing of 106 homes from developers, I recently opened 6 new shared ownership homes built on an old garages site these were built to a high standard complete with air sourced heating systems. We are still working with few individuals who are homeless (their choice) most of the people taken off the streets at the beginning of the first lockdown have been moved on to permanent housing which is great news. I endorse the response we have sent to Government regarding the planning White Paper it is a very robust response particular in respect to affordable housing where I have serious reservations, I did have a meeting arranged with the housing minister to which I had sent the questions I needed answering but this was cancelled due to a Parliamentary statement by the PM, I hope this can be rearranged these meetings between local Cabinet Members and Ministers are very important as we are the sharp end of their policies and our input is necessary to get aspects changed so we can make them work or not as one size does not fit all.

East Suffolk responds to new restrictions

East Suffolk Council has confirmed that key services will continue despite the new restrictions introduced to help combat the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we are asking residents to continue doing their very best to help combat the virus.

While some changes and adaptations have been made to ensure that the Council adheres to the new guidelines, the priority remains that services continue to be delivered as normally as possible while also supporting the efforts to reduce the virus in East Suffolk and the wider county.

So, for example, while our Leisure Centres and Marina Customer Service Centres have unfortunately had to close temporarily in line with government guidelines, waste collections



are to continue as normal, public conveniences will remain open and grounds maintenance will not be affected.

You can see the full details of how services are affected on our [Covid-19 page](#).

Gold standard for councillor support

As a result of its commitment to Member development and excellent support to Councillors, East Suffolk Council has been awarded the coveted “gold standard” Councillor Development Charter Plus Award.

Developed by the Local Government Association and the nine Regional Employers’ Organisations, the Charter Plus Award is only given to those councils that can demonstrate their strategic approach and continuous commitment to councillors’ learning and development needs.

In order to obtain this prestigious award, the Council must undergo a rigorous assessment by an independent panel of assessors and submit evidence that the Council meets the Charter Plus criteria.

This accreditation is recognition that East Suffolk Council has achieved best practice in the way it provides support, learning and development opportunities for its elected members, ensuring they have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively represent their communities.

Councillor development activities are led by a cross party Member Development Steering Group. Activities include the creation of a Member Development Strategy, a comprehensive induction programme for all new Councillors, an Annual Training Programme and a Personal Development Plan process that assesses member’s individual training needs on an annual basis.

Funding boost for key organisations in East Suffolk

East Suffolk Council has launched a new £100,000 ‘Bounce Back’ Fund, which offers grants of between £250 and £5,000 to support voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in East Suffolk.

Funded through the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board, the funding is available for equipment, adaptations or staffing to enable VCSE organisations to safely continue or restart their services or to develop/launch new services.

All VCSE organisations are eligible to apply, as long as the funding requested is for equipment, adaptations or staffing to continue or restart a service or develop/launch a new service. However, some groups will be given priority to help support those who have been



particularly impacted by the pandemic. These include organisations supporting young people, organisations relying on volunteers and community buildings which are struggling to reopen safely.

The online form and full details about eligibility criteria and how to apply can be found [here](#).

Shared ownership scheme is district first

As part of a comprehensive development programme to deliver vital new housing, East Suffolk Council has introduced six new shared-ownership properties to its housing stock – the first of their kind in the district.

The properties are located in Brampton near Halesworth and provide an affordable ownership scheme, which combines purchasing a share in a home with a rental agreement for the remaining unowned share.

The six properties are semi-detached two-bedroom houses and are the first shared ownership properties the Council has built. East Suffolk has worked in partnership with Orwell Housing Association to deliver the new homes which have been built by local Contractor, Wellington Construction.

The properties are over 800sqft over two levels, externally there is a rear turfed garden, off-road parking for two cars, generous patio area and garden shed. All properties include, oven, hob and hood, carpets throughout and air source heating.

Felixstowe's Seafrost Gardens wins Green Flag

Felixstowe's Seafrost Gardens has been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme as one of the very best in the world for the fifth time.

This international award, now into its third decade, is a sign to the public that the space boasts the highest possible environmental standards, is beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities.

The Gardens has also received the much-coveted additional Green Heritage Site Accreditation for the management of the historic features.

Comments invited on planning documents

East Suffolk residents are invited to have their say on three draft planning documents:

- The draft [Cycling and Walking Strategy](#)
- The draft [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\)](#)
- The draft [Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy \(RAMS\) Supplementary Planning Document](#)



All three consultations close on 30 November 2020 and comments can be submitted online, by email at planningpolicy@eastsoffolk.gov.uk or by post to East Suffolk Council, Planning Policy & Delivery Team, Riverside 4, Canning Road, Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ.

New eBook celebrates East Suffolk's volunteers

East Suffolk Council has created a new eBook to celebrate the people, organisations and businesses who have given up their time, knowledge and skills to help make a difference in their communities since the start of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The eBook tells the stories of some of our volunteers and showcases the important work they have carried out – and continue to carry out – to support the most vulnerable in their communities. [Read the eBook.](#)

Call for food and drink traders for restyled pavilion

Local businesses are being offered the unique opportunity to trade within the redesigned East Point Pavilion in Lowestoft, which once complete will be managed by the organisers of the First Light Festival.

The pavilion is currently being regenerated by international designers Hemingway Design and Norwich-based Hudson Architects. The building will be restyled to create a thriving food hall and local events venue, injecting a new lease of life into Lowestoft's seafront. The new facility will be managed by First Light Festival C.I.C, the company which oversees First Light Festival.

First Light Festival C.I.C. are now seeking expressions of interest from experienced food and drink businesses to run the in-house bar and café as resident traders. They also want to hear from start-ups, traders and producers interested in leasing a space for their pop-up business.

Food and drink businesses, start-ups, traders and producers interested in leasing a space can go to firstlightlowestoft.com/east-point-pavilion for more details.

Local groups to benefit from new funding schemes

Small Grant Schemes has been launched by the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership and the Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula Community Partnership – both available to voluntary and community groups within the partnership areas.

Felixstowe Peninsula's scheme is aimed at tackling local priorities within the partnership area, including isolation and loneliness, mental health and emotional wellbeing, physical health, financial hardship and educational attainment.



The Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula has the Youth Engagement Grant scheme aimed at young people and the Village Hubs Grant Scheme, aimed at the wider community. Both schemes offer grants between £250 and £2,500.

[See more information, including full eligibility criteria and application process.](#)

Donations celebrate heritage of former school site

As Cabinet member for housing I have been heavily involved in the housing element of this project, I think that will finished up with a development that the Town and ES can be rightly proud of, more details to follow.

East Suffolk Council has been working with the Felixstowe Society to identify key items to donate from the former Deben High School site to the town's archives.

The site was transferred to East Suffolk Council from Suffolk County Council earlier this year with completion due on 15 November and will facilitate the ongoing development of Felixstowe Sports Hub and a new home for Felixstowe Indoor Bowls Club and Cricket Club. Proposals for the redevelopment of the main school building also include a range of housing, in particular affordable units for the town.

To enable the development, a large portion of the former school buildings will be demolished so that the site can be repurposed to accommodate the new development. However, the original Lower School Assembly Hall will be retained as a community asset. The Council has been working closely with the Felixstowe Society to ensure that key pieces which hold many special memories for the local community are saved for the Felixstowe Secondary School's Archive before the demolition.

The items identified are mainly from the original Grammar School Building and include the wooden front doors, which will match the special commemorative key held by the Society, corridor signage and masonry. The Council is also working with the Society to create a final photographic library before the work start.

