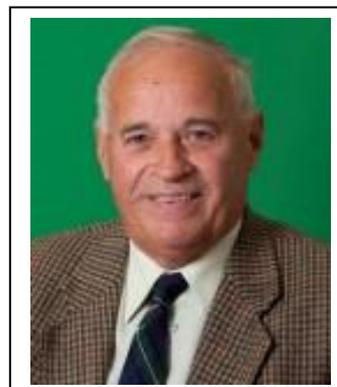


# Parish Report June 2023

## Councillor

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### Information Updates

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: [refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk) or [ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

### £10 million new funding to fix residential roads

Local road surfaces in villages and residential areas in Suffolk should be blitzed as part of a new £10 million programme, Suffolk County Council has announced.

The extra funding will nearly double Suffolk Highways' £11 million annual roads maintenance budget, but be targeted at smaller residential streets which are typically maintained less frequently than busier A and B roads. The announcement was made by Suffolk County Council's leader Cllr Matthew Hicks at the Authority's annual general meeting. The funding is subject to a formal Cabinet decision which will follow later this year.

At the same time, Cllr Hicks also reiterated the council's commitment to improving services for children with special educational needs and disabilities, including £55 million to create 1,275 new SEND school places by 2025.

### Spotlight on improving air quality as county-wide strategy launched

Suffolk County Council has set out its plan for improving air quality in Suffolk following results from a recent air quality survey, as its county-wide Air Quality Strategy is published. Air quality continues to be an important public health issue and a driver of health inequalities which disproportionately affects some of our most vulnerable residents in Suffolk.

The county council recently engaged with Suffolk's residents about their thoughts on the impact poor air quality has on their quality of life. The survey received 338 responses and had a particular focus on Ipswich residents, because Ipswich makes up four of Suffolk's eight Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). AQMAs are areas where national target levels of Nitrogen Dioxide are being exceeded.

Some of the results of the survey showed that there is a need to increase awareness about how residents can reduce pollution by reducing indoor burning of wood and coal, encouraging businesses to replace their fleet with low-emission or electric vehicles, reducing short journeys by car and considering more sustainable forms of transport such as walking, bike or bus. Vehicle idling when stationary is also a contributor to high levels of air pollution, an area the strategy will focus on going forward.

A key element of the Air Quality Strategy is a public engagement plan which is being developed to increase public awareness of the health impacts of air quality in Suffolk, enabling individuals to make choices that protect both their health and the health of others from the harmful effects of pollution.

The delivery of the strategy will be closely monitored by the council to ensure it is accomplishing what it has set out to do. The strategy will also feed into the collective work of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **Suffolk residents urged to #ShakeltOut when recycling**

A new campaign by Suffolk Waste Partnership is encouraging people to empty plastic bags and not throw them in recycling. A campaign encouraging people in Suffolk to shake out their bags and not to put them in their recycling bins is underway.

The #ShakeltOut campaign has been launched by the Suffolk Waste Partnership to encourage households in Suffolk to help improve recycling rates across the county by making sure black bin bags and other plastic sacks are not thrown in with recyclable materials.

The Partnership, which comprises Babergh District Council, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Mid Suffolk District Council, Suffolk County Council, and West Suffolk Council, says more than a quarter (26%) of the materials in Suffolk's recycling bins in 2022/23 were not able to be processed as they were spoiled.

Plastic bags and rubbish sacks are a particular problem – recycling handlers can't see what's inside them and they are often full of rubbish or other non-recyclable items. This means bags are removed during the sorting process to avoid spoiling other good recycling. Any removed bags are then sent for disposal.

The Suffolk Waste Partnership has also released a new animation as part of the wider campaign to promote the #ShakeltOut message.

The animation aims to remind households across the country of the simple measures they can take to help improve recycling: <https://youtu.be/iBKOUFWxXdQ>

To find out more about the #ShakeltOut campaign and for more information on recycling in Suffolk, visit [www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/shake-it-out](http://www.suffolkrecycling.org.uk/shake-it-out)

## **Library services protected as Suffolk County Council approves additional funding**

Suffolk County Council has today underlined its commitment to library services in Suffolk, as it approved plans to increase its funding to Suffolk Libraries, to enable the service to continue operating at its current level, until the end of the contract in July 2024.

Suffolk Libraries currently receives £5.9m per year from Suffolk County Council, however the service is forecasting a deficit of £60k per month from April 2023. The service has cited increases in service costs, a reduction in income opportunities following the Coronavirus Pandemic and rising inflation, as causes of the deficit.

This means it is no longer possible for the service to continue operating at its current level of service, within its current contract value.

At today's meeting of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet, the council has approved plans to absorb this cost pressure, funding Suffolk Libraries an additional £720k per year, through to the end of the current contract in July 2024. This additional funding will support Suffolk Libraries to continue delivering its highly valued services to Suffolk Residents.

The council has previously made a commitment to continue to support Suffolk Libraries. At Suffolk County Council's full council meeting in February, the council agreed to fund an additional £250k in the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year to help with the increased costs Highlighted by Suffolk Libraries. This £250k for the first quarter of the year is included within the overall figure agreed by Cabinet today, of an additional £720k for the 2023/24 financial year.

The council also supported Suffolk Libraries with £155,000 for initiatives to support residents with Cost of Living and support for Digital Inclusion in the 2022/23 financial year. In addition, the Council continues to successfully access Section 106 funding to support ongoing building developments required to ensure buildings are fit for purpose and support service delivery.

## **Could you improve the quality of life of people living with dementia?**

Residents have just one month left to enter a competition which will see virtual reality films used to help dramatically improve the well-being of those diagnosed with dementia. An estimated 900,000 people in the UK currently have dementia, and this is expected to increase to nearly 1.6 million by 2040. Those living with the condition often experience memory loss, confusion, changes in behaviour and problems with language and understanding, which can be devastating for both them and their loved ones.

As part of Suffolk County Council's ongoing commitment to providing dementia support, a competition was recently launched to develop life-changing VR films to help those living with the condition. This follows the council investing £80,000 to develop a bespoke VR app, to be called Reverie, based on more than 10 years of clinical research demonstrating the diverse benefits of this technology for people with dementia.

Anyone is welcome to enter the competition, including people living with dementia themselves and their paid or unpaid carers. Entrants do not need to be experienced in film production and only need to submit a simple storyboard outlining the concept of their VR film, which should fall under one of the following six categories:

- Suffolk
- Nostalgia
- Nature
- Leisure
- Computer Generated Imagery (CGI)
- Carer content

The deadline for submission of storyboards is Friday, 30 June. Shortlisted candidates will then proceed to the second round of the competition, where they will receive exclusive support from Spark Emerging Technologies Ltd with planning, filming, and producing their proposed film before the competition closes on Thursday, 31 August. People living with dementia will evaluate the films before they go on to be judged by a specialist panel.

Winners will then receive the honour of having their films showcased at an awards ceremony and be given a choice of prizes, including a camera kit, top of the range VR Headset, or the option of gifting a year's subscription to the new VR app with all the required hardware to a care setting of their choice to support someone they know who is living with dementia.

Those wishing to take part in the competition can find further details at <https://vrchallengeuk.co.uk>

### **Suffolk residents offered chance to name new fire engines**

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service will launch its 'Name the Fire Engine' competition at next week's Suffolk Show, enabling the public to name a fleet of new life-saving vehicles. Nine new fire engines are set to be ready for use by the end of 2023, following Suffolk County Council allocating over £5.3m in its 2023/24 budget to replace some of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's current vehicle fleet with state-of-the-art alternatives.

To help celebrate the service's 75th anniversary this year, Suffolk residents are invited to play an important part in shaping its future by naming the new engines in a competition due to officially launch at the Suffolk Show, on 31 May and 1 June. Entry forms will be available at Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's stand within the Emergency Services Zone of the event held at Trinity Park, Ipswich, and people can also enter online by visiting the service's Twitter and Facebook pages.

After the competition closes on Friday, June 30, a judging panel consisting of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's senior fire staff and Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, Councillor Andrew Reid, will decide on the winning names. An official naming ceremony will take place at Ipswich East Fire Station next spring, allowing competition winners to see their suggested name on one of the new fire engines before these are used across Suffolk in response to fires, road traffic accidents and other emergency incidents.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service donated two of its former fire engines to Ukraine in March 2022 to help their counterparts in the war-torn country, with six staff from the service travelling over 1,000 miles across Europe to deliver the vehicles, which remain in service in Ukraine.

A decommissioned fire engine was also given to Ipswich Transport Museum last year to support their efforts to preserve local history for future generations to enjoy.

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