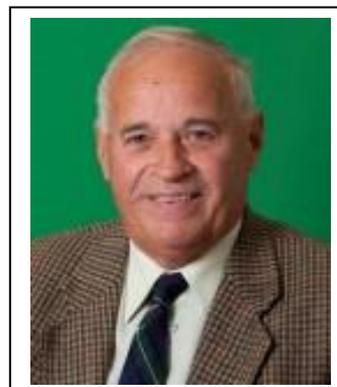


Parish Report August 2023

Councillor

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Information Updates

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

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

Remembering Caroline Page

A silence was held at the beginning of the Council meeting on Thursday 13 July to honour Councillor Caroline Page, a much-respected member of our group and a passionate campaigner for her division of Woodbridge since she was first elected in 2008. Our thoughts are with Caroline's husband and family.

Annual Safeguarding Reports

At Cabinet on 11 July, annual reports were tabled on safeguarding adults and children in the county, with numbers of referrals and trends explained by SCC officers. Some of the issues raised included mental health of children and young people, and for adults, self neglect and hoarding.

If you have concerns about the safety of a child, young person or adult, you can make a safeguarding referral by contacting Suffolk County Council's Customer First on 0808 800 4005 or by emailing customer.first@suffolk.gov.uk

Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report and Children in Care Council

On 13 June, Cabinet reviewed the annual report of the Corporate Parenting Board. Suffolk County Council acts as the corporate parent for all children who are taken into care and is responsible for finding them a place to stay and their health and wellbeing. The annual report assesses how well the council is doing in this role.

The Cabinet also received a report from the Children in Care council (C2C and Brighter Futures) who outlined the work they had been undertaking during the year, including interviewing applicants for CYP social care roles, campaigning for 'Care Experienced' to be a Protected Characteristic, and the Watch Your Words campaign to change some of the language used by practitioners around care experienced young people.

Suffolk Libraries

Suffolk County Council's contract with Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society Limited ends on 31 July 2024, and a number of options were put forward at Cabinet on 13 June about how the libraries service in Suffolk should be run after this date. After some discussions, it was agreed that there should be a 10 month extension to the current contract to allow for extensive consultation with people of Suffolk and a competitive tender process to be carried out, which is essential for a contract of this size.

The public consultation period will be for 14 weeks from October 2023 to January 2024 and we would encourage everyone to have their say on what they think libraries and libraries outreach should look like in the county.

Dental Services in the County

Health Scrutiny Committee met on 12 July to look at dental services in the county, amid news reports that 9 in 10 dental practices in the UK were not accepting new NHS patients. In Suffolk, some people have reported having to extract their own teeth, and the most disadvantaged groups in the county are the worst affected.

NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in the county have been working with providers to improve services, aiming to ensure that 10% of dental work undertaken is urgent dental work. There are also plans to develop a brand new Centre for Dental Development at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich which will train new dentists and dental nurses to improve numbers of practitioners.

Suffolk's Archive Service Achieves Full National Accreditation

Following a recent Archive Service Accreditation Panel, Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service has achieved Full Accreditation. The service achieved Provisional Accreditation in March 2019 and today the UK Archive Service Accreditation Committee has moved Suffolk Archives from provisional to full accreditation status.

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Achieving accredited status demonstrates that Suffolk Archives has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its unique collections and the service it offers to a broad range of users. Archive Service Accreditation is supported by a partnership of the Archives and Records Association (UK), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives, The National Archives; and the Welsh Government through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales division.

The Accreditation Panels are composed of Committee members nominated by the seven Accreditation partners and openly recruited from the archives sector.

Motion denied on safer speeds on Suffolk roads

At Council on Thursday 13 July, our group proposed a motion for lowering speed limits on rural roads where the safe speed is clearly lower than the current National Speed Limit. The motion suggested that on these roads, a lower speed limit than 60mph would encourage many drivers to slow to a more appropriate, safer speed, thereby reducing accidents and making roads safer for all users. This motion was voted down by the SCC administration.

Motion passed on upholding minimum parking standards

The Council meeting on 13 July also discussed a motion proposed by the SCC administration to uphold minimum parking standards in new developments in the county. This motion was passed by the council, although our group observed that it was difficult for Highways planning officers to object to development plans unless the impact of the plans could shown to be severe. It was agreed that the council had a real opportunity to shape plans for local communities by making sure residents' concerns were taken into account when in consultation with developers.

Suffolk receives £1.49m funding for walking and cycling pilot

Suffolk County Council has received the money from Active Travel England as one of 11 local authorities taking part in the social prescribing scheme. Suffolk County Council has received more than £1 million from the government to fund participation in a national pilot scheme to promote cycling and walking as part of a more active lifestyle.

The county is receiving £1,495,506 over three years as one of 11 local authorities taking part in the £13.9 million Active Travel England social prescribing scheme.

The project, launched in August 2022, is helping councils run trials to evaluate the impact of active travel on an individual's physical and mental health, such as through reduced demand for healthcare appointments and reliance on medication due to more physical activity. This also includes allowing doctors and health workers to prescribe walking and cycling to improve patients' physical and mental health.

As the scheme progresses, GP surgeries in the pilot areas of Ipswich and Lowestoft will be invited to take part. Work is already underway with Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board and Suffolk Information Partnership to link some referral systems.

Suffolk will use its funding for projects that will see patients in parts of Ipswich and Lowestoft offered free access to guided walks, cycle training and bike loans.

Introductory walk and cycle groups are taking place now on Friday mornings in Ipswich at Murray Park and Holywells Park. In Lowestoft they are operating from Normanston Park. These will be available through July and August, with participants offered 1-1 journey planning, 1-1 buddy walking, or cycling and bike maintenance training. From September, walking and cycling groups will take place across Ipswich at Whitton, Chantry, Gainsborough, Wherstead and Central Ipswich.

In Lowestoft they will be taking place at the Seafront, Normanston Park, Nicholas Everett Park and Sparrows Nest. Other venues will develop as the pilot progresses. There will be varying levels of activity depending on health needs, with each activity lasting up to 90 minutes with a rest break and free drink in a local café. There will be plenty of rest stops based on the needs of the participants. Equipment can be provided to include walking aids, bicycles or e-bikes.

All activities are led by experienced and qualified cycle and walk leaders. Later in the year other activities are planned in the form of community events, themed walks or cycle rides, cycling courses and a digital walking app featuring challenges and treasure hunts focused on the areas of Ipswich and Lowestoft.

Participants within the target areas can be referred through a GP or voluntary group or a self-referral by contacting thewaytogosuffolk@suffolk.gov.uk or calling 01473 260060.

For more details about the scheme go to the [Way To Go Suffolk](#) website.

Suffolk County Council has also received £545,528 over three years from the Government's Capability Fund to develop and invest in cycling initiatives.

This includes setting up an accessible cycling scheme in Stowmarket for those unable to use a bicycle and working with a selection of organisations offering their staff a free six week e-bike trial - [launched with Associated British Ports at Port of Ipswich last November](#) - and which now has almost 30 bikes on trial around the county.

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Website - [Suffolk Green, Liberal Democrat and Independent Group – The GLI Group at Suffolk County Council \(suffolkqli.wordpress.com\)](#)