

COASTLINE

The Newsletter of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Issue 42, Winter 2009

We want a real local say on Sizewell C

Suffolk Coastal has called again on the Government for there to be a real local say to ensure local issues are fully taken into account in any future planning process for a new nuclear power station at Sizewell.

“The Government announced in November that a planning application for Sizewell will now be fast-tracked but we want it to stick to its other main promise that it will also make the planning process fairer,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment and Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

“We strongly believe that local communities should have their say - with the right to reject plans for a Sizewell C if, after detailed consideration of the local issues, that is seen to be the correct decision for this district and its very special countryside in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

“We want guarantees that the views of local people, and this Council as their representative, will have a real influence on the decision. We do not want to lose the right to control the impact that any proposed development could have on the unique environment around Sizewell - this district's local knowledge and requirements must be taken into account,” added Cllrs Nunn and Smith.

In 2003, the Government said there would be the fullest public consultation before any decision to proceed with building of a new power station.

Advice line for parents

Parents looking for help and advice on any aspect of bringing up their children can use confidential free phone line 24/7 on 0808 800 222 or email parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk

Parentline Plus also offer websites that offer topical, regularly updated information on all parenting issues from new baby to teens plus tips on the recession and swine flu – visit www.parentlineplus.org.uk or www.gotateenager.org.uk

Car park boost

Suffolk Coastal's Melton Hill car park is again open this Christmas on Saturdays for free parking from December 5, with it also open especially on Sunday, December 6 for visitors to Woodbridge's Christmas market.

Chairman wants local heroes

Suffolk Coastal's Chairman has called on residents to help identify 'local heroes' who have achieved something for the community in spite of their physical disabilities, illness or injury.

Councillor Stephen Burroughes wants to put the spotlight on those, who behind the scenes, have become a local hero, whether through raising money, completing a marathon, helping others or some other community-spirited activity.

“I was born with cerebral palsy, and know exactly how difficult life can be for those with serious disabilities or injuries either caused at birth or due to accident or illness. For me, just putting one foot in front of the other is hard work. I want to find individuals in our district who have put their own problems aside and achieved something for their fellow human beings,” said Cllr Burroughes.

“It won't be easy finding such people, as they will probably shy away from publicity and simply hate being 'fussed over', but they deserve to be found and thanked for their achievements which is helping to restore some faith in human nature,” added Cllr Burroughes.

Please send your nominations and enquiries to 'The Chairman's Challenge', at Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU. Or contact him by emailing: stephen.burroughes@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Council to discuss Core Strategy

The latest round of consultation on the proposed Core Strategy of Suffolk Coastal's first Local Development Framework has now ended and thanks to all those who took the time to make their comments.

The last edition of Coastline explained that residents were being asked for their views again because of the revised proposals for where new homes in the district should go in the future.

The comments received are now being considered and will be responded to by the Council. A final version of the Core Strategy including Development Management Policies will be presented to Suffolk Coastal's Cabinet on Wednesday, February 10 at a meeting being held at 7pm at Trinity Park. All members of the public are invited to attend to observe the discussions.

If Cabinet agree to recommend the Core Strategy to Council, a meeting of the Full Council will be held on Monday, March 8 again at Trinity Park. To keep up to date, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review/corestrategy or call a member of the planning policy team on 01394 444628.

Christmas opening hours

The Council's Melton Hill offices will be closed from Thursday, December 24 through to Monday, December 28, and on Thursday, December 31 but will be open from 9am to 4pm on Tuesday, December 29 and Wednesday, December 30, and as usual on all other days.

Our Felixstowe office will only be open on Wednesday, December 30 during the holiday period. For details of recycling and waste collection dates see page 14, but Suffolk Coastal Services Ufford depot offices will be open every day except December 25, 26, 27 and January 1, and will also be open on Saturday, December 19 and January 2.

Felixstowe's community goals

A five-a-side football tournament for young people was held at Brackenbury Sports Centre in November organised by Felixstowe Safer Neighbourhood Team and supported by Suffolk Coastal and Felixstowe Town Council.

Aimed at those aged 15 and over, the goal was to have a day filled with community spirit, giving a chance for people of all ages to interact with the various members of the emergency services who were taking part.

Arts directory out

The latest edition of the Suffolk Coastal arts directory is packed with information about local groups and activities. Available from Council offices, libraries and tourist information centres it is also on

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts/directory

Deben Pool

Deben pool will be closed from November 30 but should be open again after Christmas. The gym is open but with no hot water but members can use the other DC gyms at Felixstowe and Leiston.

Cleaning up our coastline

Volunteers turned up on beaches in late September to play their part in the national Beachwatch campaign, with loads of rubbish being cleared up.

BT showed its commitment to the community by encouraging 31 volunteers to Trimley Marsh who in four hours collected 27 sacks of rubbish, including a portable TV, deck chair, a wheel complete with tyre, and a plastic picnic table top.

Thanks to the generous contributions from BT Staff Charity Fund, Helping Hands, and the BT Innovate and Design Charity Committee, plus a few personal contributions, they also raised a £1,540 for the Marine Conservation Society.

Members of the Greenprint Forum, Suffolk Coastal and Suffolk Coastal Services were meanwhile dealing with the area from Bawdsey Quay to Bawdsey Point which at first glance appeared clean but which still generated sacks of litter on closer inspection. Three sacks of recyclable rubbish was collected, one box of glass and four sacks of other waste including an abandoned tent.

Join a Footprints work party

Volunteers are wanted to help conserve the district's countryside as Suffolk Coastal's new Footprints campaign gets to work with monthly work parties completing practical conservation tasks, such as clearing scrub and thinning trees.

“The Footprints campaign offers residents the chance to be actively involved in maintaining and improving Suffolk Coastal's nature reserves, heaths, woods and commons, ensuring that their legacy is preserved for the enjoyment of future generations,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

The next planned event is tree thinning and coppicing at Grove Wood, Felixstowe, adjacent to pond (with bonfire) on Wednesday, December 9 from 10am to 4pm - people should meet at Suffolk Coastal's Eastward Ho car park.

In the new year, work parties are scheduled to take place at Melton Riverside on Tuesday, January 12, Sutton Heath on Thursday, February 11 and Upper Hollesley Common on Wednesday, March 10.

“Volunteering to carry out conservation work with Footprints is also an ideal first step wanting inspiration to start similar projects near them,” added Cllr Neale.

Through Footprints, individuals, business and community groups can also leave a lasting impression on local green spaces through sponsorship.

For more information about the work parties, and to find out how to get involved with the Footprints campaign, contact Peter Ross, countryside officer on 01394 444619 or email peter.ross@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Charitable staff

Staff at Suffolk Coastal have helped raise over £1,200 thanks to a spooky charity event to help raise money for the Ipswich hospital Special Care Baby Unit. The sports and social club committee raised around £30,000 since 1994 for special causes.

Ready for E.coli

Environmental health teams from Suffolk Coastal and Waveney tested their preparation for an E.coli outbreak at a special training event which confronted them with a range of possible scenarios.

"I am pleased that we have again joined up successfully to help run this event that will help all the county's environmental health teams lead the campaigns to prevent and control potential E.coli outbreaks," said Councillor Sherrie Green, Cabinet Member for Community Health.

Council's support fund kick-starts local projects across district

Suffolk Coastal's special fund to help grass-root economic recovery has already paid over £26,000 to town and parish councils, business and community organisations.

"The Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre has received support for a monthly breakfast club to keep local businesses up to date with legislative changes and keep business skills at the cutting edge," said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member for the Economy.

"This is a promising venture as there are over 300 businesses in Kesgrave and Martlesham potentially benefiting from the scheme," added Cllr Hart.

Framingham Town Council received support towards helping its business community by creating a local services directory and an interactive street map of the town that also incorporates a shopping guide for visitors.

“Our Economic Development Support Fund (EDSF) is about helping the local economy through the current economic downturn and it will hopefully continue to bring about some really interesting projects that would not have been a reality Without it,” added Cllr Hart.

There is currently funding available of up to 70% of the total cost of a project with a maximum application bid of £15,000 and the next deadline is Thursday, December 31, 2009.

Greater sums of funding are available to joint projects between towns or businesses across the district. For more information call 01394 444625 or you can email sonia.lambert@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/parishcouncils/supportfund

The initiative, which is funded by money received from the Government through its Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme (LABGI) is specifically aimed at market towns and population centres, except Felixstowe and Woodbridge which are benefiting from separate economic schemes.

Town centre parking prices are set for six year freeze

The cost of parking in the district's town centres is set to remain frozen until 2012 at the levels introduced in April 2006 following a thorough review of all the charges. The need to find £3 million worth of efficiencies between 2010 and 2013 has made Suffolk Coastal examine all its services to see where savings can be made or more income generated.

“The Government's failure to properly fund rural councils like ourselves means that Suffolk Coastal needs to reduce its costs by 20 per cent over the next three years, and as part of that, to look at its car parking charges to see if it can fairly increase them,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member responsible for car parks.

“We are now consulting on a package of measures which will help generate an extra £130,000 next year, yet is mostly a gentle modernising of our current system. It includes the strategy that our town centre car park charges should remain frozen through to 2012.

“Our proposals for April include some of the out-of town car parks for tourists seeing increases, and other car parks charging all week and/or all year, where they currently exclude Sundays or the winter period.

“At the same time, there are also some planned improvements to our service, such as smaller motor homes being able to use all our car parks. There is no escaping the fact that this Council is facing a tough financial situation but this package offers an imaginative way to share the burden,” added Cllr Smith.

In all, 16 of the Council's 28 car parks would see no increase in their current tariff. Most tourist car parks would see a rise of 50 pence, with for example parking all day at Felixstowe's Arwela Road, Brackenbury, Clifflands, Convalescent Hill, Golf Road, and Sea Road, becoming £3.50 from April 2010.

Car parks which currently charge on Monday to Saturday could now also charge on Sundays, while five car parks in Felixstowe which are currently free from November to February could now charge throughout the year.

All services now under review

Every one of Suffolk Coastal's services is being thoroughly reviewed as the Council urgently presses ahead with its attempts to save at least £3m from its spending over the coming three years.

The Council's Leader has called for a 20 per cent reduction in the net budget and has been asking for the views of residents, as well as staff, town and parish councils, community and voluntary organisations and local businesses.

“We have deliberately cast the net far and wide to get as many views as possible on which services we should still concentrate our resources on and which are less important than they used to be,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

“The responses we have received have in many ways spotlighted the tough decisions we are facing. Each of the 28 services we asked residents about in the last issue of Coastline has received a vote by someone as either being an important service to them or one they no longer need. Indeed, two of our services appear high in both lists!

“However, there is a clear pattern appearing and the views we are receiving will help us draw up our final proposals.

“I would thank everyone who has taken the time to respond so far, and I can assure residents that we are listening. For example, from next year we will only produce three editions of Coastline a year,” added Cllr Herring.

To bridge its budget gap, the Council is also looking at which of its services can be provided more efficiently in partnership with Waveney or other councils or organisations.

Suffolk Coastal's share of the local Council Tax bill is 10.1 per cent, which is equal to £7.1m. Since 2001 it has achieved budget savings of over £8m, while keeping its annual Council Tax increase to below five per cent.

“We are already one-third of the way to bridging our expected budget gap over the next three years and we will not shirk from making the radical changes that appear increasingly inevitable,” added Cllr Herring.

How you rate your services

In the last edition of Coastline we asked readers to fill out a survey to help us prioritise our services and draw up our new budget.

From a list of 28 services we provide to the public, we asked you to rank your five most and least important. By the start of November over 150 responses had been received.

Your top 10 important services were:-

- Waste and recycling management
- Coast and estuary management
- Planning and building control
- Community safety
- Concessionary travel
- Countryside management and rights of way
- Leisure facilities and sports development
- Public conveniences
- Environmental protection
- Affordable decent housing

Your top 10 least important services were:-

- Theatre management
- Health improvement
- Grants
- Green issues
- Communications
- Abandoned vehicles
- Leisure facilities and sports development
- Tourism
- Pest control and dog warden service
- Concessionary travel

What you have been saying:-

“Perhaps your wage bill would be a good start” - DG,
Rushmere St Andrew

“Charge professional planners much higher application fees to control frivolous and unsuitable applications” - SB, Ufford

“Community safety is not your job, leave it to the police and reduce communications by 50%” - JP, Melton

“Sell the Spa Pavilion and reduce concessionary travel to just local journeys” - AM, Friston

“Charge for disabled parking as they have the same lack of money as all of us” - KB, Sibton

“Leave economic development and regeneration in private hands” - RB, Felixstowe

“Charge for public toilets and concessionary travel” - CT,
Woodbridge

“Reduce spending on tourism as this area is too well known already” - BM, Leiston

“Stop recruitment until your staff are reduced by five per cent” - MB, Aldeburgh

“Concessionary travel means test - many users can afford to pay” - MA, Framlingham

“Charge holiday lets more as they never sort their rubbish” - PH, Thorpeness

These are some of the views we have received. Do you agree?

Have your say

If you want to ask a question about next year's budget or how the Council is reviewing its services, you can now ask the Leader directly on a new section of our website. Email your questions and they along with the answers will be published on our website, sharing your ideas with the Council and other residents.

Just email askUs@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/haveyoursay/askus

If you prefer you can also send your questions, comments or suggestions to Ask Us, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU.

It is still not too late to return your form from the autumn edition of Coastline which asks for your most and least important services as well as other suggestions or go online to www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/haveyoursay/servicesreview You can also call 01394 444361 and give your views – out of office hours you can leave a message.

Philis is fillip for Port of Felixstowe

A new purpose-built information technology (IT) system has been introduced at Felixstowe to help Suffolk Coastal's port health team provide an even better service to businesses.

The first phase of the IT system, called Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS), went live in September and it has already sparked interest from the Food Standards Agency and other port health authorities across the country.

“Felixstowe is the country's busiest port and it is served by Britain's best port health team who have helped create this new system that should allow them to be even more efficient when dealing with consignments of imported food,” said Councillor Sherrie Green, Cabinet Member for Community Health.

The first phase of the project was completed on time and on budget, and delivered many more features than was anticipated. The signs are that it will make the port health team more efficient and result in real savings of time and money.

The goal was to produce an integrated user-friendly and innovative information management system, and one of the next aims is to allow importers to track the progress of their consignments.

“Our port health team deal with 41 per cent of the UK's imported food. What has been created will not only help the Port of Felixstowe but is of such a quality that we expect port health teams across the country to want to buy it,” said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member responsible for IT.

Energy monitor loan for communities

Community groups can use real-time energy monitors to help check energy usage and identify how electricity bills can be cut by an average of 15 per cent.

The monitors are available to all community groups who are working to reduce their carbon footprint via SEAL (the Suffolk Energy Action Line) and the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (formerly known as CRed Suffolk).

Any group that thinks they could benefit from using these gadgets can call the Suffolk Climate and Energy Helpline on 0800 028 8938.

Looking forward to 2010

Over the next 11 pages Coastline has pulled together information about services offered by the Council and its partners that could help you to save money, or become fitter, or feel safer. We hope it will help you have a greener, safer, healthier Christmas and New Year!

Is your home green or red?

New, state of the art thermal imaging equipment is now touring the district overnight, gathering a thermal image of every home to see if improved insulation could benefit residents.

“The Heatseekers thermal image will reveal sufficiently insulated areas of the home in green and heat escaping areas in red. If areas of poor insulation are identified one of the Heatseekers surveyors will arrange to visit residents to discuss possible options to improve efficiency,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

Heatseekers can offer both loft and cavity wall insulation at competitive prices. If both cavity and loft insulation are installed residents could see potential annual savings of up to approximately £300 a year and a reduction in CO2 emissions of over a tonne.

It is estimated that as many as 40,000 of the district's homes could benefit from the Heatseekers service. There is no invasion of privacy as the thermal imaging cameras cannot see past windows or walls, only the heat escaping from the building, and do not record any information about who lives there.

For more information, contact the Heatseekers team on 0845 390 9390 or visit www.homeheatseekers.co.uk or call SEAL on 0800 02 88 938.

Residents dive in for chance of free swim

Older people in the district have proved their commitment to fitness by taking to the water, thanks to the nationally backed free swim scheme.

The Suffolk Coastal and DC Leisure free swim scheme, giving residents aged 60 and over free access to swimming, has seen over 23,000 free swims being issued at pools in Felixstowe, Leiston and Woodbridge.

Anyone aged 60 or over can apply for their free swim card by calling 01394 670411.

Other residents can still swim at a discounted rate by buying a Coastal Card from any of the district's DC Leisure centres or by visiting

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/leisure/coastalcard

Get real this Christmas

Think green this year and buy a real Christmas tree that can either be planted out or repotted for next year, or composted after the festive season.

People are often put off buying a real tree because of falling needles, but most new varieties of trees hardly shed any. Any needles that do fall can be put on the compost heap, in a composter or in the brown recycling bin.

If it is not rooted, it can be cut up and put in the brown recycling bin if the branches under one and a half inches in diameter. If bigger, it can be taken to one of the three household waste recycling centres at Foxhall, Felixstowe and Leiston, where artificial trees can be recycled in the metals skip. Remember to remove any decorations and stands before recycling.

Resolve to stop smoking

Smokers are four times more likely to stop smoking with help and encouragement from outside. Some people prefer to go to their GP for support or their local pharmacy.

The NHS Suffolk Stop Smoking Service has clinics and sessions to suit your lifestyle. Visit www.suffolkstopsmokingservice.co.uk or call 0800 085 6037.

Go online to get healthier

The Healthy Ambitions Suffolk online health manager gives you specially tailored help, support and advice to help you improve your own health.

The first time you log on to www.healthyambitionssuffolk.co.uk you will be asked to fill in a short survey. You will then be given your own personal health report outlining areas where you are doing well and those you could improve.

You can then pick your own health goal and will be given access to a range of online tutorials to help you reach your target - and even receive weekly emails giving you encouragement and extra support.

Report anti-social behaviour

Councils have a duty to help tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) which is basically any activity in a community that causes harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people.

ASB includes inappropriate use of motor vehicles, substance misuse, drunkenness, intimidating groups of people in public places, racial or verbal abuse, criminal damage, or litter, flytipping and graffiti.

To report ASB, you should call the police on 01473 613500 or contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team (see below) if the offence has happened and the offender is no longer present, but dial 999 when life is threatened, or people are injured, or there is a crime in progress and an immediate police response is necessary. Information can be reported anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

You can also report it to the Council's ASB officer on 01394 444763 or email community.safety@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk so that the most appropriate action can be taken at an early stage. ASB report forms are available at www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/communitysafety/anti-social/ or from police stations or Council offices.

Our ASB officer will liaise with the police to try and resolve the reported problem. If there is a persistent problem the Suffolk Coastal ASB network group may get involved.

This group includes representatives from the police, housing associations, social services, and youth groups, and takes coordinated action to identify who is responsible for the ASB and what can be done to stop it, using if necessary Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders which Suffolk Coastal can apply for.

How to contact your Safer Neighbourhood Team

Saxmundham and Framlingham SNT

Covers the wards of Snape, Yoxford, Walberswick, Saxmundham, Hacheston, Peasenhall, Earl Soham and Framlingham.

Call 01473 613500

Police Station, Station Approach, Saxmundham IP17 1BW.

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/saxmundhamandframlingham

Leiston and Aldeburgh SNT

Covers the wards of Leiston and Aldeburgh.

Call 01473 613500

Leiston Police Station, 34 Kings Road, Leiston IP16 4DA

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/leistonandaldeburgh

Woodbridge and District SNT

Covers the wards of Sutton, Hollesley, Eyke, Orford, Tunstall, Otley, Wickham Market, Rendlesham, Melton, Ufford, Riverside, Kyson, Seckford and Farlingaye.

Call 01473 613500.

Woodbridge Police Station, Grundisburgh Road, Woodbridge IP12 4HG

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/woodbridgeanddistrict

Kesgrave and District SNT

Covers the wards of Kesgrave east and west, Witnesham, Grundisburgh, Martlesham and Rushmere St Andrew.

Call 01473 613500

Next to Tesco in Kesgrave, off Ropes Drive.

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/Kesgrave

Felixstowe and District SNT

Covers the wards of Felixstowe, The Trimleys, Nacton and Kirton.

Call 01473 613500

Felixstowe Police Station, 32 High Road West, Felixstowe IP11 9JE

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/safersuffolk/felixstoweanddistrict

You should dial 999 if there is a crime in progress or an immediate police response is necessary.

Keep fit sitting down

Older residents are being encouraged to 'sit down and keep fit' and improve their flexibility, mobility, balance and strength by taking part in specially tailored chair-based exercise classes running across the district.

For chair-based exercise sessions at Aldeburgh (Wednesdays and Fridays), Friston (Thursdays) or Woodbridge (Fridays) contact Amanda Mallett on 01728 688696 or email amanda.mallett@btinternet.com

A new class has been launched on Thursdays in Felixstowe - for more information contact Suffolk Sport on 01394 444289.

There is also a special class in Melton on Fridays for anyone who has experienced a cardiac event or has coronary heart disease. Please contact Wendy Jackson-Palmer on 01394 384414 or 07789 535516 for details.

Recycle Christmas

If you end up with presents that you neither want nor need, do not just throw them away. Charity shops will take good quality unwanted goods or perhaps friends or family might want them.

Unwanted books, clothes, shoes and other garments can also be taken to a book or textile banks. The Freecycle network matches people who have things they want to get rid of with people who can use them. Visit www.uk.freecycle.org to find out more.

You can keep and reuse your greetings cards as tags for next year's presents, and keeping gift packaging such as ribbons, rosettes and bubble wrap for wrapping presents throughout the year. For more helpful tips visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/waste/minimise/

Keep a healthy eye on how much you drink

A new advertising campaign has been launched to try and cut down the number of road accidents on the county's roads, which includes highlighting the perils of drinking, speeding and the distraction of mobile phones.

Suffolk Coastal linked up with the police in October for Know Your Limits, part of an initiative to encourage people to be aware of how much they drink during an average week.

The guidelines on lower-risk drinking recommend men do not drink more than three to four units daily, or about two pints or two cans of normal strength lager or beer, and women do not drink more than two to three units daily, about a large glass of wine or three single measures of spirits.

Drinking above these levels can increase many health risks such as heart disease, breast cancer, liver disease, stroke and other diseases.

Encouraging people to take a more responsible attitude to drinking would also help prevent the amount of alcohol-related crime.

SEAL can make you warmer and better off

SEAL offers a link into a range of services including free and discounted cavity wall and loft insulation, Warm Front grants for vulnerable households for heating and insulation, Greener Homes interest free loans for all, links to local solar water heating contractors and access to the Suffolk Warmer Walls programme for solid wall insulation. There is also guidance on the limited grants on offer to help with costs.

SEAL has linked up with the Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union to offer interest free loans to cover the cost of a whole range of energy saving goods and renewable energy installations such as solar water heating, solar photovoltaics and heat pumps.

The minimum loan would be as little as £100 and the maximum £4,000 with up to four years to pay. SEAL is also running a pilot working with communities to help residents in Framlingham receive and install their own energy saving goods free.

For more information about SEAL and ways to increase energy efficiency in the home people can visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/energy/seal or call 0800 02 88 938.

Do you need to lose weight to be healthy?

Slimming on referral is a scheme run by NHS Suffolk in partnership with Slimming World to help people who have health issues and who would benefit from losing weight.

It is aimed at those who do not normally attend commercial slimming classes and you have to be referred by your doctor or practice nurse.

You will then be asked to attend 12 free sessions with Slimming World paid for by NHS Suffolk at a local venue to suit you and visit your practice nurse to see how you are getting on and check your weight, waist measurement and blood pressure.

Walking back to healthiness

Stepping Out walks, organised by Suffolk Coastal and NHS Suffolk, last from 30 to 90 minutes and are a free, informal and sociable way to improve your health. You walk at your own pace with trained leaders. Sensible footwear is recommended.

Some of December's walks:

- Tuesday, December 8 - Framlingham;
- Wednesday, December 9 - Walberswick;
- Thursday, December 10 - Dunwich; Ufford; and Felixstowe Ferry;
- Saturday, December 12 - Melton;
- Wednesday, December 16 - Sweffling;
- Thursday, December 17 - Snape; and Rushmere Common, Rushmere St Andrew;
- Monday, December 28 - Felixstowe.

For more information, or to go on the mailing list for the walks programme, call 01394 444501, email walks@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/steppingout/

District's green pioneers?

In October, 22 people gave up their weekend to learn how to engage their communities in tackling the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change at a special training course.

The Council's C-Change project, funded by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership and the AONB Sustainable Development Fund who also funded the weekend, offers community groups up to £2,000 for awareness events, training or pioneering projects aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions and reliance on fossil fuels. For more information email deborah.wargate@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444747.

If you want to get involved in your community then Transition Woodbridge www.transitionwoodbridge.org.uk meets the first Tuesday of every month from 8pm in The Cherry Tree Inn in Cumberland Road, while for information about Greener Fram visit www.greenerfram.org.uk

In Leiston, a public meeting will be called if enough people contact Andrew Nunn on 01728 830462 or by email andrew.nunn@btinternet.com while Debbie Wargate on 01394 444747 or demiwar1@yahoo.co.uk will do the same in Felixstowe.

Claim what is yours

Living proof that even at 100 years old it is never too late to claim what is rightfully yours, a Woodbridge resident recently became Suffolk Coastal's oldest ever success of its benefits take-up campaign.

The Council's benefits team encourages residents to check out what support they could be receiving, particularly to help pay housing or Council Tax bills. For general questions or advice, or if you need a home visit because of age, disability or other circumstances, call 01394 444838 or email benefits@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/benefits/ where you can even apply online at any time.

You can also get free expert advice and help from one of the local branches of the Citizen's Advice Bureau (see below for contact details).

Free help from your CAB

Felixstowe & District Citizens Advice Bureau

2-6 Orwell Road, Felixstowe, IP11 7HD.

Telephone 01394 275958

www.felixstowecab.org.uk

Opening hours

Monday 10am-1pm & 3.30pm-6.30pm

Tuesday and Thursday 10am-4pm

Wednesday and Friday 10am-1pm

Also available at Felixstowe are a legal clinic (by appointment) and home visits (by arrangement).

In addition its advisers are available at

- Walton Surgery at High Street, Walton - every Tuesday 2pm-5pm
- Haven Health Centre, Grange Farm Ave, Felixstowe – every Wednesday 8.30am -11.30am
- Martlesham Parish Rooms, Old Felixstowe Road - first Thursday of each month 9.30am -12.30pm
- Mums and Tums, Salvation Army Hall, Cobbold Road, Felixstowe - every Tuesday 10am-12 Noon
- Council offices, 93 Undercliff Road West, Felixstowe - every Monday 9.30am-11.30am
- Framfield Medical Centre, Ipswich Road, Woodbridge -every Thursday 10am-12 Noon (Shared with Leiston CAB)

Leiston, Saxmundham & District Citizens Advice Bureau

14 Colonial House, Station Road, Leiston, IP16 4JD.

Telephone: 01728 832193.

Opening times:

Mondays and Fridays: 10am to 1.30pm.

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 10am to 2.30pm.

www.leistoncab.org.uk

Ipswich & District Citizens Advice Bureau

19 Tower Street, Ipswich, IP1 3BE.

Telephone: 01473 219777.

Opening times:

Monday - Friday: 9.30am to 4pm (except Wednesdays 9.30am – 12 noon).

www.ipswichcab.org.uk

Fitness classes to ease your health problems

The Suffolk Coastal exercise on referral scheme is for people whose health means they could do with some additional physical activity to help them lose weight, tackle depression, stress or low self-esteem, or for those with high blood pressure, heart problems, respiratory problems, diabetes, arthritis or minor back problems.

Offered in conjunction with the Kinetica Fitness at Felixstowe and Leiston Leisure Centres, and Woodbridge's Deben Pool, the exercise on referral scheme consists of a 12 week programme. However, you have to be referred by your GP, so ask about it the next time you see your doctor. The scheme costs £41 and can be paid in two instalments.

Partnership investing in future of Suffolk Coastal

Nearly £200,000 has been set aside by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for 14 different projects that will tackle some of the district's key issues, such as climate change, the social and economic problems facing rural areas, health, and coastal communities.

“This is the most wide-ranging and ambitious package of projects ever backed by the LSP and we expect it will make a real difference to the lives of many of our communities and residents of all ages,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Chairman of the Suffolk Coastal LSP Board.

“Our backing will help attract more funding and support from other organisations, meaning that there will be nearly £500,000 for these important initiatives.

“Our latest Sustainable Community Plan set out the challenges facing this district over the coming years, and these projects are a coordinated response to some of those key issues,” added Cllr Herring.

Help on planning for and controlling the effects of climate change will target those living in Aldeburgh, Felixstowe Ferry, Shingle Street and South Felixstowe, as well as farmers and local communities.

The importance of the voluntary and community sector to the district is recognised with an initiative to recruit 200 new volunteers, and a co-ordinator who has already helped 200 groups and helped attract £230,000 of new funding.

The Heritage Market Towns Initiative will get further support to helping the areas around Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham build up their business skills and opportunities.

Two healthy success stories will be expanded, with 20 new classes offering older people, particularly in rural areas, chair based exercise, and more Stepping Out health walks across the district.

There will be help for older people unable to install free loft insulation because they cannot do it themselves, while the Go With The Flow bus will visit more rural areas offering activities for young people at night, while during the day it will give adults information and advice.

There will also be more activities for young people in Saxmundham, Leiston, Friston and the surrounding villages.

Councils will work even closer together

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney are now committed to taking the opportunity of making further savings, maximising their joint resources and improving the effectiveness of their services to their communities.

“We have agreed to work with each other as preferred partners, which means that we will seek, where appropriate, to share resources and deliver services jointly. Our aim is to be more efficient and to provide better value for money for our customers,” said Councillor Ray Herring and Councillor Mark Bee, Leaders of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney respectively.

The two Councils already share a Chief Executive and a head of planning services, and other partnerships that have helped deliver more efficient services include insurance and audit.

“Both councils share a commitment to becoming more efficient, and both can point to successes in controlling our budgets. But we have achieved this while also improving the quality of the services we provide,” added Cllrs Herring and Bee.

Working with other councils has not been excluded but joint working and partnership development between the two councils is a logical step forwards because of their shared boundary, challenges and background. Both councils have responsibility for Suffolk's coastline and its management, and have major seaside resorts, market towns and rural communities.

They also share infrastructure such as rail and road links but also face accessibility challenges, while the power corridor runs along through both districts, which also have in common arts and creative industries as well having maritime, logistics, tourism and technical/scientific sectors that are key to their economies.

Travel plan to cut down CO2

A Travel Plan has been agreed to help Suffolk Coastal cut the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) produced as a result of its business travel and by its employees getting to work.

The plan will look at what can be done to reduce the transport emissions from the waste management fleet and other vehicles of the Council's partners Suffolk Coastal Services Ltd which drove over 1.3 million miles last year with CO2 emissions of around 945 tonnes.

“We will also try to control the amount of work-related journeys by our staff, which generated 156 tonnes of CO2 last year, while also encouraging people to find greener ways to get to work in the first place,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

“Because our district is so large and rural, with poor public transport links, we have to be realistic about how much we can achieve, but I am sure there are positive changes that can be made and we will be doing what we can to encourage them,” added Cllr Nunn.

Among the proposals are an increased use of telephone conferencing and considering the business case for investing in video conferencing facilities to cut down the need to travel to meetings, making it easier to work from home and encouraging more people to car-share and cycle to work.

Equipment seized to stop noise nuisance

Peace and quiet returned to homes around Westward Ho in Leiston after Suffolk Coastal's environmental protection team removed audio equipment that was regularly being used at unacceptably high volume.

The equipment, which included two stereo systems and MP3 player, was taken from the home in Westward Ho in October.

“We used our powers under the Environmental Protection Act to confiscate the source of the noise which had made the lives of neighbours unbearable. After repeated warnings, that failed to get the young people to respect others by keeping the noise down to a reasonable level, we had no choice but to confiscate the audio equipment,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Working in partnership with Leiston police and the Council's anti-social behaviour team, the environmental protection team visited with a warrant of entry to remove the musical equipment.

“It is unusual for this Council to have to take this kind of action as normally after an advisory letter and abatement notice, people will see sense, recognise the problems they are causing for their neighbours and act responsibly,” added Cllr Nunn.

Suffolk Coastal has a set procedure for dealing with noise complaints, and if that procedure is followed the Council can visit to witness the noise. Residents can contact the team on 01394 444624 or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/envhealth/nuisance/ or email environmental.protection@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk giving their name and address and the details of where the noise is coming from, and the times and dates of occurrences.

Public name their top policing priorities

Local people across Suffolk have highlighted their top priorities for policing in their communities at recent public meetings with chief officers from the Constabulary and senior members of the Police Authority.

The meetings and other residents' feedback, shows that the public's top three priorities for the Constabulary were tackling anti-social behaviour & criminal damage; dealing with violent crime, and responding to incidents.

Most people tended to agree that the Police and their local council are dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime issues in their area and most are broadly happy with what they currently pay for policing services through Council Tax.

Simon Ash, Chief Constable said: “A key aim of the Constabulary is to achieve high levels of public confidence in the policing we provide. Although the majority of people at each meeting expressed confidence in how police are tackling issues in their area, it is crucial that we improve this even further.”

The Chair of Suffolk Police Authority, Gulshan Kayembe said: “It is interesting that the three main things affecting confidence in the police are police visibility, alleviating anti-social behaviour and engaging with communities consistently. These are at the forefront of our concerns and we have responded to this with the continued development of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) which the Police Authority strongly believes are the cornerstone of community policing and we have invested heavily in the development of these teams.”

Making an impact on crime

Cleaning up Felixstowe was the goal of a five-hour blitz which saw Suffolk Coastal join up with the police, Suffolk Coastal Services, Suffolk Fire and Rescue, Vehicle and Operators Service Agency, HM Revenues and Customs, and Suffolk County Council in November.

United as the Impact team, the members targeted graffiti and litter, along with untaxed, unroadworthy or speeding cars, as well as giving advice and help to residents. Shopkeepers were visited for reminders about fire regulations, the sale of age-restricted goods like alcohol and cigarettes, and the employment of children, while fire safety checks were also conducted.

“This sort of operation is exactly what we should be doing - out there working together in partnership with other agencies and engaging with the public,” said Inspector Steve Gallant of Felixstowe Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The blitz was just one of a range of events across the district including Aldeburgh, Saxmundham and Woodbridge during Not in My Neighbourhood week promoting community safety and crime reduction to help make Suffolk Coastal an even safer place to live.

“When local people see a community safety presence and other people taking action to ensure their neighbourhood is safe this reassures them, making the community an even safer and enjoyable place to live,” said Councillor Sherrie Green, Cabinet Member for Community Safety.

Lock your cars reminder

Suffolk Coastal's Community Safety Partnership and Suffolk Constabulary want residents to play their part in cutting crime by remembering to lock their cars and keep valuables safe and out of sight.

Nearly one in ten of all the district's crimes are related to theft from cars and vans, and in Felixstowe, Nacton, Kesgrave and Woodbridge up to half of those vehicles that had items stolen were not locked, which rose to a staggering 70 per cent when parked on driveways.

Among the stolen valuables were satellite navigation systems (sat navs), mobile phones, handbags, power tools and even a new 42" flat screen television. New warning signs are going up in all of the Council's 28 public car parks and some of the larger privately owned ones such as Tesco at Martlesham Heath.

Relatives need to renew exclusive right of burial deeds

Suffolk Coastal is trying to contact family members of anyone buried in its Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham or Woodbridge cemeteries between 1974 -1984 where the plots have been purchased under an Exclusive Right of Burial.

Exclusive right of burials last for 25 years and the Council is trying to contact family members for those plots where the right has either expired or is about to expire.

After such a time span it will probably be difficult to contact all those who originally bought a right as they may have changed address so notices are also being put up in the cemeteries.

A 25-year fixed term right of burial guarantees exclusive use of the plot and allows up to two other people to be interred in the same grave. If it is not renewed, then the plot returns to the Council's ownership, which could mean that at some time in the future the headstone would be removed and the plot could be reused for someone else's grave.

It is possible to renew the right and anyone affected can call 01394 444329 or 444706 and speak to a member of staff who will be explain all the options.

Conservation areas under review

Suffolk Coastal is currently putting the spotlight on all of the district's 34 conservation areas and is asking for views on its latest eight draft appraisals which cover Westleton, Yoxford, Peasenhall, Earl Soham, Thorpeness, Orford, Grundisburgh and Melton.

“These latest appraisals try to define the special character of each conservation area so we can use them as a guide for any future changes. While there are no proposals to alter the boundaries there are suggestions about how they can be managed or improved,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

All eight appraisals can be found on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/conservation/appraisals and people are asked to send their views about them by February 28, 2010 by email to conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or write to the conservation team, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU.

“It is a reflection of how special our district is that we have 34 conservation areas, of which 13 have already had completed and published reviews so far. The comments we receive on these latest appraisals will be considered before the Development Control Committee meets next Spring to decide whether to adopt them as supplementary planning documents,” added Cllr Smith.

Drafts are currently being finalised for Woodbridge and Aldeburgh, which should be published early next year, while appraisals will be drafted by the summer for Cretingham, Dennington, Huntingfield, Brandeston, Darsham, Walberswick, Blythburgh, and Saxtead Green.

Artistic life brought to skyline

The coastal scenery of Thorpeness was recreated in an ambitious piece by piece project, as the district's contribution to the national community arts project, the Big Draw.

Groups of people in the local community took part, using a variety of materials and techniques, to create a collage on 70 A2 cards of the coastline including well recognised landmarks, the House in the Clouds, Sizewell power stations and the Thorpeness windmill.

On the day, volunteers worked hard to assemble the 6 x 3m image. People of all ages got involved in the Big Draw project including Leiston Primary School, Leiston Middle School, 2nd Leiston Rainbows, Knodishall Brownies, Leiston Long Shop, Leiston Weaving group, Felixstowe Guides, Felixstowe's Kingsfleet School, Sizewell Residents Association, Leiston WI Art Club, Woodbridge School and the Moat Barn Nursery, Hasketon.

What's on in Suffolk Coastal

- Christmas Concert at Snape Maltings Concert Hall - Friday, December 11
- Festive Market, Woodbridge Market Hill - Saturday, December 12, 9.30am to 4pm
- Phoenix Singers - music and readings for Christmas on Wednesday December 16, 8 p.m. in St. Michael's Church, Framlingham.
- Christmas spectacular with the award-winning Co-op Juniors at Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Thursday December 17 to Tuesday, December 22
- Carols on Market Hill, Woodbridge - Monday, December 21, starts 6.30pm.
- Viennese Concert, Woodbridge Community Hall - Friday, January 1

- Piano Concerto by the Woodbridge Orchestral Society at Woodbridge Community Hall on Sunday, February 28
 - Aldeburgh Literary Festival, Friday, March 5 to Sunday, March 7
- Visit one of our tourist information centres for a monthly what's on guide or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/calendar/whatson

Ticket to ride

Felixstowe's Tourist Information Centre, based at 91 Undercliff Road West, now sells a range of peak and off-peak rail tickets for travel to London and selected routes around East Anglia.

Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Customers and Partners was on hand to help launch this initiative between Suffolk Coastal and National Express East Anglia which is the latest addition to the wide range of services on offer at the TIC to both visitors to the resort and also the local community.

Working together for Alde and Ore

Four groups including representatives of local communities from around the Alde and Ore estuary are helping develop a better understanding of the long-term issues facing the area and how these can be resolved.

Focussing on the issues identified at September's Alde and Ore Futures conference, the groups are looking at landowners, community groups, business and infrastructure and environment, recreation and access, and how the local communities can be sustainable in the long term.

The Alde and Ore Futures project is an innovative pilot project which covers 20 towns and parishes including Thorpeness to Shingle Street and inland as far as Benhall, Blaxhall and Hollesley.

A framework plan will be jointly developed and a draft launched at the second conference in the spring. It will be integrated with the implementation of other plans and strategies and will address the longer term challenges to the area's sustainability.

You can have your say via an online survey until December 18 by visiting

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/coast/aldeore/haveyoursay/

More information is available at

www.suffolkcoastfutures.org.uk or contact Bill Parker by emailing suffolkcoastfutures@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or calling 01394 444553.

Young people urged to check they can vote

With a General Election looming ever closer, local young people are being urged to make sure their name has been included on the latest edition of the electoral register.

“More often than not, those who are aged 16, 17 or over are not the ones filling in the forms and so have to rely on their parents or others to remember to include them,” said Stephen Baker, Suffolk Coastal's Chief Executive who is also in charge of running elections in the district.

“I would recommend young people check with us to make sure that their name has been included as they could otherwise miss out on their chance to have their say on the national issues,” added Mr Baker.

On the updated version of the register people should be listed for where their permanent home was on October 15. For more information about elections and registering visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/elections/ or call the elections team on 01394 444329.

“We usually have turn-outs for elections in our district that are higher than the national average and I hope the new generation of voters will help us continue that trend, and get registered so they can vote on national, local and European issues,” added Mr Baker.

Hitting the right notes

Another wave of young musical talent has been put in the spotlight by this year's Soundwaves Ultimate Bands Contest which has seen young local bands taking to the stage at Felixstowe's Spa Pavilion.

In the last few weeks, three heats have been held with the audience choosing the best 10 acts who will appear on the Sounds from the East Coast III CD and could scoop the title of overall champions at the final on Saturday, April 10.

Only the winners of the first heat was known when Coastline went to press, which saw Woodbridge based Clay in first place, Fick as Fieves in second and Silk and Steel in third all gaining places in the final.

To get the latest news visit www.myspace.com/suffolksoundwavesmusic or email suffolksoundwavesmusic@hotmail.com or call 07973 632576. The contest is backed by Suffolk Coastal, the county council, the Youth Opportunity Fund and Access To Music.

Fund supports more play facilities

Local youngsters now have even more opportunities for play thanks to the outdoor play space fund (OPSF) which this year has awarded over £109,000 to 15 different organisations and allocated £93,000 for another 21 applications.

Projects have included the Felixstowe skatepark, a trim trail, cricket pitch nets, various play equipment and a basketball area. Among the places that have had funding this year are Bredfield, Rushmere, Sudbourne, Leiston and Waldringfield. Existing play areas have also been updated and improved with new safety surfacing.

“I am particularly excited to see the new trim trail in Kettleburgh as it is a great way for all members of the community, not just children, to have fun and get active,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

The OPSF was launched in 2001 to ensure play facilities keeps up with the development of the new housing which funds the initiative. For more information contact Jennie Catling on 01394 444321, Tuesday - Thursday, or email jennie.catling@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/parishcouncil/playfund

Get on the MEND

MEND is a fun nine-week healthy living programme run by Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust and NHS Suffolk for children aged seven to 13 whose weight is above the healthy range for their age and height.

The free programme teaches children about a healthy lifestyle at fun and relaxed after-school sessions twice a week.

If you would like a MEND session one in your area or to get on the list for Kesgrave (after Easter) call Linda on 01473 704030 or visit www.mendprogramme.org