

COASTLINE

The Newsletter of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Issue 44, Summer 2010

New planning policies are helping protect the district

While the final consultation on Suffolk Coastal's recently agreed Core Strategy document has now been put on hold, planners and developers have been told that its policies should now be used to assess most new planning applications.

After years of discussion and public consultation, in March Suffolk Coastal's Full Council agreed the Core Strategy document, which sets out how the Council's planning policies will protect and improve the district over the coming 15 years.

“We are now using our Core Strategy as an important and up to date tool in determining planning applications and helping balance the need for good quality development in our district against the core principle of protecting and maintaining our unique environment and quality of life,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning.

“It is important that we can use all the advantages of our new policies, which cover key issues like the environment, quality of design, energy efficiency, community safety, and possible developments at Sizewell.

“The full details of the Government's new planning policies will be published later this year and probably become law in 2011, and obviously we will update our policies if we need to.

“In the meantime, the vast majority of our Core Strategy policies were largely welcomed and sparked little controversy, so it is for the benefit of all our communities that we proceed with using them immediately to guide our planning decisions,” added Cllr Smith.

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When Full Council in March gave its approval to the Core Strategy it was also agreed that it would be reviewed, and if necessary revised, if national planning policy changed.

New policies are beginning to emerge in statements from the Government but the uncertainties of exactly what will finally be approved by Parliament means the Core Strategy's formal external approval has been put on hold.

The Communities and Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles, wrote to all councils on May 27 stating that it was his intention to rapidly abolish Regional Strategies and that decisions on housing supply would rest with local councils.

Mr Pickles also expected councils to take account of his letter when making relevant planning decisions, although it is unclear what weight his request would carry if a developer chose to challenge it in the Courts as it will probably be next year before any changes agreed by Parliament could come into effect.

“I can assure everyone that as soon as there are proper details of future national planning policies we will immediately look at how they impact on what we have so far agreed.

“It was the issue of major housing policies that generated the most public debate, and given the comments already made by the Government it is unclear how we should proceed with any such applications, and indeed how Government inspectors would be able to deal with any appeals.

“Until the uncertainty is cleared up by the Government, we are not sure how we can proceed with meeting the proven need for more homes for our residents.

“However, the housing element is just a small but important part of the overall Core Strategy. We would be letting down our communities if we did not use its modernised policies in it to help determine the hundreds of planning applications needing decisions over the next few months, and which will probably be unaffected by the Government's new policies when they can finally become law.

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“Working with this new system is going to be quite challenging to start with, for all those involved, not least Town and Parish Councils, on whom we rely very much for locally informed input to our planning decisions. We shall be doing all we can to explain the new system, and how to best understand and make use of it,” added Cllr Smith.

Free swims sunk?

Free swimming for over 60s is set to end on July 31 when the Government’s cash support for the scheme will run out eight months earlier than expected as a result of the national financial situation.

Be locally prepared

Suffolk communities are being urged to join a new campaign designed by the Community Resilience Forum to help local people prepare for emergencies – visit

www.getpreparednow.co.uk or call 01473 265321 for details.

Collage on show

The dramatic skyline of Thorpeness was brought to life by residents in a 70 piece patchwork collage as part of last year’s Big Draw and it is now on display in the Long Shop Museum in Leiston.

Veronica Falconer is new Chairman

After being a district councillor for seven years, Veronica Falconer is Suffolk Coastal's Chairman for the next year, replacing Stephen Burroughes.

“It is a great privilege and honour to represent the Council and to become Chairman is beyond anything I could have imagined. I look forward to taking on the role and will carry out its ambassadorial duties with tremendous pride and to the best of my ability,” said Councillor Falconer who moved to Suffolk in 1978 with her family and quickly fell in love with the district.

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“I enjoy meeting, talking and listening to local residents finding out what issues they are passionate about. In my new role as Chairman I hope to continue to be at the heart of the community as well as carrying out my new duties,” added Cllr Falconer.

Cllr Joan Sennington is Vice Chairman. It is only the second time that the Chairman and Vice Chairman have both been women.

2011 census jobs on offer

Up to 35,000 staff are set to be recruited to work from local communities across England and Wales to support the 2011 Census filling a range of posts including address checkers, area managers, census coordinators, census collectors and special enumerators.

Visit www.censusjobs.co.uk for more details. 2011 Census staff will be employed directly by the Office for National Statistics with its contractor Capita running recruitment, training and payroll services.

On offer are flexible working hours, a short term income boost, the chance to work within your local community, and playing a part in ensuring decision makers have up to date information about local communities.

Suffolk Coastal's Village of the Year

Wickham Market has become Suffolk Coastal's Village of the Year for 2010 with Yoxford and Orford finishing second and third respectively.

Villages with 501 and 3,000 residents could enter and be judged on their community spirit, Parish Council, natural environment, general appearance and any special activities.

“Wickham Market stood out because of its welcoming and bustling centre and its sense of community spirit with residents keen to make sure that there was something for everyone,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

Help reshape Felixstowe's seafront gardens

Residents have until September to give their comments on the latest draft plans drawn up by Lanarca to refurbish Felixstowe's Seafront Gardens, with a special exhibition at Felixstowe Town Hall on Friday, July 16 from 11am to 5pm and Saturday, July 17 from 11am to 3pm.

You can give your views about the Heritage Lottery Fund-backed project at the public exhibition or by emailing seafrontgardens@lanarca.co.uk

For more information visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/felixstowefutures/projects/seafrontgardens

Reducing car crime

The Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership and Felixstowe's Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) have been promoting awareness of car crime and giving advice to residents. For more information about car crime contact your local SNT on 01473 613500.

Town pastors trained

The Felixstowe Town Pastors, who encourage responsible drinking and help deter anti-social behaviour, recently received training organised by Suffolk Coastal's Community Safety Partnership to help them tackle anti-social behaviour as a result of drug misuse.

Chestnut Coppice restored at Sutton Heath

As part of the heathland restoration project at Sutton Heath near Woodbridge, a specialist contractor is safeguarding a significant area of sweet chestnut trees by using traditional coppicing techniques.

The work is being carried out by Jason Roberts of Green Man Horse Loggers, who uses heavy horses to clear timber felled during the winter, causing minimal damage to surrounding heathland and woodland flora, and is part of a stewardship agreement funded by Natural England.

"As part of the larger works taking place at Sutton Heath, the coppicing works should help to improve the quality of the woodland here and biodiversity making it an even better natural landscape," said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Countryside and Leisure. Cont/d...

Coppicing is a traditional form of woodland management involving felling of the tree stump close to ground level which is repeated in rotation every five to 20 years. This allows new shoots to grow and light to reach the woodland floor, allowing plants, insects and birds to flourish.

The Sutton Heath restoration project is being carried out by Suffolk Coastal, with the support of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the Forestry Commission, Natural England and the Suffolk Coast and Heath Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit.

Make your barbecue safe

Suffolk Coastal's food safety team have been reminding residents about the importance of good food hygiene when having barbecues.

The team recently held advice sessions at local nurseries with a quiz won by Les Gaskin, pictured receiving his prize from Notcutts' Carol Salter and food safety's Jo Wyatt.

Some key simple tips are:

- light it early enough and only start cooking when the coals are white hot
- fully defrost food in the fridge before cooking
- use separate utensils for cooked and raw foods
- keep raw, cooked or ready-to-eat food covered and separate
- keep food in the fridge or a cool box until it going to be cooked or served up
- make sure all food is cooked thoroughly.

We are prepared for a tough year

After being re-elected Leader of the Council for the 11th consecutive year in May, Councillor Ray Herring immediately pledged that the Council was ready to meet tough challenges over the coming year.

“It is still too early to know precisely what effect the welcome change of Government will have on our communities but I am confident that the positive steps that this Council has taken in the last few years makes us better prepared than most to face up to what are bound to be tough times financially,” said Cllr Herring.

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“By next March we will have saved over £9m since 2001 by constantly identifying ways to provide our services more efficiently and effectively, which is particularly impressive when our income from our Council Tax payers is only £7m a year.

“Last year I set this Council the tough target of reducing its net spending in three years by 20 per cent or about £3m. We are continuing to review every aspect of what we do to see if it is still necessary, or if it can be done more efficiently, and we cannot shirk from our drive to find yet more value for money. I must commend both members and staff for what has been achieved, and it is that track record that gives me confidence that we can continue to deliver the radical transformation necessary in the future,” added Cllr Herring.

In the past few years, the Council has pressed ahead with innovative partnerships to help deliver more efficient services, which has seen its workforce reduced by nearly two-thirds. Suffolk Coastal was one of the first to share a Chief Executive with a neighbouring council, and since April 2008 when Stephen Baker took on the joint role with Waveney, the two councils have been moving ever closer together.

“We are committed to a radical coalition of our expertise and resources between our two councils to give our communities the best possible value services. Joint working is rapidly becoming the norm which not only saves money but also allows us to share and learn good work habits. We expect to announce significant changes to the way that both councils work in the next few months,” added Cllr Herring.

- Suffolk Coastal and Waveney now have a partnership manager, thanks largely to regional funding, who will work with services at both councils to see how they can move forward and share their resources and expertise to provide their services more efficiently. A Joint Partnership Board of councillors has also been set up.

Farcical review consigned to the dustbin of history

The Leaders of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney warmly greeted the announcement in May that 'wasteful and unnecessary restructuring plans' for councils in Suffolk were to be stopped immediately.

The new Communities and Local Government Secretary, Eric Pickles, said he was 'pulling the plug on this expensive distraction and saving the taxpayer £40m of restructuring costs.'

“We are grateful that Mr Pickles has put an immediate end to the farcical review of councils in our county, which had threatened to impose changes that the majority of people did not want,” said Councillors Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal and Mark Bee, Leader of Waveney.

“We have been very robust in defending the best interests of our communities and it is gratifying to see that we have been instrumental in helping save taxpayers money. It has been a costly and unwanted distraction since 2007 from our priority of delivering local services and genuine efficiencies.

“Now that the Boundary Committee's proposals have at last been binned, we can all concentrate on being more efficient for our communities,” added Cllrs Bee and Herring.

Mr Pickles' Under-Secretary Bob Neill wrote to Cllrs Bee and Herring that 'stopping this restructuring represents good value for money. Councils in Suffolk will now be free to concentrate on achieving efficiencies and giving greater value for money to their communities. The key will be sensible cooperation and effective collaborative partnership working between all councils and their partners’.

Suffolk Coastal’s petition scheme

Suffolk Coastal welcomes petitions as one way in which people can let us know their concerns and in May the Council agreed to make it easier for people to submit them and what we will do with them.

Petitions with 50 or more signatures will be treated as 'active' petitions. If a petition has at least 600 signatures, the relevant senior officer will give evidence at the Council’s relevant scrutiny committee, while petitions with 1,200 signatures or more will be debated by the Full Council. All 'active' petitions sent to us will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days setting out what we plan to do with it and when you will hear from us again.

Details of any 'active' petitions we receive are on our website – visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/haveyoursay/petitions. Any petitions with less than 50 signatures will be treated in accordance with our compliments and complaints procedure and if they relate to specific ward issues they may also be passed to the relevant ward councillors and town/parish council for their consideration. Petitions can be sent to Democratic Services, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU. In December we expect to have an e-petition service on our website.

Council helps safeguard Thorpeness homes

Emergency work in May was taken by Suffolk Coastal to help safeguard homes in North End Avenue, Thorpeness which had seen their beach levels drop by six feet after heavy storms.

The beach was given such a pounding that tons of material was swept out to sea, revealing a series of ‘gabions’ (rock-filled wire baskets) that had been in place since 1976 to help protect the coastline.

“The northerly winds after the initial storm saw a drop of another foot in the beach level and as much as 20 foot of the cliff was eroded immediately to the south of the gabion bank,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Coastal Protection.

“We took immediate emergency action to repair the damage to the gabion bank to stop the rapid erosion. Contractors filled and repaired the broken gabions at the foot of the cliff where the main erosion has happened to provide some significant temporary respite to the cliffs and so offer some reassurance to those living in the nearby homes,” added Cllr Smith.

The erosion appears to have been caused by an unusual combination of weather conditions, and that nature has once again taken the opportunity to reshape our soft and therefore vulnerable coastline.

Communities look to the future

Spring's Alde and Ore Futures community conference focussed on the working groups, made up of people representing the communities in the area from Thorpeness down to Shingle Street and inland as far as Benhall and Blaxhall, that have been looking towards the future of the area.

“The conference gave over 100 people the chance to hear what the topic groups have come up with, to agree what lessons have been learned, what should happen next and the priorities,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Suffolk Coastal's Deputy Leader and Chairman of Suffolk Coast Futures.

“Each group has been chaired by a member of the local community and has been busy identifying how to tackle the issues regarding landowners, communities, business, environment, culture, and recreation and access.

“So far, this has been an excellent example of how the community can work and learn together to set the priorities for the future. It is succeeding in not just spotlighting the challenges but also outlining shared themes and objectives and the policies that need to take account of them,” added Cllr Smith.

There is expected to be further public consultation during the late summer, and information is also available on www.suffolkcoastfutures.org.uk

The work around the Alde and Ore is being lead by the Suffolk Coast Futures partnership and will influence its future work and of its partners, which include Suffolk Coastal, Suffolk County Council, the Environment Agency, East of England Development Agency, Natural England, Go-East, Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit and Waveney DC.

New defences for Central Felixstowe

Vital coast defence works to protect Central Felixstowe for the next 100 years should get underway next year after the Environment Agency agreed to fund the Suffolk Coastal-led scheme.

Plans were drawn up after consultation with the public about improved defences to safeguard 1,491 homes, as well as local businesses, tourist beaches, recreational gardens and key facilities.

The works between the War Memorial and Jacob's Ladder will include 18 new rock groynes, and more sand and shingle, a new rock armour revetment and eventually a flood wall between Undercliff Road East and the southern side of the Spa Pavilion.

Helping parish councils plan

Helping parish councils and community planning groups implement their own Parish Plans was the goal of an information conference in May initiated by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

Parishes that had completed their plans were invited, as well as experts on topics such as good neighbourhood schemes, affordable housing, transport, health and safety risk assessment, highways, youth activities, the natural environment and community halls.

“This was the perfect opportunity for parish planning groups to find out how they can deliver their plans, as well as what additional help and support is out there to help improve their community,” said Wil Gibson, LSP Board Member for Community Development.

Over 60 parishes in the district have already completed a Parish Plan. The event was organised and funded by Suffolk Coastal LSP, Suffolk Acre, the Big Lottery Fund and the Suffolk Coastal Resource Network, which is now planning its next event which will provide more opportunities to share experiences and information on broadband access, how to renew plans, and partnership working to achieve more.

Green designs for the Futures

The first phase of the shared space scheme promoted by Felixstowe Futures' partners Suffolk County Council, Felixstowe Town Council and Suffolk Coastal has changed the road priorities at the top of Convalescent Hill, built a mini-roundabout at the bottom of it, and changed the lay-out of the car park.

Suffolk Coastal and the County designed the greenery around the car park and Wolsey Gardens, with shrubs, perennials and trees planted, including sycamore and pine, traditional sea front trees for Felixstowe. Cordylines and yucca have been used to frame views of the sea and provide focal points.

Fines as Council tackles eyesores

The illegal use of an 11 hectare site within a special landscape area in Thorington to store materials saw its owner fined in May by Lowestoft magistrates for failing to comply with a Suffolk Coastal order to clear up the site.

“Ourselves and the Environment Agency first became aware that this site was being used for the storage of materials in 2007 and since then we have been taking action and monitoring the situation to bring an end to this blot on the local landscape,” said Councillor Ivan Jowers, Chairman of the Development Control Committee.

The site was being used for storing reclaimed building materials, caravans, portacabins, motor vehicles and waste materials. Edward Thomas Webster pleaded guilty and was fined £1,400, and ordered to pay £250 costs to the Council.

In April, Andrew Banks of Westerfield admitted failing to comply with a planning enforcement notice from the Council and was fined £3,500, with £600 costs by magistrates at Ipswich.

He had been told by Suffolk Coastal in December 2007 to remove a large quantity of building materials, portacabins and concrete pads off land adjacent to his home by July 2008 after local residents, the Parish Council and the local district councillor had raised problems about the use of this site.

Development within the countryside is tightly controlled by a range of national and local planning policies. Suffolk Coastal is putting a fresh emphasis on planning enforcement and making better use of its resource to target cases that have been identified as being of particular concern in local areas.

“I hope that these cases warn others that this Council takes the protection of our district very seriously and that we will use whatever powers we can to safeguard our communities from unauthorised eyesores,” added Cllr Jowers.

To report a possible breach of planning control call the enforcement team on 01394 444351 or visit

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/devcontrol/enforcement

The enforcement team deal with around 350 reports a year, but about half of these turn out not to be breaches of planning rules. Often, a call from the team is enough to resolve the problem, but it does have to issue over 20 enforcement notices a year.

However, because some cases require court action, it is inevitably quite a lengthy process, as in the two cases featured above, with even relatively straight-forward cases taking a year to resolve successfully because of the laws laid down by Parliament.

New guide to help improve your home

Working with other councils in Suffolk, Suffolk Coastal has produced The Guide to Extending Your Home which will help residents comply with Building Regulations by letting them know if and how they apply to their home improvements.

“The guide is not a substitute for getting professional advice but does provide helpful information about what is likely to be affected by the regulations in most domestic projects,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Development and Building Control.

Building Regulations help make sure the work is carried out safely and to a satisfactory standard. They cover most building projects including loft, basement and garage conversions, removing interior walls and altering any electrical or drainage systems.

The guide can be downloaded for free from

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/buildingcontrol/guide.

To find out if your project is covered by the Building Regulations or for more information, call buildingcontrol on 01394 444219 or email building.control@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Get ready for a summer of fun

The Latitude Festival may attract people from across the country, but as you can see below, there are loads of other festivals, events, or activities on throughout the summer to keep people of all ages entertained.

To keep up to date with what's on in your district visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/whatson or pick up one of our what's on guides from our Melton Hill offices or any of our tourist information centres.

Live events

- Eastern Angle's **Bentwater Roads** at Hush House, Bentwaters Parks July 1-18 - call 01473 211498 or visit www.easternangles.co.uk
- **The Village Show, Grundisburgh** playing field, Saturday, July 17 – call 01473 738267 or visit www.gbchs.org.uk
- **Dallinghoo Village Fete** Village Hall and Grounds Saturday, July 17 – 01473 737598.
- **Knodishall Village Fete** – Saturday, July 17 11am - 3pm.
- **Darsham Horticulture Show** - Saturday, July 17 2.30pm - 3.45pm – 01728 668251.
- **Bentwaters Cold War Museum Open Day** - Saturday, July 17, 10am-4pm - www.bcwm.org.uk
- **Unity Dance Showcase 2010** - Spa Pavilion Theatre, Felixstowe, Saturday, July 17, 6.30pm – 01394 282126.
- **Peasenhall Pea Festival** - Sunday, July 18, Village Hall 11am - 4pm – 01728 660457.
- **Woodbridge Regatta & Riverside Fair** - Sunday, July 18, 12 noon – 07900 825713.
- **Aldeburgh Theatre** – the Jill Freud Company presents Cowardy Custard July 23- 31, Dangerous Obsession August 3-7, My Cousin Rachel August 9-14, Holiday Snap August 17-21, and Abigail's Party August 23-28. Call 01728 453007 or visit www.aldeburghtheatre.org

- **Yoxford Two Charities Fete** - Saturday, July 24, 2pm - 5pm at Yoxford Village Hall.
- **Salute for Heroes** at Glemham Hall, Little Glemham, Saturday, July 24 and Sunday, July 25 – a weekend of military displays and re-enactments in aid of Help for Heroes - call 07921 931283 or visit www.saluteforheroes.org.uk/
- **Chameleon jazz, classics, blues and rock** at the Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club on Saturday, July 24, and music from the 1940s on Thursday, August 19 at St Nicholas Church, Felixstowe Ferry - call 01394 670633 or visit www.felixstowemusic.com
- Red Rose Chain's **A Midsummer Night's Dream** in Rendlesham Forest, July 28 - August 29 - call 01473 288886 or visit www.theatreintheforest.com
- **Hachfest Festival 2010** - Friday, July 30 - Sunday, August 1 www.hachfest.co.uk
- **Darsham Summer Fete** - Saturday, July 31, 2pm at Village Hall
- **The Snape Proms** run from July 31 to August 30 with a varied programme for all tastes - selected highlights include Maceo Parker (James Brown's sax machine) on Sunday, August 1, the South African Gospel Singers on Thursday, August 12, Taraf de Haidouks on Saturday, August 14, Brian Eno's Apollo on Monday, August 23, Courtney Pine on Tuesday, August 24, Seamus Heaney's Poetry Prom on Thursday, August 26 and the Australian Chamber Orchestra on Monday, August 30. Call 01728 687110 or visit www.aldeburgh.co.uk
- **Felixstowe carnival and fair** - August 13-15 - visit www.felixstowecarnival.org
- **Aldeburgh carnival** - Monday, August 16 - visit www.aldeburghcarnival.com
- **Footloose**, the summer youth project at the Spa Pavilion - August 18 - 21 - call 01394 282126.
- **Hot Rod and Custom Car Rally** - Saturday, August 28 at Felixstowe – visit www.rodandcustom.co.uk/nationals
- **Art on the Prom** - Sunday, September 5 at Felixstowe - visit www.artontheprom.org
- **The Wild Oats** at Leiston Film Theatre on Wednesday, September 15 - call 01728 830549 or visit www.leistonfilmtheatre.co.uk

Roll up to Activefest and Xtremefest

Try out alternative sporting activities in Felixstowe at the fourth Xtremefest on Sunday, July 25 at Brackenbury Fort from 11am to 5pm and the Activefest the day before.

Xtremefest will include a mobile skatepark, a climbing wall, human gyroscope, a rodeo surfboard, a bungee run, cheerleading and survival skills. As well as live local young bands and DJs from the Soundwaves project, people can splash out with watersports activities or kayaking, as well as displays of powerlifting, hang gliding, Judo, boxing, parkour and street dance.

Organised by Suffolk Coastal in partnership with Felixstowe Police, Felixstowe TV, Alton Water Sports Centre and Nomad Sea Kayaking, activities such as trampolining, squash, basket ball and a bike park will be at Brackenbury Sports Centre.

The Activefest on Saturday, July 24 from 10am to 4pm at Felixstowe Leisure Centre will promote local clubs in Felixstowe as well as promoting a healthy mind and body.

Visitors will be able to try a climbing wall, spinning, carpet bowls, cheerleading, dance mats, judo, badminton, salsa dancing, street dance and mini-golf.

For more information call 07775 586545 or 01394 444652, or email active.communities@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit their website www.xtremefest.org.uk

Young people are in for a fun filled August thanks to Suffolk Coastal's programme of activities ranging from afternoon Pay 'n' Play sessions to weeklong day camps for those aged eight and over.

Pay 'n' Play include dance mat parties, football, puppet making, Wii games, dodge ball and giant garden games. The activity camps are at eight different locations packed full of art and craft activities and different sports. Each day is themed and can be booked by the day or the full week.

Fishing sessions are taking place at Aldeburgh and Bromeswell, and there are also dance sessions with trained instructors and dance mats.

A forest camp in Rendlesham Forest offers the chance to learn orienteering and survival skills, build survival shelters, cook on home-made campfires and get an introduction into tracking the animals of the forest.

The district's five skateparks will host several sessions throughout August for beginners and also the Skate Jams tour combining displays and live music.

Pick up a brochure from any of the district's leisure centres or tourist information centres or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime or www.coastalpotato.co.uk or call 01394 444779 or email active.communities@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk to book a place.

Watch out for the Outdoor Festival

This year is the 40th anniversary of 400 square kilometres of coast and heaths being officially recognised and designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Most of this national treasure is in our district and to celebrate its birthday, Suffolk Coastal and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths team is holding an Outdoor Festival in October.

Two weeks of events around the district are launched on October 16 with a series of new pub walks within the AONB, marketed with support from Adnams.

The aim of the festival is to provide something for all ages, from traditional crafts and guided walks, to workshops in music and dancing, attracting those with an interest in outdoor pursuits, as well as the many who may not realise the delights of the AONB.

If you have any outdoor events, walks or celebrations planned between October 16 and 30, contact Nicky Corbett, Outdoor Festival Co-ordinator on 01394 444538, or email nicky.corbett@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk. For more information visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime

Places to visit

- **Bawdsey's Transmitter Block**, the site of the world's first radar station, is open Sunday, July 25, Sunday, August 29, Monday, August 30, and Sunday, September 12. Call 07821 162879 or visit www.bawdseyradar.org.uk
- **Martlesham Heath Aviation Society's Control Tower Museum** - open every Sunday until the end of October – call 01473 624510 or visit www.mhas.org.uk
- **Parham Airfield Museum** - open Sundays and Wednesdays until October - call 01394 286802.
- **Long Shop Museum**, Leiston - 200 years of industrial innovation, open daily - call 01728 832189 or visit www.longshop.care4free.net
- **Easton Farm Park** – open daily - call 01728 746475.
- **Suffolk Punch Heavy Horse Museum**, Woodbridge – open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays - call 01394 380643 or visit www.suffolkhorsemuseum.com
- **Suffolk Punch Trust**, Hollesley Bay - open daily until September - call 01394 411327 or visit www.suffolkpunchtrust.org
- **Orford Ness** - events include To the Lighthouse on Sunday, August 22, Bombs and Beasties on Saturdays July 24, August 7, and September 11, or Moth Mornings on Saturdays July 31 and August 21. Call 01394 450900 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- **Sutton Hoo** - events include Anglo-Saxon Encampments on July 17 and 18, 24 and 25, August 14 and 15, 29 and 30, Romeo and Juliet on Friday, July 23, Gruesome Graves Tour on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in August or Be Crafty on every Tuesday and Thursday in August. Call 01394 389700 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Flying the flag for Felixstowe remains a top priority

Making Felixstowe an even better attraction is a top priority for Suffolk Coastal which, despite its financial constraints, is supporting more activities to attract tourists.

Donkey rides have returned to the resort, Segways and the road train have come on track, while in the pipeline are a brass band in the seafront gardens, falconry and a French market.

“We are working harder than ever to help make Felixstowe even more of an exciting place. All of this is in addition to the recent £10m improvements to the South beach area, the plans for similar works to the central stretch of the beach, and the range of projects sparked by Felixstowe Futures which have included the improvements to links between the town and the resort with the works at Hamilton Road and Bent Hill,” said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member for Tourism.

“This Council is reviewing all its spending to ensure it is still getting maximum value for money. One decision we took was to no longer seek Blue Flag status which would have cost nearly £15,000 this year. That saving is instead being invested in supporting activities that really matter to residents and visitors,” added Cllr Hart.

Water quality at Felixstowe was recently rated as among the best in Britain, and the clean water and beach safety that made Felixstowe a regular Blue Flag winner remain as important as ever.

“Concentrating on making the resort better and busier is a much more sensible use of our limited resources than trying to meet the every growing shopping list of criteria demanded for Blue Flag status such as yet more new signs and notice boards,” added Cllr Hart.

Felixstowe is keeping crime in focus

Felixstowe's closed circuit television (CCTV) system now has nine cameras helping the police tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, after four more were funded by donations from the Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership, Suffolk Coastal, Lidl and Grange Shipping.

“Since it was launched in December 2008, the CCTV system has played an important part in supporting the work of the police in Felixstowe and I am proud that we have managed to obtain an additional £35,000 to expand and improve the service,” said Councillor Doreen Savage, Chairman of the Felixstowe CCTV Partnership.

The Felixstowe CCTV Partnership includes the police, Suffolk Coastal, Felixstowe Town Council, and the Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Seventeen police support volunteers monitor the live link and direct police resources as they arise. The new 46 inch widescreen television means all nine cameras can be seen easily at the same time.

Children scoop UFO in Yoxford

Children from Yoxford Primary School put their writing skills to the test, with the help of local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Jamie Newson from Saxmundham and Framlingham Safer Neighbourhood Team and a mocked-up UFO crash site within the school grounds.

As part of the project 'Everybody Writes' the children took on the role of a journalist, writing a front page story about the event.

Helping licensees tackle drugs

The Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership (CSP), along with the Suffolk Constabulary drug specialist, has been giving local licensees practical knowledge and skills to deal with drug misuse on their premises.

“The training on offer to local licensees will be a great help in improving their knowledge of drug misuse and what signs to look out for in their establishments,” said Councillor Sherrie Green, Chair of the CSP.

“Instances of drug misuse and crime are relatively low in our district but it is important that licensees are aware of procedures to follow should they come across any drugs on their premises,” added Cllr Green.

For information about upcoming training events run by the CSP and the police, licensees can contact the substance misuse officer on 07768 817607 or email julia.catterwell@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

News from your SNTs

- Kesgrave SNT assisted a group of adults with learning disabilities from the Rushmere Community Resource Unit to litter pick the Rushmere Common in Rushmere St Andrews.

- Woodbridge and District SNT has listened to public concerns and has a new priority of tackling the problem of illegal off-road motorcycling in forests and heaths around the Rendlesham, Tunstall, Hollesley and Sutton areas.
- Westleton has joined Suffolk's Community Speed Watch initiative with the help of the Saxmundham and Framlingham SNT which sees local volunteers recording speeding motorists and passing the details onto the police.
- You can contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) about any community issue by visiting www.safersuffolk.org.uk and entering your postcode or by phoning 01473 613500.

Making Leiston even safer

A campaign against youth-related anti-social behaviour in Leiston town centre has been launched by the Leiston and Aldeburgh Safer Neighbourhood Team, which includes identifying regular offenders and dealing with them robustly.

Officers are increasing patrols and will engage with offenders directly, with a zero tolerance policy on criminal damage, assault, burglary or drugs and alcohol offences.

The police are holding surgeries twice a week at local schools to engage with pupils, their families and staff to help get information that assist the SNT to deal positively with offenders.

SNT Sgt Mark Beresford said, “Nobody should feel unsafe in their home and Leiston is no exception. By working with partners such as Suffolk Coastal District Council, the Youth Offending Service and local schools, we will be able to resolve the issue and ensure that everyone can enjoy the town centre at any time.”

Businesses could win at Olympics

A special breakfast event is being held on Monday, July 27 to help local businesses get on track to exploit the opportunities on offer from London’s hosting of the 2012 Olympics.

Kesgrave's Business Breakfast Club is hosting the event at 7.30am at the Kesgrave Conference and Community Centre, when Adam Baker, the Suffolk Project Manager for the 2012 Games, and David Coulson, of the East of England Development Agency, will explain more about the estimated 7,000 contracts that are on offer.

To book your place contact Mandy Camilleri 01473 612648 ext 27 or email conference@kwmcc.co.uk by July 21. The Business Breakfast Club is one of the local initiatives that has been supported by Suffolk Coastal's economic development support fund (EDSF) and any business or community organisation outside of Woodbridge and Felixstowe, which have their own schemes, can apply for EDSF help if they have a project that would boost the local economy.

For more about the EDSF visit

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/communitygrants/supportfund or call 01394 444625 or email sonia.lambert@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Businesses save money and go green

Over 60 local businesses have received helpful advice from Suffolk Coastal's business advisor that could save them over £265,000 a year, while reducing carbon emissions by over 1,100 tonnes.

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the district can take advantage of the free expert help to understand their carbon footprint and help reduce the cost of their energy bills.

There are over 4,000 local SMEs in the district that could benefit from the help on offer. Find out more by calling the Suffolk Coastal business energy advisor on 01394 444257 or by emailing anna.martin@groundwork.org.uk who is funded by Suffolk Coastal, Groundwork East of England and the Suffolk Heaths AONB Sustainable Development Fund.

Changes to SBRR

Important changes are due to come into effect on October 1 to the Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) scheme which should benefit many local businesses in the year up to September 30, 2011.

Eligible businesses whose properties have rateable values of £6,000 or below will receive 100% rate relief instead of 50% during this period, while those whose properties have rateable values between £6,001 and £12,000 will get a tapered rate relief of between 100% and 0% during this period. It is anticipated that legislation confirming these proposed changes to the scheme will be completed this summer.

A letter and a facts sheet has been sent to all those whose properties have a rateable value of £12,000 or less who currently receive SBRR.

Businesses guardedly confident about the future

A survey of 100 local businesses in Suffolk Coastal has concluded that most are confident about the future but would be happier if issues regarding the internet and the skills of potential employees were addressed.

The Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) wanted to find out how businesses were coping in the current economic climate and the research was produced by Nick Boulter, Chairman of its economy and skills working group and of the Suffolk Coastal Business Forum.

Businesses reported that the district is an outstanding environment to live and work in and is a great asset for attracting businesses, customers and potential employees, but improved broadband access was needed as soon as possible.

Another important finding was that a lack of skilled workers meant many local businesses found it difficult to recruit employees such as chefs, managers, agronomists, accountants, stage technicians, customer care staff and sales staff. The LSP has already been working hard with its partners to address some of the issues raised regarding training.

HCMTI working for the future

A business-led project supported by Suffolk Coastal and Magnox South has celebrated its first year encouraging social and economic improvements in the IP15, 16 and 17 postcode areas.

The Heritage Coast Market Town Initiative (HCMTI) looks to involve local communities, businesses and their expertise to address the opportunities and challenges facing them, such as energy, tourism, transport, skills or coastal management.

Community enterprises could be the key to creating long-lasting, local answers. Usually run by people within the area they serve, reinvesting any profits back into their communities and providing local jobs and training opportunities.

The HCMTI wants to bring together business associations and special interest groups who recognise the common issues and are willing to cooperate together. To find out more call Chris Betson on 07895 69105 or email cbetson@suffolkcoastbusiness.co.uk

Plug into renewable energy

The Government's new Feed in Tariff (FiT), or Clean Energy Cashback scheme, means any home generating electricity from renewables, such as solar (photovoltaic) panels or micro-wind turbines, can claim generous payments from their energy company as long as the product and its installer are officially accredited.

Payments vary, but the typical 2.5kW solar panel can earn 41.3 pence per kilowatt hour, saving around £140 on energy bills and earning £900 a year in cash-back payments for the electricity you have generated and used in your home, and for any surplus power you export to the National Grid.

For this type of solar insulation, the average start-up costs are £11,000, but the pay-back times are now much quicker and you are also reducing your carbon footprint. The Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union on 01473 690690 offers interest free loans of up to £4,000.

For those communities that want to join up and do something together, projects up to five megawatts such as small free-standing wind turbines, small-scale hydroelectricity projects or anaerobic digestion systems can also qualify for payments. Any interested communities can call the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership's John Taylor on 01473 432696.

For more information visit the FiT section on www.decc.gov.uk or call the Energy Savings Trust on 0800 512 012, and for details of local installers, call Suffolk Energy Action Link on 0800 02 88 938. Details about the necessary accreditation are on www.microgenerationcertification.org.

Going greener, saving money

Suffolk Coastal has reduced its carbon emissions by five per cent over the last year, with energy use down by six per cent, and transport down by 10 per cent, largely thanks to Suffolk Coastal Services (SCS) having new, more fuel efficient vehicles and more careful planning of routes.

As part of its commitment to environmentally friendly service delivery, SCS now has two electric vans for its grounds maintenance staff to use around Felixstowe.

As well as having zero emissions, they are cost effective as a full overnight charge takes six hours from a 13 amp socket and costs just 75 pence.

Felixstowe Leisure Centre has also cut its annual electricity usage dropped by six per cent, their water by 10 per cent and their gas by nine per cent.

Helping communities take local green action

Communities that want to help residents save energy and water, prepare for extreme weather and protect the environment can now turn for assistance to Dan Wheals, Suffolk Coastal's new community environmental action advisor.

“The threat of extreme weather events, the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, and the increasing demands for water, are some of the issues that our communities can take positive steps to address,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Suffolk Coastal has got funding and support for the new post from Groundwork East of England, the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership and the Environment Agency.

“With LSP funding, we helped Greener Fram, Transition Woodbridge and Otley Green engage and involve their residents, and inspired others like Greener Sax and Ufford to start their own community initiatives,” added Cllr Nunn.

Views wanted on reactor designs

While no formal plans have yet been submitted for Sizewell, the Environment Agency is assessing and consulting about the designs of two new nuclear reactors, with comments wanted by October 18.

A new nuclear power station has been mooted for Sizewell. Power companies will propose new reactor designs and the process Generic Design Assessment allows the Environment Agency to assess them and identify at an early stage any problems so it ask for improvements.

The UK EPR™ is proposed at Sizewell. Call 08708 506 506 or email gda@environment-agency.gov.uk for a copy of the consultation document, or comment online at www.consult.environmentagency.gov.uk/portal/ho/nuclear/gda

PHILIS is proving a massive success

Suffolk Coastal's purpose built Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS) is proving a big boost to the Port of Felixstowe.

The website, www.philis.co.uk, lets importers and exporters keep up to date electronically, and has allowed Suffolk Coastal's port health team to work more swiftly and efficiently.

“PHILIS online has been live since January 1, processing Common Entry Documents, which are required to accompany certain types of imported food. We have over 90 registered organisations, nearly 300 users, and new organisations and users are registering all the time. The user-friendly and comprehensive online system is proving to be an incredibly useful tool for both port health staff and shipping agents alike,” said Councillor Sherrie Green, Cabinet Member for Community Health.

PHILIS online has a range of features which are saving companies valuable time when submitting documents for multiple consignments of goods. At other ports shipping agents still have to laboriously complete paper forms separately.

The drive to create PHILIS was the recognition that to meet the additional demand of the increasing trade at Felixstowe where over 40 per cent of the country's food imports arrive, the port health team would have to be increased by up to 15 people.

“The system was developed in-house by the Council and delivered on time and within budget. It has the potential to help other port health teams across the country and has already attracted potential buyers who want to benefit from similar success,” said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member with responsibility for ICT.

The second phase of PHILIS is set to go live this autumn with increased functions such as mobile working and upgraded consignment tracking.

Volunteers helping to keep the district clean

Over 50 groups, organisations and families have carried out litter picks in their communities as part of this year's Spring Clean and Radio Suffolk's Don't be a Tosser campaigns which are backed by local councils.

“So far an impressive 1,300 bags of non-recyclable litter and over 500 bags of recyclable litter have been issued to volunteers in the district by our partners Suffolk Coastal Services. Removing rubbish not only benefits the appearance of the local community but also ensures that it is disposed of properly and recycled where possible,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Suffolk Coastal can provide sacks, for both recyclable and non-recyclable rubbish, gloves and litter grabbers to anyone wanting to carry out a litter pick in their community. Visit

[Www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/waste/springclean](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/waste/springclean) or

call 01394 444000 or email waste.management@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Litter can be reported to 01394 444000 or email

scsltd@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Designs on keeping district mess-free

Local school children have been getting creative by designing posters for their school and local community to encourage people to be responsible and clear up after their pets.

“It has been great to see that many young people are passionate about keeping our district clean and mess free. I hope that the winning poster designs will be successful in making pet owners think before they leave dog mess on public footpaths or green spaces,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Langer Primary received £360 for first prize and Wenhaston Primary, £160 as runner-up. Pupils from Langer Primary were presented with their cheque by Cllr Doreen Savage and intend to use the prize money to help the local environment.

Those caught not clearing up after their dog can receive a fixed penalty notice of £80 with a maximum penalty of up to £1,000 if taken to court.

Dog fouling can be reported to Suffolk Coastal Services on 01394 444000 or email scsltd@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Get set to recycle on the go

New bins are making it even easier for residents to do their part for the local environment and recycle while on the go.

Separated into two halves, blue for recyclable items including newspapers, plastic packaging, magazines, cans and tins and black for non-recyclable litter, they also have a section for cigarette butts.

New bins have been installed in lay-bys on the A14 at Nacton, the A12 at Benhall, Brightwell, Martlesham, Melton, Thorington and Woodbridge, and at various locations in Felixstowe, and will be rolled out across the district gradually replacing the existing litter bins.

Leiston sets a green example

Residents of King George's Avenue, Leiston, set a green example for the rest of us during a two-week experiment funded by the Government when they reduced their waste by nearly a third.

“As well as residents, Leiston Primary School and businesses along King George's Avenue were also involved, and I would like to thank all those who took part. We hope it will provide useful tips on how we can improve our services and encourage people to reduce their waste,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

The amount of non-recyclable waste collected at the end of the fortnight was 30 per cent, or over 400 kilos, less than the amount collected at the start of the project, with the school reducing its non-recyclable waste by nearly a half after it composted all its fruit and vegetable peelings from snack time and recycled all leftover cooked and uncooked kitchen waste.

Help lead the way to fitness

Keen walkers and champions of a healthy lifestyle are wanted to join the successful team of volunteer health walk leaders in Suffolk Coastal.

Health walks are a great way for residents recovering from illness or operations to gently increase their fitness levels and is also good for those wanting to start improving their cardio-vascular fitness or improve muscle tone.

“We would like to introduce specialised walks for people with learning difficulties and mental health illnesses, providing the additional support that may be required but we need more volunteer walk leaders ready to give a bit back to the community while doing something they enjoy,” said Councillor Sherrie Green, Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership Board Member which backs the health walks.

Former Olympic marathon runner, and Felixstowe resident, Stan Cox, has been an active health walks champion for some time now and at 93 is a great example of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Bob Halls, also involved in health walks for several years, has recently been presented with a Healthy Ambitions Suffolk Gold Award for his voluntary work training other walk leaders and is great at motivating others to enjoy staying active.

To find out about becoming a volunteer walk leader call 01394 444501 or email walks@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk A full list of the health walks programme can be viewed online at www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/steppingout or see below for brief details of upcoming walks.

Tuesday, July 20 –

Felixstowe - 10.30am Broadway House, Orwell Road;
Framlingham -10.45am Castle car park;
Ramsholt - 6.15pm public free car park.

Wednesday, July 21

Leiston - 2.30pm Leisure Centre;
Dunwich -10.30am at beach car park.

Monday, July 26 -

Wickham Market - 2pm at the Hill;

Wednesday, July 28 -

Trimley St Martin - 11.00am Sports and Social Club.

Tuesday, August 3

Rendlesham Children's Centre - 11am;
Charsfield - 6.15pm Charsfield Village Hall car park.

Thursday, August 5 -

Brackenbury - 10.30am Sports Centre.

Monday, 9 August -

Wickham Market - 2pm at the Hill;

Wednesday, August 11 -

Westleton - 10am Westleton Road car park.

Thursday, August 12 -

Knodishall Common - 11am car park right of Butchers Arms;
Woodbridge -1.30pm Elmhurst Park.

Tuesday, August 17 -

Framlingham - 10.45 Castle car park.

Thursday, August 19 -

Blythburgh - 10.30am White Hart car park.

Monday, August 23 -

Trimley Marshes - 10.30am Morrison's car park;

Wickham Market - 2pm at the Hill.

Tuesday, August 31 -

Felixstowe Ferry - 10.45am St Nicholas Church.

Nominate our sporting heroes

Nominations are wanted for the fourth annual Suffolk Coastal Sports Alliance Awards which celebrate sporting talent, dedication and achievement across the district, and this year also includes a category for the team of the year.

“There is a wealth of local sporting talent across the district and the awards provide a chance to recognise the efforts of all those taking part no matter what the sport,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Countryside and Leisure.

The categories are sports personality, young sports personality, disabled sports personality, club, team, coach, sports school, volunteer and lifetime achievement. In order to qualify nominees must live or attend a club in the district and nominations should be submitted by Friday, July 30 - visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/sportsawards for more information or call 01394 444318.

The awards are being supported by the Coastal Sports Alliance, Suffolk School Sports Partnership, Suffolk Sport, Felixstowe TV, DC Leisure, The Spa Pavilion, Optua and British Energy.

Grants awarded

Over 20 local not-for-profit groups and organisations have been given a financial boost thanks to this year's revenue grants fund with awards from £200 to £9,000 to help provide services, facilities or activities to local residents to help improve their quality of life.

“Many of the groups are run wholly by volunteers and rely on donations and funding in order to continue running. With a little additional help from the Council they can ensure that even more community projects are able to go ahead,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Countryside and Leisure.

Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/communitygrants/councilgrants for more information or contact the grants team on 01394 444626.