



Parish *Bulletin*

Winter 2008/09



Review delayed again - Make Suffolk Three back on track?



The Boundary Committee for England (BCE) has been given until July 15 to reconsider, and perhaps rethink, its increasingly ill-fated review of local government in Suffolk.

The BCE should originally have published its final recommendations by December 31, but this was put back to February 13 and on February 9 the shock news was that it has now been delayed a further five months to July 15.

“This news shows that the Government again clearly has strong concerns about the previously proposed BCE options and I hope it means that North Haven, Rural Suffolk or the one giant Suffolk will never see the light of day. The BCE should now start again, forget its proposals for twinning Ipswich with Felixstowe, and instead offer an Ipswich unitary on a much tighter boundary with the rest of the county being split into East and West Suffolk as previously suggested by Suffolk Coastal. If the Government insists on proceeding with what has turned from a review into a farce, this Council believes that our Make Suffolk Three model would be the best way forward,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Suffolk Coastal’s Deputy Leader.

“The bad news is that the continuing delays and uncertainty will definitely further harm local government in our county. The BCE has not previously given any real consideration to the most sensible option of creating three new local unitary councils, or even addressed the strong demand for the existing local councils to be allowed to remain in an updated and modernised way.

“There were strong concerns in our district about the lack of real consultation, which was recently highlighted in our survey of Suffolk Coastal’s town and parish councils. It is good that the Secretary of State wants the BCE to take the

extra time to consult fully with local communities, which it should now make sure includes options that it had not previously looked at,” added Cllr Smith.

A special edition of Parish Bulletin will be published when the details of what the BCE intends to do becomes clear. See the local media and www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/future to keep up to date with the latest news.

“Friday the 13th felt like a suitably ominous day for its recommendations to be published but now that has been abandoned as well. I think even the Government is now recognising what a massive and distracting waste of time this has been and that it has been getting in the way of all the councils in Suffolk delivering better services and even better value, which is so important in these economically challenging times,” added Cllr Smith.

The Government’s announcement says ‘an extension to July 15 would allow for significant further consultations and substantial time for the Committee both to prepare for consultation, to consider responses, and formulate any advice it submits’.

The Boundary Committee will publish any further proposals on March 19 and will receive representations on those proposals until May 14, prior to making its final recommendations public on July 15. To help you be fully informed, we will be holding two special Town and Parish Meetings on Monday, March 30 at the Kesgrave Conference Centre, Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, starting at 4.30pm and 7pm.

Please reserve a place by calling Jo Mael on 01394 444326 or email jo.mael@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

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Sorry that this issue is a few weeks late but the next issue of this Bulletin should be published at the end of April 2009.

This is your publication, if you have any items you would like included that would be of interest to other Towns and Parishes please contact the Communications Team on 01394 444361 or email communications@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Wider choice for those on housing waiting list

Letters have been sent to people currently on the housing waiting list in Suffolk Coastal, inviting them to re-register the new Choice Based Lettings scheme, Gateway to Homechoice, which is being introduced now, and will see Suffolk Coastal linking up with six other borough and district councils in the region.

“The Choice Based Lettings scheme, Gateway to Homechoice, is set to be introduced from February to April, and I would encourage people in the district who are waiting for homes to take advantage of the improved system by re-registering as soon as they can. In the meantime, homes will continue to be allocated according to the old list,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

“Anyone in housing need can register by filling in an online application form at www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk People who are currently on the housing waiting list should use the reference number enclosed in their letter and their date of birth to log in,” added Cllr Slemmings.

The old housing waiting list is now closed, so new applicants should register with Gateway to Homechoice. If people do not have internet access at home, they can use computers at the Council's Melton Hill office, which is open Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 5.15pm, and 8.45am to 4.45pm on Fridays, or its Felixstowe Seafront office, which is open Mondays and Wednesdays, 9am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 4.30pm.

Suffolk Heritage Housing Association's Framlingham office, and the district's libraries, will also offer internet access to those who want to re-register. Alternatively, anybody can call 01728 727524 to go through the process over the phone with a member of staff.

Suffolk Coastal's partners are Mid Suffolk, Babergh, Braintree, Maldon, Colchester and Ipswich. Once Choice Based Lettings has been brought in, available homes will be advertised on the Gateway to Homechoice website, in a special newsletter and in local housing offices, and anyone on the register can put in a bid for homes they would like.

For more information visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/cbl or www.gatewaytohomechoice.org.uk



Strategy for district's future is agreed

The document that sets out the priorities and vision for the district from now until 2021 has been officially adopted by Suffolk Coastal.

The Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) drew up the Sustainable Community Strategy which includes a long-term vision for the district based on local need, and a series of key priorities based upon the vision that can be achieved in the next few years.

"The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out an overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Suffolk Coastal district and its communities, in a way that is both achievable and sustainable," said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal and Chairman of the Suffolk Coastal LSP Board.

"This is probably the district's most important document as it sets out a clear vision, priorities and tasks for all our communities and organisations across all aspects of everyday life to help achieve an even better quality of life across the whole of Suffolk Coastal. It will certainly help this Council plan its future actions," added Cllr Herring.

The vision of the district in 2021 that underpins the strategy is that of it being a place where people want to live and to invest, to care for others and the environment.

Among the issues facing the district set out in the strategy are affordable homes, the needs and aspirations of older people, young people, access to services, health and wellbeing, crime and the fear of crime, vulnerable people, business growth, improving skills and learning, climate change, the district's rich and valued environment, and its coast and estuaries.

"Our more detailed vision for life in 2021 explains how we want our residents to access services, with strong and supportive communities, in a district facing up positively to the challenges of climate change, with a strong economy and skilled workers, healthier lifestyles for all, and young people playing a central role in the future.

"The strategy identifies our priority outcomes that we want to achieve between now and 2021 and although they are challenging they can be reached by all those with a role and interest in our district working together. I am pleased that this Council has adopted such an ambitious strategy for our district's future," added Cllr Herring.

The full strategy can be found on the LSP's website www.sclsp.org.uk/keyissues Various organisations across the district with a key role to play in the future of the district were asked for their views on the draft version of the strategy, including town and parish councils, local businesses, community and voluntary organisations.

Skatepark open

Local skateboarders, BMXers and bladers have been jumping for joy since Woodbridge skatepark opened to the public in December.

The fixed ramp skatepark, which is next to Deben Swimming Pool, has been approved by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), and so can officially take its first tricks and tumbles.

"A huge amount of hard work and determination has gone into bringing the skatepark to the children and young people of Woodbridge, and it is wonderful to think of them there now, honing their skills, performing tricks, and having fun," said Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Young People.

"The 3Bs (boarders, BMXers and bladers) group are putting in a bid for funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund to pay for youth workers to help organise future events at the skatepark and to send people on first aid courses. It is clear that this facility means a lot to our local young people," added Cllr Savage.



Funding for the skatepark has come from a range of sources including Suffolk Coastal, Woodbridge Town Council, Sport England, SET, Awards for All, Woodbridge Community Council, the Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership, Market Towns Initiative, the County's Regeneration Fund, Community Champions, Ganzoni Trust, Woodbridge School and local fundraising.

Council investing in future of the district

The go-ahead has been given by Suffolk Coastal to an ambitious £1.5 million investment package in the district that could attract a further £6 million of funding for local projects.

The £1.5 million was gained from the Government, through its Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI) because of the district's success in increasing the amount collected from business rates.

"In two years we have received £1.5 million LABGI funding, the largest amount in Suffolk, and we plan to use this one-off windfall to invest in a range of projects that could make a lasting difference to the future of our district," said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member for the Economy.

"As the economic downturn begins to affect the country, this is an excellent opportunity using new money gained from the Government to press ahead with projects and initiatives that can help regenerate areas across our district and encourage local businesses to grow.

"With some of our more ambitious projects we hope to attract financial support to the value of an additional £6 million from some of our partners to turn these schemes into reality. This is probably the largest and most varied investment programme this district has ever seen at a time when it is needed more than ever before," added Cllr Hart.

The investment plan includes money being spent on improving transport and town centres, business development

initiatives, projects to boost tourism, and funds to support the work of the Felixstowe and Trimleys Peninsula Futures Programme and the regeneration of market towns.

The proposals include improving parking and passenger facilities at the district's railway stations, a new foot ferry between Harwich, Shotley and Felixstowe, and regeneration projects at Felixstowe's Seafront Gardens and Hamilton Road/The Triangle.

"For some of these initiatives to proceed we need to work with partners to gain all the necessary funding, but our commitment could set the ball rolling to make these schemes reality. For example, we hope that our £100,000 for rail station improvements could attract at least another £1 million, while the £325,000 earmarked for the Seafront Gardens project could unlock £2m from the National Lottery.

"On a smaller scale, we will help small and medium sized businesses gain expert free advice on how to cut their energy bills and make potentially vital savings, as well as giving more businesses an improved waste collection service that should help them save money and be greener.

"As well as looking to help Woodbridge town centre remain competitive and attractive to shoppers, we will also invest in Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Kesgrave/ Rushmere St Andrew, Leiston, Saxmundham and Wickham Market to help these key parts of our district through these tough economic times," added Cllr Hart.

Help spring clean our district

Suffolk Coastal wants people across the district to get involved in a local clean-up as part of a county-wide campaign to Spring Clean Suffolk.

"Suffolk Coastal Services is ready to take away any rubbish collected by volunteers. Last year over 3,500 volunteers collected more than 7,000 black sacks full of rubbish across 54 parishes as part of the annual Spring Clean, supported by Suffolk Coastal," said Cllr Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Individual residents and groups including town and parish councils, schools, conservation groups, youth groups, and residents' associations, carried out litter picks last year, many of them also separating items for recycling.

Help such as sacks, gloves and disposal of the waste collected is on offer throughout the year from SCS. Call Suffolk Coastal on 01394 444033 or email waste.management@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Recycle your cartons

There are now five recycling banks in the district just for paper-based food and drink cartons, which cannot go into the blue-lidded recycling bins that are being rolled out as part of Suffolk Coastal's improved recycling service.

The two latest carton recycling banks are at Woodbridge Community Centre and Framlingham Sports Club and are in addition to the ones at the Household Waste Recycling Centres at Foxhall Road, Brightwell, Lovers Lane in Leiston and Carr Road, Felixstowe.

The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment, an organisation that represents major carton manufacturers such as Tetra Pak, has helped provide the five recycling banks in this district.

For information on recycling facilities in Suffolk Coastal, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/waste/recycling/facilities or call Suffolk Coastal Services on 01394 444000.

Partnership goes to school to prevent homelessness

An innovative partnership project has been working in local schools to help prevent homelessness and give Suffolk Coastal's young people an accurate picture of what help is on offer.

Suffolk Coastal's Housing Options team has been working with Children's and Young Person's Services and Connexions to give talks in schools and to explore the issue of homelessness through a performing arts project.

"Homelessness is a serious concern, and young people who have recently left school are among those most at risk of having no place to live. This partnership is informing and supporting young people to help prevent the worst happening," said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

"The partnership has set up One Stop, an advice service for young people to come and talk through their housing problems, based at Felixstowe's Level 2 Youth Group," added Cllr Slemmings.

Their work has led to homelessness featuring in the drama and performing arts curriculum at high schools in Felixstowe. This culminated in students making a DVD about the problems that can arise if young people choose to leave home soon after finishing school.

In the future, the Housing Options Team plans to work with high schools in Leiston, Saxmundham and Woodbridge and to show the DVD made in Felixstowe to other young people in the district.

Anyone concerned about possibly becoming homeless can contact Suffolk Coastal's Housing Options Team on 01394 444264 or at homelessness@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk.

There is also advice available from www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/homelessness. Young people should visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/homelessness/youngpeople16and17 for help tailored to meet their needs.

Levington scoop national Village of the Year award

Suffolk Coastal added its congratulations to Levington which won in December the prestigious 2008 Calor Village of the Year award for England.

"This is a marvellous achievement and is an excellent tribute to all those in Levington whose efforts and community spirit have now gained a richly deserved national spotlight," said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Countryside and Rural Issues.

"The judges paid tribute to the fact that over 40 per cent of the village offer their help in one form or another to run activities aimed at all members of the community, and that Levington and its parish council have been working to protect and enhance their local environment and involve people in local decisions," added Cllr Neale.

With a population of 280, the judges also highlighted the efforts being made to save local services and amenities with campaigns to maintain the bus service and to prevent the



closure of the local post office in neighbouring Nacton.

According to Calor 'many initiatives have resulted from the Parish Council's lead and all can enjoy the improvement in facilities and activities that have been made possible by the enthusiasm, hard work and active participation of an increasing proportion of villagers'.

Entries are wanted for the 2009 Village of the Year competition, which this year is aimed at villages with less than 500 people. The Suffolk Coastal winner gets £200 and an engraved silver cup, which last year was won by Orford. Application forms are on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/parishcouncils/noticeboard or from Jo Mael on 01394 444326 or email jo.mael@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

The Suffolk Coastal 2009 survival guide

Suffolk Coastal has pulled together a brief list of some of the assistance that is on offer to residents, businesses and communities to help them combat the economic gloom.

The most important advice to any resident or business is do not ignore or store up problems - advice and help is on offer that can help everyone plan their way through the current maze. Take action now!

Housing

The Council's Housing Options team tries to stop people losing their homes, or help them find and keep a new home that meets their needs. The team provides advice and assistance relating to all areas of housing, including:

- ◆ Debt
- ◆ Mortgage / rent arrears or increases;
- ◆ Harassment and illegal eviction;
- ◆ Housing rights, domestic violence and relationship breakdown;
- ◆ Disrepair in your home;
- ◆ Mediation between families or with a landlord;
- ◆ Types of accommodation available;
- ◆ The Housing Register;
- ◆ Landlords and letting agents;
- ◆ Finding a rent deposit;
- ◆ Homelessness.

Anyone concerned about their housing situation should contact the Housing Options team as soon as possible - call 01394 444264 or email homelessness@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/homelessness.

Young people can visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/homelessness/

youngpeople16and17 for help tailored to meet their needs.

Council Tax/ Housing Benefits

The Housing and Council Tax Benefits teams assist residents who are unemployed or on a low income and need help with their rent or Council Tax payments. It is important that residents understand what benefits they may be entitled to and how to claim them.

Trained members of staff help customers complete the application process quickly and efficiently and you can even apply online using the

website service. Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits/online/claimonline/ or call the Council's benefits team on 01394 444838.

As well as benefits to those who are on a low income or unemployed, reductions in Council Tax can also be granted in certain circumstances, such as:

- ◆ Single resident discount (25%) for those living alone, or where all other residents are disregarded because of their status e.g. students, hospital patients etc;
- ◆ Reduced charge or exemptions for some empty properties;
- ◆ Disability Reduction Scheme - where a property is occupied by, and has certain features to cater for the needs of, a person with a disability.

Council Tax is split into eight bands from A - H. It is important to make sure that your property is recorded in the right band or you could end up paying too much. If you feel your property is in the wrong band, call the Valuation Office on 01473 587800.

Business Rates

Suffolk Coastal offers Business Rate relief to charities, registered community amateur sports clubs and non-profit making organisations. The Council also deals with applications for SBRR and has discretion to give Hardship Relief in special circumstances.

For further information call: 01394 444546/544 or email businessrates@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/businessrates

Concessionary travel

Suffolk Coastal residents aged 60 or over or who have a qualifying disability, can have a concessionary bus pass and travel for free for all journeys that start in Suffolk, and free on any off-peak buses anywhere in the country. However, this does not include travel on long distance or express coach services, or 'special' services such as tours or excursions. For further information call: 01394 444647 or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/travelconcessions/nationalbuspasses

Grants on offer from the Council

Disabled facilities grants are available for adapting dwellings to meet the needs of people with disabilities to enable them to live more independently in their own homes. Call 01394 444506.

Minor works grants for energy efficiency funds insulation work for owner-occupiers of properties in Council Tax bands A, B or C. Call 01394 444506.

Small repairs service carries out basic repairs and odd jobs for disabled and elderly people - call 01394 444644.

Renovation grants to repair, adapt or improve private homes to bring them up to the decent home standard. Call 01394 444506.

Grants to help local organisations that are providing useful services or facilities across the district. Call 01394 444626.

For more information about grants from other sources visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/communitygrants/fundingsources

For help and advice visit www.onesuffolk.co.uk/creditcrunchsuffolk

Help on hand for residents

Relate

Advice and counselling on relationship issues. 0300 100 1234

www.relate.org.uk

National Domestic Violence Helpline

Support for women suffering domestic violence

0808 2000 247

www.womensaid.org.uk

Ipswich Women's Aid

01473 745111

www.ipswichwa.org.uk

Patients Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Advice and support for patients across Suffolk.

Freephone 0800 389 6819

NHS Direct

Access information and experience, from trained staff, about health concerns. 0845 4647

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Age Concern

An independent local charity working with and for senior citizens in Suffolk. 01473 257039

www.ageconcernsuffolk.org.uk

Age Concern benefit advice services (age 60+)

01449 674222

Help the Aged: your money matters (age 60+)

01473 214287

Consumer rights

Consumer Direct 08454 04 05 06

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Citizen's Advice Bureau

see general concerns

Coastal Homeless Action Group

Saxmundham: 01728 602529

Felixstowe: 01394 276115

Shelter

The housing and homelessness charity.

0808 800 4444 www.shelter.org.uk

Ipswich and Suffolk Credit Union

01473 690690

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/

ipswichandsuffolkcreditunion

Trading standards

01473 401122

stoploansharks@suffolkcc.gov.uk

Suffolk Legal Partnership

(Babergh, Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk) 01473 407129

Suffolk Council for Racial Equality

46a St Matthews Street, Ipswich, IP1 3EP 01473 408111

Support for people with mental health issues.

East Suffolk MIND

Hyntle Barn, Hill Farm, Silver Hill, Hintlesham, IP8 3NJ

01473 652847

www.suffolkmind.org.uk

Samaritans

24-hour, confidential, non-judgemental emotional support. 08457 909090

www.samaritans.org

Community legal advice

Free, confidential and independent legal advice -tel: 0845 345 4 345

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk)

Cedar House, Pytches Road, Woodbridge, IP12 1EP

01394 387070

Suffolk Family Carers

01473 232679

www.suffolk-carers.org.uk

Help on hand for businesses

Business Link

Free, confidential, independent and impartial advice for existing or potential businesses. 08457 171615

www.businesslink.gov.uk/east

The East of England Development Agency

The EEDA Business Map helps businesses navigate the range of business support available and includes information on grants, loans and reducing running costs.

www.bizmapeast.co.uk/finance

Train to Gain

See help on hand for workers

Jobcentre Plus

See help on hand for workers

Carbon Trust

Help for organisations wanting to reduce carbon emissions and develop commercial low carbon technologies. 0800 085 2005 www.carbontrust.co.uk

Business Debtline

A business helpline providing free, confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems 0800 197 6026 www.bdl.org.uk

General concerns?

Citizen Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Advice and information for individuals on a wide range of issues.

Felixstowe and district Citizens Advice 01394 275958

Ipswich and district Citizens Advice 01473 219777

Leiston, Saxmundham and district Citizens Advice (Leiston)

01728 832193

Help on hand for workers

NextStep

Advice, information and guidance for people looking for work, volunteer positions or training.

0845 603 1059

www.nextstepeastofengland.org.uk

Jobcentre Plus

Supports people of working age from welfare into work and helps employers to fill their vacancies. Looking for a job? 0845 6060 234

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Inland Revenue

Advice on tax credits.

0845 300 3900 www.hmrc.gov.uk

Train to Gain

A government service offering independent advice on improving the skills of employees to improve business performance. 0800 387326

www.traintogain.gov.uk

ACAS Helpline

Advice on employment issues.

01284 774500

08457 474747 www.acas.org.uk

Help to tackle money worries

Consumer credit counselling service

Advice and information for people experiencing financial difficulties.

0800 138 1111 www.cccs.co.uk

National debtline

Advice on 0808 808 4000

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Energy Saving Trust

Information on reducing your fuel costs through improving the energy efficiency of your home and through cutting motoring costs.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

or call SEAL on 01394 444506.

Audit and planning are latest partnerships with Waveney

January 1 saw the start of the latest partnership arrangement between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney councils which sees both working together to provide a high-quality internal audit service.

This move follows the recent appointment of Philip Ridley as joint head of planning services at both councils and Stephen Baker's role as Chief Executive at both since March.

"This is the latest move to share expertise between the two councils to help deliver better services and even better value. Our internal audit service has already been working highly successfully in partnership with Ipswich and combining with Waveney will increase the benefits to all three councils," said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

It was also agreed by both Suffolk Coastal and Waveney in October that they would share the same head of planning

services to help maintain current high levels of performance and deliver future efficiencies from sharing of knowledge and resources.

Both councils should benefit from having shared expertise across their areas which should make it easier for both to attract, train and retain staff in a field which is suffering a national shortage.

"The closer working between our two planning teams should also deliver real long-term benefits to all our residents as it should protect and enhance the quality of the teams over the coming years. When we made the case for an East Suffolk Council we pointed out that both councils were facing similar issues and this is particularly true in planning, but this partnership should mean we are both in a stronger position to meet them successfully" added Cllr Herring.

Downturn hits South Seafront project

Residents have been assured that the South Seafront site at Felixstowe will still be developed despite the national downturn in the housing market forcing a postponement until March 2010 of the planned work.

"Given the national picture following the credit crunch and the significant drop in the housing market, it is no surprise that Bloors, our preferred development partner for the project, has serious concerns about commencing with the plans for the South Seafront site," said Councillor Robert

Whiting, Cabinet Member for Resources.

"Bloors remain committed to the project, but like everyone else they cannot predict how long this current slump will continue or even if the market has yet reached its lowest point," added Cllr Whiting.

A free car park is now be open on Sundays and every day during the busy summer months on the site of the old Wireless Green car park.

New rules in place for Foxhall Stadium

Speedway and stock car racing have been part of the district since Foxhall Stadium was granted planning permission in 1949, but the rules governing the use of the famous racing venue have now been updated.

Suffolk Coastal's Development Control Committee has reviewed the old operating formula, which were last agreed upon in the late 1990s, to ensure it reflects today's speedway and stock car racing practices. The new operating formula is in force now and will be the governing tool for the next five years.

"The improvements to the operating formula were motivated by Suffolk Coastal's desire to balance the needs of competitors and motor sport enthusiasts with those of local

residents and the environment," said Councillor Ivan Jowers, Chairman of the Development Control Committee.

The rules control the number of race meetings allowed to take place in a year, the duration that engines are allowed to make noise, the start and end times of meetings, the use of loudspeakers and amplifiers, the length and number of practice sessions and the number and type of events related to the races, such as firework displays, barbeques and music concerts.

A copy of the operating formula is available at www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/devcontrol/enforcement/foxhallstadium.

Parish noticeboard

Playtime boost for Felixstowe - and it could be your area next

Children in Felixstowe are enjoying brand new play equipment at Eastward Ho and Cavendish Park thanks to a partnership between Suffolk Coastal and Felixstowe Town Council. The new equipment was funded by the Town Council successfully applying for £19,000 from Suffolk Coastal's Open Play Space Fund (OPSF), backed with a further £16,000 from Suffolk Coastal. For more information on the OPSF should call Jennie Catling on 01394 444321 or email community&economic@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/parishcouncils/playfund and www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/devcontrol/playspace

Limited free parking

Suffolk Coastal has changed 11 spaces in a long-stay car park in Wickham Market to give drivers the chance of a half-hour stay at no charge as part of its latest moves to improve parking in and around the market town, which also includes starting charging an hour later at 9am. The changes followed a review of the system that was introduced to tackle the ongoing problems of shoppers unable to find a parking space, and meetings with the Parish Council.

Benefits online

It is now even easier for people to apply for Council Tax or Housing Benefit, thanks to Suffolk Coastal's online application service which means that people can find out by just going online if they are eligible to claim these benefits, and be guided through the application process, by visiting www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits/online/claimonline/

All that is needed to start using the service is a Suffolk Coastal Council Tax account number, which can be found on Council Tax bills.

Port logistics study published

A major new study has been published on the implications of the growth of the Port of Felixstowe and how Suffolk Coastal and surrounding areas can help make the most of its increasing needs.

The Felixstowe Port Logistics Study was instigated by Suffolk Coastal and has been produced by GHK on behalf of a partnership led by Suffolk Coastal and involving its neighbouring authorities as well as the East of England Development Agency and the owners of the Port itself. It is one of the documents that will help shape the Council's new Local Development Framework (LDF) which will set out the future of the district until 2025. The study is on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review/evidence/studies/

Council staff earn IIP accolade

An independent inspector has reported that Suffolk Coastal's workforce is dedicated to delivering success as the Council was awarded Investor in People (IIP) status for the fourth time.

The IIP assessment was carried out in December and found that 'people are genuinely committed to the success of the organisation and are proud to work for the Council'. The report also concluded that Suffolk Coastal has a clear set of core values, which are expressed in its vision, reflected by its key performance indicators, and referred to across the organisation.

Mobile youth centre coming soon

A new travelling youth centre will soon be visiting Wickham Market on Thursdays, Saxmundham on Fridays, Yoxford on Sundays, and various villages on Wednesdays from 7pm to 9pm. The Go With the Flow Youth Bus is operated by Suffolk ACRE, with funding from the National Lottery and Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership among others. Volunteers are also wanted - for more information call Jon Denny on 07876 680909.

Latest recycling service expansion

By the end of April, another 6,000 homes will have joined Suffolk Coastal's improved recycling service, with the latest areas being Woodbridge, Bucklesham, Foxhall, Brightwell and parts of Martlesham, Rushmere St Andrew and Kesgrave.

This will mean that 42,000 homes will now have three wheelie bins, and every home in the district will have the new service by March 2010.

Try travelling the greener way to help Woodbridge

Visitors to Woodbridge are being asked to play their part in improving local air quality by considering using a bus for their journeys to the bustling town.

Information about buses and other public transport is now easier to find than ever before thanks to the launch of www.suffolkonboard.com which contains all the timetables and other details that you could want.

“Air quality in the district is generally good but we have two problem areas, one of which is at the busy Woodbridge junction of Lime Kiln Quay Road, Thoroughfare and St. John’s Street. One part of our action plan to reduce emissions is to encourage more people to use local bus services,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

The latest bus timetables for the district can be picked up from the Council’s Melton Hill offices, or any of the tourist information centres at Felixstowe, Aldeburgh or Woodbridge.

Other, greener ways to travel include walking, cycling or try car sharing by visiting the increasing popular www.suffolkcarshare.com which could put you in touch with someone else doing your journey.

“The volume of traffic on roads and their emissions clearly affect local air quality and on a larger scale are a factor in climate change. It is estimated that transport makes up nearly 40 per cent of all the district’s estimated carbon dioxide emissions, so I would encourage everyone to play their part in helping protect the environment by considering alternatives to jumping in their car,” added Cllr Nunn.



Green coaching on offer

Do you want to speak up in your community and help persuade people to make a change to their daily habits, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and so help tackle climate change?

The Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership and the Greenprint Forum have linked up to offer a day’s free COIN training on Saturday, March 21, to anyone who wants to develop the expertise and skills to deliver a powerful and persuasive speech.

COIN is an experienced national charity which gives new speakers the confidence to speak without being a scientific expert and seasoned speakers the chance to obtain new skills for communicating more effectively. Participants will get, in addition to the training, a speaker training pack, free membership of a speaker support network and the opportunity to meet likeminded local people on an ongoing basis through membership of the Greenprint Forum.

To find out if places are still available, or to get more information, call Anne Keen on 01394 444624 or email environmental.protection@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Business rates news that could save you money

- The Government has announced a significant boost for owners of empty business properties with the news that from April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010 no rates will have to be paid on any property with a rateable value of up to £15,000. The previous limit from April 2005 to March 2009 was £2,200 so this will help many more businesses. Suffolk Coastal’s business rates team will carry out this one-year empty property rate exemption so affected businesses do not have to apply or do anything.

- There is also good news that will help those whose business premises has a rateable value of less than £10,000 get their business rates cut by up to half under the SBRR scheme. To previously qualify for this relief, the premises had to be on the register on April 1, but now for 1/4/09 to 31/3/10 they will qualify for it any time during the year. This will help any ratepayers of new properties, or those

properties that have been officially recognised as being split up, merged or reorganised by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA).

To find out more call the business rates team on 01394 444546 or 444544 or email businessrates@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/businessrates/reliefs/smallbusiness or fax 01394 444247. The business rates team are also ready to help any company having problems paying their rates. Special arrangements can be made and they may be able to identify help from one of the rate relief schemes.

- The Government’s VOA has produced a leaflet, being sent with the latest Business Bulletin, which gives basic information about the revaluation of business properties that takes effect on 1 April 2010. For more information on the revaluation visit www.voa.gov.uk/2010 or ring 01473 587800.

Starter pack help for voluntary groups

Running a voluntary or community group can be a daunting prospect, so the Suffolk Coastal Resource Network (SCRN) has published a guide to the process in order to train, support and inform prospective volunteers and to help those in existing groups who are in need of further advice.

The 32-page starter pack, entitled *Setting Up A Voluntary & Community Group* was funded by the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), and is available free of charge.

“The starter pack has been designed to give volunteers the basic skills to set up and run a voluntary or community organisation, guiding them through various aspects of the process. It includes important information on how to get funding and how best to structure your organisation,” said Councillor Doreen Savage, Suffolk Coastal LSP Board Member.

“The SCRN has helped hundreds of keen voluntary and community groups to get organised and start making a real difference in the district, and now all of their expertise and local knowledge has been collected in this pack for easy reference,” added Cllr Savage.

The starter pack is a resource in itself, but it also provides information on other sources of help available to Suffolk Coastal’s volunteers, charities and voluntary organisations.

These include the fortnightly funding surgeries held in locations around the district by Karen Lawson, Suffolk Coastal’s voluntary and community sector development co-ordinator that is funded by Suffolk Coastal LSP.

To download a PDF of the starter pack, go to www.suffolkcoastallsp/communitydevelopment. Alternatively, you can request a hard copy from the SCRN by calling Karen Lawson on 01473 275195 or emailing karen.lawson@savo.co.uk.



People in Suffolk Coastal wishing to set up a new group, having an issue with their current organisation or in need of funding can also contact Karen for support and advice.

Restored glory bid for Felixstowe’s seafront gardens

A Suffolk Coastal project aiming to restore and improve Felixstowe’s historic seafront gardens is preparing to apply for a grant from Parks for People, run by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The bid for just under £2 million of funding has been submitted by Suffolk Coastal with input from the Landscape Partnership, an environmental design and planning company, and a new community group, the Friends of the Seafront Gardens.

“The seafront gardens, namely the Spa, Cliff and Town Hall gardens, cover seven and a half acres of land, and having been enjoyed by generations of tourists and residents they are now in need of serious restoration and repair,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

“It is planned that the grant will provide new access routes and an open air venue for arts and cultural activities in the gardens, as well as restoring overgrown and damaged areas to their former glory.

“If the first stage of the application is successful, then a series of workshops, presentations and consultations will be held in Felixstowe for the second stage of the application, involving all sections of the community in deciding what the future of the seafront gardens will be,” added Cllr Neale.

A community group, Friends of the Seafront Gardens, is being set up to give the people of Felixstowe a say in how the gardens are restored and whether any new facilities are needed. Anybody interested in getting involved should contact Susan Robinson, Clerk of Felixstowe Town Council, on 01394 282086 or email susan.robinson@felixstowe.gov.uk

For more information on the plans, or to offer comments or raise questions, please contact Caroline Driver, economic regeneration and development funding officer, by emailing caroline.driver@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or writing to her at: Economic Regeneration and Development Team, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP12 1AU.

Volunteers help trees and hedges take root

Volunteers across the district helped plant over 4,000 native hedges and trees as part of Suffolk Coastal's Parish Tree Scheme which links our countryside team with town and parish councils to encourage planting to enhance the local landscape.

"This marvellous initiative has helped improve the look of the district for over 30 years, making a lasting contribution for future generations. I would thank everyone who has played a part, particularly all the parish councils and local residents who have been involved in the planting this year, or during the last three decades," said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

As well as around 4,000 hedge plants to help create habitat areas, 150 trees were also planted, including the rare native black poplar, and other species such as buckthorn, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, spindle and oak.

At Westleton (as pictured) 400 metres of hedges were planted around its new recreation field, and some of the areas where the green-fingered volunteers have also planted for the future



are Blackhall, Wenhaston, Wickham Market, and Aldeburgh.

Suffolk Coastal has over 70 tree wardens who advise parish councils and run planting and conservation projects within their areas. Anyone interested in this rewarding role can contact their local parish council.

Free swimming

Anyone aged 60 or over can swim for free at any of our three swimming pools from April 1 thanks to Suffolk Coastal and DC Leisure who manage the pools.

"By signing up for one of our free swimming cards, anyone aged 60 or over will be able to go swimming at either Felixstowe Leisure Centre, Woodbridge Swimming Pool or Leiston Leisure Centre," said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Countryside.

"This excellent initiative will run for two years initially, up to March 2011. It may also encourage people to enjoy what else is on offer at our centres as well, and I would remind all our other residents that anyone can get a great deal at our centres with a CoastalCard. More than 6,000 card-holders get a cheaper rate when they use their passport to leisure," added Cllr Neale.

Those over 60 can register for their free swimming card at any of the sports centres or online at www.dcleisurecentres.co.uk from March 16. To get a CoastalCard visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/leisure/coastalcard or visit one of the centres. Call 01394 670411 for more information.

Hope for old station

Plans to demolish Trimley St Mary railway station have hit the buffers after Suffolk Coastal took action that could save the empty Victorian building forever.

Suffolk Coastal has asked the Government to make the station a listed building, and a building preservation order was put on the site in February to protect it until a decision is made.

"Dating back to 1891, it is the last country station built by the Great Eastern Railway still standing in England and is an excellent example of late Victorian railway architecture that should be given listed building status," said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

With potential financial support now possible through the Haven Gateway Partnership or the Felixstowe Futures project, this could be the time for it to be renovated and brought back to life.

"Anyone with a serious proposal should contact Trimley St Mary Parish Council, who have been campaigning tirelessly for such a project, and Network Rail, who own the building and surrounding land," added Cllr Smith.