

COASTLINE

The Newsletter of Suffolk Coastal District Council

Issue 46, Spring/Summer 2011

Working together for the district's future

Suffolk Coastal can look forward positively to the future, with a budget that safeguards priority frontline Council services, committed investment that will protect our coastline, and innovative local schemes that could help regenerate the district.

That is the upbeat message to the district from the Council's Leader as he looked ahead and explained how by working together the district can go forward through these challenging times.

"These are tough times for all of us, but we have frozen our Council Tax while still maintaining what you have told us are your priority services. See page 3 for more about our budget but there are many other positive initiatives underway, most of them involving our local communities and partners," said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

"Thanks to our efforts we have succeeded in attracting around £11m from the Environment Agency to complete coastal defence works at Central Felixstowe and Thorpeness.

"We are also working hard to invest in a better future, with an exciting £2.7m proposal for Felixstowe's Seafront Gardens, as well as local initiatives across the district to work with and help support our communities and businesses to grow.

"Partnerships are proving to be key to our future. We are working closely with partner organisations, particularly Waveney District Council and the Local Strategic Partnership, businesses and most importantly our communities. We have already got some real successes by working together and we can and will achieve so much more," added Cllr Herring.

Get ready for the digital tv switchover

During the summer, the transmitters serving the district's televisions will start switching over to digital, with the Sudbury transmitter being changed on July 6.

The Switchover Help Scheme has been set up to make digital TV easy for older and disabled people by converting one of their televisions to digital in the run-up to digital TV switchover in their region.

People are eligible for help if they are: aged 75 or over, have lived in a care home for six months or more, get or could get, disability living allowance, attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement, or if they are registered blind or partially sighted.

If you want more information for yourself or someone you know, please call 0800 40 85 911 or log onto www.helpscheme.co.uk

Suffolk Coastal's recycling team would remind residents that nearly any TV can be converted by the use of a digital box. However, if you are planning to upgrade your TV, please buy one that is energy efficient.

If your old one still works, offer it to a reuse network like Freecycle. If it does not work, ask the shop that you are getting your new one from to dispose of it for you, or you can take it to one of the district's household waste and recycling centres. You can call SCS to collect it but a charge will be made. Whatever you do, don't be tempted to dump it as you could face a heavy fine or even imprisonment.

Changing Coastline

Coastline has been produced in line with the Publicity Code of Conduct and will now only be issued twice a year to help save money. The next edition will be in November and you can email coastline@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Preserving fish

Suffolk Coastal's Port Health team is helping to protect marine wildlife by actively getting involved in ensuring fish brought into the UK is caught legally and is not damaging the local environment.

PHILIS in final

Suffolk Coastal is a finalist in the prestigious Local Government Chronicle awards for its innovative Port Health Interactive Live Information System (PHILIS) which has made the Felixstowe Port Health team more efficient.

How to contact Suffolk Coastal

Write to Suffolk Coastal District Council Melton Hill, Woodbridge IP12 1AU or visit our website www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Emergencies outside office hours: 07771 816535

Planning Advice 01394 444403 01394 444428

Council Tax 01394 444855

Housing Benefits 01394 444838

Business Rates 01394 444544

Port Health 01394 614933

General Enquiries 01394 383789

Office Hours - Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.15pm (except Wednesdays when doors open at 9.30am) Friday 8.45am - 4.45pm

Refuse and Recycling 01394 444000

Also call 01394 444000 for street cleansing, car parks, public toilets, abandoned cars, ground maintenance - all provided by Suffolk Coastal Services Ltd.

Tourist Information Centres

Aldeburgh 01728 453637

Felixstowe 01394 276770

Woodbridge 01394 382240

Leisure Centres (managed by DC Leisure)

Felixstowe 01394 670411

Brackenbury 01394 270278

Leiston 01728 830364

Deben Pool 01394 384763

Residents test insulation scheme

A pilot insulation scheme has helped 20 homes in two Felixstowe roads benefit from having a warmer home and improved energy efficiency while helping the Council test the effectiveness and practicality of the scheme.

Suffolk Coastal has information to help all residents properly insulate their homes and can offer advice about the different schemes available - just call 01394 444506 or visit

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/energyefficiency

Get fitter

Adults wanting to get back into exercise and enjoy a healthier lifestyle can now get help from sessions taking place as part of Suffolk Sport's Active Wellbeing programme. Visit www.suffolksport.com or call 01394 444289 for details.

Going transparent

Suffolk Coastal is now even more open about the way it makes decisions and how it spends your money with a new transparency page on our website. Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/transparency/ for all the details.

Council Tax frozen and budget agreed for an efficient, effective, engaged council

No increase in Council Tax, efficiencies of over £2m and a commitment to safeguarding priority services is the core of the 2011/12 budget for Suffolk Coastal.

“We have this year frozen our Council Tax which I am sure in these cash-strapped times will be more welcome news for our communities, especially as it follows seven years of us keeping our rise to below five per cent,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

“These are tough financial times for all of us, particularly for councils, but there are still reasons to look forward positively. Having saved an average £1 million a year for the last 10 years, it was very challenging to reduce our costs by another £2m but we have minimised the impact on our services, our employees and, most importantly of all our communities.

“What our communities and we see as our priority services have been protected, and we can still look forward to key projects such as the coast defence works at Central Felixstowe and Thorpeness. Our budget will continue our commitment to providing efficient, effective, engaged and value for money services.

“Largely thanks to our Local Strategic Partnership, our towns and parish councils and our community and voluntary groups have been gaining new skills and resources that could help them exploit the forthcoming opportunities for the district provided by national initiatives such as Localism and the Big Society,” added Cllr Herring.

Suffolk Coastal budget facts

£2m budget gap caused by

- Fall in Government Formula Grant by £1.1m to £6.3m
- Fall in income, inflation and rising costs.
- 2011/12 budget requirement is £13.789m, down £1.9m from last year's £15.679m. The total Council Tax income will be £7.436m.
- A further £2.3m savings need to be made by 2014/15

Savings and priorities

- Service priorities reviewed to reduce costs
- Efficiencies identified and savings made
- Impact of budget reduction identified and assessed
- Over £310,000 saved by joint working with Waveney
- Suffolk Coastal Services and Norfolk Property Services will save nearly £400,000
- 19 staff voluntarily redundant

Where your Council Tax goes

The Band D charges are:

Suffolk Coastal District Council £149.40

Suffolk Police Authority £160.74

Suffolk County Council £1,126.53

In addition there is also a charge for your town or parish council - from zero for Boulge, Burgh, Dallinghoo, Hemley, and Ramsholt parishes, to the £108.17 of Aldeburgh and £110.23 of Leiston town councils.

The district's average Band D is therefore £1,481.32.

In 2011/2012, people who live in Suffolk Coastal will pay £73.7 million in Council Tax

Suffolk County Council gets £126 million or 76%

Town and Parish Councils get £2.2 million or 3%

Suffolk Coastal District Council gets £7.4 million or 10.1%

Suffolk Police Authority gets £8.0 million or 10.9%

Get ready to vote

Nearly 80 polling stations across the district will be open on Thursday, May 5 when people can elect councillors to Suffolk Coastal District Council, but also potentially all of the 100 plus town and parish councils, and decide how they will vote in future.

All 55 district council seats are due for election, where currently 45 are Conservative, nine Liberal Democrat and one Labour. Nominations open on Friday, March 18 and anyone wanting to stand must return a completed form by Noon, Monday April 4.

Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on the day, but if for any reason you will not be able to get there, you have until Thursday, April 14 to ask for a postal vote, which is also the same day to change your details or be added onto the register.

Everyone listed on the electoral register and therefore eligible to vote will receive a polling card before the election, but it pays to check as soon as possible that the details our elections team have for you are correct. If you have changed address in the last six or so months, unless you have told them they will not know.

Call the elections team on 01394 444685 or email elections@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk if you have any questions. However, there will be all the information you could want on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/elections/ and many useful online forms.

On May 5 people in the district and across the country can vote whether to have a new Alternative Vote system introduced for all future elections. There will also be a by-election to fill the County Council vacancy at Wilford caused by the death of Councillor Rosie Clarke.

Make sure you fill in your census form

The 2011 Census questionnaire will be coming through your letterbox on March 27 when all residential households in the United Kingdom will be taking part in a census.

Since 1801 (apart from in 1941 during the war) a day has been chosen every ten years for this purpose. The census provides an excellent source of information about the population and helps central and local government, health authorities and many other organisations to plan housing, education, health and transport services for years to come.

The census statistics affect how much money local councils get from the Government, and so play a major part in their ability to provide local services.

It is therefore crucial that the population estimate is as accurate as possible as the level of funding for services in Suffolk may be below what is needed if the census return rate from people in Suffolk is low. It is therefore important that you complete your census questionnaire and encourage others to do so.

You are legally required to complete and return the Census questionnaire, and you could be fined up to £1,000 if you don't. When the questionnaire envelope comes through the door you'll easily recognise it by the purple 2011 Census logo. Take care of it. If, like many people, you want to complete the questionnaire online, your individual internet code is on the front of the questionnaire.

Information about the 2011 Census is available online at:
www.census.gov.uk

Arts explores coastal change

Exciting workshops involving art, film and poetry are being held March and April organised by Art and Coastal Change and funded by The Crown Estate. They include landscape painting at Aldeburgh on March 27 and Dunwich on April 10, film making at Sizewell on March 20 and poetry, art and litter-picking at Orford Ness on April 3. Call Nicky Corbett to book a place on 01394 444538 or visit
www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts/coastalchange/

Staff help baby care

Staff from Suffolk Coastal's sports and social club have raised £2,596.70 for the Ipswich Hospital Special Care Baby Unit after a year of money-raising activities. They have now raised over £30,000 since 1994 for charity.

Core strategy put on hold

The March Full Council meeting to consider the Reviewed Core Strategy (RCS) for its Local Development Framework was postponed so a new study can be analysed to meet European habitat regulations.

“As part of our RCS consultation the Suffolk Wildlife Trust told us about their concerns from a study about the potential impact of visitors from future developments in areas north and east of Ipswich on nature conservation sites in the ‘Suffolk Sandlings’ area north of the river Deben,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

“There was not enough time to fully appraise this study, so the special Full Council will now meet later this year. Unfortunately, this will delay us using the RCS to protect our area from inappropriate development.

“All the significant possible areas for growth outlined in our RCS are over a mile from any wildlife conservation areas, and even further from Sandlings. We value and respect our nationally and internationally important areas and our policies are working to conserve and protect them, while at the same time finding the right balance to also achieve the new jobs and homes our communities need,” added Cllr Smith.

To keep up to date with Core Strategy news visit
www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review/

Making woodlands work for humans and wildlife

The future of woodlands has been under the spotlight in recent weeks and a special free event on Sunday, March 20 will look at how communities can get involved with these valuable natural resources.

Well-managed accessible woodlands can be a boon for people and wildlife, providing sanctuary, leisure, fuel, and food while improving air quality and reducing surface water flooding and cooling temperatures.

Tree wardens, Greenprint Forum members and local people can meet up at Martlesham Parish Hall from 10am to 4pm for a series of workshops and short talks, including one on forest gardens and one on managing woods for wood fuel. There will also be a wonderful woodland walk.

Making Woodlands Work for Humans and Wildlife is being held to mark the International Year of Forests and Climate Change Week. It is organised by Groundwork, Suffolk Coastal's countryside and environmental services teams, the Greenprint Forum and Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership, and funded by the Suffolk Coastal Community Environmental Action project, Suffolk Coast and Heaths, and the Environment Agency.

Those attending will need to bring their own lunch but drinks will be provided. Please book a place by calling 01394 444218 or emailing environmentalprotection@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Help keep your countryside green

Want to help look after the district's countryside and green spaces? The Footprints campaign organises conservation work parties to maintain and preserve local areas as well as supporting community projects. During the winter over 250 local residents gave up over 1,000 hours of their time to help with tasks such as coppicing woodland, planting trees and clearing ponds or heathland.

Although most of the winter work is now completed, during the spring and summer more work parties will be needed to help with hay meadow management, footpath clearing and wildlife surveys. Individual residents, groups, or businesses are welcome to get involved, perhaps even tackling a task in their local area.

To find out more about Suffolk Coastal's Footprints scheme call the countryside rangers on 01394 444508 or visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/footprints/volunteering

New-look Felixstowe taking shape

Felixstowe town centre is more visitor friendly thanks to the Hamilton Road shared space and the new public toilet facilities in Crescent Road Car Park, which includes a specialist Changing Places cubicle for disabled people and replaces the old Triangle toilets.

The building reflects the traditional architecture of the town, combined with the latest environmentally friendly designs, and has seven cubicles, plus a large parent and toddler cubicle, and the Changing Places cubicle with a special hoist and a height adjustable changing bench, large enough for parents or carers to provide assistance. This is key access only – visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/changingplaces.

“The new facilities are a great addition for the town and, with the inclusion of a Changing Places cubicle, will help even more people visit the town who may have been restricted in the past,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Deputy Leader of the Council.

“Work began in January on demolishing the existing block, landscaping the area and installing a canopy so that a range of community functions can take place throughout the year, to make a more attractive centrepiece for the town. The canopy is not intended to be a permanent long term solution, it will provide an interesting and attractive feature until money is available to fund even more impressive plans,” added Cllr Smith.

“Visitors needing accessible facilities will no longer be restricted from visiting the town and with the completion of the shared space scheme in Hamilton Road, with a single level surface and reduced traffic flow, getting around the town has never been easier,” said Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Customers and Partners.

The new toilets were funded by Suffolk Coastal, using money from the Local Authority Business Grant Incentive fund, and is part of Felixstowe Futures.

Play boost for young people

Young people can have safe fun at play areas in Felixstowe after new equipment was installed at Coronation Drive and Allenby Park thanks to a bid to Suffolk Coastal's Outdoor Play Space Fund (OPSF) from Felixstowe Town Council.

The OPSF is funded by contributions from building companies and developers when making planning applications to make sure that play facilities keep up with new housing developments and has helped town and parish councils across the district. For more about the OPSF visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncils/parishcouncils/playfund

Bid could transform gardens working together for the future

The renovation of the Felixstowe Seafront Gardens is one step closer as the final round grant application for £2.2 million towards the project is with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for consideration.

After public consultations last year, residents' views have been used to shape the submitted designs which include improved access, seating and lighting, restored ponds and heritage features, a heritage trail, an outdoor performance space and a focal point shelter.

“The gardens are important to many residents and visitors to the area so it is important that they are restored to a high standard. When drawing up the designs for the gardens the views of residents and visitors were very important. The public consultations have shaped plans based on residents and visitors needs and what is important to them. The range of community involvement is a great strength of our bid and is something the HLF will be looking for,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Countryside and Leisure.

After considering the submission, and visiting the gardens, the HLF should announce if the bid has been successful in June. Work could be underway in September 2012 and take about a year to complete.

The total £2.7m costs of the exciting plans to regenerate Felixstowe Seafront Gardens would include contributions from Suffolk Coastal's Local Authority Business Grant Initiative, Haven Gateway Partnership and other local sponsorship.

To view the final design plans that were submitted as part of the bid, and full details on the application process so far you can visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/felixstowefutures/projects/seafrontgardens.

Community planning together to save Trimley station

The fight to save Trimley station is going full steam ahead, thanks to information gained from a questionnaire filled in by residents, rail users, community groups, estate agents and people interested in running a café to determine the need and demand for the facility.

Over 400 responses were received, forming the evidence base for a business plan, and 56 more people joined the Friends group which wants to save the building and use it to benefit the community.

“Suffolk ACRE, with support from Trimley Parish Council, has drawn up a business plan based on the findings of the questionnaires and have presented it to Network Rail. This is a great example of the community working together with the help of Suffolk Coastal to find a local solution and I hope that it proves successful,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

If the business plan is agreed, a community interest company can be formed to take on a head lease, organise and deliver the project and so save the station for the community. You can offer your support joining the Friends of Trimley Station group - email conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444616.

Sharing space at Hamilton Road

The shared space scheme is now complete for the main straight of Felixstowe’s Hamilton Road, providing a level block paved surface from shop to shop, with attractive seating areas, so improving the shopping environment for residents and visitors.

At the Hamilton Road junctions with Orwell Road and Cobbold Road, black and white stripes form three new ‘courtesy crossings’ on each junction. These are designed on the principal that the road is shared, with pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles each having the same priority. The scheme was supported by the Haven Gateway Partnership, and Suffolk County, Felixstowe Town and Suffolk Coastal councils.

Community partnerships leading the way in protecting our coastline

Suffolk Coastal's latest pioneering example of community partnerships working together to defend the district's coastline now has the full £660,000 funding to finish a vital project for the protection of Thorpeness.

Suffolk Coastal has been working to put in place defences at the northern part of Thorpeness village which suffered badly from coastal erosion last spring. The Council completed most of the first phase with over 1,200 geotextile bags filled with sand shingle put in front of the cliffs. Now the vital second phase will begin later this spring thanks to the Environment Agency (EA) agreeing to fund up to two-thirds of the cost.

“We agreed the first phase after talking with the local community, some of who were prepared to make it possible by putting in their own funds. Their realistic and pro-active approach, almost unique in the country as far as we know, has now been recognised as a prime example of partnerships between local people, the Council and the Government. It has been a privilege to work with them in finding a way forward,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Suffolk Coastal's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Coastal Protection.

“We worked closely with Charles Beardall of the regional EA to gain this funding. Our success is a tribute to the pioneering work that we have been doing, which includes the Bawdsey project, the Dunwich defence trials, and our ongoing Suffolk Coast Futures and Alde and Ore Futures projects, and which have all heavily involved our local communities,” added Cllr Smith.

The Council has committed approximately £89,000, the residents and community about £137,000, and the EA will back the partnership with up to £431,000 so the work can be completed as soon as possible.

Minsmere defence works

The Environment Agency is planning to start important flood defence works at the RSPB Minsmere Reserve. The work should begin in August 2011 when it will raise and widen the Coney Hill Cross Bank and build a new water control structure and culvert through the bank.

Two smaller bunds to connect the primary and secondary defences just south of Coney Hill Cross Bank will also be built. These will control the movement of water and reduce erosion of flood defences during storm surges.

Alde and Ore Futures working with its communities

The community-led Alde and Ore Futures project is an innovative way to help rural coastal communities develop plans for a long-term sustainable future that will help tackle their unique combination of problems that include poor telecommunications, their geographical isolation, limited access to transport and affordable homes, as well as their vulnerability to coastal erosion and flooding.

A recent workshop attracted over 70 members of the community who heard what progress has been made so far and helped develop new ideas on community planning in the area. For more information visit www.suffolkcoastfutures.org.uk

The project's local groups will be finalising a consultation that will run this summer. It will focus on the needs of the business community, how we manage the coast and estuary for tidal surges and erosion, and keeping the communities around the estuary viable over the next 20 years or so.

The aim is to produce a framework for the future that will summarise the actions that organisations, such as Suffolk Coastal, plan to undertake and also what as individuals we can do for ourselves.

This represents for the first time a collective community approach to tackling the issues of most concern to local people. The progress to date has been lead by the community and supported by local councils and Government agencies, and is helping to develop a model for supporting our coastal communities in future.

Funding for Felixstowe defences confirmed

The Environment Agency has confirmed the funding for Suffolk Coastal's £10m Felixstowe Central Coast Protection Scheme which will protect the seafront from Jacob's Ladder to the War Memorial.

The work will include a series of 18 rock groynes, a rock revetment and walkway from the prom around Cobbold's Point to Jacob's Ladder, and the topping up of the beach levels with sand and shingle.

The expert predictions are that 1,500 homes and businesses in Central Felixstowe would be at risk during the next 100 years if the planned works are not carried out, but that urgent action for some of those has to be taken as soon as possible. Parts of the existing defences at Cobbold's Point and Undercliff Road East are at real risk of imminent collapse.

“This is really excellent news for both the residents of Felixstowe and the future of the town itself. I would like to thank our colleagues at the regional Environmental Agency for the way they have listened to our concerns,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Suffolk Coastal's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Coastal Protection.

“To have lost this scheme, with the near certainty of collapse of parts of the sea wall, with imminent danger then of major losses to homes, businesses and infrastructure, as well as the serious impact on tourism and jobs, was unthinkable. The support of the Suffolk Coastal MP Therese Coffey was also invaluable,” added Cllr Smith.

The work should now get underway this year and will now be done in two phases, during this summer and the next. This avoids the real risks involved with working on the sea defences during the winter. The most urgent work, on the northern section, will be done this year, then the remaining groynes on the southern section and completion of the full defences and walkway at Cobbold's Point would be completed in 2012.

Funding will help coastal habitats

Landguard Nature Reserve will be doing even more for the local environment and visitors wanting to learn more about local wildlife thanks to £83,500 from the SITA Landfill Trust, along with a £1,000 locality grant and nearly £10,000 from Suffolk County Council.

“The support from SITA will be a great boost for wildlife on the reserve and I hope that with the improvements made even more people will be able to appreciate the varied biodiversity that is on offer at Landguard,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Chairman of the Landguard Partnership Committee.

Work will include a boardwalk through the reserve, a bird and wildlife sanctuary, pond restoration and enhancement, with wire mesh fencing being replaced with post and rope boundaries.

To find out more about the Landguard Partnership or the Landguard nature reserve visit www.landguardpartnership.org.uk or call 01394 675283.

The Landguard Partnership includes Suffolk Coastal, English Heritage, Landguard Conservation Trust Bird Observatory, Landguard Fort Trust, Natural England, Felixstowe History & Museum Society, Harwich Haven Authority, Port of Felixstowe, Felixstowe Town Council and Suffolk County Council.

District attracts coastal experts

The 2011 annual Local Government Association coastal special interest group will be meeting in Aldeburgh for two days this summer.

Representatives from coastal areas across the country will be attending the event which will be addressed by Richard Benyon MP, the Government Minister responsible for coastal issues.

“This is another sign of how respected the pioneering work in our district involving our communities is on the national stage and will be the second recent visit to Suffolk by the Minister,” said Councillor Andy Smith.

Home recycling makes banks redundant

The success of Suffolk Coastal’s recycling service, with over 60 per cent of all household waste diverted from landfill, has helped make the district’s network of paper and can banks not necessary any more.

Paper and cans can now be recycled from home in the blue-lidded bins, and the amount of these materials collected from banks has dropped by up to three-quarters.

“Our urgent need to save £2 million has made us review every service and question whether they are still necessary. Our paper and can banks are one of those we feel we can no longer justify paying for as everyone can use their blue-lidded bins instead, and the figures already show that most are choosing to do just that,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

The banks will start being withdrawn in April, although glass and textile banks will still be on offer as these are not yet collected from home by the Council.

County's new times for recycling centres

The opening times for the County Council's three household waste and recycling centres at Felixstowe, Foxhall and Leiston will from April be: April to September 9am-5pm, and October to March 9am-4pm on Mondays to Saturdays. Sundays will be 10am-4pm all year.

Try home composting

Compost Awareness Week runs from May 1 to May 8, and is the perfect time to consider taking up home composting which is the most environmentally friendly way to deal with your compostable garden waste and some food waste.

You can compost at home a wide range of organic waste including teabags, fruit and vegetable peelings, coffee grounds, egg shells, straw, hay, bedding from rabbits, hamsters, guinea pigs and other vegetarian pets, shredded paper, sawdust, cardboard, as well as garden waste such as dead leaves and prunings, grass cuttings, and weeds.

For more information on home composting visit www.suffolk.getcomposting.com where there is special offers on bins.

You recycle 60% for the first time

After six months when residents recycled over 60 per cent of their household waste, the district was ranked 21st best out of 235 English councils, with only 192.9 kg of rubbish per person a year.

The collection of paper, card, plastic, tins, food waste and garden waste from all homes has helped residents reduce waste sent to landfill and increase the amount that is diverted for recycling.

“Suffolk Coastal and our partners Suffolk Coastal Services provide an excellent waste collection service and I hope our residents are pleased that their hard work and support for our three bin system has paid off,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

“With landfill taxes increasing and landfill space running out, it is important to continue the hard work. Over 24,000 tonnes of waste You recycle 60% for the first time was recycled or composted in 2010, meaning we have all saved the £2 million cost of landfilling those materials.

“We have a committed refuse and recycling service and I would thank all the SCS teams that worked through the extreme winter weather and three bank holidays,” added Cllr Nunn.

Ready for a spring clean?

You can play your part in a local clean-up as part of Spring Clean Suffolk and BBC Radio Suffolk’s ongoing Don’t Be A Tossler campaign, and help pick up any litter in our towns, villages, roads and countryside.

“Suffolk Coastal Services (SCS) can take away any rubbish collected by volunteers. Last year around 2,000 volunteers collected more than 4,000 sacks full of rubbish across 50 parishes as part of the annual Spring Clean supported by Suffolk Coastal,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

Many groups also kept separate any recyclable tins, plastic containers and newspapers found, helping divert much of the recyclable litter away from landfill.

People do not have to do their local spring clean during the fortnight from March 28 that has been advertised as the Suffolkwide campaign - any time of the year that you want to help keep your community tidy by organising a litter pick you can get support from SCS, including sacks, gloves and disposal of the waste collected.

Anyone interested in taking part in their area can contact their parish or town council or call SCS on 01394 444033 or email waste.management@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

Helping residents get on track

Improvements to car parks will help reduce congestion during busy times at Wickham Market railway station in Campsea Ashe and Melton station.

“The improvements are particularly good news for those living in more rural parts of the district and I hope the ease of commuting and travelling will encourage even more good business links across the district,” said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

The work has been made possible thanks to Council grants worth nearly £90,000 from its over £1.5m Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme budget gained from the Government.

The car park extensions were carried out in partnership with Campsea Ashe Parish Council, Network Rail, National Express East Anglia and Suffolk County Council.

Energy advice is helping businesses save tonnes

Recassa Financial Solutions Ltd based in Martlesham is set to save £1,200 in electricity costs alone thanks to the Suffolk Coastal business energy advisor identifying that they could find cheaper electricity.

“The business energy advisor is on hand to carry out energy audits for local companies to help enable them to address areas that can help to save them money and make the running of their business greener,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

So far, the business energy advisor has helped local businesses identify average savings of £5,253 in energy costs and 22.28 tonnes of carbon across the district.

“The vast majority of businesses in Suffolk Coastal are quite small so this is particularly beneficial for them and I would encourage businesses to arrange an appointment if they are keen to find out more about improving their green credentials and reducing energy costs,” added Cllr Nunn.

To find out more visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/energyadvice or call 01394 444257 or email anna.martin@groundwork.org.uk The business energy advisor is provided between Suffolk Coastal, Groundwork East of England and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund.

Get on board to improve your skills

Jobless residents in the north of the district can get help to improve their skills and job prospects.

The Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership has teamed up with Suffolk ACRE and Community Learning and Skills Development for a series of training sessions and a community information bus, which visited Aldeburgh, Leiston and Saxmundham.

Adults can get information, advice and guidance about careers and help with their job search as well as the Skills for Life qualification for adult literacy and numeracy.

To find out more about the Skills for Life classes and the support and guidance that is available call Suffolk Acre on 01473 345316 or email lynn.cross@suffolkacre.org.uk

Tap into EDSF help for your area

Suffolk Coastal's Economic Development Support Fund helps local businesses, town and parish councils and community organisations by awarding grants to help kick-start and rejuvenate local towns and population centres, and new applications should be in by Thursday, March 31.

The EDSF has recently supported a monthly breakfast club for businesses in Kesgrave and Aldeburgh Business Association's hanging baskets in the High Street area. The money for EDSF comes from the Government's Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme.

Visit

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/communitygrants/supportfund for full details or call 01394 444625.

Holiday guide spotlights district

The 2011 Choose Suffolk Coastal holiday guide is now available with 60,000 copies helping give some ideas for a short break or holiday.

“It is estimated that one in 10 jobs in Suffolk Coastal are in tourism related industries and with more people choosing to holiday in Britain I hope that local tourism and businesses will benefit from more visitors coming to the district thanks to our Choose Suffolk Coastal holiday guide,” said Councillor Colin Hart, Cabinet Member for Tourism.

Visit www.thesuffolkcoast.co.uk or www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/tourism.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

A community engagement event was held in February in Felixstowe’s Langer Park to raise awareness about Council services and find out first-hand people’s experiences of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

There had been some complaints about ASB in Langer Park but only a handful of those asked on the day said they had seen any problems. Officers took the chance to say how easy it was to report ASB and the actions being taken by the police, Suffolk Coastal and other partners.

To find out more about what is being done to tackle ASB, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/communitysafety, or call the ASB team on 01394 444322.

Help for district’s ASB team

Officers from the Suffolk Coastal anti-social behaviour (ASB) team working with young people and parents across the district now have the use of a community resource library to support their work in the community.

Over 30 officers involved with the anti-social behaviour team, based at the Council's Melton Hill offices, have been trained on how to use the resource packs that should help them to be more confident when working in the community.

The new resources have been funded jointly by the Extended Services Southern Area Activities for All fund, the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership and the Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership.

Make sure you are getting all your benefits

Residents who have nursery or childcare costs of up to £175 a week for one child, or £300 for two or more, and are receiving Council Tax or Housing Benefit should check if they are getting all they are entitled to.

Some have gained an additional £63 per week in Housing Benefit and £13 per week in Council Tax benefit if they are a couple, or £54 per week in Housing Benefit and £11 per week in Council Tax Benefit if they are a single parent.

“Families can miss out because they do not let the Council know when their circumstances have changed, such as having another child, returning to work, or a partner has moved in. I would encourage residents to check we have their up to date details as this could mean they receive more not less,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

There is also help for residents living with a second adult, who is not their partner, being able to claim a second adult rebate on their Council Tax bill of up to 25 per cent if they earn less than £227.99 per week.

Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/benefits for more details or call 01394 444838 or email benefits@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or visit the Melton Hill offices between 8.45am to 5.15pm (from 9.30am on Wednesdays and until 4.45pm on Fridays) or 93 Undercliff Road West, Felixstowe call for opening times.

PHILIS chosen as LGC finalist

Suffolk Coastal is a finalist in the prestigious Local Government Chronicle awards for the implementation of PHILIS, its innovative Port Health Interactive Live Information System.

“PHILIS is a very valuable tool and has helped our Felixstowe port health team to work to the best of their ability by saving time and allowing them to work more efficiently,” said Councillor Marianne Fellowes, Cabinet Member for Port Health.

PHILIS is an integrated information management system that allows the port health team, who created it in partnership with the Council’s ICT team, to carry out its work more efficiently and effectively and is set to be bought by Mersey and London ports.

Food hygiene ratings on show

A Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) is being introduced by Suffolk Coastal from April with all businesses supplying food direct to the consumer being given a rating between zero, being the lowest, and five, being the highest, based on their food hygiene inspection.

The rating will be displayed on the Food Standards Agency’s (FSA) website www.food.gov.uk/ratings and businesses will be given a certificate and window sticker to put on show.

“The introduction of the FHRS is particularly useful for residents and visitors coming to the district as they will be able to see how well food hygiene is met in places they eat or shop for food and then choose where to go,” said Councillor Marianne Fellowes, Cabinet Member for Community Health.

The information in the FHRS was already being recorded during the food safety team’s regular inspections of food premises but is now being revealed to the public for the first time.

For more about FHRS, which is being funded by a FSA grant, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/foodsafety/hygieneratings or call 01394 444357.

Outstanding designs wanted

Suffolk Coastal wants nominations for the second annual Quality of Place Award scheme which recognises the highest standards of design that contributes to the environment of the district.

The categories are

- Building conservation - repair or restoration works to buildings of local historic interest undertaken with particular care for the quality of their conservation.
- Design - new buildings or extensions which exhibit originality, contribute to local distinctiveness and incorporate sustainable features.
- Landscape and Nature - landscape or nature conservation projects, which contribute to local distinctiveness, and benefit the local environment, wildlife or habitat.

Projects or schemes that have been completed in the district within the last two years will be eligible for nomination and entries should be made by the end of April.

A panel of professional and lay judges, chaired by a District Councillor, will review all nominations and visit the shortlisted sites. Winners will receive a bronze Quality of Place plaque at a special ceremony in the summer.

For more information, including an entry form, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/policy/qualityofplace/ where there is also full details of last year's winners.

You can also e-mail conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444296.

Council fighting for A12 bypass

Campaigners pressing for the dualling of the A12 as a bypass around four key local villages can be assured that Suffolk Coastal is backing their fight and arguing the case for it to be funded.

The Council's Sizewell Task Group and its Cabinet have strongly reiterated that developers should fund the scheme if more nuclear power stations are built at Sizewell.

“Suffolk Coastal has always backed the case for a bypass around Farnham, Little Glemham, Marlesford and Stratford St Andrew, although the problem has always been getting the cash to move it from the drawing board and into reality,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

“Discussions are already underway with EDF, who would be behind any Sizewell expansion. We have made it clear that one of the many local issues that would have to be addressed by any developers of Sizewell would be improvements to the road system generally, and this stretch of the A12 in particular which is not fit for purpose for those who need to use it or for those who live alongside it,” added Cllr Smith.

Trust to help preserve local buildings

Volunteers from the community have come forward and helped set up the East Suffolk Building Preservation Trust (ESBPT) which will work to protect and preserve buildings in the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney districts.

The Trust has been established as a limited liability company and wants to register as a charity. It is made up of six trustees and six volunteers including members of the Felixstowe Society and Aldeburgh Society, several architects, an architecture historian, a surveyor, conservation officer and a Suffolk Coastal Councillor.

“There are several historically and architecturally important buildings that are at risk of falling into disrepair and being lost forever. The ESBPT hopes to use the knowledge and resources of its trustees and volunteers to ensure that these buildings are preserved,” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning.

Volunteers are welcome, whether they work with listed buildings or are just interested in preserving the district's architectural heritage, or you can suggest listed or at risk buildings in Suffolk Coastal or Waveney that could benefit from the ESBPT. Email conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444616.

Woodbridge draft

Suffolk Coastal wants comments by Friday, May 6 on the draft conservation area appraisal for Woodbridge so that an accurate evaluation can be agreed to ensure its future good management.

The draft has been drawn up, based on the framework set out by English Heritage, by the Council's design and conservation team. The appraisal can be seen on

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/policy/conservation/woodbridge/ or at the planning helpdesk at Suffolk Coastal's Melton Hill offices.

What's on in Suffolk Coastal

This is a brief guide to some of the many activities on offer across our district over the next few months. All listed below are subject to change so please try and check. You can keep up to date with events in our district by visiting www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/whatson or picking up one of the What's On guides from one of our tourist information centres.

April

16-17 National Police Dog Trials, Trinity Park

www.suffolk.police.uk/About+Us/National+Police+Dog+Trials+2011

22-25 Easter Fun Fair, Felixstowe

22-24 Aldeburgh Music Easter Festival www.aldeburgh.co.uk/events

May

1 Historic Vehicle Rally, Felixstowe. www.ipswichtransportmuseumco.uk

1-2 TBC Suffolk Game & Country Fair, Glemham Hall.

www.fenlandfairs.com/suffolk

2 Rotary Club Fun Run, Felixstowe

2 Woodbridge Horse Show, Trinity Park, Ipswich.

www.woodbridge-horseshoworg.uk

12/16 Bluegrass Festival, Nacton www.orwellbluegrass.co.uk or 07889 607612

27-30 Spring Fun Fair, Felixstowe

June

1-2 Suffolk Show, Trinity Park www.suffolkshow.co.uk

3-5 Suffolk Folk Festival, Woodbridge.

www.onesuffolk.co.uk/suffolkfolkfestival

10-26 Aldeburgh Music Festival www.aldeburgh.co.uk/events
19 Woodbridge Regatta and Riverside Fair

July

3 Darrels Day, Landguard Fort Felixstowe. www.landguard.com
4-9 TBC East of England Tennis Tournament, Felixstowe.
www.eastofenglandtennis.co.uk
17 Ufford Bygones and Fun Day www.uffordbygones.org.uk
14-17 Latitude, Henham Park www.latitudefestival.co.uk
25-27 Aldeburgh Summer Theatre www.southwoldtheatre.org

August

1-31 Snape Proms www.aldeburgh.co.uk/events
TBC Walberswick Crabbing Competition www.walberswick.ws/crabbing
8-15 TBC Woodbridge Arts Festival
13-14 Felixstowe Carnival and Fair www.felixstowecarnival.org
13-15 Aldeburgh Carnival and Regatta www.aldeburghcarnival.com
18-19 Thorpeness Regatta & Fireworks

September

4 Art on the Prom, Felixstowe
29-30 Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival

October

15-29 Woodwose Festival
21-30 Saxmundham Arts Festival
www.saxmundham.org/news/artsfestival.html
22-29 Film Flurry - family friendly film festival

November

4-6 Aldeburgh Poetry Festival www.thepoetrytrust.org

TBC = to be confirmed

Soundwaves contest heats up

The battle for the title of the Soundwaves Ultimate Band 2011 is already underway with local young musicians and bands taking to the stage to display their talents.

February saw a heat at Framlingham College, and on Saturday, March 19 the focus switches to Martlesham Community Centre, with the final heat on Saturday, April 2 at Leiston Film Theatre.

“The Soundwaves competition has a reputation of recognising excellent quality musical talent and giving artists the chance to gain valuable experience of performing to large audiences and working in a recording studio,” said Councillor Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Countryside and Leisure.

The top three bands from each heat and the best runner up will progress on to the final in September. For more about the Soundwaves project visit www.suffolksoundwaves.co.uk or contact the Soundwaves project manager on 07903 017838.

Bus making tracks for young people

The Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership supported Go with the Flow bus is continuing to make regular visits across some of the rural parts of our district offering somewhere for young people to enjoy.

Among its facilities are TV screens, Mac books, Wii games, a sound system and a kitchen. Its regular stops include Wickham Market, Saxmundham, Leiston, Framlingham, Westleton, Benhall, Rendlesham and Ufford.

To find out more about the bus visit www.gowiththeflowbus.com – where they are also after youth workers and drivers. The bus is also being increasingly used during the day as a facility to offer services to adults as well.

Film Flurry returns in October

After the success of our family friendly film festival in 2010, developed with Mid Suffolk ARTS, it returns again this October with even more films, larks and adventures, and we need to find some more venues.

We want to bring you 10 or more film screenings in existing rural venues of cinemas and village halls plus some new ventures in farms, museums ... and maybe even outside.

The central theme will be enjoyment for all the family, so if you have a venue, however small, or idea and want to get involved, call 01394 444294 or email Rachel.nightingale@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk by May. Watch out for full details on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts

More classic music for children

There's a classical music treat for children aged under five on October 27 when the City of London Sinfonia will be playing at The New Cut Arts Centre in Halesworth. Watch out for full details on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts

Keep in touch with the arts

Visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts and look out for the Rural Arts Directory to be launched end of May.

Want to put on your own event?

Want to bring exciting events to your community? Home Grown is a project intended to inspire and equip people and communities to organise local arts events. For more information call Beverley Bishop on 01953 713390 or visit www.creativeartseast.co.uk/homegrown/

Arts on parade at Landguard

Suffolk Coastal ARTS and the Landguard Fort Trust have an exciting group of talented and stimulating artists visiting to create work inspired by the historic fort and peninsula.

Felixstowe's Landguard Fort will feature Kate Morrell's Flint and Forgery in May and June, while in August Jane Cheadle will be creating a film animation. Her projects include a U2 tour so expect to be intrigued by her work.

September will see Viyki Turnbull create an installation inspired by the vastness of the Fort, while in October sound artist Stuart Bowditch and photographer Eleanor Cleasby will explore the Fort.

There is also a chance to see the Pantaloons present their new, comic masterpiece production of Canterbury Tales on August 25, 6pm at the Fort – free entry to all.

Magical Marshes - a family day of play

Mark Sunday, July 24 in your diary when an amazing day of playful ideas and fun is lined up at Snape Maltings from 11am to 5pm, which will leave you with lots of ideas for activities to fill the summer.

For only £1 per person, you can try out an amazing array of magical and creative outdoor activities, everything from willow weaving to wing making. The full events list may include magic in the marshes, fairies larking, pirates prancing, tightrope walkers teetering, and some mud larking for the mums and dads.

Magical Marshes will be a great event for all the family – watch out for further details on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts

Small is Beautiful - play your part

Help us hold the first Small is Beautiful tour of small venues around the district with live music and children's shows and developed with Peppery Productions.

The full programme is still being finalised but should be ideal for all the family - watch out for full details on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/arts and if you are interested in hosting an event, get in touch.

We need you to promote it locally and host it on the night, but we will do the rest of the work and provide the funding. If it goes well on the night you could even make some money for your local community. Email rachel.nightingale@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444294.

Take a seat and keep fit

Even more older people could benefit from chair-based exercises with new classes being held across the district, with Felixstowe the latest to join Aldeburgh, Framlingham, Friston, Kesgrave, Leiston and Woodbridge.

Chair-based exercises are aimed at older people that want to strengthen and tone muscles, helping them stay active and avoid having falls in their home or when out and about.

Visit

www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/healthguide/sitdown/classes for details of classes. For more about the Felixstowe sessions call Suffolk Sport on 01394 444289.

Steady as you go

The Partnership with Older People in Suffolk (POPS) held a forum in Woodbridge recently to consider what can be done to cut down the risks of older people falling.

Most of the older people there had themselves fallen over at some time and all were keen that more advice and information was given to help others. So, what can you do to reduce the risk of falling down?

- Be physically active;
- Eat well and drink plenty of fluids;
- Check your sight and hearing;
- Make your home safe and free of trip hazards;
- Understand your medicines;
- Avoid or limit your alcohol intake;
- Wear sensible shoes and keep feet healthy.

If you have fallen in the last year, it is important to find out why so please speak to your GP. If you would like more information about avoiding falls, call Anita Walkinshaw at Suffolk NHS on 01473 275250 or visit www.fallsandfracturepreventioninsuffolk.nhs.uk

Full information about chair based exercise classes is on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/helpingpeople/healthguide/sitdown/ or you can call 01394 444697.

Step out and get healthy

Enjoy the district with a healthy walk by joining in with Stepping out in Suffolk health walk which has strolls lined up across the year.

“The health walks scheme has proven very popular with many more people now keeping active on a regular basis and feeling the benefits of a healthy lifestyle,” said Councillor Ray Herring, Chairman of the Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

To find out more contact the health walks team on 01394 444501 or email walks@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk A full list of walks is also available at www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/steppingout

Health walks are a joint project between Suffolk Coastal LSP, Stepping out in Suffolk, Healthy Ambitions Suffolk, Active Wellbeing and Mid Suffolk LSP.

Rural areas get set for fitness

The race is on this summer to get all our rural communities more physically active and fitter. Fit Villages can offer subsidised activities with qualified instructors, thanks to national funding and support from the County Council and Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership,

If 40 or more from a village express an interest, taster sessions and eight week courses could be set up for activities such as health walks, badminton, yoga, keep fit, Nordic walking, tai chi or chair based activities.

Any parish councils, or other local community bodies that would like to get involved can email henry.tapp@suffolksport.com or call 01394 444289 or visit www.suffolksport.com

Time for villages to get on their bikes

Cycle Suffolk wants to get people in rural areas on their bikes and active, and will give them the help they need to get cycling, with its own bikes that people can use.

The health benefits of cycling are numerous and everyone can take part no matter what their fitness level. Cycling is also great fun and gives everyone the opportunity to get out and enjoy the Suffolk countryside. To find out more contact Tracy Brownlow on 01379 677307 or email tracybrownlow@btconnect.com