



# Parish *Bulletin*

Autumn 2008



## Working together provides a unique local answer to fund coastal defence work

Thanks to a unique community partnership that came together to provide much-needed coastal defence works, East Lane, Bawdsey will very shortly see the start of the £2 million project.

Because the defence works were low on the list of priorities for national funding, the innovative partnership was created to raise the money by building homes on three nearby sites.

“Suffolk Coastal has now received the necessary funds from the East Lane Trust (ELT) for the coastal defence works to proceed, together with the unexpected and hence doubly welcome contingency commitment from the Environment Agency (EA),” said Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Coastal Management.

“I want to pay tribute to all those involved, not least Gerry Matthews of the ELT and all the other members of the Trust particularly the landowners who helped make it all possible, for the most amazing community vision and courage.

“I am proud of the role that Suffolk Coastal has been able to play in this project. There can have been few ever examples of such close, effective and productive joint working between the community and the statutory bodies, and it has been a privilege to be associated with it,” added Cllr Smith.

A series of emergency works worth nearly £250,000 were funded by Suffolk Coastal over recent years which has worked closely with the local community and the EA to help shore up an area that suffered dramatic impacts of coastal erosion over the last few years.

The loss of the cliffs would have a serious flood threat to large areas of low-lying land in Bawdsey, Alderton and

Hollesley. The Shoreline Management Plan recognises the importance of this stretch of the coast.

“The reality of the situation united the three parishes. We all worked hard to produce a local answer to the funding gap caused because there is not enough money set aside nationally for coastal defence work,” said Gerry Matthews of the East Lane Trust.

“The Trust came up with its own imaginative way of locally funding the cost of the permanent defence works, by selling housing development land, for which we had to get the backing of both Suffolk Coastal and then the Government.

“These were exceptional circumstances and we have delivered a unique local solution to provide the vital coastal protection for East Lane and beyond, added Mr Matthews.



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## Help us plan our budget

Town and parish councils are being asked to play their part in helping Suffolk Coastal prioritise its services and draw up its budget for 2009/10.

The Council is facing a gap between its planned spending and estimated income of over £700,000 and is seeking views from all its communities on how its services can be improved and made more efficient.

An interactive budget game will be available on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/your-council/budget/haveyoursay](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/your-council/budget/haveyoursay) which will give people the chance to indicate what should happen to each of over 70 different services and see what the impact of their 'budget decisions' would be on the overall Council Tax level for the district council.

## Your next chance to have your say on LDF

Town and parish councils, along with the rest of the community, will soon have the chance to make their comments on two of the important planning documents that will form part of the district's first Local Development Framework.

From December 1, Suffolk Coastal will be asking for views on its Core Strategy and the site specific proposals, with a current closing date of February 9, 2009 for people to respond on the two documents.

The Core Strategy was agreed by the Council's Cabinet on October 21 and sets out its preferred approach towards the future development of the district, covering such subjects as housing, a settlement hierarchy, economy, environment and community well-being.

The Council is currently recommending that the main two development areas for housing be in the Martlesham area east of the A12, along with an organic and evolutionary growth of a minimum of 1,620 homes in the Felixstowe and Trimleys area over a mixture of sites, while preserving as far as possible prime agricultural land for essential food production.

The site specific proposals document contains all the suggestions that have been submitted to the Council as part of the LDF process for changes to the current town or village 'envelopes', or land suggested to be used for specific purposes that are different than currently agreed.

There are over 400 suggestions listed, and the Council wants to hear what people think about the suggestions before it makes its decisions on which, or indeed any, of the sites should be allowed to change their current planning designation.

Further details will be sent to all town and parish councils at the start of December, and more information will be available on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review/](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/planning/review/)

**The next issue of this Bulletin will be published in January 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 444741 or email [communications@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:communications@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)**

# Council votes to make Suffolk three

September's Full Council meeting of Suffolk Coastal threw its support behind the call for a three-way split of Suffolk that would keep Felixstowe and Kesgrave in a new East Suffolk unitary council.

The Council has now submitted to the Boundary Committee for England (BCE) its outline of how Suffolk could be split into three, with each of its distinct communities having councils that would be able to offer value for money services and be locally accountable.

"Many of us remain unconvinced of the need for introducing unitary government in Suffolk but after a thorough review of our February proposals we have made changes that we believe would deliver the best unitary solution for our communities and all of Suffolk," said Councillor Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

"We are insistent that Felixstowe and Kesgrave should not become part of Ipswich, in the same way that it is clearly wrong to make Lowestoft part of Norfolk.

"The BCE has recognised the need to break up the county if unitary government is going to have a chance of succeeding in Suffolk, but it needs to go one step further and create three rather than two councils," added Cllr Herring.

Suffolk Coastal has been highly critical of the review period, and has argued strongly that the Government has not given enough time for the BCE, or indeed councils, town and parish councils, and local communities, to consider all the potential implications of changing councils with a combined turnover of around £1.5 billion.

"Officers and councillors across Suffolk have tried to work out the budget and service implications of the BCE's proposals, but it is completely wrong that this frantic exercise spread over a few weeks in the summer should determine the future of local government in Suffolk for the next 30 years.

"All of us, the councils and the BCE, and most importantly the communities that we serve and the town and parish councils we work in partnership with, needed more time before reaching conclusions that will have a massive impact on communities across Suffolk," added Cllr Herring.

The BCE proposed on July 7 that there should be two unitary councils, one covering Ipswich and Felixstowe and the area between the two towns, and the other covering the rest of Suffolk but without Lowestoft.

"The proposals presented by the BCE were a complete surprise because absolutely no-one had suggested them. Five of Suffolk eight main councils have all called for three councils to be created and on reflection I still believe that is still the



best way forward for everyone if unitary councils are to be introduced.

"I think that most people accept that one giant Suffolk council would be too large and too remote to serve all its communities. While it might mean only one very well paid chief executive, that person would need many more middle managers to cope with such a geographically spread out area.

"We are suggesting a larger Ipswich, which would take in the Shotley peninsula and the Hadleigh area. That would make this Ipswich and South Suffolk council large enough to stand on its own feet and meet its own particular challenges.

"Both East Suffolk and West Suffolk have their own particular communities and it is right that both should be separate so they can tackle their issues and provide local solutions to local needs. I am sure we will provide better services and even better value for money, and be close enough to our communities to involve them fully in delivering the services that they want," added Cllr Herring.

Linking Lowestoft and Felixstowe into East Suffolk would mean that one council would be responsible for all the coastal defence issues. At the same time, more than any other part of the county, East Suffolk is home to regional centres of excellence, with Felixstowe and Lowestoft Ports, BT/Adastral Park, its 'power corridor' of low carbon energy providers, as well as Snape Maltings and Sutton Hoo.

A large part of East Suffolk is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while it also has many market towns and picture-book villages and some of the highest quality of life ratings in the country. It is therefore little surprise that so many tourists visit the attractions and resorts in East Suffolk, and that nearly ten per cent of jobs are linked to tourism.

**The BCE is expected to send its preferred options to the Government on December 31, with a decision expected early-February as to whether the Review has been accepted or rejected.**

## Helping market towns

The five-year Towns Alive initiative launched by Action for Market Towns (AMT) is supported by a £1 million award from the Big Lottery Fund.

AMT recognises that market towns face complex pressures, including development pressure, lack of affordable housing, threats to small independent retailers and decline in services, such as post offices.

Many towns have set up market town partnerships - independent community-based organisations - to tackle these issues and create new opportunities by developing and delivering regeneration plans, and the Towns Alive initiative aims to support these partnerships in three ways:

A Market Towns Academy will develop and run training programmes - including online courses - to help partnerships more effectively organise, plan and manage their resources.

At the same time, a Market Towns Knowledge Hub will co-ordinate research and policy studies affecting market towns and help to influence national and regional policy affecting market towns.

Finally, a Towns-for-Towns programme will help towns share knowledge and good practice with each other.

## New ES handbooks

Natural England has recently published new Environmental Stewardship (ES) handbooks to provide farmers with a comprehensive guide to ES and how to apply.

A dedicated ES phone number has also been established - 0300 060 1115 - and for the first time applicants for Entry Level Stewardship schemes (ELS) can now apply online on [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

The new handbooks - which cover every available ES scheme - apply to all agreements starting on or after October 1, 2008. The handbooks have been redesigned and include information on new options and changes to the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) bringing farmers up to date on how ES can help their farm business and how they can apply.

Almost £3 billion is earmarked for ES and other agri-environment schemes from 2007-2013, under the RDPE. There is no limit to how many ELS applications a customer can submit, once they have downloaded the software and have the system up and running. Printed versions of the new ES handbooks for scheme applicants, and their agents, can be obtained from the regional Natural England office.

Existing agreement holders must keep their old handbooks as the terms and conditions remain part of the legal basis of their agreement.

## Ideas to improve local communities?

Communities Secretary Hazel Blears called in October on councils to work closely with their residents to unearth new and innovative ideas to improve their local area and make places in which people want to live, work and raise a family.

As part of the Sustainable Communities Act, the Secretary of State has invited local authorities to send in proposals on what central government can do to help improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their local areas. The innovations put forward could provide local solutions to any number of issues. For example, Communities could make proposals to:

- Tackle climate change at a local level - cutting energy consumption or creating more green areas for communities to cultivate
- Strengthen the local economy - finding ways in which to support local businesses and producers
- Increase social inclusion, including an increase in involvement in local democracy.

Ms Blears said: "I'm inviting local authorities, in discussion with the people they represent, to tell us in Government what we can do to help their local community thrive.

"It's about turning assumptions about power upside down. Less of Whitehall calling the shots and more of men and women everywhere getting together and working with their council to set the agenda for what happens in their town or village - I look forward to hearing their ideas."

Local authorities have until July 31, 2009 to submit proposals to the Local Government Association, who has been appointed as the Selector under the terms of the Act and further details about the process for submitting and progressing proposals are available on both the Communities and Local Government website [www.communities.gov.uk/local-government/about/sustainablecommunitiesact](http://www.communities.gov.uk/local-government/about/sustainablecommunitiesact) and the LGA website.

The Sustainable Communities Act aims to promote the sustainability of local communities by encouraging the improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the authority's area. It provides a channel for local people to ask central government, via their local authority, to take action. It will also increase transparency and accountability by identifying public funding that goes into each area by providing for the production of new local spending reports.

# More affordable homes in Orford and Kesgrave

Suffolk Coastal has helped to create new housing developments in Orford and Kesgrave, making these areas more accessible to those on low incomes and people with disabilities and enabling them to remain part of the community.

In Kesgrave, a site on Century Drive was used to build eight wheelchair-friendly bungalows for rent, two with three bedrooms and six with two bedrooms.

“As part of the planning negotiations, the owner of the land was happy to meet the needs of those with physical disabilities, making it possible for more people to join the Grange Farm community,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

“The site has been leased to Flagship Housing, and the landowner has also contributed to the cost of building the bungalows,” added Cllr Slemmings.

In Orford, a survey carried out by its Parish Council and the Rural Housing Enabler from Suffolk Acre, with the support of Suffolk Coastal’s housing team, showed that there was a demand for more rented and shared ownership housing in

the village, because of high house prices and private rents.

“Suffolk Coastal’s planning team, Orford Parish Council and Flagship Housing chose a site on Ipswich Road for the new, affordable homes. They held an open meeting to consult members of the public on the layout and design of the buildings before starting work.

“A tree will be planted to mark the affordable housing scheme, which has provided Orford with a mix of shared ownership and rented properties.

“To ensure the new housing in Kesgrave and Orford met the needs of the community, planning agreements were made so that homes could only be let or sold to people with a local connection,” added Cllr Slemmings.

Local families have already moved into their brand new homes, except for one three-bedroom shared ownership home in Orford, which is still available. Anyone with a local connection who wants more details about this opportunity to get onto the property ladder can call 01603 255416 or 01603 255431.

## Don't let your sacks become an eyesore

Suffolk Coastal residents who are yet to receive the new wheeled bins are being reminded to take steps to prevent their rubbish leaking out and becoming an eyesore and a danger to wildlife, pets and small children.

“Suffolk Coastal Services are reminding people that they should never put their black sacks out for collection any earlier than 4.30pm on the day before their scheduled collection and that at all other times black sacks should be kept in a dustbin or other similar container,” said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

“Wild and domestic animals may be attracted to food waste in black sacks. People should remove the temptation by placing any food waste, wrapped in cardboard, newspaper or compostable bags, in their brown bin for the fortnightly organic waste collection service,” said Cllr Nunn.

If black sacks are being used to hold rubbish, please take care with the attached orange string used to tie the sack as it could be hazardous to wildlife.

“If everybody puts these measures into practice we will make our environment safer, more attractive and cleaner, though once Suffolk Coastal brings the improved recycling service to every home in the district, which should happen by 2010, the new bins will help solve most of these problems,” added Cllr Nunn.



## Website is crystal clear

Suffolk Coastal’s website, [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk), has been awarded an Internet Crystal Mark by the Plain English Campaign (PEC), the first council in Suffolk and only the 39th in the UK to gain the accolade.

The award was given in recognition of the Council’s commitment to using plain language and its willingness to do everything practical to make its website crystal clear.

“Suffolk Coastal supports the PEC’s work to improve the way public bodies communicate with people. It is vital that anyone visiting our website understands what we are saying, otherwise we could be alienating our customers and they might not be able to take advantage of our advice and services,” said Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Customers and Partners.

The PEC examined the content, design and layout of the website and found the pages well designed and ‘easy on the eye’ and the information clearly and consistently presented.

# East's diverse coastline set to benefit from regional coastal initiative

The goal of creating a better social and economic future for the East of England's coastal areas - among the most environmentally rich, most scenic and economically diverse landscapes in the country - was the aim of a conference, which took place on Monday, October 13.

The conference was held at the Orbis Centre in Lowestoft, the focus point of the region's renewable energy effort, and concentrated on the pioneering work of the East of England Coastal Initiative.

This initiative is the first of its kind in the country and brings together a wide range of government, local councils, non-government, voluntary, and business groups. Their combined knowledge and resources will be used to create an effective, streamlined approach that involves the local communities to tackle some of the economic and social challenges the coastal area faces, and build new and sustainable opportunities for coastal communities. The initiative will also fully address the challenges and opportunities for coastal communities and environments in the region as a result of climate change.



Minister for the East of England, Barbara Follett said: "The East of England Coast has some of the most stunning landscape and rich wildlife in the country. Its inhabitants count themselves lucky to live there but, despite being surrounded by great beauty and diversity, they are facing some very real challenges. Not least

among these are the pockets of deprivation to be found in many local communities; the difficulties people living there have accessing transport, jobs and health services and, in particular, the effect that coastal erosion is having on homes and businesses.

"These challenges are complex and multi-faceted with no easy solutions. That is why the Coastal Initiative is so important. It provides a really good way for the region to pool its expertise and resources to find really effective ways of tackling these issues in the short, medium, and long term."

Key delivery partners of the initiative include the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East), the East of England Development Agency (EEDA), East of England Regional Assembly (EERA), Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Partnerships, Sustainability



coastal  
initiative

East (formerly the Sustainable Development Round Table), Suffolk Coastal District Council representing coastal local authorities and Norfolk County Council.

The Coastal Initiative programme is divided into three phases:

- Phase 1: Gathering evidence to get clarity on the key challenges faced by the coastal area of the region.
- Phase 2: Engaging with coastal decision makers and the coastal communities to agree ways to address these issues.
- Phase 3: Coastal decision makers (local and national) to establish ways to deliver the agreed plans.

A significant contribution towards Phase 1 of the Coastal Initiative has recently been completed with existing evidence of coastal issues in the region being collated by a number of government and council departments. In addition, EEDA has funded a specific investigation into the value of the coastal area to the regional economy.

Kate Haigh, Senior Executive for Sustainable Development at EEDA, said: "1.6 million people live in coastal districts in the East of England and the area adds £24 billion to the UK economy each year. As such our coastal communities are huge contributors to the overall success of the region.

"However, our coastal areas face major challenges. The areas under-perform on most measures of economic vitality when compared to the East of England as a whole. In particular some areas suffer from deprivation and perennial unemployment and are also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, water stress, coastal erosion and flooding. If the region is to grow and meet its sustainable economic ambitions these issues need to be addressed, which is why today's summit and the Coastal Initiative are important steps forward for the region."



Ian Monson, Norfolk County Council's Cabinet member for Environment, said: "In the long term, communities and the environment in the east of England will need to adapt to the changing circumstances of the years ahead, including the effects of climate change.

"This Initiative has been born from recognition among its partners that much more can be achieved, both in solving problems and seizing opportunities, if agencies and decision-makers work together, rather than in isolation. I hope this conference will be the start of closer co-operation that brings real results."

The conference at the Orbis Centre in Lowestoft will enable key local councils and other organisations to comment on the progress of the programme and provide further direction for the aims and objectives of the Coastal Initiative. It will also agree how the partners will work together to ensure effective delivery of the objectives.

The Minister for the East of England, Barbara Follett is supporting the Initiative, and has championed it within central government with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). The Minister will report back to these departments after the event with the evidence and potential solutions to dealing with the key challenges faced by coastal areas in the region.

The East of England is providing input into the development of policy relating to coasts including a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS20) on coastal erosion. Additionally, Defra and CLG have asked for specific input from the groups attending the conference in Lowestoft, which will be used for the development of this policy.

For further information about the Coastal Initiative please visit <http://www.go-east.gov.uk>

The project was born out of three key observations through research carried out by the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East)

- The coast is one of the region's most valuable and often underrated/under-utilised assets;
- The coast is home to some of the region's most deprived communities, which require regeneration
- The coast and its communities increasingly need to address significant challenges associated with climate change



Pictured outside the Orbis Centre, Lowestoft, which hosted the Coastal Initiative conference, are some of the key partners, including Cllr Andy Smith of Suffolk Coastal (front left), Minister Barbara Follett (front centre), and Suffolk Coastal's strategic director Jeremy Schofield (back centre).



All Coastal Initiative partners are contributing their work and expertise across all these areas. On top of that they are contributing the following resources:

- Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) - funding a full-time project manager for three years (from January 2008) and contributing funding towards consultancy work to inform the evidence base
- East of England Development Agency (EEDA) - funding a consultancy study on the value of the coast to the regional economy as part of the evidence base
- Natural England - contributing funding towards consultancy work to inform the evidence base
- Environment Agency - funding and organising the conference to share the evidence and shape the direction of the project
- Sustainability East - contributing funding towards consultancy work to inform the evidence base
- Suffolk Coastal District Council - representing all the local councils and their coastal communities in the East of England coastal area.
- Norfolk County Council - leading workstream on formulating

## Parish noticeboard

### Recent election results

The Conservatives won the two recent contests to fill the District Council seats of Woodbridge Riverside and Witnesham. Geoff Holdcroft and Steven Hudson were elected for the respective seats. The results leaves the Conservatives with 45 seats on Suffolk Coastal, the Liberal Democrats with nine and Labour with one.

Liberal Democrat Caroline Page won the vacant Woodbridge Division seat on the County Council Woodbridge Riverside while Conservative Robert Grimwood won the Woodbridge Riverside Town Council seat.

### Don't cut EEDA budget

Suffolk Coastal has written to the Government expressing its serious concerns about the recently announced cuts to regional development agency budgets which will see the East of England Development Agency losing £21.5m.

The Council is worried that vital regional economic development funding is being diverted to support action to help people facing problems with their mortgage.

### Is your business eligible for rate relief?

Get your application in now is the message from Suffolk Coastal to those local businesses who have not yet claimed under a rate relief scheme that could cut their bills by up to 50 per cent.

A Government rule change means that from April 1, 2007 any eligible business with a rateable value of below £10,000 has until September 2010 to apply. A copy of the application form can be found on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/businessrates/reliefs/smallbusiness/](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourbusiness/businessrates/reliefs/smallbusiness/) or contact Suffolk Coastal's Business Rates Team on 01394 444546 or 444544 or email [businessrates@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:businessrates@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

### Battling to appear on Soundwaves CD

The Soundwaves Ultimate Bands Contest is offering bands and solo artists in the Suffolk Coastal district the chance to compete, battle-of-the-bands style, for the opportunity to work with top industry professionals, record demo CDs, and perform live on stage.

The first heat was on Friday November 8, with the second heat on Saturday December 6. Each gig starts at 7pm and tickets cost £5 (£4 concessions) on the door or from the box office at Seckford Theatre, Woodbridge - call 01394 615015.

### Tackling rowdy public drinking

Three more parts of the district now have designation orders to help police deal with local problems caused by people drinking in the streets.

The orders came into force in August and signs have been erected to mark out the new zones in Wickham Market, Saxmundham and Kelsale-cum-Carlton, as well as changes to areas in Felixstowe.

### BT's plans for Adastral Park

Suffolk Coastal will be holding a special exhibition at Martlesham Parish Room, Felixstowe Road, Martlesham on December 16 (11am-9pm) and December 17 (9.30am -12.30pm) when planning officers will be on hand to answer questions about the plans submitted for the redevelopment of the BT/Adastral Park and the adjacent area. All the relevant planning information can be found on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/devcontrol/adastralpark](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/devcontrol/adastralpark)

### Christmas opening hours

Suffolk Coastal's Melton Hill offices will close at 3pm on December 24 but will be open again from 10am -3pm on Monday-Wednesday, December 29-31, before reopening as normal from Monday January 5.

A range of Council services are available 24 hours a day throughout the year on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk) where there is also full details of the recycling and refuse arrangements during the holiday period. Call SCS on 01394 444000 if you have any issues with collections.

## Help keep our district clean and green

The call is still being made for people and groups to take part in Suffolk Coastal's Big Tidy Up, a scheme that is encouraging people to don gloves, take up bin-bags and help banish litter from their local area.

The Big Tidy Up is a Keep Britain Tidy campaign, and although the focus has been on September and October, people can hold them whenever they like.

"Schools, businesses, community groups and individuals can all play a part in taking care of the environment, and if we work together we can make a difference to the look and feel of our parks, schools and local areas," said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

SCS can provide disposable gloves, black sacks for non-recyclable rubbish and clear sacks for recyclable newspapers, magazines, tins, cans and plastic bottles. Register on [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/waste/springclean](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/waste/springclean) or call 01394 444000.



## Making sure our customers are happier

A new Customer Access Strategy, backed up with improved service standards, has been agreed by Suffolk Coastal after it consulted with some of the people who use its services.

During June a number of customer focus groups were held to find out their particular needs and their views on the way the Council's services are delivered.

"As the local council, we recognise the importance of providing good services that are accessible to all parts of our community, and this updated strategy is a simple statement of our commitment to our customers," said Councillor Doreen Savage, Cabinet Member for Customers and Partners.

"The groups helped us revamp our customer service standards, making sure that we were providing the standards, and making the improvements, that matter to our customers. It helped confirm that people do not want a remote call centre but prefer a friendly local voice to deal with their calls and problems," added Cllr Savage.

The Customer Access Strategy sets out a clear message of what customers can expect when dealing with Suffolk Coastal - whichever service they are accessing across the Council.

"The standards are also backed up by an action plan showing what we are going to do over the next two years to help reach our goals of excellent service delivery and customer satisfaction," added Cllr Savage.

**The Customer Service Standards in full are as follows:-**  
Our aim is to ensure that all users of the Council's services are satisfied with the service they receive, however they choose to contact us.

We will achieve this by:

- Being polite, welcoming and courteous and treating all people fairly and with respect
- Providing access to a number of methods of communication that suit the needs of all our customers
- Responding to customer enquiries in a timely fashion
- Attempting to answer all enquiries first time or ensuring that the enquiry is passed to the appropriate person for response
- Using information appropriately to determine where services require improvement
- Engaging with the users of our services to understand where improvements can be made
- Ensuring services are delivered in the most cost effective manner

We will know if we have achieved this by:

- Continually measuring satisfaction levels of the users of our services
- Delivering the actions set out within the Customer Access Strategy

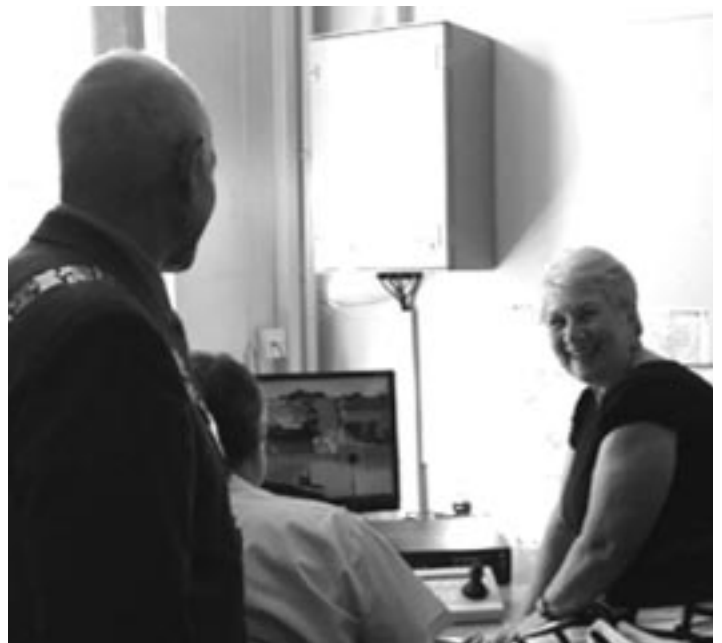
*The underlying Action Plan expands on all these points.*

## CCTV launched in Felixstowe

A network of four closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras are now in place helping local police combat crime thanks to the efforts of the Felixstowe CCTV Partnership.

“A successful bid by the Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Partnership to the Home Office for £37,000 of funding has enabled us to get the cameras, but we would not have been able to proceed with the scheme without the support of Felixstowe Town Council, the Felixstowe Chamber of Commerce and the county council,” said Cllr Doreen Savage, Chairman of the Felixstowe Community CCTV Partnership.

The cameras are now fully operational and are feeding their images into a control room at the Felixstowe police station where it will be monitored at peak periods by a special volunteer group.



## Giving a bigger choice to those on waiting list

Big changes are being made to the way that people on housing waiting lists get their next home with a new system being brought in that will give more control and choice to those on the list.

Councils across the country are introducing the Choice Based Lettings scheme, but Suffolk Coastal has linked up with six other councils in the Greater Haven Gateway area to offer people even more options. The partnership, which involves Babergh, Braintree, Maldon, Colchester, Mid Suffolk and Ipswich as well as Suffolk Coastal, is called Gateway to Homechoice.

“Choice Based Lettings will mean that empty council and housing association homes across the seven partner councils will be advertised on a website, in a special newsletter and at local housing offices,” said Councillor Chris Slemmings, Cabinet Member for Housing.

“All partners will use the same application forms and computer system. People will be able to express an interest in any of the advertised properties that meet their requirements,” added Cllr Slemmings.

Those who register for the Gateway to Homechoice scheme will be placed in one of five bands, based on how serious or



urgent their requirements are. To look at the banding system, visit: [www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/cbl](http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourhome/housing/cbl)

Each home on offer will go to the applicant with the highest need in the highest band. For some schemes, a local connection will be required.

“Suffolk Coastal will be bringing in Choice Based Lettings from January to April 2009. Over the next two months, anybody who is still on the housing register will be invited to re-register if they still need to be housed.

“They will then need to complete an online application form, which can be done over the phone as well as on a computer, and will shortly be notified of their banding for the new Gateway to Homechoice scheme,” added Cllr Slemmings.

In the coming months, helplines will be set up and drop-in sessions will be arranged where a housing officer will discuss the bandings and offer advice. There will also be training for those who need more information and help.

Call Nicola Clarke on 01394 444214 or email [nicola.clarke@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.clarke@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk) if you have any comments or queries.

## Free service offers hi-tech care to vulnerable residents

Assist & Assure has launched a new free service aimed at helping elderly and vulnerable people remain in their own homes, while providing round the clock peace of mind to their family and carers.

Thanks to funding from the Government and its partnership with the county council, Assist & Assure can now install for free a wide range of hi-tech equipment that provides support to those who need a bit more help in their own home.

Among the gadgets on offer are fall detectors, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide and flood detectors, bed occupancy sensors, epilepsy sensors, pull cords and bogus caller buttons, all of which is linked up to Assist & Assure's control centre which is staffed 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Thanks to the Government's Preventative Technology Grant, 260 homes in the Suffolk Coastal area could get this potentially life-saving technology for free. For more information and an informal chat, please contact Camilla on 01362 696175.

Customer First will decide whether a potential service user is eligible for the free service, usually based on whether they



have previously received any services through the County Council. The decision can be influenced by any additional information given by either the individual or their family carer, or an Occupational Therapist. People can refer themselves, or be referred by a health care professional or family member, and decisions can be appealed against.

Assist & Assure is part of the Flagship Housing group and provides Telecare alarms and other assistive technology to people of any age who, for one reason or another, may be vulnerable in their homes from time to time. For example, older people who wish to remain in their own homes, people suffering from physical disabilities or mental problems, individuals at risk from harassment or domestic violence, or lone workers.

## Tap into the Outdoor Play Space Fund

Town and parish councils are being urged to get their share of a £1.1 million pot of money that can help provide local play facilities.

Over £500,000 has been paid out by Suffolk Coastal from its outdoor play space fund (OPSF) to help projects across the district since its launch five years ago.

The OPSF was set up by the Council to ensure that recreation facilities kept pace with new housing developments and requires builders to make a contribution to the fund when they gain planning permissions.

The fund is helping our many partners make a real difference in their area, giving people of all ages improved local facilities and community groups are urged to come up with their funding bids.

Suffolk Coastal is keen to encourage recreational projects that involve people in their communities and each year asks towns and parishes to identify their local needs for inclusion in the annual Outdoor Play Space Parish Strategy (OPSPS). This strategy then ensures that funds available from the OPSF are used in the best possible way.



### Play equipment at Saxmundham funded with help from OPSF

Anyone who would like more information about the OPSF or the OPSPS can contact Suffolk Coastal's outdoor play-space development officer, Jennie Catling, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays on 01394 444321 or email [community&economic@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:community&economic@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

## A tennis treat is served up for Wickham Market - thanks to community partnership



Wickham Market celebrated the official opening of its new tennis courts at the end of September, thanks to its successful People's Millions Big Lottery bid with Christine James (formerly Truman), Wimbledon finalist in 1961, performed the ribbon cutting ceremony (pictured left).

Trustees of the Wickham Market Partnership, a local regeneration charity, realised tennis courts were needed after two surveys showed overwhelming support for the sport. The opportunity to benefit from a Big Lottery grant was not one to be missed, so it was full steam ahead with a project plan, quotations and finally a television slot, with Wickham Market scoring the highest number of runner-up votes and a cheque for £94,000.

"We knew that the development of a tennis club was crucial to the sport's success so part of the grant is being used to buy equipment as well as giving volunteers the chance to train as coaches. We wanted a holistic approach as just putting in the courts would not have been enough," said Cath Caudwell, a Trustee and Company Secretary of the Partnership,

To find out more about the pay and play facilities or club membership contact Hilary on 01728 747414.

## Making it even easier to recycle from home

At the end of October, nearly 6,500 more homes joined Suffolk Coastal's improved recycling service, making it even easier for two-thirds of the district to do their bit for the environment.

Across the district, the recycling rate has been 45 per cent overall, but those homes on the new service have been achieving 54 per cent, which is why Suffolk Coastal is keen to roll out the improved service as quickly as possible. This latest expansion will mean that over 35,000 homes in all will be reached.

"The new blue-lidded wheeled bins are for paper, cans, tins, foil, plastic containers and cardboard, which will be taken away for recycling. Cardboard can also go in the brown bin, along with garden waste and cooked and uncooked food, for composting," said Councillor Andrew Nunn, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment.

"The new grey-lidded wheeled bin, which will replace the black sack service, is for household waste that cannot be recycled, and will be collected fortnightly, with the recycling bins emptied the following week.

"The rising costs of landfill taxes and other charges mean that

we could be faced with an extra £9 million bill for disposing of the household waste we are collecting, so if we can all recycle more that potential bill will be drastically reduced," added Cllr Nunn.

Suffolk Coastal has already held a round of information roadshows where members of the recycling team were on hand to answer any questions that people may have had about how to make the best of this new service.

"We also displayed the choice of recycling bins, so that people could choose whether to stick with the standard size or go for a smaller one. Giving people the chance to find out more has played a big part in making the introduction of the new service as smooth as possible," added Cllr Nunn.

The areas included in the expansion of the service are Kelsale, Ufford, Cransford, Bromeswell and parts of Yoxford, Saxmundham, Rushmere St. Andrew, Kesgrave, Felixstowe, Aldeburgh, Aldringham, Rendlesham, Martlesham, Melton, Pettistree, Framlingham and Trimley St. Mary.

"We are introducing the improved service as quickly as we can, but financial constraints mean it will be March 2010 before every home is reached," added Cllr Nunn.