



# District Councillors Report to Little Bealings Annual Parish Council Meeting

For May 2023

**Carlford and Fynn Valley Ward.**

Rushmere Village, Great Bealings, Little Bealings, Playford, Bredfield, Grundisburgh & Culpho, Witnesham and Swilland, Westerfield, Hasketon, Clopton, Charsfield, Dallinghoo, Tuddenham, Boulge, Burgh, Debach, Otley.

**From District Councillor**

**Cllr Colin Hedgley**

([Colin.Hedgley@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Colin.Hedgley@eastsoffolk.gov.uk))

If you are reading this then I have been successfully re-elected as your district councillor along with Dan Clery. Dan stood as a Green Party candidate and I am sure you will meet him soon.

My thanks to all those that gave me their vote, so I am now in my ninth year as a District Councillor. I am of course the District Councillor for everyone in Carlford and Fynn Valley Ward irrespective of party allegiance. I look forward to working with all the Parish Councils and am available to help anyone that lives within the ward in whatever way I can.

For the record the party numbers at East Suffolk Council are :-

Green 16, Conservative 15, Labour 12, Lib Dem 11 and Independent 1.

It will obviously take a little time until a new working administration is in place followed by all the necessary training before some new councillors can fulfil their roles. I will keep the Parish Councils informed as to progress.

## **The Past Year**

This past year has been one of recovery from the pandemic then to be faced by a 'cost of living crisis'.

As in most situations such as these two, the government of the day makes money available from the exchequer but it's the local councils that have to deliver it. For instance, East Suffolk Council had to deal with the distribution of £350 million pounds in help for businesses during the pandemic, a huge headache for the financial team at ESC.

Since the cost- of- living crises we have received over 500 referrals for financial assistance and set up, with volunteers, 50 warm rooms. Other help is of course available. The demand continues.

Of course, the one thing that affects all parishes equally is planning. Planning law is, to say the least, complicated and it often appears stacked against the ordinary person. Each application must be considered and if necessary, fought against on its merits or otherwise. My biggest gripe is that I do not believe that Parish Councils



opinions are given enough weight in planning applications. But for them to have more say would take government legislation, although having a Neighbourhood Plan does help to a limited extent. I for one would like to see the end of Duplicate Applications by, usually, large scale housing firms. Although it saves time and money for the planners it is almost impossible for the Parish Councils to oppose an application with any chance of success.

### Helping people access affordable food

Community groups, organisations and town and parish councils are invited to apply for funding to help provide affordable food to East Suffolk residents in need.

Supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the East Suffolk Pantries Grant Scheme is a three-year programme which aims to fund the initial set up of community pantries across the district, helping people in need to access affordable food in their local community.

The pantries will provide a welcoming space, similar to a shop, where people can pay a subscription of less than £5 per week and receive food worth at least £15 in return. Pantries can also provide additional support, signposting to other local services and help to reduce social isolation.

Following a successful first round, the second round of funding applications is now open. Grants of up to £4,500 are available and applications close on 30 June.

Nicole Rickard, Head of Communities at East Suffolk Council said: “Due to rising costs, we know that many people are struggling to buy essential food items and increasing numbers of people are visiting local foodbanks. Community pantries help to ease the pressure on foodbanks whilst ensuring those who are struggling can continue to access affordable food and we would encourage local groups and organisations to find out more about the process by attending our online information session later this month.”

Pantry providers will become part of the East Suffolk Food Network, bringing together organisations providing both affordable food, and food in times of crisis. The network will be used to share best practice, gain support and manage access to surplus food to ensure fairness in distribution.

Applications are welcome from community and voluntary groups, organisations and town and parish councils.

Full details about how to apply can be found at [eastsuffolk.co/ukspf](https://eastsuffolk.co/ukspf)

An online information session for prospective applicants takes place on Thursday 25 May (11.30am - 12.30pm) on Microsoft Teams. To book a place, please email [gemma.fraser@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.fraser@eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

In December, East Suffolk Council was allocated £2.75m from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which will be used to support high streets, local businesses, workforce and community skills development, as well as support for those struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.



East Suffolk Council understands the pressures faced by many people today and is working closely with partners and stakeholders to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/squeeze)

## **Council Tax**

As most of you are aware the government instructed local Councils not to raise Council Tax by more than 5%. ESC have set ours at 2.8% for 2023/24. I have no responsibility for the County Council or the Police and Crime Commissioner who I know is struggling with ever increasing demands and costs.

## **Felixstowe to host Tour of Britain 2023 stage finish**

A seaside trip awaits more than 100 of the world's best cyclists when Felixstowe hosts a stage finish of the Tour of Britain cycle race in September.

The fifth day of the UK's longest-running and most prestigious international cycle race will culminate along the Suffolk coastline in the shadows of Felixstowe's pier and world-famous port on Thursday 7 September.

The stage will mark Suffolk's first appearance in the Tour of Britain since 2017, although it will be the fifth time in modern race history that the peloton will have raced through the county. Felixstowe has never previously welcomed the Tour of Britain, however its sister race – the Women's Tour – dramatically culminated there in 2021, when newly-crowned world champion Elisa Balsamo claimed an emotional victory in the famous rainbow jersey. Since its return in 2004, the Tour of Britain has become a cornerstone of the UK sporting calendar. More than 15 million people have watched the event in person, with the race generating over £330m for the UK economy to date. Full details of stage five – including the start location, route and timetable – will be announced in due course.

## **East Suffolk Council approves a budget of over £30million to fund essential services in 2023/24.**

The spending plan, to help improve the lives of residents over the coming financial year, was agreed by councillors at a meeting of the full council on Wednesday 22 February. Additionally, in the five years up to and including 2026/27, a forecast £410m will go towards major projects as part of the council's overall General Fund Capital Programme, and an additional £83m on housing development and new build schemes, and maintenance of the existing housing stock. Over £287m has been raised from external grants and contributions towards the cost of our General Fund capital project programme. This includes a £24.9m Towns Fund grant to regenerate Lowestoft, driving economic growth and acting as a catalyst for future investment, and rising to a potential £35.9m with the addition of matched funding, while UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Fund grants will support local business, people and skills throughout the district.



A General Fund Revenue Budget of £30.1m for 2023/24 includes £16.37million in Council Tax, which makes up just over 50% of the money we receive. However, the portion of Council Tax which East Suffolk receives (around 10% of the total bill) will only increase by 2.81%, or £4.95 for the entire year on the annual bill of a Band D property. The remaining 90% goes to Suffolk County Council, the Police & Crime Commissioner, and Town/Parish councils.

### **May 2023 elections: Photographic voter ID.**

As you have no doubt aware, voter ID was required at the recent local elections.

I would be most interested to hear of constituent's experiences and opinions as to how well this worked on an individual basis.

### **Illegal dog breeder jailed following council investigation**

An illegal dog breeder and dealer has been jailed, and banned from keeping animals for 10 years, following a successful prosecution by East Suffolk Council. Jamie Wilkinson was sentenced at Suffolk Magistrates' Court on Friday 28 April for the unlicensed breeding and sale of dogs, along with a number of other offences, including fly-tipping. The 33-year-old, of Foxglove End, Leiston, was also disqualified from breeding, owning or keeping animals for the next decade.

### **Ease the Squeeze on cost of living**

If you, or someone you know, is worried about the increasing cost of living the help is at hand. We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk. To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place.



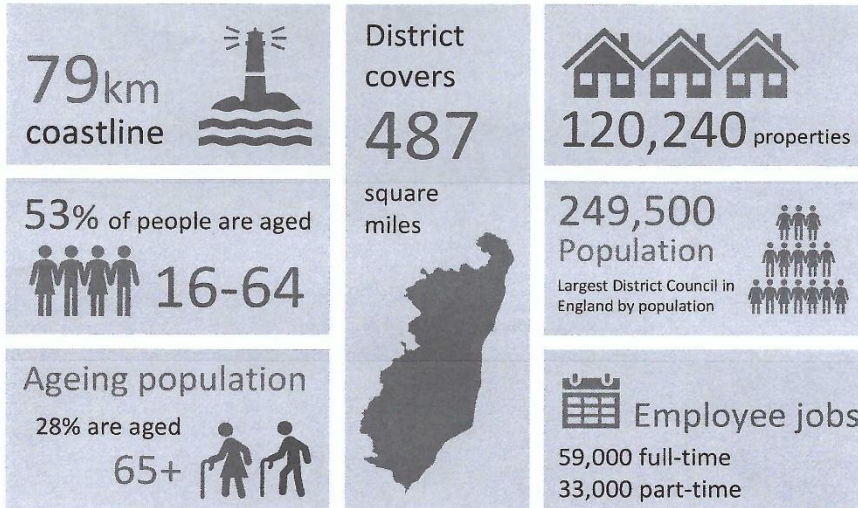
[Head to our Ease the Squeeze page now](#) (control and click)



### **Imported food products surrendered following vehicle spot check**

Food inspectors from East Suffolk Council helped intercept a quantity of suspected illegally imported meat following a vehicle stop in Lowestoft. The discovery was made during a multi-agency spot check of vehicles, in Lowestoft, on Friday 3 February. East Suffolk Council's Food and Safety team investigated the contents of the vehicle following a request for assistance from Suffolk County Council Trading Standards colleagues. The van was found to contain mainly pork, eggs and other food, which the occupants of the vehicle claimed was for personal consumption. It was also found to contain weighing scales and a refrigerator.

## About East Suffolk



## Key statistics 2021/22

