

## **Annual Report Suffolk Coastal District Council 2017**

It has once again been a very busy year - we celebrated the Queens 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, looked at and debated devolution, published our first joint Business Plan, responded to the latest consultation re EDF, inspired people to join in on the walking festivals, won awards for our sea front gardens in Felixstowe, voted in the EU referendum, held a beach hut consultation, recycled our old furniture from the Melton Hill offices and much more. Through our ward reports we have kept you informed and up to date with all that has been going on but we would like to take this opportunity to update and remind you of a few items. As always, planning issues keep us busy and can we remind you to copy us in on any correspondence so that we can help. Please do not hesitate to get in contact with us on any other matters if we can help in any way.

### **We moved to Riduna Park**

Suffolk Coastal moved in new office premises at Riduna Park in Melton.

The move from the previous ageing offices at Melton Hill in Woodbridge is part of the Council's continuing aim to protect the tax payer, by downsizing to reduce the Council's running costs in the future and to give staff more efficient and modern facilities to work in.

The new purpose built offices provide a contemporary and comfortable place for our staff to work and allow for improved flexible working for both staff and members and to reduce running costs.

### **Merger**

In March 2016 Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council considered a paper where we looked at a possible merger, as you know both councils have been working increasingly closely, since appointing a joint Chief Executive in 2008 and the partnership has been key to the Councils' ability to make efficiency savings.

Not quite a year later both Cabinets approved the proposals at a simultaneous cabinet meeting followed by a SCDL Full Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, a day after Waveney councillors voted in favour of the merger - where both Council Leaders recognised the significance of this decision. Both approved to create a brand new 'super district' council, delivering services to communities across east Suffolk and will now work with the Department of Communities and Local Government to begin the formal process of merger. With the Secretary of State's agreement, the new Council would then hold elections, and commence operations, in 2019.

By creating a new, larger and more influential council, we will be able to keep costs down, enabling us to maintain and improve the services that local people depend on.

Working in partnership has already helped the councils save over £16m since 2010. However, further savings cannot be made unless the partnership progresses further. A new, merged, council will be better placed to address the shared challenges that both councils face.

The formal process of merger will now get underway and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the two Leaders, has submitted a written request to the Department of the Communities and Local Government. Final ratification of the decision will then be made by the Secretary of State in September 2017.

The two existing councils will then be formally dissolved with elections to the new authority in May 2019.

There is a lot of work to be done and following last year's public consultation on proposals for new constituency boundaries, the Boundary Commission for England is once again asking for your views.

Almost 20,000 responses were received during the 2016 consultation – these comments have now been published and the Commission is inviting comment on them until Monday 27 March:  
<https://www.bce2018.org.uk/>

After this date, the Commission will consider all representations received from both consultations and will consider whether any revisions are needed. If the Commission decides to revise the proposals, then a further consultation on the revised boundaries will take place.

The Boundary Commission for England is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.

### **Protecting the tax payer**

Suffolk Coastal has vowed to develop a more commercial approach to providing services, in order to protect the local tax payer.

At its Full Council meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, Suffolk Coastal District Council agreed its budget and set its portion of the Council Tax for the coming financial year.

The Members decided that, in order to continue to provide high quality services, the Council would increase its part of the Council Tax bill for 2017/18 by 3.25%.

In real money, this equates to a rise of less than £5 for people living in a Band D property, with the Council Tax on Band D increasing by £4.95 from £152.37 to £157.32 a year.....or by less than 10p a week!

“I remain very positive about the future and believe Suffolk Coastal has a key role to play in fostering a strong economy by helping businesses develop, driving the provision of more housing, particularly extra affordable homes, and creating new jobs in the district,” said Suffolk Coastal’s Leader, Cllr Ray Herring.

“While east Suffolk has a robust economy, the Council has recognised the need to adopt a more commercial approach to providing services. We need to make sure we get a fair market value for services, if we are to keep council tax down and protect the tax payer.

“No one wants to pay more for services or pay more council tax. But we are faced with dwindling financial support from central Government, so we have a difficult balancing act to ensure everyone pays their fair share to support the services we provide to the community.

“By being more commercial in our approach, we create the funds to be able to invest in important community projects, such as improving our leisure centres, as well as continuing to deliver our Enabling Communities agenda to provide essential grants and support in order to help make our communities stronger and more able to do things for themselves.”

Through its partnership working with Waveney District Council, Suffolk Coastal has already drastically reduced its staffing numbers and made joint saving of over £16million since 2010. These savings have been achieved while safeguarding frontline services provided by the Council.

“We need to build on our success and continue to drive down costs. We need to focus on how we will successfully deliver our ambitious Business Plan, while supporting the local economy,”

“We are driving forward on all fronts, from the proposed merger with Waveney District Council through to moving to new, more economical offices in Melton at no cost to the tax payer.

“There are financial challenges ahead, but we are confident we can deliver quality services, while continuing to make efficiency savings and investing in the future.”

Suffolk Coastal District Council has an annual budget of about £12 million. About £7.7million of this comes from Council Tax. Although Suffolk Coastal collects the Council Tax (on behalf of Suffolk Coastal, the County Council, Police and Town/Parish Councils), only about 10p in the pound goes towards providing our district council services.

We are also facing a steep reduction in central Government grants. Grant income from central Government has dropped from £7.4million in 2010/11 to £600,000 in 2017/18 – and is projected to fall even further in the future.

Because the district’s economy is so strong, the Council has benefited from what is called ‘incentivised income’, through New Homes Bonus and business rate retention, although there is still a projected budget gap of £2.1 million in 2018/19.

Rather than make cuts to services, Suffolk Coastal is committed to reducing its dependence on central Government grants by becoming more financially self-sufficient, through reduced spending and becoming more business-like in order to generate the income we need to make up this shortfall.

### **Joint response re Sizewell.**

We have also provided our response to Phase Two of the consultation on the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station. It is fair to say, we have been disappointed with the amount of information EDF Energy have provided. Although we do support the project in principle, we cannot give it our full support without more detailed information. The onus is now on EDF Energy to provide more information about the project, and to demonstrate it has listened to our feedback (and the responses from all our communities)

### **Planning documents given the go-ahead**

Suffolk Coastal's Full Council formally agreed to adopt the recently approved planning documents which set out site allocations for new homes in the district over the next 10 years.

The Site Allocations and Area Specific Policies Development Plan Document and the Felixstowe Peninsula Area Action Plan were considered by the Planning Inspectorate and found to be "sound" with the Inspector's report being received by the Council on 16 January 2017.

In August and September 2016, the public examination into the documents took place and identified a series of Main Modifications which were then subject to a period of public consultation. The Council has included all the Main Modifications as required by the Inspector within the documents that have been formally adopted as part of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan.

The documents will together establish and agree the most suitable land to meet the forecast demand for housing in the district as well as considering the requirements for employment land, town centres, open spaces, infrastructure and other land use planning issues as the Council seeks to implement the Core Strategy.

The documents will now become part of Suffolk Coastal's Local Plan alongside the Council's Core Strategy which was adopted in July 2013.

### **Improving our leisure facilities - Leisure Centres set for transformation**

Suffolk Coastal has announced ambitious plans to invest in its leisure centres.

The work is part of the council's commitment to improve its leisure centre offer and to encourage more people to become more active.

One of Suffolk Coastal's 10 priorities in its Business Plan focuses on the need to provide high-quality, modern leisure centres that the whole community can enjoy, with state-of-the-art equipment, that come at no additional cost to the tax payer.

The work builds on the progress made by the Leisure Strategy formed in 2014, which sets out how improvements to the leisure provision will be made across the district, over the next 10 years.

A five year programme is now being launched, with Deben Leisure Centre as the first to be upgraded, followed by Leiston and then Felixstowe. While the timetable of works is still being finalised, it is expected that refurbishments will start at Deben Leisure Centre in 2017, with the other centres following in subsequent years. Suffolk Coastal is working closely with its operational leisure partners, Places for People Leisure, to ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum and existing users receive regular communications and updates.

When our leisure centres were first built, they gave our communities a great sense of pride, such as Deben Pool which couldn't have been built without the support and hard work of local groups and residents. However, our leisure centres are now aging and need updating to today's and future standards so that they have the best facilities and become the destinations of choice for our residents. We want to increase the number of people using our leisure facilities and boost overall numbers of people taking part in health and well-being activities as part of our commitment to getting more people fit and active.

### **Implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement in East Suffolk.**

We had a key decision to make on whether we should take over responsibility for parking enforcement. Suffolk is one of the few counties in England where district councils do not have this responsibility, and parking enforcement is still carried out by the police.

The lack of enforcement action is seen in communities across the district, with mounting discontent over 'unpoliced' illegal parking – in particular at pinch points around schools. There are significant safety issues associated with this and, under current arrangements, District Councils are powerless to enforce a solution. CPE would provide those powers. The law permits the responsibility for parking enforcement to be transferred from the police to local authorities and income from tickets stays with the authority, potentially enabling self-funding.

This proposal includes a range of options such as on-street pay and display or the development of new car parking facilities, and putting in place a very streamlined enforcement operation, fully integrated with our current off street parking enforcement service. There is a lot of work to be completed to implement this and we urge you to continue to report items to the police.

### **Funding revitalising the Suffolk Coast**

Suffolk Coastal are celebrating the accomplishments achieved through the Coastal Communities Fund Programme as the team prepare to launch another project this week.

The Council received £490,000 in funding from the programme launched in 2012, which was developed to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs in coastal communities.

A wide range of projects have so far been supported to encourage more people of all ages to visit our coastline.

For kids, a new children's viewing sculpture became an iconic part of Snape Maltings last summer. The sculpture called Myriad created by artist David Rickard and architect Germano Di Chello, was created following a competition in 2016 and gives visitors a different way of looking at the landscape. After a successful summer, the sculpture is set to be moved to a new location.

A year long series of events for children, including a Children's Film Festival, was also established across independent cinemas in east Suffolk by Aldeburgh Cinema's Audience Development Project. The group have been busy organising screenings of acclaimed films as well as running creative work shops for children of all ages to get involved in. During the summer, there were 79 screenings of classic and new family films in Aldeburgh, Halesworth and Ipswich, reaching a total 4,450 people.

Home grown and locally produced food and drink is also helping to bring more people to the Suffolk coast. The development project led by young people through the Young Producers Group, aims to support members and new start-ups, sharing knowledge and experience and promoting new businesses in the area. The group have now held the first Suffolk Young Producers Food Fair and link to the Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival.

Work is now also taking place to develop an interactive food trail web platform, celebrating the best of the Suffolk coast to encourage visitors to explore undiscovered parts of east Suffolk. The map will enable people to create their own trail of places to visit and enjoy across the county.

A new volunteer tourism project run by Wild Days Conservation Holidays has been established and aims to link volunteering with holidaying opportunities along the Suffolk coast. Supported by Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), three holidays have now taken place in Dunwich, Orford and Walberswick and four more are planned for this year. The development of these holidays is part of a wider 'Volunteer Tourism' project to help both local volunteers and visitors to pass on their passion for the Suffolk coast.

This also links to the Suffolk Coast Greeters project to form the Volunteer Tourism Network which recruits volunteers to welcome visitors to the area who will share what they love, what they know and their personal experiences of the area. All these projects are brought together to promote the area as a visitor destination by the Suffolk Coast website. Launched in April 2015 by the The Suffolk Coast Ltd Destination Management Organisation (DMO) and enhanced thanks to the funding received, the website showcases

what the area has to offer to visitors and tourists with high profile PR campaigns, increased social media coverage as well as connecting and boosting the profile of a string of local businesses.

Walking is becoming a major draw for people visiting the Suffolk Coast leading to investment in the creation of four new walks and improved route marking to enable easier access to some of the coast's best loved areas. New walking guides have also been developed for the four paths in Aldeburgh & Thorpeness, Rendlesham & Staverton, Sutton & Hollesley Heaths and Walberswick to enable people to navigate the routes easily and safely.

The Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team are launching the newly renovated coast path in Walberswick on Friday 24 February, along with the collection of Outstanding Landscapes walks guides to link the best walks in the area. The team hope the improved path will encourage more visitors and residents to explore and discover more of the Suffolk Coast.

### **Launched the Exemplar Grant programme**

Suffolk Coastal District Council announced the launch of a new grant programme in October.

The Enabling Communities Exemplar Programme looks to assist community initiatives with grant funding to deliver new 'flagship' projects that will have a significant impact on communities and tackle need in a sustainable way. Voluntary and community organisations can apply for grant assistance between £1,000 and £10,000 to help a specific project or activity across our communities at a ward or across multiple wards that need more funding than is available through the Enabling Communities Budgets.

To be eligible for funding, the project must be supported by the relevant Ward Councillor or the relevant Cabinet Member(s). The Exemplar Programme has no set deadlines, so you can apply at any time and a decision will be made within 8 weeks of Council Officers receiving your complete application.

There has been £132,000 of funding set aside to fund projects through this programme, which can be spent on costs to fund a new community project or help fund new community capital projects, please check grant criteria before applying.

The fund has been designed to be accessible, responsive to community need and more aligned with the Enabling Communities Budgets and contribute towards Council's Enabling Communities Strategy and Business Plan.

Please get in touch: email [grants@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:grants@eastsoffolk.gov.uk) or call 01394 444721.

The Enabling Communities Budget is our other grant which continues to be very successful. Each Ward Councillor will have £6,500 to spend directly on new projects or community groups in their ward, as they see appropriate. If you are interested please contact your local Ward Councillor for more information on ECB's or the exemplar grants.

### **Held another successful Annual Forum**

The East Suffolk Partnership's (ESP) annual Forum celebrated its biggest Forum to date in November and the theme was 'the future of east Suffolk' which attracted a wide variety of delegates from local businesses, Town and Parish councils, voluntary organisations, health services, the police, local councils, and education. The event focussed on providing a 'time out' from our continually changing world to look towards the future of east Suffolk and posed to delegates how to take advantage of the emerging opportunities and challenges.

The aim of the conference is to help build better partnership working in east Suffolk, allowing the delegates the opportunity to meet members of the East Suffolk Partnership Board and hear about progress in developing a collaborative approach to working across east Suffolk. Once again, the events will be supported by Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils and the East of England LGA.

### **Made Car Park improvements**

Work to Melton Riverside Car Park next to Melton Railway Station started in November and completed in January where we created 20 extra car parking spaces. The work completed by Kier Construction also

involved doing a general clean-up of the picnic area, re-dressing the surface, increasing the total number of parking spaces to 50.

The Council hope the improved car park will provide better access for regular users of the Country Park and extra parking for those using the nearby facilities at the station and new district council offices, providing additional public parking at times of peak demand such as major planning meetings.

Work is only weeks away from being completed at Thorpe Road car park in Aldeburgh where the work involves improving the drainage of the site and surface of the car park.

### **Reminded you to continue to test your smoke alarm**

Residents in east Suffolk are being urged to test their smoke alarms today and then once per month.

According to recent research, only 28% of all UK households who own a smoke alarm test it on a regular basis. Having a working smoke alarm in your home gives you valuable time to get out of your home in the event of a fire. There were 229 fire-related deaths in the home last year and it is hoped that encouraging people to test their smoke alarms now and then monthly could prevent more deaths.

To help keep you and your loved ones safe:

- Test your smoke alarm(s) today.
- Make sure you fit smoke alarms on each level of your home and test them monthly – even if they're wired into the mains.
- Never remove the battery in your smoke alarm unless you are replacing it.
- Plan and practise an escape route and make sure everyone in your home knows the plan.
- If you know of friends, family or neighbours who are unable to test their smoke alarms themselves, test it for them.

If you're a private landlord, you must fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the property you rent out. You must also fit a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a solid fuel burner (eg a wood or coal-burning fireplace).

- You can be fined up to £5,000 if you fail to fit the required alarms.
- You must test every alarm at the start of a new tenancy.
- You can download the fire safety regulations for landlords here.

If you are a tenant in rented accommodation, your landlord is responsible for ensuring that there are working smoke alarms on every level of your home at the start of your tenancy. However, you are responsible for testing your alarms monthly and replacing the batteries where necessary.

**In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and call 999.**

Visit [www.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.gov.uk/firekills) for more information.

### **New 'one stop shop' officially opened at Woodbridge Library**

The new shared customer services facility in Woodbridge Library was officially opened today in May and allows us to provide better customer services to local people by dealing with more things at the first point of contact. By creating this 'one stop shop' for Suffolk Coastal services at Woodbridge Library our Customer Services Team can deal with a wide range of enquiries, including council tax, housing benefits, tourism and much more.

People can also be able to make appointments to see staff from other Council services, such as Planning.

Customers also benefit from services that the library provides including printing services, internet access and free WiFi.

### **Encouraging people to Switch your Council Tax to Direct Debit.**

As part of a national campaign, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils are encouraging as many people as possible to pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit.

Direct Debit is the most convenient way to spread the cost across the year and gives you peace of mind that your bills will be paid on time, every time, with no missed payments. It really is the perfect way to stay in control of your bills.

Set up a Direct Debit with your bank and payments will be made automatically, meaning you will never forget to make that vital payment. But don't worry, you will stay in control as a Direct Debit can be cancelled at any time. What's more, everything is protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee – so you can be confident that you will get a full refund from your bank in the unlikely event that an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit. It also helps councils protect public money by ensuring bills are paid on time and it reduces the time it takes for us to deal with payments which frees up resources for other vital services. To sign up, call our Customer Services team on 01394 444339 (Suffolk Coastal)

### **Brought in New powers to tackle fly-tipping**

The Suffolk Waste Partnership continues to warn anyone thinking of dumping waste in the county that new powers came into force on 9<sup>th</sup> May that allow local authorities to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to any person found to have fly-tipped.

**Any person issued one of the new Fixed Penalty Notices for fly-tipping would then have 14 days to comply by paying £200, which is reduced to £120 if paid within 10 days, though individual local authorities will have the power to fix the level of the penalty at up to £400.**

Failure to comply with the notice may result in prosecution proceedings, which in the event of a conviction by a Magistrates Court can result in a maximum fine of £50,000 and / or a prison sentence of 6 months being imposed, with Crown Courts able to impose even steeper penalties of up to 5 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

Householders also have a legal duty of care to ensure that their waste does not end up being fly-tipped and can be prosecuted and fined up to £5,000 if convicted by a Court for failing to fulfil this duty. So to stay safe, always carry out the following SCRAP checks when arranging for your rubbish to be removed by anyone other than your local district or borough council:

- Suspect - Beware of rogue waste carriers – reputable companies do not usually make direct approaches. If in any doubt as to whether someone is a legitimate waste carrier, do not allow them to take your waste.
- Check - Ask for their waste carrier registration details. You can verify them by visiting the online register at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers> or by calling 03708 506 506. Note down the registration number of the vehicle used to take your waste away.
- Refuse – Any unsolicited offers to have any rubbish taken away. Always carry out your own research and choose who you wish to approach.
- Ask questions - Always ask what exactly is going to happen to your rubbish and seek evidence that it is going to be disposed of appropriately. A legitimate, professional waste carrier who wants your business should not object to being asked reasonable questions.
- Paperwork - Make sure you get a proper receipt containing the written information for your waste. This should include what has been removed and where it will be going. Make sure the Company or tradesman's details are included.

If you see someone dumping rubbish, please report it to your local council along with any details that might help us to identify and trace those responsible, including the registration of any vehicle involved: 01394 444000

### **A county first – Created a digital map created for east Suffolk**

Work to create a digital map showing free PC and Wi-Fi locations in east Suffolk has now been completed – the first of its type in the County!

The map to help our customers find their nearest computer location has been created by Customer Services.

Points on the map include children's centres, libraries, Citizens Advice Bureaus and Jobcentres. Each icon provides detail on the level of service offered at each location such as free Wi-Fi and computer access as well as access to IT training and support.

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/digital-map-for-east-suffolk/>

### **Suffolk Coastal launched a new noise service**

As the weather starts to improve Suffolk Coastal's Environmental Protection Team is asking its local residents to spare a thought for their neighbours.

Around 40% of the population said that noise affects their quality of life with noise nuisance from pubs, clubs, barking dogs and loud music from neighbours proven to cause stress, loss of sleep and high blood pressure.

The Environmental Protection Team at Suffolk Coastal deals with around 500 complaints of noise nuisance each year, most of which occur during the summer months.

Officers can be contacted through Suffolk Coastal's weekend evening hotline on: 01502 527132. Noise complaints can also be reported during the normal working day by telephoning: 01502 562111.

### **Food Hygiene - Remember to ask 'where's the sticker?'**

We are pleased that many food businesses across east Suffolk have been awarded the highest possible rating for food hygiene, however, we are reminding you to check the food hygiene rating sticker when choosing where to eat out.

The Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) helps people make an informed choice about where to eat by highlighting restaurants, pubs and cafes with excellent food hygiene. Food businesses can display their black and green FHRS sticker advertising their current food safety rating. This gives an immediate insight into the kitchen and shows how seriously the business takes food hygiene.

All food businesses are checked by the Council's Food and Safety Team to ensure they are compliant with food hygiene law and so if a business is not displaying a FHRS sticker, it might be they have something to hide! Food businesses with poor food hygiene standards will have a rating of 0 (urgent improvement necessary), 1 (major improvement necessary) or 2 (improvement necessary).

People are encouraged to take food hygiene seriously when choosing where to eat and so if the FHRS sticker is not visible, always ask 'where's the sticker?' You can also check the rating of over 440,000 food businesses online at [ratings.food.gov.uk](http://ratings.food.gov.uk).

All food businesses are capable of achieving the top FHRS rating of 5 (very good) and having a top rating can attract more customers. Food establishment owners should make sure their FHRS sticker is proudly on display on the door, the menu and in any advertising.

### ***Food safety and hygiene training***

To help businesses ensure that employees are trained, Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils jointly run a nationally recognised one-day training course - the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering. This qualification replaces the former Foundation and Basic courses.

This course is intended for anyone working in a catering or hospitality setting where food is prepared, cooked and served. Typical environments may include pubs, hotels, restaurants, contract catering, fast-food outlets, hospitals, care and nursing homes, schools, prisons and the armed forces.

The next dates for the CIEH Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering course are:

- 29 March at Riverside, Lowestoft
- 5 April at East Suffolk House, Melton
- 18 May at Riverside, Lowestoft
- 8 June at East Suffolk House, Melton

Anyone booking and paying for their course online will receive a 10% discount on the booking fee.

### **Landlords required to check 'right to rent'**



As of last year private landlords were required to check whether new tenants have the 'Right to Rent'.

Right to Rent requires all private landlords, including anyone sub-letting or taking in lodgers, to carry out quick and simple checks on all new tenants to make sure they have the right to rent property in the country. Landlords need to check, and take copies of, identity documents for all new tenants. A wide range of documents can be used for the checks and the Government has worked closely with housing and homelessness charities to design a document list which can accommodate different individual circumstances. This includes where people do not have traditional identity documents such as a passport.

For more information about making the checks go to [www.gov.uk/righttorentchecks](http://www.gov.uk/righttorentchecks).

### **Universal Credit**

A new, single, benefit that incorporates Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. It was introduced at Lowestoft and Beccles Jobcentres in March 2015, however this initial phase of the roll out contained several 'gateway conditions' and only applied to single people that were 'non householders' (did not own a home or have a mortgage) and would have previously applied for Jobseekers Allowance. For general information on the changes go to: <https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>.

### **Power cuts - Don't be left in the dark**

There's a new number to call if you have a power cut.

When the power goes out, it can leave people feeling unsure about what to do. Research by Energy Networks Association found that 72% of people don't know who to contact during a power cut, with many wrongly thinking they should call the electricity supplier they pay their bill to.

105 aims to solve this problem, providing you with an easy-to-remember number that will put you through to your local electricity network operator - the company that manages the cables, wires and substations that bring electricity into local homes and businesses. 105 is a free service for people in England, Scotland and Wales, and you can call the number from most landlines and mobile phones. It doesn't matter who you choose to buy your electricity from - anyone can call 105.

You can also call 105 if you spot damage to electricity power lines and substations that could put you, or someone else, in danger. If there's a serious immediate risk, call the emergency services too. To find out more, visit [powercut105.com](http://powercut105.com).

### **Reminder to take care by the Coast & Flood warnings**

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils are advising people to take extra care by the coast and to take extra care if they are out on the seafront, as the storms have made parts of the coastline unstable. To keep up to date with any forecasts and flood warnings <https://www.gov.uk/browse/environment-countryside/flooding-extreme-weather>

Flood warning information, as well as guidance about preparing for floods, can be obtained from the Environment Agency website.

When exceptionally heavy rain is forecast, the Met Office will publish local weather warnings.

If you think you have been targeted by a scam, or know someone who has, then call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or report it [online](#). Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and internet crime.

### **More info..**

#### **Love East Suffolk' returns for spring**

The 'Love East Suffolk' litter pick scheme is back for 2017 to encourage, enable and reward people to show some love for the environment we live in.

Last year the incentive based community litter pick scheme helped clean up over 7.6 tonnes of waste across Suffolk Coastal and Waveney whilst also giving groups funding to spend in their community.

In 2017 both Councils hope to encourage even more groups to take part – beating the 2,035 people who got involved during 2016.

To incentivise more groups of volunteers to help litter pick in East Suffolk, the Love East Suffolk scheme offers a £20 payment to all groups who register their litter pick to take place between 1 March to 31 May 2017.

All registered groups who carry out their pick during this period will also be entered into a prize draw, with prizes of £200 awarded to winning groups in each of five 'neighbourhood areas' in Suffolk Coastal and in each of four 'neighbourhood areas' in Waveney with funding once again provided by Norse.

The scheme ties in with the Great British Spring Clean taking place 3 – 5 March which aims to bring together people from across the country to clean up litter that blights our towns, villages, countryside and coastline.

Both Suffolk Coastal Norse and Waveney Norse can provide volunteers with equipment including sacks, disposable gloves, to groups by booking online and will also arrange for gathered litter to be collected. Litter pick sticks, bag hoops, and green vests can also be loaned out, subject to availability. (book online: <https://eastssuffolk.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=ow54YQdcfJw&HideToolbar=1>) more details on our website.

*Further information:*

All groups participating between 1 March and 31 May 2017 will receive £20 for their nominated community fund or charity, and will be entered into a £200 grand prize draw

To be eligible, all registered groups must submit a photo of their event and permit use of the photo for our publicity purposes.

All cash awards would be payable to a recognised charity or community group chosen by that team of volunteers.

**Felixstowe to celebrate our Armed Forces**

A celebratory event to show appreciation of the work of the Armed Forces is to be held in Felixstowe this year.

2017 marks the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dutch attack on Landguard Fort in Felixstowe and to mark the occasion, and to recognise the huge contribution made by our servicemen and women from the past until the present day, Felixstowe has been chosen as the venue for Suffolk Armed Forces weekend.

A weekend of action-packed entertainment is planned for Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 June 2017 and plans to be a high profile, one off free event for all age groups.

There will be a unique package of entertainment including music from choirs and military bands to an evening of pop and rock, military displays, food stalls, children's activities and fireworks, and some thrilling battle re-enactments between the Dutch and English with cannon, muskets and swords. All this by Felixstowe's fantastic seaside with all that has to offer as well!

We're very excited about hosting Suffolk Armed Forces Day in Felixstowe. We hope the weekend will raise public awareness of the contribution made to our country by those who serve and have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces as not many people, locally or nationally know that Felixstowe played an important role in the history of our nation. We're proud to be bringing together the community, armed forces personnel, their families and service veterans for this celebratory weekend that is set to be the biggest Armed Forces event in the region. This important event puts Felixstowe on centre stage and promises to bring history to life for all the family and is a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase what we have to offer.

The event is being organised in partnership by organisations including the Suffolk Armed Forces Covenant Group, the Landguard Fort Trust, Royal Marines Association and Royal British Legion, with assistance from local authorities and military units.

To make this an event we can all be proud of we need the support of businesses, organisations and individuals who understand and value our armed forces, our community and our history.

If you would like to talk more about how you could be involved, please feel free to give our project officer Paul Grant a ring on 07850 427928, or email: paul.grant@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

### **Volunteers needed to help Suffolk get composting**

Suffolk Master Composters are inviting green-minded enthusiasts to join their ranks and master the art of composting this spring time.

New volunteers will receive expert training from the Suffolk Waste Partnership and Garden Organic to enable them to act as composting ambassadors – encouraging the public to compost through promotional talks, events and demonstrations.

The next two-day Suffolk Master Composter foundation course takes place in March. Those who attend do have a choice of dates for attending day two.

All sessions will take place at Stowmarket Community Centre, Hillside, Stowmarket. Day one takes place on Saturday 18 March and day two is either on Sunday 19 March or Tuesday 21 March.

Composting resources and ongoing support will also be provided throughout the volunteers' involvement. In return, volunteers are asked to commit a minimum of 30 hours to the scheme – promoting the composting message through a wide range of methods including talks to local organisations, visits to schools, writing articles and running information stalls at public events.

No experience is required to join the scheme – all that is needed is an interest in composting and a desire to support your local community.

If you are interested in attending please contact Craig Renton, Waste Advisor on 01473 264795 or email mastercomposters@suffolk.gov.uk

### **Scam warning to residents**

Unfortunately we have reported about scams and frauds a lot over the year and we are continuing all residents to remain vigilant following reports of possible scam attempts.

If you think you have been targeted by a scam, or know someone who has, then call Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040** or report it online. Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and internet crime.

### **Help us keep standards up - closing date 10.03.17**

Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Councils take pride in the quality of service its elected Members provide.

However, we need to make sure there is a rigorous, independent procedure in place to investigate any complaints against our Councillors. We want to appoint a new 'independent person' to help maintain the high standard of conduct of local councillors across both councils.

If you have an independent mind and a strong sense of what is right or wrong, this could be the role for you. The role involves helping deal with any complaints about councillors' conduct, as well as providing advice to any councillors who have been complained about. If you are fair, pragmatic and committed to high standards of behaviour, we'd like to hear from you.

To ensure the independence of the role, you cannot be appointed if you are currently a councillor, co-opted member or officer of that council, or have been within the last five years. Neither can you be a relative or close friend of such a person. If you are interested we would encourage you to apply online.

<https://www.suffolkjobsdirect.org/administration-business-support-customer-service-independent-person/43965.job>

The successful applicant will be given training and will also be paid a nominal sum (of £300 a year, plus £50 with expenses for each complaint they investigate). It is estimated that the time commitment would be about three hours a month. The closing date for applications is Friday, 10 March 2017, with interviews scheduled to be held on Thursday, 23 March 2017

Best Wishes

TJ & Maureen