



District Councillors Report to Little Bealings Parish Meeting and Parish Council Meeting

For March 2026

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

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Westerfield Quarry (SCC/0093/25SC)

We are still awaiting a decision. A number of clarification requests have been sent to the applicants. The application will not now be considered in March. The application will not be considered by Suffolk County Council's Development & Regulation Committee before the County Council elections on 7th May. This means the previously expected March committee date will not happen. Under election rules, there is a six-week "moratorium period" before local elections (beginning 27th March this year). During this time, major decisions cannot be made by the current administration. As a result, the application cannot be determined before the election. It is possible the application could be heard at the 21st July committee meeting, but that decision will rest with the new administration after the election

Devolution

As I expect all of you are now aware the plan to postpone the County Council elections has now been reversed and these will take place in May 2026. That will have a knock-on effect for the District Elections. The new Local (District) Councils will be in place from May 2028. The Mayoral Election should take place in 2028. Of course anything could change.

Planning.

Planning is undergoing some major changes from this government with the aim of speeding up the delivery of new homes. East Suffolk has had their built homes figure increased from 905 to 1660. You have probably seen the adverts for building land and indeed the large roadside billboards asking for land.

Planning Enforcement

I am often asked why enforcement doesn't happen when an obvious deliberate flouting of the rules has occurred. Enforcement has to firstly investigate and secondly abide by very strict



rules even if the perpetrator does not. Also, the person to whom the enforcement team are taking action has the right of appeal at every stage. At East Suffolk there are some enforcement actions taking 6-10 years to complete.

Waste and Recycling

2026 will see the introduction of a new bin collection system. This area should start receiving the new style bins at the end of next month. (March)

The details can be viewed on the East Suffolk Website. Just enter **Better Recycling**.

Council secures First Light Festival for future

The future of Lowestoft's First Light Festival has been secured, following East Suffolk Council agreeing to funding for the next three years.

Communities encouraged to choose sustainable transport with new grant scheme.

East Suffolk Council is inviting organisations to apply for funding towards cycle parking in their local community. The Community Cycle Parking Fund is offering grants of up to £1,000 for the purchase and installation of new or upgraded cycle parking facilities.

Both town and parish councils, as well as community groups that work alongside them, can apply for the funding. Applications are now open for the grant fund. There is no deadline and applications will be considered on a rolling, first come first served basis until all funding has been allocated. Application guidance: <https://eastsuffolk.co/cycle-parking-fund-guidance>

Application form: <https://eastsuffolk.co/cycle-parking-fund-application>

If you are considering making an application and have any questions or are unsure if this grant scheme is appropriate for your project, please.

contact: climate.sustainability@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

Boot Street Bridge

Damage was caused to Boot Street Bridge a couple of weeks ago by two vehicles not giving way. The damage was extensive and has caused the bridge to be closed for the time being. Diversions are in place with some signage. However, since the collision both the County Councillor and myself have been involved in liaising with Highways in order to gain information on the planned repair and reopening. Signage is one area that requires improvement now. To that end I moved one of the Diversion signs that had been placed opposite the incorrect spur at the Boot Street end of Holly Lane. The incorrect placing had caused a lot of confusion and probably unnecessary vehicular movement down Holly Lane. However, Elaine can give you the latest on Highways proposals.



Message from County Cllr Elaine Bryce regarding Boot Street Bridge and Diversions

Following the recent damage caused to the historic bridge on Boot Street, Great Bealings, I have been in regular contact with Suffolk Highways to raise the concerns of local residents, the Parish Council and road users from neighbouring villages.

As a direct result of my interventions and conversations with Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Highways, I want to provide the following update.

"This closure is currently in place for safety purposes, following the bridge being struck and damaged earlier this month.

Suffolk County Council remains committed to reopening the bridge as soon as possible and are currently in the process of arranging for temporary concrete barriers to be installed on site to ensure safety and to facilitate this.

Whilst we do not have a date scheduled for these works yet, due to awaiting arrival of materials, we are hopeful that the bridge will be able to reopen in a couple of weeks.

In the meantime, we have escalated feedback from residents regarding a single-lane road being used as a shortcut, and the potential damage which this is causing to verges and hedges, to the Area Manager for the works. He has subsequently contacted our traffic management crew to request that additional signage advising of a no through route and urging highways users to follow the signed diversion route is installed in the area.

We will also explore additional measures to attempt to reduce traffic volumes on the smaller single lanes in the vicinity although, unfortunately, Suffolk Highways cannot enforce the use of official diversion routes."

Whilst the county council or Suffolk Highways cannot mitigate for drivers attempting to choose their own diversion routes, I am hopeful that these interventions will be helpful and please be assured that I shall continue to monitor progress with this important piece of work. I hope this reassures you that I am on the case, I am monitoring this and if I can help with anything more, please just let me know.

Other News from the last few months

Council joins call to end gambling advertising

East Suffolk Council has joined a coalition of organisations calling for a nationwide end to gambling advertising.

As part of its commitment to promoting wellbeing and protecting vulnerable people, the Council has joined nine other local authorities from across the country to become part of the Coalition to End Gambling Ads (CEGA).



East Suffolk Council also joins leading public health bodies, including the Royal Society for Public Health, the Association of Directors of Public Health, and the Faculty of Public Health, as members of the CEGA.

The campaign aims to reduce exposure to the potentially harmful consequences of gambling by calling on the Government to restrict advertising, promotions and sponsorship.

Potholes etc

Potholes and damage to verges can be reported to Suffolk County Council Highways Department. The easiest way is on the [Highways Reporting tool](https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/). <https://highwaysreporting.suffolk.gov.uk/>, this allows you to report problems and to include photographs, if you have them. Highways will issue you with a problem report number and advise you of the action they intend to take. Alternatively, you can telephone the Customer Service Centre on 0345 606 6067.

Access Community Trust (Closure)

East Suffolk Council is leading a coordinated, multi-agency response to this devastating news, involving its Housing, Legal, Finance and Procurement teams, alongside key external partners. Access Community Trust currently provides 87 bed spaces for homeless and rough sleeper services across East Suffolk. We are deeply concerned that all Access delivered services including Bridge View Day Centre, Sam's Café and Employment Services are at risk of immediate closure, however we have made significant progress regarding beds.

Our priority is to ensure that nobody is left without a safe place to stay or access to essential support services. Therefore, we have activated an Emergency Response Plan to ensure that all vulnerable residents currently supported by Access Community Trust continue to receive safe and appropriate accommodation.

Through working in partnership with recognised providers during the past 48 hours, we have been able to ensure 75 of the bed spaces will be retained and that residents will be able to remain, with an alternative, trusted support service. We have also agreed a short-term solution to the remaining 12 beds, meaning that no-one will be asked to leave their home today.

We also recognise that Access is a significant local employer, with more than 200 staff and volunteers, many of whom have themselves experienced similar issues. We are preparing to support staff wherever possible, and work is under way with partners to provide urgent advice and assistance to staff who may face sudden financial uncertainty due to unpaid wages or potential redundancies.

Our overarching aim is to minimise hardship for everyone affected by this and we are entirely committed to safeguarding residents, supporting staff and maintaining essential services during this challenging period.



Anti social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour can affect anyone at any time and can range from annoying other people which causes harassment, alarm, or distress. If your report is regarding any of the following issues you can report it.. This list is not exhaustive.

- Nuisance vehicles (not parking)
- Neighbour nuisance/disputes
- Harassment of residents
- Intimidation
- Racial abuse
- Verbal abuse
- Noise and/or abusive behaviour

A special reporting form is available on the ESC website under “Community Safety and Emergencies” or contact the Customer services 0333 016 2000

New fund announced to support East Suffolk’s smallest communities

East Suffolk Council has announced a new £1.5m programme that’s set to revitalise the district’s towns, village and rural communities.

Announced on Thursday 26 February at the Town Councils’ Conference held at High Lodge at Hinton, Saxmundham, the Thriving Places fund is planned to deliver projects that will strengthen the long-term resilience and sustainability of the district’s smallest communities. Launching in April 2026, the fund that will run for two years will be open to town and parish councils, CICs and social enterprises, charities and not-for-profit organisations and community groups to upgrade facilities, help improve public spaces and make a difference to the lives of local people.

Contributing to the ambitions of East Suffolk Council’s strategic plan, the fund supports its priorities of Environmental Impact, Sustainable Housing, Tackling Inequalities and a Thriving Economy by improving local infrastructure, enhancing community capacity and enabling inclusive participation.

Communities can apply for grants of up to £50,000 to support local projects which aim to reduce inequalities in the area, help people to adapt to changes, help to protect important local assets like buildings or spaces, improve access to services, skills, wellbeing activities and local facilities and support long-term local growth.

Capital grants of between £10,00 and £50,000 will be available for purchasing or improving physical assets, while revenue grants between £5,000 and £25,000 can be utilised to cover project-specific activities and operational costs. Up to 60% of project costs will be covered by the new grants and up to 80% for successful applications from community and not-for-profit



organisations. Each year communities can apply within four funding rounds, with the final decision made by a grant panel consisting of senior East Suffolk councillors and officers.

The fund is open to all areas of the district apart from the town council areas of Felixstowe and Lowestoft due to the significant Council and external funding both towns continue to benefit from such as the £20m in Pride of Place funding that's being awarded from central Government.

Further details on the funding will be available in April.