

## County Councillor Report



### Parish Councils, August 2024

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**Bus Service Changes** – Suffolk County Council officers have been working with Simmonds’ new owner and have agreed interim financial support to enable bus services between Diss and BSE to continue with a few minor alterations until December 31<sup>st</sup> this year. This includes an early morning bus suitable for schools and college and a return in the afternoon. An early version timetable for the new Route 73 has been provided to the Parish Council; please note that all buses will serve West Suffolk College, although not shown in the current version this will be in the final public timetables.

The support of SCC is much appreciated in working to resolve a difficult contractual situation. SCC will work with parishes over the next few weeks to see how a more formal community led bid can be made to the Bus Service Improvement Funds that have been awarded to the County Council.

**Sunnica Solar Farm Approval** - Suffolk County Council has expressed its extreme disappointment that a huge solar farm has been approved in West Suffolk. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband MP, has announced that approval had been granted for the Development Consent Order, as proposed by Sunnica. The project will see 2,792 acres of solar panels and battery storage installed in West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Additional applications for major solar arrays are anticipated.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s Deputy Cabinet Member for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, said: *“The approval of this solar farm is a massive blow to local communities, agriculture, nature and our landscape in the west of Suffolk. “I am frankly shocked that the poorest infrastructure application that I have ever dealt with, has now been approved - we highlighted numerous deficiencies in the submission which have been ignored.”*

**Carbon Charter Awards** - Suffolk County Council’s annual Carbon Charter event, hosted at the Coddham Centre on 11 July 2024, honoured businesses from Suffolk and Norfolk for their achievements in environmental sustainability.

More than 100 delegates from local businesses shared their experiences of reducing their environmental impact, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Volvo Trucks UK were guest speakers. The Carbon Charter was set up in 2010 by Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency. Since then, over 500 businesses have received Carbon Charter awards. Earlier this year, the Carbon Charter itself received the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) award for Delivering Clean Growth in the UK. Refer to [www.carboncharter.org](http://www.carboncharter.org)

**Flood Investigation Report issued for Framlingham** - Suffolk County Council has today published a detailed report into one of the worst-hit communities during Storm Babet. A detailed investigation into the flooding around Framlingham during October 2023 has taken place to understand what

caused these events and recommend what could be done to alleviate flooding here in future. Refer to <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/framlingham-flood-investigation-report-24-07-2024.pdf>

Longer term recommendations emphasise improvements to drainage infrastructure and creating new natural flood management features to reduce catchment flood risk. These longer-term recommendations would require external funding and collaboration with landowners and communities to implement.

**Brecks Fen Edge Project Festival** - Over 50 events, many of which will be free, will celebrate the fifth and final year of The Brecks' Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme this September.

From accessible walks around the River Lark to yoga, from identifying wildlife to outdoor swimming, a huge range of activities for all ages and abilities is planned. The Brecks' Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme began in 2020, following a five year grant of £1.97 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The festival runs from 7 to 22 September 2024, the full programme of events can be found at [www.brecks.org](http://www.brecks.org)

**Fire Safety** - Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is asking everyone to be fire safety aware. Last summer firefighters responded to more than 200 fires in woodland, heaths, farmland, and fields, between July and September. During 2022 there were 500 fires due to extreme temperatures. During hot dry weather, people are encouraged to:

- Avoid barbecues and campfires in public open spaces.
- Ensure that any cigarettes are totally out and disposed of properly.
- Pick up the remove any glass items after a picnic as they can start a fire.
- Report any fires in the countryside immediately by calling 999.

Farmers are also urged to take measures such as storing hay and straw with a break between stacks and away from other buildings, especially those housing livestock or containing fuels and chemicals.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments: [Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk)  
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