

Parish Report – July 2024

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SEND Improvement Plans

Scrutiny Committee met on Thursday 13 June to review the council's priority action plan to improve SEND services. The plan had to be created following the poor Ofsted/CQC inspection report which was published at the end of January. The committee heard about the extra £4.4m funding to recruit more staff, including educational psychologists. There are plans to invest more money in the improvements and this will be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting in July. Among the issues discussed were communication with parents and carers and responses to complaints and the importance of early intervention to support young children with needs as soon as possible.

FURTHER WORK ON A14; I have sent details to all parishes.

VERGE CUTTING; and have sent the programme for verge cutting.

Councils call for more Foster Carers

Suffolk County Council is taking part in a new initiative for fostering under the banner Foster East along with ten other councils in the region. There is an urgent need for foster carers in the East of England, with more than 7,000 vulnerable children already in the care of their local authority, and a further 150 children coming into care every month.

The Foster East initiative is funded by the Department of Education and is a new, collaborative approach to foster carer recruitment and support. Potential foster carers will be supported by local council and via a buddy network. Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children.

Foster East will give people considering fostering the opportunity to speak to an advisor from 8am to 8pm daily, and the chance to talk to an experienced foster carer to find out more about what the role involves and ask any questions. More information can be found on www.fostereast.org.uk

The project will be delivered in Suffolk by Innovation Labs:
<https://innovationlabsgroup.com/>

Eco Month at SCC

During June the council has been celebrating Eco Month to celebrate all the work being done internally and externally to tackle climate change, enhance biodiversity and protect the environment. Events have included a market at Endeavour House, a workshop for staff on energy bills, wildlife walks, litter picks and a guided visit to the Ipswich tidal barrier. Council staff were also coached on how they can make a difference in their jobs to reduce waste and printing and promote sustainability. Suffolk County Council has ambitions to achieve carbon net zero by 2030 and has taken many steps already to achieve this, including switching to a 100% renewable energy tariff, moving to electric vehicles for all staff pool cars, and moving street lights over to LEDs, which are 50% more efficient than traditional street lighting. The council has also reduced its gas use by 38%.

Cold Callers

Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards have asked residents to be vigilant about tradesmen knocking on their doors to offer services, after several examples recently of cold callers persuading people to part with large sums of money for unnecessary or substandard work. The council is recommending that residents only use workmen on the Trusted Trader website: <https://trustedtrader.team/Suffolk/about-us>

Residents can also protect themselves and their neighbours by nominating their area to become a No Cold Calling Zone – there are now more than 200 of these across Suffolk. In order to nominate your road or neighbourhood, visit <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/suffolk-trading-standards/fair-trading/no-cold-calling-zones>

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Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/preparing-for-flooding>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>