

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – JULY 2022

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



• **COUNCIL OBJECTS TO NORWICH TO TILBURY PYLON PROPOSALS**

On June 8th, Suffolk County Council confirmed its intention to object to the proposals for National Grid's East Anglia GREEN pylon run. A new network is needed to deliver electricity between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury, to cope with the increasing amounts of renewable and low carbon electricity being generated around East Anglia. This is National Grid's East Anglia GREEN proposal, which would see many pylons installed across the county, affecting the Suffolk countryside and its communities.

But the council does not support this proposal as it stands. It believes that there are better ways to manage the project, for example involving an undersea network which has not been fully investigated.

The council has been campaigning for government ministers and officials to introduce a more co-ordinated off-shore approach to meet the demands of all the energy projects in the region.

• **NEW FANTAIL INSTALLED ON HISTORIC SUFFOLK WINDMILL**

A historic Suffolk landmark has had a key feature restored in a refit by Suffolk County Council. Buttrum's Mill in Woodbridge has had a new fantail installed which mirrors the long-lost original. The six-bladed fantail automatically turns to ensure the sails always face into the wind, regardless of whether they are turning.

This is important, as if the wind gets behind the sails, the mill is at risk of serious damage. Built in 1836, the windmill worked until 1929 and was preserved by the former East Suffolk County Council under a 100-year lease in 1950. Suffolk County Council is now responsible for the Grade II-listed mill's upkeep. Standing at more than 60 feet it is the tallest surviving mill in Suffolk.

It was built by John Whitmore, a millwright of Wickham Market, for the Trott family, and taken over in 1868 by the Buttrum family which ran it until its closure. The original fantail was lost in the 1940s as the mill fell into disrepair following its closure. In restorations in the 1950s a slightly smaller replacement fantail was made, but this did not matter as the sails and windmill cap no longer turned. In the early 1980s, further restoration work enabled the cap and sails to turn once again, retaining the smaller fantail.

However, it was damaged beyond repair in gales in March 2021 and it was decided to build a new fantail of similar size and appearance to the original.

The new fantail is two feet bigger in diameter than the one it replaces, and the blades are painted dark green as they were in the 1930s. The work cost £14,300 and was carried out by Bill Griffiths of MillBill millwrights in Ipswich, who remembers the mill from living in Woodbridge as a child.

• **SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES AWARDED £6.4M TO 'RECLAIM THE RAIN' AND TACKLE FLOODING**

Norfolk and Suffolk County Council's joint Reclaim the Rain project, which aims to implement innovative and sustainable water management projects, progressed on June 14th. The Norfolk and Suffolk County Council's joint Reclaim the Rain project, which aims to implement innovative and sustainable water management projects progresses as six communities are selected across both counties.

The project team received 37 formal applications from communities keen to be involved in Reclaim the Rain. These applications were carefully considered and whittled down to three communities in Suffolk and three in Norfolk.

The three chosen communities in Suffolk are:

- Boxford – this community displayed a strong interest in sustainable water management and ways in which the community could be more involved with water management.
- Friston – who are exploring innovative ways of resolving long-standing hard-to-resolve flood issues.
- Little Blakenham – they identified some excellent opportunities to work with upstream landowners, allowing them to have a more proactive approach in managing flood water running off their land.

The selection process was based on various factors, including each community's vulnerability to surface water flooding, water resource needs, rurality and the likelihood of attracting funding outside of our project.

In the coming months, Reclaim the Rain will be working closely with these communities to develop projects which maximise the opportunities to manage risks from both flooding and droughts. The overall project objective is to identify new ways of working that can be learnt from and evidenced to inform and influence future policy, approaches to, and investments in how flood risk is managed nationally in the coming years.

Norfolk and Suffolk both face considerable surface water flood risk, while also being the driest region in the UK. The project will aim to store flood water and make it available for use by agriculture, industry, communities, and the environment.

The project will involve both partner organisations and the community in the development of suitable flood water reuse schemes. The schemes will address the community's needs in terms of flood risk and water resource requirements, and could result in provision of:

- Habitat creation and restoration;
- Irrigation reservoir recharge
- Rainwater Capture and Reuse for community, agriculture or business use;
- Retrofitted SuDS;
- Smart Leaky Water Butts
- Rain Gardens and more

I am excited by the announcement of Boxford, Little Blakenham and Friston as Suffolk's chosen communities, and congratulate officers and selected communities across the two counties, in what will no doubt be a fascinating and innovative 6-year programme."

• **SUFFOLK LEADING THE WAY IN UK'S WATER CONSERVATION**

Announced on June 16th, a new scheme based in Felixstowe reuses over 800,000 tonnes of water.

Since its launch in February 2021 a unique scheme to the UK, based in Felixstowe, has saved over 800,000 tonnes of water being lost to the North Sea - and reused it to grow Suffolk crops. Drainage water has traditionally been pumped away to the River Deben and North Sea, damaging saltmarsh along the way. Instead, it is now pumped back inland, conserving the saltmarsh and refilling 14 reservoirs, which six local farms are using to irrigate their crops. Last week (9-10 June 2022) local landowners and national organisations were invited to visit the site, to hear first-hand from the scheme's operators, Felixstowe Hydrocycle, and from farmers who are benefitting from the scheme.

Organised by Suffolk County Council, working with the Environment Agency and University of East Anglia as key partners of the project, the event aimed to inspire more schemes to be trialled around Suffolk, the UK and Europe.

The Felixstowe scheme is one of only four being trialled across Europe, overseen by FRESH4Cs, a cooperation project between 10 UK, Belgian and Dutch partners. FRESH4Cs has received funding from the Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

The drainage water is sourced from the Kingsfleet near Felixstowe and travels along a 12km pipeline to local farms where it is stored in existing reservoirs ready for irrigation. The pipeline route has been carefully plotted to avoid areas of conservation and archaeological sites.

• **EXTRA FUNDING AGREED BY CABINET TO FUND NEW SEND PLACES**

Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project agreed by Cabinet. Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has today agreed an additional £15.9million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools.

Plans for new SEND places under phase 3 will come before Cabinet from September. The newly-approved £15.9million includes £6million to complete phase 2, £4.6million to cover overspend and a grant from the Department for Education of £5.3million. The special schools include Castle EAST, a new communication and interaction school in north Suffolk; a new social, emotional and mental health school in west Suffolk named Sir Peter Hall; and a communication and interaction school in south Suffolk, Woodbridge Road Academy.

• **BURY ST EDMUNDS ARCHIVES BRANCH STARTS PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**

It was announced on June 23rd that Suffolk County Council is looking to the future as it considers plans for its Suffolk Archives branch in Bury St Edmunds. As part of long-term planning for the Suffolk Archives service, the county council is looking at options for either remaining at its current location in Raingate Street or moving to the planned new Western Way Development. The planned hub development at Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, will introduce state of the art replacement leisure facilities, as well as health, education and other public services to a site which is already a close neighbour of West Suffolk College, the Abbeygate Sixth Form, several schools and the existing council offices. It is expected to open to the public in 2025.

Suffolk County Council will be working with users of the branch, depositors of archive documents, and other key local stakeholders to show what the archives service would be able to offer in the future at either Raingate Street or the Western Way development, as well as how they can input into the council's decision.

No decision has been made and any proposed options for the Bury St Edmunds Archives Branch will be considered by Suffolk County Council's Cabinet later in the year.

• **LOWESTOFT CONVENIENCE STORE OWNER PROSECUTED FOR SELLING ILLEGAL TOBACCO**

On June 27th, a Suffolk shop proprietor was prosecuted for selling illicit tobacco following Trading Standards' continued crackdown on this serious crime. The owner of Town Mini Market, a convenience store on Bevan Street East, Lowestoft, appeared at Ipswich Magistrates Court on the 24th June having been charged with breaching tobacco packaging regulations. Suffolk Trading Standards received intelligence of the selling of illicit tobacco at his store, and subsequently carried out a test purchase, during which illegal tobacco was sold to an undercover operative posing as a customer. Following the sting, a raid was conducted by Suffolk Trading Standards in September 2021 as part of Operation CeCe, a National Trading Standards initiative in partnership with HMRC to tackle illegal tobacco.

This resulted in the seizure of approximately 2,000 cigarettes and more than 7kg of hand rolling tobacco. The tobacco seized did not comply with tobacco packaging regulations and contained health warnings which were not written in English, as well as the packaging itself being of an incorrect colour.

In sentencing, the owner was issued a fine of £5000, £190 surcharge and £3302.50 in costs (£8492.50 total).

Those wishing to protect themselves from inadvertently buying illegal tobacco can look out for the following:

- A lack of health warnings on the packet
- Unknown brands
- Prices that look too good to be true
- Packaging that isn't plain olive green or contains text that is not in English

- **SUFFOLK LOOKS CLOSER DURING MODERN SLAVERY AWARENESS WEEK**

The Suffolk Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) raised awareness of Modern Slavery from June 27th as part of a local campaign. The campaign, 'Suffolk Looks Closer' is intended to support people to spot the signs of Modern Slavery and empower them to report any concerns. Modern Slavery is an umbrella term used when someone is coerced or forced to do something they don't want to do and another person gains from this exploitation. Victims of Modern Slavery are held against their will and are often unseen and unheard. They can be of any age, gender, nationality and ethnicity. It is often hidden in plain sight, making it harder to recognise victims. People are often unable to escape because of fear for their own lives or for the lives of their family, or because they don't know who to turn to or who to trust. 40.3 million people worldwide are estimated to be victims of Modern Slavery. Labour exploitation is when victims are forced to work against their will for long hours and for little or no pay, in poor conditions and under verbal or physical threats of violence to them or their families. Sexual exploitation is when victims are pressured or manipulated into sexual activity. Victims are primarily women and children, but men can be affected too.

The Modern Slavery Network, which reports to the SSCB will be hosted a number of community events across the week in Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, Sudbury and Ipswich, where people were able to speak to representatives from Suffolk Police, Suffolk County Council and local District and Borough Councils.

You can report any concerns to the UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation helpline on 08000 121 700. It is free, confidential, open 24 hours and available in 200 languages. You can also report to Suffolk Police on 101. Remember, if someone is in immediate danger please call 999 and report it to the police. Do not attempt to intervene yourself as you may put yourself and others in danger, including potential victims of modern slavery. Visit UnseenUK or download the Unseen app, for more information about the common signs of exploitation and how to report it. The number of referrals in Suffolk has increased annually in line with the national trend. We have seen an increase in Suffolk Modern Slavery reporting to Suffolk Police from just under 20 reports in 2016 to in excess of 140 reports in 2021.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Stephen Burroughes

County Councillor for the Framlingham Division

Deputy Cabinet Member for Children & Young Peoples Services

SCC Mobile: (Phone or Text) 07714 598003

Twitter @CllrStephenB