

LEADER'S MONTHLY BULLETIN

September 2025

Welcome to another edition of my monthly bulletin, which aims to keep councillors, officers and town and parish councils up to date on the previous month's main news stories and any emerging issues from the district.

Caroline



IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

Air quality monitoring carried out annually by East Suffolk Council recorded falling nitrogen dioxide levels across the district last year.

In December last year, East Suffolk Council received approval from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to revoke its last remaining Air Quality Management Area, located at Stratford St Andrew. This followed an eighth consecutive year with no exceedance of the Government's annual air quality objectives.

The Council's latest annual report on air quality has shown that recorded NO₂ concentrations reached a maximum of 25.4 microgrammes per cubic meter (µg/m³) across the district last year – against a national mean objective of 40µg/m³.

Working with partners, East Suffolk is developing an air quality strategy for the next five years. This will shape our future priorities.

[Read the full story.](#)

THREE COUNCILS FOR SUFFOLK

The five district and borough councils of Suffolk, Babergh, East Suffolk, Ipswich, Mid Suffolk, and West Suffolk, launched their joint [Three Councils for Suffolk](#) proposal last month, a locally led plan to reshape local government and deliver stronger, more responsive services to communities across the county.

This proposal offers an alternative to Suffolk County Council's vision of a single "mega council," instead championing a structure that is big enough to deliver, local enough to care.

Suffolk is a county of contrasts, from market towns and rural villages to vibrant urban centres. [The Three Councils For Suffolk](#) proposal recognises this diversity and is built on three strong foundations: local leadership, tailored services, and financial sustainability.

The preferred option of three councils would each serve distinct

regions anchored by Suffolk's largest towns, Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. This meets the government guidance that the new council areas have a "clear rationale", they are "sensible economic areas" and have "sensible geographies".

The Three Unitary Councils plan responds directly to what people across Suffolk have said they want: councils that are local, greater accountability with local councillor leadership, and provide services that understand and reflect the needs of Suffolk's diverse communities.

It also delivers value for money. Independent analysis by KPMG shows the model could unlock £34 million in annual savings, while allowing reinvestment of £20 million every year back into vital services such as social care, highways, and housing.

This model also strengthens the voice of Suffolk in the new Mayoral Combined Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk, ensuring that local issues, whether rural or urban, aren't lost in a county-wide approach.

CONFERENCE FOR LANDLORDS TO TAKE PLACE

The founder of The Independent Landlord, Suzanne Smith will be the key speaker at a free conference to support landlords, letting agents and property agents, as major changes take place.

Safe Suffolk Renters is encouraging people who rent out residential properties in East or West Suffolk to [register now](#) ahead of its third annual conference in October.

Much focus this year will be on the new Renters' Rights Bill and how it will affect the private rented sector. The bill is expected to become receive Royal Assent and become law shortly before the conference.

Titled 'Moving forward with private renting – 2025 and beyond', the conference will be held at the University & Professional Development Centre in Bury St. Edmunds on Tuesday 21 October from 8.30am until 4pm.

The event is sponsored by insulation specialists, WarmPro.

The keynote speaker, Suzanne Smith, is founder of The Independent Landlord website and YouTube channel. She worked as a solicitor in life sciences for 25 years, before becoming a private landlord in 2019, and put her legal experience to use by setting up The Independent Landlord to provide free, reliable guidance to landlords.

Exhibitors including member associations, financial advisers, insulation specialists and grants advisers will also be on hand to provide to support.

[Register for the event.](#)



GRANT SCHEME STREAMLINED

Communities in East Suffolk can now apply more easily for grant funding of up to £15,000 to carry out upgrades, improvements and essential repairs to their community buildings.

Local organisations looking to upgrade their village halls, community centres and other 'community hubs' have also been given more time to apply for grants, with the deadline extended to Tuesday 23 September.

The funding provided through the UK Government Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board aims to support local organisations to make upgrades.

Applications are open until 9am on 23 September. A grant panel will choose which applications are successful. All funding must be spent, and the project completed by 31 March 2026.

See the full eligibility criteria and apply [here](#).

OTLEY RESIDENTS: HAVE YOUR SAY

Otley residents are being invited to have their say on whether the Neighbourhood Plan for their area should be used to determine future planning applications.

In a referendum that will take place on Thursday 18 September, people living in the area will be asked to vote on whether East Suffolk Council should use the Otley Neighbourhood Plan to help determine planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

Prepared by Otley Parish Council, the Otley Neighbourhood Plan outlines the vision for the future of Otley and sets out clear planning policies to 2036. The plan sets out to protect and enhance the key services and facilities within the parish to support the needs of future generations whilst also preserving the character of the parish.

Residents living in the neighbourhood area and who are registered to vote can vote in the referendum.

[Find out more.](#)

BRINGING EAST SUFFOLK'S HISTORY TO LIFE

East Suffolk residents are being given the chance to explore the heritage of the district like never before.

England's largest free festival of history and culture, Heritage Open Days, is returning from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 September.

This year's festival is themed around architecture, with many events focusing on the iconic buildings in their towns.

Several events are being hosted across the district and, earlier this year, we offered support to local events with grants of up to £500. The grant aimed to encourage local participation of voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise organisations.

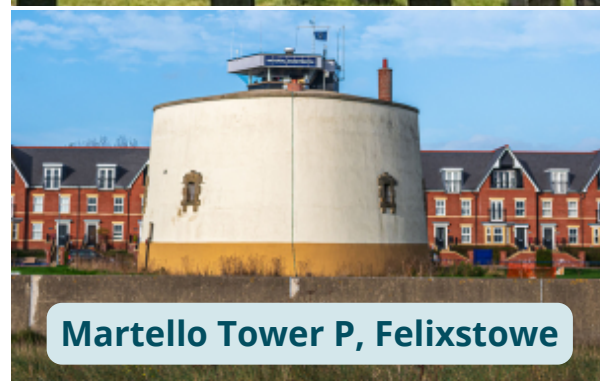
Ten local organisations were selected to receive the grants, see the full list [here](#).

East Suffolk Council is also hosting an event at Martello Tower P in Felixstowe.

Several tours of the tower are on offer, giving visitors a rare opportunity to see inside the historic coastal defence tower.

Some events may require pre-booking. To find out more, including dates and times for each event, visit the [Heritage Open Days website](#) and search for each event.

Here are some of the iconic buildings you can visit:



FREE MUSIC SESSIONS HIT THE RIGHT NOTE

Kesgrave students have been working with professional musicians to help deliver free music sessions for older residents with long term health conditions.

Run by Britten Pears Arts, Participate Kesgrave is a free to access music project for older people, particularly for those living with long term health conditions including dementia and Parkinson's, and their carers.

The involvement of the students has been funded by the Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership and the Community Partnership Board..



SUPPORTING FARMLAND BIRDS IN EAST SUFFOLK

Landowners and managers within East Suffolk are being invited to apply for funding to help protect vulnerable bird species living within the district's farmed landscapes.

The East Suffolk Farmland Bird Support Fund (FBSF) which is being delivered by East Suffolk Council has been established to reduce the impact of the Sizewell C project on farmland birds.

A total of around £300,000 in funding is set to be awarded, with grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 to help landowners and users to deliver projects that will create, restore, and enhance habitats for birds that use farmland for cover, nesting and to find food.

Those interested in applying for the funding will need to submit an expression of interest form which will outline their proposal, with the council providing guidance where required before being invited to submit a full application.

FREE SPORTS EQUIPMENT

Visitors to Nicholas Everitt Park in Oulton Broad will now be able to benefit from a popular scheme which provides people with free sports equipment.

From Friday 29 August, the popular free-to-use sports equipment locker, known as BoxUp, will be relocated to Nicholas Everitt Park, giving a fresh audience the chance to benefit from its facilities.

The new location at Nicholas Everitt Park was chosen for its high visitor numbers and variety of users. The unit will be positioned centrally, near the table tennis table and coffee shop, making it even easier for families, friends, and individuals to access.



ST PETERS COURT DEMOLITION

Following the relocation of all tenants from St Peters Court in Lowestoft, and agreement reached to demolish the building, the final stages of this process are now underway.

Despite speculation recently on social media regarding the future use of St Peters Court, there are no proposals for alternative uses for the building and East Suffolk Council is progressing with work for its impending demolition.

It was intended that the final demolition would commence sooner, however we have not been able to conclude the relocation of telecommunication equipment from the roof of the building.

Unfortunately, the work involved in this, is far from straightforward. However, the Council has been working with the provider to source a suitable, alternative site and it is now hoped that the matter will be resolved before the end of the year.

More information is available [here](#).

2025 TOUR OF BRITAIN MEN

On Tuesday 2 September, the first stage of the Tour of Britain Men passed through East Suffolk.

The community came out in full force for the event, beginning in Woodbridge. Residents lined the streets at both the start and finish in Southwold and along the rest of the route, residents showed their support. For those watching the TV coverage, you could feel the strong sense of pride in our district through the screen!

This event puts East Suffolk on the world stage, and was made possible through the hard work of East Suffolk officers and town and parish councils, as well as other partner organisations. Thank you to everyone involved.



DIARY DATES

Tuesday 16 September 6pm	Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula Community Partnership	East Suffolk House
Wednesday 17 September 10am	Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership	Trimley Sports & Social Club
Thursday 18 September 6.30pm	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	East Suffolk House
Friday 19 September 10am	Licensing Sub-Committee	Riverside
Tuesday 23 September 2pm	Planning Committee South	East Suffolk House
Wednesday 24 September 6.30pm	Full Council	East Suffolk House
Thursday 25 September 6pm	Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership	Lound Village Hall
Monday 29 September 12.30pm	Shareholder Reference Group	East Suffolk House
Monday 29 September 2pm	Planning Committee North	Riverside
Tuesday 30 September 1pm	Licensing Sub-Committee	East Suffolk House

