

TOP-TEN REPORT FOR BUNGAY AND THE VILLAGES (JULY & AUGUST 2024)
East Suffolk Councillors Toby Hammond and Anthony Specca

1. Anthony and Toby were delighted to be able to support the third annual Black Shuck Festival from our Enabling Communities funding. Taking place in early August, it was the largest and most diverse festival yet, attracting much welcome attention to our town, its fascinating heritage, and the creativity and community spirit of its residents. Congratulations to all involved in planning and executing this successful event.
2. Sadly, Toby has been obliged to step down from Cabinet, due to new commitments arising in his professional role as a founding director of a solar-energy company. Over the past 16 months, Toby has overseen economic-development, regeneration and transport policy across East Suffolk. He's particularly proud of bringing in business rate relief for low-carbon companies, and preventing oil and gas companies from leasing Council-owned commercial space. He will now take a seat on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which is chaired by an Opposition Councillor, and which provides independent assessment of Cabinet's work.
3. Cllr Tim Wilson, who represents Rendlesham and Orford Ward, is Toby's successor on Cabinet. Cllr Wilson will take forward the Bungay Parking Review, building on the substantial work that Toby and his team of ESC officers have already completed. Most recently, ESC officers presented the latest set of proposed improvements to Bungay parking regulations to Bungay Town Council, drawing wide support. In fact, the collaborative approach that BTC has taken means the Bungay Parking Review has jumped up the list of priorities compared to other local towns.
4. Changes to the RingGo parking app mean that a booking fee (or 'convenience fee') of 20p is now charged on all parking sessions made using the system. The fee is charged by RingGo, and it has until now been fully subsidised by ESC. Under new Government rules designed to encourage rival parking apps to work together, ESC is now obliged to pass on the fee to motorists.
5. ESC passed a motion in July cementing our ambition to toughen up regulations ensuring the protection of trees and hedgerows, and to plant at least 250,000 new trees across our District. This motion follows several recent incidents of quite brutal and unnecessary tree and hedgerow removal in our District by developers.
6. In 2025, new Government legislation called 'Simpler Recycling' will come into effect, and it will require ESC to improve our waste-recycling performance. Cabinet is meeting in September to discuss proposals to adopt a twin-stream recycling model across East Suffolk, which will increase recycling rates and reduce sorting costs to ratepayers.
7. Anthony and Toby continue to back River Waveney Trust in their work to combat pollution in our river, and to obtain bathing-water status for Falcon Meadow. We were pleased to arrange and attend a meeting between RWT and Adrian Ramsay MP, who will now seek to highlight our local issues at Westminster.
8. Toby has been heavily involved in efforts to find a new use for the Ringsfield Hall Eco Centre, a much-loved community asset which has been declared financially insolvent and is currently being managed by administrators. Advice on a crucial point is awaited from the Charity Commission, and we're hoping for positive news soon.
9. Toby and Anthony have met with some victims of the recent spate of anti-social behaviour in Bungay to offer our support. Together with Bungay Town Council, we've also pressed Suffolk Police to re-engage. It appears that Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner Tim Passmore has now agreed to visit the town to hear about the problem first-hand.
10. With no civic events over the summer months, Anthony has continued to focus on preparing to launch the new East Suffolk Youth Council. Secondary-school pupils across the District will be invited to elect Youth Councillors during the autumn term, and Anthony will visit as many schools as possible to encourage youth to take part, and to make their voices heard.