

## **Parish Report for the end of December 2025 to the Bungay and Wainford villages division, from County Councillor Judy Cloke.**

I do not have 'parish specific' reports for you this month as apart from the ongoing discussions regarding Local Government Review, things have been really quiet. I have continued to attend parish council meetings when I can and to deal with issues as they arise, if I can.

I am pleased to report work will shortly start on the Tin River and its catchment to alleviate the extensive and frequent flooding caused, especially on the A144. The last time it happened the road was practically impassable, but as I was heading to Aldeburgh that afternoon I was able to alert the Highways team and they swung into action quite quickly. I have copied the press release below, though I am sure some of you will have seen it in the local paper.

A natural flood management scheme is to be installed on a flood-prone river in north Suffolk.

The River Tin, named locally as 'Tin River' is a tributary of the River Waveney that has long contributed to flooding across the Bungay area.

Now, Suffolk County Council, in partnership with the River Waveney Trust, has secured more than £50,000 from the East Anglian Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

The work will deliver a number of features to enhance biodiversity and reduce flood risk to Bungay. Delivery is expected in 2026.

The Tin River catchment area covers around 17 square miles, with the river flowing through Bungay before connecting to the River Waveney.

Tin River has been heavily modified over the years through straightening and deepening. The channel often runs dry in the summer but is susceptible to rapid rises in water levels during storms, overwhelming the system, and resulting in flash flooding.

The nearby A144 floods regularly - sometimes along a 500-metre stretch - causing disruption to residents, businesses, and agricultural operations.

Downstream, the town of Bungay continues to face surface-water flooding risks, with a number of residential properties being at risk of flooding.

The works will take place along the river at two separate locations and will comprise of a range of natural features.

This includes reconnection of a meadow to the floodplain, construction of a new pond to create water storage, and installing a series of leaky barriers - dams made from natural woody materials, designed to allow water to spill naturally onto the meadow during heavy rainfall, slowing flow, increasing infiltration, and reducing downstream flood risk.

**Matt Hullis, Head of Environment Strategy for Suffolk County Council**, said: "The Tin is a small but ecologically significant tributary of the River Waveney.

"Recent conservation projects have enhanced its role as a wildlife corridor, making it an important part of Suffolk's river landscape.

"The measures we are undertaking will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and transport routes; increase water storage and slowing flow, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity across its catchment area."

**Angela Lamb of the River Waveney Trust** said: “We are really pleased to be working in partnership with Suffolk County Council, local landowners and the community of Bungay to develop projects on Tin River. It is a fantastic opportunity to create more diverse habitat, improve water quality and have a positive impact on downstream flooding.

“Developing these two sites is just the start of wider plans; we are looking for further opportunities within the Tin River catchment to re-establish natural river processes. “It is not possible to prevent all flood events from Tin River, but we can reduce that impact by slowing the flow of water through its tributaries and by finding more places for natural water storage within the landscape upstream of St John's Road.

“We are focused on developing a catchment-wide project that creates a wildlife corridor through an agricultural landscape, some of which is accessible by public footpaths, so it's good news for wildlife and the people of Bungay.”

**Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Operational Highways and Flooding**, said: “These important works are good news for the public and the environment.

“Flooding severely disrupts road networks through closures, structural damage, and traffic delays, hindering transportation and emergency response.

“These works will also enhance wetland and meadow habitats, giving the public restored views of the river from local footpaths and increasing wildlife presence in the revitalised wetland areas.”

### **Heat network Project in Ipswich:**

Suffolk County Council has been leading on the feasibility of a heat network project since 2021, and has now secured £10 million from the government’s Green Heat Network Fund to make it a reality.

The project will work by harnessing natural occurring heat from the River Gipping, and delivering the energy to buildings across Ipswich.

The county council is committed to working through the shared Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan, helping to deliver cleaner power and supporting local industry and commerce in the local public and private sector – delivering for residents, the community and environment.

### **Fire Inspectorate report:**

In 2024 an inspectorate report on Suffolk’s Fire & Rescue Service highlighted some areas for improvement. They visited again in October, when inspectors recognised early positive change across leadership, governance and organisational culture, supported by a comprehensive action plan developed with staff and representative bodies.

Inspectors also noted the significant investment and support from Suffolk County Council - totalling £1.6 million over two years, which has enabled new posts, development programmes and organisational reforms to be put in place. While acknowledging that meaningful cultural improvement takes time, the inspectorate confirmed it is satisfied with the service’s progress to date.

## **Proper disposal of batteries:**

FCC Environment operates 11 recycling centres and three waste transfer stations on behalf of Suffolk County Council, and has seen a sharp rise in the number of fires fuelled by wrongly disposed batteries and electronic items.

In April 2025, a battery sparked a fire at FCC Environment's Red Lodge site near Newmarket which took eight days and 660,000 litres of water to extinguish, causing £60,000 of damage.

FCC Environment's Suffolk Recycling Contract Manager, Paul Smith, said:

"Hidden batteries start real fires, and we're urging residents across Suffolk to take care and dispose of batteries and items at local battery recycling points across the county. "If not recycled properly, subsequent fires endanger the lives of recycling centre staff, firefighters and local residents."

## **Sizewell C Bursary scheme**

Managed by Suffolk County Council, the bursary is designed to remove barriers to training and employment, ensuring that local people can gain the skills needed for Sizewell C and other high-quality jobs in the county. The fund will provide £15,000 every year for the next decade, with individual bursaries of up to £1,000 available.

Applications must be supported by the learner's training provider.

The bursary can help with essential costs such as travel, accommodation, childcare, specialist equipment, study materials, PPE or uniforms, and short upskilling courses not funded by government, like a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card. Full details of eligibility and how to apply are available at

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/business/supporting-employers-training-your-workforce/sizewell-c-skills-funds>

## **Public Transport funding:**

Millions of pounds of investment is to take place in Suffolk's bus network over three years following allocation of Government funding. Services, ticketing, and infrastructure will all benefit under the package worth nearly £27 million between 2026 and 2029. Suffolk County Council will receive a total of £26,813,760 under the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG).

This funding will enable the continuation and expansion of new and improved services introduced over the past two years through LABG support and its predecessor, the Bus Services Improvement Grant (BSIP), many of which were shaped by community feedback.

Suffolk will receive:

- 2026/27 - £8,849,119
- 2027/28 - £8,937,920
- 2028/29 - £9,026,721

The funding is split into two areas.

Revenue investment will focus on:

- Maintaining and growing enhanced services based on local suggestions.
- Increasing publicity and travel information to help residents make informed choices.

Capital funding will deliver:

- Renewal and expansion of Real Time Passenger Information across Suffolk.
- Improved ticketing options and accessibility in partnership with bus operators.
- Investigations into bus priority measures to reduce journey times and encourage modal shift.
- Upgraded bus stops with new shelters, better footway links, and accessibility enhancements—many suggested by local communities.

Local authorities will have flexibility to use LABG funding to meet local needs—whether by reducing fares, introducing new routes, investing in zero-emission buses, or improving bus stops and stations.

*Do let me know if you would like further information on this and I will ask. I have already raised the issue of a lack of marked bus stops on the A144*

### **SEND provision:**

The progress of improvements to special educational needs and disabilities provision in Suffolk was discussed at Education Scrutiny Committee on Thursday <4 December>. The committee, made up of councillors from all parties and non-elected independent members, such as parent governors, quizzed health and county council leaders on the progress, plans and challenges within SEND reform. The last time SEND was discussed at Education Scrutiny was June 2024.

Progress reported to the committee included:

- Significant improvement in the timeliness of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). By January, timeliness will be well above the national average of plans issued within 20 weeks. (Approximately 50% compared to 3.8% November 2023)
- Issuing more Education, Health and Care Plans than ever before. In November, 364 plans completed, compared to 186 November 2024. An increase of 65%.
- The timeliness of Annual Reviews has also improved, with 892 completed in November - compared to 775 last November

The committee also heard how the Department for Education continues to monitor and track improvement. The results of a recent stocktake visit by officers from the Department for Education is due shortly. Despite positive evidence, officers were clear that improvement is not yet being felt by all families and reiterated that a robust, detailed and deliverable plan remains in place to keep driving reform at pace. Acknowledgement was given that work to improve SEND is complex and costly, working across many sectors and against a backdrop of a broken national SEND system. Suffolk

also faces rising demand with an increase of 22% more Education, Health and Care Plans over the year.

### **Loft Insulation scammers:**

Riva Surveyors Ltd has been ordered to pay £48,891 in fines and compensation, while senior salesman Justin Brason received a suspended prison sentence for his part in the scam. Riva Surveyors Ltd (previously known as Riba Surveyors Ltd) and Justin Brason, aged 45, of Brambling Close, Stowmarket, appeared separately at Ipswich Crown Court on 9 December 2025 for sentencing, following an investigation led by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards team. Between July 2019 and February 2020, the company cold-called or visited elderly homeowners across Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, claiming to offer free loft inspections. Once inside the properties, "surveyors" falsely reported serious roof defects such as damp, mould or infestations, and urged householders to install spray foam insulation at vastly inflated prices. Victims were told the work was urgent and that their roofs were structurally unsound if left untreated. In reality, the spray foam insulation sold was unnecessary and, in some cases, unsuitable for the properties, with an expert witness later confirming that the reported problems were exaggerated or entirely fabricated. The insulation could also reduce property value and make it harder to sell or remortgage. Many victims were elderly and living alone. Out of 20 affected consumers, six went ahead with the work, suffering significant financial losses. Two victims later had to remove the insulation at additional cost so they could remortgage or sell their homes.

### **Active Travel:**

Suffolk County Council has been awarded more than £12 million over four years by Active Travel England to continue its work promoting sustainable travel. Active Travel England (ATE) works with local authorities and other bodies to help them put in place infrastructure and facilities that make it easier for more people to walk, wheel and cycle, more often, on local journeys. It has awarded Suffolk a total of £12,537,098 for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30 to invest in footpaths, infrastructure, and cycle lanes. Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Transport Strategy said: "This is a fantastic amount of money for important schemes and a vote of confidence by ATE in the work we are doing. "Congestion and pollution are the bane of our bigger towns, which is why it is important that we develop a network of measures to encourage people out of the car wherever possible.

### **Warm Homes Scheme:**

At the end of November 2025, Suffolk County Council secured £1.38 million from the government's Warm Homes Local Grant Fund. Residents and landlords are urged to apply quickly, as the funding must be allocated by the end of March 2026. The fund aims to provide free energy saving improvements to energy inefficient homes if residents are on a low income, receive certain benefits or live in a certain postcode area. This could be wall and loft insulation, solar panels or air source heat pumps.

To be eligible, Suffolk homes must:

- be privately owned (either by you or your landlord)
- have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G (you can find this out when you apply)

Household income must usually be £36,000 a year or less - but if you earn more than that, you might still be eligible if either:

- you live in a certain postcode area (certain areas of Beccles, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Stowmarket)
- someone in your household is getting certain benefits
- you have a severe or long-term health condition, which is adversely affected by living in a cold home

Once these conditions have been approved, an assessment of your home will identify which measures are best suited to your property. These will then be installed by trusted contactors, for free.

### **Lion Link consultation:**

A written consultation and materials will launch on 13 January 2026, supported by five public information exhibitions in Saxmundham, Southwold, Hinton, Westleton and Yoxford. The consultation will close on 10 March 2026.

The planning of the LionLink project is now reaching its final stages, before an expected application for a Development Consent Order later in 2026.

Therefore, the county council is urging concerned residents, businesses, organisations and town and parish councils to get up-to-speed with the scheme's plans, so they are in a position to contribute to the forthcoming consultation.

**Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and NSIPs, said:**

"It is imperative that local communities engage with the upcoming LionLink consultation, it is the final chance to influence the design, the routing, and ultimately the need for the project, before the application is submitted.

"I completely understand that some communities are exhausted – on a constantly moving conveyor belt of responding to consultation after consultation, for project after project. Much of which could have been mitigated if there was better coordination across all the huge infrastructure projects on Suffolk's doorstep.

Initial details about the consultation are available on [National Grid's LionLink website](#), with further information being published shortly.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Peaceful New Year.

Judy Cloke  
5 Jan 2026