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**Suffolk County Council Report
July 2023**

Dear All,

Please see below an update for July 2023.

Kind regards
Bobby

Help for Suffolk Pre-payment Meter customers

A package of support has been created for pre-payment meter customers in Suffolk who are struggling with their energy bills.

Warm Homes Suffolk is a Suffolk wide Council partnership service, delivering energy efficiency support to low-income households affected by cost of living pressures.

Supported by Suffolk's Collaborative Communities Board and funding from Public Health Suffolk's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), the service is now able to offer specific help for households struggling to pay their energy bills via a pre-payment meter, in addition to its existing support.

The support covers the whole of Suffolk and is available for all residents, whether they are in social housing, council tenants, owner occupiers or private renters.

The Warm Homes Suffolk Service can check eligibility and support applications for grants to increase household energy efficiency, with measures such as loft and wall insulation to air source heat pumps, draught-proofing and more.

It is estimated that more than 24,000 people in Suffolk are pre-payment meter customers.

The service will work with each individual to understand the pressures on their finances and the impact this is having on their lives. The service can carry out a home visit, as well as providing advice over the phone and by email.

The COMF funding of £180,000 will enable this project to run for 12 months to provide the following:

- Income maximisation (through grants and benefits)
- Budgeting advice
- Help understanding bills and heating systems
- Support to reduce energy expenditure (By promoting social tariffs and support to switch suppliers)
- Improving household energy efficiency (By installing insulation, draught proofing, heating systems and solar panels)
- Facilitating switch away from prepaid meters if appropriate

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, said:
"I am pleased that through the Collaborative Communities Board and Public Health COMF funding, we are able to offer Suffolk residents who use pre-payment meters this help with their energy bills, which will support people financially as well as reduce the Health risks associated with inadequately heated homes."

“If you are struggling to pay your energy bills or know someone who is, please get in touch.”

Pre-payment meter customers who would like support can contact prepay@eastsuffolk.gov.uk to find out more, or call: Prepay West 07769 365796, Prepay East 07769 366229.

Referrals can be made directly from households, voluntary sector and professionals to find prepay households who can benefit from an independent look at their bills.

Warm Homes Suffolk also offers support and advice for residents who are not pre-payment meter customers. To find out more about the support on offer, visit: <https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/>

Cllr Bobby Bennett added: “Further details of cost of living support available for Suffolk residents and organisations can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/costofliving.”

Suffolk Fire Service to bring control room back to county

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has announced plans to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk.

Since October 2011, Suffolk has shared a control room with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service in Huntingdon. The joint project has worked well, saving both fire services money and enabling greater cross border resource sharing.

However, the company behind a project to deliver a new IT system, initiated in 2019, has run into technical and financial problems, causing a significant delay. This, in addition to advancements in technology, has led to the decision to bring fire control back into the county by the end of 2024.

The proposed new control centre will be brought to Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet for approval in September 2023.

New public project celebrating migration to Suffolk receives grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund

Suffolk Archives has been awarded a grant of £126,523 to deliver community-based project ‘Arrivals’ which will celebrate and explore historical and contemporary stories of migration to Suffolk.

Arrivals: Celebrating Migration To Suffolk will collect and preserve the histories of ethnic minority, underrepresented and marginalised groups and individuals, who have travelled to Suffolk from overseas to make it their home.

The project will be delivered by Suffolk Archives, Suffolk County Council’s Archives Service, and provides an opportunity to meaningfully engage with diverse local communities, strengthening connections and putting recent migration into a longer historical context of people settling in Suffolk.

Made possible by National Lottery players, this exciting project begins with the recruitment of volunteers, the launch of a community forum and a range of community-based activities which will collect stories and build relationships with communities from across the county.

The programme of supporting activities will include engagement with local schools, in addition to free workshops for community groups that will offer training in identifying, organising, and preserving their archives and the opportunity to co-create activities that will share these stories with the wider community. The project will also include the cataloguing and selective digitisation of relevant records already in our collection to make them easier for the public to use. We will also be using the project as an opportunity to add the records for more ethnically diverse groups to our archive collections.

The project will inform the contents of a free exhibition taking place at The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront from November 2023 to April 2024. Research and community curation for the exhibition will take place throughout the summer and autumn.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities said: “I’m delighted that this project has received the backing of the NHLF. Suffolk has a rich history of welcoming migration and this project will allow Suffolk Archives to explore this further by collecting historical and contemporary stories of migration to Suffolk.

“The project aims to connect individuals and communities, and help more people feel a sense of belonging in Suffolk, particularly those who have arrived here recently. It will culminate in an engaging exhibition which we hope will help to strengthen understanding between people and communities.”

Ancestry appointed to digitise Suffolk’s popular family and local history sources

More than 400 years of fascinating historical documents held at Suffolk Archives are to be digitised and made available online, thanks to an agreement between Suffolk County Council and Ancestry. Suffolk Archives will work alongside family history website Ancestry to create high quality, full colour digital images of millions of baptism, marriage and burial records from parishes within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

The earliest records being digitised date back to 1538 and include events in the lives of notable historical figures, such as the 1776 baptism of landscape artist John Constable, and the 1846 burial of Thomas Clarkson who devoted his life to the abolition of slavery.

It is hoped that Suffolk’s main parish records will be published online in early 2025 with other collections of local interest to follow. Public access will be free of charge in Suffolk Archives branches or at any Suffolk Library. Anyone with an Ancestry subscription will also be able to access the records as part of their research from their own computer or device.

Cllr Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, said:

“Exploring your family tree has never been more popular and technology is making it easier and more accessible than ever before. This new agreement will lead to more than four centuries of fascinating documents, held by Suffolk Archives, being professionally digitised and made available online on Ancestry. As a result, anyone with Suffolk roots anywhere in the world will be able to learn more about their ancestors at a click of a button.”

Further details about the project can be found on the Suffolk Archives website.

Waste transfer station fire sparks fresh warning over safe disposal of batteries

People are being reminded of the importance of disposing of waste batteries properly following a fire at a Suffolk waste transfer station.

Operations were briefly disrupted at Haverhill waste transfer station in Homefield Road after fire broke out amongst 50 tonnes of rubbish on June 16.

The waste transfer station takes refuse material collected locally and bulks it for onward reprocessing.

The precise cause of the fire has not been determined but FCC Environment, which manages the 11 recycling centres and four transfer stations around the county on behalf of Suffolk County Council, said that when a fire starts in piles of waste it is usually caused by a battery that has managed to spark.

This can happen if there is friction, such as when a waste pile is moved or crushed.

In June 2022 a fire at the Materials Recycling Facility in Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, which recycles waste from across Suffolk, is suspected to have been started by a battery dumped with household recycling.

Lithium batteries are a particular problem but standard household batteries are also culprits, as well as vapes and small electricals plus items that do not look like they have a battery such as Christmas jumpers and light toys.

All batteries should be disposed of either at recycling centres or in collection points at most large stores where they are sold.

Work began in May to build a new recycling centre for Haverhill within the waste transfer station.

The new centre, which should be completed in early 2024, will replace the current facility in Chalkstone Way.

Fire and Rescue Services attend around 300 significant fires at waste sites per year in the UK. There are many other smaller fires that are dealt with before they become significant.

More information on hidden batteries can be found at the Suffolk Recycling website.

Details on how to find your nearest electrical recycling point can also be found at the Suffolk Recycling website.

Norfolk and Suffolk councils given authority and funding to help nature's recovery

Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council have been formally appointed by Government as responsible authorities for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their respective counties.

This means that they will be working together to help improve wildlife habitats and reverse the decline of biodiversity across the region, working with local communities to develop a tailored nature recovery strategy for their areas.

They will also work with other local planning authorities, the Broads Authority, Natural England, and a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including farming and landowner groups.

This is all part of Government's ambition to further drive nature recovery, with 48 individual local authorities across the country receiving allocations from a £14 million funding pot. Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils will receive £333,000 and £282,000 respectively over two years to fund this work. With the best ways to support nature recovery depending on local character and geography, Local Nature Recovery Strategies will help communities map out the action needed in their area to restore nature.

The Norfolk and Suffolk councils have already been working closely with each other, jointly hosting the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership, and a host of other stakeholders and interested parties to prepare for this moment. The two authorities have pooled resources and expertise and to ensure that strategies effectively join up across the two counties to the wider benefit of nature and people.

The Strategies will focus on how to improve habitats and protect the natural environment across the region, with local approaches tailored to the specific circumstances of each area. Norfolk and Suffolk are home to a variety of beautiful and unique landscapes, from the chalk streams of the Norfolk Coast to the Stour estuary at the south east of Suffolk and across many habitats in between, and specific policies will be drawn up to best protect and nurture each location.

Future plans will include working closely with other neighbouring counties, to identify and support opportunities for nature recovery at sufficient scale to really benefit wildlife."

Free exhibition 'Wolsey's Ipswich' this summer at The Hold as part of Wolsey 550 celebrations

Suffolk Archives' free summer exhibition 'Wolsey's Ipswich' opens on Friday 14 July at The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront and will explore the legacy of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey thanks to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The exhibition forms a key part of the Thomas Wolsey 550 project, a programme of events and activities planned to celebrate the 550th anniversary of Wolsey's birth across Ipswich.

Curated by the team at Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service, the exhibition includes items from Suffolk's own archive collections, as well as items on loan from organisations across the country.

Made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Ipswich Central and Ipswich Borough Council, the exhibition will explore the legacy of Thomas Wolsey, re-connecting him with his hometown and examining his position on the world stage.

Born and raised in Ipswich, Wolsey rose from humble beginnings to become the most powerful man in England, working alongside King Henry VIII. The 'Wolsey's Ipswich' exhibition will unearth a story of ambition, aspiration, determination, and the possibility for anyone to succeed.

The exhibition features archive treasures from Suffolk's collections dating from the 16th century to the present day, as well as some significant loaned exhibits, including Wolsey's original Cardinal hat, on loan from Christ Church College, Oxford.

Having finally been made a Cardinal by the Pope in 1515 following a long campaign, Wolsey was made to wait three years to receive this badge of honour from Rome and arranged a grand procession for it through the streets of London.

The exhibition will also include an original copy of Shakespeare's first folio, on loan from Trinity College Cambridge and coinciding with Folio 400 which marks 400 years since the first printed collection of Shakespeare's work. The exhibition will look at how Wolsey has been depicted throughout history including within Shakespeare's play Henry VIII which covers part of Henry's reign and depicts elements of Wolsey's rise and fall.

The final section of the exhibition will be dedicated to building a sense of aspiration for local young people, taking Wolsey's experiences as a starting point.

Suitable for all ages, the exhibition offers a unique opportunity to come and explore the complex and inspiring story of Ipswich's most famous son.

Local businesses celebrated for their environmental achievements

Businesses across Suffolk and Norfolk have been recognised for their environmental successes at this year's Carbon Charter event, held at Anglia Car Charging's headquarters in Broome on 5 July 2023.

Over 100 representatives from local businesses of all sizes came together to hear from guest speakers and share their journeys as they all work towards a lower carbon future.

The Carbon Charter was set up in 2010 by Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency. Since then, it has given 738 Carbon Charter awards to companies that have delivered on a commitment to reduce their impact on the environment, by reducing their carbon emissions, supporting their local community and developing green spaces.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner praises Suffolk's Champions

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, Nicole Jacobs met today with Suffolk's Domestic Abuse Champions Network.

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner is an independent voice that speaks on behalf of victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

Alongside Councillor Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities, DA Commissioner Nicole Jacobs, met with Domestic Abuse Champions and representatives from Suffolk's commissioned Domestic Abuse Services. They presented certificates to Champions, who have gone above and beyond in their role by providing support or raising the profile of Domestic Abuse. The Suffolk Domestic Abuse Champions Network aims to raise awareness about coercive control and increase confidence across the Suffolk community in order to provide consistent information, advice and support to victim-survivors of domestic abuse.

The Champions are provided with free training to have the skills to spread awareness to other colleagues and act as the 'Go to Person' for Information between their own agency and local support services. The Network was launched in April 2019, and since then, the content of the training has evolved, and the delivery has developed to incorporate an online offer as well as face to face.

Over 1,300 Champions have now taken the free training, including representatives from across the county and from a broad range of organisations including health, education, housing, recovery services, mental health support, adult and children's social care, police and more individuals, voluntary and community organisations.

Council to consider new chapter for library services

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet is set to discuss the future of library services in Suffolk at its next meeting on 11 July.

The current contract with Suffolk's Libraries Industrial and Provident Society (IPS), worth £5.92 million per annum, comes to an end on 31st July 2024. The Council now needs to consider how library services will be delivered following expiry of the contract.

The report to cabinet will recommend that a new Library Service contract is procured using a competitive tender process.

To enable meaningful engagement, public consultation and a competitive tender process to take place, the report also recommends that the current contract with Suffolk's Libraries IPS is extended by 10 months, to 31 May 2025. The public consultation will be used to inform the requirements and future development of the new service.

SCC set out concerns as public consultation opens for Norwich to Tilbury proposals

Essex County Council, Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council united in expressing concerns regarding project.

National Grid has opened its consultation to anyone wishing to comment on its Norwich to Tilbury proposal, previously known as East Anglia Green. This is an eight-week non-statutory consultation period which closes on 21 August 2023.

The project will see a new 400kV electricity transmission line built between Norwich and Tilbury, running a distance of 111 miles. It will be made up mostly of overhead line and pylons, along with some underground cables and a new substation.

The new consultation reveals the route for the pylons, passing through Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. It shows the line will run underground through the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the Essex-Suffolk border.

The consultation is open to residents, landowners, businesses and any individuals or groups that may be interested in commenting on the revised proposals. Consultees can participate online or via face-to-face events.

Essex County Council, Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council are also being consulted on the proposals as statutory consultees. All three councils have already raised concerns to the initial consultation undertaken last year.

2,000-year-old Roman hoard discovered in Suffolk

A rare discovery of late Roman pewter plates, platters, bowls and a cup has been made in Euston, in the west of Suffolk.

The remains of the vessels were buried in a pit and carefully stacked, suggesting that they were placed as a single group, possibly for safe keeping or an offering.

They have just gone on display at the West Stow Anglo-Saxon village and Museum, near Bury St Edmunds, until January 2024.

The hoard was discovered in Autumn 2022 by local metal detector user, Martin White, whilst taking part in an East of England Rally – an organised detecting event.

Martin said:

"I've been detecting for about 10 years, and this is the most high profile find I've made so far, it was very exciting! We quickly consulted with the Archaeological Service so that the items could be removed and recorded, without being damaged. It was a privilege to be involved in the whole process, from discovery to excavation to seeing the finds go on display."

Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service facilitated the excavation of the hoard, which was carried out by Wardell Armstrong and Norfolk Museum Service conservators.

It was then conserved by the Norfolk Museum Service conservators.

All work was funded by the Euston Estate and East of England Railies.

Suffolk's Archive Service Achieves Full National Accreditation

Following a recent Archive Service Accreditation Panel, Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service has achieved Full Accreditation.

The service achieved Provisional Accreditation in March 2019 and today the UK Archive Service Accreditation Committee has moved Suffolk Archives from provisional to full accreditation status.

Accreditation is the UK quality standard which recognises good performance in all areas of archive service delivery. Achieving accredited status demonstrates that Suffolk Archives has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its unique collections and the service it offers to a broad range of users.

Archive Service Accreditation is supported by a partnership of the Archives and Records Association (UK), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives, The National Archives; and the Welsh Government through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales division.

The Accreditation Panels are composed of Committee members nominated by the seven Accreditation partners and openly recruited from the archives sector.

The Archive Service Accreditation Panel "supported the move to full accreditation following the successful move to new premises at Ipswich. The Panel commended the determined efforts made by Suffolk Archives in developing and delivering community engagement across the county."

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities said: "We are delighted that Suffolk's archive services have achieved full accreditation following detailed submissions and inspection from UK Archive Service Accreditation Committee.

"Suffolk Archives preserves our local history so that people of all ages and backgrounds can discover more about their heritage, and this national accreditation formally recognises the important work they do.

"Suffolk's local communities can be assured that their heritage is in good hands."

Norfolk and Suffolk residents urged to accept Food Savvy mission to reduce food waste and serve another day

Households across Norfolk and Suffolk are being urged to sign up for a mission to do their bit to protect the planet and help get the best out of salad and vegetables.

Mission Food Savvy is targeting these items in the war on waste as they are some of the most thrown away foods in the two counties.

The summer campaign promotes savvy ways to store salad and vegetables to keep them fresher to be savoured another day; or send them undercover in delicious dishes to make sure nothing goes to waste.

Using a fun, hero agent theme, the campaign reveals how everything from tomatoes to cucumbers, carrots to broccoli, can escape the waste bin through better planning, storing and cooking.

Mission Food Savvy is the latest in the well-established Food Savvy campaign, run jointly by Norfolk County Council and Suffolk Waste Partnership. The campaign inspires households to reduce food waste by:

Planning meals before shopping to ensure nothing goes to waste
Keeping vegetables and salads in optimal condition by storing them correctly
Getting creative with leftovers and send spare veg undercover into other dishes

Suffolk Waste Partnership and Norfolk County Council work together on the Food Savvy campaign.

Energy developers must stop mistreating Suffolk's communities

Communities must be shown more respect and be treated fairly by the developers of huge energy infrastructure projects, such as solar farms and vast new pylon runs, says Suffolk County Council. This is the council's message in a letter to the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, published on Monday 17 July 2023. In its letter, the Council cites the Sunnica solar farm on the Suffolk / Cambridgeshire border as the worst example of the mistreatment of local communities, with complaints received throughout the consultation and examination process. Suffolk plays a major role in the UK's drive for energy security. The county will be home to over 10 percent of the UK's large energy projects, like Sizewell C, known as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). It is estimated that East Anglia will generate over 30 percent of the nation's energy but uses only 6 percent. The letter goes on to explain that NSIPs should be subject to more rigorous scrutiny when engaging with local communities, before the Planning Inspectorate's formal Examination process begins. Suffolk County Council recognises the extent and magnitude of the infrastructure required to deliver the Government's Net Zero target and supports its ambitions. These projects must be executed quickly and efficiently, but not to the detriment of affected communities. The council has also set out more detailed proposals on developers' treatment of communities, in its recent response to the Government's consultation on community benefits and electricity transmission infrastructure.

Woman sentenced following social care payment fraud.

A woman who previously lived in Ipswich, who admitted committing fraud to steal over £27,000 worth of social care payments, was sentenced today at Ipswich Magistrates Court following a successful prosecution by Suffolk County Council.

Hannah Colley, of Fiddlers Folley, Colchester, pleaded guilty on the 5th June 2023 to one count of failing to disclose information that she was under a legal duty to disclose, between 2018 and 2022. She was claiming care payments in Suffolk and submitted a later claim for social care direct payments from Essex County Council.

A social care review in the summer of 2022 raised concerns that Colley was not providing evidence of how her direct payment had been spent, she had been avoiding meeting with her Social Worker face-to-face and it was found that she was registered to a GP Practice in Colchester.

The concerns were referred to the Council's Counter Fraud Service who found that Colley moved from Ipswich to Colchester in June 2018, meaning she would no longer be eligible for funding from Suffolk County Council and that she had been claiming a second direct payment from Essex County Council since June 2020. During this period she received £27,643.68 in direct payments from Suffolk County Council.

Colley was sentenced today to 26 weeks' custody suspended for 2 years, with conditions that she complete a rehabilitation activity requirement for 10 days and abide by a curfew. This curfew will require her to stay indoors

nightly, for 26 weeks, between 8pm and 8am. The court also ordered her to pay compensation of £27,643.68, legal and investigatory costs of £6,100 and a victim surcharge of £154. The Court stated that they found 'limited mitigation' in the case and made direct reference to the falsehoods that Colley had told Suffolk County Council over many years.