

June 2025
Town and
Parish
Newsletter

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This summer, Suffolk Archives invites you to set sail on a journey through the county’s rich maritime heritage with its new exhibition Anchors Away: Suffolk and The Sea.

Dementia Marketplace 2025

On Wednesday 25th June 2025, Care Development East, in partnership with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB), will host the third annual Dementia Marketplace—a free, one-day event offering practical advice, support, and information for anyone affected by dementia.

Held from 10:00am to 3:30pm at [Trinity Park Conference & Events Centre, Ipswich](#).

Dementia is the UK’s biggest health and social care challenge—and it’s growing. One in three people born in the UK today will develop dementia in their lifetime. By 2040, 1.4 million people are expected to be living with the condition. Early diagnosis is key—it unlocks treatment, support, and care that can make a real difference.

What to Expect:

- Marketplace – Information and advice from over 40 dementia-related services and support groups
- Expert Speaker Sessions – Short, accessible talks throughout the day
- Innovation Room – New for 2025, come see, and try out a range of equipment and digital care technology to help keep people as safe and independent for as long as possible. It will also include the launch of Reverie a new cutting-edge Virtual Reality (VR) app designed with and for people with dementia featuring customised Suffolk film content
- Supervised Activities Room – A safe space for people with dementia while carers explore the event

Opening at 10:00am with a short welcome from:

- Gareth Everton, Executive Director for Adult Social Care
- Eugene Staunton, Deputy Director, SNEE ICB

Speaking about the Dementia Marketplace's return, Cllr Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care said:

“I am pleased to see the Dementia Marketplace return this year, as it is an important event that truly showcases the incredible support available for people living with dementia, as well as their families and carers. With an ageing population here in Suffolk, it is absolutely essential that we continue to do all we can to help people find the support they need to live well with dementia—and events like this play a key role in making that happen.”

Cllr Beccy Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care

Event Details:

Venue: Trinity Park, Ipswich, IP3 8UH

Date: Wednesday 25th June 2025

Time: 10:00am – 3:30pm (drop-in)

Entry is free, [please book your ticket today via Eventbrite](#).

Suffolk Libraries to Become Suffolk Community Libraries from 1 June

The service will continue to operate as usual, with no changes for library users and all 45 libraries will remain open.

This ensures the council can continue delivering library services in a sustainable way, strengthening the role libraries play across Suffolk’s communities.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

“This move is not just about preserving the service we have; it’s about making libraries even more integral to the services we offer. While they already provide excellent spaces for reading and community engagement, we want to expand their role and ensure they become vital access points for a wide range of public services.

“We’re incredibly grateful to Suffolk Libraries and all their dedicated staff for everything they’ve done, and for working closely with us to ensure a smooth transition. We value their expertise and passion, and we look forward to working with them as they become Suffolk County Council staff.”

Suffolk County Council extends its sincere thanks to everyone involved in the transition and looks forward to this new chapter for library services in Suffolk.

For more information, please visit www.suffolkcommunitylibraries.co.uk

Popular outdoor festival returns this August to celebrate the Brecks

55 events, many of which will be free, will take place over the fortnight, recognising the work of the Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The festival will launch on 9 August at an event in Brandon Country Park, with opportunities to meet a range of local groups and organisations working with nature in the Brecks, as well as activities, storytelling and the chance to start your very own seasonal sketchbook.

“This year’s festival is a great opportunity to explore what has been achieved, whether that’s through walking, swimming, listening, cycling, running, stretching or sketching – there’s something for everyone.”

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality

Other festival events will include guided walks, creative activities, outdoor yoga, family activities and trails, outdoor swimming, fishing and more:

- **Explore the River Thet:** Explore Thetford from a different point of view and try canoeing or stand-up paddle boarding with support and guidance from a trained and knowledgeable instructor.
13, 16, 20 August, Thetford
- **Mildenhall Doves Challenge Walk:** An exclusive route through a classic Brecks landscape of river, sandy droves and pine lines. How many droves can you walk down in one day?
23 August, West Row
- **Thursday Social Off-Road Cycle Ride:** A social bike ride to explore the landscape of Brandon Country Park and Thetford Forest. All abilities welcome, difficulty and

distance determined by riders on the day.
14, 21 August, Brandon Country Park

- **The Nine Stiles Walk & Steel Band Performance:** A walk in the heart of the Brecks with no stiles! Follow part of the historic ‘beating of the bounds’ route and end with music from steel band Panache!

The Brecks Fen Edge & Rivers Landscape Partnership Scheme began in 2020, following a five-year grant of £1.97 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Using the money raised by the National Lottery players, the project has been creating positive and lasting change for people and communities in and around The Brecks.

A small partnership delivery team hosted by Suffolk County Council has facilitated successful management of the project, bringing together more than 60 local, regional and national groups, as well as many volunteers - all with a central vision and plan.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

“Building on the popularity of the 2024 festival, this year will offer even more to do, with new events, as well as some crowd favourites from last year.

“The Partnership Scheme has been a real triumph for the local area, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, as well as bringing communities together.

“Numerous organisations, volunteers, and experts have collaborated to deliver outdoor activities and conservation initiatives around the Brecks.

“This year’s festival is a great opportunity to explore what has been achieved, whether that’s through walking, swimming, listening, cycling, running, stretching or sketching – there’s something for everyone.”

The Brecks is an invaluable part of the UK’s landscape, covering nearly 400 square miles:

- Over 40% of the landscape is covered by conservation areas
- Nearly 13,000 species have been recorded in the area
- 28% of the UK’s rarest species are found there
- It contains Thetford Forest and Kings Forest, making the largest lowland forest in the UK
- It is home to eight registered parks and gardens, 157 scheduled monuments and over 1,000 listed buildings

The festival runs from 9 to 24 August 2025, the full programme of events can be found at www.brecks.org

What a win for waste at the Suffolk Show!

The tent brought together waste contractors across Suffolk, such as Biffa who manage and run the Materials Recycling Facility where all Suffolk's household recycling goes.

Suez contributed, the company who manage and run the Suffolk Energy from Waste plant where all Suffolk's black bag waste is sent, to be used to generate electricity for 40,000 homes.

Also exhibiting were FCC Environment who manage and run the county's 11 recycling centres and The Benjamin Foundation who run our re-use shops in Bury and Foxhall.

On display were the new recycling bins that will be introduced across Suffolk next year to allow collection glass and tetrapak, along with food waste.

Visitors also had the opportunity to speak with Master Composter and Repair Cafe volunteers, learn about Food Savvy (a campaign to reduce the amount of food they throw away), and take part in crafting using recycled materials.

"The county council is proud of the award presented to the Suffolk Waste Partnership tent, and all those who helped make the two days of the Suffolk Show a success. The award was the cherry on the cake and fully deserved."

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, said:

"The county council is proud of the award presented to the Suffolk Waste Partnership tent, and all those who helped make the two days of the Suffolk Show a success. The award was the cherry on the cake, and fully deserved.

"For many years, the SWP has been the tent neighbour of Suffolk County Council at the Suffolk Show, and I really enjoyed going 'next door' to see the fantastic displays and activities on offer, in particular a peak at the new changes that will be coming to waste collection in Suffolk next year."

Councillor Phil Smart, Chair of the Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP), said:

"I'm delighted that all the hard work of our teams and partners across the county has been recognised with this award.

"We run campaigns throughout the year to support residents to minimise the amount of waste they produce, and to encourage reuse and recycling. This year, visitors were particularly interested in the new waste services being rolled out across Suffolk in 2026.

“I think more and more people are becoming aware of their environmental impact through waste, and are keen to support a change. This was evident at this year’s Suffolk Show, with over 6,000 people visiting our tent – an increase of around 70% on last year.

“I’d also like to thank the 16 Suffolk schools who provided amazing artwork to help decorate the tent.”

The award was presented by the Suffolk Agricultural Association.

Phillip Ainsworth, Chief Executive of the Suffolk Agricultural Association, organisers of the Suffolk Show, said:

“We always maintain that Suffolk Show is not only a great family event but is also a platform for many community and public organisations to showcase all the work they do through the year.

“We were delighted to learn that judges awarded Suffolk Waste Partnership tradestand an award for Best Stand Representing Education at the Suffolk Show this year for their efforts in informing the public about many campaigns they run including ways to reduce waste, reusing and recycling, composting and many more.”

[New Strategy Launched to Tackle Violence Against Women and Girls in Suffolk](#)

While Suffolk remains a safe county in which to live, work, and visit, the reality is that Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continue to affect too many people. These crimes are often driven by harmful attitudes and gender-based stereotypes that disproportionately impact women and girls. However, the strategy recognises that anyone, regardless of gender identity, can be a victim and that support must be inclusive and far-reaching.

The new Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy places the experiences of victims and survivors at its heart. Shaped through extensive engagement with victim-survivors, support services, and frontline professionals, the strategy sets a clear and ambitious vision:

For everyone in Suffolk to play their part in preventing and identifying Violence Against Women and Girls, creating the safety we all deserve.

To achieve this vision, the strategy is built around four key ambitions:

- Stop the abuse before it starts
- Support every survivor
- Hold abusers accountable
- Build a united front

In March 2025, the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board formally endorsed the strategy, marking an important milestone in the county's coordinated response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality and Chair of the Suffolk Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said:

"These are complex issues that require a joined-up approach, with action across all parts of our community. This strategy provides a shared vision and a plan for how we can work together to create lasting change in Suffolk."

Help is available, whether you are currently experiencing abuse, have recently left an abusive relationship, or are concerned about someone you know, you are not alone. A wide range of local, specialist support services is available [Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) | Suffolk Constabulary](#)

For more information, and to read the full strategy, visit: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/asset-library/Suffolk-VAWG-Strategy-2025-28.pdf>

Council reorganisation affects us all - so have your say today

A new survey giving residents the opportunity to shape the future of councils and public services in Suffolk has been launched.

It's part of the Government plan to reshape and streamline councils in Suffolk to save money, reduce confusion and improve public services for residents.

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for devolution, local government reform and NSIPs, said: "It's fairly well known that we strongly believe that replacing Suffolk's six local authorities with a single new council would be smarter, simpler and better for our county.

"We've arrived where we have because early figures show it's the only way to save money, improve services and keep your council tax as low as possible.

"But that doesn't mean our proposal is the finished product. We want our plan to improve residents' connection with their local council and we'd like their help to ensure that's the case.

"A key part of this work is finding out what people think about the state of local government in Suffolk – and what their hopes are for the future.

"After all, it's their council tax and services so what they think is vitally important.

"This survey will help us to develop our plan so that we can be confident it addresses the

issues that matter most to you. I'd therefore encourage all Suffolk residents to take a moment to have their say."

The survey only takes about 10 minutes to complete, and can be done online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/devolution, by emailing devolution@suffolk.gov.uk or by calling 0345 603 1842 where a member of Suffolk County Council's customer services team can help residents to complete the survey.

People can also visit any of Suffolk's 45 libraries to complete the survey online.

It asks questions about local democracy – such as how you raise issues that need addressing, local decision making – such as how you might want to get involved and about the specifics of council reorganisation itself.

The survey is open for eight weeks – until 4 August 2025.

The survey will play a part in helping Suffolk County Council to develop a comprehensive business plan that looks at the best way to organise councils and deliver public services in Suffolk – so that the Government has all the information it needs to decide which proposal(s) to put out to public consultation.

From best practice elsewhere in the country to the costs of various options currently on the table, no stone is being left unturned.

Whilst a final proposal is still to be developed, Suffolk County Council believes that a new single local council is the smartest, simplest, and best option for the whole of Suffolk which will deliver the biggest savings and most sustainable service improvements. The council argues that any alternatives will have to work hard to justify the risks of breaking up critical services like social care, creating new council boundaries and smaller population sizes.

Early analysis by financial consultants PwC suggests that establishing a single new local council could cost around £19 million but that this could be repaid quickest through the significant financial savings achieved by having one council.

Alternatively, the cost of breaking Suffolk into two or even three – as proposed by Suffolk's district and borough councils - would cost £7 million to £13 million more and, in the case of three new councils, that investment would never be repaid as there would be no savings to be found.

Councillor Rout said: "If we want our new structure to retain key local services and to be truly accessible, then the new council or councils needs to be able to afford to do so. "Breaking Suffolk up would place such financial pressure on new councils that those small, discretionary local services we all value would be at risk from day one.

"To create a truly sustainable and effective council structure for Suffolk, one new council is not just the only viable option, but also the best one."

Fresh plaudits for Gull Wing bridge at awards ceremony

Congratulations to all involved with Suffolk's iconic Gull Wing bridge in Lowestoft, which has been recognised once again at a prestigious national awards ceremony.

It was 'Highly Commended' at the Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) awards held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London in front of an audience of 450 industry professionals.

The bridge had been nominated in the CIHT Infrastructure Award, which recognises exceptional engineering solutions that have delivered creative and resilient infrastructure. However the bridge was pipped to top spot by Belfast Grand Central Station. The Herring bridge in Great Yarmouth was 'Commended' in the same category.

The 'Highly Commended' certificate was presented to Andrew Cook, Executive Director for Growth, Highways and Infrastructure at SCC, and Gull Wing bridge project director Simin Bretherton, along with colleagues from bridge designers Arup.

Andrew said: "The new Gull Wing crossing has been transformative for Lowestoft since it opened last September and is a critical enabler and catalyst for future growth and regeneration.

"This recognition by CIHT is a fantastic reward for everyone at Suffolk County Council who contributed to the success of the Gull Wing from planning and design through to construction and commissioning."

The bridge is the world's largest rolling bascule bridge operated by hydraulic cylinders.

It spans Lake Lothing and opened to the public on September 7, 2024, being officially opened by Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal on November 19.

Costing around £146 million the bridge, delivered by Suffolk County Council with Farrans Construction as the main contractor, has significantly reduced congestion and improved connectivity between the northern and southern parts of the town.

Spanning 345 meters in total, the bridge features a main bascule span that is 39.5 meters long, 22 meters wide, and 35 meters tall.

When raised, it offers a 12-meter clearance above high tide, accommodating marine vessels up to 32 meters wide.

Suffolk challenges Government on Planning reform at a National Infrastructure Conference

The Council and other speakers raised concerns that proposed changes to the NSIP regime were not suitably robust to manage the significant changes which NSIPs can bring to host communities, particularly with the proposed replacement of a statutory duty for pre-submission consultation with statutory guidance.

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

"I'm proud that Suffolk County Council continues to lead the way with its NSIP expertise and influence and can bring together colleagues and speakers from around the country. "Suffolk has one of the greatest concentrations of NSIPs in the UK, and for me it's important to ensure that local communities are considered first-and-foremost by local authorities, project promoters and government. "Today there were some robust discussions around government's proposals to scrap the statutory duty to consult for NSIPs. "This is something that the county council fundamentally disagrees with - our communities need more and better consultation, not less. "We welcome any opportunity to further engage with Government to share our expertise as to what meaningful engagement should look like."

Delegates from across the country attended the Conference to hear speakers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), legal experts, and industry leaders discussing the emerging

Planning and Infrastructure Bill, effective communication with project promoters, and the importance of local impact reports.

The conference further cements Suffolk County Council's recognised role as a Centre of Excellence for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) for its expertise when engaging with projects, such as Sizewell C, the Gull Wing, National Grid upgrades, solar farms and offshore wind farms.

The conference was sponsored by Cornerstone Barristers, Howes Percival, National Infrastructure Planning Association and Sharpe Pritchard.

Following the success of this year's conference, it will take place again in June 2026.

Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs have arrived!

Two cars with a range of over 200 miles have been placed at each of the following locations:

- Girling St Car Park, Sudbury
- Maiden Way Car Park, Hadleigh

- Station Yard Car Park, Needham Market

With the average vehicle parked 96% of the time, the Car Club gives residents the opportunity to simply book a car for the minutes, hours or day that they need, cutting out the expense of car ownership. Suffolk are receiving free membership to the Car Club as well as credit on their account so they can start using the cars straight away.

Car Clubs have been trialled in other areas of the country and can improve air quality, reduce congestion and parking pressure and increase mobility to those without access to their own car. Residents can also experience driving an electric vehicle without the cost of owning one.

The Plug In Suffolk Car Club is just one way that Suffolk's local authorities are helping to create a net zero Suffolk. This project delivers on two of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan's goals; a reduced number of cars on the road and an increased proportion of vehicles on the road that are low or zero emission. You can find out more about the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan at greensuffolk.org.

Over the next few months, two car club vehicles are due to be delivered to each of the following further locations:

- Norfolk Road, Ipswich
- Crown Street, Stowmarket
- Cannon Street, Bury St Edmunds
- Ann Street, Ipswich
- Granary Road, Newmarket
- Norwich Road, Lowestoft
- Castle Street, Woodbridge

An initial 18-month trial of the Car Club will determine the appetite for a wider scheme across the county so we could see electric community vehicles rolled out to more locations in Suffolk in the future.

To join the car club, visit co-wheels.org.uk/Suffolk. Suffolk residents can use promo code Suffolk15 to get free membership and £15 credit on their account. After becoming a member, vehicles can be booked via the website, Co Wheels app or over the phone.

This innovative project is funded by Suffolk's public sector organisations and managed by Suffolk County Council with additional charge point funding provided by the Department for Transport's On Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme (ORCS). On the ground, the Car Clubs themselves will be delivered by Co Wheels and the chargepoints provided by Connected Kerb, with Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils managing the chargepoints located in their car parks.

Councillor Gerald Kelly, Chair of the Suffolk Councils' Environment Portfolio Holders' Group, said:

“It is so exciting to see the delivery of the first batch of Plug in In Suffolk Car Club electric vehicles. As a largely rural county where private transport is heavily relied on, this scheme helps people access a more sustainable method of private transport that is also cost effective and better for the environment.

I encourage everybody in the surrounding areas to use the Plug In Suffolk Car Club whether to transport their families or for work. Once the scheme has been up and running for several months, we will welcome feedback on this trial to see if there is an appetite for Car Clubs to become a permanent part of Suffolk.”

Richard Falconer, Head of Mobility at Co Wheels, said:

“We are delighted to be expanding our network of Co Wheels cars across Suffolk, offering a smarter, greener alternative to car ownership. With each Car Club vehicle taking up to 20 private cars off the road, Co Wheels is helping residents reduce congestion, cut emissions and enjoy more flexible, sustainable travel.”

£8m funding for Bus Service improvements

The funding from the Department of Transport’s Local Authority Bus Grant can be used to create new bus services or enhance existing routes.

Following on from previous grants from the Department for Transport to improve bus services, totalling £3.7m of revenue funding between 2023 and 2025, the new grant which has been allocated for 2025/26 comprises of:

- £2,805,076 revenue for delivering new or enhanced services.
- £5,229,805 capital for new and improved bus stops, bus stations, bus priority measures or vehicle upgrades.

This money will enable Suffolk County Council to invest up to £5 million in capital projects to increase bus priority on congested streets, make improvements to bus stops and gain a better understanding of the journeys people are taking, paving the way for more innovative fare offers in the future. The council also plans to upgrade the current Real Time Passenger Information system, giving live updates on when buses will arrive at stops across the county.

The remaining £2.8 million will be spent supporting the existing services on the county’s bus network and working with bus companies to finalise a number of route improvements and new services, set to launch later this year.

The previous funding has created and enhanced more than 15 routes across the county, through the council’s Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP). These included the first Sunday and evening service between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds for more than 20 years and direct links from Haverhill and Mildenhall to the West Suffolk Hospital.

Successful bids will be contacted in the coming days with new and enhanced services coming online later this year.

“We have seen the positive impact from the previous BSIP funding and our close work with parish councils and local community groups, to enhance and set up new bus links – in many cases the first links in many years allowing people to access goods and services using public transport.”

CLlr Chris Chambers, Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste

CLlr Chambers continued: “This new round of funding will enable us to continue to improve bus journeys in the county and support our ambition to help make public transport a viable alternative to the car for more Suffolk residents.

“We are also aware of the recent cancellations of services in Newmarket and Marham Park, and we are working with local providers and the community to find solutions, utilising the funding from Department for Transport. We have an excellent track record of supporting services when needed and hope to reach a solution soon.”

A full list of enhanced and new services funded with the previous BSIP funding can be found at: [Bus Service Improvement Plan - Suffolkonboard](#) including videos from services who received BSIP round 1 funding.

Details of successful bids for the latest round of funding will be posted on Suffolk On Board.

Local businesses celebrated for carbon reduction achievements

The Carbon Charter was set up in 2010 by Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency. Since then, over 500 businesses of all sizes have received Carbon Charter awards for taking on climate action, by reducing their carbon emissions, supporting their local community and developing green spaces.

This year’s event was hosted by long-standing Carbon Charter members, Home Farm Nacton. They use the latest farming technologies, robots and AI to produce organic vegetables, Red Tractor certified and LEAF marque crops.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality said:

“It was fantastic to meet a variety of local businesses who all have the common goal to reduce their impact on the environment, as well as helping to reduce costs and overheads.

“This is something the county council itself takes very seriously with our own operations, and with the organisations we deal with – around half of our top 100 suppliers now have their own carbon reduction targets.

“We’re delighted to offer the Carbon Charter to local businesses, to share our knowledge and support them on their sustainability journeys.”

Attendees enjoyed speakers from CNH Tractors, Groundwork East and Home Farm Nacton, as well as a tour of the farm and seeing its droid robots in action. Carbon Charter Awards were presented to:

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Shepherd Engineering
Kelling Heath Holiday Park
Woodhill Park

Local businesses at any stage of their carbon reduction journey can benefit from the work of the Carbon Charter, whether they are not sure where to start, or are looking to take their efforts to the next level.

For more information on the Carbon Charter, visit www.carboncharter.org

Success for Flood Investigations and Grants team at prestigious local government awards

Suffolk County Council’s Flood Investigations and Grants team is celebrating after winning a national award for its work supporting the communities affected by one of Britain’s worst storms of the century.

It has won the Small Team of the Year category in the prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards.

The team was set up in the immediate aftermath of Storm Babet in 2023 to assist flood victims in applying for funding grants and helping communities get back on their feet.

Team leader Ellie Coleby and grants manager Beverly Davies were presented with the award by stand-up comedian, writer, and actor Maisie Adam in a prize-giving evening at Grosvenor House in London attended by more than 1,400 people.

Matt Hullis, Suffolk County Council Head of Environment Strategy said: “We are absolutely thrilled and delighted to win this award, it is recognition of the incredible hard work of this team.

“I am so proud of each and every member for their dedication in helping the people of Suffolk following Storm Babet.”

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council Cabinet member for Operational Highways and Flooding, said: “Huge congratulations to the team for a richly deserved award.

“Storm Babet hit Suffolk hard and, while not forgetting the superb response of all the other organisations and individuals who contributed to the recovery effort, the way this newly formed team rose to the challenge was magnificent.”

The Flood Investigations and Grants Team was set up immediately after Storm Babet in October 2023, which saw the worst flooding in Suffolk for more than 70 years with over 900 homes and businesses affected.

It hit the ground running, investigating the causes, streamlining procedures, collaborating with the Environment Agency, district/borough and parish councils, and working to keep communities informed and supported.

The LGC judges said: “Suffolk CC's entry was a great example of a small team responding to crisis with compassion, tenacity, and creativity.

“The judges were impressed with how they faced a potentially overwhelming challenge through strong leadership, courageous approach to building trust with residents and partners whilst taking opportunities to do things differently.

“This resulted in innovation, better relationships which are having long term impacts for residents which a whole range of public services could learn from.”

The LGC Awards identify and celebrate outstanding practices and innovations delivered by councils, highlighting the significant contributions local government makes to communities and showcasing the hard work of teams and individuals.

Further details of this year’s awards can be found [on the LGC website](#).

Stowmarket shop closed for selling illegal tobacco and vapes

A Suffolk store has been ordered to close for three months following a pioneering joint operation by Suffolk County Council Trading Standards and Mid Suffolk District Council to tackle the sale of illegal tobacco and vapes.

This is the first closure order in Suffolk granted by the courts for the sales of illegal tobacco or vapes from a business.

Star Convenience, situated on Ipswich Street, Stowmarket and currently owned by Mr Hawkar Omer Rasul, was the subject of multiple enforcement visits since it first opened in late 2023.

Initial action began back in November 2023, when Trading Standards officers seized illegal tobacco hidden under the counter during an inspection of the newly opened store. Two further inspections during 2024, supported by Suffolk Police and using tobacco detection dogs, revealed hidden concealments were being used to hide illegal goods on site. In total

134 pouches of hand rolling tobacco, 463 packets of illegal cigarettes, and 458 illegal vapes were found and seized.

Following engagement with the landlord, there was a change in tenant, however further test purchase operations conducted by Trading Standards in late 2024 and early 2025 confirmed Star Convenience was still selling illegal tobacco.

In light of this persistent criminal activity, Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk Trading Standards successfully applied for a three-month closure order, which was granted by the courts to protect the local community and prevent further harm.

Councillor Steve Wiles, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member for Public Protection, said:

“This closure sends a clear message that we will not tolerate the sale of illegal tobacco or vaping products here in Suffolk.

“These items are not only harmful to resident’s health, but they also undermine legitimate local businesses and fund organised crime. I commend the work of our Trading Standards team and partners in bringing this case to a successful conclusion.”

Graham Crisp, Head of Suffolk Trading Standards, added:

“Our officers have uncovered repeated and deliberate attempts to conceal illegal goods, including the use of hidden compartments and persistent unlawful trading. The sale of illegal tobacco and vapes puts the public at risk and damages community trust.

“This Closure Order is the result of thorough investigation, community intelligence, and partnership working. It is the first one in Suffolk for such activity and we will be seeking to use this powerful enforcement mechanism much more in the future to tackle and prevent the sales of illegal tobacco and vapes”

Leader of Mid Suffolk District Council, Cllr Andy Mellen, said:

“I am delighted that by working with Suffolk Trading Standards we have been able to demonstrate our council’s zero-tolerance approach to the sale of illegal and potentially dangerous tobacco and vapes.

“We will continue to take all possible steps to protect our communities from crime and anti-social behaviour, while supporting legitimate traders on our high streets.”

Report the sales of illegal tobacco and vapes to Trading Standards via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Improvements identified to boost walking and cycling thanks to Active Travel

Improvements to boost walking and cycling and improve road safety in two parts of Suffolk are taking shape following consultations with the public.

Designs to encourage walking, cycling, and wheeling are being progressed for West Felixstowe and on the road between the villages of Copdock and Capel St Mary.

Following two public consultations, which took place in 2023 and 2024, the schemes are now being refined to take into account the feedback received.

They are part of a package of schemes across Suffolk that the council is working on following funding from Active Travel England.

The scheme for West Felixstowe covers the area around three schools - SET Felix primary school, Grange Community primary school and The Bridge school.

Following feedback from residents and students from Felixstowe High School, Suffolk County Council is now reviewing the designs to:

- Retain existing levels of on-street parking within the neighbourhood
- See if shared-use paths for pedestrian and cyclists are appropriate or if there is an alternative solution to provide safe space for cycling
- Consider how to improve traffic flows along the northern section of Maidstone Road
- Ensure the design of the junction of Maidstone Road and the High Road allows people to cross
- Ensure spaces outside SET Felix and Grange primary schools create a safe environment for families accessing them
- Consider if there are sufficient safe crossing points for pedestrians
- Consider where 20mph limits might be appropriate to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists and adding in design features to support this
- Decide on how to prioritise different elements of the scheme for delivery

The council will now review the designs before moving on to fully detailed plans ready for construction, which it is hoped will begin during 2025. More details are available on [the Suffolk County Council website](#).

The scheme for Copdock and Capel St Mary is along a 3.5 mile route between Whights Corner on London Road in Copdock and finishing at the junction of The Street and Cedar's Lane in Capel St Mary.

Based on feedback from the consultation, Suffolk County Council is now reviewing the designs to:

- Give the easiest possible access to Copdock village hall and best location of the proposed crossing

- Ensure residents on London Road can access their driveways without compromising the safety and convenience of people walking and cycling
- Ensure there is sufficient room for HGVs to turn in and out of London Road
- Consider extending the designs past Whight's Corner to link up to the existing cycle route to the Ipswich Park and Ride Service at Copdock
- Consider how to encourage reduced speeds on London Road
- Consider the design of the existing zebra crossing outside Capel St Mary primary school

Work is now underway to identify funding sources for this scheme. More details on the plan can be found at the [Suffolk County Council website](#).

Councillor Chris Chambers, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste said: “Public consultations help us shape and design the urban environment for the benefit of the people living and working within it and I thank everyone who contributed.

“These proposed improvements for Felixstowe and from Copdock to Capel St Mary are the latest chapter in the story of how Suffolk residents continue to benefit from more than £10 million of funding from Active Travel England to date.

“Through this funding we can make it easier for people to travel around Suffolk more sustainably.”

Soap, suds and sirens: Suffolk's firefighters to lather up for a worthy cause

The event - The Chief's Challenge - is being organised by SFRS firefighter Ed Crawford, who has taken on the role of charity co-ordinator for the Fire Fighters Charity in Suffolk.

The charity provides vital clinical care and wellbeing support to members of the UK's fire services and their families. It helps them cope with physical, emotional and social challenges, supports recovery from injuries and illness, and assists with the transition to life after service.

By simply taking your car for a wash, you can help ensure that our county's firefighters have reliable support when they face tough times - just as you can always count on them to be there for you in yours.

Commenting on what the Service hopes to achieve from the initiative, Ed said: “We are aiming to wash as many cars as possible and hope to raise a total of at least £10,000. With the support of our communities, this is an achievable goal.”

“With average prices for a hand car wash ranging anywhere between £7 and £100, we're offering our services at an absolute steal.”

Thanks to a generous donation of £1,000 from Greene King Brewery - which has been brewing quality beer in Bury St Edmunds for over 200 years - the event will be well-equipped. The funds will be used to purchase essential car wash equipment such as soap, sponges, and buckets. There'll be no cheating with high-pressure hoses - it's all about good old-fashioned elbow grease!

Martin Hayes, Finance Director for Brewing and Brands at Greene King, said: "It is a pleasure to be able to support the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service with its charity event and we encourage anyone in the area on the 28th June to visit and support this brilliant cause."

SFRS stations taking part are Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Clare, Elmswell, Eye, Framlingham, Hadleigh, Haverhill, Ixworth, Lowestoft South, Newmarket, Orford, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Wickhambrook and Wrentham.

Halesworth fire station held one on the 25th May and raised £673.57 (not including card donations), and Bungay has one planned for 5th July.

For further information about the charity, please visit www.firefighterscharity.org.uk.

Launch of Armed Forces Week 2025 in Suffolk

This week is Armed Forces Week, where the country has the chance to show its appreciation for the contributions of the UK Armed Forces to society.

It is also to raise awareness of the role of the military and bring communities together to support service members and their families.

There will be events throughout the week culminating with the Suffolk Armed Forces Day celebration, which takes place on Saturday June 28 from 11am to 4pm at Christchurch Park's Mansion Lawn in Ipswich.

As the new Armed Forces Commissioner for Suffolk, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of Suffolk's Armed Forces Community, the Armed Forces Covenant Board, and the many supporting organisations who have made me feel so welcome in my new role.

Suffolk County Council, and its armed forces champion Councillor Mick Fraser, have been extremely supportive as I settle in to my role and to whom I am very grateful.

As I begin attending events across the county, I am very much looking forward to meeting the individuals and organisations who dedicate themselves to ensuring that our Armed Forces personnel, Reservists, Veterans, and their families are not disadvantaged by living or working in Suffolk.

In my role as Chair of the Suffolk Armed Forces Covenant Board, I would also like to take this opportunity during Armed Forces Week to share with you three key veteran-focused projects that the Board is advancing in the coming years.

First, we are committed to strengthening collaboration between statutory and charity sectors. By improving understanding between service and civilian organisations, we aim to enable quicker and more accurate signposting to support for those in need across the county.

Second, we will be supporting the new VALOUR network, as announced by Alistair Carns DSO OBE MC MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Veterans and People).

This initiative will bring together housing, employment, and health services to deliver easier access to care and support for veterans in Suffolk through regional networks.

Third, we will continue to encourage employers, local government, and statutory bodies in Suffolk to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and participate in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme—an important way to recognise and celebrate their support for the Armed Forces Community.

Suffolk is proud to be home to a number of Armed Forces units. These include a small Royal Navy detachment and the Army's 7 Aviation Support Battalion Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, 3 & 4 Regiment Army Air Corps at Wattisham Flying Station; 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment, 28 Engineer Regiment (CBRN), and 70 Gurkha Field Squadron, Royal Engineers at Rock Barracks in Woodbridge; and RAF Honington, which hosts 1 Sqn RAF Regiment, the RAF Force Protection Force HQ, the Specialist Police Wing, and 1 (Tactical) Police Squadron.

We also have six Reserve units across the county for both the Army and RAF. In addition, we value the contribution of our American partners—USAF personnel and families stationed at RAF Mildenhall and Lakenheath—who are an integral part of our Suffolk communities.

In total, Suffolk is home to around 3,340 UK military personnel, 2,540 service family members and 415 civilians supporting the UK Armed Forces.

Every one of these individuals plays a vital role in keeping our country safe, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

There are an estimated 30,000 veterans, of whom about 9,500 are of working age. These are primarily based around Stowmarket, Bury St Edmunds, and Woodbridge.

I would like to thank the Lord Lieutenancy of Suffolk, the East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, and the many charities and partners who support our Armed Forces Community.

In particular, I thank all our local councils and our Armed Forces Champions for the services they provide and for their vital leadership as part of the Armed Forces Covenant Board.

In this Armed Forces Week, let us all reflect on the courage, service, and dedication of our Armed Forces—past and present—and recommit to supporting them in every way we can.

Set Sail on a Journey Through Suffolk's Maritime Past with Suffolk Archives

Running from 27 June to 27 September at The Hold in Ipswich, the exhibition explores Suffolk's deep connections to the sea from smuggling and sea rescues to shipbuilding, coastal communities, and historic ports.

This free exhibition features fascinating contributions from local museums and organisations including the Felixstowe and Offshore Radio Group, Ipswich School, East Anglian Traditional Arts Centre, Lowestoft Maritime Museum, and the RNLi Archives. It is supported by Associated British Ports.

Councillor Philip Faircloth-Mutton, Cabinet Member for Environment, Communities and Equality, said:

"We are delighted to host this fascinating exhibition, which shines a light on Suffolk's proud and diverse maritime heritage. It's a wonderful opportunity for communities across the county to come together, learn, and celebrate the stories that helped shape our coastal identity."

To accompany the exhibition, Suffolk Archives has launched a packed programme of talks, walks, workshops, and family events offering something for curious minds of all ages. Young explorers can dive into storytelling adventures with The Yarnsmith of Norwich, Grethe Jensen, and Hannah Brailsford, who will bring to life tales of sea monsters, pirates, treasure and more.

Families can also drop anchor at Let's Get Crafty workshops taking place at The Hold in Ipswich and at venues across the county including Newmarket's National Horse Racing Museum, Haverhill Library, Stowmarket Library, Lowestoft Library, Eye Library, and Moyse's Hall in Bury St Edmunds. These creative sessions are a fun and engaging way to explore maritime myths and legends.

Also on tour is Following the Fish, a travelling exhibition telling the powerful and often overlooked story of the Scotch Girls, women who followed the herring fleets from Scotland to Suffolk and Norfolk. A collaboration with High Life Highland's Archive Service, Tasglannan Eilean, and the Norfolk Record Office, and supported by the Lloyd's Register Foundation, the exhibition visits towns where their story once unfolded.

So, whether you're a seasoned history buff or just looking for a fun family day out, chart a course to Suffolk Archives this summer where there's something for everyone to discover.

For more information and event listings, visit www.suffolkarchives.co.uk.