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Suffolk County Council Report for Clare Division September 2024

Suffolk launches pothole prevention programme ahead of winter weather

Suffolk County Council has launched a pothole prevention programme to target areas of Suffolk's road network that could worsen when the winter weather hits.

Teams with additional resources and the latest technology have already started visiting and treating locations susceptible to deterioration or where there are smaller defects that could grow as the colder and wetter weather strikes.

Building on the success of earlier trials with the Roadmender Elastomac and Dragon Patcher machines, teams will be deployed across Suffolk to use this equipment in addition to our usual Safety Defect Service that deals with larger defects as they occur.

Highways workers using the Roadmender Elastomac system will target urban roads that are at higher risk of damage to locate cracks and smaller potholes and carry out repairs. Unlike traditional methods, which require potholes to be saw-cut, excavated and asphalt to be compacted on top, Elastomac is a flowable material used to seal the repaired area.

Once applied, this adhesive, flexible material bonds with the existing road surface, preventing water getting in the cracks and extending the road's lifespan. The process is more sustainable and efficient, reducing material movement and waste by 90%, lowering costs and minimising disruption.

With the Dragon Patcher machines, these clean the surface of the road using compressed air, preparing it for repair with an application of aggregate and hot bitumen material, and will target rural roads.

Fuelled by biodiesel, HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil), the patcher reduces raw material use, generates zero waste, and has demonstrated significant carbon savings compared to traditional patching techniques.

The locations have been carefully chosen, focusing on areas with a higher risk of potholes forming during winter. Highways teams will be working when weather conditions allow, from 7am to 5pm, moving across the county to treat the more vulnerable areas. Whilst the repairs are underway, traffic will be managed temporarily by staff on site, and there may be waiting times of up to 15 minutes.

Highways authorities up and down the country experience an inevitable rise in potholes during the winter months. Water seeps into cracks in the road surface which freezes, expands then breaks up the road

surface. The purpose of this preventative programme is to seal treated areas of Suffolk's road network to reduce water getting into cracks reduce the overall number of potholes forming.

For more information on our targeted project, please visit the [pothole prevention programme page](#).

Government's new housing targets must put infrastructure first

Suffolk County Council has raised concerns in its response to the government's proposed reforms for planning policies for England.

In particular, it expresses fears about the lack of clarity around infrastructure, such as schools, transport, waste and community facilities when new housing developments are approved.

Last week, the government closed its consultation on plans to change the National Planning Policy Framework and other parts of the planning system.

The proposals include a significant increase in the number of new homes to be built across Suffolk – the government's own figures suggest that East Suffolk alone would see an 87% increase in the number new homes, compared those currently planned.

Suffolk County Council is already very active in securing developer contributions and delivering infrastructure. It secures Section 106 contributions as well as funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy from district councils - but this is to maintain a baseline level of service rather than make a positive overall improvement to infrastructure.

In its response to government, the council said that the simple question of "who pays" for the infrastructure needs to be answered when permissions are being granted. Local planning authorities should not be allowed to assume that other authorities and agencies will make up any difference.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards honour their heroes

Firefighters, staff, and volunteers have been honoured at Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's annual awards ceremony.

More than 50 long service and good conduct medals and clasps plus accolades and certificates for outstanding service to the community were presented in the ceremony at Trinity Park Showground in Ipswich on Wednesday October 2.

The awards also recognise the work of Suffolk County Council Trading Standards and emergency planning.

The Miles Hammond Trophy, awarded for excellence by an individual or team during an emergency incident, has been awarded to Firefighter Matthew Brown.

He was sitting in his car in Lowestoft when he saw a teenage girl knocked down as she crossed the road.

She was thrown into the air and landed 10 metres away. Matthew gave her CPR until an ambulance arrived. He also aided the driver of the car to prevent him becoming a target of hostility at the scene of the accident.

The Excellence in Community Safety Award was won by the Suffolk Trading Standards 'No Cold Calling Zone' team for its work in reducing doorstep crime and promote confidence in people who may have been subject to doorstep crime or who are more vulnerable to it.

There are now 217 such zones across Suffolk and since the launch of the first, in 2009, more than 34,000 households have been protected from cold callers, either by living in a zone or through stickers provided to individual households which give legal effect to the displayed 'no cold calling' request.

The Cabinet Member Award for Volunteer of the Year went to the Salvation Army, whose volunteers provide refreshments for firefighters at the scene of major incidents.

The team are on stand-by 24 hours a day to crew a response vehicle kept at Stowmarket fire station. On receiving the call they mobilise to buy fresh food and get to an incident within 40 minutes.

Over the years the team have provided thousands of firefighters with tens of thousands of hotdogs, sandwiches, soups, and hot drinks.

The Alan Soards Award for Best Fire Station went to Debenham fire station for its work in the aftermath of Storm Babet, despite being flooded itself.

A Lifetime Achievement award was made to Nigel Howlett of Suffolk Trading Standards in recognition of his 44 year career with the organisation which has seen him successfully investigate numerous rogue businesses.

They include car-clocking cases, where many miles were taken off vehicles; an investigation into a business producing counterfeit goods which required a visit to Dublin to obtain evidence; and the prosecution of a rogue builder for fraudulent trading against consumers on home improvement work.

A dozen Certificates of Merit were presented by Yvonne Gilchrist-Mason OBE, the High Sheriff of Suffolk, while Certificates of Long Service were presented by Councillor Liz Harsant, the Chair of Suffolk County Council.

Chief Fire Officer Jon Lacey and Becky Heginbotham-Blount of Suffolk Resilience Forum presented awards marking the work of the forum, a multi-agency group providing strategic and operational guidance for major incidents.

His Majesty's Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk, Mark Pendlington, presented HM The King's Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, which are awarded for 20 years service to Firefighter Neil Bonham, Watch Manager Kevin Chambers, Firefighter Bryan Cooper, Crew Manager Gareth Cossey, Area Manager Henry Griffin, Firefighter Gary Nayler, Crew Manager Richard Plant, Firefighter Shelly Pleasance, Watch Manager Kirsten Thorpe, Firefighter Carl Vearer and Firefighter Darren Wood.

30 Year clasps were awarded to Deputy Chief Fire Officer Dan Fearn, Firefighter Les Field, Crew Manager Peter Goodhand, Watch Manager Steve Mullen (retired), Firefighter Stefan Saunders, Area Manager Andy Smith, and Station Manager Mark Walker.

40 Year clasps were awarded to Watch Manager Martyn Hazelwood, Watch Manager Paul Jolland, Crew Manager Paul Kerridge, and Station Manager Russell Punchard.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of Firefighter Steven Fisk, an on-call firefighter with Halesworth fire station, who passed away in September.

Council to offer interest-free loans to make homes more energy efficient

Suffolk County Council will offer interest-free loans to help make residents' homes warmer, safer and cheaper to run.

Energy efficiency upgrades such as insulation, solar panels, batteries, glazing, or heat pumps will all be possible with loans of up to £15,000 to be repaid over a maximum of 7 years at 0% interest.

The £3 million project will be open to homeowners across Suffolk from November, but you can [register your interest now at Lendology](#).

Making homes more energy-efficient helps retain their heat and use less energy, meaning homeowners can save on their energy bills and reduce their carbon emissions. A warm home also has a positive impact on health and well-being.

Money for the loans comes from £3 million of funding received as part of the council's negotiations with the previous government to secure a County Deal.

It was allocated from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to support an energy efficiency and energy generation 0% loan fund for people that cannot access grants currently available to low-income households.

The scheme supports Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan, by increasing the number of properties which have energy-efficient and low carbon energy measures installed.

An increase in demand for energy efficiency measures will also help support businesses providing those services, meaning jobs, skills development and investment in the green economy.

Suffolk County Council is partnering with Lendology CIC to deliver the interest-free loan scheme. Lendology CIC is an experienced Social Enterprise Lender, managing similar schemes with councils across the country.

For more information and to register your interest in an interest-free loan, visit [Lendology's website](#).

Suffolk residents encouraged to share views on new Local Transport Plan

Suffolk's communities helped shape a new draft of the Suffolk Local Transport Plan by sharing their views back in February of this year and the county council is now seeking feedback on the final proposed document.

The plan which details activity between 2025-2040 sets out a long-term vision for transport in Suffolk and covers themes such as decarbonisation of transport, strengthening the local economy, promoting health, wellbeing and social inclusion, and creating better-connected places that encourage a range of transport choices.

Alongside this county-wide plan, the county council has produced fifteen 'Area Transport Plans' and a 'Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan' which are the funded implementation plans for the wider Suffolk Local Transport Plan. These plans outline how the Local Transport Plan's vision and objectives will be delivered in key locations across the county.

The consultation is available via www.suffolk.gov.uk/LTP and the consultation will close on Monday 25 November 2024. The Local Transport Plan and its associated plans will then be presented to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet in 2025.

Suffolk County Council set on major investment to further protect Suffolk from flooding as it calls on Government to 'step up'

Suffolk County Council has announced its intention to invest another £1.5 million to carry out important flooding prevention work.

- Council set to agree £1.5 million to deliver first phase of works identified in initial flood investigation reports
- Authority calls on Government to recognise ongoing impact of Storm Babet and fund £20 million of further prevention work urgently needed
- Extensive work already completed since Storm Babet including more than 111,000 drains cleared and significant road repairs.

The commitment comes as initial flood investigation reports have identified that a further £20 million is needed to complete the work – a figure that the county council can't afford. The council has therefore written to the Flooding Minister, Emma Hardy MP, and demanded the government step up and plug the funding gap.

- [Read the council's letter to DEFRA](#)

Examples of the kind of projects that could be delivered include:

1. Creating flood water retention ponds in land above villages and green spaces within communities to capture water and slow the flow into residential areas.
2. Installing flood doors and non-return valves on drains to stop water entering properties that are particularly at risk of flooding.
3. Help landowners with advice and guidance, especially those within responsibilities to maintain ditches and streams on their properties (known as 'riparian ownership').
4. Bolstering Suffolk Highways' resources to deliver planned and reactive maintenance on the county's roads and footpaths.

Storm Babet struck between October 18 and 21 last year and caused substantial flooding and disruption across Suffolk. A month's worth of rain fell in 24 hours, flooding more than 900 homes and businesses. The impact of the storm was exceptional and demanded an urgent multiagency response.

So far, Suffolk County Council has committed more than £13.75 million for work to aid recovery from Storm Babet.

Suffolk County Council has made several achievements as part of our continued commitment to reduce flood risk.

The council has already committed £12.25 million, including:

- £1 million on bringing in additional flood investigation specialists
- £1.25 million for repairs to Suffolk's highways following the flood damage

- £10 million funding, which was committed in 2021, to address long-standing drainage issues over three years. This complements £2 million a year invested in drainage repairs and improvements funded from the Department for Transport maintenance grant.

The council has completed seven location-based flood investigations, with an estimated 50 to complete. This compares to an average of three or four investigations in an average year. These reports provide a detailed account of events for each flooding location and recommendations for other organisations, landowners, businesses and residents.

Carried out extensive works on Suffolk's highways. Specifically:

- Cleared 96% of highway drainage gullies across Suffolk, more than 111,000. This involves lifting the iron grates and sucking up the debris that has washed off the roads
- Attended more than 3,500 emergency call outs for flooding related incidents – an unprecedented number. This includes pumping an estimated 2.5million litres of water from the roads, removing 53 tonnes of debris and clearing 121 fallen trees
- Rolled out the [DEFRA-funded Recovery Scheme](#) which meant that flooded property owners could apply for up to £5,000 to make their homes and businesses more resilient to future flooding. Suffolk County Council is administering the scheme on behalf of government. [Applications are open until April 2025.](#)

The new money is set to be agreed by the council's Cabinet on 5 November.

Deadline approaching for secondary school places in Suffolk

Parents and carers have until Thursday 31st October 2024 to submit an application to secure their child's place at a secondary school for September 2025.

Applying after the closing date significantly reduces a child's chances of getting a place at their preferred school.

Last year, Suffolk County Council received 7,867 on-time applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to be educated at from September 2024 in Year 7. 93% of applicants received an offer for their first preference school and almost 98% of applicants received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.

A completed application must be submitted for every child requiring a Year 7 place at a secondary school. For families who are planning to move house or think their circumstances may change before next September, it is still important to make an application on time using the child's current address. Further information to help parents and carers with this process is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.

Parents and carers should apply online as they will receive an email confirming that their application has been received. If they are unable to apply online, they should complete a paper application (CAF1), however these cannot be acknowledged, so it is suggested parents and carers obtain proof of postage.

Before making a school application, parents and carers need to carefully consider how they will get their child to and from school. School travel eligibility is based on a child attending their nearest suitable school that would have had a place available and where the distance criteria is met. This might not be the catchment area school. To find out more about SCC's School Travel Policy please visit www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel.

Families who apply online will be able to log on to the Online Service on the National Offer Day (Monday 3rd March 2025) to see their offer of a school place. An email confirmation will also be sent on the day. For those who completed paper applications, offer letters will be sent out by second class post on the National Offer Day.

Applications can be made at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions, where further advice and guidance is also available.

Fostering is...Everything

Fostering can mean everything to those involved. That is the message of a powerful new fostering film from over 100 councils.

‘Everything’ was launched on 17 October 2024. It is the seventh film produced by a growing partnership of councils and children’s trusts to promote local authority fostering. The ‘Everything’ project is the largest collaboration yet, with participants from Cumbria to Devon and Lancashire to Suffolk.

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‘Everything’ follows foster carer Mike and his family on a journey through time with two of the children they have looked after, who are now adults. A surprise 60th birthday party for Mike gives Will and Zara a chance to reflect on how being fostered made a difference to their lives, thanking him for everything.

Thanks to footage shot on a genuine old camcorder, we are taken to the 1990s, to see how Will settles into the family. We also jump back to the 2010s, when a young Zara is being taught to play the guitar by Mike, something that comes full circle when she performs a song at the party. Mike’s son Chris is involved throughout, showing the important role the children of foster carers play.

The concluding message of the film is that what you do with your life could forever change someone else’s – encouraging people to foster in order to make that change.

The film was developed with the input and insight of foster carers and people with care experience, was produced by Reel TwentyFive and project managed by public sector media partner CAN/Rachel Brown.

‘Everything’ is the latest in a series of film collaborations that started in 2017 with ‘Giants’, which was supported by a small number of local authorities in the midlands and has now grown into a national project across England, reflecting the need to recruit more foster carers.

More time to get your Suffolk solar panel and battery storage quote

Over 3,100 Suffolk residents have signed up for a quote from the Solar Together Suffolk scheme for solar panel and battery storage installation – and the deadline for registration is now extended to 15th November 2024.

This gives more homeowners the opportunity to save on their energy bills, cut carbon emissions and boost local renewable energy generation.

Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying a fair price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers, without the hassle of shopping around themselves.

On offer are solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charge points, as well as retrofit battery storage for anyone who already has solar panels installed and is looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate.

Registration to the scheme is free, and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

Suffolk's councils are working in partnership with iChoosr, experts in sustainable energy transition, to make the transition to clean energy as cost-effective and hassle-free as possible, and enabling homeowners to increase their independence from the national grid.

How does it work?

- Householders can register online by 15 November 2024 for free and without obligation at solartogether.co.uk/suffolk
- Approved UK solar PV suppliers participate in a reverse auction. They are able to offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.
- After the auction, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
- Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

iChoosr has been collaborating with UK councils since 2015 on its Solar Together scheme, aiming to accelerate the energy transition nationwide. The initiative aims to encourage residents to partake in the collective purchase of solar PV and battery storage systems. To date, Solar Together has installed 13,750 solar panels in Suffolk, reducing carbon emissions by 27,100 tonnes over 25 years – equivalent to 15,000 cars off the road in that time!

iChoosr's schemes have been delivered in partnership with local authorities in five countries. More than 180 schemes have led to 178,000 residents installing solar PV systems.

Suffolk residents urged to share their views on local pharmaceutical services

Suffolk County Council is calling on residents to share their views on local pharmaceutical services as part of a regular review to ensure that these services continue to meet the evolving needs of the community.

The Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA), which is undertaken every three years in line with statutory requirements, is a comprehensive report designed to assess current pharmaceutical services and identify any gaps or areas for improvement.

Feedback gathered through this survey will help the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board, NHS England, and Integrated Care Boards make informed decisions about future service provisions, including any potential new pharmacy openings.

Pharmaceutical services in Suffolk are delivered through community pharmacies—sometimes referred to as chemists—which include those located in supermarkets, online pharmacies, and specialist medical appliance contractors. These pharmacies not only dispense medicines but also offer essential healthcare advice and support, often serving as the first point of contact for health concerns.

Residents can complete the survey online by visiting <https://bit.ly/4f4PUYC>. The deadline for submissions is 8th November 2024.

By contributing to this important review, residents can help ensure that pharmaceutical services in Suffolk remain fit for purpose and responsive to the needs of the community.

Suffolk Highways unveils new gritting fleet named by county's young people

With winter approaching, Suffolk Highways has welcomed 38 new gritters to replace its existing fleet, including Kieran McSpreader, Albert Brinestein and Morgan Freezeman.

The new gritters have a digital operating system with the latest route map planning software, ensuring they are winter ready to keep Suffolk's roads safe and moving in the event of ice or snow.

A competition to name the gritters was launched at this year's Suffolk Show, with winning entries including Salty, Gritty McGrit Face and Grit Britain, being unveiled during a recent ceremony in Ipswich.

There are also multiple Suffolk-related names in the fleet, such as Spread Sheeran, Lizzie Gritzzini and Grit Rhys Jones in recognition of some of the county's famous residents.

They are not the only celebrities to be honoured, as Gritney Houston, Spready Mercury, Keanu Freeze, Lewis Caploughdie, and David Attenbrrrrrr are set to grace Suffolk's roads in the coming weeks and months.

Whilst the weather has been warmer in recent weeks, Suffolk residents may get a glimpse of the new gritting fleet when they carry out their test grit runs in the coming days.

Further information on winter maintenance carried out by Suffolk Highways, including which roads are gritted, can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/highway-maintenance/check-which-roads-are-gritted.

Loft Insulation Offer gives Suffolk residents 50% off eco-friendly insulation

According to The Energy Saving Trust, an uninsulated home loses up to a quarter of its heat through its roof.

An effective way to reduce this heat loss, and your heating bills, is to insulate your loft.

For the second year running, Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders have provided funding to help Suffolk residents make their homes warmer and save money on their energy bills.

The Suffolk Loft Insulation Offer enables homeowners in Suffolk to receive a 50% discount (up to £200) and free delivery on orders of 200mm or 370mm wide eco-friendly, itch free thermal insulation rolls from High Loft, the UK's leading eco loft insulation brand.

Last year, the project enabled over 5,000m² of roofs in Suffolk to be insulated. This year, the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership want to double that figure. The offer is open to anyone in Suffolk and will only close once the allocated funding has been spent. Simply go to highloft.co.uk/pages/suffolk-council-200-loft-insulation-contribution and fill in the form to receive your discount code.

The Loft Insulation Offer is being funded by Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders and High Loft and will help contribute to Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan and our vision for a net zero Suffolk. To find out more visit greensuffolk.org.

To order, simply [visit the High Loft website](#) and fill in the form to receive your discount code.

Products available for 50% discount up to £200 are:

- [200mm Width](#) - Eco Friendly Itch Free Thermal Insulation Roll

8m x 200mm x 110mm (1.60m²)

- [370mm Width](#) - Eco Friendly Itch Free Thermal Insulation Roll

8m x 370mm x 110mm (2.96m²)