

July 2026 Parish Report

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Cabinet Meetings:

Climate Emergency Declaration Reversed

At Full Council on 16 July, the Reform UK administration at Suffolk County Council tabled a motion to reverse the Climate Emergency Declaration which the council had made in 2019 and then reaffirmed in 2023. They also proposed a review of environmental schemes at the council to make sure that they were making financial savings and not costing the council money. We hosted a protest before the chamber meeting with speakers including Adrian Ramsey MP and Andy Stringer Leader of the Opposition and a member of the Fire Service Union.

During the cabinet meeting councillors from my group argued against the proposal, which came at a time when the county was facing extreme heat, drought and reduced farming yields due to the changing climate.

I argued the actions taken by Reform lead Suffolk Council in response to the climate emergency removes Suffolk Council from a framework with regular monitoring and accountability. By removing the word 'Emergency' we are removed from this framework and Suffolk Council will attract far less government funding to combat climate change. We also pointed out that the council has saved nearly £5m a year due to its carbon reduction programme, money that it badly needed. Unfortunately Reform UK hold the majority of votes in the chamber, this motion was passed.

My group proposed a motion that the council should set out plans for a Universal Minimum Bus Service for all villages in Suffolk to ensure residents can get to their nearest town during commuting hours so they can access employment, education and health services. The county was recently awarded £564,000 to conduct a feasibility study on bus franchising, which would give the council greater control of bus networks, and regularly receives funding from the government to improve bus services which is currently allocated piecemeal to local communities who bid for it. This motion was voted down by the Reform UK administration. This means that all parish that still need a bus service will need to make individual applications. It is a large burden on parishes.

Plans announced for £18.9m of SEND Capital Funding

At Cabinet on Tuesday 14 July, proposals were outlined for £18.9m of High Needs Provision Capital Funding received by the council from the government for 2025-26 and 2026-27. This funding enables the council to increase the number of specialist education placements in the county for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The report outlined the following allocations:

- Specialist provision at secondary phase – £9.8m (168 places)
- Satellite provision linked to special schools – £4m (80 places)
- Mainstream inclusion capacity (ringfenced and flexible) – £2m
- Post-16 specialist provision – £1m
- Adaptations to mainstream schools – £2m

Demand for specialist school placements continues to rise in Suffolk, with a 17% increase in Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in the last year. A greater number of specialist school places across the county means children can be educated closer to home, and without the high costs of independent schools or out of county placements.

You can see information about the council's SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2026-2030 here:

<https://www.suffolklocaloffer.org.uk/asset-library/Suffolk-SEND-Sufficiency-Strategy-2026-2030.pdf>

Budget Outturn for 2025-26 Financial Year

Cabinet on 14 July also reviewed the council's financial outturn for the financial year ending 31 March 2026. The council overspent last year by £15m overall, a figure which the council will need to take from its reserves to balance the books. The main areas of overspend for the council are in Care Purchasing for Adult Social Care, and Children in Care placements. Other areas in adult care did exceed their savings targets for the year, but the increase in demand was still greater than the money saved. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), a 'negative reserve' where the council holds its debt for overspending on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), increased by £70m over the year. The government recently announced it would pay off 90% of councils' DSG debt in autumn 2026, but this will still leave Suffolk County Council with £16m of DSG, which will continue to rise until the government takes over SEND funding from April 2028.

At the same meeting, Cabinet also agreed that the council would object to the EcoPower Suffolk Solar Farm planned for Mid Suffolk.

The council agreed to submit a business plan to the Department for Transport (DfT) for improvements to the A12 between the Seven Hills roundabout and the Woods Lane roundabout. The cost of the scheme has increased from £57.46m in 2021 to £63.61m in 2026 due to the construction inflation, although funding from DfT and third parties will cover most of this, with the cost to the council currently calculated at £3.5m.

Adult Social Care Service rated 'Good' by Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Suffolk County Council's social care services for adults were judged as 'Good' again by CQC following an inspection in December 2025. The rating given to the council was 67%, with the threshold for 'Good' being 62%. Adult social care services are provided by the council to elderly and disabled adults, and those with learning disabilities and autism who need extra help. CQC stated that areas of strength included committed and compassionate staff, strong partnership working with health (NHS) and good multi-agency working to keep people safe. It also complimented the council on its focus on

helping people remain independent and its use of digital technology to support people safely in their own homes. It also identified several areas for improvement, including better support for unpaid carers, staff capacity issues in some teams, reducing waiting times in parts of the system and ensuring care reviews were consistently person-centred.

You can read the full report here: <https://www.cqc.org.uk/care-services/local-authority-assessment-reports/suffolk-0726>

Wildfires

A major wildfire has broken out on Dunwich Heath and Minsmere Nature Reserve, just 4 miles away from Sizewell Nuclear Power Station. More than 370 acres of heathland have been burnt and this could take up to 20 years to recover. Over 100 firefighters were mobilized and there were hundreds of evacuations into Westleton Village Hall. We have many people to be thank to – Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, Westleton Village hall and Residents, The Rural Coffee Caravan, Local farmers and landowners, businesses and the National Trust who supported fire staff. Volunteers will be needed to help with land restoration.

Parish Response to Wildfires

Please be sure your Parish Emergency Plans are updated to include wildfires as due to climate change, they are expected to become more frequent. Including partnering with Suffolk resilience Forum, lists of vulnerable residents, locations of bowers, heavy farm machinery and promote wildfire prevention and awareness.

Planning Committee Meeting

I attended the planning committee meeting on 15th July to speak against the proposal to build a 15 million egg unit to fertilize eggs. On an 18.5 day cycle, with 20 cycles a year, this could add 300 million extra chickens in Suffolk or nearby every year. Each chicken uses up to 1000 L of water from egg to plate including soy feed production. I asked for a Cumulative Impact Assessment to consider the effect of extra poultry provision of Suffolk, air, soil and water. Still, the committee passed Cranswick's plans and these will get the final stamp of approval once new National Planning Policy Guidelines are adopted.

This means that villages will experience more traffic as poultry production is increasingly intensified, our most precious resource in Suffolk – our underground natural aquifers could be over exploited. Our rivers will continue to decline in health, our air quality will decline and we will have more trouble with flies. Honestly, I tried my utmost to protect all of the parishes in the Hoxne and Eye Division from what I perceive to be an unnecessary development.

Traffic

I have met with Eye Town Council and Suffolk Council Officers regarding the traffic issues in Eye, with some 11,000 vehicle movements a day and where lorry strikes are common place. We are working together on a strategy to make the town safer for people.

All parishes have persistent problems with speeding. I have noticed in my village that between 4.30am and 7.30am, then after dark, it is like the wild west, and hardly a vehicle is doing less than 30mph. . I will be working with the community police and I will make a representation with the Police and Crime

Commissioner.

Public Consultation on Cuts to Healthy Child Service

Suffolk County Council has launched a public consultation on proposed changes to its Healthy Child Service, which is provided by the council's Public Health team. The changes include cessation of the Young Person Pathway and Family Nurse Partnership, who provide specialist support to parents under the age of 21 after they have a baby. The proposals also include removal of the Community Staff Nurse role from Health Visiting teams, and the School Nursing service to become term-time only. The consultation runs until 18 September, with a decision likely to be made at Cabinet after that.

You can read through the proposals and respond to the consultation here:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/healthy-child-services-consultations>

People's Emergency Briefing

Many parishes have taken it upon themselves to host the public information film, The People's Emergency Briefing. It is a 50 minute community lead film featuring expert briefings on the climate and nature crisis, designed to educate the public on risks to food security, health and infrastructure. The film is free to broadcast and comes with a support package to have a structured public discussion after the film.

Parishes showing the briefing include:

Stradbroke – Thursday 24th September, 6.45pm, Stradbroke Community Centre, IP21 5JN

Laxfield – Thursday 9th October – 6.30, Location?

Halesworth – 10th September, 7.30pm, St Mary's Church

Fressingfield TBA

Metfield TBA

Please see the [National Emergency Briefing](#) website to book tickets in advance (recommended) or to organise your own event locally.

EcoPower Suffolk (EPS)

I have now completed my Mitigation Response to the plans (23 pages!), my view point was largely due to meetings with Eye residents and Eye Town Council. Some residents in Eye could be completely surrounded by solar panels and BESS batteries and it will have a devastating impact on their lives.

While I am for solar panels on rooves I am not for a project which removes 2200 acres of grade 2 land out of production with little public benefit. If the feedin network was upgraded instead, it would be better for home owners and eco home / business and it would save their costs as well giving local benefit.

I would encourage everyone to put in their own mitigation to [Eco Power Solar](#) and send a copy to their



parish council.

Current Topics

Our current fears are that the Reform lead council will 'firesell' Suffolk County Council profitable business leaving the stripped back council as we enter the LGR reorganisation. The Green party will oppose this type of asset stripping.

Clacton Elections

On a lighter note, with the Clacton by-election scheduled for 13th August, the Green Party as well as the Conservatives and Lib Dem have boycotted the elections. This has effectively positioned Count Binface as Nigel Farage's key challenger.

Please do get in touch if you have issues that I can help with:

Highways and Transport

Education and Schools

Adult Social Care

Childrens' Services

Waste Disposal (not bin collections)

Public Health

Emergency Planning

Libraries and Archives

Social Media and Helpful Links

Follow us on:

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/scc.green/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/suffolkgreens/>

Group Website - <https://suffolkgreens.org.uk/>

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>



Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>