

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Stephen Burroughes – September 2020



- **NEW NAME AS LEISURE CENTRE GETS READY TO RE-OPEN**

Work to complete the £3.4m refurbishment of the former Bungay Pool & Gym was completed last week and the facility, which will be renamed 'Waveney Valley Leisure Centre' will be re-opening in October. Initially estimated to take around 10 months to complete, Covid-19 meant that work was slightly delayed. As well as renewing the mechanical and electrical systems, the work included new changing rooms, showers and toilet, including improved disabled facilities; a new café area with a pool view area, WiFi and air conditioning; new, modern gym equipment and a refurbished studio; a purpose-built spin studio; a new sauna; new tiling in and around the pool and refurbishment of the flume; and improvements to the car parking area.

This is the third centre to undergo a full refurbishment as part of the Council's commitment to improve its leisure facilities and to encourage more people to exercise regularly. This follows Deben and Leiston leisure centres, both of which have undergone major and hugely successful improvements in the past three years. Places Leisure, who operate the Council's leisure centres in the south of the district, have been awarded an interim operational contract for Waveney Valley and will also manage Waterlane Leisure Centre, following the end of Sentinel Leisure Trust's operational contract at both centres. Delays to the contractual/procurement process caused by Covid-19 means that it has not been possible to appoint a permanent operator yet, however, a decision is expected to be taken in December.

Meanwhile, as part of the Council's ongoing improvement programme for its leisure centres, essential specialised work, which has been unable to proceed until now due to Covid-19, will also be undertaken at Waterlane this Autumn.

The work will include replacing the equipment and flooring in the gym, upgrading the lighting and adding new flooring in the sports hall as well as repairing showers and decoration throughout. The pool area will also see improvements with plans to empty the pool to repair the teaching pool moveable floor and the pool tiles. Waterlane will close on 15 October and the work is expected to take around 3 months to complete. Members will be kept fully informed during the works and will be encouraged to use other facilities such as the Waveney Valley during the period of closure.

- **SIMPLIFIED PARKING TARIFFS BEING ROLLED OUT**

Following a delay caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, East Suffolk Council has now begun rolling out new parking tariffs across the district – including a simplified pricing structure and free half hour parking across a number of sites. Reducing over 50 different price points to just three or four main ticket types across the district, the new price structure will see prices reduced or frozen in over 70% of cases. Additionally, the Council has introduced 30 minutes free parking in a number of car parks to support people who have told us that they make regular short visits. This will also support local businesses who will benefit from drivers making quick turnarounds in car parks. The staggered roll out started in Bungay on 24 August and will continue throughout the district over the next few weeks.

East Suffolk Council is also continuing to make the best use of technology to improve services by making them more efficient, and has seen an increase of 129% on contactless payments in its car parks as visitors take advantage of the simple RingGo app to park with ease and confidence.

Available in all East Suffolk's car parks, RingGo is a quick and easy to use mobile phone service which lets people pay for their parking with a credit or debit card, via an app, rather than using cash at the machine.

This means that drivers no longer need to queue at the machine or handle cash to pay for their parking. Go contactless with RingGo [here](#).

Parking management moved from the police to East Suffolk Council in April 2020, to improve parking locally and tackle nuisance and unlawful parking, enabling the Council to address the parking problems that are affecting communities the most. Alongside this, the Council also reviewed how it administered on-street parking permits, exemptions and dispensations. As a result of this, a new online [parking portal](#) has been put in place, enabling residents and others to apply for and manage permits online. This is a new system which is separate to 'My East Suffolk', and people will need to register before using. The system also recognises valid permits from a vehicle's registration number, meaning that permit holders will no longer need to remember to display their permits.

- **COUNCIL CONSIDERS SIZEWELL C PLANS**

The Council's priority is to ensure, should Sizewell C new nuclear power station be granted consent by the Secretary of State, that the best possible outcome is achieved for local communities, by virtue of maximising benefits, minimising adverse impacts, and achieving mitigation and compensatory measures for the district.

As part of the DCO process, all interested parties must submit their views on the project (Relevant Representations) to the Planning Inspectorate by 30 September so that the Examiners can consider all issues and prepare an Examination of the proposal.

The Council's draft report considers EDF's submission to the Planning Inspectorate for consent to build the new facility and the discussion at Full Council followed an undertaking by Council Leader, Cllr Steve Gallant, at Full Council in July, that all councillors should be given an opportunity to comment on the Council's submission.

East Suffolk Council's Relevant Representation will be considered by Cabinet on 21 September and, if agreed, it will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by the 30 September. Receipt of Relevant Representations from all parties to the Planning Inspectorate is the start of the process that will continue through a formal Examination period which East Suffolk Council will take part in, before the Planning Inspectorate's Examining Authority submit a report to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy who will make the final decision. View the draft report [here](#).

- **HOW FLOOD RESILIENT IS YOUR STREET?**

During the December 2013 tidal surge, over 160 homes and businesses in Lowestoft were flooded. In addition to this, road and rail networks were significantly disrupted.

In July, East Suffolk Council were awarded £43m to build flood walls and a tidal barrier to protect Lowestoft from tidal flooding, giving the people of Lowestoft much needed reassurance and the economy and growth a significant boost. But until the walls and barrier are completed the Town remains at significant risk. East Suffolk Council are working with Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance to find out how well the community in Lowestoft is prepared for any flooding that might occur in the future. We will be doing a survey to measure the current resilience level of Lowestoft and each household in the flood zones will be invited to participate. Each household in these areas will receive a flyer delivered to them containing details on how to take part. They can either do this there and then socially distanced with our representative or online or by telephone. The survey is open until 14 September and to thank residents for taking part, there are 10 chances to win an Amazon voucher worth £50. The survey and more information about the project is available [here](#).

- **WORK ON NEW SEAFRONT EATERY HAS STARTED**

Work on a new café/restaurant in the heart of Felixstowe's South Seafront started last month, bringing a new exciting resort experience to the area. Local building company, Barnes Construction, is carrying out the work on the new landmark building, with the development estimated to be completed in summer 2021.

The Dedham Boathouse Group will be taking on the running of the new eatery once it is ready to open, offering indoor and outdoor dining with unspoilt views of the sea. The development is part of a bigger project of ongoing investments in the South Seafront area, where the Martello Park has already delivered new homes, a play area and new car parking facilities. The Council has also invested in the refurbishing the two public shelters on the South Seafront and the long-term maintenance of its historic Martello, which forms the centrepiece of the park.

The £1.5 million project is funded by East Suffolk Council and the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) which was launched in 2012 to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs in coastal areas. CCF awarded the Council £950,000 grant funding which enabled the project to go ahead. Additional funding of £30,000 was also awarded from the Coastal Revival Fund.

- **CELEBRATING EAST SUFFOLK'S BEACHES**

Three of East Suffolk's beautiful beaches have been awarded 'Seaside Awards', placing them amongst the best in the country. Each year, the country's best beaches are awarded Blue Flags and Seaside Awards by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy. This year, Seaside Awards have been awarded to the beaches at Lowestoft South of Claremont Pier (bathing / resort), Southwold (bathing / resort) and Kessingland (non-bathing). Additionally, Felixstowe Town Council and Felixstowe Forward, supported by East Suffolk Council, have successfully secured both a Blue Flag and a Seaside Award for Felixstowe beach (Felixstowe South and Pier).

- **COUNCIL CHARGES FORWARD WITH NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLES**

East Suffolk Council is continuing to proactively take steps to reduce its carbon emissions by introducing six new electric vehicles to its fleet run by partners, East Suffolk Norse. The environment is a key principle of East Suffolk's Strategic Plan and, alongside its declaration of a climate emergency last year, the Council is committed to environmental issues and fighting climate change. Read more [here](#).

- **SMART TOWNS PROJECT RECEIVES £450,000 BOOST**

As part of the Government's £900m Getting Building Fund, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership has been awarded £32.1m in funding to help deliver jobs, skills and infrastructure in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The East Suffolk Smart Towns scheme has been selected to benefit from this £32.1m and will receive £250,000 to cover the capital cost of installing digital town technology, such as free to use WiFi, footfall tracking sensors, analytics and retail apps in both Lowestoft and Felixstowe.

In addition, the project will receive £200,000 from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Innovative Projects Fund' to enable Smart Towns to be rolled out across 11 market towns in East Suffolk. This follows a successful trial of the scheme in Framlingham last year.

As well as free WiFi and footfall tracking, the Smart Towns project will deliver the digital business 'springboard'. This innovative business support initiative aims to deliver bespoke digital diagnostics and interventions according to business need. This will operate as a procured 'business ecosystem', developing creative digital adaptations, expert workshops and digital upskilling of businesses and towns.

- **AMBITIOUS 'MASTERPLAN' SETS OUT ASPIRATIONS FOR TOWN CENTRE**

A new plan for Lowestoft's town centre has been revealed by East Suffolk Council, to guide future development and act as a blueprint for positive change within the heart of the town. The Lowestoft Town Centre Masterplan presents a response to the challenges faced within the town and is a catalyst to secure inward investment for the further development of the town centre.

Developed through stakeholder workshops with representatives from across Lowestoft, the masterplan will act as a 'blueprint for change' over the next 10 to 15 years. It provides a singular vision and direction, as part of the wider Lowestoft Place Board ambitions for the whole of the town. Lowestoft already has significant advantages, with massive economic opportunities presented through the growth in offshore renewable energy, tourism attractions along the South Beach and a range of large-scale infrastructure projects on the horizon, including the Lake Lothing Third Crossing and the tidal flood defences. The Lowestoft Town Centre Masterplan can be viewed [here](#).

- **PAVILION EARMARKED TO BENEFIT FROM GOVERNMENT FUNDING**

East Suffolk Council has been awarded £750,000 in Government funding to invest in capital projects in Lowestoft. The regeneration of East Point Pavilion, located on Lowestoft's seafront, has been identified as a key project to benefit from an advance grant through the Government's Town Fund, which specifically calls for projects which can be delivered by March 2021. As part of the draft investment plan for Lowestoft, several key projects were assessed to determine which were most suitable to receive this funding. Careful consideration was given to a range of capital projects, in terms of readiness, impact, value for money and deliverability within the timescales and criteria set out by the Government.

From these projects, the first phase of the regeneration of the East Point Pavilion was deemed to be the most appropriate and achievable within the timeframe. The council has therefore proposed that the majority of the grant funding, £720,000, is allocated to this work.

The funding will be used to redesign the interior of the pavilion, providing flexible space for community and cultural activity, space for small entrepreneurial 'pop-up' businesses to operate from and a year-round café venue and the first phase is expected to be completed by March 2021. The Council will be working with an arts and events organiser to run the new facility.

For further questions or points please contact me at: stephenburroughes@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Cllr Stephen Burroughes

Member for the Kelsale & Yoxford Ward

Cabinet Member for Customer Services, ICT & Operational Partnerships

Twitter @CllrStephenB