

A Report for Edwardstone Parish Council Meeting on 15th May 2023

From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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➤ **Most pupils receive a place at one of their preferred secondary schools.**

98% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 93% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 8,083 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2023. This is approximately 300 more applications than received last year.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer.

➤ **99% of pupils receive a preferred primary school place on National Offer Day**

99% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred primary schools and 96% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 7,056 applications from parents and carers indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2023.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They received an email to confirm this offer. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application

➤ **Help design a new Virtual Reality app for people living with dementia**

Suffolk County Council is looking for people to help develop a new Virtual Reality (VR) app for people living with dementia in Suffolk.

The county council is inviting people living with dementia, their family carers, as well as health and social care professionals, who live or are based in Suffolk, to join a user group to help co-create the bespoke platform.

The group will be called 'Synergy' and members will have input into all aspects of the look, design, and structure of the new VR app.

Over the last 10 years clinical research has demonstrated that not only do people with dementia tolerate virtual reality, but they can actually derive a wide variety of benefits from it, including improvements in well-being, cognition and communication.

The app is being produced in partnership with Spark Emerging Technologies Ltd, who were awarded a contract by Suffolk County Council in December last year.

To learn more about the user group and to apply visit

suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/virtual-reality-project

➤ **Suffolk to mark Dementia Action Week with event at Trinity Park, Ipswich.**

This is a drop-in event for people with dementia, their families, and their carers, to be held next month at Trinity Park in Ipswich on Tuesday 16 May from 10 am,

Representatives from more than 34 care organisations across Suffolk will host stalls at the event, which will showcase the wide range of information, advice, and support available to people living with dementia and their carers, to help them to get the right support from the right providers, at the right time.

Running alongside the marketplace will be keynote sessions on a range of topics including how to live well with dementia from those with lived experience, memory assessment and the importance of a timely diagnosis.

There will also be the opportunity for people with the condition and their carers to hear about the development of a countywide dementia strategy for Suffolk, and provide feedback on their experiences, needs and priorities for support.

The event, which is being facilitated by the Suffolk Dementia Action Partnership and Care Development East, will be held on Tuesday 16 May from 10 am, at Trinity Park, Ipswich.

➤ **Suffolk County Council secures £2.65m funding from the government for the county's children's homes.**

The fund was set up by Department for Education (DFE) to enable local authorities to provide more placements within council run children's homes, as many councils have to commission residential provision which is costly.

£1.9m of funding will go towards repurposing two children's homes. One children's home will be reconfigured into two separate wings to accommodate complex young people, this will provide 2 additional placements. The other children's home is to be developed into a provision for young people preparing to exit the care system. A wholly separate independence/training flat with its own external entrance will be created. This will be additional capacity at the home.

The remaining £0.7m funding will be used, in addition to the £2m already approved by cabinet in November, towards the development of a new residential home for children and young people with disabilities at the Felixstowe Ferry Centre building in Felixstowe. The home will include three residential care places and two shared care beds. Shared care is when a young person spends a portion of time living with parents or carers and the rest at the home.

➤ **Suffolk County Council's innovative digital care service, Cassius, clocks £10m savings.**

Cassius, Suffolk County Council's multi-award winning digital care programme, has released figures for its first 18 months in action. Since its launch in July '21 Cassius has:

- *reached 3,000 people whose lives have been changed with the installation of over 4,000 devices;*
- *saved residents of Suffolk a collective 67,825 days in care homes;*
- *avoided 400 ambulance call outs during a time of relentless pressure on emergency response teams in the NHS;*
- *prevented hospital admissions and amounting to a saving of 500 hospital days, freeing up beds for those most in need;*
- *saved £8.8 million of social care funding and £480,000 for the local NHS;*
- *achieved a happiness rating of 98.45% among Cassius users.*

Cassius has also been recognised with a hat-trick of awards from leading health technology publications. Last month, Cassius was awarded 'Best Innovation Project of the Year' in the Health Tech Digital Awards 2023 and 'Best New Assistive Technology Solution of the Year' at the Assistive Technology Awards 2023. Meanwhile, Cassius+, which is being trialled in West Suffolk and introduces additional health monitoring and assessment tools, such as blood pressure monitors, oximeters, scales, and thermometers alongside the established care technology offered by Cassius, has won 'Best Innovation Project of the Year'.

As the UK's leading digital care technology service, Cassius delivers more safety, independence and confidence to Suffolk people and their families. A range of care technologies – video care phones, smart watches, monitoring sensors and falls wearables – support users to live their normal lives around their home and makes it simpler for loved ones to check in with them. The devices also give care professionals valuable insights into people's habits and vulnerabilities, helping build more personalised, empowering and less intrusive care packages that also reduce costly interventions and deteriorations in wellbeing.

Crucially, Cassius relieves worry and increases wellbeing at a time that can be fraught with anxieties for more vulnerable people and their families. Increased face-to-face connectivity via the video smartphones, and peace-of-mind delivered by wearable devices and sensors that enable carers and families to check their loved one is up and about, bring huge benefits to people's lived experiences. The user happiness rating (98.45%) sits alongside endless user and family testimonies to show how Cassius really can be life enhancing.

➤ **Council has now installed 100 rural EV charging points, with more on the way**

Suffolk County Council's Plug In Suffolk project has now installed 100 electric vehicle (EV) charging points across the county, with the latest fitted at Risby Village Hall, near Bury St Edmunds. The

council launched Plug In Suffolk in 2018 and was the UK's first 'fully open' public EV fast charging network and has seen other local authorities around the country follow in its footsteps.

Risby Village Hall now has four EV charging points installed at its site, three 7kW chargers and one 22kW charger. They do not require any registration, membership or apps - drivers simply park, plug in and charge using contactless payment.

With an increasing number of EV drivers across the county and the UK, the council's ambition is to make Suffolk a well-connected destination for visitors and residents. We're a rural county and the infrastructure of charging stations is still developing, so our aim is for Plug In Suffolk to plug the gaps. We are installing the chargers at rural destinations such as public car parks, sports clubs, libraries and community halls.

Although the initial phase of Plug In Suffolk is now complete, EV owners can look forward to even more charging point infrastructure across Suffolk, thanks to Suffolk County Council.

The council has received £1,362,000 of funding from the Department for Transport, as part of the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) pilot scheme. This will see a total investment of around £2.75m, thanks to additional contributions such as commercial funding.

The scheme will see:

- PV solar power and battery storage upgrades to approximately 10 existing sites
- Installing community EV charging, PV solar power and battery storage at over 30 further sites in urban and rural areas
- Identifying key commercial sites for 7kW, rapid and ultra rapid chargers, which will benefit the local community

➤ **New exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo telling the story of royal Anglo-Saxon Rendlesham**

Rendlesham Revealed: The Heart of a Kingdom AD 400-800 is a new exhibition opened on Thursday 23 March 2023 at the National Trust's Sutton Hoo, in Suffolk. The exhibition takes visitors on a 400-year journey to reveal how the Anglo-Saxon royal settlement at Rendlesham grew and developed, and celebrates the many volunteers from the local community who uncovered the long-lost archaeological remains.

This story is brought to life with over 150 archaeological finds from the settlement, ranging from food remains to gold jewellery, many of which have never been on public display before. Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service is curating the exhibition to celebrate "Rendlesham Revealed", a community archaeology project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

➤ **Youngsters get the clean air message**

Schoolchildren across Suffolk have been learning about the importance of clean air thanks to a special drama production.

Year 5 pupils at 30 schools enjoyed a performance of Abbie Ayre and the Shed of Science in which they learned about improving air quality safely and sustainably. It was based around the story of Abbie, whose grandmother is Dr Rosemary Ayre, an incredible scientist with a shed full of experiments and adventures. Together with her friend Charlie and Gran's supercomputer 'Derek 5000' they investigate the causes of air pollution and what they can do to make their world a safer, cleaner and more sustainable place.

The production by theatrical company Performances in Education taught pupils to identify the causes and health consequences of poor air quality and to address ways in which they can avoid contributing to it, such as using sustainable transport.

Suffolk County Council teamed up with Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council, East Suffolk Council and West Suffolk Council to fund the performances.

➤ **Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley**

A Foster Carer Recruitment Event is held the **1st Wednesday of every month**, and an Adoption Event is on **the 1st Thursday all 7:00pm** in your home.

To book a place please email Claire.Gwatkin@suffolk.gov.uk.

My Priorities

Education - Supporting Vulnerable People - Jobs and Growth - Localism and the Stour Valley - Building on Suffolk's Strength all underpinned by strong financial management and fair council tax.