

Customer Service Improvements at Woodbridge Library

Work has started to develop and upgrade Suffolk Coastal District Council's Customer Services presence in Woodbridge Library.

This is part of our commitment to provide better Customer Services, dealing with issues at the first point of contact, by moving to provide more services in the heart of the community at our current shared facility within Woodbridge Library.

Work on the project started on Monday, 22 February, and should be complete by the end of March.

This investment supports our planned move to new, more cost efficient accommodation in Melton during autumn 2016.

This will effectively create a 'one stop shop' for Council issues at the Library. The improved Customer Service Centre will be the face to face point of customer contact for Suffolk Coastal, with more staff being based at the library and able to deal with more enquiries. Customers will also benefit from services that the library provides including printing services, internet access and free WiFi.

The development will incorporate a new shared helpdesk for library and council staff, a new private interview room and a quieter dedicated area for accessing computers and for reading or study.

The library and Suffolk Coastal Customer Services will remain open during the work, and there should be minimum disruption to customers, but there may be some intermittent noise at various times. We have apologised to customers for any inconvenience during the work.

Celebrate the Queen's 90th in style

Thinking of organising a neighbourhood street party in celebration of the Queen's 90th birthday? A helpful guide has been issued to help communities organise their own street party in time for Her Majesty's official birthday weekend in June.

The guide sets out all the things you need to think about and what information you will need to let us know. Organising a street party just for residents and neighbours is very simple and you don't always need a licence. Top tips for holding a party are to plan early and get yourselves organised.

Read the full guide on organising a street party,

visit: www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/streetparty

For more helpful tips, advice and support for organising a successful street party,

visit: www.streetparty.org.uk and The Big Lunch website: www.thebiglunch.com

Love East Suffolk

Please help us to promote this new scheme – which rewards local people for caring for the environment. The new incentive-based community litter pick scheme 'Love East Suffolk' has been launched by Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils to encourage more volunteers to help keep our environment clean and tidy.

The scheme ties in with the 'Clean for the Queen' campaign which aims to get everyone involved in cleaning up Britain in time for The Queen's 90th birthday. We are inviting new and existing community groups of volunteers to register to help clean up around East Suffolk. They will not only have the pride of achievement, but also receive a small financial reward of £20 to thank them for their support. Groups will then

be entered into a prize draw, with the chance of winning £200 to support a local community group or charity, which is being funded by Norse.

Both Suffolk Coastal Norse and Waveney Norse can provide volunteers with equipment including sacks, disposable gloves, and loan sticks and hoops to groups, as well as arranging for the litter to be collected. For more information:
www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourdistrict/envprotection/love-east-suffolk

Getting ready for important elections

Voters in Suffolk Coastal will go to the polls for the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner for Suffolk on Thursday 5 May.

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) oversees the running of local police forces, including appointing the Chief Constable, setting the local budget and deciding what the priorities should be for the police in their area.

You must be registered to take part in May's elections. To make sure you don't miss out on having your say on polling day, Suffolk Coastal residents will need to register. It's easy to register if you haven't already done so online, at: www.gov.uk/register tovote. Registering only takes a few minutes and you'll need your date of birth and National Insurance number. Alternatively customers requiring assistance with registering can contact our customer services team by calling **01394 444422**. The deadline to register to vote is Monday 18 April 2016. For more information, visit: www.suffolkparo.org.uk

Suffolk Coastal Business & Community Awards 2016

Sponsors celebrate the launch of Suffolk Coastal Business & Community Awards 2016

The businesses whose sponsorship enables the Suffolk Coastal Business & Community Awards to continue to go from strength to strength, gathered at The Hangar, Kesgrave Hall to celebrate the launch of the 2016 awards.

The awards recognise the contributions, initiatives and successes of businesses, groups and individuals within the Suffolk Coastal District over the past 18 months. This year's awards categories cover teamwork, growth, services to the community and charities, environmental impact, customer service, health and wellbeing and tourism.

The line-up of 2016 sponsors includes EDF Energy, EB Carpets, Melton Day Nursery, Places for People Leisure, The Local Strategic Partnership, The Suffolk Coast DMO, Ufford Park and Suffolk Coastal District Council. Anglia Radio's Town 102 and The Beach Radio Stations are also supporting as 2016 media partners. The awards open for nominations on 15th April with the deadline for entries of 30th June. The winners will be announced at a black tie awards dinner at The Hangar, Kesgrave Hall on 15th September.

Councillor TJ Haworth-Culf, Suffolk Coastal District Council's cabinet Member with responsibility for Customers, Communities and Leisure, said: "We're very grateful to the sponsors for supporting these awards. Many have been with us from the beginning. These awards provide a platform for the unsung heroes and shining stars of Suffolk Coastal to be recognised for their contributions to this diverse district."

Nicola Cannon, Owner of Melton Day Nursery, said: "These awards give local businesses and groups the recognition and encouragement they deserve and we are very happy to be a part of that."

For more information on the awards or visit www.scbca.co.uk

The full list of awards and sponsors is as follows.

- New Business of the Year sponsored by Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Business Growth Award sponsored by Suffolk Coastal District Council
- Services to the community (group) sponsored by EDF Energy
- Services to the community (individual) sponsored by Place for People
- Innovation sponsored by the local strategic partnership
- Charity Champion sponsored by EB Carpets Felixstowe
- People Development sponsored by Melton Day Nursery
- Health & wellbeing sponsored by Ufford Park
- Encouraging Tourism sponsored by The Suffolk Coast DMO
- Customer Focus
- Great & Green Award
- Team of the Year
- Club of the Year

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Rushmere man given criminal record for waste offence

Suffolk Coastal is reminding householders of their duty of care towards their waste after a Rushmere man was last week found guilty of a waste offence.

A male, of Fellbrigg Avenue, Rushmere St Andrew, appeared at Ipswich Magistrates Court on Tuesday 1 March.

He pleaded guilty to an offence of failing to fulfil his duty of care towards household waste, contrary to Section 34(2A) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in December 2014 from his address at the time.

The case was brought to court after ten sacks of fly-tipped waste found on land at Bealings Lane in Hasketon were found to contain post addressed to Mr Adams' home at the time.

When interviewed at his home by Council Officers, he stated that he had allowed an unknown person to remove the ten sacks of unsorted, general household waste that had accumulated in his front garden, and admitted failing to ask what was going to happen to the waste, failing to take any basic details of the identity of the person, and failing to check that the person was an authorised waste carrier.

He had previously been contacted by the Council over concerns about the accumulation of waste in his front garden, and had been offered advice about the correct disposal of the waste.

He pleaded guilty and was fined £100. He was also ordered to pay a Victim Surcharge of £20 and contribute £75 towards the Council's costs.

Cllr Poulter, Cabinet Member for the Green Environment, said: "By failing to carry out his basic Duty of Care checks, this individual's carelessness led directly to his waste being dumped in our countryside. This case serves to show that we will have no hesitation in taking robust action against anyone found responsible for despoiling our beautiful district.

"I would therefore urge anyone who arranges for any waste to be taken away from their home by anyone other than the Council's service partner Suffolk Coastal Norse (formerly Suffolk Coastal Services) to remember the Scrap Code, to avoid being held responsible should their waste end up fly-tipped."

- **Suspect.** Beware of rogue waste carriers – reputable companies do not usually make direct approaches. **If in any doubt as to whether someone is a legitimate waste carrier, do not allow them to take your waste.**
- **Check.** Ask for their waste carrier registration details, and verify them by checking the online register or by calling **03708 506 506**. Always note down the registration number of the vehicle used to take your waste away.

- **Refuse** unsolicited offers to have any rubbish taken away. Always carry out your own research and choose who you wish to approach. Legitimate waste carriers are unlikely to seek business by going door-to-door.
- **Ask questions.** Always ask what exactly is going to happen to your rubbish and seek evidence that it is going to be disposed of appropriately. A legitimate, professional waste carrier who wants your business should not object to being asked reasonable questions.
- **Paperwork.** Make sure you get a proper receipt containing the written information for your waste. This should include what has been removed, and where it will be going. Make sure the Company or tradesman's details are included.
The Suffolk Waste Partnership has produced a video aimed at householders, emphasising the importance of the Duty of Care and how to do their bit to prevent their waste ending up fly-tipped by rogue waste carriers and avoid risking a fine of up to £5000: www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1X83ka_AqQ
If you see someone fly-tipping in the district, please report it in confidence online or by calling Suffolk Coastal on **01394 444000** or emailing: scs@ncsgrp.co.uk.

Further Transformation in East Suffolk

The future working relationship between Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils is being examined – with the possibility of a merger being explored. Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils have been working increasingly closely, since appointing a joint Chief Executive in 2008. This partnership has been key to the Councils' ability to make £16million efficiency savings since 2008.

Now, at a Simultaneous Cabinet Meeting on Monday, 14 March, leading councillors from both Councils will consider a report examining all the options for the future from forming a wider partnership with one or more other district/borough councils through to formally merging Suffolk Coastal and Waveney into a single district council for East Suffolk.

The report concludes: 'Both councils are committed to ensuring that East Suffolk is in the best possible position to respond to, and take advantage of, these emerging opportunities and challenges.....The Cabinets are now asked whether they want SMT (the joint Senior Management Team) to develop a draft business case for the formal merger of the two district councils.'

It is stressed these proposals are still at a very early stage. Any merger could not happen without a lengthy democratic process, including public consultation, which would run until 2019 at the earliest.

Nuclear conference held in Suffolk

Senior representatives from 'new nuclear' local authorities across England and Wales gathered in Suffolk last week to discuss common issues relating to the development of new nuclear power stations. Delegates at the NNLAG (New Nuclear Local Authorities Group) conference also heard from Lee McDonough, Director of the Office of Nuclear Development, who highlighted the importance of "communities being at the heart of these developments" and what local authorities can do to support them.

Addressing the conference Ms McDonough highlighted some key elements that are central to supporting local areas to make the most of benefit from the proposed new nuclear developments:

- Early and strong engagement with local businesses and education providers
- Identify workforce requirements both nuclear/non-nuclear specific
- Establish a strong link between Government and local stakeholders

- Develop an evidence-based community offer or project which meets the needs of developer, Government and local community
Lee McDonough said: "Communities are at the heart of these developments and it is therefore absolutely right that they stand to get a large share of the benefits associated with them. It is also important that we make the most of these developments for UK Plc. Therefore, we are working with developers to encourage them to be open and transparent about their procurement plans to enable small and medium size business to get themselves in the strongest possible position to bid for high value contracts." Whilst each of the proposed developments is at a different stage there were some common themes across members councils:

- Infrastructure
- Supply chain
- Skills
- Jobs
- Growth
- Impact on and benefits for local communities
- Legacy

As part of the conference Cllr Geoff Holdcroft, deputy leader at Suffolk Coastal District Council was elected NNLAG's new chairman.

Cllr Geoff Holdcroft said: "The main role of a local authority in this process is to lobby the developer and Government to do right by local communities. Together NNLAG has a range of topics it is working on, including applying pressure on the UK Government in relation to funding for Community Benefit for nuclear new build in the future.

"As Chair of the group, I am committed to making sure that we work together and speak with a single voice on matters that are common to us all. Together, we put ourselves in a much stronger position. It is a great privilege to be elected Chair of this extremely important group."

Less than two months to go for the Scottish Rate of Income Tax (SRIT)

The Scottish Rate of Income Tax comes into effect from 6 April 2016. The Scottish rate for 2016 to 2017 has been set at 10%, meaning 10p in every £1 will go to the Scottish Government.

Your members may have already received their annual coding notice but if not they soon will. It will include the new 'S' code for Scottish taxpayers.

What they will need to do:

- They need to check with their provider that their payroll software is up to date and ready to apply the new 'S' code.
 - If they use HMRC's Basic PAYE tools they will need to make sure they use the latest version which will be published in March 2016.
 - They must use the code in RTI that was supplied by HMRC.
 - Remember the 'S' code depends on the residential address of the employee.
- Please encourage employees to tell HMRC if their address changes, as this will help us to correctly identify any Scottish taxpayers and ensure they pay the right amount of tax. They can do this online at GOV.UK.

All the updates and latest information can be found on the Scottish Rate of Income Tax news page.

Update

Website

Work is being carried out on the SCDC website (as per previous report) You may experience some 'glitches' during this period but these should be rectified asap. We apologise if you have any problems whilst changes are being made.

Car Park

As per the update last week to the Mayor, TC and Cllr Digby from TJ. An inspection/investigation was carried out last Tuesday.

There are 2 main issues that need to be addressed, the southernmost end of the car park has a large number of pot holes where past attempts to fill them in have not been that successful. The surface will be scraped, re levelled and a roller put over it to level it up – this should be a more affective short term fix and hopefully carried out prior to the Easter holidays.

The remainder suffers with rain water pooling as identified in Cllr Digbys photos that can't drain away properly. Several test holes were completed during the inspection and it would appear that the semi porous surface material has become heavily silted forming an impermeable crust, impeding natural drainage. In this case it is proposed that the surface could be broken up and excavated, then using a geotechnics membrane & mixing in new aggregates to lay a new free draining surface to assist. TJ will update the TC when she knows more about time scales and what has been decided etc.

TIC

The TC has been updated via Neil Cockshaw and I have been promised that this will continue.

The new agreement for delivery is currently being finalised and it is hoped that an announcement will be made before the end of March.

Full Council – Thursday, 25 February

Budget/Council Tax 2016/17: as mentioned previously. Full Council agreed to put up Council Tax for the first time since 2010. It is important that we explain the reasons for this increase – and the fact we are investing in building a strong and vibrant economy. While we continue to look for ways of making further efficiency saving, we also need to make sure that we protect frontline services, provide more affordable homes and support economic development. Suffolk Coastal is already the strongest economy in Suffolk. Our new Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next four years focus on how we can invest in our communities to enable them to flourish. We are slightly increasing our portion of the Council Tax bill for this coming year (2016/17) by just under 2 per cent (1.99% to be exact).

This is disappointing, as we have kept Council Tax frozen at 2010 levels, but it needs to be put into context – the increase will be less the £3 (or about 25p a month) for a Band D property, with their Council Tax rising from £149.40 to £152.37 a year.

The reality is that our funding from central Government has been cut by 40 per cent in the last five years. In the same period Suffolk Coastal also froze its portion of the Council Tax, leading to a reduction in our net budget of £3.7 million.

Now Government is removing the Revenue Support Grant, significantly reducing our core funding by over £2.5 million by the end of this Parliament. Another essential part of our funding, the New Homes Bonus is also likely to be cut. Taken together, funding from these sources reduce from over £3.6m in 2015/16 to around £500,000 in 2019/20. We recognise that Government is doing this as part of the drive to reduce the national deficit, but on a local level we need to properly fund our services.

We believe that a small increase of £2.97 per annum to our portion of the Council Tax this year will put us in the best possible position to continue to invest in enabling our communities and drive economic development to safeguard the future prosperity of this area.

We are committed to providing grants through each Councillor to help build stronger communities through our successful Enabling Communities Initiative and continuing to collect brown bins (organic waste) for free.

We are also investing £1.68million in creating more affordable homes to ensure people can stay within the communities where they are raised and work.

We are still working to reduce our costs. For example, our move into our new headquarters will be funded by the sale of our existing site at Melton Hill and the sale of Cedar House, so there will be no extra burden on the tax payer. Then we will reap the benefits of a smaller, more efficient building, which will lead to year on year savings in our running costs of up to £500,000 a year.

Brickworks Affordable homes – TJ took the matter of the age limit up and it was lifted. The properties are/were being advertised

TJ & Maureen