

# March 2022 Town and Parish Newsletter

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Build Back **Better**  
Build Back **Stronger**  
Build Back **Greener**

## **Council focuses on children's services, adult care and the environment, as budget confirmed**

Suffolk County Council has approved its financial budget for 2022-23, alongside its first-ever full Net Zero carbon budget.

Both items were passed at the Full Council meeting on Thursday 17 February 2022, providing a focus on children's services, adult care and the environment.

The council's budget will rise by 4.5% (from £598.2m to £625.4m), with the additional money generated by a 1.99% increase in council tax, a further 1.00% from the Adult Care Precept, and an increase in grants received from the Government.

The Net Zero carbon budget will allow the council to measure its carbon emissions and monitor and evaluate the impact of decisions it makes. This will mean it can report each year on its progress, tracking its ambitions towards Net Zero.

## **Council's commitment to further enhancing Suffolk's natural environment**

It was announced on February 1<sup>st</sup> that Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment.

Suffolk County Council will be doing even more for the county's natural environment, as it confirms plans to enhance the biodiversity of at least 30% of its land and assets, by 2030.

This means it will be progressing its work around managing highway trees, planting more hedgerow, nature-based flood management solutions, roadside nature reserves, and much more.

The council already planted 100,000 trees last year, and is on course to plant another 100,000 this year. It has also put in around 20 kilometres of mixed species hedgerow.

## **Residents urged to support Suffolk spectacular**

Suffolk is set to stage a host of exciting Jubilee celebrations during 2022 – bringing the county's communities together to mark this momentous milestone.

Her Majesty The Queen will become the first ever British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, on Sunday 6 February, after 70 years of service.

The unprecedented anniversary will be celebrated throughout the year, with a four-day UK bank holiday taking place from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June to enable people to commemorate the occasion.

Plans are already in place for a Festival of Suffolk – the county's biggest ever community event. This year-long spectacular will incorporate much-loved existing events, such as the Suffolk Show, alongside dedicated Jubilee celebrations, including a race day and torch relay. Details on the latest line-up can be found at: [www.festivalofsuffolk.org/](http://www.festivalofsuffolk.org/).

**Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare, Countess of Euston commented:**



“I am delighted that Suffolk is providing a wealth of Jubilee events for everyone to enjoy.

“This will not only unite communities in joyful celebration but will also create a powerful legacy to increase the visibility of our county and improve local lives for many years to come.”

A highlight of the festival is the Big Jubilee Lunch, set to take place on Sunday 5 June. The initiative encourages people to come together and celebrate, either by hosting their own street party or simply enjoying a cup of tea with a neighbour.

To help facilitate this, Suffolk County Council has set up a dedicated webpage: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent) and will waive its fees for any road closures for events on this day, as well as providing free assistance with traffic management for all applications received before 11pm on Sunday 27 March.

The council is also supporting the Queen’s Green Canopy in Suffolk, which aims to plant over 775,000 new trees in 2022 – one for each resident in the county.

Almost a quarter of a million trees have been planted to date, with everyone urged to visit [suffolk-lieutenancy.org.uk/queens-green-canopy/](http://suffolk-lieutenancy.org.uk/queens-green-canopy/) and find out how they can ‘Plant a Tree for the Jubilee’ either directly or via one of the many organisations taking part in the scheme.

In addition to using the Jubilee as an opportunity to create a greener county, a focus on health and wellbeing will also form an important part of the celebrations, with plans for themed park runs across Suffolk and a County Community Games tournament currently in development.

### **Suffolk cements commitment to keeping its communities safe**


A new strategy was announced on February 7<sup>th</sup> outlining how Suffolk will address Violence Against Women and Girls has been published today.

The strategy has been prepared collaboratively by the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) – consisting of representatives from Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, the police, Suffolk’s Police & Crime Commissioner, community safety partnerships, health and probation services, the Norfolk & Suffolk Criminal Justice Board and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

All board members hold a shared ambition to tackle the incredibly important issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which includes, but is not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and revenge porn – all of which have a devastating impact on victim-survivors, families, and communities.

### **Good news for Suffolk Government gives the green light to negotiate a County Deal**





Leader of Suffolk County Council, Councillor Matthew Hicks, on February 8<sup>th</sup>, explained why a new county deal is good for Suffolk, and why we don't need a new Mayor. He said:

In August last year, I wrote about the efforts of Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders in working to secure from the Government a devolution deal for Suffolk. Last week, at the same time as the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper, we heard the news that Suffolk was successfully chosen as one of nine areas across the country to have been given the opportunity of negotiating a new County Deal.

This is fantastic news for Suffolk, and I am delighted about it.

One of the questions I've heard a lot since the announcement is, what would a deal mean for Suffolk? To clarify we do not have a deal yet, and we have many more months of negotiations and discussions with Government ahead of us before we can look to finalise an actual deal.

Some of the areas we included in our initial discussion centred around the development and roll out of Oyster style travel cards to increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of public transport and longer-term funding for major transport infrastructure upgrades, not just one-off funding.


We also discussed with Government the opportunity of keeping all the apprenticeship levy funding raised in Suffolk in Suffolk, benefiting more people here. This could create the opportunity to work with the University, colleges, business and others to explore how this money could be better used.


Negotiating the devolution of the powers necessary to develop more innovative projects to help deliver further action on Climate Change and make good on our promises around net zero by 2030 are also possible. Whilst I was delighted to read the other day that in a recent study Suffolk County Council was ranked as the third-best county council nationally for our response to the climate crisis, our ambitions in this area could be taken further still via a County Deal.

What I can promise you, however, is that during the negotiations I will be pushing the Government for the maximum amount of benefit for the people of Suffolk.

Finally, one of the areas related to this announcement which gained a lot of attention, especially from the media, was the potential for a directly elected Mayor of Suffolk, like the Metropolitan Mayors across the country in areas like the West Midlands. Let me say here and now, this is not something which Suffolk has asked for and importantly not something we need to secure a deal with Government.

Whilst of course we recognise the work of such Mayors like Andy Street and Ben Houchen, this additional level of oversight is not needed for our deal given the strong levels of co-operation and leadership already found here in Suffolk. Do not forget, this opportunity is the result of an ongoing dialogue to promote Suffolk to central Government strongly supported by our MPs and the partnership working with district and borough councils. Going forward this partnership working will continue alongside health partners, emergency services, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chamber of Commerce.





I have always been ambitious for Suffolk, and I believe the opportunities within a County Deal would help unlock more potential in Suffolk and help us level up across the county; especially as we start to slowly escape the clutches of COVID. We will negotiate hard for a deal that will give us the tools we need to build back better, build back stronger and build back greener.

### **Plans for a large solar farm are seriously flawed and can't be supported, say Suffolk County Council**

On February 18<sup>th</sup>, Suffolk County Council published its concerns over plans for a large solar farm in West Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire.

Cabinet papers released today state that plans for the 2,792-acre Sunnica solar farm project are unacceptable in their current form. The paper claims it is impossible for the Government to fully evaluate the significance and degree of the impact of the site because several key assessments are inadequate. A link to the papers can be found [on the committee minutes page](#).

Plans to build the Sunnica solar farm are currently with the Planning Inspectorate for examination. In time, the Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy who will, ultimately, be responsible for making the final decision. The recommendations made in this Cabinet paper, if agreed, will form part of Suffolk County Council's initial submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

