

CHARSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Held on Tuesday, 18th January 2022

Present: Councillors Pedgrift, (Chair), Moor (Vice Chair), Laird, Haird, McArthur, Sharp, Murray and Pam Hembra (Parish Clerk)

Tony Fryatt, District Councillor, Elaine Bryce, County Councillor

Members of the Public: John Fox,

		Action
1.	Apologies and Approval of Absence	
	Daphne Murray	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	Recreation Ground	
3.	Approval of Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th November 2021	
	Minutes were approved and signed by Councillor Pedgrift.	
4.	Progress Reports for Information or Matters Arising	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As the law on whether it would be legal to film motorists is ambiguous the PC felt it best not to. - St Peter's Meadow – we do not know if the inspector has been or not. He has not called on the householders concerned - The planning permission for the Garage has still not been decided. - Section 106 still on going 	Chair/ Clerk
5.	<p>Points from the public – A chance for the public to raise matters of interest relevant</p> <p>It was asked if there was any information about the pub as there had been a recent Froth meeting. There would possibly be another Froth public meeting in the near future</p>	
6.	Reports	
	<p>6.1 County Council – report below – Councillor Bryce was pleased to inform us that £21M extra had been given for highways, footpaths and drainage.</p> <p>Councillor Bryce was asked to look into the latest Lorry Survey. When the original ruling was made on specific local roads some years ago it was never enforced.</p>	
	6.2 District Council – report below – 17 th February Road Safety Forum.	

	<p>It was suggested the PC apply for funding from the district for the signage near the garage.</p> <p>6.3 Recreation Ground</p> <p>6.4 Village Hall</p>	Clerk																									
7.	<p>Road Safety</p> <p>7.1 East Suffolk Community Partnership Road Safety Forums – Community Partnership Meeting annual forum- 25th March at Trinity Park. Road Safety Forum 9th February – Teams Meeting – need someone to a</p> <p>7.2 ANPR – this was discussed at the Community Partnership Meeting but none have been approved as yet.</p> <p>7.3 Road Safety Funding –</p> <p>7.4 ESC Cycling and Walking Strategy – This applies only to main roads and not the smaller road in parishes. The main routes were concentrating on Kesgrave A12 /Woodbridge and Lowestoft areas. This will probably be a one off strategy.</p> <p>There is on going erosion of verges, these get smaller every winter and there are fewer places where pedestrians can get off the road in face of traffic. Sempers Hill/Church Road junction is quite a dangerous spot. It was pointed out that Highways respond more to individual householders than the Parish Council and suggested several local residents wrote to Highways..</p>																										
8.	<p>Planning:</p> <p>Planning Appeal for Land and Barn Known as Buttons Meadow – on line meeting on 26th January 2022.</p> <p>Councillors Pedgrift and Moor together with the Clerk will apply to attend this Appeal and ask to speak.</p>																										
9.	<p>Finance</p> <p>9.1 To authorise payments as listed below:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Detail</th> <th>Ref</th> <th>Power</th> <th>Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>29/12/2021</td> <td>HMRC</td> <td>Bank Transfer</td> <td>LGA 1972 s 112</td> <td>£80.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29/12/2021</td> <td>Community Heartbeat Trust</td> <td>Bank Transfer</td> <td>LGA 1972 s 139</td> <td>£126.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>29/12/2021</td> <td>P Hembra – services</td> <td>Bank Transfer</td> <td>LGA 1972 s 112</td> <td>£319.36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30/12/2021</td> <td>Seated Furniture Ltd</td> <td>Bank Transfer</td> <td>PHA 1875 s 164</td> <td>£482.95</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Detail	Ref	Power	Amount	29/12/2021	HMRC	Bank Transfer	LGA 1972 s 112	£80.00	29/12/2021	Community Heartbeat Trust	Bank Transfer	LGA 1972 s 139	£126.00	29/12/2021	P Hembra – services	Bank Transfer	LGA 1972 s 112	£319.36	30/12/2021	Seated Furniture Ltd	Bank Transfer	PHA 1875 s 164	£482.95	
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	<p>9.2 Bank Balance as at 31st December 2021 – £6,226.32</p> <p>9.3 Budget 2022-2023 – The Budget was proposed by Councillor Pedgrift and seconded by Councillor Moor.</p>																										

10.	SALC Budget Survey	
	The Chair read out the questions and the response would be input into the website.	
11.	The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 and the Festival of Suffolk 2022	
	<p>Councillor Haird reported the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to the expense of metal for a beacon we would probably have a bonfire beacon. The Chair will contact Fields in Trust to see if they would allow this. - Historic Charsfield Exhibition will run in the Committee Room for all four days. We hoped to have an official opening. - Peter Holloway and Karen Goddard are putting together an entertainment for Friday pm in the Village Hall Car Park. - Linda Stratton - The Flower Show is hoping to happen this year and they may run a flower arranging class/exhibition. - Councillor Haird still to contact the Chapel and also Pearl Crane. - Charsfest will be on the Saturday and they are hoping to be able to broadcast the evening concert from London. - Sunday an afternoon tea party in the empty Charsfest tents. - Find out how often bar can be open during this time. - Should we resurrect the Scarecrow Competition with a Royal theme? - Debach Village are to be invited to join in with Charsfield. - Councillor Haird will look into funding. 	<p style="text-align: right;">SH</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Clerk</p> <p style="text-align: right;">SH</p>
12.	Queen's Green Canopy Initiative - https://queensgreencanopy.org/ Steve Moor suggesting have a recreational wood and it was suggested Steve Moor contact Stephen Fletcher.	
13.	Percy and Phyllis Mapperley Memorial Collection started	
14.	Cyril Kindred Memorial There is £37.55 left in the fund and we were looking to have a plaque against the tree. Timson will do quite a nice plaque and the Chair will go ahead and order this.	
15.	Emergency Plan	
	The Charsfield Village Hall Management Committee is happy for Viviane Ward to be their representative on this on the Emergency Plan.	
16.	Councillor Training	
	Councillor Haird booked for one course.	
17.	Telephone Kiosk	

	We are still hoping for the glazing to be done fairly soon. The Chair has possibly found another avenue for stills from the film we might be able to use.	
18.	Village Historian – Update	
	John Fox has made contact with Max Pemberton (now 85). His father was a carpenter, builder and undertaken in the village and they lived at Cottage. Has given John a copy of his life story and also a painting of the old vicarage which was demolished in 1861. We are to asked the Village Hall Committee if this could hang in the Committee Room. Clerk to send a letter of thanks to Max Pemberton. Try to arrange a plaque to say presented by Max Pemberton with official handover during the celebrations. Also to invite Bernard Catchpole.	Clerk
19.	Village Website – Up-date	
	Garry Stratton sent us a breakdown of costs for transferring the website to the Village Hall platform. The Chair and Clerk are to have a meeting with Garry to get a clear view of what our objectives are.	
20.	Date of Next Meetings	
	<p style="text-align: center;">15th March 2022 17th May 2022 19th July 2022 20th September 2022 22nd November 2022</p>	
	The meeting closed at 10.05 pm.	

East Suffolk Council

January Ward Report by Tony Fryatt

Free Health and Wellbeing Courses for the over 60s in the Carlford/Fynn Valley villages

After four successful courses in Kesgrave and Martlesham, SPOT Wellbeing are bringing their free Health and Wellbeing Courses to Grundisburgh in February with support from East Suffolk Council's Community Partnership.
2nd February, weekly for 6 weeks at Grundisburgh New Village Hall

6 sessions over six weeks, each with a different theme and an opportunity to meet new people and get advice from Qualified physiotherapists, occupational therapists and more.

Regardless of your current physical condition the course is about helping people to stay as well as possible.

Kesgrave, Martlesham, Rushmere St Andrew and villages Road Safety Forum

A meeting was held on 10 January, primarily to discuss and agree the distribution of the £15,000 the group have to spend this year. A number of grants were made for SID machines but included a contribution to Swilland and Winesham for speed limits at the Gibraltar Crossroads.

Notice has been sent out inviting Parish Councils to send a representative to the Forum to be held on **17 February 2022**

Members will:

- i. Focus on road and traffic safety issues across the entire geographical area of the Forum
- ii. Attempt to address issues and priorities using a solution-focused and problem-solving approach
- iii. Adapt the agenda to respond to emerging issues if they arise
- iv. Work alongside current provision, such as SAVID (Safer Village Driving), Speed Watch volunteers and others to enhance the actions already being taken
- v. Report quarterly to the Community Partnership meeting, on progress made against priorities
- vi. Develop proposals for expenditure from the Community Partnership budget and other available sources of funding
- vii. Create task and finish groups as required to explore specific issues and report back to the Forum
- viii. Ensure that all decisions have due regard to the impacts on road and traffic safety for the entire geographical area
- ix. Raise specific concerns with the relevant representatives where action is delayed/not taken place. Such concerns should have been previously reported through the publicly available Reporting Tool, and a reference number provided.

Grundisburgh the Chapel Field Application

After considerable effort and objections from Grundisburgh Parish Council, and almost the whole village, the Appeal Inspector has made his report. He has found in favour of the proposed development. The next course of action would be to apply for a Judicial Review, but this would be extremely expensive.

Lorry Survey

I have not had any feedback from this as yet. The last time I was involved in a similar review to this, it was to establish the Lorry route network in this neck of the woods. We had fine words and promises about the way in which the lorry routes would be policed i.e. speed restrictions, single file lorry traffic and lorries

forbidden to join the A12 from the C308. After 10 years, I can confirm that these controls have been very seldom applied despite a heavy increase in HGV traffic. We must make sure that this time we do have some control.

Additional help this winter – Household Support Fund

The government has recently made funding available to County Council's and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need this winter during the final stages of economic recovery.

Local authorities have discretion on exactly how this funding is used within the scope set out, however the expectation is that it should primarily be used to support households with the most need, by offering support to meet living costs or housing costs (in exceptional cases of genuine emergency).

In all instances where households are struggling with their housing costs, they should contact our Housing Needs Team about their situation, so that we can identify the best option for financial and other support (if applicable).

For other financial advice, we will continue to refer customers to the Citizens Advice or in-house debt advisors, on a case to case basis.

To get in touch please contact East Suffolk Council's main switchboard on 0333 016 2000 so that all relevant information can be sent to the team for assessment and an Officer will be in touch.

Survey of East Suffolk businesses

We are currently looking at the vitality of our town centres and in order to help understand and improve town centres, we need views from local businesses.

One important source of data is capturing the 'business confidence' and perceptions of traders in town centres across the district. By establishing the trading conditions of town centre businesses, we can focus on issues of concerns and how to improve them.

All town centre businesses are encouraged to complete the short survey by Friday 28 January at <https://destinationresearch.typeform.com/towncentres>

Supporting customers to access council services

To ensure residents can continue to access our services in the way that suits them best, our Marina Centre in Lowestoft is open (Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am – 4pm), along with our desks at Woodbridge and Saxmundham Libraries (Wednesdays 10am – 4pm) and at Felixstowe and Leiston Libraries (Fridays 10am – 4pm) – all by appointment only.

The majority of our services are available at www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk and we encourage residents to continue to use these online services wherever possible.

However, anyone with difficulties using these services or who are unable to resolve an issue online, can email or call our Customer Services Team. If still unable to

resolve the issue, an appointment can be made for one of our Customer Services locations in person by calling 0333 016 2000.

Residents can also learn how to access our online services and report issues directly, using our new 'digital receptions' which are available at the Marina Centre and libraries. Residents should book an appointment and our fully trained Customer Services staff will be available as 'digital champions' to help them get online.

Surveys and consultations

We are currently running one consultation and, as always we want to encourage participation as feedback from people in East Suffolk is invaluable and helps us ensure we're making the right decisions for our community

- **The draft East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy**

Consultation on draft document which provides a district-wide shortlist of cycling and walking infrastructure opportunities. The strategy aims to encourage greater use of sustainable forms of transport, reduce contributions to climate change, support the growth of the tourism industry, and to improve the health and wellbeing of residents by ensuring more trips to work, school, leisure, day-to-day errands, or public transport hubs, such as train stations or park and ride sites, are accessible by bike or on foot. Once adopted, this strategy will replace the Waveney Cycle Strategy (2016) and will cover the whole of the district. The consultation ended on 10 January but details can be found at:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cbc57e4a9cc24e4e7d174fb34b1bf0e>

Social media

We keep our communities up to date in a variety of ways and social media has an important role to play. Please follow us and share our posts with your audiences!

Facebook: www.facebook.com/eastsuffolkcouncil

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EastSuffolk>

Children's services and adult care at the heart of Suffolk County Council's new budget plans

Suffolk County Council has outlined how it plans to spend money on public services in 2022/23.

- **More money to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**
- **Extra resources for adults in need of care**
- **Additional funds to prevent flooding and fix footpaths**

Under the proposals, the council's budget for 2022-23 would rise by 4.5% (from £598.2 to £625.4m). This additional money is generated by a 2.99% increase in Council Tax, and an increase in grants received from the Government.

The proposals will be presented at a scrutiny meeting in January, then put forward for approval by councillors in February.

Councillor Richard Rout, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Environment at Suffolk County Council, said:

“I’ve worked with my colleagues to propose a budget which will not see any reductions in our services, and invests further where it is most needed. Our aim is always to provide the best possible services for everyone in Suffolk and provide value for money.

“This has been a difficult budget to consider, particularly as Covid continues to make life challenging on every level, including our finances.

“We also continue to face rising costs and hugely increasing demands on our services year on year, particularly our adult care and children’s services.

“But this is a budget which helps us to respond to these demands and meets our priorities for next year. For example increasing our family services budget by £1.1m from next year, to specifically to address the recommendations made by the recent independent SEND review – this is in addition to our previous commitment of £45m to develop SEND provision.”

The council’s priorities are to:

- promote and support the health and wellbeing of all people in Suffolk
- strengthen the local economy
- protect and enhance the environment
- provide value for money for the Suffolk taxpayer

Some of the detail of the budget proposals include:

- £1.1m increase for the family services budget, specifically to address recommendations made by the recent independent SEND review
- £1m additional funding for Suffolk Highways over the next four years, for example to fund road signs and responsible verge cutting
- £10m to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes (over the next three years)
- £10m to improve footpath quality and access (over the next three years)
- £12.8m to decarbonise the buildings that we own (by 2030)
- Investments this year to set up future borrowing for bigger schemes, such as SEND and carbon reduction

Regarding Council Tax, the proposed 2.99% increase would be made up of a 1.99% increase in general Council Tax and a 1.00% increase dedicated to funding adult care.

This means costs for a household would look like:

- Band D property: £27.60 per week (80 pence per week increase from 2021-22)
- Band B property: £21.47 per week (62 pence per week increase from 2021-22) (Band B properties are the most common in Suffolk)

Councillor Rout continued:

“Proposing an increase in council tax is not a decision we take lightly, particularly when our costs of living are going up too.

“However, I think there is increasing recognition of the pressure our services are under. In our public consultation, there were more people who agreed that council tax would need to go up next year, compared to those that didn’t. This was especially true for funding adult care.

“By paying this extra each week, we are all helping the council to provide its key services, and helping to support those who need it most.

“If anyone does have concerns about paying their council tax, they may be eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which is managed by our borough and district councils. You could receive help if you are on a low income, even if you are working.”

The budget proposals will be presented at a Scrutiny Meeting on Tuesday 11 January 2022, with the final budget discussed at a Full Council meeting on 17 February 2022.

The Scrutiny meeting will be available to stream on Suffolk County Council’s YouTube channel, and public questions can be submitted in advance, details available at www.suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk County Council approves extra £20m investment in highway drainage and footpaths

It was announced on December 7th that Cabinet members have committed an **extra £20 million over the next three years into further improving Suffolk’s highway drainage systems and footpaths.**

In recognition of the increasing maintenance demand on these areas, councillors approved the use of £10 million to specifically deliver an increasing number of drainage schemes that deal with problems that affect larger numbers of people, and a further £10 million to improve footpath quality and access.

Suffolk Highways will use the drainage investment alongside funding from the Department for Transport to increase the number of highway flooding sites which are resolved, providing a highway network that is more resilient and accessible during heavy rain and severe weather events.

The footpath investment will be focused on urban areas and busy footpaths in rural areas - providing a safer and more accessible network that supports people accessing local bus services, health care services and local shopping precincts.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council’s cabinet member for operational highways and flooding, said:

“Committing this extra funding is a very welcome boost to our already significant improvement programmes in highways.

“The integrity of our county’s drainage systems and footpaths are incredibly important to our livelihoods; functioning drainage systems and well-paved paths support us all to safely travel for work, social or leisure purposes or to access essential services.

“£20m divided across drainage and footpath services will enable our highways teams to resolve more drainage issues, where there may be significant highway or property flooding; and footpath improvements to provide a safer and more accessible network in urban and busy rural areas.

“I look forward to working closely with the teams to ensure that the additional funding is used appropriately; targeting areas that require essential improvements, on a priority basis. I will continue to keep Suffolk’s residents informed on how any additional funding is going to be used.”

Annual Public Health Report focuses on Mental Health impact of Covid-19

On December 2nd Suffolk County Council endorsed far-reaching recommendations to improve Suffolk people’s mental health and wellbeing.

This includes the creation of a dedicated fund of £2.5m and the development of a cross-system group to support community wellbeing in Suffolk.

Each year, the Director of Public Health in Suffolk produces an independent report, which explores a topic or area of strategic focus that is of importance to Suffolk. This year’s report titled “Better, together: Public Mental Health in Suffolk”, focuses on the actions that need to be taken to support and enable good mental health and wellbeing in the community, following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The strains of the Covid-19 pandemic have meant that the issue of mental health has been in the public consciousness like never before. The unprecedented measures required to reduce the spread of the virus, have placed extraordinary pressures, and demands on the whole population, with around 1 in 5 adults in Britain experiencing some form of depression in the first three months of 2021 – more than double the figure prior to the pandemic. Almost half of adults have reported that their emotional and mental wellbeing has been affected.

The report highlights that those impacts may be as damaging and long-lasting as the physical effects of the virus. It focuses on actions which can be taken by communities, public and private sector organisations to try and mitigate these effects and protect and promote good public mental health in Suffolk now and for the future.

Stuart Keeble, Director of Public Health, said:

“Every single person in Suffolk has had their life disrupted to some degree by the Covid-19 pandemic, and while the vaccines are currently doing a good job of protecting the majority of us from serious illness, the longer-term impacts on mental health and emotional wellbeing continue to evolve.

“It is important to remember and honour what has occurred – both the terrible losses, and the extraordinary individual and collective acts of courage and kindness made by so many to protect and support others.

“Communities, workplaces, and public sector organisations must come together to create places and environments which support mental and emotional wellbeing across the whole of Suffolk.”

The report makes six recommendations, which have today been endorsed by Suffolk County Council. Among the recommendations is the development of a cross system group focused on public mental health, which will report into the Health and Wellbeing Board, and a dedicated Suffolk Public Mental Health Fund to support good public mental health in Suffolk communities.

The £2.5m funding, comes from the Government’s Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), in recognition of the need to support Public Mental Health, which in turn both supports behaviours which continue to reduce the spread of the virus as well as supporting longer term recovery. The Health and Wellbeing Board will oversee this and will be discussing principles for how to deliver the recommendations at its next meeting in January.

Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council and Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, said:

“It is clear that the time to focus on improving public mental health is now.

“Mental wellbeing continues to be a priority for the Health and Wellbeing Board, and the County Council, as we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Keeping mentally well is not only vital for individuals and families, but also for communities and the economy. The people of Suffolk stand the strongest chance of getting Better, Together.”

The 2021 Annual Public Health Report for Suffolk, ‘Better, Together: Public Mental Health in Suffolk’ [can be viewed online here](#).

Suffolk has shown determination and resilience in our Covid fight – this is another challenge we must overcome

A column published on December 14th – By Matthew Hicks.

It has been just 14 days since I last wrote this column on concerns about a ‘new’ COVID-19 variant called Omicron. Sadly, so much has happened in that time.

We have seen first-hand the speed in which Omicron can spread – doubling in 2 or 3 days, some places quicker.

The UK has been placed in level 4, the second highest tier, because of this doubling time.

And Plan B has been enacted by the Government.

It is a very unsettled time for us again, which is difficult with Christmas just days away. In his speech on Sunday evening, Boris Johnson, made no excuse for the seriousness of the situation we now face. He spoke about the emergency we now face in our fight against Omicron and the fact there may be a tidal wave of cases coming in the next few weeks.

But he also spoke of hope and a way out – and this is vaccinations. It has recently been discovered, as we learn new things about Omicron daily, that the booster jab is highly effective against Omicron and because of this, the Government has asked the NHS to step-up the booster roll-out.

This means that the booster is now open to every adult over the age of 30 who has had a second dose of the vaccine at least three months ago. Those that are 18 and over can book from tomorrow. Johnson’s message is clear ‘Get Boosted Now’.

In Suffolk, a vast amount of work is being done to increase our capacity to deliver this. We will keep you updated when plans are finalised, but at the moment we are looking to maximise our current vaccination sites by increasing the hours they are open and offering more days. NHS colleagues currently deliver about 7,000 vaccinations a day – this will increase to just short of 21,000 each day. This is an extraordinary effort and I want to thank people for their hard work in making this happen.

Colleagues from Suffolk County Council and Public Health Suffolk are doing all they can to support this NHS roll-out. There is little doubt that this delivery will have big implications for the NHS and wider health system, but as the Prime Minister said, the impact on the health service will be greater in the longer term if people do not get fully protected from Omicron.

Today I also wanted to address any reluctance that people may have in taking Omicron seriously. At this point scientists cannot say if Omicron is less severe, but we do know that it is more transmissible. Therefore if it spreads to people in Suffolk who are unvaccinated or vulnerable we would risk more hospital admissions and overwhelming the NHS.

This is not a risk that should be taken lightly. It takes 10 days to identify an Omicron case so we know case numbers will be much higher than reported.

Last week, the Prime Minister announced Plan B measures in order to combat the growth of Omicron. Measures to be introduced as part of Plan B, include:

- Face coverings to become compulsory in most public indoor venues, other than hospitality (from Friday 10 December)
- People asked to work from home if they can (from Monday 13 December)
- NHS Covid Pass to be mandatory in specific settings, using a negative test or full vaccination via the NHS Covid Pass (from Wednesday 15 December, subject to parliamentary approval)

I ask that as we continue to live with COVID we keep safety in mind, such as washing hands, wearing a mask and making sure your house is well ventilated.

Suffolk has shown time and time again it’s determination and resilience in our fight against COVID – this is another challenge we must overcome. Throughout the pandemic, Suffolk has been effective at tackling COVID. This is because we have worked hard and been proactive at every stage. The situation facing Suffolk now calls for the same forward-thinking and preventative work to protect residents, businesses and our way of life.

My final ask of you echoes the Prime Minister’s appeal - make sure you are up-to-date with your vaccinations. These are not just empty words, science shows that vaccinations save lives. **[Find out about the booster vaccine at NHS.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)**.

As the Prime Minister said:

- Get Boosted Now for yourself, for your friends and your family.
- Get Boosted Now to protect jobs and livelihoods across this country.
- And Get Boosted Now to protect our NHS, our freedoms and our way of life.

Significant investment in firefighting equipment secures safer future for Suffolk

On December 10th, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service added to the lifesaving kit at its disposal – cementing the county’s continued commitment to protecting its people.

A significant investment from the service in new equipment has seen the introduction of digital radios, smoke hoods and smoke curtains – benefitting both residents and firefighters across Suffolk.

The state-of-the-art digital handheld radios offer a clearer and greater range than previous models – vastly improving communication between firefighters when attending incidents.

These are accompanied by two pieces of new equipment designed specifically to reduce the harmful impact of smoke. All fire engines will now carry escape smoke hoods – enabling firefighters to protect people when rescuing or evacuating them from fires. Smoke curtains have also been introduced to help ensure that escape routes are kept clear of smoke, while also aiding in protecting property by reducing smoke damage.

This equipment can be used in a range of incidents, with it already proving invaluable in Lowestoft earlier today, where two occupants were rescued from a property following a kitchen fire suspected to have been caused by cooking left unattended.

Cllr Andrew Reid, cabinet member for Public Health, Public Protection and Communities commented:

“I am delighted that this significant investment by Suffolk and Fire and Rescue Service has paved the way for state-of-the-art apparatus to be at the disposal of every firefighter in the county, which could, potentially, prove to be lifesaving.

“This complements the addition of four new enhanced rescue vehicles for the service earlier this year – supporting our continued commitment to providing fire staff with the best possible equipment as we all work towards a safer Suffolk.”

Jon Lacey, Chief Officer of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service said:

“This new equipment will ensure the safety of our firefighters when attending incidents, while also protecting the public from harmful smoke and the immense damage this can cause to property.

“Although our crews are ready to attend emergency calls with this life-saving equipment, I’d urge everyone at home to test their own life-saving equipment – smoke alarms. At this time of year we are cooking more in kitchen, plugging in festive lights, burning candles or using

the fireplace, all of which come with a fire risk. Have a happy and safe holiday by making sure you have smoke alarms fitted, and test them regularly.”

Further advice on fire prevention is available on the council’s website: www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-safety-in-the-home/

Show social care a little love this winter

On December 21st the county council launched its first ever dedicated campaign about Social Care.

The campaign is designed to help the public understand more about the Social Care sector in Suffolk, how the various partners and organisations work together to provide care for people, celebrate the amazing care professionals that work in the sector and ask the public for a little patience and flexibility as we all navigate through one of the toughest winters any of us can remember.

Adult Social Care in Suffolk is made up of a close partnership of different organisations including local councils, NHS Trusts, and several private care providers who, when taken together, employ around 22,000 individuals countywide. On any given day the sector supports over 9,500 people to live independently for longer whilst enjoying their lives to the fullest. The sector faces considerable challenges however, including the recruitment and retention of key workers, the increasing complexity of care packages and the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, especially on care homes, home care and front-line workers.

To try and demonstrate how busy the sector is, every day the county council's Customer First contact centre handles, on average, over 551 phone calls, webchats, or emails from people about adult social care. On Christmas Day alone, there will be around 1,200 care home staff working hard to ensure that the 5,662 people currently living in Residential or Nursing Homes in Suffolk get to enjoy a good Christmas. Then, on top of that, there are the 3,000 or so home care workers who will be out and about across Suffolk, offering help and support to people who are receiving care within their own homes. Therefore, it is so important that we all show the Social Care sector a little love and support this winter. Please be patient when contacting any Social Care service. They are all working as hard as they can to provide essential support for people. They will do their best to answer you and provide the best care possible as quickly as they can.

I also hope that this campaign will change the way we think and talk about those people who have made working in Social Care their career and passion. Too often those working in the sector are either incorrectly swept up and talked about as if being part of the NHS or worse, forgotten about in conversations entirely. These incredible people have made the choice to dedicate their working lives to the care of others. Whether social workers, mental health practitioners, occupational therapists, home care workers, care home and nursing home staff, and every other role I don’t have space here to list - all of them, together, deserve our praise and thanks for the value they bring to people's lives, and our wider community (and yes – I think they should be paid more too). But, to start with, I invite you to join with me in challenging anyone you see or hear using words like "unskilled" to describe anyone working in Social Care. Ask them to stop, think, and then try again - because of all the words we could

use to describe these wonderful people, “unskilled” is certainly not one of them. They are professional care givers and need to be treated with the respect they deserve.

I know that changing perceptions can take time, but we must make a start, and that start is this new campaign.

You can get involved very easily. To start with show your support for Social Care by sharing the council’s posts on your own social media, using the hashtag **#SupportSocialCare**. You can help by being a little bit patient when contacting Social Care. Or go further and offer to collect an elderly neighbour’s prescription or just by pay them a visit to see how they are.

However you decide to get involved, please show Social Care a little love this winter.

Over 10,000 new LED streetlights installed across Suffolk

On December 17th Suffolk’s LED replacement programme reached a new milestone, with over 10,000 streetlights upgraded with new, sustainable LEDs.

Bouygues Energies & Services, the contractor leading the programme has successfully installed 10,799 new lanterns and counting as part of the project to replace all 43,400 streetlights in the county. These lanterns use less energy and produce a more natural and focused light than the traditional orange glow of streetlights.

The project, which is due to complete by the end of 2022 will also allow opportunity for other streetlight owners within Suffolk such as Parish and District Councils to upgrade their streetlights as part of this process.

This upgrade supports Suffolk County Council’s ambitions for becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. The benefits include; supporting a reduction in carbon emissions by saving energy and reducing light pollution, as well as providing clearer images on CCTV, traffic cameras and dashcam footage for the benefit of public safety.

The teams have been working their way through the west of the county and are making progress in Stowmarket and Sudbury.

Aside from the reduction in energy usage and minimising light pollution, the project will also bring down ongoing maintenance costs for the authority. The County Council expects to reduce its annual electricity costs on the streetlights by around 76%, saving more than £1.7 million a year.

By upgrading the lighting system with smart technology, this will increase the control the County Council has over its power consumption which will further reduce costs.

Prior to commencing in towns or parishes, Suffolk Highways is contacting those councils in case they wish to upgrade their parish-council owned street-lighting at the same time. All heritage-style lanterns which have been identified will be upgraded towards the end of the programme.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council’s Cabinet Member responsible for Operational Highways and Flooding, said:

“Despite the obvious challenges we have faced since the start of this project, I am extremely happy with the progress being made to replace all county council streetlights in Suffolk.

“The project brings many positive changes, with the main one being the reduction in energy use. This will go towards Suffolk County Council’s ambitions to become a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030. I congratulate the teams involved for their hard work and determination during trying times and look forward to seeing more of the county benefiting from these upgrades.”

Architecture and building award win for The Hold

On the December 8th, The Hold, the new archives and heritage centre on Ipswich Waterfront, won a prestigious national architecture and building award for the public sector.

SPACES, the Society for Public Architecture, Construction, Engineering and Surveying, named The Hold as the winner in the Community Category at their online award ceremony.

The awards are dedicated to rewarding excellence, collaboration and innovation in construction projects delivered within the public sector and, because they were unable to hold the awards in 2020, included two years’ worth of projects.

The Hold first opened to the public in September 2020 and was officially opened by His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester in September 2021. The £20million building is a partnership between Suffolk County Council and the University of Suffolk and is home to more than nine centuries of history safely preserved by Suffolk Archives.

The SPACES awards judges said:

The Hold is “A great example of community architecture which actively brings together different user groups, whilst highlighting the value of local historical records.”

They added:

“On the judge’s visit, it was clear to see the passion the end user had for the building and what it represents to the community, and praise goes to the Architect and wider delivery team for creating such a valuable asset.”

Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Heritage at Suffolk County Council, said:

“It is great news that The Hold has been recognised as such a valuable community building, especially against such strong competition.”

Anne Jenkins, Director England, Midlands & East at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

“Thanks to the National Lottery players, we were able to support Suffolk County Council in building the new archives and heritage centre in Ipswich and it is hugely impressive that the quality of the architecture and the contribution to the community of The Hold has been recognised in winning this national award.”