

# To all electors in the Parish of Woodbridge

Notice is hereby given that the

## Annual Town Meeting

Will be held at the

## Woodbridge Community Hall, Station Road

on

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7.30pm**

The Local Government Act 1972 provides that a Town Meeting shall assemble annually between 1 March and 1 June in every year. It is a meeting of Local Government Electors of the Parish for the purpose of discussing the town's affairs.



**WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

Town Clerk: Mr G E Diaper

Shire Hall, Market Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4LP

Telephone: 01394 383599 | Email: [townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk) | Website: [woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk](http://woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk)

The Town Mayor presides at the meeting and the Council's Standing Orders apply. The under-mentioned business will be conducted – local government electors for the parish of Woodbridge are qualified to attend and participate in this meeting (LGA 1972 s 13(1)).

Councillor Eamonn O’Nolan

Mayor of Woodbridge

26<sup>th</sup> April 2024

### **Agenda**

**1. Welcome.**

Introductions from the Mayor of Woodbridge, Councillor Eamonn O’Nolan.

**2. Apologies for absence.**

**3. Consideration and approval of Minutes of the Town Meeting held on Tuesday 7th March 2023.**

**4. To receive a report from the Town Mayor on the Civic Year.**

**5. To receive a report from County Councillor Leach.**

**6. To receive a report from District Councillors Molyneux and Yule.**

**7. Public question time.**

To receive questions from the public and reports from local organisations.

**8. Closure.**

# Woodbridge Town Council

Minutes of the **Annual Town Meeting** held at the Shire Hall on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023** at 7pm

## Councillors:

Present: Patrick Gillard (Mayor of Woodbridge) and fifteen members of the public.

Apologies: Cllrs. Caroline Blois, Robin Sanders and Caroline Page.

In Attendance: Mr G E Diaper, Town Clerk.

### 743. Welcome

The Mayor of Woodbridge, Councillor Patrick Gillard, welcomed those in attendance to the Woodbridge Annual Town Meeting.

### 744. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Caroline Blois, Robin Sanders and Caroline Page.

### 745. Consideration and approval of Minutes of the Town Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2022.

The minutes of the Town Meeting held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

### 746. Civic Year 2022-23.

The Mayor of Woodbridge spoke to the following report on the 2022/23 Civic Year.

This has been a very busy and historic year in the history of our country. We started the year as we were just coming out of the pandemic times that occupied so much of our energies in 2020 and 2021; we finish it with a new monarch, a new Prime Minister and in two months, a new Woodbridge Town Council as this council has finished its four-year term.

As well as talking about this year, I would like to pay tribute to the way that our townspeople, our elected representatives and hundreds of volunteers helped us get through the pandemic. It has given me the greatest satisfaction during the term of this council that Woodbridge responded so well to an unprecedented crisis. And now we are back on our feet.

This year's highlights have seen much ceremony and celebration. In June the wonderful Jubilation Fun Day on Kingston Fields had about 2000 residents enjoying the chance to be together again in glorious sunshine to celebrate Her Majesty's 70th anniversary as Queen.

Then three months later the town was paying its respects for her long service and beginning the reign of King Charles III.

In the Town Council year there have been many highlights, including:

- The installation of new play equipment in Elmhurst Park, to complement the new equipment installed last year on Kingston Fields.
- The imminent arrival of the new 'Changing Places' accessible toilets in Elmhurst Park, to make the park a better facility for all residents and to help with the events that take place there.
- The work that the Town Council and individual Town Councillors have done to welcome refugees from the war in the Ukraine, work that is still sadly much needed.
- Collaboration and support for the County Council bid for up to £20m of Government 'Mini-Holland' funding to make Woodbridge and Melton much better places to get around on foot and two wheels. This comes on top of the work already done to make the Thoroughfare a much better place to stroll and shop.
- We decided in January that because of the unprecedented financial crisis facing many residents, the Town Council should provide what help we could. We voted to give £7,000 support to the excellent Salvation Army branch in the Town Centre, to help it with its Food Bank work.
- We have continued to contribute regular amounts to our long-term maintenance reserve to repair and preserve the assets that the town holds, and we have committed to research the views of the town before making any decision on the future of the Town's most historic asset, the Shire Hall in which we are now meeting.

To enable the Town Council to continue its work for the Town and its residents, we voted to increase the Town Council precept by an amount equivalent to an extra 11p a week for a band-D property. We believe this sum will allow us to continue improving the facilities which we manage and to continue responding to needs and opportunities where we can.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the hard work of our Shire Hall team and to the engagement and energy shown by our elected councillors and other committee volunteers throughout the year that we are now closing. Thank you all.

Patrick Gillard, Mayor of Woodbridge 2022-23

Cllr. John Jewers thanked County and Town Councillor Caroline Page for her service to Woodbridge.

#### 747. Public Question Time

The Chair of the Woodbridge Riverside Trust provided a report on the progress of the tapestry project in the Longshed, funding for which had been provided by Woodbridge Town Council. The project is registered with the National Needlework Archive and is now self-funded due to donations from visitors.

A member of the public spoke regarding a potential planning application at St Mary's Church, outlining their concerns with the proposed development.

A member of the 'Save the Deben' campaign provided an update on the application to secure designating bathing water status for the River Deben. No answer had been received from DEFRA regarding the status of the application.

**748. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 7.20pm.

Councillor Gillard  
Chair

**April 2024 Parish Report**  
**East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update**

***East Suffolk Blooms community wildflower growing scheme returns***

A flourishing environmental scheme, encouraging people in East Suffolk to grow beautiful, pollinator-friendly wildflowers, is returning for 2024.

Each year, East Suffolk Council distributes free packs of bulbs to town and parish councils, community groups and organisations to plant locally as part of the East Suffolk Blooms campaign. The planting efforts of last year's successful applicants are already being rewarded with colourful narcissus displays.

This time, in tandem with the East Suffolk's Amazing project to promote an all-round effort to keeping the district clean and attractive, and in order to provide greater benefit to pollinators, East Suffolk Council will be offering blends of native bulbs that appeal particularly to bees and butterflies.

East Suffolk Council's Public Realm Contracts Manager, Laura Hack said: "We were thrilled with the level of interest in last year's scheme and we're looking forward to receiving applications for East Suffolk Blooms in 2024.

"We expect to have enough bags of bulbs to distribute one to each of 50 groups across the district."

Packs of bulbs will be available to collect in the autumn, around October, from two locations in the district.

A 'Bees Mix' of bulbs flowers from February to May and includes crocuses, chionodoxas, scillas, muscaris and naturalising tulips, while the 'Butterfly Mix' flowers between May and July and comprises camassias, nectaroscordums, irises and alliums.

The scheme is funded by East Suffolk Council's trading company and services operator, East Suffolk Services Ltd, and from the Enabling Communities Budget scheme.

An application form will be available to complete online until 30 June, before a judging panel meets to decide the successful applicants, with additional consideration given to groups reapplying after missing out last year. Applicants will then be informed of the decision by August.

To view the application form, visit: [my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/east\\_suffolk\\_blooms](https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/east_suffolk_blooms)

***East Suffolk's Amazing***

We invest every single penny we can in services to help maintain the beauty and cleanliness of East Suffolk but sometimes admit that it can never necessarily be enough.

A cross-party working group of councillors is already working on different ways we can work to maintain the beauty of East Suffolk, which includes encouraging more residents to take active pride in their local area.

This includes reducing fly-tipping, recycling properly and even, where possible, looking after the spaces outside your own property. We are also working closely and collaboratively with

Suffolk County Council who have responsibility for weeds on roads and pavements, potholes and road signs.

There is already an incredible network of volunteers who work to help keep our district beautiful, with regular litter-picks, planting, and an all-round effort to keep their local area clean. If East Suffolk matters to you, if you want to play your part we would love you to get involved. East Suffolk's Amazing... let's keep it that way!

For information on community litter picks, recycling, community composting schemes and reporting issues, please visit: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/waste/litter/amazing/](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/waste/litter/amazing/)

### *Ease the Squeeze on cost of living*

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living?

We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place:

[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/)

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:

[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

# East Suffolk Council – Annual Report to Town and Parish Councils

**I am incredibly honoured to have been elected as Leader of East Suffolk Council and enormously proud to be its first female Leader.**

Following Council elections in May 2023, the Green, Liberal Democratic and Independent Members formed the GLI group to become the new Administration.

After many years of Conservative Administration at Suffolk Coastal, Waveney and East Suffolk Councils, our residents voted in huge numbers for something different and our aim from day one has been to operate on the basis of clear priorities which reflect our shared values.

## **Our Direction 2028**

Our vision is clear and has been set out in our strategic plan, 'Our Direction 2028'. Its four main priorities, Environmental Impact, Sustainable Housing, Tackling Inequalities and Thriving Economy reflect the political ambitions of the new GLI Administration, and set the path the Council will embark on, collaboratively, for the four years until 2028.

We want to work with and empower communities and individuals to conserve what we love about our district, improve services where we need to and adapt to our changing environment - ensuring the district is in the best place possible in 2028. We also want to work closely with businesses and people visiting our beautiful District.

In delivering this plan, we recognise the importance of the solid foundations that are critically important to any successful local authority. We will continue to provide excellent quality services for our residents and will always listen - engaging with you whenever possible.

For more, head to [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/ourdirection2028](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/ourdirection2028).

## **Our spending plans for 2024-25**

East Suffolk Council will spend nearly £100million in 2024/25 delivering critical services for its communities, and projects to improve the district, as part of our ambitious four-year-plan.

We confirmed a balanced budget in February committed to a net spend of £46 million for services such as planning and coastal management, environmental services, leisure, waste collection and parking.

In addition, a further £50 million will be invested in assets, services, housing and infrastructure in 2024/25 as part of the General Fund and Housing Capital Programmes.

We know that many people are facing difficulties including with the cost of living and also mental and physical health, and our services can make a real difference. We are focusing on



the inequalities that people face in East Suffolk, with a range of services dedicated to providing support for those most in need. We are raising funding for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, providing more money for Citizens Advice East Suffolk, and to Community Hubs which offer practical advice and support for a range of vulnerable residents.

Improved housing is also a key priority and, along with the Housing Revenue Account, our budget commits to supporting safe, suitable and sustainable homes, delivering affordable and sustainable housing as opportunities arise. Right house, right place, right infrastructure, right price – homes that people can afford to live in

We have also put together a £3m ‘investing in our future’ fund, from existing money. This is funding that will be available to each of the ‘four pillars’ of our plans in ‘Our Direction 2028’, so that the Portfolio Holder and those in that task group, can put together actions to bring forward projects, under their portfolio that address our priorities in ‘Our Direction 2028’.

Naturally, we are committed to delivering positive climate, nature and environmental impacts – which will also benefit and enhance our long-term financial stability. This includes a commitment to fund a range of different initiatives such as our Cycling and Walking Strategy and ongoing financial support for the delivery of the Council’s commitment to net zero by 2030. We have set up an active Cycling, Walking and Wheeling working group and the first project will link Benhall with Saxmundham. We are also looking at trialling some “modal filters,” which restrict motorised vehicles but allow through other road users, at a few places around the district.

This budget also looks to ensure that our economic development and regeneration activity enables residents of East Suffolk to benefit from and contribute to a thriving economy but with a sustainable approach at its heart.

### **East Suffolk Services**

East Suffolk Services Limited began officially trading at the beginning of July 2023, delivering a range of operational services for local communities on behalf of East Suffolk Council. As part of our commitment to seeking the best possible value for money for residents, businesses and stakeholders, the council agreed to create a ‘Local Authority Trading Company’ (LATCo) in the autumn of 2021, enabling it to play a more direct and influential role in the delivery of important services.

East Suffolk Services aims to provide a more flexible service and respond quickly to local issues (as in the case of clearing up after Storm Babet). The council wants to deliver improvement that benefits council taxpayers. However, the decision to create East Suffolk Services was taken in part to help us deliver environmental changes, such as new fuels, more efficient vehicles and different approaches to waste management.

## **Storms Babet and Ciarán**

On Friday 20 October, East Suffolk was badly affected by Storm Babet which resulted in serious flooding in parts of the district, and led to the declaration of a major incident in Suffolk.

East Suffolk Council, its Officers and Councillors (who were also physically out in our communities), and East Suffolk Services worked tirelessly, alongside towns and parish councils to support communities as they sought to recover from the incident - with Framlingham and Wickham Market particularly impacted.

In the immediate aftermath and for the days that followed, teams were on hand offering housing advice, as well as clearing and cleansing work. East Suffolk Services provided vehicles and staff to assist with the clearance of houses and businesses in Framlingham. I would like to thank everybody who assisted those that suffered flooding.

In response to this, and from existing funding, we have established a ring-fenced amount of money to proactively help people with disaster resilience. This way, we do not have to wait for something to happen, and for central government to decide how to deal with it (and usually via the county council). This takes too long and is not helpful to those on the receiving end of the issue who need help immediately. If we can help put protection in, in advance, then we proactively want to help.

## **Flood Protection**

On a very wet day in October, I joined Peter Aldous MP for Waveney and community representatives, businesses, invited guests and local students to mark the completion of the tidal walls as part of the Lowestoft Flood Protection scheme.

The 1.5km of flood defences have been built in key locations impacted by 2013 East Coast Tidal Surge. Flood walls, demountable defences and flood gates have been built along Hamilton Road, Waveney Road and Station Square. Glass-topped flood walls have been built around the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club and the South Pier to maintain views across the marina.

However, following the emergence of a budget gap totalling more than £100 million, and with no immediate prospect of additional funding being secured, the decision (nobody wanted to make) was taken to halt work on the project to construct a tidal flood barrier for the town.

£15 million has been spent on the project to date, and this sum is accounted for with funds that have already been pledged. However, the project was scheduled to spend an additional £20 million from January to July 2024 and this amount cannot be covered by pledged funds, creating a £20 million risk for the Council.

Although discussions have been ongoing for more than a year, it was clear that a decision by the Government and EA would not be made before this additional spending must be

committed to. Therefore, despite making them aware of the urgency, East Suffolk Council was left with no alternative but to halt work on the tidal barrier element of the scheme.

The business case for the barrier could not be clearer. Prior to the commencement of the Lowestoft Flood Protection scheme, Lowestoft was the only UK coastal town with no formal tidal flood defences, leaving the town at great risk of climate change impacts.

Alongside Lowestoft MP Peter Aldous - who has also worked tirelessly in support of the tidal barrier - we will continue to remind the Government of the necessity and benefits of this scheme. However, their inability to meet the clear, critical funding requirements at this time is incredibly disappointing.

### **Construction of Sizewell C**

The construction of Sizewell C new nuclear power station is underway, and we will watch closely to ensure that Sizewell C adheres to the commitments and obligations to make certain that, where possible, the adverse impacts are appropriately mitigated.

This includes a commitment by Sizewell C, secured by and for East Suffolk Council, to provide £30 million in investment for Housing, Economic Development and Tourism schemes, as well as a £23 million community fund and £12 million towards the natural environment in partnership with Suffolk County Council.

In addition, East Suffolk Council will have two nominated Trustees on a Charitable Trust created by the promoters of the new nuclear plant, to be known as The East Suffolk Trust.

This will promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment, including the protection and enhancement of Natural Beauty and the advancement of the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment in and around East Suffolk for the next 70 + years.

Whilst the Council remains of the view that truly renewable energy, such as offshore and onshore wind and solar provides a better long-term answer to the energy security and carbon reduction future of the UK the development of Sizewell C has been consented by the government and it is now under construction.

### **Long stay car park charges reduced**

In other news, and following feedback received from residents, the cost of an annual long stay car parking ticket has been decreased. There are 52 long stay car parks in East Suffolk, and for these, drivers can choose to purchase a daily, monthly or annual ticket.

As part of a review of the Council's fees and charges, the cost of an annual ticket has now been reduced from £650 to £350 per year. The new price will come into effect from 1 April 2024.

The Council sets fees and charges for a wide range of services including car park charges, planning application and building control fees, licence fees, land search fees, beach hut

rents and cemetery charges. Some fees are fixed by Government, and some are discretionary.

### **Seashore village complete**

We were also delighted that work was completed on a new seaside development of beach huts and landscaped public greenspace in Felixstowe. The new Seashore Village attraction features 27 traditional-style timber beach huts provided by East Suffolk Council.

Completion of the Seashore Village brings to fruition a wider regeneration project on land between Sea Road and The Promenade – with a neighbouring activity park, featuring climbing walls, sports equipment and games, which opened in the summer.

### **£900,000 investment for historic Town Hall**

Meanwhile a project by Lowestoft Town Council to restore and revitalise Lowestoft's historic Town Hall has received a further funding boost thanks to a £900,000 investment by East Suffolk Council.

The funding will go towards a project to transform the vacant High Street building into a multi-functional community space, containing a Heritage Gallery, café, community event space and town council offices.

Cabinet members agreed a request from building owner and project leader, Lowestoft Town Council, for a financial contribution towards the redevelopment, which forms part of the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan and the Towns Fund programme.

East Suffolk Council has already provided support in developing the project plan and bidding for additional external funding, which included an allocation of £2million in Towns Fund investment as part of the overall £24.9m Lowestoft's Town Deal awarded by the Department for Levelling Up, Homes & Communities in 2022.

Meanwhile, plans to regenerate Royal Plain, Royal Green, and South Quay Wharf in Lowestoft to further improve the area as a destination for local communities and visitors are also proceeding.

East Suffolk Council is also proud to be one of the major funders of the First Light Festival in Lowestoft. Organised by First Light CIC and held on Lowestoft's award-winning South Beach each June, First Light Festival is a free multi arts festival, celebrating the first midsummer sunrise in Britain's most easterly town.

Supported by East Suffolk Council, the festival attracts tens of thousands of people from across the UK and offers an exciting programme of arts activities including music, dance, theatre and performance, for all ages (if you would like to volunteer to steward at this event, please do contact the organisers).

### **Safe Suffolk Renters**

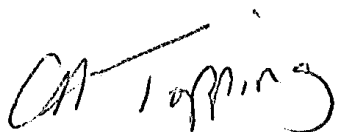
I am pleased that Suffolk's five district and borough councils are working together on delivering a ground-breaking project aimed at improving the experience and environment for landlords and tenants in the private rented sector.

Called 'Safe Suffolk Renters', this multi-faceted initiative is designed to create a better understanding of the pressures and problems in the sector, and to improve standards, particularly in the worst private rented homes in the area. To achieve this, the project team will consult widely with tenants, landlords and stakeholders in the county.

The project is already speaking with key stakeholders and staged a landmark conference for private sector landlords at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich. Engaging for a Better Future brought together landlords, representatives of member associations and industry professionals.

We have also already funded some exemplar projects in East Suffolk such as Green Light Trust, who are building a 'Green Building' and ran out of funding to finish it off to the best carbon credentials and given space for the Deben Climate Centre to establish a climate action project in Woodbridge. Other projects are being supported and if you have such a project, please let your District Councillor know.

**Cllr Caroline Topping**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CA Topping', written in a cursive style.

**Leader  
East Suffolk Council**