

# **Report to Great Bealings Parish Council**

## **District Councillors.**

Cllr Geoff Holdcroft

Cllr Colin Hedgley

Cllr Patti Mulcahy

For July 2017

## **Riduna Park.**

The new Council Offices at Riduna Park were officially opened on the 15<sup>th</sup> June.

The move from the previous ageing offices at Melton Hill in Woodbridge is part of the Council's continuing aim to protect the tax payer, by downsizing to reduce the Council's running costs in the future and to give staff more efficient and modern facilities to work in.

## **Merger**

In March 2016 Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Council considered a paper where we looked at a possible merger, as you know both councils have been working increasingly closely, since appointing a joint Chief Executive in 2008 and the partnership has been key to the Councils' ability to make efficiency savings.

Not quite a year later both Cabinets approved the proposals at a simultaneous cabinet meeting followed by a SCDC Full Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, a day after Waveney councillors voted in favour of the merger - where both Council Leaders recognised the significance of this decision. Both approved to create a brand new 'super district' council, delivering services to communities across east Suffolk and will now work with the Department of Communities and Local Government to begin the formal process of merger. With the Secretary of State's agreement, the new Council would then hold elections, and commence operations, in 2019.

The formal process of merger will now get underway and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the two Leaders, has submitted a written request to the Department of the Communities and Local Government. Final ratification of the decision will then be made by the Secretary of State in September 2017.

The two existing councils will then be formally dissolved with elections to the new authority in May 2019.

There is a lot of work to be done and following last year's public consultation on proposals for new constituency boundaries, the Boundary Commission for England is once again asking for your views.

Almost 20,000 responses were received during the 2016 consultation – [these comments have now been published](#) and the Commission is inviting comment on them until Monday 27 March: <https://www.bce2018.org.uk/>

After this date, the Commission will consider all representations received from both consultations and will consider whether any revisions are needed. If the Commission decides to revise the proposals, then a further consultation on the revised boundaries will take place.

The [Boundary Commission for England](#) is an independent and impartial non-departmental public body which is responsible for reviewing Parliamentary constituency boundaries in England.

### **Protecting the tax payer**

Suffolk Coastal has vowed to develop a more commercial approach to providing services, in order to protect the local tax payer.

At its Full Council meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, Suffolk Coastal District Council agreed its budget and set its portion of the Council Tax for the coming financial year.

Through its partnership working with Waveney District Council, Suffolk Coastal has already drastically reduced its staffing numbers and made joint saving of over £16million since 2010. These savings have been achieved while safeguarding frontline services provided by the Council.

Suffolk Coastal District Council has an annual budget of about £12 million. About £7.7million of this comes from Council Tax. Although Suffolk Coastal collects the Council Tax (on behalf of Suffolk Coastal, the County Council, Police and Town/Parish Councils), only about 10p in the pound goes towards providing our district council services.

Rather than make cuts to services, Suffolk Coastal is committed to reducing its dependence on central Government grants by becoming more financially self-sufficient, through reduced spending and becoming more business-like in order to generate the income we need to make up this shortfall.

### **Joint response re Sizewell.**

scdc have also provided our response to Phase Two of the consultation on the proposed Sizewell C nuclear power station. It is fair to say, we have been disappointed with the amount of information EDF Energy have provided. Although we do support the project in principle, we cannot give it our full support without more detailed information. The onus is now on EDF Energy to provide more information about the project, and to demonstrate it has listened to our feedback (and the responses from all our communities)

**Planning documents given the go-ahead** Suffolk Coastal's Full Council formally agreed to adopt the recently approved planning documents which set out site allocations for new homes in the district over the next 10 years.

**Improving our leisure facilities** - Leisure Centres set for transformation Suffolk Coastal has announced ambitious plans to invest in its [leisure centres](#). The work is part of the council's commitment to improve its leisure centre offer and to encourage more people to become more active. One of Suffolk Coastal's 10

priorities in its [Business Plan](#) focuses on the need to provide high-quality, modern leisure centres that the whole community can enjoy, with state-of-the-art equipment, that come at no additional cost to the tax payer. The work builds on the progress made by the Leisure Strategy formed in 2014, which sets out how improvements to the leisure provision will be made across the district, over the next 10 years.

A five year programme is now being launched, with Deben Leisure Centre as the first to be upgraded, followed by Leiston and then Felixstowe.

We want to increase the number of people using our leisure facilities and boost overall numbers of people taking part in health and well-being activities as part of our commitment to getting more people fit and active.

### **Implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement in East Suffolk.**

We had a key decision to make on whether we should take over responsibility for parking enforcement. Suffolk is one of the few counties in England where district councils do not have this responsibility, and parking enforcement is still carried out by the police.

The lack of enforcement action is seen in communities across the district, with mounting discontent over 'unpoliced' illegal parking – in particular at pinch points around schools. There are significant safety issues associated with this and, under current arrangements, District Councils are powerless to enforce a solution. CPE would provide those powers. The law permits the responsibility for parking enforcement to be transferred from the police to local authorities and income from tickets stays with the authority, potentially enabling self-funding.

This proposal includes a range of options such as on-street pay and display or the development of new car parking facilities, and putting in place a very streamlined enforcement operation, fully integrated with our current off street parking enforcement service. There is a lot of work to be completed to implement this and we urge you to continue to report items to the police.

users of the Country Park and extra parking for those using the nearby facilities at the station and new district council offices, providing additional public parking at times of peak demand such major planning meetings.

Work is only weeks away from being completed at Thorpe Road car park in Aldeburgh where the work involves improving the drainage of the site and surface of the car park.

### **Reminded you to continue to test your smoke alarm**

Residents in east Suffolk are being urged to test their smoke alarms once per month.

According to recent research, only 28% of all UK households who own a smoke alarm test it on a regular basis. Having a working smoke alarm in your home gives you valuable time to get out of your home in the event of a fire. There were 229 fire-related deaths in the home last year and it is hoped that encouraging people to test their smoke alarms now and then monthly could prevent more deaths. To help keep you and your loved ones safe:

- Test your smoke alarm(s) today.
- Make sure you fit smoke alarms on each level of your home and test them monthly – even if they're wired into the mains.
- Never remove the battery in your smoke alarm unless you are replacing it.
- Plan and practise an escape route and make sure everyone in your home knows the plan.
- If you know of friends, family or neighbours who are unable to test their smoke alarms themselves, test it for them.

If you're a private landlord, you must fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor of the property you rent out. You must also fit a carbon monoxide alarm in any room with a solid fuel burner (eg a wood or coal-burning fireplace).

- You can be fined up to £5,000 if you fail to fit the required alarms.
- You must test every alarm at the start of a new tenancy.
- You can [download the fire safety regulations for landlords here](#).

If you are a tenant in rented accommodation, your landlord is responsible for ensuring that there are working smoke alarms on every level of your home at the start of your tenancy. However, [you are responsible](#) for testing your alarms monthly and replacing the batteries where necessary.

**In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and call 999.**

Visit [www.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.gov.uk/firekills) for more information.

### **New 'one stop shop' officially opened at Woodbridge Library**

The new shared customer services facility in Woodbridge Library was officially opened today in May and allows us to provide better customer services to local people by dealing with more things at the first point of contact. By creating this 'one stop shop' for Suffolk Coastal services at Woodbridge Library our Customer Services Team can deal with a wide range of enquiries, including council tax, housing benefits, tourism and much more.

People can also be able to make appointments to see staff from other Council services, such as Planning.

Customers also benefit from services that the library provides including printing services, internet access and free WiFi.

### **New powers to tackle fly-tipping**

The Suffolk Waste Partnership continues to warn anyone thinking of dumping waste in the county that new powers came into force on 9<sup>th</sup> May that allow local authorities to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to any person found to have fly-tipped.

**Any person issued one of the new Fixed Penalty Notices for fly-tipping would then have 14 days to comply by paying £200, which is reduced to £120 if paid within 10 days, though individual local authorities will have the power to fix the level of the penalty at up to £400.**

Failure to comply with the notice may result in prosecution proceedings, which in the event of a conviction by a Magistrates Court can result in a maximum fine of £50,000 and / or a prison sentence of 6 months being imposed, with Crown Courts able to impose even steeper penalties of up to 5 years imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

## **Suffolk Coastal launched a new noise service**

As the weather starts to improve Suffolk Coastal's Environmental Protection Team is asking its local residents to spare a thought for their neighbours.

Around 40% of the population said that noise affects their quality of life with noise nuisance from pubs, clubs, barking dogs and loud music from neighbours proven to cause stress, loss of sleep and high blood pressure.

The Environmental Protection Team at Suffolk Coastal deals with around 500 complaints of noise nuisance each year, most of which occur during the summer months.

Officers can be contacted through Suffolk Coastal's weekend evening hotline on: 01502 527132. Noise complaints can also be reported during the normal working day by telephoning: 01502 562111.