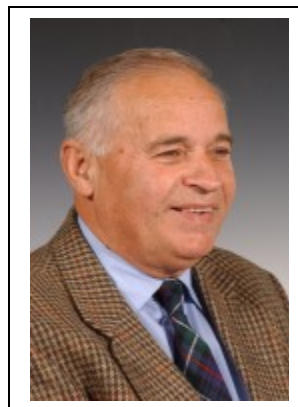


Parish Report November 2017

Councillor

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Stay safe with bonfires and fireworks

With firework displays and bonfires planned across the county for November 5th, Suffolk's fire fighters are intent on spreading vital fire safety messages and encouraging people not to take any unnecessary risks. SFRS is strongly advising people to attend official, organised celebrations, but is issuing the following advice for those who are having celebrations of their own:

Before you light the bonfire, check that children and animals are a safe distance away

- Never leave bonfires unattended
- Never light bonfires in unsuitable weather conditions, particularly wind
- Never use flammable liquids to start the fire, and never burn dangerous rubbish such as aerosols
- Have only one person in charge of lighting the fireworks, and use eye protection and gloves
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions on each firework. Read them by torchlight – never a naked flame
- Light fireworks at arm's length using a safety firework lighter or fuse wick
- Never go back to a firework once lit
- Keep a bucket of water nearby
- Put used sparklers hot end down into a bucket of sand or water
- Never throw used fireworks on a bonfire

Suffolk Trading Standards are urging the public to only buy fireworks from legitimate traders. Any shop keeping fireworks must have a licence and follow strict guidelines on safe storage and re-sale, including not selling to people under the age of 18.

Trading standards officers are urging people to contact them if they have any concerns about fireworks being sold on 03454 040506. They should not be sold from vehicles, market stalls or car boot sales

Suffolk County Council launches consultation on proposed sand and gravel sites

Communities are being invited to have their say on proposed sand and gravel quarrying sites as part of a six-week consultation held by Suffolk County Council.

Suffolk County Council, as a minerals and waste planning authority, is required as part of the planning framework to make a provision for sand and gravel supplies, based largely on the average of sales over the previous 10 years, which is 1.158 million tonnes per year.

A total of 10 sites, outlined in the council's minerals and waste local plan are sufficient to supply enough materials until the end of 2036 have been put forward:

Barham	Barnham	Belstead	Cavenham	Layham
Tattingstone	Wangford	Wetherden	Wherstead	Worlington

Belstead is the only completely new site proposed, and the other sites would be extensions of existing sites with planning permission.

Once the Plan has been adopted by the county council as policy quarrying companies will still need to submit a planning application to the county council to extract materials. Companies will also pay landowners to dig up the materials on their fields – before selling it to construction companies. This work is likely to create additional employment in the area.

Each site is considered in terms of its potential impacts upon the landscape, ecology, highways, cultural heritage and amenities in the area. Once the site has had its sand and gravel quarried, the site can be restored, by reshaping the land and covering with soils, which are stored during the extraction process. Then follows a five-year aftercare period to make sure the land is brought up to the required standard.

Only one site for waste development has been allocated, at Sizewell A, for the treatment and temporary storage of radioactive material removed as part of decommissioning from Sizewell and other decommissioning stations. Currently Sizewell A is already benefitting from exporting waste to Bradwell Nuclear Power Station in Essex for treatment and temporary storage. While there are no current proposals to share the facilities in Sizewell, it is considered sensible to have policies in place if such a proposal is put forward in future.

The consultation opens at 5pm on 30th October 2017 and closes at 5pm on 11th December 2017

Find out more about the consultation and how you can have your say at www.suffolk.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste

There will also be several **consultation events** across the county, where members of the public can learn more about the preferred sites, speak to members of the minerals and waste team and fill in the consultation survey. To find out more about these drop-in events, visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/mineralsandwaste

A paper copy of the survey can be requested by calling, **0345 603 1842** or emailing smwlp@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Social worker Karen Stock nominated for National Adoption week award

A Social Worker from Suffolk has been selected as a finalist at the First4Adoption National Adoption Week 2017 Awards.

Karen Stock of Suffolk County Council's Adoption and Fostering service has been nominated for the 'Adoption Social Worker of the Year' award. Karen is one of 24 finalists across 6 categories and will find out whether she has won at an award ceremony taking place in London next week.

Motion to improve Early Years funding rejected by Council

At the meeting of Council on Thursday 19th October, our LDGI group supported a Labour motion which called on the Council to (1) lobby central government for more funding in Suffolk and (2) pass the full amount of funding received on to providers. Unfortunately, the Conservative majority refused to back the motion.

Since September 2017, working families are entitled to 30 hours of free childcare, whilst all families are entitled to 15 hours of free childcare. Suffolk is one of only 37 local authorities which this year had a reduction in early years funding, receiving a total of £31 987 186. This equates to £4.41 per hour. However, childcare providers receive a base rate of only £3.87 per hour, and many are struggling to run their businesses on this low rate.

The motion highlighted the difficulty faced by childcare providers across the county, and questioned why the Council did not pass through a higher rate of funding to providers.

Councillor Gordon Jones (Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills) stated that the Council only retains £2.1m, which is used to meet their statutory duties. He has yet to provide a full breakdown on how this money is spent.

Home to School Transport - Workshops announced

In September, the LDGI Group successfully "called-in" the Cabinet's decision to go to consultation on changes to the Home to School Transport policy. We questioned the nature of the pre-consultation period, and argued that more research needed to be done. The Scrutiny Committee agreed with us, and voted to refer the decision back to Cabinet for further consideration. It has not yet been announced when Cabinet will reconsider the proposals.

Suffolk County Council has announced that two workshops will be taking place next month, to further discuss the challenge and help develop proposals for Cabinet to consider. However, invitations will only be sent to 80 randomly selected representatives. If you have not been invited, and feel that you should be a part of these workshops, you can contact either myself or schooltravel@suffolk.gov.uk.

Suffolk Fostering service launches first in a series of fostering recruitment campaigns

Suffolk County Council's Fostering Service will launch a series of campaigns over the coming months to encourage more Suffolk residents to become foster carers.

820 children currently live in care in Suffolk and there is an urgent need for more people to come forward to foster. The first campaign will focus on the need to recruit more foster carers for teenagers.

Suffolk Fostering Service will also be hosting pop-up events across Suffolk. In November, the events are:

- Saturday 11th November, 9.30am - 12.30pm, Stowmarket Leisure Centre
- Saturday 11th November, 12.00pm - 6.00pm University of Suffolk, Ipswich

More information can be found at: www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk

GCSE and A' level results on the rise in Suffolk

Provisional GCSE and A Level results have been published by the Department for Education on Thursday 12 October 2017

GCSE: Almost 7,000 students in Suffolk were entered for GCSE results this year.

The provisional figures show that 2% more students in Suffolk are achieving the expected standards in English and Maths at GCSE compared with last year.

This year, there has been a change to the way that English and Maths GCSEs are graded. Results are now graded from 9 to 1, (previously A to G) with 9 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The expected standard for pupils to achieve is now a grade 4 and above (previously a C grade and above), with grade 5 considered a 'strong pass'. These changes will be phased in to cover all subjects by 2020.

62.4% of students in the county are achieving the expected standard in English and Maths and Suffolk has closed the gap to national to just 1.1%. Suffolk has also risen by 24 places in national league tables for this measure, to 85th out of 151 authorities. The county has risen 7 places in national rankings for the percentage of students achieving the English Baccalaureate.

Progress of Suffolk students continues to be above the national average for state funded schools, with the county achieving an average Progress 8 score of -0.01, compared with -0.03 nationally.

Progress 8 measures how well pupils of all abilities have progressed by comparing them with students who achieved similar levels in Key Stage 2 across the country.

A' Level: Almost 3,000 pupils were entered for A Levels in Suffolk.

The provisional A Level figures show that Suffolk pupils have once again performed well with the General Applied entry and Tech Level entries remaining above the national average figures.

A Level attainment is measured by the Department for Education using a points system. Points are given based on the type of A Level and the grade achieved. For example, an A Level at grade A is worth 50 points, whereas an AS Level would be worth half of this.

Suffolk's Academic average points per entry this year is 30.01. For General Applied, (previously referred to as vocational) the average points per entry has increased to 35.95 from last year's figure of 34.70. This has remained above the national figure of 35.6. At Tech Level, Suffolk's average points has increased by more than 3% to 34.66 and remains above national figure of 32.2.

These figures are provisional and are subject to validation by the Department for Education. Validated results will be published in the New Year.