

Parish Report October 2017

Councillor

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Suffolk Fire & Rescue Launches Escape Plan Campaign

The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has launched a new safety campaign and website highlighting the importance of fire escape plans

Visitors to the campaign website fire.suffolk.gov.uk will be able to:

- take a quiz to test how prepared they are to escape a fire
- create their own escape plan for everyone in their household

The campaign addresses the fact that every year there are 40,000 accidental house fires in the UK. Having an escape plan will allow Suffolk residents to escape the fire quickly and safely.

The 'escape plan' fire campaign will run until **31 October 2017**

More Students in Suffolk pass A level Exams than across the Country

Provisional A level figures show that Suffolk pupils have once again performed well with the number of A*-E grades awarded above the national average.

Almost 3,000 pupils were entered for A Levels in Suffolk. Although yet to be verified, the figures show that 98.2% of A levels taken in the county have been awarded an A* to E grade, compared with 97.9% nationally. 77% of A level grades achieved were within the A* to C bracket, in line with national figures and a 1% increase on last year's results.

Early indications show that Suffolk's Academic average points per entry has risen to 33.37 this year, compared with 30.44 last year. Pass rates remain high across the county, with St Benedict's Catholic School and Newmarket Academy both reporting a 100% pass rate (A*-E grade achieved). Students at Sir John Lemman High School made a significant 11% gain in the number of A* to C grades awarded this year, increasing from 71% to 82%.

A level and Applied General figures are based on self-reported data from schools and academies to Suffolk County Council. The results are subject to validation by the Department of Education in the new year.

Legal Challenge to Department for Transport casts doubt on current arrangements for Community Transport provision for all local authorities

Suffolk County Council is working with the community transport sector to discuss a recent legal ruling with a view to finding a way to maintain these valued services.

This follows advice from the Department for Transport (DfT) that affects all local authorities.

The ruling has determined that going forward, local authorities cannot enter into certain contracts with transport providers unless they have particular operator licenses and related mandatory training certification.

This change is part of new guidance issued by the DfT, not a new law, that states previous DfT guidance issued was incorrect. Like many other local authorities that proactively redesigned their community transport provision, Suffolk acted on the previous guidance in good faith and is now considering what needs to happen next.

Suffolk County Council currently has 40 related contracts with local providers for community transport. The majority of these contracts are set over five years and the overall cost is £1.3M per annum.

Energy Efficient Grants now available for local retail businesses in Suffolk

Recent changes to European funding rules mean that retail businesses across Suffolk can access grants for energy efficiency measures.

Suffolk County Council is collaborating with Norfolk County Council to use EU funding to support businesses from a range of sectors. A number of shops have already benefited from free and independent advice and a change in the funding regulations means that shops can now also access grants towards the capital costs of any energy saving measure.

The Carbon Trust calculate that taking 20% off the energy spend of any business is equivalent to a 5% increase in sales. Grants are available for up to a maximum of £20,000, with a minimum of £1,000 for those businesses which take part in the scheme.

To date, the Business Energy Efficiency Anglia (BEE Anglia) project has reviewed 371 organisations in Suffolk and Norfolk (156 in Suffolk), identifying cost savings of £2.26m (which equates to £6,146 per business), and carbon savings of 22,371 tonnes (61 tonnes per business).

These savings are equivalent to the carbon used in 6,648 flights from London to Sydney. This initiative is not just about identifying savings. BEE Anglia has so far awarded over £118,000 in grant funding for various energy efficiency projects in Suffolk including radiant heating, vehicle tracking, wood burners and more efficient lighting.

The BEE Anglia project is funded by the European Regional Development Fund and is being delivered across the region through a partnership of Suffolk County Council, Norfolk County Council, Groundwork and NWES.

The project has three core offers that have been designed to help businesses reduce carbon and save money using independent advice.

Energy experts will visit the business' premises to conduct a free, impartial and independent review that identifies the best cost and carbon saving opportunities.

Businesses interested in any aspect of this service can find out more and register online at www.beeanglia.org or call Groundwork on 01473 350370. Dedicated advisors will be able to answer any queries about eligibility for the programme or potential grant projects

Cycle Link from West Suffolk Hospital to Bury St Edmunds Town Centre unveiled

Find out about a quick, safe and easy route for cyclists from West Suffolk Hospital to Bury St Edmunds town centre. The 620 metre cycle path, which begins in the Hardwick Lane/Cullum Road area of Bury St Edmunds, was officially opened by representatives from Suffolk County Council, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, Suffolk Highways and the Bury Local Links team.

The link, which was previously a footpath, underwent conversion works funded by Suffolk County Council to create a cycle path. To facilitate cycling along the route, dropped kerbs have been provided at crossing points, guard rails have been replaced with new ones, which have sufficient space between them to allow a bike to pass through, and new signs have been added to highlight the route across the water meadow.

In addition, vegetation along the route has been trimmed back and, where needed, the cycle path has been resurfaced. The work has been carried out by Suffolk Highways, as part of Suffolk County Council, and the project cost in the region of £30,000

Earlier in the day, Bury Local Links Project Officers organised a cyclists' breakfast and a 'Dr. Bike' bike maintenance session with hospital cyclists – forming a full morning of celebrations to mark the opening of the cycle path as well as the new secure cycle parking facilities recently installed at the hospital.

It is hoped this improvement to the cycling infrastructure in Bury St Edmunds will encourage more employees and visitors to travel to and from the hospital by bicycle, leading to a greener, healthier Bury St Edmunds.