**Parish Report February 2025**

**£1million to be invested in East Suffolk car parks**

**East Suffolk Council is investing £1 million in car park infrastructure, including new contactless payment terminals, EV chargers, new cycle racks and signage, as well as introducing a suite of new parking tariffs in the district.**

As part of an annual review of its fees and charges, the Council has agreed to retain the 30 minutes free parking available in many council-owned car parks and to introduce several new tariffs to reduce congestion at peak times of the year.

To reflect the increased number of visitors coming to the district from further afield during the summer, new seasonal tariffs will be introduced in car parks in popular tourist destinations. Running from 1 March to 31 October in some council-owned car parks in Aldeburgh, Felixstowe, Lowestoft and Southwold, the new seasonal tariff will be higher than off-season and aims to ease the demand on busy car parks during the main tourism season.

New tariffs will also be introduced to allow campervans and motorhomes, HGVs and coaches to park in designated car parks in the district, with limitations on the length of stay.

The new parking fees, which were agreed at a meeting of East Suffolk Council’s Cabinet on Tuesday 7 January, also include an increase to parking costs for the first time since 2020. Despite increased costs for running the parking service, parking costs have remained unchanged in council-owned car parks for four years. A two-hour parking session currently costs £1.50, however from 1 April, it will rise to £2.00, and a 4-hour session will rise from £3.00 to £3.50.

Cllr Tim Wilson, East Suffolk’s cabinet member for Economic Development and Transport said: “We are investing a much needed £1million into our car parks to improve parking for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses across the district. Car parking fees must be spent on car parking infrastructure and other local facilities, so we can look forward to better maintenance of our car parks and their surroundings too.

“Parking fees haven’t risen in four years, and over that time the council has carried the cost of inflation – now we need to catch parking fees up with inflation, so that’s where it will now be, and no higher. Parking in a council-owned car park still compares favourably with other similar locations, with council-owned car park fees being approximately 20% cheaper than alternative parking options, and our new charges still compare favourably to other tourism destinations and our neighbouring councils.”

Other changes include the option to park for longer in short-stay car parks and reduced parking prices in car parks out of town centres to encourage people to park further afield and walk into town.

Contactless payment terminals will be introduced to give drivers more choice when paying for parking. This will be in addition to paying through a parking app or with cash.

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.

**50% off loft insulation for anyone in Suffolk!**

Suffolk residents can now get a 50% discount (up to £200) and free delivery on 200mm or 370mm wide eco-friendly, itch-free thermal insulation rolls, from High Loft, the UK’s leading eco loft insulation brand. So now is the perfect time to top up.

To receive your personalised link to claim your discount, visit [www.bit.ly/suffolkloft](http://www.bit.ly/suffolkloft) and fill out the short form, or phone High Loft on 01706 248203.

Did you know that an uninsulated home can lose up to a quarter of its heat through the roof, according to The Energy Saving Trust? Do you know if your loft insulation meets the Government recommendation of 25-50mm deep?

This offer is an excellent way to make your home warmer, reduce your energy bills, and make a positive environmental impact. You could decrease your energy bills by 40%!

Last year, the project enabled over 5,000m2 of roofs in Suffolk to be insulated. This year, the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership want to double that figure.

This Loft Insulation Offer is funded by Suffolk’s Public Sector Leaders and High Loft and will help contribute to Suffolk’s Climate Emergency Plan and our vision for a net zero Suffolk. For more funding and support available for Suffolk residents click [here](https://www.greensuffolk.org/how-to-take-action/at-home/grants-and-support-for-suffolk-residents/).

This information is also being shared on social media, through the Suffolk – Creating the Greenest County channels.

**Funding available for programmes to help reduce falls**

**Voluntary organisations, community groups and those delivering physical activities are invited to apply for funding to run activity programmes to help prevent falls in older people.**

East Suffolk Council’s new Strength and Balance project promotes ‘falls prevention exercise’ to encourage people aged 65 and over to stay active, reduce their likelihood of falls and provide opportunities to meet others in the community.

Through the project, a series of 12-week ‘Otago’ strength and balance programmes will be funded across the south of East Suffolk.

Programmes are already being funded in Leiston, Felixstowe, Saxmundham, and Woodbridge, and the scheme would bolster the offer in these areas whilst also expanding to other areas.

Cllr Jan Candy, East Suffolk’s cabinet member for Community Health, said: "Falling can cause serious injury, affect mobility, increase social isolation and reduce self-confidence. Strength and Balance exercise is a scientifically proven way for older adults to reduce their risk of falling whilst remaining active, and as a Council we are keen to ensure these programmes are available which will not only have a positive effect upon our residents’ health, but also reduce the demand on local health services."

Groups and organisations can apply for a share of £40,000 in funding, which will cover 12 months of group-based Otago exercise delivery. Organisations of all sizes are eligible to apply, provided they can meet the requirements detailed in the standard operating procedure.

Full details about how to apply: [www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/strength-and-balance](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/strength-and-balance)

**Trial scheme to divert unwanted household items to charity**

**Unwanted items collected through East Suffolk Council’s bulky waste scheme are now being made available for reuse through a local charity.**

****

A trial scheme is now underway in the north of East Suffolk which will enable East Suffolk Services Ltd, who collect bulky items on the Council’s behalf, to divert items in good condition to the Benjamin Foundation. Items can then be sold through the charity’s furniture and electricals store at Phoenix Enterprise Park in Lowestoft.

Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk’s cabinet member for the Environment said: “Diverting good quality furniture and household items collected via our bulky waste scheme to the Benjamin Foundation allows these items to be reused and repurposed. Many items collected through the scheme are in good condition with plenty of life left in them and so it is an excellent opportunity to prevent these items from going to incineration and instead prolongs their life. We are keen to promote a circular economy in East Suffolk and are encouraging residents to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible. As well as reducing waste, buying these pre-loved items is far cheaper than buying new and the proceeds go towards helping our local young people.”

Paul Sinclair, Operations Manager at Ben’s Social Enterprise said: “The Benjamin Foundation are excited to be supporting East Suffolk Council with their continued efforts to reduce waste and ensure items which can be reused find a new home. We have been overwhelmed by the support our new store at Phoenix enterprise park in Lowestoft has received, with hundreds of furniture and electrical items being sold in the first six months providing vital funds to further support our work supporting children, young people and families. We are on Facebook, so if you’re not following us yet click like and ensure you keep up to date with new items, events instore and more information about how your purchase and donations can have a positive impact in your local area.”

If successful, the scheme may be introduced in the south of East Suffolk in future.

The Benjamin Foundation is one of East Anglia's largest charities, focused on tackling youth homelessness, providing Early Years education, youth and family support, and emotional wellbeing and mental health services to children, young people and families. <https://benjaminfoundation.co.uk>

The Benjamin Foundation also has re-use shops at the Foxhall and Bury St Edmunds Recycling Centres, which are operated by Suffolk County Council.

**The Council's bulky waste service allows residents to dispose of up to three items for a fixed cost of £51.50, and includes the collection of sofas, beds, washing machines, televisions, cookers, bicycles and more. Additional items can be collected at £17.50 per item.**

**Find out more about the bulky waste collection service, and book a collection at** [**www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/bulky-waste**](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/bulky-waste)

**Last Air Quality Management Area in East Suffolk removed**

**The last remaining Air Quality Management Area in East Suffolk – located on the A12 within Stratford St Andrew – has been removed following significant improvements in air quality.**

To meet national air quality objectives, local authorities must regularly review and assess air quality in their areas. If a location is found where the objectives are not being achieved, the local authority must declare the area an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and develop an Air Quality Action Plan to reduce air pollution.

The AQMA, located at four properties close to the A12 within Stratford St Andrew, was established in 2014 after high levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) were detected. Studies undertaken suggested that southbound traffic accelerating just prior to the end of the 30mph speed limit in Stratford St Andrew – originally located at the end of the Long Row houses – was a cause of increased emissions and a large part of the problem.

In 2017, after the 30/50mph speed limit change was moved further south out of the village and away from the houses by Suffolk County Council, NO2 concentrations within the AQMA fell below the national objective level and have continued to decrease year-on-year.

As a result, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) requested that the AQMA be revoked, and an assessment was carried out in 2024 to establish whether removal of the AQMA was appropriate. The revocation assessment considered the historical monitoring data, projected NO2 concentrations over the next five years, local and national trends in NO2 emissions, and local and regional factors that may impact on the AQMA. This included the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) expected to commence within East Suffolk – including Sizewell C, and the East Anglia One (North) and East Anglia Two offshore windfarms.

The findings were discussed by East Suffolk Council’s Cabinet on 1 October 2024, and following a six-week public consultation, the AQMA was revoked on 18 December.

Fiona Quinn, East Suffolk Council’s Head of Environmental Services and Port Health, said: “Poor air quality negatively affects the health and wellbeing of our residents, and so it is great news that the air quality at this location has significantly improved to such an extent that the AQMA is no longer necessary.

“This will not alter our monitoring regime. The Council will continue to monitor air quality in Stratford St Andrew and along the A12.

“This is particularly important as the early years works have now started for Sizewell C, construction associated with cabling has begun for the EA3 Offshore Windfarm, and initial surveying work has started for both the EA1N and EA2 offshore windfarms.  We will be keeping a close eye on NO2 concentrations at this location, and across the district, and working closely with each project individually and cumulatively.

“With the removal of our last AQMA our air quality focus is now able to shift, and we will be updating the East Suffolk Air Quality Strategy to reflect this. We want our residents to help shape the strategy by telling us their air quality priorities and we will be conducting public engagement in early March.”

A copy of the revocation order is available online.

[Stratford St Andrew AQMA - Revoked](https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/environmental-protection/air-quality/air-quality-management-areas/stratford-st-andrew-aqma-revoked/)

**Repair works to begin at Southwold promenade
Repair work to fill voids under a collapsed section of promenade at Southwold will begin later this month, ahead of planned repairs to the seawall.**

East Suffolk Council’s repairs and maintenance contractor, the Water Management Alliance, will begin work on the damaged section of promenade north of Southwold Pier from Monday 24 February. This follows the partial collapse of the promenade in December.

The WMA will be filling the voids under the promenade and replacing the collapsed slabs. This work will last approximately three weeks and will precede the planned repairs to the ‘toe’ of the sea wall. Erosion damage to the toe, which is usually underneath beach material, had previously been identified and repairs were scheduled for later this year. However recent erosion had exposed this area more quickly than expected, which resulted in the partial collapse of the promenade and the repair works have been brought forward as quickly as possible. Work on the sea wall will begin from Tuesday 22 April and is intended to be complete before the start of the school summer holidays.

Philip Ridley, East Suffolk’s Head of Nationally Significant Infrastructure said: “Our coastal management team have worked with consenting organisations to bring the scheduled repairs to the sea wall forward, which in combination with the repairs to the promenade, will see this section of the seafront returned to its former good condition and reopened once work is complete.

“The cordon to the north of the pier will remain in place until all works are complete and we would remind people to take extra care in this area and take notice of any signage and fencing.”

A works compound will be sited in the council-owned car park at Southwold Pier, and whilst this will reduce the number of available parking spaces, both car parks north of Southwold Pier will remain open. There will be no access to the promenade or the beach in the area where the works are taking place.