

Vince Langdon-Morris

East Suffolk (District) Councillor

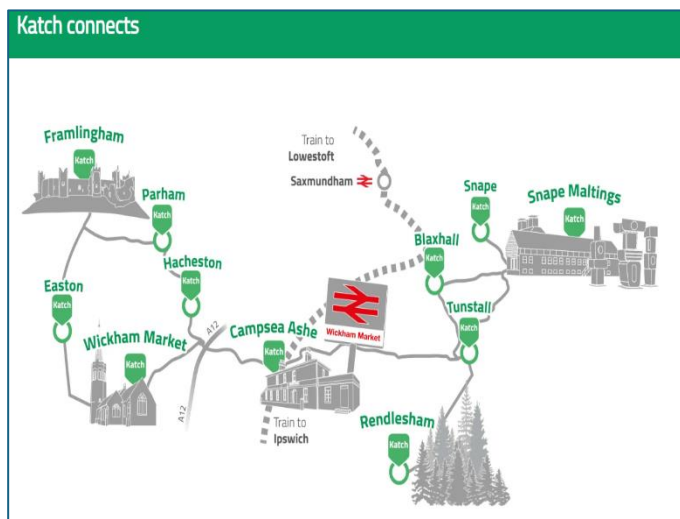
Wishing you all a happy and healthy festive season!

But if not: Winter can be a great season, but also a challenging one. Shorter days, colder temperatures, higher heating bills and Christmas preparations can all take their toll. Please note the various offers of support by East Suffolk Council in this newsletter.



Katch Bus: The number of people using the [Katch bus service](#) (including myself) is on the increase. Though there is a phone app available, I have found, personally, that the best way to engage Katch is to give the office a call [01728 635 939] to discuss your journey, both outward-bound pick-ups, and the return pick up.

You can use your bus pass, it's free for me :-). The Katch office staff and drivers are friendly and helpful, and it's great using public transport again (after many years behind the wheel for me).



Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The UK Government has launched its statutory consultation on the reorganisation of local government across Suffolk. The Minister is expected to decide our governance future in March 2026. New unitary council(s) are to be in place from April 2028. 2 proposals are on the table:

Three Councils for Suffolk: proposed by district and borough councils, replacing the current 6 councils with 3 unitary councils responsible for all local services.

One Suffolk: proposed by Suffolk County Council, creating a single mega unitary council.



Suffolk **District** and **Borough** councils are making the case for 'three unitary councils. **The consultation is open and your views really matter, see below.**

Please take this opportunity to have your say by visiting: [Local government reorganisation in Norfolk and Suffolk - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). The consultation closes 11th January 2026. If you have questions, please contact me, vince.langdon-morris@eastsoffolk.gov.uk



The Deben Climate Centre The 4 Rivers Project.

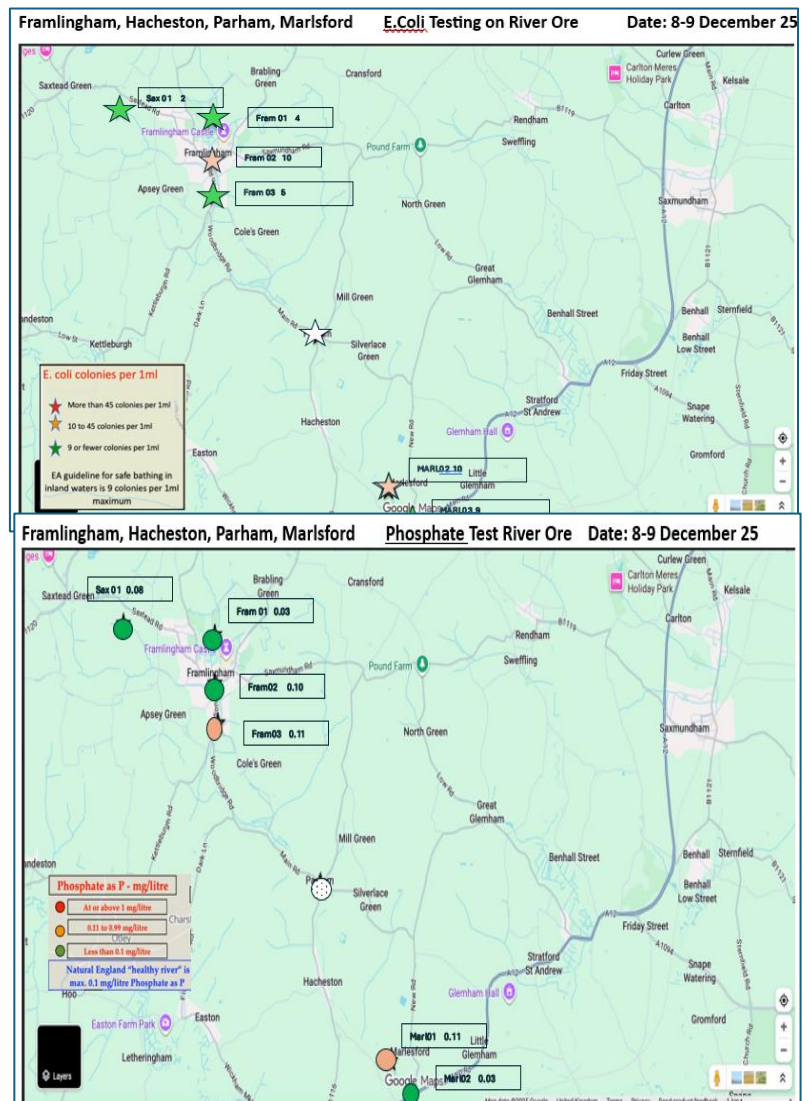
With support from East Suffolk Council, Deben Climate Centre's (DCC) floating headquarters is up and running in Woodbridge.

The DCC 4 Rivers project is a citizen science project, that does district wide river water quality testing on the Deben, Ore/Alde, Blyth and Waveney Rivers.

All water test results are shared with the Environment Agency, E&S and Anglian Water.

In Framlingham, we have established a DCC testing team to do water quality testing along the length of the River Ore, from Saxtead, through Fram, almost to the junction of the River Alde. We are now up and running and produced our first test results for E. coli, Phosphates, Nitrite, Nitrates, Turbidity, Ammonia, etc. (see pics)

Updates to follow.



Framlingham Flood Resilience & Recovery Working Group - FFRWG

My sincere thanks go to the ongoing commitment of our hard-working group members (all volunteers). Additionally for the support of Framlingham Town Council for hosting the 'FFRWG'.

Since Storm Babet in October 2023 the working group has developed a robust, well documented evidence base. This is needed to try to attract the investment needed to build the future 'resilience' of both the wider river catchment and the town.

Recently the working group completed a tour of the Ore River catchment above Framlingham (with a member of the farming cluster group). This was to physically inspect and better understand what is required to make our catchment and town more resilient to future flooding.

Please see FTC [Resilience Group](#) documents, an impressive and growing catalogue, providing a comprehensive overview of historical flooding in the town. The FFRWG has also completed and tested:

- A Community Emergency Response Plan (and tested it)
- Set up an active WhatsApp group
- Agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with Castle Community Rooms for the set-up of an emergency REST centre (hopefully we will never need one again)
- Established a 'grab box', kept at the FTC office with equipment like torches, small solar charger, walkie talkies, megaphone, hi viz jackets, the list goes on
- As ESC Cabinet Member for Finance, I have approved a £500k 'Resilience Emergency Response Fund' designed to provide immediate financial support (in the first 48 hours) to Town and Parish Councils affected by any future emergency.

Many farmers in the Ore River Catchment are members of the **Upper Deben, Alde & Ore Farm Cluster (UAOFC)**. They are working together to take a closer look at the farming landscape and how it can be made more resilient / future proofed. [ADAS](#) consultants have now visited 19 local farms and identified 12 sites for Sustainable Water Solutions / Natural Flood Management measures (Suffolk County Council have been approached for funding support). My Enabling Communities Budget has also been used to support UAOFC, and we will be receiving a map of the Ore catchment with proposed sites identified for future natural flood management.

UAOFC will develop a wider Community Management Plan and apply for funding from the last two rounds of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management from the Environment Agency (Apr & Oct 26). This is a £1M budget per round, each divided over 11 projects across East Anglia.

ESC webinars continue to support Emergency Preparedness and Building Community Resilience, with follow up in-person workshops. **The aim is** to provide an opportunity for Community Emergency Planning Groups (CEPGs) to develop. The sessions are designed for those thinking of



On a catchment walk, FFRWG members looking southward towards Framlingham Town and Mere. The gentle drop in elevation towards the town can be seen clearly from this vantage point.

developing a CEPG plan, or guidance and support for their current plan. The training examines how volunteers can provide long term sustainable support and run through simple scenarios to ensure they have essential information.

Objectives: test CEPG plans, including the notification processes when a plan has been activated. Develop the knowledge and competency to support the responders and their community to manage an incident. Provide useful links and information for CEPGs to enhance community resilience. Interact and learn from other volunteers / CEPGs.

For more information please contact: ESC Resilience Coordinator, Charlie.Smith@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Field to Fork The fund is now open for applications. Groups are invited to apply to support communities to grow their own food and be more self-sufficient. FTF is funded solely by East Suffolk Council and the Framlingham, Wickham Market and Villages Community Partnership.



Since 2023 the FTF home growing scheme has funded dozens of



new growing spaces, given 3,000 free growing kits to schools and other partners, generated £138,000 of food produce, diverted over 23 metric tonnes of carbon and over 80% of people supported have attributed improved wellbeing by being involved in this initiative :-)

Groups can apply for up to £2,000 to create new or improve existing growing spaces, see: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/field-to-fork, closing date Friday 16th January 2026.

Greener Fram | action for a positive future

Greener Fram has been very active in the last quarter of this year, gaining many more members :-), conducting information / presentations in the Town Square, handing out free wildflower seeds, insect hotels and nest boxes. They have also held several meetings at the Unitarian Meeting House, including a very well attended hedgehog talk by Councillor Sally Noble from Wickham Market.



GREENER FRAM action for a positive future



HOMES FOR NATURE: Wildlife
Garden Ponds and Bee Hotels

Event

Talk on Wildlife Garden Ponds by
Transition Woodbridge...

[read more](#)

Splash of Colour: Sam T and myself have again expanded the growing areas of wildflowers along our grass verges. In the coming spring we hope to have an expanded 'colour burst' of wildflowers.

My thanks go to the hard work of the Greener Fram team, who put so much of their personal time in to make this initiative a success.



Stripping the grass away allows wildflowers to establish.

Housing / Planning

Framlingham Neighbourhood Plan Review

Framlingham Town Council have agreed to review the existing Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2031 to keep it: relevant and effective, address any changes in local need, align with new housing targets, update to national planning rules, stay relevant with planning policy implementation.



Neighbourhood Plan reviews try to ensure that the community's vision stays aligned with current planning realities, legal requirements & prevent conflicts with higher-level planning.

Key reasons to review: *Changing circumstances, local demographics, environmental concerns, updated higher-level Local Plans (note East Suffolk has new increased housing targets allocated by Central Government), national policy change, securing future Community Infrastructure Levy funds) and correcting any past errors.*

Benefits of reviewing: Maintains Neighbourhood Plan relevance: Ensures the Neighbourhood Plan guides development effectively. Tries to prevent our Neighbourhood Plan policies from being overridden by new Local or National plans. Empowers our community to try to reaffirm 'local control' over ongoing housing development.

Framlingham - Housing

Belway Application, Woodbridge Road, Framlingham [DC/25/3412/FUL](#)

Many residents have stated their concern over this outline planning application and the future look of Framlingham Town, should this be allowed. Please see link to a [synopsis](#) that I compiled to try to provide a 'simple' guide / understanding around this application. Please note that the East Suffolk Council Planning Portal closing date for comments is 27th February 2026. Also note that this proposed site is not allocated in our current Framlingham Neighbourhood plan.

Victoria Mill Road [DC/25/4170/ARM](#): Please note, this is *an approval of Reserved Matters*

for DC/22/2831/OUT - Outline Application (some matters reserved). A phased development, including the erection of up to 35 custom/self-build homes (plots), with the development to include 12 affordable homes, public open space that will include equipped play and multi-use games area, landscaping, and other associated infrastructure. Reserved Matters for appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for a phased development of 35 dwellings, including 23 self-build/custom-build homes (plots) and 12 affordable homes - public open spaces (including equipped play area and multi-use games area), landscaping, and other associated infrastructure.

If residents would like to comment on this review of the housing design by ESC, please see a [synopsis](#) here, compiled by VMR and other town residents, which hopefully helps to understand the key issues around this approval of reserved matters, ESC Planning Portal closes on the 12th January 2026.

Planning - various topics / actions relating to Framlingham

[The East Suffolk Council Planning Committees were recently reviewed](#). This report was carried out by the Local Government Association (LGA) Planning Advisory Service (PAS). ESC welcomed the recommendations made.

[New Compulsory Purchase Order \(CPOs\) principles adopted](#). ESC has approved a policy which aims to clarify the process of bringing unused or difficult to acquire land into use, which should make it easier to see regeneration and more affordable homes built across the district.

East Suffolk Council Helpful Information

Support with budgeting, debt, bills:

- **Citizens Advice East Suffolk:** providing support on different things including benefit entitlement, debt and budgeting. Advice line 0808 278 7866 open Mon to Frid 10am to 2pm; can also email on advice@caes.org.uk
- **East Suffolk Council's Community Help Hub:** providing support on health & wellbeing and helping you budget, and see what you're entitled to. You can self-refer at [https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Community Help Hub referral](https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/Community%20Help%20Hub%20referral) or call East Suffolk Council's Customer Services Team, ask for Community Help Hub - 0333 016 2000
- **Suffolk Coastal Poverty Action** - focussing on poverty and debt; call 07942 359865 or email help@scpa.uk

Food:

- **Waveney Foodbank:** serving down to Framlingham; call Citizens Advice East Suffolk on 0808 208 2138 if you need a voucher
- **Lowestoft and District Foodbank:** covering Wickham Market area; email info@lowestoft.foodbank.org.uk for more information

Local support: If you need solutions in your local town/parish you may want to reach out to:

- **Heating your home:** If you are finding it difficult to heat your home, please reach out to organisations above who can see how you may be able to be helped. There are also Warm Welcomes running, including all libraries; free, supportive spaces for you to do activities or just 'be' if you prefer.
- **Hour Community** (Fram area) call 01728 440511 or email admin@hourcommunity.co.uk
- **Connection and socialising with others this winter:** If you're not able to see friends, family or neighbours as often as you'd like, Silver Line is run by Age UK free and is a confidential telephone service for older people. They provide friendship, conversation and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call for free on 0800 4 70 80 90. Your local library or coffee morning is also a good place to go to chat with others.
- **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: [Ease the Squeeze on cost of living » East Suffolk Council](#)

Council launches annual photo competition for 2025

East Suffolk Council's "Through the Lens" photo competition is back, and entrants are being given more chances to win with the introduction of two new categories.

The return of East Suffolk Through the Lens follows the success of last year's competition, which welcomed more than 230 entries.

This year, photographers of all ages and experience are invited to submit entries for two categories, 'People' and 'Place'. Under-16s will also have their own category, like previous competitions.

High street retail vouchers will be awarded to the winner of each category.

From the three winners, one overall winner will be selected. This photograph will grace the cover of the East Suffolk Magazine when delivered to every household in the district next spring.

Entrants are encouraged to capture the essence of the district by photographing the people, places and communities that make East Suffolk amazing.

Cllr Caroline Topping, Leader of East Suffolk Council, said: *"Last year's photo competition was extremely successful, proving that we have some keen photographers across the district, and I am excited to see what this year's competition brings.*

"Our district is full of amazing people, places and communities with unique stories, all waiting to be captured through the lens. It could be an image of an inspiring person in East Suffolk, a beautiful landscape picture that reminds us just how amazing our district is, or an active and supportive community."

Entries should be submitted via eastsuffolk.co/through-the-lens before midnight on Saturday 31 January. Previous entries will not be considered.

More information can be found at www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/photo-comp. The competition officially opens on Monday 24 November.

Winners will be announced during the week commencing Monday 23 February, with the three winners each receiving a £100 high street voucher. The overall winner will also have their photograph featured on the cover of the East Suffolk Magazine in the spring.

East Suffolk Council Green Liberal Group (GLI) Update

Fraud prevention commitment protects millions in public funds. More than £2.8 million of public funding was protected as a result of work by East Suffolk Council's Corporate Fraud Service in 2024/25. The team uncovered over 103 cases of irregularity between the beginning of April 2024 and the end of March 2025. An annual Corporate Fraud report, presented to the Councils Audit and Governance Committee this month, showed that officers helped to detect £2,844,032 of irregularity during the last financial year. The Corporate Fraud Service Team is professionally resourced and skilled in investigating any potentially fraudulent activity relating to the organisation, its partnerships, and direct contractors.

Intervention included the cancellation of 9 Right to Buy applications following due diligence activities, providing £1,724,500 of prevented losses by retaining these properties within council housing stock and continuing to yield monthly rental income and be available for social housing needs. Meanwhile, tenancy fraud investigations resulted in the recovery of ten social housing properties, saving an estimated £930,000 and enabling genuinely eligible families to become tenants.

Councillor Vince Langdon-Morris, East Suffolk Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money says: *"These are excellent results from our Corporate Fraud Service. The prevention, detection and prosecution of fraudulent activity help us to protect taxpayers. With increased pressure on local government, and a reduction in central government funding, it has never been more important for our Corporate Fraud Services to tackle fraud and protect those that truly need our help."*

Reports of suspected fraud can be made to East Suffolk Council by calling: 01394 444444 or emailing fraud@eastsuffolk.gov.uk or completing our online fraud report at: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/contact-us/corporate-fraud/>

Helping Town and Parishes to support nature

Prepared by environmental charity Groundwork East on behalf of East Suffolk Council, a new toolkit is now available for town and parish councils to support conservation in their local area.



As part of the Council's Nature at Work scheme, the toolkit contains branded graphics for town and parish councils to use online to promote their involvement with the conservation scheme, which has created 116 wild spaces across East Suffolk which are being left to grow over the summer.

New signs have been installed on council-owned land across the district to help identify the wild areas where grass cutting will be limited to twice per year for the benefit of pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The signs feature a QR code directing people to further information about the scheme, including how residents and community groups can get involved. A map of all the sites is available, and photos from the locations will be added throughout the year.

Groundwork East is currently working with town and parish councils to build awareness of the sites, and these councils are encouraged to help monitor the sites to better understand what species are present and how the sites are changing.

GLI Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk's cabinet member for the Environment said: *"Nature at Work aims to respond to the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis by supporting nature at small-scale community sites across East Suffolk. The refreshed scheme has a new focus this year, working with local schools, town and parish councils and community groups to raise awareness of the benefits of the Nature at Work scheme and encouraging people to consider how they can get involved in their own garden or community space."*

Have your say on play areas in East Suffolk

East Suffolk Council is calling on residents and local organisations to have their say on what three upgraded play areas in district could look like.

With plans to improve play areas at Dale End in Gisleham, Newnham Avenue in Woodbridge and Staplehurst in Carlton Colville, working with the town and parish councils, the Council is asking local people and groups to take part in surveys to share their views on the equipment they would like to see and what ideas they have for the spaces.

East Suffolk is home to 280 play areas, with 63 owned and maintained by East Suffolk Council. Following an independent review of play spaces by Knight, Kavanagh and Paige Ltd which assessed how play spaces are used, what equipment is available and where improvements could be made, the Council's Play Strategy 2023 – 2027 was developed.

The three play areas in Carlton Colville, Gisleham and Woodbridge were recommended to be improved as the review found equipment in them to be limited, dated, with some damage to seating and surface areas. Their development follows improvements to play areas in eight communities across the district – including Beccles, Carlton Colville, Felixstowe, Framlingham, Kesgrave, Rendlesham, Trimley St Mary and Wrentham.

Cllr Sarah Whitelock, East Suffolk Council cabinet member for communities, leisure and tourism, said: *"Our play areas are a vital, free resource for families in the district, helping to boost children's development and to ease cost of living pressures. That's why we're committed to providing modern and inclusive equipment to ensure children of all ages and abilities can play safely and have fun. "We want to encourage as many as possible to take part in our surveys to help us to shape the upgraded play spaces in Carlton Colville, Gisleham and Woodbridge. "We'd like to find out what play experiences matter most to children, so whether you're a parent, carer, grandparent or a local organisation, please ask the children in your care what they like most about the play areas, what they'd like to change and what equipment they'd love to see."*

Following the public's feedback, design proposals will be developed by play equipment providers, with the community then asked to give their thoughts on the designs. Members of the public can take part in the surveys for each play area and explore ideas for different play experiences by visiting www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/have-your-say-on-east-suffolk-play-areas . The closing date to take part is Friday 19 December.

Extended free Wi-Fi network helping people stay connected

Extensions to East Suffolk Council's free Wi-Fi network in four of the district's market towns have proven popular with residents and visitors, with data showing a large increase in sign-ups to the service.

The existing free to use Wi-Fi networks in Aldeburgh, Halesworth, Leiston and Saxmundham were all extended earlier this year for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses. Data collected shows a significant increase in registrations to the service since the extensions were launched, with an 86% increase in Saxmundham and a 73% in Aldeburgh.

Cllr Tim Wilson, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Economic Development and Transport said: *"Our free Wi-Fi is available across East Suffolk as part of the Digital Towns programme which supports our market towns and businesses by strengthening the local economy and improving connectivity.*

"The extensions to the Wi-Fi coverage in Aldeburgh, Halesworth, Leiston and Saxmundham mean more of the main shopping areas are now covered and we hope this will encourage more people to visit and stay longer, supporting local businesses."

"As well as free public Wi-Fi, the Digital Towns programme provides information on the number of visitors to each town, identifying the busiest times of day and where people visit most frequently and this enables us to offer tailored support to local businesses."

When visitors register for the free Wi-Fi, they can also choose to receive a quarterly email newsletter highlighting local events and information.

East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi is also available in Beccles, Bungay, Felixstowe, Framlingham, Lowestoft, Southwold and Woodbridge.

The Wi-Fi equipment is provided and managed on the Council's behalf by Elephant Wi-Fi.

Find out more, including details of the areas covered by the free Wi-Fi in each town, at www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/east-suffolk-free-wi-fi