

Annual Report

Kelsale & Yoxford Ward

Cllr Julia Ewart

Spring 2024

East Suffolk Council has been active in a range of areas during the 2023-2024 term, focusing on community services, housing, financial management, and environmental policies.

One of the significant developments in the council was the election of a new leadership team, reflecting a shift towards the Green Party, and the Liberal Democrats and independent administration who all gained key seats and therefore portfolios. This change in governance has implications for the council's strategic direction, particularly in environmental and community-focused initiatives. [East Suffolk Strategic Plan » East Suffolk Council](#)

Financially, East Suffolk Council has managed a budget of £50 million for the 2023-24 period, aimed at supporting essential services and community needs. This includes managing council tax revenues efficiently, which are a critical component of the council's funding. The council has also been involved in reviewing and adjusting fees and charges for various services, including parking, planning applications, and cemetery management, ensuring these are aligned with the needs and financial realities of its residents.

In housing, the council has been proactive in addressing the needs of its community. It offers a comprehensive range of housing services, from providing advice on homelessness to managing council housing and facilitating affordable housing developments. Efforts have been made to enhance the housing strategy to accommodate a growing need for diverse types of housing within the district and it is relooking at social housing with some urgency.

Moreover, East Suffolk Council has been actively managing its benefits services in partnership with the Anglia Revenues Partnership. This collaboration helps streamline the delivery of essential services like council tax, housing benefits, and business rates, making these processes more efficient and user-friendly for residents.

Personal case work for Cllr Ewart has included housing issues, noisy hounds, air quality, dog licenses, school transport, road and verge issues, village maintenance, tree preservation and a great deal of planning. The latter brings great opportunities to the ward.

These initiatives demonstrate the council's commitment to improving the quality of life for its constituents through careful planning, fiscal management, and responsive governance. The council's efforts to adapt to changing political leadership and economic conditions reflect its dedication to meeting the evolving needs of East Suffolk's communities.

In response to the devastation caused by Storm Babet in 2023, East Suffolk Council took significant steps to support the affected communities, demonstrating their commitment to swift and effective crisis management.

The impact of Storm Babet was severe, with more than 200 properties across Suffolk experiencing flooding. This prompted East Suffolk Council to engage in a robust multi-agency response effort to manage and mitigate the effects of the flooding, particularly focusing on the town of Framlingham and the villages of Peasenhall and Yoxford which were heavily impacted.

To aid recovery, East Suffolk Council initiated several support mechanisms, including financial assistance. Affected residents were eligible to apply for a Community Recovery Grant and a council tax discount to help cope with the immediate aftermath. The council facilitated access to these resources by actively reaching out to impacted households to inform them about the available support and assist them with the application process.

Moreover, the council coordinated with local services to offer direct aid in clearing and cleansing operations, helping to restore normalcy as quickly as possible. This included the deployment of East Suffolk Services teams who provided additional resources to the hardest-hit areas, ensuring that those displaced by the storm received necessary support and housing guidance.

The response to Storm Babet showcased East Suffolk Council's capacity to manage emergencies effectively and underscored their ongoing commitment to community welfare and safety. Their efforts were part of a broader strategy to strengthen resilience against future natural disasters and enhance the council's emergency response protocols.

The East Suffolk Council has established Community Partnerships as an initiative to collaboratively address local priorities and improve the quality of life across different regions within East Suffolk. These partnerships are structured around natural community groupings based on East Suffolk Council ward boundaries, serving as the foundational units for each partnership area. There are eight distinct Community Partnerships, each involving local stakeholders such as East Suffolk councillors, town and parish councils, police, health services, businesses, voluntary organizations, community groups, and youth representatives.

These Partnerships focus on tackling various community issues such as social isolation, mental health and wellbeing, and financial inequality. The group operates with a well-sourced budget across all partnerships and the Community Partnership Board, aimed at funding projects that address identified priorities within their respective areas.

The Community Partnerships employ a solution-focused workshop style, utilizing data packs and local intelligence to refine and focus their efforts. They regularly update their priorities based on the latest available data and community input gathered through workshops. Notable projects and initiatives across these partnerships address a wide range of issues from improving air quality and physical health to enhancing opportunities for young people and combating loneliness and isolation.

The Partnership held its annual forum, providing a platform for stakeholders to share knowledge and collaborate on community-driven solutions. These events have already been instrumental in shaping the partnerships' focus and facilitating community engagement and empowerment with the most recent being held at Trinity Park, Ipswich where many of the

Partnership attendees from East Suffolk enjoyed getting together and meeting some of the charities involved. The Kelsale & Yoxford ward was glad to host the most recent event, which was held at the Hub, Huntingfield and we thank Sam Kenway

The current projects with the Community Partnership are looking at mental health and local transport. This ties in well with the new Live-Well Hub in Leiston.

To close, funds from the councillor's enabling grant have been spent on a variety of items within the ward such as a gazebo for the Hub, a (share of) a defibrillator, special traffic gates and village sign posts and more extraordinary piece of support for a history society's archive.

Cllr Ewart thanks everyone who has supported her in her first year of office, for the Clerks' who have ensured the smooth running of the mutual relationship between the Parishes and East Suffolk Council and for their endless attention to supporting the parishes in the storms.

It is a privilege to work for the thirteen villages and eleven Parish Councils. With the large projects of Sizewell C and the renewable plants likely to be in train then there is a busy time ahead and so it is important to keep the channels of communication open.

Cllr Julia Ewart

April/May 2024

April 2024 Parish Report East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

East Suffolk Blooms community wildflower growing scheme returns

A flourishing environmental scheme, encouraging people in East Suffolk to grow beautiful, pollinator-friendly wildflowers, is returning for 2024.

Each year, East Suffolk Council distributes free packs of bulbs to town and parish councils, community groups and organisations to plant locally as part of the East Suffolk Blooms campaign. The planting efforts of last year's successful applicants are already being rewarded with colourful narcissus displays.

This time, in tandem with the East Suffolk's Amazing project to promote an all-round effort to keeping the district clean and attractive, and in order to provide greater benefit to pollinators, East Suffolk Council will be offering blends of native bulbs that appeal particularly to bees and butterflies.

East Suffolk Council's Public Realm Contracts Manager, Laura Hack said: "We were thrilled with the level of interest in last year's scheme and we're looking forward to receiving applications for East Suffolk Blooms in 2024.

"We expect to have enough bags of bulbs to distribute one to each of 50 groups across the district."

Packs of bulbs will be available to collect in the autumn, around October, from two locations in the district.

A 'Bees Mix' of bulbs flowers from February to May and includes crocuses, chionodoxas, scillas, muscaris and naturalising tulips, while the 'Butterfly Mix' flowers between May and July and comprises camassias, nectaroscordums, irises and alliums.

The scheme is funded by East Suffolk Council's trading company and services operator, East Suffolk Services Ltd, and from the Enabling Communities Budget scheme.

An application form will be available to complete online until 30 June, before a judging panel meets to decide the successful applicants, with additional consideration given to groups reapplying after missing out last year. Applicants will then be informed of the decision by August.

To view the application form, visit: my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/east_suffolk_blooms

East Suffolk's Amazing

We invest every single penny we can in services to help maintain the beauty and cleanliness of East Suffolk but sometimes admit that it can never necessarily be enough.

A cross-party working group of councillors is already working on different ways we can work to maintain the beauty of East Suffolk, which includes encouraging more residents to take active pride in their local area.

This includes reducing fly-tipping, recycling properly and even, where possible, looking after the spaces outside your own property. We are also working closely and collaboratively with Suffolk County Council who have responsibility for weeds on roads and pavements, potholes and road signs.

There is already an incredible network of volunteers who work to help keep our district beautiful, with regular litter-picks, planting, and an all-round effort to keep their local area clean. If East Suffolk matters to you, if you want to play your part we would love you to get involved. East Suffolk's Amazing... let's keep it that way!

For information on community litter picks, recycling, community composting schemes and reporting issues, please visit: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/waste/litter/amazing/

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:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/ For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk