

February/March 2026 Parish Report

From Cllr Julia Ewart

East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

So Much To Share!

With so much to share I have made the report as easy to read as possible but wished to point out a few matters before they get lost at the bottom.

Local Elections

There will be elections in May, 2026 for the County Council after all.

That's now only a matter of weeks away, and your involvement as a community is really important. You need strong representation, especially given the amount of new housing coming forward, the ongoing challenges around the Sizewell project, new solar farm applications, and the proposed Essex & Suffolk Water storage facility in Sibton.

A practical complication is that the geographical 'divisions' have changed. The current Kelsale & Yoxford ward villages are now being split in several different directions.

- **Yoxford** will sit in the new **Blyth Estuary Division**.
- **Kelsale** will be in the new **Saxmundham & District Division**.
- The northern villages will join **Halesworth**, and some will be aligned towards **Framlingham**.

You can see the full breakdown of the new divisions here:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2026-02/County%20Division%20Breakdown.pdf>

Many district councillors will be standing as candidates in the County elections to help support keeping residents represented with these larger projects.

Community Partnership

First of all – our Community Partnership Officer is a daddy for a second time. His dear baby and mum are home safely and all is well. Sam will return later in March.

He has arranged for a really informative Community Forum to take place at Stratford St Andrew on Friday 17th April – anyone with an interest who has attended or not a Community Partnership meeting before should feel free to attend, 9am -2pm inc lunch .. just let me know, and come along to Stratford St Andrew.

The Thrust of the NSIPS

We all knew that it would be different, and that coping with roadworks and highways issues would be challenging, but I don't think any of us fully appreciated just how much disruption would take place.

Most villages are feeling the increase in traffic, disruption, and parking challenges — not to mention the hold-ups on the A12 and the extra time spent on diversions. Yoxford and Kelsale are particularly affected by roadworks, and Peasenhall is experiencing a significant rise in traffic volumes. Please speak up if you have concerns, and report any issues to your clerks.

You will recall that I sit on the NSIP working group in order to stay as far ahead as possible. Please be assured that I speak up for the ward wherever I can. On behalf of East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for Energy and Climate Change, Tom Daly, and the Energy Projects Team, please see below an overview of this month's core energy project updates — dated March 2026:

Sea Link – National Grid Electricity Transmission

National Grid proposes to reinforce the electricity network between Suffolk and Kent via a new 2GW high voltage direct current (HVDC) link between a proposed substation near Friston in Suffolk and the existing Richborough to Canterbury 400kV overhead line in Kent. Sea Link is in the formal 6-month examination phase with the Planning Inspectorate, having 2 months left closing on 5th May. ESC officers continue to engage with the examination, reviewing submitted materials, preparing responses, engaging with local community representatives and making submissions.

Deadline 5 of the examination is 10th March 2026 and includes responses to the second round of questions from the Examining Authority and updated versions of the principal areas of disagreement summary statements (PADSS). ESC has also been updating the draft Statement of Common Ground with NGET for Deadline 5 and reviewing and responding on Deadline 4 submissions. Officers continue to engage with the Examination, making submissions at deadlines and attending and making representations at hearings. Outside of this, officers continue to engage with the applicant and stakeholders.

The Planning Inspectorate has now published the Rule 13 notice of hearings for the end of March (24th to 27th) <https://nsip-documents.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN020026-002758-SeaLink Rule 13 March Hearings.pdf>

Once the examination closes, there will be a 3-month period for the Planning Inspectorate's Examining Authority to make a recommendation on the project, and a further 3-month period for the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to decide whether to grant development consent or not. If consented, as with all DCOs, there will be a 6 week window of time for any legal challenges to be lodged regarding the decision.

- Up to date Sea Link project information is available on the Planning Inspectorate's website [Sea Link - Project information](#)
- The Rule 8 letter which contains the revised examination timetable (Annex A) can be [found here](#)

LionLink Multi-Purpose Interconnector – National Grid Ventures

LionLink is a new subsea electricity cable (known as an interconnector) proposed to run between Great Britain and the Netherlands. The project is being developed by National Grid Ventures (NGV) and Dutch partner, TenneT. LionLink remains in the pre-application phase. Statutory consultation opened on 13th January, and closes next week on 10th March (running for 8 weeks) – on the same day as Sea Link’s Deadline 5. ESC are currently reviewing the consultation materials, engaging with elected ward members and local communities, and compiling a response to National Grid Ventures. This consultation allows statutory consultees to provide expert advice and concerns regarding the project to help shape the application before it is formally submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, including the publication of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The PEIR is a key document that provides an early, preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental impacts of the proposed project, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. As many of you will also have noticed when reviewing the statutory consultation materials, many areas of assessment and survey work remain outstanding and will be undertaken ahead of submission later in 2026. This has resulted in gaps in data but ESC and local communities have been highlighting this in responses to NGV.

The application is expected to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate later this year.

- The Planning Inspectorate’s project page can be [found here](#).
- DCO submission to PINS expected in late 2026 [LionLink About | National Grid Group](#)

Sizewell C – SZC Co

Sizewell C commenced construction in January 2024, and construction is anticipated to last 9-12 years. The first half of 2026 will see works progress at pace in the Friday Street (A12/A1094) area and the Yoxford area. A key focus is getting Friday Street and Yoxford roundabouts linked to the A12 and open to the road network, expected around early summer. Both the Southern Park and Ride (Wickham Market) and Northern Park and Ride (Darsham) will be opening in phases beginning from spring, with full openings due in the late summer, following partial operation starting in late 2025.

Milestones for the rail programme have recently been reached, with the trainline and rail head at the Ancillary Construction Area (ACA) fully installed and the first engineering train reaching the ACA in mid-February, followed by the first aggregate train into the ACA in early March. The Green Rail Route continues to be built from Buckleswood Road to the Temporary Construction Area (TCA), in February rail tracks began to be laid across the B1122 (Abbey Road). The level crossing will be constructed later in the year. Works continue in the beach and harbour area this spring, with a noticeable increase in marine activity associated with construction of the Construction Drainage Outfall and desalination pipes, and construction of the Marine Bulk Import Facility (MBIF). These works require footpath restrictions, which will be lifted over the weekends. The Orwell Logistics Park freight management facility is also now fully open with 350 office-based workers now working from the site.

- Discharges for Sizewell C are ongoing. All discharges are on Public Access and can be found here: [Requirement discharge information and applications » East Suffolk Council](#)
- The Sizewell C Works Tracker provides the most current snapshot of ‘on the ground’ activity. Works can be followed on the Works Tracker: [Home - Sizewell C Works Tracker \(szcworkstracker.co.uk\)](#)

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR)

The East Anglia TWO and East Anglia ONE North offshore wind farm projects have now concluded the primary discharge of requirements attached to the DCO consents for the onshore works. The ESC team have now discharged the DCO requirements for both projects associated with the ‘substations stage’. Substation civil and ground works commenced on site in early March 2026.

- More details on the projects [can be found here.](#)

Norwich to Tilbury

The Project proposes to reinforce the high voltage (400 kV) electricity transmission network between Norwich Main down to Tilbury in Essex. The Project will involve new overhead power lines (400kV) as well as new substation works at Norwich Main (Norfolk), Bramford (Suffolk), Lawford, Tendring (Essex) and Tilbury (Essex). ESC will be monitoring the examination and hearings, noting we submitted a Relevant Representation, however we defer to the host authorities as the project is entirely located outside of the ESC district.

- More details can be found on the [PINS website here.](#)

Other Local News

East Suffolk Council had invited residents, local businesses and organisations to comment on drafted guidance relating to accommodation for the workforce of major energy projects in the district. The Draft Major Energy Projects Accommodation Planning Position Statement set out the Council’s position on managing housing needs for workers involved in National Significant Infrastructure Projects, with a particular focus on Sizewell C. It also recognised the accommodation impacts linked to other projects such as East Anglia 2 (EA2) and National Grid’s Sea Link and LionLink.

Given the scale of these developments and the thousands of construction workers required—many of whom would not be living locally—the Council acknowledged the importance of ensuring suitable accommodation within reasonable distance of work sites, especially for longer-term contracts.

Cllr Mark Packard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management, had explained that while some impacts were unavoidable, the Council was taking a proactive approach to manage current and future accommodation pressures and to reduce strain on the private rented sector and tourism accommodation. Although the Position Statement did not amend or replace existing Local Plan policies, it updated the supporting evidence and highlighted key material considerations for assessing planning applications for worker accommodation connected to the energy industry.

The consultation was advertised as running from Thursday 22 January until 5pm on Thursday 26 February. Comments could be submitted via the online portal, by email to planningpolicy@eastsuffolk.gov.uk, or by writing to:

Planning Policy and Delivery Team
Riverside
4 Canning Road
Lowestoft
Suffolk
NR33 0EQ

If anyone still has additional thoughts or reflections, they are welcome to share them so they can be considered as part of any future work on this topic.

Get The Vision Early!

Whilst councils are still waiting for the outcome of the national government's decision on local government reorganisation, day-to-day work continues. It is reasonable to assume that the role of the "Local Plan" in setting out how things will be delivered publicly will continue.

A Local Plan is the council's formal blueprint for future development in the area. It sets out what can be built, where it can be built, and what infrastructure, community facilities, and environmental protections are needed to support that growth. Because it guides all major planning, investment, and funding decisions, any project applying for Community CIL money from the wider local government pot must already be included in the Local Plan. If it is not listed, the project is classed as "unplanned" and does not qualify for funding. This means that any concept or emerging idea for a new community asset—particularly one that may require external funding—needs to be identified early and lodged with the planning department for inclusion.

So, if you hope to build a new community asset at any point in the next ten years, the idea needs to be submitted to the planning department, requested for inclusion in the Local Plan, and then checked to ensure it has been added. Doing this early safeguards future eligibility for CIL funding and ensures that community priorities are recognised in the council's long-term vision.

Here is some information from the East Suffolk website—which has recently been updated, if you haven't visited it lately.

The Suffolk Coastal Local Plan passed its five-year mark on 23 September 2025, triggering the statutory requirement for review under national planning regulations. The Review Assessment concluded that the plan now needs updating, driven largely by a significant increase in the housing need figure for East Suffolk—rising from the 916 homes per year planned for in existing local plans to 1,667 homes per year under the Government’s updated standard method introduced in December 2024. This conclusion means the council must now begin a full Local Plan update, and the expected timetable for this work is published in the council’s Local Development Scheme.

[Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review Assessment September 2025 \(PDF, 1.08MB\)](#)

The expected timetable for the Local Plan update is published in our [Local Development Scheme](#).

For the overall read:

[Statement of Community Involvement and Local Development Scheme | East Suffolk Council](#)

Grant Opportunities – Beginning March 2026

[Rowntree Community Grants Support Summer Activities Across Local Areas](#)

Grants are available through the Rowntree Free the Fund Community Grant to support summer activities for adults aged 21 to 65 in local communities across the UK and Ireland.

Four awards of up to £10,000 each are being offered to organisations delivering projects that improve outdoor spaces or create opportunities for community participation. The funding is intended to enhance local environments and support activities that contribute to wellbeing and social connection.

Projects must focus on outdoor activity spaces or initiatives that benefit local people within the specified age group. Eligible uses include transforming community gardens, improving shared outdoor areas or purchasing equipment for arts, theatre, music and sport.

Activities supported may cover arts and crafts, dance, music, gardening, sports and fitness. Example projects include running a summer art festival, supporting a wheelchair basketball club or upgrading facilities for team sports.

Applications are open to registered charities, social enterprises, not-for-profit organisations, hospices, sports clubs and social housing providers. All applicants must be based in the UK or Ireland.

The grants are intended to support projects that deliver clear community benefit and encourage participation through accessible activities.

The deadline for applications is 31 March 2026 (17:00).

Website: [Rowntree's – Free the Fund Community Grant Programme - Groundwork](#)

One Stop Community Partnership Support for Local Groups

The One Stop Community Partnership programme offers support for community organisations located within two miles of a One Stop store. It provides an initial £1,000 grant and creates a long-term package of tailored assistance delivered jointly by the One Stop Community Team and the local store team.

Successful applicants work with their local store to develop activities that address food poverty, assist vulnerable or elderly residents, support low income families, run youth sports teams or improve the environment through waste reduction or recycling.

Eligible applicants include voluntary and community organisations, registered charities, schools, health bodies, parish or town councils, social enterprises, Community Interest Companies operating for at least two years, community councils, local authorities and housing organisations.

Groups such as women's refuges, hospices, food banks and homeless charities are also considered. Support from store teams may include volunteering assistance, awareness-raising or help with fundraising.

Funding may be used for equipment for food banks such as fridges, freezers or storage units, although it cannot be used to buy food. Food banks may contact their local store manager to discuss the possibility of establishing a donation point.

The next deadline for applications is 31 March 2026.

Website: [One Stop Community Partnership - Groundwork](#)

Supporting Water Activities for Children and Young People

The Children's Alliance is offering grants of up to £15,000 for not-for-profit organisations across the UK to deliver projects and activities that give children and young people under the age of 18 access to water for learning, developing, and playing

Proposed projects must support children under the age of 18 years to have access to water in the form of swimming lessons, transport to lessons, swimwear and water play equipment. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Free swimming lessons and swim nappies for children who need them.
- Online learning programmes that teach valuable life skills for parents and children.

- Water splash areas to encourage play as well as water confidence and safety.

Priority will be given to grassroots initiatives delivering water-based projects for disadvantaged children.

There are typically two application rounds per year, in March and September.

The next deadline for applications is 31 March 2026

Website: [Community – Children's Alliance](#)

Grow Wild Youth Grants

Grow Wild is once again offering grants of £500 to young people (aged 16 to 25 years) across the UK to deliver a creative project that celebrates why UK native plants and/or fungi are so special.

The project should be original and exciting and focus on UK native plants and/or fungi. Projects need to engage at least 100 other people (either in person or online). The grant be used to pay for anything to support the project, such as equipment, materials, training, resources, or expert help. Projects can start in May but must be completed by the end of October 2026.

Applications will be accepted from young people aged 16 to 25 years old who live in the UK and who can find a supporting organisation, such as a school, university, youth club or a local community group, to help them deliver the project.

The deadline for applications is 18 March 2026 (15:00).

Website: [Youth Grants | Grow Wild | Kew](#)

Parkinson's Physical Activity Grants Programme

Parkinson's UK supports activity providers, national governing bodies, Parkinson's groups and branches, and sports and healthcare professional who are based and operating within the UK.

Grants of between £500 and £3,000 are available to support physical activity projects for people with Parkinson's within the UK.

The priorities for this year's grants programme are:

- Supporting people with Parkinson's to participate in movement-based activities that build confidence and foster a lasting interest in being physically active.
- Engaging people with Parkinson's who are currently inactive to begin physical activity and maintain ongoing participation.

This year, in recognition that some people face additional barriers to engaging in physical activity, the programme has broadened its scope to include 'Gateway Activities'. These activities help people with Parkinson's build confidence and develop an interest in movement-based activity. Examples include arts-based activities such as

theatre, musical and circus skills, singing and movement, playing large instruments that require significant movement (such as samba drumming), and gardening or horticulture projects.

Projects should reach and engage with a wide range of people with Parkinson's especially those who may be from the following groups:

- People who are inactive, or active at low levels.
- Newly diagnosed.
- Young onset.
- Under-represented groups, including socially isolated, not digitally connected or ethnic communities.
- People from marginalised communities/protected characteristics
- People who are not engaged with Parkinson's UK.
- People who are still working.

Projects must run for a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months and must start within three months of receiving the grant.

Applications are open and will be accepted until all of the funding has been allocated.

Website: [Grants for physical activity providers | Parkinson's UK](#)

Beyond Literature Borders Programme Open for Small Arts Organisations

Speaking Volumes, in partnership with the British Council, has opened a new round of Beyond Literature Borders, a grants programme supporting small UK-based arts organisations to develop international literature projects. The programme is designed for organisations that are diverse-led or working with underrepresented voices and have limited or no experience of international collaboration.

The 2026 round includes five awards of £7,000 each to support the development and delivery of projects. The funding aims to help organisations build the skills and knowledge required for international work and to create connections across borders. Support includes guidance from Speaking Volumes and the British Council throughout the year-long project period.

Applicants must propose a collaborative literature project with an international partner. The programme prioritises early-stage international work and encourages organisations showcasing underrepresented voices in the UK literature sector to extend their activity globally. Previous recipients have undertaken projects involving workshops, collaborative publications, cross-cultural exchanges and international mentoring.

The deadline for applications is 27 March 2026.

Website: [Beyond Literature Borders | British Council Arts](#)

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Usual tips to empower your own Funding Search / Applications

East Suffolk Council Funding opportunities for local communities and charitable organisations:

Use this link to see a summary of our CURRENT funding schemes; a host of Funding Tips & Advice and examples of other external funding organisations:

[Community grants and funding » East Suffolk Council](#)

FREE Funding search tool - Funding 4 Suffolk:

Hosted by Community Action Suffolk, via a collaborative partnership with local authorities including East Suffolk Council. Tailored to the needs of **Suffolk's** voluntary sector, it gives you access to a COMPREHENSIVE list of all the current funding opportunities on the Grantfinder database and you can 'tailor' a search to your own needs. It also aims to help support you and your organisation to secure funds, build capacity and improve your grant making efforts. The site also has guides to help you get the best from the search tool and top tips from funders on how to write successful applications....as well as, listings of local funder events and training opportunities. It means you can undertake a search at ANY TIME and it is the main source I use when searching for opportunities!

[Home | Funding 4 Suffolk \(idoxopen4community.co.uk\)](#)

Suffolk Community Foundation

They regularly have a large number of opportunities. Website: [Current grants - Suffolk Community Foundation](#). You can contact their Grants Team at grants@suffolkcf.org.uk

Suffolk County Council

They also offer funding at various times and give other forms of help, support and possible funding sources too: [Community Funding - Suffolk County Council](#)