

A Report for Bures St Mary Parish Council Meeting on 28th September 2023 From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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➤ **Ambling African Women break down barriers to accessing Suffolk countryside**

Suffolk County Council celebrated the launch of 'Ambling African Women' a new partnership with PHOEBE, the Ipswich-based charity advocating for black and ethnic minority women and children. The new partnership aims to support PHOEBE members to access the countryside for its health and well-being benefits and is part of the wider work by the Green Access and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) teams to address inequalities in countryside access.

Founded by Zimbabwean women social workers in 2008, P.H.O.E.B.E (Promotion of Health, Opportunity, Equality, Benevolence and Empowerment) offers specialist domestic abuse advice, information, casework, advocacy and support and counselling services to black and ethnic minoritised women and children in Suffolk. The Council worked with PHOEBE in 2022 to identify specific cultural barriers to countryside access. The partnership which has been developed will help inform future interventions that will be offered to other community groups facing similar barriers to visiting the countryside.

At the launch event on Tuesday 29 August, Suffolk County Council and its partners hosted a guided walk for around 30-40 women from the PHOEBE centre, who are part of the centre's new Ambling African Women walking group. As your newly elected Chairman of the Dedham Vales AONB, I am suggesting a similar walk here in the Dedham Vale AONB.

➤ **Trading Standards urge £765,000 fraudster to give himself up for sentencing.**

Suffolk Trading Standards is appealing to the public for help as they urge a man wanted for failing to appear in court for sentencing for fraudulent trading to hand himself in.

Wayne Parker, of Mildenhall, was found guilty in October 2022 of obtaining more than £765,000 in credit from suppliers. He presented himself as a livestock owner which enabled him to be given credit by a wide range of companies. He often made no attempt to settle his debts and, when he did, repeatedly sent cheques that would bounce. An arrest warrant was issued when he failed to appear in court in February 2023.

Since going on the run Mr Parker is known to have been using the Match.com dating website and has also been hiring cars in a bid, it is believed, to avoid detection by the police. He has links to west London, with his last known address being in Feltham, however, he has carried out work across Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, and Surrey. Recent intelligence suggests that he may also be working in Wales and there are links to him being in Somerset.

➤ **Award Success for Social Care in Suffolk**

Social work is vital to keeping people safe, and helping them live good, independent lives as part of the community. In Suffolk I believe we are incredibly lucky to have some of the best Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Social Care workers anywhere in the country

This year more Suffolk County Council staff and teams have been recognised for their achievements and skills by being shortlisted at the Social Worker of the Year Awards, *a national award ceremony* which uses these awards to improve the awareness, understanding and reputation of the social care sector. The awards are open to qualified practitioners throughout England with a wide range of individual and team categories for those working in both children's and adult departments. This year Suffolk has been particularly successful - I want to extend my congratulations to all the individuals who have shone with their professionalism and talents in their respective services who include Patrick Hamilton and Victoria Veale, both shortlisted as Newly Qualified Social Worker of the year and Suzanne Ladlow,

➤ **Window now open to apply for primary and secondary school places.**

Parents and carers can now apply for a place in the normal year of entry at a primary (including infant and junior) school and secondary school for September 2024.

The deadline for applications to secure a place at a secondary school is Tuesday 31 October 2023.

The deadline for applying for a primary school place, including infant and junior schools, is Monday 15 January 2024.

All applications received by the relevant closing date are processed at the same time using the schools' oversubscription criteria to prioritise applications when necessary. Late applications are processed after all of those received on time.

Last year, Suffolk County Council received just over 15,400 on time applications for pupils wishing to start at a primary or infant school, or to transfer to a junior or into Year 7 at a secondary school from September 2023. Just over 94% of applicants received offers for their first preference school and 98.5% of applicants received an offer for one of their top three preferred schools.

➤ **Formal opening of £1.3 million Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service training centre**

The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre at Wattisham Flying Station near Stowmarket has recently undergone a £1.3 million upgrade. It now boasts a tactical firefighting facility, which uses real fire and an LPG-fired facility to simulate incidents firefighters may be faced with.

The most recent addition is the modular office complex, which features additional classrooms and welfare facilities for all delegates and staff.

The centre was formally declared open at the annual base families' day on Thursday August 24 by Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Jon Lacey of Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, and Colonel Toby R Moore MBE, Station Commander, Wattisham Flying Station.

➤ **Council fears new energy proposals will harm Suffolk's coastline.**

Suffolk County Council is disappointed to learn that the LionLink interconnector project from National Grid Ventures has identified an alternative landfall at Walberswick, with cable routing making its way to the north of Southwold. The Lionlink project aims to connect multiple offshore wind farms in the North Sea, instead of individual wind farms connecting one by one to the shore. The project is a joint venture between the UK and the Netherlands, supplying energy to both countries. I believe, if National Grid Ventures are to bring this project ashore in Suffolk, they must fully justify why far less harmful alternatives have not been fully considered and why they are not working with other projects in the area.

The Council will study the details of the new proposals and will prepare its response to the National Grid's second public consultation, which opens on 8th September.

➤ **Free exhibition 'Wolsey's Ipswich' at The Hold as part of Wolsey 550 celebrations**

Suffolk Archives' free summer exhibition 'Wolsey's Ipswich' opened on Friday 14 July at The Hold on Ipswich Waterfront and will explore the legacy of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey thanks to funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. The exhibition forms a key part of the Thomas Wolsey 550 project, a programme of events and activities planned to celebrate the 550th anniversary of Wolsey's birth across Ipswich.

Curated by the team at Suffolk Archives, a Suffolk County Council service, the exhibition includes items from Suffolk's own archive collections, as well as items on loan from organisations across the country.

Made possible by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Ipswich Central and Ipswich Borough Council, the exhibition will explore the legacy of Thomas Wolsey, reconnecting him with his hometown and examining his position on the world stage.

Born and raised in Ipswich, Wolsey rose from humble beginnings to become the most powerful man in England, working alongside King Henry VIII. The 'Wolsey's Ipswich' exhibition will unearth a story of ambition, aspiration, determination, and the possibility for anyone to succeed.

➤ **Virtual Fostering and Adoption Sessions for the Stour Valley**

A Foster Carer Recruitment Event is held the 1st Wednesday of every month, and an Adoption Event is on the 1st Thursday all 7:00pm in your home. To book a place please email Claire.Gwatkin@suffolk.gov.uk.

My Priorities

Education - Supporting Vulnerable People - Jobs and Growth - Localism and the Stour Valley - Building on Suffolk's Strength all underpinned by strong financial management and fair council tax.