

A Report for Bures St Mary Parish Council Meeting on 18th July 2024 From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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➤ **Council's shock at £600m solar farm go-ahead in West Suffolk**

Suffolk County Council has expressed its extreme disappointment that a huge solar farm has been approved in West Suffolk. The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband MP, has announced that approval had been granted for the Development Consent Order, as proposed by Sunnica Ltd. ***The project will see 2,792 acres of solar panels and battery storage, installed across parts of West Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.***

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, (NSIPS) said: "The approval of this solar farm is a massive blow to local communities, agriculture, nature and our landscape in the west of Suffolk. "I am frankly shocked that the poorest infrastructure application that I have ever dealt with, has now been approved - we highlighted numerous deficiencies in the submission.

"The voices of thousands of local residents, businesses and organisations have not been listened to. This scheme will permanently and detrimentally impact the landscape of a vast part of West Suffolk and remove thousands of acres of land from food production.

"Despite some improvements to the initial application, we felt that the proposals did not meet the standards we, and local communities, would expect from a project on this scale. Local residents will quite rightly be asking what it takes for a project to be refused, when the worst project we have dealt with gets consented in the face of so much opposition."

Suffolk County Council supports national aims to adapt to climate change and provide low carbon energy for the country, which often bring benefits to support the local economy. However it also has an ambition to protect and enhance Suffolk's communities and environment.

The council had many issues with the application, including:

- The geographic scale of the proposal which will permanently transform the landscape
- The impact on local communities of the 24 month construction period
- Sunnica's serious shortcomings in terms of both evidence and methodology
- Sunnica's presentation of proposal which made it, and impacts on local communities, unclear.
- Mitigation proposals did not appear to be tailored to the local context

➤ **Hundreds of local businesses celebrated for taking climate action**

Suffolk County Council's annual Carbon Charter event, hosted at the Coddensham Centre on 11 July 2024, honoured businesses from Suffolk and Norfolk for their achievements in environmental sustainability.

More than 100 delegates from a range of local businesses shared their experiences of reducing their environmental impact, and heard from guest speakers from Suffolk Wildlife Trust and Volvo Trucks UK.

The Carbon Charter was set up in 2010 by Suffolk County Council and the Environment Agency. Since then, over 500 businesses have received Carbon Charter awards for taking climate action, by reducing their carbon emissions, supporting their local community and developing green spaces.

Earlier this year, the Carbon Charter itself was an award winner, receiving the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) award for Delivering Clean Growth in the UK – recognised for the effect the Charter is having on moving the economy towards a low carbon future, and praised for its very practical approach to helping businesses transition to net zero.

➤ **Residents advised - don't do business with cold callers**

Suffolk Trading Standards is reminding people to stay alert to the risk of being ripped off by cold callers knocking on their doors. The warning comes after recent incidents of people approaching householders on the doorstep and touting for business. Suffolk Trading Standards advises people to only use businesses registered with the Suffolk Trusted Trader scheme and should only use those businesses vetted by this scheme. Residents can also protect themselves and their neighbours by nominating their area to become a No Cold Calling Zone, of which there are now more than 200 across Suffolk.

Anyone wishing to nominate their road should go to the No Cold Calling page on the Suffolk County Council website. For more details about Suffolk Trusted Trader go to: [Learn about Suffolk Trusted Trader](#)

Anyone contacted by traders on the doorstep should report them to Trading Standards via 0808 223 1133.

In the last few weeks, Suffolk County Council Trading Standards had been made aware of a caller in

Hadleigh: – A doorstep caller convinced the elderly individual to have foil insulation installed, despite the property being a new-build bungalow. **£7,600 was paid.** The client's son later learned of the installation and on investigating found only half the loft space had had the insulation added. He also found old insulation had not been removed and was in perfect condition.

➤ **Suffolk County Council Backs Youth Justice Plan with a focus on keeping families together.**

Suffolk County Council has backed the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 at a meeting of Full Council on 11th July.

The plan has a focus on supporting young people into education, training and employment and reducing the numbers of young people offending, supporting the council's ambition to keep more families together and to keep Suffolk safe. Each year the Suffolk Youth Justice Management Board produces a Youth Justice Plan for Suffolk. The Board includes representatives from: Suffolk Constabulary; Suffolk Probation Service; NHS Suffolk and North-East Essex and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Boards, and Suffolk County Council. The Youth Justice Service also consults with staff, children, and volunteers.

With the new plan, the partnership is aiming to support more children that the service works with into education, training, or employment. This year the service is running a pilot project with specialist staff to work with education providers and children to support them to remain at, or return to, school or college. The service also offers children short, accredited courses, which have been proven to have positive outcomes for young people and can encourage young people into further training.

Another key theme of this year's plan is to take a restorative approach to Youth Justice. This is when The Youth Justice service works with victims of youth crime to find out how they think the harm caused to them can best be put right. The service then supports the young person involved to understand how their own behaviours impact on others and to re-engage with their community and society by repairing harm and restoring relationships.

As well as helping to prevent re-offending we know this approach improves outcomes for victims. This year the service is aiming to deliver more restorative approaches including within families where relationships have been fractured by the child's contact with the youth system.

The plan also outlines how the service will be looking in detail into the reasons why some groups of children are more likely to enter into the youth justice system, to inform interventions which aim to reduce the number of young offenders in Suffolk.

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

Fostering is a flexible role with options for short term care from a weekend a month to longer term opportunities, all providing life-changing support for local children.

Suffolk will continue with Foster Carer Recruitment Event on the 1st Wednesday of every month, and an Adoption Event is on the 1st Thursday all 7:00pm in the home of the applicant. 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.