



# June 2019 Monthly Parish Newsletter: Karen Soons

## **New electric vehicle charging points to be installed in Suffolk**

Electric vehicle charging points will be installed at Suffolk Business Park in Bury St Edmunds.

Currently under construction, Suffolk Business Park in Bury St Edmunds has announced that it will explore ways of working with Plug In Suffolk, the UK's first fully open public electric vehicle (EV) fast charging network. Installing EV charging points at the site will be an incentive for potential tenants, customers and visitors.

Plug In Suffolk, launched earlier this year, is a project run in partnership with Suffolk County Council, Stowmarket-based EO Charging, and renewable energy provider, Bulb. It aims to install up to 400 EV charging points across the county at 100 business premises, car parks, hotels and anywhere that EVs could park for a short amount of time. This will make Suffolk a national leader in EV infrastructure.

The fast charging points supplied by Plug In Suffolk do not require any registration, membership or apps - drivers simply park, plug-in and charge using contactless payment.

The overall cost to businesses is negligible and, if used regularly, can even generate a small income. For further information or to apply to join the 'Plug In Suffolk' network head to [www.pluginsuffolk.org](http://www.pluginsuffolk.org)

## **Conversations start as county council seeks solutions to bus funding challenge**

On 19 June, Suffolk County Council met with representatives from Suffolk's bus operators to see whether they can run a number of bus services without public subsidy. This follows a reduction in the amount of public money available.

The meeting, involving 11 of Suffolk's biggest bus operating companies, follows decisions taken in February 2019 on how to save £13 million from Suffolk County Council's budget, including £340,000 from the authority's passenger transport budget.

This led to a cross-party policy development panel being set up to agree how decisions should be made about the funding of services. A new, fair and thorough set of criteria was adopted in May 2019, including passenger numbers, subsidy per

single ticket, integration with other services, the number of entitled students using a service, and the percentage of journeys made by concessionary pass holders.

Of the 211 bus routes currently operating throughout Suffolk, 61 are subsidised by public money. 23 of these will have their public funding removed. This does not mean that these services will necessarily end, just that public funding is no longer affordable.

In 2017/18, the 23 services were responsible for 107,624 single journeys out of a total of 14.9million journeys made across the county. This means that the services are responsible for only 0.7% of journeys per year.

A full list of the affected routes has been published on Suffolk County Council's website [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) and includes services where the council is currently paying a subsidy of £12.64 per single ticket which equates to over £25.00 per round trip.

**Councillor Mary Evans, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Issues said:**

“We need to ensure we spend public money effectively. In reviewing these services against our new funding criteria, we have had to make tough decisions. However, the implementation of the new criteria has enabled these decisions to be made in a robust and transparent way and ensures we consider key measures before making tough calls.

“We are committed to working with bus operators and partners to explore other sources of funding to support these services once SCC funding ceases. We are also open to conversations with community groups and partners to see if local solutions can be developed.”

“I recognise the importance of passenger transport and I remain committed to ensuring that Suffolk's residents have access to it.”

Following conversations with bus operators and partners, the county council will review the situation at the end of July 2019 before determining next steps. The council aims to have operators taking on these services on a commercial basis from the end of October.

## **Further £700k available in green grants as Suffolk print firm unveils solar panel installation**

Bury St Edmunds-based printing firm, Denny Bros, has installed its new array of solar panels. This should cut their carbon footprint by 10% and draw an income of around £12,000 each year.

The installation of the 150kW array was made possible thanks to a £20,000 grant from Business Energy Efficiency (BEE) Anglia, which provides free support to eligible organisations to help them become more energy efficient. BEE Anglia has

given over £1 million to support businesses to install green measures including electric vehicles, insulation and high efficiency machinery.

The success of the BEE Anglia project and high demand from businesses, has resulted in a further £700,000 being made available to support this investment in energy efficiency across Suffolk and Norfolk.

This new injection of funding will enable even more businesses to apply for grants to help cut their energy costs.

Grant funding is just one of the ways that the BEE Anglia project supports businesses to reduce their carbon footprint and save money. It also offers free and independent advice and the chance to accredit your organisation to the Carbon Charter.

Businesses interested in the BEE Anglia Project can find out more and register online at [www.beeanglia.org](http://www.beeanglia.org) or call 01473 350370.

## **Why the news of health visitor cuts is not the whole story**

On 18 June, Gordon Jones, Cabinet member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, published an opinion piece in response to news about potential cuts to the number of health visitors working in Suffolk. Cllr Jones explained how the current proposals are designed to have a very positive impact on the lives of children, young people and families in Suffolk.

"This is about Healthy Child Services, including school nursing and health visitors, for all children aged between 0 and 19 in Suffolk. In the past, there were two providers covering Suffolk, which meant a different level of service depending on where you live.

I'm pleased to say that after a formal and competitive tendering process, Suffolk County Council's Children's Services directorate won the contract for the whole of the county.

This is great news for us because it provides us with an opportunity to help children be healthy and well from an early age through to adolescence with the support of their families. The new contract went live at the beginning of April.

As with all new services, it is only right we carry out a thorough review of what we provide to ensure that we always deliver the best level of service we can within the money available. Of course, funding is a factor. Due, in part, to a reduction in the amount of money available from the Department of Health, Suffolk's public health grant has fallen by more than £5 million since 2015/16, that's about 17%.

Despite our budget constraints, I am very proud of the new service model we have developed. It has a very clear focus on integrated and partnership working, reducing inequalities and promoting health and wellbeing in our children and young people. It

will have a very real impact on the nature of care and support we offer to our younger residents and their families.

We will be increasing our school nursing service by 32% - this equates to 30 new staff positions. Having nurses in schools is incredibly important, especially as we look to increase our support for those young people with poor mental health.

So what will the new service look like? We asked new parents what would improve the service for them and they told us that they wanted more information available online and when they wanted it.

Therefore, for those who receive care from health visitors, there will be a host of new services available. This includes a dedicated phone line, which will be staffed from 8am to 7.30pm, for queries and concerns that new parents may have. Our website will also have lots of new and helpful information.

On Friday, we finished a staff consultation which looked at reducing the number of health visitor posts. The final number has yet to be finalised, but what's clear is that changes like this need to be handled carefully and sensitively.

However, while the number of health visitors may reduce, the number of health visiting appointments that a mum can expect will not. All new mums will see a health visitor twice and then, according to their needs, they will be seen by a health visitor or a healthy child practitioner, and they can visit a clinic for further follow-up appointments.

We know from feedback that many new mums enjoy the social aspect of going to a clinic because they have the opportunity to meet other mums and babies, so we're responding by making them available.

Also included in this new model is an extension of the Family Nurse Partnership, which works with first-time young mothers. Previously this was only offered in Ipswich and Lowestoft, but will now cover the whole of Suffolk.

You will recall that Ofsted recently rated Suffolk's children's services as 'outstanding' and in that spirit we will continue to provide high quality services to keep children and young people in Suffolk safe and well."

## **Applications open soon for museums trainee programme**

On 17 June, applications opened to become a trainee at one of five partner museums across Essex and Suffolk.

The High Street Museum and Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich, along with partners at Colchester Museums, the Long Shop in Leiston, Palace House in Newmarket, and the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket are seeking applicants for one-year posts – thanks to a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant.

Transforming People to Transform Museums welcomes applications from local people, aged 18+, with a GCSE grade C in English (or equivalent) and no paid

museum experience to join their teams in discovering, interpreting and sharing museum stories and collections.

Nine, one-year placements are available from October across a number of sites. Successful trainees will receive a bursary of £14,400 per year (paid monthly), visit all other partner museums through the extensive training and partner day events, and will be expected to complete a Level 3 Diploma in Cultural Heritage.

Those interested must complete the online application form on the [Association for Suffolk Museums website](#) by **Monday 15th July 2019**.

## **Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board has committed to tackling poor mental health in Suffolk**

On 14 June 2019, Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board demonstrated their commitment to tackling poor mental health by signing up to the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health.

Working closely with Public Health England, Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board is making significant steps towards promoting good mental health and preventing mental health problems.

One in six adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in their lifetime. This is influenced by the environment in which we are born, grow, live and work - meaning many of these problems can be prevented.

Having good mental health is important because it can help us to be more resilient, feel good and function well, have more positive relationships with those around us, and deal with difficult times now and in the future.

The Prevention Concordat marks the first time agencies across the community and care sectors have come together to make prevention a priority for mental health. So far, 92 organisations representing all sectors have signed up and committed to action.

The commitment from Suffolk's Health and Wellbeing Board includes work to improve people's mental health, including preventing suicide, social prescribing initiatives and a pilot for a new online resource supporting young people aged 16-24.

## **Little feet take big strides in Suffolk**

Nursery children are taking big strides to be more active by embarking on a Little Feet Walking Challenge.

Little Feet is an initiative developed by Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking, that helps children aged 2-5 years walk more through a set of fun and engaging activities that also support families in understanding the benefits of active, everyday journeys.

It is supported by the Suffolk County Council-led Most Active County partnership which aims to encourage more people to be more active.

One local nursery taking part is St. Edmunds Catholic Pre-school from Bury St Edmunds.

**Caroline Wright, Manager at St Edmunds, said:**

“We are delighted to support the Little Feet campaign, by encouraging our pre-school children to walk to school. We strongly believe in the benefits of fresh air and regular exercise, particularly in the battle against childhood obesity”.

According to Living Streets, 9 in 10 children aged 2-4 years do not meet recommended activity levels, with 78% of early years settings surveyed not involved in any walking initiative.

The organisation equates this to more cars on the road, leading to more congestion and poorer air quality for children to grow-up in.

**Councillor James Reeder, Cabinet Member for Health at Suffolk County Council, said:**

“Walking to or from pre-school is a simple and effective way to help families meet their daily activity recommendations. It’s also important from a road safety and environmental perspective.

"If we can encourage children to be active from an early age, we hope it will instil healthy habits that children can take to primary school and, eventually, into adult life and, by doing so, contribute to our ambition of becoming the most active county in England.”.

## **Suffolk pothole repair scheme to go countywide**

A trial scheme to tackle potholes swiftly has been so successful it is being rolled out across Suffolk.

The Suffolk Highways scheme, which started in Ipswich in October 2018, changes how potholes are categorised.

The new system allows engineers to repair potholes close to each other during the same visit, tackling smaller potholes before they can expand.

Previously, they fixed larger holes first and smaller ones at a later date.

The new policy reduces the amount of time workers have to travel between jobs.

Mary Evans, Cabinet Member for Highways on Suffolk County Council, said the scheme would be rolled out permanently across the county this summer.

She said the previous system had been "incredibly complicated", leading to highways workers complaining that they were "driving over potholes to get to potholes".

Mrs Evans said: "The rate you pay the gangs is the same whatever they do, and the material they put in the pothole is the same, so the efficiency savings comes from the travel time.

"I am really pleased - it's about looking at ways the system can be more efficient."

## **Foster carers for Suffolk children**

As a local authority, Suffolk County Council is responsible for more than 800 children in care in Suffolk. The Suffolk Fostering & Adoption service is part of Suffolk County Council, and their goal is to secure families for Suffolk children, either on a short-term or permanent basis. The service has been rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

Fostering is a big commitment, but it is an incredibly rewarding journey. Foster carers can make a real difference to a child's life, providing them with the nurturing home life they need to give them every chance of a happy childhood and to succeed in life.

Suffolk Fostering & Adoption aren't looking for perfect families. They need people with a passion and an ability to provide children in their care with love, patience and a sense of belonging.

When you foster for Suffolk you:

- Give back to your community and offer help and support to the most vulnerable children in Suffolk.
- Enrich your own family life by gaining new insights, interests and skills.
- Develop your own skills and career opportunities through support and training, including a Level 3 Diploma in Childcare.
- Are part of a team – the largest family in Suffolk.
- Have access to therapeutic support services for the children you foster and your own family.
- Are given 24-hour support and up to 21 days paid leave.

Suffolk offer competitive financial rewards for foster carers. Fostering for Suffolk really can be a career choice.

### **To find out what Suffolk Fostering & Adoption Service can offer foster carers:**

- Call 01473 264800
- Email [fosterandadopt@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:fosterandadopt@suffolk.gov.uk)
- Visit [www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk)
- Find them on Facebook - Suffolk's Fostering Service - or on Twitter @suff\_fostadopt