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Newsletter

Katch electric bus scheme

extended until end of 2022 and now to call at Blaxhall

It was announced on May 11th that Katch, the all-electric Suffolk taxi-bus service, is to have its trial extended until the end of the year and to also have a new destination added to its route.

The service, which is led by Suffolk County Council, launched as a 12-month pilot in east Suffolk in May 2021 but has now been extended by six months to December.

This is to give Katch a chance to encourage passenger usage and allow the council to establish a truer picture of demand as bus services strive to recover following the lifting of Covid restrictions.

In further good news for passengers the service will also now call at Blaxhall village, stopping outside the Youth Hostel in School Road from Monday May 16.

The service is also to see:

- Group tickets being introduced for two adults and two children or four adults, saving £4 on return journeys.
- Rewards cards being introduced – take six return journeys and get the seventh free.
- Upgrades to the booking app, including an online payment facility.

However, as part of the pilot extension a review of current demand has resulted in service hours being adapted.

From May 16 there will no longer be a Sunday service and Saturday hours will now be 10am-8pm. Weekday operating hours remain 7.30am to 8pm.

Katch is led by Suffolk County Council in partnership with operator [CabsSmart](#), and with support from East Suffolk Council, Framlingham Town Council, Wickham Market Parish Council, Community Rail Network, and East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership.

It uses two Renault ZE electric eight-seater wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Serving fixed bus stops it operates between Framlingham – Wickham Market – Blaxhall – Tunstall – Snape Maltings – Snape Village and to Wickham Market railway station at Campsea Ashe.

Journeys can be booked on-demand by telephone or via the app, charging fares in line with a bus service.

Councillor Richard Smith said:

“I am pleased that we have been able to extend the pilot of Katch. This is an innovative service which provides on-demand transport links for a rural area in an environmentally friendly way.

“Extending the length of the pilot scheme will allow us to gain a more representative picture of demand, including summer visitors, something we could not do in the immediate aftermath of lockdown and as we endeavour to get back to normal.

“By extending the service to Blaxhall we are giving more people a chance to use it and help stimulate demand – something we need to generate if the service is to mature into long-term viability.”

For further information please visit the [Katch website](#).

Council on course to plant 200,000 trees

Additionally, on May 11th it was announced that Suffolk County Council had planted 198,547 trees across Suffolk in just the last two years (at an average of 272 per day).

Much of this was possible thanks to £400,000 of the council’s own Suffolk 2020 Fund, to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county.

In one year, 198,547 average adult trees could absorb the equivalent CO2 emitted by:

- 8,845,898 miles travelled in a typical petrol car
- 903 typical household gas boilers running for a year
- 199 Suffolk residents each year.

The planting includes 12 miles of new mixed native species hedgerows across 15 county farm holdings, delivering new wildlife habitat, ecological corridors and enhanced landscapes.

The council worked with many partners to make the tree planting a success, including The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Warden Network, county farm tenants, landowners, local authorities and communities, and contractor Giles Landscapes.


Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council’s cabinet member for Environment and Public Protection, said:

“This amazing achievement would not have been possible without all the partners we work with, to whom I’m grateful for getting these trees in the ground. From the support of our exceptional Suffolk Tree Warden Network volunteers, through to the children at local schools, we really have put Suffolk on the UK map for tree planting.

“Once the healing wood is completed at Howard Community Academy later this year, we will have surpassed our target of 200,000 trees for Suffolk.

“New trees will help protect and enhance biodiversity in our environment, which is crucial. They will provide habitats and havens for wildlife, supporting the delicate and special ecosystems we have in Suffolk. We will continue to explore ways of planting even more.”

“Of course more trees will absorb more CO2 from the atmosphere, and contribute to slowing the increasing rate of climate change. But that is not enough on its own in our ambition for a Net Zero Suffolk by 2030, and as a council we are committed to using less energy and cutting our own carbon emissions.”



All the trees have been registered as part of the Queen's Green Canopy to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and contribute to the continuing Suffolk-wide ambition of Creating the Greenest County.

Suffolk celebrates as 185 Platinum Jubilee events approved

Communities across Suffolk are preparing to celebrate Her Majesty, The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, as Suffolk County Council, as of May 12th, approved applications for 185 events.

Thousands of residents across the county will come together with neighbours and attend celebration events between Thursday 2 and Sunday 5 June, to mark Her Majesty, The Queen's 70 years of service.

Originally, fees were waived for events taking place on Sunday 5 June only - which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', however due to the unprecedented demand for events taking place across the rest of the weekend, Suffolk County Council also waived fees for events taking place on Thursday 2, Friday 3 and Saturday 4 June.

The waived fees are associated with costs related to road closure applications and traffic management, such as signs and barriers.

The approved celebrations are made up of smaller street party style events in roads and cul-de-sacs; held by residents and community groups, and bigger events organised by town, parish, borough and district councils.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:

"This milestone for Her Majesty, The Queen is an incredible achievement and I am delighted that so many communities across Suffolk are joining together with their neighbours and celebrating this momentous occasion. By waiving fees for events across this weekend of celebration, we were able to encourage as many as possible to get involved, whether it be a small gathering in a local street, or a larger event, organised by town or parish councils. Our highway teams have worked tirelessly to approve as many of these events as possible and will be working with communities to ensure they can carry these events out safely and successfully."


[View the list of events and road closures here](#) or visit [One.Network](#), use the 'Public Events' layer and toggle the 'Queen's Jubilee' option to green to see these locations displayed on an interactive map (you may be required to create an account).

Suffolk's schools step up for Walk to School week

For this year's Walk to School Week (16-20 May), Suffolk County Council is supporting schools to take part in its Keep Moving Suffolk Walking Challenge.

Following the success of last year's challenge, almost 100 primary schools across Suffolk have signed up to receive a pack of free resources from the council, which aims to encourage 25,000 children, parents and staff to get active by walking to school.

The resources include a poster and daily reward stickers for each class, as well as an activity log for children to complete on their journeys to and from school, giving them fun daily activities to do and a printable certificate to recognise the achievements of children who walk to school during the week.



Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, said:

“Walking for just 10 to 15 minutes a day can make a huge difference to our fitness and wellbeing. As well as the physical benefits, walking regularly can also improve our emotional wellbeing, memory and concentration, whilst also helping to reduce traffic outside school gates.

“Last year we had 86% of pupils whose schools took part, walking, scooting, and cycling to school, which is a fantastic achievement. I hope that this year’s challenge will encourage even more children and parents to get active by walking to school.”

One school taking part in the challenge is Whitehouse Community Primary school.

Lee Jordan, Physical Education Specialist at Whitehouse Community Primary School, said:

“Walk to School Week has become an annual event at Whitehouse CP School. Our pupils love taking part and engaging with the resources provided. In particular, recording their walk on their class sticker chart.

“It is a fantastic and simple way of encouraging our pupils and parents to become more active. It also enables them to consider alternative ways of traveling to and from school each day besides taking the car.

“To add a healthy competitive element to this year’s Walk to School Week, we will also be introducing an inter-class competition to see which class has the greatest number of pupils walking to school throughout the week.”

This year Keep Moving Suffolk has teamed up with The Way to Go Suffolk, the County Council’s Active Travel Team, to bring even more benefits for schools taking part in the Suffolk Walking Challenge. Schools taking part will also be in with a chance of winning £1,000 of new playground equipment. To enter, schools simply have to post about how they are getting on with Walk to School Week via Twitter, tag @most_active and use the hashtag #KeepMovingSuffolk. A winner will be picked at random.

14th annual Suffolk Walking Festival kicks off at Clare Castle Country Park


Over 60 people celebrated the launch of the 14th annual Suffolk Walking Festival at Clare Castle Country Park on Saturday 14 May.

All in attendance were greeted by the Clare Town Crier on the warm and sunny morning which marked the start of one of the longest running walking festivals in the UK. Organisers then welcomed guest speaker Derek Blake, Chair of Clare Walkers who got the festivities underway by welcoming attendees on the first of many walks planned for this year’s festival.

The two launch walks were:

- Clare and the Upper Stour Valley (5 miles): This walk combined views of Clare’s unique built heritage (medieval castle ruins, Victorian railway buildings, country park and Priory), with the beautiful scenery of the Upper Stour Valley, the common and medieval Erbury
- Exploring Clare Castle Country Park (2 miles): This walk explored all sections of Clare Castle Country Park, the different green space habitats and heritage: medieval castle ruins, railway heritage, the new cut of the River Stour and railway walk.

The Suffolk Walking Festival is back for 2022, after it was cancelled in 2020 and took place virtually in 2021 due to the pandemic. The 16-day programme boasts over 70 walks, covering 400 miles. Whether you enjoy exploring outstanding landscapes, seascapes, and rivers, watching wildlife and



seasonal spectacles, or learning more about Suffolk's local history. There is a walk for all. Some of the highlights of this year's festival include

- A gentle stroll along the River Lark into water meadows and a nature reserve,
- A chance to discover the history of the wool trade and the history of Lavenham on the "Woods, Weavers and Wizards" Walk,
- The opportunity to get crafty in the woods with the Family Wildcrafts Walk at Brandon Country Park, and
- The promise of a hill in Suffolk, on the "Valley Ramble, dipping a toe into Essex" walk.
- There are also 3 longer walks, to give yourself a challenge, all starting from the Abbey Gardens, exploring landscapes North, South and East of Bury St Edmunds.

Councillor Paul West, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for Ipswich, operational highways and flooding, said:

"It is very exciting to see the much-loved Suffolk Walking Festival celebrate its fourteenth year. The festival grows in popularity each year with its vast variety of walks and events – it shows off some of Suffolk's most beautiful places and is a fantastic way to keep active and meet others. The festival requires a great deal of planning and organising, and of course support from the walkers – so I thank all who are involved and make these events possible. I would encourage all to grab a ticket for a walk before they all sell out!"

[Visit the Suffolk Walking Festival website](#) for more details of the programme, to sign up to regular newsletters, and to buy tickets.

Business owners urged to #ThinkSprinkler to protect lives and property

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is supporting National Sprinkler Week, helping to raise awareness of how sprinkler systems can protect people and property.

The campaign, established by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), starts today and runs until Sunday 22 May, with fire services across the country taking part.

Calls are also being made by the NFCC for government to remedy building regulations in relation to sprinklers, which currently differ across the UK. The NFCC are particularly concerned about new build schools, care homes and warehousing. At present, sprinklers are a requirement in new build care homes and schools in Scotland and Wales, but this legislation doesn't extend to England and Wales, with the NFCC fearing that this could lead to a fire risk for vulnerable people.

Fire sprinklers are widely recognised as the single most effective method for fighting the spread of fires in their early stages. Research carried out by the NFCC and the National Fire Sprinkler Network (NFSN) found that, when in use, sprinklers help to extinguish or contain fires 99% of the time. They also reduce fire related injuries by at least 80% and property damage by 90%.

Jon Lacey, Chief Fire Officer for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, shared why they're proudly supporting Sprinkler Week once again:



“We have seen first-hand how sprinklers can help to control a fire within seconds of it breaking out, protecting not just people and property but also our firefighters. For this reason, we would encourage new build non-domestic properties to consider installing a sprinkler system, as these are relatively inexpensive but really do make a difference in keeping communities safe. We are always on hand to provide guidance on sprinklers and other fire safety measures as part of our ongoing protection work, and anyone wishing to benefit from our advice can [visit the Suffolk Fire and Rescue website](#) to find out more.”

Further information on National Sprinkler Week will be shared on Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service’s [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts over the coming days.

Suffolk County Council leader vows to get the job done as he sets out ambitious vision for Suffolk

On May 19th, Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, outlined the council’s priorities at the Annual General Meeting.

Supporting people’s health and wellbeing, strengthening the economy, protecting and enhancing our environment and providing value for money are at the heart of the council’s new ambitions.

Matthew Hicks, leader of Suffolk County Council, said:

“Suffolk is bursting with ambition, with a county council led by an administration which time and again delivers for the people of Suffolk. Working together we will overcome those challenges we face and build a bright future for Suffolk and its people.

“Let’s get on with the job and make our ambitions a reality.”

Councillor Hicks began his speech by paying tribute to Her Majesty the Queen on her Platinum Jubilee, before acknowledging Russia’s illegal war on Ukraine and the collective response from Suffolk residents, with the message that people are safe, supported and welcome here.

He then spoke in detail of the council’s four ambitions. These include:

- Promoting and supporting the health and wellbeing of Suffolk people

Councillor Hicks said:

“It represents the greatest part of our current £625M budget, however money alone doesn’t make the difference in these areas, it is the way we work together with partners which delivers real substantial change for people.”

He outlined his commitment SEND improvement, acknowledged the ongoing work to integrate health and social care systems under the two Integrated Care Systems and the successes of Cassius, the council’s digital care service.

- Strengthening our local economy

Councillor Hicks said:

“Our local Suffolk economy is the life blood of this county and its people. We are committed to working with local businesses, business organisations like the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, and

others to ensure that the Suffolk Economy is best placed to fulfil its potential - so that everyone benefits.”

He referenced the ongoing construction of the Gull Wing Bridge in Lowestoft, the council’s new housing Joint Venture Partnership with Lovells, where some council land will be used for providing 3,000 new houses. He acknowledged the new Freeport at Felixstowe and Harwich and the importance of improving the major networks which connect the port to the rest of the country, citing projects to improve roads between the Seven Hills Junction and Melton, the A11 Fiveways roundabout and planned works to improve the interchange at Copdock. Finally, he made reference to Sizewell C and confirmed that should the plan to build a new reactor on the Suffolk coast be approved, Suffolk would stand to benefit from £200m of investment to mitigate impact.

- Protecting and enhancing our environment

Councillor Hicks said:

“This administration is committed to protecting our natural environment and assets. We are ambitious for the future, to ensure generations to come, get to enjoy the benefits of this greenest of counties.”

He confirmed the council has invested £12.8M on decarbonising council owned building and assets, marked the installation of over 100 electric car charging points across Suffolk, celebrated the council planting almost 200,000 trees and announced ongoing work to upgrade and build new Household waste and recycling centres in Stowmarket, Haverhill and Foxhall.

- Providing value for money

Councillor Hicks said:

“None of the aspirations I’ve mentioned before would be achievable without sound financial management and providing real value for money for our residents. Providing value for money means investing in services which matter most.”

Councillor Hicks highlighted Suffolk’s achievement of being selected by Government to negotiate a County Deal, which involves the transfer of power in areas such as transport, education, skills, housing and planning. He also mentioned the £20million investment in highways and the successful programme to upgrade all 46,000 streetlights to LED.

The speech closed with Councillor Hicks’ continued commitment to tackling poverty in Suffolk. He said:


“This administration will work with front line organisations drawing on their first-hand experience of poverty to do what we can to mitigate the effects. This administration recognises and accepts there is a real issue with the cost of living and I urge anyone who is struggling to make ends meet, struggling to pay bills or to afford necessities like food to contact the Suffolk Advice and Support Service helpline on **0800 068 3131**.”

Find out more:

- [Read Councillor Matthew Hicks speech in full](#)
- [Watch Councillor Matthew Hicks speech on Suffolk County Council’s YouTube channel](#)

Suffolk residents encouraged to use their Quiet Lanes

People in Suffolk are being encouraged to explore more of the beautiful countryside on their doorstep through the growing Quiet Lanes initiative.



Quiet Lanes is a nationally recognised designation for narrow, rural roads which can be shared with walkers, horse riders, cyclists and other road users.

The scheme aims to encourage everyone using the lanes to travel with caution, so everyone can enjoy the rural lanes with greater safety.

Launched in 2020 it is a county-wide project overseen by a volunteer steering group supported by Suffolk County Council's 2020 Fund, the East Suffolk Community Partnerships and the East Suffolk Greenprint Forum.

Since its launch nearly 200 parish councils have engaged and there are now more than 350 lanes designated in Suffolk, covering approximately 400 kilometres (248 miles) of country road.

All Quiet Lanes are marked with green signs at either end, which clearly show the hierarchy of right of way for people using the road.

Residents can use the interactive map on [the Quiet Lanes Suffolk website](#) to find out where the nearest lanes are to them.

Councillor Alexander Nicoll, Suffolk County Council's Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, said:

"This is a wonderful sustainable initiative aimed at opening up more of our countryside for leisure and recreation activities and active travel.

"The lockdowns over the past two years have shown the value of these areas that exist on many of our doorsteps, both for our physical and mental health.

"Now they have been officially designated we hope it will encourage more residents to make use of the countryside around them and explore other ways of travelling other than in the car."

"Quiet Lanes has been the perfect example of people working together to achieve something significant," said volunteer Tim Beach of Suffolk Quiet Lanes.

"Without the hard work of the volunteers and the willingness of Parish Councils to work together to link up the lane network and hold public consultation, we wouldn't have been able to achieve anywhere near the amount of Quiet Lanes that have now been designated across Suffolk, in such a short space of time."


In a joint statement Councillor James Mallinder, East Suffolk Council's cabinet member for the environment, and Councillor Norman Brooks, East Suffolk's cabinet member for transport, said:

"This is a fantastic initiative which helps to preserve the character of our country lanes, reduce traffic and speed, and encourage drivers to be more mindful of non-motorist road users, making it safer for those who want to enjoy our beautiful rural lanes by foot or bike.

"Not only does this support an active and healthy way of travelling, but it also helps the environment and provides a better quality of life for the local area."

In 2019, Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council declared a Climate Emergency.

The council set up a Policy Development Panel to investigate how to cut Suffolk County Council's carbon and harmful emissions on a spend to save basis, with the aim to make Suffolk carbon neutral by 2030.



Now in its second phase, work is being done to explore six focus areas, including Transport and Air Quality to which the Quiet Lanes initiative contributes through improvement to natural environmental quality.

Visit [Quiet Lanes Suffolk](#) to access over 350 Suffolk country roads designated as Quiet Lanes for recreation.

Suffolk Archives invites people to donate Platinum Jubilee souvenirs for 'memory box'

As the county prepares to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Suffolk Archives is inviting the public to contribute souvenirs from their celebrations.

From Monday 6 June, people can donate items such as photographs, postcards, programmes, invitations and leaflets from local events.

After past royal events, the public has donated a variety of physical and digital items. With the Platinum Jubilee being a rare event in British history, this is an opportunity for local people to help build on the Archives' existing 900-year records, providing valuable research content for future generations.

Councillor Bobby Bennett added:

"We are encouraging people of all ages to help us capture Suffolk's celebrations this summer, be it a family gathering, a performance, a school or village festival or a street party. Part of the Archives' job is to gather a 'living history' and any mementos of the celebrations could help us to create a lasting record of how our county marked the Platinum Jubilee – a major historic occasion."

Digital content can be submitted online via the website, and hard copy posters, postcard and similar materials can be brought into local branches in Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich and Lowestoft. All donations will be subject to assessment, as archivists can only keep the best quality materials and need to prevent duplication of items. Items cannot be returned.

For more information and to submit digital content [visit the Suffolk archives website](#)

Email any questions to suffolk.remembers@suffolk.gov.uk or call 01473 296666.

Felixstowe builder sentenced for unsafe work

On May 30th, Suffolk Trading Standards successfully secured a conviction against Kevin Zizka for fraudulent and unfair trading.

This has resulted in a suspended prison sentence and £27,841 in compensation for his victims.

Zizka, 56, of Coronation Drive, Felixstowe, traded as KHF Building & Landscaping Ltd and operated across Suffolk. However, complaints against the company quickly mounted after customers claimed that the work carried out by Zizka was dangerous and did not comply with building regulations or meet electrical safety standards.

Four victims contacted Suffolk Trading Standards after paying thousands of pounds to Zizka for substandard home improvements involving the fitting of steel beams and electrical work, which prompted Trading Standards to launch an investigation into the rogue trader.

One case saw a Felixstowe homeowner charged over £17,000 for the removal of a chimney breast, installation of steel beams and a kitchen renovation. Zizka left the job part way through, leaving the victim with essential parts of the chimney breast's steel support rusting in their garden, and the remaining chimney inadequately supported. Electrical work carried out on the property was inspected by the Chief Technical Officer of NAPIT and found to be unsafe, with a potential risk of fire or serious injury to users.

Another customer from Ipswich who employed Zizka to install a kitchen and fit steel beams to her property reported that the work had caused her ceiling to drop, opening a gap between the ground and first floor of the property that had to be propped up, after he ignored the advice of structural engineers and failed to fit the beams properly. On inspection from an independent chartered surveyor, these were found to pose serious safety concerns, and urgent remedial works were required due to a risk of collapse from the supporting walls.

In addition to his dangerous work, Zizka fraudulently charged VAT to customers despite not being VAT registered with HMRC. He also took building control fees for applications but failed to submit these, and falsely claimed to be a member of Checkatrade to encourage customers to use his services.

A court hearing on 4 February saw Zizka plead guilty to one count of Fraudulent Trading under Section 993 of the Companies Act 2006 and two counts of commercial practice which contravened the requirements of professional diligence under regulation 8 of the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

He was subsequently sentenced to four months per offence in prison, to run concurrently, suspended for 18 months, at Ipswich Magistrates Court on Friday 27 May. The court also ruled that Zizka must carry out 200 hours of unpaid work, participate in rehabilitation activity, is disqualified from being a company director for five years, and will pay £27,841 in compensation to his victims, along with £10,000 in costs to Trading Standards.

Anyone who believes that they may have been the victim of a fraudulent or substandard trader should contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.