

# Thriving West Suffolk

Magazine



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**West Suffolk**  
Council

# Welcome to Thriving West Suffolk Magazine

Welcome to our new residents' magazine designed to keep you better informed and engaged about how we are supporting West Suffolk to thrive.

West Suffolk is a great place to live, work and visit and we are dedicated to making sure that continues and our communities and businesses prosper.

*If you want to hear more about what we are doing you can subscribe to get any future versions of this magazine and news straight to your email.*



We have a range of stories about what we do, including how you or local community groups can benefit, what local events are on in our parks and facilities as well as how you can help by being a bin-fluencer for your street as improvements are made to recycling.

It is part of our drive to engage with local communities, keep you informed and explain how we are delivering against our ambitions and priorities that make a real difference for residents and businesses.

## Getting Our Priorities Right for a Thriving West Suffolk

West Suffolk Council's ambitious vision and strategic priorities guide everything we do to support a thriving West Suffolk. Listening to what you, local businesses, community organisations and our partners want for West Suffolk has been at the heart of shaping our priorities.

They are the foundation which has ensured we have been delivering initiatives and services that matter to you – from affordable homes, improved leisure facilities, new job opportunities and looking after our environment – to name just a few. West Suffolk is a wonderful place to live, work in and visit but we want to make sure that remains the case now and for future generations. We are pleased to say that our Corporate Peer Challenge Review said this was working and that we are a strong authority, which has good leadership and has the right priorities to meet future challenges.

*The Council's strategic priorities are:*

- affordable, available, and decent homes
- environmental resilience
- sustainable growth
- thriving communities

They also include making sure the council is delivering essential and high-quality services that you use every day. In addition, we have upped our game to improve how we engage with and listen to you. This magazine is part of that and you can read over the following pages what we are delivering to help West Suffolk thrive.



*Leader of West Suffolk Council, Cllr Cliff Waterman and Deputy Leader, Cllr Victor Lukaniuk.*



*Cliff Waterman*

Leader of West Suffolk Council

*Victor Lukaniuk*

Deputy Leader of West Suffolk Council

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### ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

This magazine is made from sustainably sourced paper and is being distributed across West Suffolk. You may receive a copy if you live near West Suffolk as due to the method of delivery this keeps costs down and we also hope you may be interested in some of the events and news happening just over the border.

# How We Make the WEST SUFFOLK Pound Stretch Further

Making sure our budget and your Council Tax is spent making West Suffolk an even better place is a top priority for us.

Our budgets are limited but we are making sure the West Suffolk pound stretches further to protect the high quality service that make our area such a great place to live.

We are prioritising delivering services that matter to you such as housing, reducing homelessness, emptying bins, better recycling facilities, protecting the environment and improving health through award winning parks and leisure centres.

We are helping the most vulnerable and those struggling financially. And we are investing in creating jobs, helping businesses, developing and supporting our town centres, markets and rural areas and encouraging people to take pride in their local area.

For those most in need, we have provided a 100 per cent Council Tax discount.

Your Council Tax bill is shared by many organisations. We receive 11 per cent of the total Council Tax bill (the rest goes to Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Police, and your town or parish council).

That only meets around 20 per cent of the costs of the services that we provide – such as emptying your bins, providing housing, ensuring the food you buy is safe, delivering markets and keeping parks open. We ensure your Council Tax goes further by generating money to cover the full cost of our services.

An example of how we are continuing to deliver value for money is our investment in property and green energy. This has secured an annual income of over £10 million which helps pay toward day-to-day services. Alongside this we have also delivered a further £1million in savings and income generation in the past financial year.



## Useful Contacts

Follow the QR code for useful contact details for West Suffolk Council.  
You can also call customer services on **01284 763233**



# Affordable, Available and Decent Homes

There are huge challenges that we face in West Suffolk around new and existing housing.

Our Housing, Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out a partnership approach to tackling the various challenges around housing in West Suffolk.

*This includes:*

- addressing a lack of affordable housing to meet demand
- improve living conditions in the private rented sector to prevent people living in cold, damp homes or homes that are in poor disrepair
- helping combat fuel poverty through targeted work so that residents in low-income households that have low energy efficiency, can heat their homes for less.



*Cllrs Richard O'Driscoll, Cabinet Member for Housing and Cllr Diane Hind, Cabinet Member for Resources, checking out the additional 10 affordable rent and three social rent homes we worked with Havebury to deliver.*

## Homes for Now and Future Generations

Our priority is to have affordable, available and decent homes for residents including their children and grandchildren so they can continue to live in and enjoy West Suffolk.

One of the ways that we are doing this is through the West Suffolk Local Plan to shape development and allocate sites for where new homes can be built and land for business growth in the area.

We have set ambitious targets for "affordable" homes, delivering 40 per cent in some developments against a national target of 30 per cent. This includes shared ownership and homes at 80 per cent of market rents. Even these rents can be challenging for people, and we will be delivering wherever we can more social lower rent homes.

Without the local plan, homes will still be built but there is less control over where. The local plan is crucial to ensuring that developers pay the right amount toward vital infrastructure such as schools, roads, and money for the NHS to supply services.

## Supporting People in Their Own Homes



Housing is also about supporting people in their own homes to stay independent, including adapting to people's changing health. We support people to carry on living independently and with dignity through Disabled Facilities Grants. We are one of the fastest authorities for awarding these grants which also reduce the amount of time people have to spend in hospital or social care. If you want to find out more about applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant scan the QR code.

# Keeping Standards to Keep You Safe



Did you know, we also enforce minimum housing standards in the Private Rented Sector. We take action against landlords that are failing to address issues that could impact the health of their tenants or expose them to serious safety risks. Some of this is responding to concerns raised by tenants themselves as well as other partner organisations. We are also carrying our proactive work with Safe Suffolk Renters to identify properties where tenants are likely to be living in poor housing conditions so we can check and take action without having to wait for issues to be reported to us. Alongside this, Safe Suffolk Renters also works to support landlords, letting agents and their tenants including sharing best practice.

# Preventing Homelessness and Reducing Rough Sleeping

The cause of homelessness and rough sleeping is complex and can happen to anyone.

We try wherever possible to help prevent people from becoming homeless. But if a West Suffolk household does become homeless, we are here to help. We continue to invest millions of pounds to secure temporary accommodation to support people from across West Suffolk who have become homeless and reduce our reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation which costs more to the taxpayer. See Sarah, Jane and James' stories on our YouTube channel through the QR code.



Member of Rough Sleeper support service going out in the early hours.

# Free Help to Heat Your Home for Less

We also want to help people have efficient and warm homes. As part of Warm Homes Suffolk, we are helping residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. This includes free home improvements to help lower income households stay warm in winter, and cool in summer, heating their home for less. Find out more by scanning the QR code.



Guy Ransom, of Finn Geotherm with Cllr Gerald Kelly, Cabinet Member for Governance, Regulatory and Environment, looking at heat pumps.

# Building Homes



The council has its own house building company, Barley Homes, to help develop much needed housing, affordable homes and wider benefits for our communities.

We have two completed sites in Haverhill and are currently working on other sites across West Suffolk.



# Better Recycling



**Better Recycling**  
IS COMING TO  
WESTSUFFOLK

Next year we will be changing how we collect your household waste and recycling to make it easier for you to recycle more.

We will be supplying all households with an additional bin or other container to separate paper and card from plastics, metal, cartons (including Tetra Pak) and glass bottles and jars.

This will be in addition to a new food waste collection service. You will have two food waste caddies, a smaller bin for your kitchen and a larger and lockable outdoor bin.

The new approach is in line with the Government's new Simpler Recycling legislation and will maximise the quality of materials for reprocessing into new products, with huge environmental benefits! This also means that less general waste will need to be collected, increasing the amount that we recycle.

We have included an example of a collection calendar to visualise how the new service will work. Households will receive further information next year to explain how Better Recycling will work.



A typical collection calendar will look like

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
General waste				
Recycling glass, plastic, metal and cartons				
Recycling paper and card				
Food waste				
Garden waste paid for service				

General waste (black bin) - fortnightly  
Recycling (blue bin) - once every four weeks  
Recycling (grey bin with green lid) - once every four weeks  
Food waste (caddy) - weekly  
Garden waste (brown bin) - fortnightly

## Reverse Vending Machines

We are the first council in the country to have supported public facing reverse vending machines to increase recycling rates and reduce litter. Trovr, the company behind the machines, uses a smartphone app to incentivise recycling through points-based rewards which can then be spent in local and national businesses.

Since launching in February 2024, a total of 22,561 bottles and cans have been recycled! It wouldn't be possible without partners: Love Newmarket, The Guineas Shopping Centre, Abbecroft, Eastern Education Group, and Our Bury St Edmunds.



Keep up to date with environmental initiatives.



## Solar Powered Services

Did you know over 100 West Suffolk businesses have signed up to our Solar for Business scheme? Our Solar for Business customers have cut their carbon footprint and collectively have saved over £700,000 in energy costs.

Discover the support offered by the council to help you improve the energy efficiency of your home on page 5.



We own one of the largest Council owned solar farms in the country. It been generating renewable electricity for eight years and has helped fund day to day council services.



# Growing West Suffolk's Economy

See how we are supporting businesses and residents thrive. This new year and beyond – helping with new opportunities, new businesses, learning new skills and new careers.

## Major Investment in Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre

A state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing and engineering centre which will help cement Suffolk's reputation as one of the leaders in advanced manufacturing is being built in West Suffolk thanks to £17.25 million in funding from the council.

According to 2022 data, advanced manufacturing is the largest of the growth sectors in the Suffolk economy, with £1.9 billion gross value added in 2022. By 2050 that is due to more than double and contribute £4.7 billion to Suffolk's economy.

Once complete the centre will have 17 flexible workshop units, with shared conference and networking spaces. Alongside providing start-up space we will work with partners, including higher education providers, to maximise benefits for businesses and our communities by supporting job creation and enhancing skills.

The scheme includes Enterprise Zone funding and is endorsed by Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Business Board.



Artist impression.

## Business Festival



Leader of the Council, Cllr Cliff Waterman and Cllr Indy Wijenayaka, Cabinet Member for Growth with supporters and businesses at the Business Festival.

We are proud to be the location that many businesses call home. We pride ourselves in supporting businesses from securing investment, delivering infrastructure, and helping improve skills.

The businesses and individuals that contribute to our thriving economy each each year are recognised through the West Suffolk Business Festival and Awards – which just celebrated its fifteenth year.



PHOTO CREDIT: THE BURY FREE PRESS - PHOTOGRAPHER RICH MARSHAM

# Clean Sweep

A series of action days and events to help keep West Suffolk streets clean, safe and support civic pride in the local area were launched in November.

The work was carried out in time for Christmas to help support local areas and high streets. And the good news is that it will be continued through 2026.

We are working with local town and parish councils, business improvement districts and community groups to identify and target areas that need enhancing.



*Our pictures show us working with local town and parish councils across West Suffolk.*



This will support the other regular works being carried out on a daily basis by the council and local organisations to help keep their local neighbourhoods clean and attractive. Thank you to everyone who goes that extra mile in their community to make it look its best.

# Business Grants and Support

The council supports a range of schemes and grants to help businesses continue to grow and develop within West Suffolk. We approved 22 applications to the West Suffolk Start-Up grant, an investment by the council of £23,241.

Business can access a whole selection of resources funded by the council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from the government to further strengthen the West Suffolk economy and improve job opportunities.



# Horse Power

The Horse Racing Industry contributes over £256 million to the local economy annually and directly supports over 3,200 jobs. We work together to improve and provide facilities and infrastructure to sustain and enhance its activities and operations.



# Skilling Up

We want our residents to have the skills they need to follow the career paths they want and work to deliver education, training and employment opportunities across West Suffolk.

There are a range of skills and education initiatives, funded by the council, available to all residents. Regular jobs and skills fairs also take place across the district in partnership with Job Centre Plus. Follow the QR code to find out more.

Accessing education is crucial at any age. That is why we invested in Provincial House, Haverhill, to accommodate West Suffolk College's Professional and Personal Development Centre. The college can now expand its adult education and skills offer to meet local demand.





## In the Market for a New Career?

Want to turn that hobby into a business? Why not test the market for free? We are investing £300,000 in our markets across West Suffolk over three years as part of a campaign to ensure they stay lively, local, and full of character.



Our regular markets in Brandon, Bury St Edmunds, Clare, Haverhill, Mildenhall and Newmarket vary in size and style, but visitors are always guaranteed a warm West Suffolk welcome from them all.

Expect seasonal produce, artisan bakes, street food, flowers, crafts, and everything in between – straight from local traders who know their products.

Whether you're after your weekly groceries, a unique gift, or just a good coffee and a chat, West Suffolk's markets deliver. Throughout the year there are monthly makers markets in Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Newmarket.

Three additional markets have been introduced this year in Mildenhall, bringing new opportunities for the community to shop, explore and support local traders. The Spring Market held in

April was a great success – the sun was shining and the crowds were out in force.

Interested in trading at a West Suffolk Market? Find out more about three new deals tailored exclusively for local market stallholders contact: [markets@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:markets@westsuffolk.gov.uk) or Find out more from the QR code above.

## Backing Business and Tourism

We work with the local organisations set up to support business and tourism. These Business Improvement Districts (Our Bury St Edmunds and Love Newmarket) and Destination Management Organisations (Bury St Edmunds and Beyond and Discover Newmarket) help secure funding to encourage sustainable growth, deliver projects and improve services that enable communities, businesses, and towns to thrive.

In towns where there are no such organisations, we work with local businesses and town and parish councils, to understand what resource and support they need to thrive.



# Thriving Communities

You may be one of the thousands of community superheroes making a real difference to the place where you live. This might be delivering health and wellbeing initiatives for residents, boosting civic pride in local towns and villages, charitable work with the most vulnerable or helping out at a sports or youth club – the list is endless. Under our thriving community priority we work alongside and focus on supporting these vital local organisations and individuals who make such a difference.

## Do You Know Someone Who is Struggling?

We've invested £600,000 over three years into the work of Citizens Advice West Suffolk giving free, confidential advice to people struggling with money, their home, health, work, loneliness and more. Much of this links with our work mentioned on this and our other pages in helping people with housing, homelessness prevention or support, dealing with issues such as poor-quality housing, and tenancy support, helping people heat their homes for less, adaptations to people's homes, helping low-income families maximise their income and manage debts, building people's skills and confidence and self-esteem and reducing loneliness. As part of our grant agreement we will also be working alongside them on joint initiatives and campaigns to benefit residents across West Suffolk. If you need help contact Citizens Advice West Suffolk on freephone **0808 278 7868** from 9.30am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday. For details of reception opening hours or other ways to contact Citizens Advice scan the QR code.



Citizens Advice West Suffolk volunteers and staff with Cllr Donna Higgins, Cabinet Member for Families and Communities.



We are supporting 33 warm spaces in West Suffolk to open this winter. They provide a place for residents to meet and help reduce social isolation. It's one example of the work we do responding to the national and international challenges that our communities face.

## How Our Grants Can Help Support Your Community

We have a range of grants to support the work of our communities. Nearly £450,000 of community support was made available last year through our Thriving Communities Fund and Locality Budgets.

Go For It grant offers up to £300 to start-up funding to help not for profit groups get their bright idea off the ground to benefit their local community.

It will fund ideas that will bring residents together, inspire people to get more active, increase participation, support health and wellbeing or respond to local needs through innovation and activities.



The grant may be used to support start-up such as equipment, venue hire, promotional materials, transport and more.

The scheme is backed using funds allocated to the council from Central Government from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

To find out more follow our QR code.



# Looking for Help with That New Year's Resolution?

Did you know that as well as being good for your health and wellbeing, six of our parks have been awarded a Green Flag Award for the sixth year in a row? The parks are: Aspal Close Nature Reserve in Beck Row, Brandon Country Park, East Town Park in Haverhill, Nowton Park, Abbey Gardens in Bury St Edmunds and West Stow Country Park.

Our parks, green spaces, play areas, leisure centres, West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village, Moyses Hall Museum and The Apex are all part of our leisure and culture activities that we provide to support residents' health and wellbeing.

West Suffolk has many parks and green spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy, each providing an important place for people to walk, to run, for children to play, and to exercise their body and relax their mind.

West Suffolk's parks aren't just pretty – they're packed with things to see and do, all year round. They support a range of wildlife habitats and biodiversity and provide venues for public events and volunteering opportunities.



Feeding the ducks at Brandon Country Park.



We also work with partners to support some of the activities and events that they put on throughout the year. We recently carried out a public survey to help shape a new, long-term vision for arts, culture, and heritage across the district. In the meantime you can find out What's On in West Suffolk by scanning this QR code.

Don't forget, you can book early for next year's events.

## Five Things to Enjoy in Early 2026

1. Sci-Fi and Action featuring The Art of Cinema at Moyses Hall Museum runs to 22 February
2. Battle against the orcs in our Lord of the Rings themed Ring Quest at West Stow Anglo Saxon Village and Country Park during February half term (14 February to 22 February 2026).
3. Take in a show at The Apex
4. See the Natural History Museum: Dinosaurs Live at The Apex on Thursday 19 February 2026.
5. And shake off the mince pies in 2026 – our parks and leisure centres are here to help.



Cllr Ian Shipp, Cabinet Member for Leisure takes the stage.

## Want to Get More Active?

We have invested tens of millions of pounds in improving and supporting our five leisure centre sites across West Suffolk to keep residents active.

From swimming to spinning and archery to aerobics, Abbeycroft, who manage the sites on behalf of the council, have something on offer for everyone.



## Play Areas

Each year we assess the play areas that need refurbishing to keep play fun and safe for children. We engage with local schools and communities to understand what they want from their play areas. This year we have refurbished:

- Hepworth Avenue, Bury St Edmunds
- Manderston Road, Newmarket
- Hopton Rise, Haverhill Play
- Briscoe Way, Lakenheath

# West Suffolk Council: Turning Vision into Action



A year of delivery, ambition, and real impact for the people, communities, and businesses of West Suffolk has been showcased in our 2024 to 2025 Annual Report.

The report highlights how the council is delivering on its ambition of a "Thriving West Suffolk".

The report highlights what the council has achieved against its strategic priorities over the last year.

This report is a moment of reflection on what we've achieved for our residents. But we are also keeping our eyes firmly on the future. A Thriving West Suffolk – not just in words, but in action.

You can read it in full by scanning this QR code.



*Cllr Dave Taylor, Cabinet Member for Operations with commercial waste crew.*

## Suffolk to the Power of Three

Local government in Suffolk is changing. All county, district and borough councils are being replaced with 'unitary' councils, which will be responsible for delivering all services.

From November the Government has been consulting on what that should look like for Suffolk. The end of that consultation is 11 January. Whether you are reading about this before or after that date you can find the details by following the QR code.

We are working together, with district and borough councils in Suffolk, on an ambitious proposal for three unitary councils, which will deliver services to different parts of the county.

We believe these local unitary authorities delivering all council services will meet the differing needs of our diverse communities and value for money. It means residents will be closer to decision makers, driving better outcomes and have a council that is based in the place you live. Suffolk to the Power of Three.



**Suffolk<sup>3</sup>**  
to the *power*  
of three

Suffolk County Council is promoting a one unitary council for the whole county called One Suffolk. Our plans have now gone to Government, but you can find out more by scanning this QR code.

