

# A Report for Groton Parish Council Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 From James Finch – County Councillor for the Stour Valley

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## ➤ **Family carers must be recognised for their invaluable contribution**

During the week 7 – 12 June Suffolk County Council, alongside Suffolk Family Carers and other partners, marked Carers Week and celebrated the hard work and dedication of carers in Suffolk.

**The theme this year is 'Working together to ensure family carers are visible, valued, supported and connected'**. There are an estimated 98,000 carers across Suffolk who provide unpaid care for their loved ones. In the UK, according to research from Carers UK conducted in 2020, this figure rises to 13.6 million. Their contribution is believed to have saved the country somewhere in the region of £193 billion during the Covid-19 pandemic alone – during a time when many have faced unprecedented pressure, taking on new caring responsibilities for some of the most vulnerable in our society.

That is why, during Carers Week, we highlighted the challenges faced by unpaid carers and recognising the contribution they are making to families and communities across Suffolk and the UK.

Many people are carers without realising it. If you are supporting someone who cannot manage without help, whether due to illness, frailty, mental health, substance misuse or disability, then you are a carer and we want you to know that there is advice and support available.

Some of this support is financial: for example, you may be entitled to a weekly allowance or a reduction in your Council Tax. You can also find practical and emotional support. There are several groups and organisations where you can link up with other family carers and share information and experiences in a friendly setting. These can also offer a welcome break from your role as a carer.

To learn more about the types of support available, help is available [here](#) on the Suffolk County Council website. In addition there is support and help at Suffolk Family carers website [here](#)

## ➤ **Council objects to Norwich to Tilbury pylon proposals**

On June 8th, Suffolk County Council confirmed its intention to object to the proposals for **National Grid's East Anglia GREEN pylon run**. A new network is needed to deliver electricity between Norwich, Bramford and Tilbury, to cope with the increasing amounts of renewable and low carbon electricity being generated around East Anglia.

The council does not support this proposal as it stands. It believes that there are better ways to manage the project, for example involving an undersea network which has not been fully investigated. The council has been campaigning for government ministers and officials to introduce a more co-ordinated off-shore approach to meet the demands of all the energy projects in the region.

The council absolutely supports ambitions for renewable energy and the government's commitment to meet the target of Net Zero by 2050. They recognise the benefits that can come from this project, and they continue to work with the government to develop coordinated off-shore transmission.

However, the council objects to the proposal for National Grid's East Anglia GREEN as it stands. I and my colleagues are determined that Suffolk will not suffer unnecessarily as a consequence, we will continue to protect our communities, residents and natural environment.

## ➤ **Successful communities awarded £6.4m to 'Reclaim the Rain' and tackle flooding**

Norfolk and Suffolk County Council's joint Reclaim the Rain project, which aims to implement innovative and sustainable water management projects, was announced on 14<sup>th</sup> June. Six communities across both counties were selected. The project team received 37 formal applications from communities keen to be involved in Reclaim the Rain living in one of the most driest areas in the country. These applications were carefully considered and whittled down to three communities in Suffolk and three in Norfolk. They are:

- **Boxford** – this community displayed a strong interest in sustainable water management and ways in which the community could be more involved with water management.
- **Friston** – who are exploring innovative ways of resolving hard-to-resolve flood issues.
- **Little Blakenham** – they identified some opportunities to work with upstream landowners, allowing them to have a more proactive approach in managing flood water running off their land.

I am excited by the announcement of Boxford in particular as one of Suffolk's chosen communities, and congratulate officers and selected communities across the two counties, in what will no doubt be a fascinating and innovative 6-year programme to provide guidance to future National policy.

### ➤ **Extra Funding for second phase of £45 million five-year project for SEND**

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet agreed an additional £15.9 million to complete the funding for the creation of at least 879 specialist places for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This money marks the second phase of a £45million five-year project to deliver specialist provision for SEND students in Suffolk. These places include units attached to mainstream schools and three new special schools.

So far, 500 new places have opened across the county, with another 325 due to open between September 2022 and September 2024 under phase 1. The additional money will enable the completion of phase 2 of the project, and the creation of between 54 to 72 new places, depending on design and planning.

The new SEND places support the growing number of children and young people in Suffolk who need specialist help at school. Between September 2021 and May 2022 there have been 1,333 referrals for specialist placements for children currently in mainstream schools

### ➤ **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](mailto: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.*