

August 2026 Parish Report
East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

GLI Council Leader Urges Communities to “Be Prepared” for More Weather-Event Emergencies

After a year of extreme weather events, East Suffolk Council Leader Cllr Caroline Topping is urging communities to think ahead and ensure that they are ready and able to respond to local emergencies.

After the recent wildfires in Dunwich, which in turn followed flooding and coastal erosion issues in recent times, Cllr Topping says it is more important than ever for towns and parishes to have clear Community Emergency Plans which detail exactly how they would respond in the event of an emergency, be it a natural weather event or otherwise.

East Suffolk Council and the county’s Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) are hosting a webinar on Emergency Preparedness and Building Community Resilience on 1 October. It is designed to help Town and Parish Councils and Community Emergency Planning Groups better prepare for unexpected events and crises, and Cllr Topping hopes as many representatives as possible will attend.

She said: “East Suffolk Council takes its responsibility to help communities prepare for emergencies incredibly seriously and our Emergency Planning Officers and Resilience Coordinator work hard to ensure that local groups understand how to be ready for different scenarios.

“We want people to understand local risks and know what resources they have available to help minimise the impact of an emergency on their community. Experience shows that those who are prepared cope better when something unexpected occurs.

“There are many community groups, towns, parishes, and wards who have produced a plan already, but there are some who haven’t and given recent events – with the increased likelihood of further emergencies due to climate change – I would urge as many as possible to get ready.”

Community Emergency Plans contain a wealth of useful, practical information, which all local people can refer to and act upon. This includes establishing key emergency contacts, places of safety, skills needed and volunteering. One location which already has an effective Emergency Plan is Westleton, and their response to the Dunwich wildfires was thanks in no small part to their preparation.

Cllr Topping continued: “The incredible response in Westleton during the wildfires was an example of a prepared community which had plans in place should something occur. As a Council, we were able to liaise smoothly with the village hall committee and enact our rest centre operation effectively.

“So, while the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service were working extraordinarily hard to extinguish the fire, we were able to support people affected in a planned and co-ordinated way. The more communities that understand and prepare for such risks, the more effectively we will be able to respond.

Representatives of local communities should complete a registration form if they wish to attend the webinar, which is on Thursday 1 October from 5-6pm. Details can be found here: www.suffolkprepared.co.uk/events/east-suffolk-community-resilience-and-emergency-preparedness-webinar/

For further information about emergency preparedness in East Suffolk and the county as a whole, please visit: www.suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/prepare-your-community

Prioritising Support for Young People in East Suffolk

East Suffolk Council has launched a new Youth Fund, offering grants of up to £2,000 for projects supporting young people in the district.

Co-created with members of the East Suffolk Youth Council, the Youth Fund will support young people across the district and safeguard their future.

Grants of between £200 and £2,000 are available, and Youth Councillors have identified several areas they would like to see projects around. These include:

- Protecting and enhancing the environment
- Sport and leisure opportunities
- Improving transport options and accessibility for young people
- Developing skills, confidence and experience to support future employment and training
- Activities and opportunities for teenagers
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Reducing financial and practical barriers to opportunities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Supporting youth facilities, clubs and safe spaces for young people
- Expanding youth provision in rural communities
- Increasing access to the arts and cultural activities

East Suffolk Community Partnership Board provided a £40,000 budget for the Youth Council to determine how it should be spent, and it was agreed that £32,000 would be allocated to the Youth Fund. The remaining funds will be used to establish projects that the Youth Councillors themselves have designed and created.

Applications for the Youth Fund grants close on Friday 2 October.

Following the application period, an appraisal process will take place. A decision-making panel made up of Youth Councillors and council officers will then meet in November to consider applications and make funding decisions.

Youth Councillors have been clear that they want to support a variety of projects from across the district. They are keen to see a range of different projects come forward and encourage applications from rural communities and larger communities alike.

GLI Cllr Caroline Topping, Chair of the Community Partnership Board, and GLI Cllr Anthony Specca, Chair of East Suffolk Council, said in a joint statement:

"Young people are the future of East Suffolk, so it is incredibly important that they have a say in shaping the places and opportunities around them. This new Youth Fund is particularly special because of the large role that the East Suffolk Youth Council have had in the process.

"We are delighted that funding is now available to support projects which will help young people in our communities to thrive. We encourage community groups, organisations and partners across the district to apply and help turn the ideas and ambitions of our young people into reality."

The Chair of the East Suffolk Youth Council commented:

"We're so pleased that this Youth Fund has launched, and we have enjoyed the process of creating the guidance and application form. We look forward to seeing what projects come forward and how they will support local young people."

More information can be found at: www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-support/community-grants-and-funding/east-suffolk-youth-fund

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) Update

LionLink is a new subsea electricity cable (known as an interconnector) proposed to run between Great Britain and the Netherlands, being developed by National Grid Ventures (NGV) and Dutch partner, TenneT, designed to connect our electricity system with the Netherlands. The project is currently in the pre-application phase. The submission of the full application is expected in Q2 2027.

Between 7 July and 5 August, NGV held a Targeted Consultation to seek feedback on a limited number of localised changes to the LionLink project which have been identified following Statutory Consultation, which was held between January and March this year. These changes included a relocation of the landfall site at Walberswick, realigning part of the project order limits with Sea Link's where opportunities to coordinate works have been identified, and other alterations to the order limits to facilitate improved access to sites during construction. East Suffolk Council submitted their response to the Targeted Consultation and is anticipating examination to start in Q2 2027.

On 30 June, officers took part in the Suffolk Design Panel Review meeting at the Fromus Centre in Saxmundham. The session included a visit to the proposed LionLink and Sealink convertor station site on the outskirts of Saxmundham and a presentation to the panel setting the Council's position on the project, its concerns, and highlighting key points for

consideration as part of the evolving converter station design on land East of Saxmundham. National Grid Ventures's approach to the proposed design and landscaping of the converter station site was received positively by the panel. A second Suffolk Design Panel Review meeting is currently being arranged to take place in October of this year.

The Design Review Panel identified the value of the landscaping areas proposed at the Saxmundham Converter Station site (for both LionLink and Sea Link), having significant potential to become more than simply landscape planting, rather a local community asset in the form of a country park allowing visitors to engage in recreation and educational opportunities, alongside realising local ambitions to link Saxmundham to the sea via greener routes. Plans are being refined; however the opportunities are significant in this regard and early findings are very encouraging. Coordination between the two project promoters is ongoing and something which ESC has been strongly advocating for at every opportunity.

The team continues to engage constructively with NGV to ensure local priorities remain at the forefront of discussions and to secure the best possible outcomes for local communities and the environments of East Suffolk. Several topic specific workshops are planned to take place during late summer and autumn.

Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet: tinyurl.com/9xhka624