

Report for Parish Councils, Aug 2026

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1. Suffolk Council meeting 16th July 2026

Suffolk County Council met on 16 July 2026 and debated several matters of countywide significance. Councillors voted to rescind the Council's 2019 Climate Emergency declaration and agreed to conduct a review of climate, net-zero and environmental programmes, while continuing to recognise the risks posed by climate change and extreme weather. Members also debated a proposal for a minimum universal bus service across Suffolk, aimed at ensuring all eligible parishes had access to regular public transport, but the proposal was not approved. Councillors additionally agreed new measures requiring independent financial commentary to accompany public announcements of council savings, with the aim of improving transparency and public understanding of financial decisions. The meeting also received Cabinet updates on county services and approved a revised programme of council meetings through to 2028.

2. Dunwich Heath Wildfire Update

The Major Incident declared in response to the Dunwich Heath wildfire was stood down on 10 August following a reduction in immediate risk. However, firefighting operations remain ongoing, with crews continuing to monitor and tackle hotspots across the affected area. Public access restrictions remain in place, and residents and visitors are being urged to stay away from the heath and respect all closures and traffic management measures. The fire, which started on 29 July, spread across approximately 150 hectares of heathland and woodland around Dunwich Heath and RSPB Minsmere. Recovery arrangements are now commencing, led by East Suffolk Council through a multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group, while Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service continues its operational response. Dunwich village and surrounding communities remain open for business. The County Council and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service have thanked emergency service personnel, partner organisations, volunteers, residents and local businesses for their support throughout the incident.

3. East of England Stroke Association

The Stroke Association is hosting **Stroke Information Live** on **Tuesday 22 September 2026** at the **Norfolk County Showground**. This free event is aimed at stroke survivors, carers, family members and anyone supporting people affected by stroke. Attendees can access expert speakers, practical advice, wellbeing support, local services and opportunities to connect with others affected by stroke. Residents can register for a free place by visiting Stroke Information Live. For further information, please contact Louise Hornagold, Engagement Lead for the East of England at the Stroke Association, on **07983 342638** or by email at Louise.Hornagold@stroke.org.uk.

4. Suffolk County Council School fires investigation update

Following the precautionary shutdown of solar panel systems at affected Suffolk schools, a dedicated team is carrying out infrared drone surveys to identify any faults or defects. Where no issues are found, systems are being safely returned to service. The current expectation is that inspections and any necessary remedial work will be completed before schools return in September. The financial impact of the temporary shutdown is assessed to be minimal. I am also still awaiting clarification regarding how installations completed after 2016 are being assessed and whether they are affected by the current measures. I will provide further updates as more information becomes available.

5. EcoPower Suffolk Solar Consultation

The consultation on the proposed EcoPower Suffolk Solar project remains open until 11:59pm on Sunday 16 August 2026. Suffolk County Council has formally objected to the scheme, and the County Council administration continues to work with local parish councils and residents to ensure community concerns are properly heard and represented throughout the process. Residents are strongly encouraged to review the proposals and submit their views before the deadline. Individual responses, together with those from parish councils and community groups, help ensure local knowledge and concerns are fully considered as the project progresses. Consultation responses can be submitted via the EcoPower Suffolk website before 16 August 2026.

6. Energy efficiency loans available for Suffolk residents

Suffolk County Council has launched the Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme, offering homeowners loans of £2,000 to £15,000 at a fixed 2.2% APR to fund energy-efficiency improvements such as insulation, heat pumps, solar panels and double glazing. The scheme, delivered in partnership with Lendology, aims to help residents reduce energy bills and improve home comfort. Applications are now open via the [Lendology Warm Homes Suffolk Loan Scheme](#).

7. Trading Standards Warning

Residents are being urged to beware of **fake charity collection bags** being distributed in Suffolk. The bags falsely claim to support a children's cancer charity and may be used by fraudsters to collect donations. Please verify any door-to-door collection before donating and use official charity shops or collection points where possible. Anyone with information about suspicious collections can contact Suffolk Trading Standards on 0808 223 1133.

8. Division Contact and Support

If you have specific issues regarding local county services, school transport allocations, or unresolved highways defects, please contact me with your relevant case reference numbers.

Please get in touch with me if you have questions or comments:

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