

OCTOBER 2023 PARISH REPORT

ORWELL & VILLAGES WARD

The recent heavy rain and flooding caused by Storm Babet has thrown the spotlight on both preparedness of local communities for emergency incidents and the very real threat which climate change represents, be that through flooding, wildfires, or water shortages.

The two worst affected areas in Suffolk – Framlingham and Debenham- both had updated emergency plans in place through their parish councils and very quickly could co-ordinate with both Suffolk County Council and their respective District Councils to provide rest centres for residents affected by the flooding and to those visitors who were unable to leave the flooded areas. Emergency housing has been provided to those whose homes are uninhabitable and ESC aided with furniture removal and street clearance within hours of the flood.

If parishes do not currently have emergency plans in place or feel that current plans may need to be updated, then help is available from ESC and the County Resilience team. All ESC councillors have now been invited to training in setting up rest centres and who to contact to receive supplies such as food and bedding etc.

Government funding is available for those directly affected by flooding from Storm Babet (including for future flood-proofing of property and businesses) but it is very important that the council is made aware of any property flooding within parishes outside Framlingham in order to qualify for that funding.

It would also be helpful whilst the flooding remains fresh in your minds if any particular areas of concern within your own parish could be recorded and advised to us, and they will be passed on centrally so we know potential future flooding sites where road diversions / closures may need to be highlighted.

On a related subject we would share the following temporary stop notice against developers.

East Suffolk Council has served a Temporary Stop Notice in relation to land at Mow Hill, Witnesham.

Notice has been served today, Friday 27 October, in response to work commencing on site to construct dwellings without required surface water management and associated drainage systems. The works are therefore in breach of a condition of planning permission (DC/22/0998/FUL).

As Local Planning Authority, East Suffolk Council requires that new developments address surface water flooding through the inclusion of appropriate measures within the site to manage surface water to ensure surface water flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

We expect developers to undertake works in accordance with approved plans and the conditions included on planning permissions. Where developers fail to comply with approved plans and conditions, the Local Planning Authority can take formal enforcement action through the serving of notices.

While recent flooding around the area of the Mow Hill and Tuddenham Lane junction, during an extraordinary weather event, cannot be attributed solely to the failure of Denbury Homes to complete the required surface water management works, the lack of installation of the surface water management measures may have been a contributing factor.

If parish councillors need to contact either of us, please feel free to do so.

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Levelling -Up and Re-generation Act

Unexpectedly the Levelling-Up and Re-generation Act became law on 26th October 2023. The 500 page plus document fundamentally changes some elements of planning law. Whilst the full implications are being assessed by Councillors and officers the new rules do give some additional scope for a review of the current local plans. The act aims to:

- Streamline the local plan-making process and reduce duplication by ensuring authorities have a single local plan.
- Ensure the preparation, examination and adoption process is more “front-loaded” and evidence requirements reduced. The government expects plans adopted within 30 months.
- Result in amendments to the National Policy Planning Framework which remove the current requirement for a rolling five-year supply of housing land, where the local plan is up to date.
- Councils will be able to consider slow build-out rates when approving planning.
- A new infrastructure levy will be introduced to replace the current Community Infrastructure Levy and much of the section 106 system. However, the levy, which will be charged on the value of a property when it is sold, will not now be introduced fully for a decade.
- Planning authorities will be given stronger powers to deal with those breaching planning rules and processes.

This is very clearly an important issue which will have significance for all levels of local government planning. We will push for a briefing document to be provided as soon as possible although some of the proposals will not come into effect for several years.

Polling station review

To ensure they remain suitable for voters, polling stations and polling districts in East Suffolk are currently being reviewed and residents are invited to comment before 30 November.

[The ‘Polling Districts and Polling Places’ review](#) aims to ensure that the current polling districts, polling places and polling stations in East Suffolk are suitable and convenient for electors, and to assess feedback from voters or other interested parties.

Brownfield land grant to help pave way for waterfront regeneration

A Government grant worth more than £4.2million has been awarded to East Suffolk Council (ESC) to help transform brownfield land in Lowestoft into much needed future housing.

The £4,203,800 grant is part of the second phase of a £180m Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) designed to unlock sites across the country to make way for more than 6,000 new homes. The funding will help cover the cost of land remediation at the former Sanyo and Survitec manufacturing sites located on the south side of Lake Lothing, Lowestoft, in an area known as Kirkley Waterfront.

The land was acquired by predecessor to ESC, Waveney District Council, in 2018, having stood vacant since 2009, and forms part of the Kirkley Waterfront and Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood scheme, which focuses on regenerating the area to provide housing and jobs for local people. The work will enable preparation for future development of plans which include the construction of 350 new homes at the former Sanyo and Survitec manufacturing sites.

GLI Cllr David Beavan, East Suffolk's Cabinet Member for Housing said: "This is good news. Lowestoft's industrial past can be transformed into much needed housing which is as affordable and as sustainable as we can make it.

"Record homelessness needs more housing, which is better on brownfield than greenfield sites. We just need funding for the tidal barrier now to allow this project to go full steam ahead."

Time to think about how we heat our homes

Warm Homes Suffolk is accepting applications to fund improvements to residents' homes, making properties warmer and more efficient for the colder months. Warm Homes Suffolk has new funding available for eligible households, to put towards energy efficient measures such as insulation, solar panels or heat pumps.

The scheme is administered by Suffolk County Council, and delivered by East Suffolk Council, on behalf of all councils in Suffolk. It has been funding home energy efficiency improvements for more than a year but has recently received further funding from the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero to continue the work.

An average of £18,000 in funding per property is available for homeowners meeting the criteria. Landlords and tenants are also entitled to apply, with qualifying rental properties getting up to two-thirds of costs, as an average grant of up to £12,000.

To find out more about how Warm Homes Suffolk, visit [Warm Homes Suffolk](#) or call the team on 03456 037 686.