

August 2022 report for the Martlesham Division

Suffolk supports the cost of living

The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme helps those experiencing financial hardship, including access to items like household furniture and white goods, fuel vouchers for electricity and gas top-ups, supermarket vouchers, and contributions towards increasing costs during the winter months.

Local organisations across Suffolk can submit an application for support, on behalf of an individual or family. These organisations include Citizens Advice Bureau, district and borough councils, health services and voluntary organisations. A list of these organisations, who will assess circumstances and submit applications, is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/FinancialHardship

After the recent spell of warm weather it may feel a long way off now, but Autumn and Winter will be a time when energy and fuel costs rise. Suffolk's Warm Homes Healthy People is a project designed to help vulnerable people and families make their homes more energy efficient cheaper to heat. It can help with access to grants to help pay for insulation, basic draught proofing, or first-time central heating. It can also offer emergency support if needed in the form of temporary heaters or support with emergency boiler repairs.

If high energy bills are preventing putting the heating on, or you know any friends, family or neighbours who need extra help heating their home, please contact Warm Homes Healthy People on **03456 037 686** or email whhp@eastssuffolk.gov.uk

There's also a wealth of support in Suffolk for families with young children.

Healthy Start vouchers help parents of children under four years old, to access healthy food and milk. Through the county's Tackling Poverty Strategy, we have been working with health visitors, and partners in the voluntary sector to support eligible families to take up the offer.

You may be entitled to Healthy Start Vouchers if you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4. To check if you can apply or to find out more speak to your Midwife or Health Visitor or visit HealthyStart.nhs.uk

Suffolk County Council recently published its Tackling Poverty Strategy and action plan. The strategy, which has been coproduced with District, Borough and Voluntary Sector partners, along with people with lived experience of poverty, pulls together the many strands of work that have been helping people for many months, as well as looking to the future. You can view the strategy and action plan at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/poverty

Tackling poverty is a system-wide challenge and as such, the work of the Poverty Strategy will report into the Health and Wellbeing Board and Suffolk Public Sector Leaders and Suffolk's Collaborative Communities Board. Suffolk Public Sector Leaders have provided £1 million in hardship funding to support this work.

Visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/FinancialHardship where you can find a list of the support services in Suffolk.

Bus charter to deliver highest standards for passengers

It was announced on August 15th that bus passengers in Suffolk can look forward to higher standards of service following the signing of a new charter.

The charter has been signed by Suffolk County Council (SCC) and bus operators covering the county and is a key part of the Suffolk Enhanced Partnership.

The Partnership is made up of councils, operators and other stakeholders and supports the improvement of all local bus services operating in the SCC, Local Transport Authority (LTA) area and neighbouring LTA areas where services are cross-boundary.

The charter has a wide range of pledges detailing what passengers are entitled to expect before, during and after their journey.

They include:

- Information about service disruptions will be posted on bus company websites, apps, and social media.
- A recognisable bus stop, with access to up-to-date timetable and contact information, and real-time displays at major stops
- To be able to pay to travel by contactless, mobile apps or smartcards – not just cash – and tickets that are easy to understand
- Buses that are clean, comfortable, and accessible
- A clear, consistent process for complaints, feedback, and praise – with a speedy resolution

The charter also outlines the part passengers can play in helping buses run smoothly.

This includes reporting damage to buses, stops, or shelters, having passes, tickets, or fare money ready as they board, and helping keep the bus clean by taking litter home and keeping their feet off the seats.

The charter will be reviewed and renewed every 12 months by the Enhanced Partnership.

More details on the Enhanced Partnership and the passenger charter can be found [on Suffolk On Board](#). Suffolk County Council website.

Simple scheme to buy solar panels returns for Suffolk residents

Solar Together Suffolk, a scheme which has helped over 1,500 homes to install solar panels and batteries, opens for new registrations on 22 August 2022.

The scheme helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers, whilst increasing their independence from the grid and reducing their carbon emissions.

Solar Together Suffolk is supported by Suffolk County Council and all local borough and district councils.

From 22 August 2022, Suffolk residents can register for free with the group-buying scheme, with no obligation to go ahead with an installation: www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk.

It is open to anyone interested in:

- installing new solar panels (with the option for battery storage and EV charge points)
- adding battery storage to an existing solar panel array

How does it work?

- **22 August to 26 September:** registration is open, it is free and with no obligation
- **27 September:** pre-vetted installers take part in the auction to bid against each other to offer the best deal
- **17 October:** a few weeks after the auction you will receive a personal recommendation based on your registration details
- **25 November:** your deadline to accept your personal recommendation and proceed with an installation

Support is on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

Suffolk's local authorities are again working in partnership with independent experts iChoosr to roll out Solar Together Suffolk.

iChoosr has a strong track record of delivering group purchase schemes for local authorities. It has worked with 160 UK local authorities on its collective energy switching schemes. iChoosr's schemes have also been delivered in partnership with local authorities in five countries. Over 70 schemes led to 110,000 residents installing solar PV systems.

Free registration, with no obligation is open from 22 August to 26 September 2022, submit your details at www.solartogether.co.uk/suffolk.

Suffolk Waste Partnership back campaign to raise awareness of safe battery disposal

Suffolk Waste Partnership is backing a nationwide campaign urging people to safely dispose of old batteries in a bid to avoid starting fires in refuse vehicles

The Partnership has signed up to the Stop Battery Fires Campaign launched by national safe electricals recycling group [Material Focus](#), which aims to raise awareness of how householders can properly recycle batteries and electricals.

Batteries, or electricals containing batteries, that end up inside bins or recycling and waste lorries with other materials, get crushed in the waste or recycling process. This can result in them being punctured and self-combusting, setting fire to dry and flammable waste and recycling around them.

In June a fire at the Materials Recycling Facility in Great Blakenham, near Ipswich, which recycles waste from across Suffolk, is suspected to have been started by a battery dumped with household recycling. The fire was located deep within nearly 400 tonnes of waste and took firefighters and staff nearly two hours to extinguish.

Electricals containing batteries that tend to be discarded the most are smaller, frequently used and often cheaper electricals like toothbrushes, shavers, chargers and toys. Lithium-ion batteries are responsible for around 48% (more than 200) of all waste fires occurring in the UK each year according to the [Environmental Services Association](#), the trade body representing the UK's resource and waste management industry.

These fires cost some £158 million annually to waste operators, fire services and the environment. Yet the Material Focus survey found 45% of householders are unaware of the fire risk if they do not safely dispose of batteries hidden inside electrical items.

