

Parish Report – September 2023

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Pylon plan not supported by SCC

Suffolk County Council is not supporting the latest proposals by the National Grid to install 114 miles of electricity pylons across the county as part of the “Norwich to Tilbury” project. A number of objections have been raised about the 33 mile stretch of the new works which would run through Suffolk, which includes installing a stretch of cabling under the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The council is pressing for an offshore solution to be fully researched and considered.

Onshore facility proposal for Suffolk Coast

National grid are undertaking a new Non-Statutory Public Consultation under the name of LionLink, a previous consultation was completed in the name of EuroLink and did not include any areas in my Division. LionLink have now identified an alternative underground cable Northern Search Area, which means they now need to consult again.. From 8th September until 3rd November.

There are other options for landfall which do not include such a long and convoluted route (via Reydon, across the A12 towards Brampton and down to the proposed converter station on land (Friston area). It is thought landfall further down the coast at Thorpeness or Aldeburgh would be more straightforward.

This will be the first electricity link of its kind between Great Britain and The Netherlands, enabling the cross-border flow of electricity and the direct connection to Dutch offshore wind.

Events are being held to look at the project But **NONE** being held in our Division, despite it being in the proposed area for consultation, apparently not as many people affected! (I did point out the population figures, comparing Walberswick 🙄 with Wangford or indeed Brampton)

So do go along and look as follows:

Reydon Village Hall = Friday 22nd September 2023, 14:00 - 20:00

Walberswick Village Hall = 23rd September 2023, 10:00 - 16:00

Leiston Community Centre = Friday 6th October 2023, 14:00 - 20:00

If you want to complete the consultation online, please click the link **below..**

<https://www.nationalgrid.com/document/150421/download>

New Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre

The Suffolk Fire and Rescue Training Centre at Wattisham has had a £1.3m upgrade and was formally opened on 24 August. This includes a new tactical firefighting facility to simulate incidents firefighters may be faced with and help them prepare for the dangerous work they undertake in the community.

Social Worker of the Year Awards 2023

Suffolk County Council’s social workers and social care teams have been shortlisted for six awards at the annual Social Worker of the Year Awards. This is the only major national awards event for social work in England, attracting hundreds of entries every year and reaching millions of people with positive stories of outstanding social work. We are really proud of our social workers, who work so hard to help people in often challenging circumstances. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony in November this year.

Support for Ukrainian refugees moving to private rented accommodation

In May, Suffolk County Council announced a one-off £2,000 support grant for Ukrainian refugees moving on from their host into their own accommodation.

The Independent Living Payment is available to any Ukrainian refugees moving into private rented accommodation after 1 April 2023. Guests must have been living in Suffolk for a minimum of two months and be registered on the Suffolk Homes for Ukraine scheme to be eligible for the payment. This funding can be used for any associated housing costs, including furniture, moving costs or travel to work. The support can be used towards accommodation which is furnished or unfurnished, and accommodation can be in Suffolk or out of county.

Ukrainian guests can apply for the Independent Living Payment and completing the application form on the Suffolk County Council website:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/communities/community-engagement/support-for-refugees/support-for-ukraine/ukraine-information-for-guests>

Halesworth Fire Station

The appliance at Halesworth fire station has been relocated to facilitate some roof improvements that have been scheduled for a while.

The appliance will be moving approximately half a mile up the road to an MOT bay owned by AWD Hammond's. The work has commenced and is due to last approximately 6-8 weeks. The mobilisation of the appliance will still be completed through the station so as not to affect appliance mobilisation, cause any issues with control, or affect the speed of response.

RAAC Concrete (Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete)

SCC answered a Freedom of Information request in 2019 at which time there were 11 properties being monitored for RAAC. I am told one has since been demolished, one is empty awaiting demolition, one has been refurbished and the RAAC panels removed, and one is empty but we cannot demolish because it is a listed building. I am unable to comment on buildings, such as hospitals, which are not owned by SCC but I am told that in 2019 county relocated SCC staff out of the Haverhill Health Centre (owned by NHS Property Services), following concerns about RAAC in the building.

Suffolk County Council undertook a desktop survey in 2019 to understand which schools had RAAC present. That survey, carried out by Concertus, suggested that there was no RAAC present in our maintained schools other than at Thurston Community College where immediate remedial works were undertaken to strengthen the RAAC panels. The survey identified a number of academy buildings that had RAAC present and we highlighted this to those schools so they themselves could take the appropriate action. County are looking to carry out follow up visual surveys at all maintained schools given the updated guidance that has been introduced more recently.

RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete which was used in schools, colleges and other building construction from the 1950s until the mid-1990s.

The Department for Education (DfE) is leading on this directly with those schools affected. Suffolk County Council has had no official confirmation from the DfE, however at this stage we believe that four schools may be affected in the county. All of these are academies. Three Suffolk schools have now been confirmed as being affected by the RAAC issue. They are East Bergholt High School, Hadleigh High School and Claydon High School.

This is of course an emerging picture and there are ongoing meetings between the DfE and schools. Suffolk County Council's education and infrastructure team are offering support to minimise disruption to education.

White Bridge

The bridge is still closed, and a high priority for replacement. Funding to replace the bridge has been allocated and a topographical survey has been completed. A design brief and supporting information has been passed to Milestone to enable them to progress design/consideration before the start of the new contract. Milestone have visited the site and have prepared outline proposals. SCC very much understands the importance of the bridge to the local community and regret that it had to be closed. Initially, SCC had been able to keep the bridge open with some additional safety fencing whilst monitoring the condition, but due to bricks being removed from the supports, there was no option but to close it.

Community Self Help

Halesworth Town Council are taking on the Community Self Help scheme and currently working to order some equipment for volunteers to clear up the areas, particularly signs. For more information on the community self-help scheme visit: [Community Self-Help Scheme - Suffolk County Council](#)

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Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>