

TUNSTALL PARISH COUNCIL
SCC NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2024

Major scrapyard fire likely sparked by discarded battery, investigators conclude

The fire at Sackers in Gipping Road, Great Blakenham, on Thursday, August 8, resulted in a major response by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. The fire at Sackers saw 14 appliances and more than 80 firefighters deployed to deal with it.

It was brought under control late on Thursday and Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service subsequently launched an investigation into the cause.

This has established that the most likely cause was a battery which had made its way into a pile of scrap metal.

If batteries, or electricals containing batteries, are not properly separated they can end up being crushed in the waste and recycling process.

When punctured they can self-combust, setting fire to any surrounding dry and flammable waste and recycling.

At the height of the Sackers fire there were a total of 14 fire engines - around 80 firefighters at the scene, which included appliances from Essex and Norfolk.

Local residents and businesses were advised to keep doors and windows closed for nearly 24 hours as a massive smoke plume, which could be seen for miles, rose above the site.

Trains were also severely affected as rail services from Ipswich to Norwich, Cambridge and Ely were cancelled owing to the potential danger from the fire to the adjacent railway track.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) said in May that lithium-ion batteries thrown in household rubbish bins had led to more than 1,200 fires in the UK waste system in the last 12 months, compared to 700 in 2022.

In June last year operations were disrupted at Haverhill waste transfer station in Homefield Road after fire broke out amongst 50 tonnes of rubbish and which is thought to have been caused by a battery.

Waste batteries and electrical items should never be thrown into household waste.

Instead, they can be recycled at any of Suffolk's 11 Recycling Centres, as well as other local recycling banks. Many supermarkets also accept them.

Electricals containing batteries that tend to be discarded the most are smaller, frequently used and often cheaper electricals like toothbrushes, shavers, chargers, and toys.

More information can be found at the Suffolk Waste Partnership website <https://suffolkrecycling.org.uk/>

Council formally objects the latest Sea Link plans

Suffolk County Council has formally objected to National Grid's Sea Link project, because of proposals for the building of a new bridge and for construction work to take place on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The scale of a new permanent access bridge across the River Fromus is deemed hugely disproportionate. Plans show that it could be up to six metres in height with a span of over 150 metres, including embankment.

Updated plans from National Grid also revealed that core working hours are being proposed to include 7am to 5pm on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

In response to Sea Link's latest public consultation which has just closed, the council has submitted a 29-page document outlining these and a variety of other potential impacts, that the scheme would have on local communities and the environment.

In its response, the council adds that roads will be subject to construction traffic seven days a week. This provides no relief for locals or visitors who want to enjoy the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths National Landscape, and will disrupt local amenities and tourism.

National Grid expects to submit its application for development consent in early 2025.

Suffolk residents will be able to access electric vehicles on a short-term basis, from next summer

A trial of electric community vehicles is set to launch next summer in Suffolk, with the tender process beginning this autumn.

Plug In Suffolk Car Clubs will be placing sixteen electric vehicles across eight locations in Suffolk which local residents can book by the minute, hour or day. Planned locations include Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Sudbury, Needham Market, Stowmarket, Lowestoft and Woodbridge.

Members of the public interested in this project are urged to sign up to the mailing list to receive updates as the project progresses - [Plug in Suffolk Car Clubs - Mailing List](#).

Car Clubs have already offered people in other parts of the UK access to local, low-emission vehicles without the expense of owning one. Local communities in these areas have already experienced many benefits including improved air quality, reduced congestion and increased mobility for those without access to their own car.

Current providers remain reluctant to fully fund electric community vehicles in rural and semi-rural areas like Suffolk as they do not yet have the real-world data to support the usage.

The project is funded by Suffolk's public sector organisations, helping deliver on two of the Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan's goals; a reduced number of cars on the road and an increased proportion of vehicles on the road that are low or zero emission. Additional charge point funding is being provided by the Department for Transport's On Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme (ORCS).

Rogue Suffolk builder who conned thousands of pounds from customers is sentenced

A rogue Suffolk builder who conned customers by taking deposits worth over £17,000 for work that was never carried out has been sentenced following a prosecution by Suffolk Trading Standards.

Jack Doran repeatedly fobbed off complaints with excuses as to why work was not being done.

Doran, 40, traded as JD Roofing and General Building Ltd of Manor Road, Felixstowe, but his home address is in Harlow, Essex.

At Ipswich Crown Court on Monday August 12 he was given six months suspended sentence, suspended for 18 months by Judge David Wilson.

This was reduced from nine months due to an early plea.

Doran was also ordered to complete 240 hours of unpaid work over the next 18 month, ordered to attend a rehabilitation course to avoid future offending, and told to pay £2,500 compensation, to be split £500 per consumer and paid at £100 month starting from October 1.

He was disqualified as a director for five years.

Doran had previously admitted defrauding customers by taking 50% deposits and additional payments for roofing services and materials not provided, and dishonestly incurring debts in the course of trade, both contrary to the Companies Act 2006.

Suffolk Trading Standards was first contacted about him in April 2022 where a customer from Felixstowe complained they had paid £5,900 for work to replace a roof but which had not been carried out.

In August 2022 a second complaint was received where a customer in Felixstowe paid just over £4,000 for work that never happened.

Neighbours of the first complainant were then identified as further victims.

They paid £1,200 deposit in advance but no work at all was carried out on their property and no scaffolding installed.

All victims received invoices or estimates at the beginning of contracts that stipulated 50% deposits up front, all payable to a bank account in the name of JD Roofing & General Building Ltd.

During the contracts, and despite work not proceeding, at least two of the victims were talked into making further payments under pressure that the business was struggling financially and without further payments the work could not continue.

One paid £1,247 and then another £150 was requested. A second victim paid a further payment of £750 after initially paying £1,440.

Anyone who believes they are a victim of a rogue trader or are concerned that a neighbour or family member may be, please report it to Trading Standards via 0808 223 1133.

To find a trader that you can trust, consult the Suffolk Trusted Trader directory and choose with confidence: trustedtrader.team/Suffolk/

Solar Together launches in Suffolk

Residents of Suffolk can come together to invest in renewable energy sources through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage. Solar Together Suffolk helps homeowners feel confident that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from qualified installers.

Suffolk residents can join the group-buying scheme, which offers solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charge points, as well as retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels and are looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate. The scheme allows homeowners to increase their independence from the national grid.

It's free to register here, and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation. Suffolk's councils are working in partnership with iChoosr, experts in sustainable energy transition, to make the transition to clean energy as cost-effective and hassle-free as possible.

How does it work?

- Householders can register online to become part of the group for free and without obligation at solartogether.co.uk/suffolk
- Approved UK solar PV suppliers participate in a reverse auction. They are able to offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it

possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.

- After the auction, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
- Telephone and email helpdesks are 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.

iChoosr has been collaborating with UK councils since 2015 on its Solar Together scheme, aiming to accelerate the energy transition nationwide. The initiative aims to encourage residents to partake in the collective purchase of solar PV and battery storage systems. To date, Solar Together has installed 13,750 solar panels in Suffolk, reducing carbon emissions by 27,100 tonnes over 25 years – equivalent to 15,000 cars off the road in that time!

iChoosr's schemes have been delivered in partnership with local authorities in five countries. More than 180 schemes have led to 178,000 residents installing solar PV systems.

Small improvements needed as children's services' Ofsted report published

Ofsted has published its report into Suffolk County Council's children's services. The report rated the service as 'requires improvement to be good'.

The ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) report conveys a mixed picture across Suffolk. Importantly, inspectors concluded that children's safeguarding is strong and that the experiences and progress of children in care were good. They also reported that 'children in care thrive'.

However, they highlighted weakness in some of the processes and systems in place. These included inconsistencies with the way first contact with children and young people is processed, and the quality and support to children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless. It also found inconsistencies in the level of understanding that care leavers have about the range of support available to them.

The report outlined seven points for improvement, which have either been implemented already through small amends to systems or processes, or are in progress.

The inspection looked at four areas; the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families; the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection; the experiences and progress of children in care; and the experiences and

progress of care leavers. Although the majority of the report is positive, three of these were graded as 'requires improvement to be good'. The experience and progress of children in care was 'good'.

Following publication of the report, an action plan will be sent to Ofsted by the end of September and a partnership board will be set up to oversee improvements. The council will also carry out a quality assurance review of systems and processes.

You can read the report [here](#).

New era for Lowestoft as Gull Wing opens

Lowestoft's Gull Wing bridge opened to the public with a community walkabout on the bridge on Saturday 7th September, heralding a new era of connectivity and regeneration for the town.

The new bridge, which was built on behalf of Suffolk County Council by leading civil engineering contractor Farrans, represents a significant step forward for Lowestoft and promises to bring both immediate and long-term benefits to the town, its businesses and residents.

It not only addresses longstanding issues with traffic congestion but will also act as a catalyst for economic growth, attracting new investment and positioning Lowestoft as a dynamic and forward-looking commercial centre and community.

By providing another route over Lake Lothing, the Gull Wing bridge will significantly ease traffic congestion in the town centre, shortening journey times and improving journey reliability. Modern cycle and pedestrian facilities on either side will encourage more sustainable modes of transport and better connect communities on the north and south of the waterway.

The bridge is expected to attract new businesses and trade to the area, create new job opportunities, and to streamline logistics and transportation, laying the foundation for continued growth in the town and surrounding area for many decades to come.

The Gull Wing's bascule span being installed (CHPV Offshore Film & Photography)

To celebrate this important milestone for Lowestoft, members of the public were invited to experience the Gull Wing before it opened to traffic. From 9am to 11:30am on Saturday 7th September, the bridge opened exclusively to pedestrians, allowing the public to experience the unique scale and design of the bridge up close, as well as grab a selfie and check out the views, without any traffic.

From noon, the bridge opened to vehicles as well, with vintage Lowestoft buses from the East Anglian Transport Museum leading the way.

A rolling road closure came into effect on the morning of Sunday 8th September, as the Tour of Britain crossed the Gull Wing during their preliminary ride-out ahead of the final stage between Lowestoft and Felixstowe.

The formal civic opening and naming ceremony for the bridge is set to take place on Tuesday 19th November. Additional details will be provided closer to the date.

Andrew Reid

County Councillor – Wilford Division

Tel: 07545 423799

Email: andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk