PARISH REPORT OCTOBER 2026

ORWELL & VILLAGES

Local Government Reorganisation in disarray

On Thursday 29th October the Local Government Minister Jim Mc Mahon contacted local council leaders confirming that five counties have had their local government reorganisation confirmed. Another nine including Norfolk and Suffolk will have their business cases re-examined and decisions will now be notified between late December and early 2027.

However, it is now confirmed that elections will be held in May 2027 for East Suffolk Council based on the current ward boundaries. Elections for which ever number of unitary authorities may be agreed by the government will take place in May 2028 in a shadow capacity and both the district councils and Suffolk County Council will cease to exist in April 2029 with each council maintaining their current services until that point. This assumes that there has been no change of government policy before 2029.

It is anticipated that elections for the joint Mayoral Authority of Suffolk and Norfolk will take place in May 2028 although that is not yet confirmed.

Call for pavement, footpath and bridleway clearance sites in East Suffolk

The council is continuing to work with towns and parish councils in the district to share details of pavements, footpaths and bridleways in need of clearance and maintenance.

Clear, well-maintained pavements, footpaths and bridleways enable safe, accessible travel for everyone, improve access to schools, shops, healthcare and public transport, support physical and mental wellbeing, reduce social isolation, encourage walking and cycling, and help create healthier, more connected communities.

If there is a site in need of clearance in your area, please contact Aimee Mclachlan, Sustainable Travel Officer by emailing Aimee.Mclachlan@eastsuffolk.gov.uk to arrange a site visit.

Enabling Communities Budgets (ECB) funding

As you are aware East Suffolk Council provides ECB funds to each councillor to assist funding of community projects or good causes within or affecting their ward. For the last few years that has been a sum of £ 7,500 for each councillor. Mike and I have used much of these resources over the past few years to try and assist parishes in improving their village halls which are often the heart of the community.

Future funding is far from clear although a commitment has been made to keep the Community Partnerships going. The amount each councillor receives for ECB funding may well be cut from this financial year.

Given that the purdah period will probably start from mid-March for the elections in May it is likely that the cut-off for ECB applications may be in mid-February 2027. Therefore, if you do have any projects in mind then please do contact us about them.

Suffolk Against Fraud- The Little Book of Fraud

As reported previously Suffolk Constabulary and Suffolk Trading Standards have joined together to form Suffolk Against Fraud (SAF). They issue regular fraud alerts, many specific to Suffolk.

SAF have recently issued a Suffolk edition of the nationally promoted The Little Book of Fraud forming a 46-page booklet which makes an interesting read for all ages to become aware of differing types of fraud and how to keep safe.

We would recommend that you circulate the below link as widely as possible, perhaps to local groups who hire your village halls, so that we may all become more protected from fraud. The link is the-little-book-of-fraud-2026.pdf

On a personal note, as Armed Forces Champion for East Suffolk Council I was delighted to accept the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Silver Award on behalf of the council together with our Chief Executive. The awards ceremony was held at the historic Madingley Hall near Cambridge last Thursday and the awards were presented by the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire.

Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place: **www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/**

As always if parish councillors need to contact either of us, please feel free to do so.

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Cllr Lee Reeves: Home tel no 01394 284506 (preferred) Mobile 07823 372501

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