

September 2026 Parish Report

County Councillor, Sally Mittuch, Green Party

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Council Forecasts £7.8m Overspend

Suffolk County Council is forecasting a £7.8 million overspend this financial year, mainly due to rising costs in adult social care, children's services, SEND provision and home-to-school transport. The shortfall will have to be met from reserves, reducing them below the council's recommended resilience level. Meanwhile, the council's SEND funding deficit continues to grow despite expected government support and debt write-offs.

Local Government Reorganisation Paused

Government plans to reorganise local government in Suffolk have been paused pending a review. Proposals for three new unitary councils are currently on hold, meaning district and borough council elections will go ahead as normal in May 2027. The planned Norfolk and Suffolk mayoral election remains on track.

Council Admits Procedural Breaches

A rare Section 5A report found the council breached legal procedures when approving its judicial review challenge against the Government's reorganisation plans. Cabinet described the breaches as minor and inadvertent and agreed that additional training would help prevent future occurrences.

Flood Guidance

Please take care to protect your building from flooding. Check all ingress points: doors, windows, drainage, water, service wall apertures and air bricks. For non-listed building in not in conservation zones you have the full choice of permanent and temporary fixtures.

Some Temporary measures homeowners can install themselves

- Demountable door barriers
- Removable window flood boards
- Airbrick covers
- Sandless sandbags (filled with polymer) which work for short duration floods
- Water-filled flood tubes
- Freestanding flood barriers
- Portable pumps

- Temporary drain covers

1. Demountable Door Barriers

- Aluminium or composite panels fitted across doorways when flooding is forecast.
- Stored away when not in use.
- Usually installed into discreet side channels.
- One of the most common options for listed properties.

2. Flood Gates for Driveways and Entrances

- Larger versions of door barriers.
- Protect courtyards, garden entrances, and access roads.
- Can often be installed by two people without machinery.

3. Airbrick Covers

- Clip-on or screw-on covers fitted over airbricks before a flood.
- Prevent water entering through ventilation openings.
- Cheap and easy for homeowners to install themselves.

4. Removable Flood Boards for Windows

- Similar to door barriers but sized for low-level windows.
- Often transparent polycarbonate or aluminium.
- Can be erected quickly by households.

5. Sandless Sandbags

- Lightweight bags filled with absorbent polymer.
- Expand when wet.
- Easier to store and deploy than traditional sandbags.
- Suitable for short-term protection around doors and vents.

6. Water-Filled Flood Tubes

- Long flexible barriers filled with water.
- Placed around individual buildings or across entrances.
- No permanent fixings required.
- Popular where listed-building consent would be problematic.

7. Self-Standing Flood Barriers

- Freestanding barriers that use water pressure to improve their seal.
- Examples include modular aluminium systems and water-filled units.

- Can protect entire frontages.

8. Temporary Non-Return Drain Covers

- Covers or valves fitted to drains and gullies.
- Prevent sewage and floodwater backing up into buildings.

(May require building regulations consent!)

9. Flood Skirts / Wraparound Barriers

- Heavy-duty waterproof membranes wrapped around the lower part of a building.
- Anchored temporarily.
- Useful where there are multiple doors and openings.

10. Portable Flood Pumps

- Not a barrier, but often part of a flood-resilience package.
- Can be deployed by homeowners to remove water from basements, cellars, and courtyards.

Flood Guidance for Listed Building Owners

Many temporary flood protection measures, such as demountable door barriers, removable flood boards, airbrick covers, sandless sandbags and water-filled flood barriers, may be suitable for listed buildings because they are generally reversible and involve limited alteration to historic fabric.

However, suitability depends on the individual building and, in some cases, Listed Building Consent may be required. Property owners should consult their local planning authority's conservation officer before installation.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/guidance-for-historic-buiding-owners>

Temporary flood resilience measures may be suitable for listed buildings, but this will depend on the individual property. We would recommend that owners seek specialist advice before purchasing any products. Many manufacturers can undertake surveys and advise on the most appropriate measures.

As you'll be aware, any necessary permissions, such as those relating to listed buildings or works affecting the highway, should also be considered as part of the process. The following resources may be helpful to direct residents to:

- SCC Flood Smart Living Guide: [FINAL TO BE USED Flood Smart Living November 2024](#)
- [Flood Mary – Flooding and Listed Buildings](#)
- National Flood Forum: [Home | National Flood Forum](#)

- Blue Pages directory of flood resilience products and suppliers: [Blue Pages – The UK's Leading Independent Flood Directory](#)

A14 and Orwell Bridge

Suffolk County Council has approved £300,000 to explore options for improving traffic when the Orwell Bridge closes. The council also highlighted rail upgrades at Ely and Haughley, which could reduce lorry traffic on the A14 and improve transport resilience across Suffolk.

Better Recycling is Making a Difference

Since the introduction of Better Recycling in June, Suffolk has seen a significant reduction in household waste sent for disposal, largely due to separate food waste collections. Recycling rates for glass, plastics and cartons have also increased, showing that residents are embracing the new system. Overall, the changes could reduce Suffolk's residual waste by more than 40,000 tonnes a year.

Visit To Great Blakenham Energy from Waste Facility

I was fortunate to join other councillors on a tour around the waste facility near Ipswich operated by SUEZ. At the site, black bin rubbish from both Suffolk and Norfolk is incinerated. By recovering energy from waste, the facility reduces greenhouse gas emissions by around 100,000 tonnes per year and produces about 20,000 Mega Watts of energy, about enough to power 50,000 houses. We saw the whole process where waste collection lorries tip waste into an enclosed tip area, how a 5 ton grabber on gantries mixes the waste and loads it into the hoppers of two incinerators which power two turbines. Ash and cinders are collected from the incinerators and used to create road curves and building materials. Other pollutants are captured and disposed of in landfill.

Over the 25-year contract with SUEZ, the facility is expected to save the council at least £350 million compared with traditional landfilling. The site has welcomed over 12,000 visitors in its first ten years and continues to host school groups, community organisations, and the public. The Great Blakenham Energy-from-Waste facility is a leading example of sustainable waste management, combining energy generation, recycling, and public education.

Funding for the Fire Service

This summer's wildfires highlighted gaps in Suffolk Fire and Rescue's specialist equipment. While existing budgets cover standard replacements, incidents such as the Dunwich Heath fire may require additional investment in off-road vehicles, enhanced PPE, specialist footwear, and flood response equipment. The service is reviewing the incident and future needs, while the Fire Brigades Union has called on the Government for increased funding to address growing climate-related risks.

Battery Safety Reminder for Residents

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is urging residents to take extra care when charging and disposing of lithium-ion batteries, following a recent house fire in Lowestoft believed to have been caused by a charging e-scooter. Fires involving e-bikes, e-scooters and other rechargeable devices can spread rapidly and produce toxic smoke.

Residents are advised to use manufacturer-approved chargers, avoid charging batteries overnight, regularly check for damage, and recycle batteries safely. Smoke alarms should also be fitted and tested regularly.

More battery safety advice is available from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service urges battery safety following rise in e-bike and e-scooter fires.

Trading Standards – Fraud Prevention

Fraud now accounts for around **40% of crime in Suffolk**. Residents are encouraged to be vigilant, take time to verify unexpected requests, and never feel pressured into making immediate decisions. If in doubt, check with trusted family members or friends before acting.

If you are experiencing problems with a contract that is not being honoured, it may be possible to assign the contract to Trading Standards, who can sometimes help secure the agreed terms. I would strongly recommend using a contract if you have expensive building projects. When looking for reputable local businesses, consider using the **Suffolk Trusted Trader** scheme to find vetted and trusted tradespeople.

Residents, particularly those in vulnerable areas, may also wish to set up a **No Cold Calling Zone** to help deter doorstep traders and rogue building contractors.

For more information: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/community-and-safety/suffolk-trading-standards/fair-trading/no-cold-calling-zones>

⚡ Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) ⚡

Suffolk is awash with NSIP projects – solar installations, nuclear, water transport, pylons.

The latest proposal is for a wind farm, with 220 meter high blades. More information on the Redmere proposal and links to the Planning Inspectorate and Vattenfall's pages can be found, here: [Redmere - Suffolk County Council](#)

Please learn about the proposal and have you say while you have the chance.

🌳 Free Trees, Hedgerows and Black Poplars for Suffolk Parishes 🌳

Looking for a way to make your parish greener, more wildlife-friendly and more resilient to climate change? The **Suffolk Tree Warden Network**, www.suffolktreewardens.org.uk is once again offering **free tree and hedgerow packs** this winter, with support from the Woodland Trust and Suffolk County Council. Parish councils, community groups and local volunteers can apply for a range of planting packs, including **Eastern Claylands woodland trees**, **Riparian trees for riversides and wet areas**, and **mixed native hedgerow packs**. There are also opportunities to obtain **traditional orchard trees**, locally grown nursery trees, and the iconic **Native Black Poplar**, one of Britain's rarest and most threatened native trees. These free packs can help create wildlife habitat, support pollinators, improve biodiversity, strengthen landscape character and, in some locations, help reduce soil erosion and support flood resilience. Registered Tree Wardens have priority, but communities without a Tree Warden are still encouraged to get in touch and apply. [Further details and the application form can be found here.](#)

Care Leavers Winter Ball

Suffolk County Council is seeking donations of formalwear, shoes, accessories and funds for a Winter Ball being held for care leavers on 27 November. Donations can be made via the event's [Go Fund Me Page](#) or dropped off at Constantine House, Ipswich.

Public Consultation

Proposed changes to Suffolk's Healthy Child Services and to ask again for your support as elected members in helping to ensure residents, families and communities across Suffolk have the opportunity to share their views.

The consultation will run from **8th July to 18th October 2026** and seeks views on proposals relating to:

- **Health Visiting (0–5)**
- **Young Parents Pathway**
- **Family Nurse Partnership**
- **School Nursing**

The Healthy Child Service continues to play a vital role in supporting children, young people and families. However, increasing demand and reduced funding mean that services need to be redesigned to ensure resources are focused where they can have the greatest impact.

Find out more and take part:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations-petitions-and-elections/consultations/healthy-child-services-consultations>

Funding Opportunities for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprises (VCFSE)

Please sign up to learn more about grant opportunities.

[Grant Funding Information mailing list - Suffolk County Council](#)

Please contact me if you have church related funding projects and I can send you a **Churches Funding Guide**.

Please contact me for small projects which can be funded through **County Councillor Locality Funding**, or for small sums to initiate a large project.

People's Emergency Briefing

Following a successful showing at Metfield, and Stradbroke, the next showing at Laxfield is **currently full**. Here is a reminder if you have got your (Free) Tickets.

Friday 9th October 2026 6:30pm — 8:30pm

Location: Laxfield Village Hall

Laxfield Parish Council is hosting a People's National Emergency Briefing screening about the climate and nature crisis the world is facing. This involves showing a 50 min film, followed by open discussion on how the climate crisis impacts farmers, food supply chains and our overall health – and what actions communities can take to help. The event will take place on 9 October at 6:30pm in Laxfield Village Hall. All are welcome and refreshments will be provided.

Do please contact the Laxfield council to go onto a waiting list for another screening or perhaps to be invited by another parish?

Meetings with Parishes in the Waveney Valley Constituency

During the Parliamentary recess, Adrian Ramsay had taken the opportunity to visit villages and speak to residents across the area.

Last week, the tour started at Mendham Church followed by Fressingfield Methodist Church (and a visit to the Shed), then Laxfield Royal Oak and finally Stradbroke Community Centre. The events were well attended and these opportunities are the best way for your voice to be heard.

Waveney Valley Identity Meeting

Adrian Ramsay M.P. formed a group called the Waveney Valley Identity Group.

The idea is to put the Waveney Valley on the map. We have so much that makes the Waveney Valley both distinctive and special. To start we have our River Waveney its valleys and catchment area with a large variety of habitats from heath, water meadows, marshes and miles of hedgerows. In the catchment we have, charming, characterful market towns, cycling routes, walking routes, archaeology, legends, history etc. We have so much that makes the Waveney Valley, both sides of the border the wonderful place it is.

Our first meeting was at the Swan Inn in Harleston. We would like to encourage, organisations, businesses and individuals to participate. If you would like to get involved. Please get in touch with me and I will pass your details on to Adrian's team.

Contacting me:

Please contact on county council issues by email, copy in your parish council and include your full name, address and telephone number. **Sally.Mittuch@Suffolk.gov.uk**

Social Media and Helpful Links

Follow us on:

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Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/scc.green/>

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/suffolkgreens/>

Group Website - <https://suffolkgreens.org.uk/>

Cost of Living help and advice:

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