

May 2026

Parish Report

County Councillor Report

Election Results

The 2026 County Council election results are all counted, and the largest party is Reform up 35 councillors with 41 seats, Green Party up 4 councillors with 13 seats, conservative down from 48 councillors to 9 seats, labour down from 6 councillors to 3 seats, liberal democrat down from 6 councillors to 2 seats.

Green councillors will now form the "official opposition"

Next election due May 2027, for the new unitary councils

Road Schemes included in Government Five-Year Plan

The government has announced its five-year Road Investment Strategy for 2026-2031, which includes four key projects in Suffolk:

- **A12 improvements at Woodbridge** – a recommitment by the government to funding its share during this period of the £63m scheme to upgrade the A12 between the Seven Hills junction with the A14 and the Woods Lane roundabout, subject to Suffolk County Council submitting the final business case later this year
- **A140 - A1120 Earl Stonham junction improvements** – this has been classed as a scheme 'recommended to continue', where the government accepts work on developing improvements should go ahead during this period. However, the work will be subject to affordability, value for money and deliverability assessments.
- **Improvements to the A11 Fiveways junction near Mildenhall** – the government and National Highways will continue to develop this scheme but it will not be delivered before 2031
- **Improvements to the A12/A14 Copdock Interchange** – the government and National Highways will continue to develop this scheme but it will not be delivered before 2031

More information about the projects the government is committing to for 2026-2031 can be found here: <https://maps.dft.gov.uk/road-schemes-spring-2026/index.html>

Homes for Ukraine: Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme Launched

The government has introduced the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme (UPES) to allow people living in the UK under an existing Ukraine Visa scheme to apply to extend their stay in the UK for a

further 18 months when their valid Ukrainian visa expires. If the application is successful, Ukrainian guests will be able to continue to live, work and study in the UK and access public funds. Guests must actively apply to extend their visa (it will not happen automatically) when their current permission has 90 days or less remaining, and they must be physically present in the UK while applying and not leave the UK while the application is being processed.

More information on the extension scheme can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/applying-to-the-ukraine-permission-extension-scheme>

New Chair for Suffolk Business Board

The Suffolk Business Board has appointed Lisa Perkins, Chief People Officer and Director of Growth Partnership at Plexal, as its new Chair for the forthcoming year. Lisa is an existing Board member, and takes over from Mark Pendlington, who is stepping down from a two-year term in the role. The Suffolk Business Board is administered by the council but led by local business representatives to oversee funded programmes supporting business growth and skills development across Suffolk. As Chair, Lisa will work with the rest of the Board and local business partners to promote its ongoing programme of clean and inclusive growth across the local economy. Four other appointments have also been made to the Board, bringing in expertise in agri-food, clean energy, port and logistics and the visitor (tourist) economy: Bee Kemball, Managing Director of Debach Enterprises Ltd, Jonathan Reynolds, Managing Director of Opergy Group, Genevieve Christie, Chief Executive Officer of First Light Festival CIC and Andrew Wilkinson, formerly Chief Executive Officer at The University of Manchester Innovation Factory Ltd.

Pupils Pitch for School Active Travel Funding

School pupils from across Suffolk took part in a Dragon's Den style event at Endeavour House to secure active travel funding for their schools. The event, part of the Active Travel Ambassador programme with secondary schools, was delivered by Modeshift. They provided £200 of funding which was matched by Suffolk County Council to provide £400 available for each school, with an additional £50 for the best presentation. Schools can use the money for anything from competition prizes to promotional materials, and the following projects were put forward:

- **Northgate High School in Ipswich** – is promoting active travel through a 'golden bike lock' competition and a prize wheel for students who walk, cycle, or travel sustainably to school. It is also encouraging students who face barriers to active travel to take part by walking, helping everyone experience the benefits of physical activity
- **Ormiston Endeavour Academy in Ipswich** – is encouraging active travel by rewarding students with tokens which can be exchanged for prizes. The school is also running a photo competition, inviting students to capture and share what they see on their journey to school
- **Claydon High School** – the school Green Team organised a Sustainable Travel Day, rewarding students and staff who travel actively with raffle tickets and prizes, alongside a "golden bike lock" competition. It is also exploring ways to promote active travel year-round and have highlighted safer walking routes and crossings around the school
- **Hadleigh High School** – the school's Eco Committee is bringing back its successful 'Hidden in Hadleigh' initiative, hiding painted rocks along popular walking routes for students to find and exchange for prizes. It has also introduced a points system that rewards active and sustainable travel
- **King Edward VI School in Bury St Edmunds** – proposed a 'golden bike lock' prize alongside daily rewards for pupils who walk or cycle to school and suggested collaborating with nearby schools on a joint active travel campaign.

Schools that took part in the event last year have all reported an increase in active travel, with more pupils choosing to cycle or walk to and from school.

Suffolk Ramps Up Energy Sector Training

Suffolk Economy and West Suffolk College are launching the second phase of their Energy Readiness Programme to support employers as they prepare for major developments, including Sizewell C, growing investment in renewable energy, and the emergence of new clean energy technologies. Project partners will include Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Suffolk New College and East Coast College. The programme aims to help local people gain the skills needed for well-paid careers and give businesses the confidence to grow, recruit and take advantage of the new opportunities emerging across the energy industry. Employers taking part will be able to access a bursary to help them reduce the costs that can prevent people from undertaking training. There will also be more training options, including new courses shaped by what local employers say they need, extra support for apprenticeships to make it easier for businesses to bring in and train new talent, a focus on innovation to encourage employers to explore new energy solutions and improved monitoring and evaluation to make sure the programme delivers real benefits and adapts as the sector evolves.

Phase two will also introduce training designed specifically for work on the Sizewell C site, including courses covering minimum onsite standards and Fit for Sizewell requirements. It will also support skills development across Suffolk's wider energy economy, linking with initiatives such as Freeport East and offering training in emerging technologies.
