

Fees waived for communities to celebrate His Majesty the King's Coronation

To mark the celebration of His Majesty The King's Coronation, Suffolk County Council has waived fees associated with applications to close roads for street parties and other local authority led public events.

Charles III's coronation will take place at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May, where the King will be crowned alongside Camilla, the Queen Consort. This is the first coronation of a monarch in the UK since the late Queen's ceremony which was staged on June 2, 1953.

Events will be taking place across the country, between 6 and 8 May 2023. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours. Many of Suffolk's residents will also be giving up their time as volunteers to bring people together as part of The Big Help Out. For all events planned over the weekend, which is being referred to as The Coronation Big Lunch, Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures for events.

Similarly, to the late Queens Platinum Jubilee, if you are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or if you would like to apply as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park, you can view more information at www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation

As part of the main criteria for a road to be closed, the road must be residential and not on A or B roads and/or those roads which have a bus route operating during the proposed event.

To be allocated Traffic Management to assist organisers/residents with an event, all applications must be received before 11pm on Sunday 2 April 2023. Traffic management will consist of 4 traffic cones, 1 road closure sign, which may be collected from a local highway depot. An online booking system will be shared with those successful applications.

If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 2nd April 2023, these may still be processed. However, Suffolk County Council cannot cover the costs of Traffic Management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of Traffic Management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands.

We want to encourage communities across Suffolk to celebrate this momentous event and I am delighted that we have been able to waive fees for all events happening between 6 and 8 May, allowing communities to come together across Suffolk, whether it be a small gathering in a local street, or a larger event, organised by town or parish councils.

We all look forward to seeing such events take place and encourage as many as possible to get involved in the celebrations.

For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation

If you have any queries, please contact Suffolk County Council's Customer Services team on 0345 606 6171 or email customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk

Suffolk Walking Festival returns for 15th instalment

Tickets are on sale now for The Suffolk Walking Festival 2023 as it celebrates its 15th year.

This year's festival boasts a 16-day programme and offers over 70 walks across 350 miles of Suffolk's beautiful landscapes. With lots of weekend, evening and family walks. The programme has accessible, short, medium, long-distance walks, and more challenging walks – so there is something for everyone.

From learning about the ancient tradition of 'Beating the Bounds' to exploring the heart of The Brecks with its gorse-covered sandy chalk soils characterised by purple heathland, tall pines and rare wildlife, this year's festival appeals to a wide range of individuals.

There is a range of shorter urban strolls, and for those looking to stretch their legs, several spectacular riverside walks and valley yomps. Also returning this year are ever the popular Walk n' Water River trips with a boat in Sudbury; an exclusive walk with Sweep the sheepdog on Orford Ness; a twilight safari in an ancient woodland; and the intriguing stories of ancient smugglers and shipping routes on Dunwich Heath.

The Suffolk Walking Festival returns more diverse than ever in its 15th year since beginning, holding its title as one of the longest running festivals of its kind in the UK. We see the festival grow in popularity year after year, so don't delay in grabbing your tickets for one or more of the exciting walks planned.

The festival highlights some of Suffolk's most beautiful locations so it's a great way to explore, get active and meet others doing the same.

The festival kicks off at Thornham Walks on Saturday 13 May with refreshments and 5 launch jaunts. It then runs every day until 28 May.

Visit www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk for more details on the programme, to sign up to newsletters, and to buy tickets.

Deadly heaters detained by Suffolk Trading Standards



Over 300 electrical heaters have been detained at the Port of Felixstowe following the Imports Surveillance team discovering the products pose a serious risk of electrocution.

Officers raised concerns about the heaters after finding that the grills used on them didn't require tools to open, meaning live and hazardous parts could be accessed by hand.

The supply voltage requirements stated on the heaters were also incompatible with the UK power network, posing a danger of explosion or electric shock.

Graham Crisp, Head of Suffolk Trading Standards, said: "These unsafe heaters were due to be sold via Amazon but, thanks to the intervention of our Imports Surveillance team, the listing has now been removed, saving shoppers from unwittingly putting themselves at risk. We know that the cost of living is concerning for most, and many people may be more tempted than ever before to turn to products that seem to offer a good deal. Unfortunately, bargain purchases can leave you paying the ultimate price, with these increasing the risk of fire, serious injury or even death. Everyone can keep themselves safe by only shopping at reputable retailers and checking that anything they've bought meets safety standards. All electrical equipment should have a CE and/or UKCA mark.

We are incredibly grateful to Suffolk Trading Standards for their continued work to protect consumers by intercepting harmful products at the port before these can enter the UK's marketplace. Even legitimate heaters can pose a fire risk if not used sensibly, so I would urge all Suffolk residents to follow safety precautions when heating their homes during the colder temperatures forecast across the county over the next few days. Heaters shouldn't be used for drying clothes and must always be kept away from curtains and furniture. In addition, heaters should never be plugged into an extension lead, which could easily overheat and go up in flames, potentially endangering both people and property.

The popularity of electric heaters has increased significantly during rising energy costs, with a recent survey carried out by Electrical Safety First finding that 22% of respondents had purchased a heater during the past year, often from an online marketplace.

Anyone who believes they may have purchased a dangerous heater should stop using it immediately and contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133**.

Suffolk's exemplary commitment to retrofitting homes.

While the Warm Homes Suffolk initiative is ensuring that the most vulnerable households receive support, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership is tackling the shortage of trained installers in the county.

Almost 50 people have been trained in retrofitting through Skills Bootcamps, providing a much-needed boost to the workforce needed for the delivery of warmer homes.

The skilling-up of 46 people in Norfolk and Suffolk in three levels of retrofitting through the Government funded initiative comes after Suffolk's Public Sector Leaders agreed to create a Fuel Poverty Retrofit team to support those struggling most with their energy bills.

A Fuel Poverty Retrofit Team will work with residents living in energy inefficient properties to address funding issues and ensure a consistent supply of installers.

An extension of the Warm Homes Suffolk Scheme, the move is expected to lead to around £50m worth of work and deliver almost £4.8m in combined potential savings for households through insulation, air source heat pumps and the replacement of single glazing.

Improving the energy efficiency of homes is a key determination of Suffolk's Climate Emergency Plan, as doing so will help the county to address climate change and achieve its goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2030.

Suffolk faces a tremendous task to retrofit our aging housing stock to become more energy efficient, but with dedicated initiatives in place such as the LEP's skills bootcamps, Warm Homes Suffolk and its financial support from our public sector leaders, demonstrates that Suffolk is excelling at this challenge.

More than 62,000 properties in Suffolk are thought to have the worst Energy Performance (EPC) grades of E, F and G and 28% of its households are facing fuel poverty. The new team will strive to secure funding to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and ensure minimum standards for the private rental sector.

Just as crucial as the money to fund installations is an available workforce that can meet the demand, and 46 people in Norfolk and Suffolk have received training in

domestic retrofitting thanks to the Skills Bootcamps coordinated by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

They have received training in three levels: Retrofit Advice (Level 3), Award in Domestic Retrofit Assessment (Level 4) and Diploma in Retrofit Coordination & Risk Management (Level 5).

Up to around 40 more people are expected to be trained in retrofitting after a successful bid by New Anglia LEP to deliver more Skills Bootcamps in Wave 4 of the initiative.

The LEP, in partnership with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, was successful in gaining £1m funding to deliver Skills Bootcamps on behalf of the Department for Education.

Bev Wallman, the LEP's Skills Broker, said:

"We know there is a skills deficit in this sector and these Bootcamps will not only help bridge that gap and provide green jobs, but also support efforts to increase energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty."

Among those to complete a Domestic Retrofit Assessment Level 4 was Sophia Gentile, a qualified teacher who retrained as a retrofit coordinator when she saw "a real need to make people's homes easier and cheaper to keep warm and dry".

Sophia set up her own business in 2021, Retrofitco, and was one of the first women in the East of England's retrofit industry. She liaises between contractors, property owners and tenants to coordinate the delivery of high standard retrofitting.

"Everything we do is about protecting the environment but, this winter in particular, it is also about helping people tackle the energy and cost of living crises," she says.

New highways services arriving in Suffolk as multi-million-pound contract awarded

Milestone Infrastructure, part of M Group Services, has been awarded Suffolk's new highways services contract, which will begin on 1 October 2023.

Following an extensive procurement exercise, Suffolk County Council has confirmed Milestone will be its new contract partner for up to 20 years. The new partnership, which is worth in the region of £800 million - £1 billion, will be delivering highway projects and improvements across Suffolk, including but not limited to maintaining roads, pavements and rights of way, drainage, hedge trimming, construction of new road schemes, snow-clearing and gritting.

When searching for its new highways partner, the county council worked with leading industry analysts to understand the different types of arrangements that other local authorities have in place, to look at which specialist providers are in the marketplace, and to find out what aspects of contract agreement may work best for Suffolk.

The council wanted the new contract to focus on delivering greater social value, utilising local skills and talent, giving young people the opportunity to work in the sector as well as building on the council's commitment to carbon reduction and protecting the environment.

A rigorous procurement exercise was carried out over many months, with various stages of discussions with service providers, to evolve their solutions to meet the

various contractual requirements and deliver an effective and efficient highway service for Suffolk. Final submissions were evaluated and extensively moderated before the final winning contract was awarded.

The search for a new contractor to deliver our highways services has finally come to completion, and SCC are delighted to welcome our new highway partner, Milestone, to Suffolk. We wanted to find an organisation who could provide excellent services and value for our residents, whilst sharing our ambition and ideas to innovate in improving delivery of services, communicating more effectively with customers and sharing our commitment to reducing carbon use. Services related to our highways will in some way impact all those living, working or travelling in our county; this is why it was essential that we went through such a rigorous process to ensure we found the best possible fit for what we needed here in Suffolk.

As we navigate mobilising the new contract over the coming months, we will continue delivering highways services for our residents which meet the standards and value for money we expect. We want to take this opportunity to thank the officers involved in successfully procuring and awarding this new contract, whilst continuing to keep our county safe and moving.

Matthew Riches, Operations Director for Milestone, said:

“Milestone is delighted to be partnering with Suffolk County Council to provide safer highways for all users of the county network. In this new partnership, we are committed to maintaining the safest possible network for local communities, businesses and the travelling public, all year round.

“Our commitment to exceptional delivery will also focus on working collaboratively with the council to meet their net-zero carbon targets and enhancing biodiversity.

“We are committed to creating local jobs for local people to support our delivery, in addition to local supply chain partners adding value to the Suffolk economy. We take pride in supporting our local community and look forward to meeting and working with the residents and businesses of Suffolk from October.”

Reassuring’ progress made in Suffolk SEND reform, experts find Whole-system improvements to the way special education provision is delivered in Suffolk has been praised by government advisors.

The Department for Education said the effectiveness and pace of current reform within SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) services commissioned and provided by Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System is ‘reassuring’ and noted ‘the leadership’s commitment to improvement in a wide range of areas’.

Government and Care Quality Commission representatives met with Suffolk County Council and NHS colleagues to review progress and improvement. The visit follows on from an inspection carried at the end of the 2016, after which a Written Statement of Action was agreed. The Department for Education continue to monitor this

improvement every six months and report back on progress and impact. Another follow-up meeting is due in April 2023.

SEND services in Suffolk are currently undergoing a wide-scale overhaul following a SEND area inspection and a peer review by Lincolnshire County Council in June 2021.

Findings from this latest progress check highlighted a number of key reforms as having a positive impact. These include significant investment in staffing the neurodevelopment pathway, mental health services and language therapy.

The report also noted improved quality assurance arrangements for Education Health and Care Plans across Suffolk County Council and health services.

We are pleased that experts within the Department for Education have been able to recognise the progress we have made to date and are reassured by our ongoing efforts. There is more still to do. Transforming a programme as complex as the delivery of essential services for children and young people is never quick or easy, and we recognise that not every family's experience is where we would like it to be. However, SEND reform continues to be the council's biggest priority.

Advisors from the Department for Education also listed areas in which they would like to see a progress report during the next visit. These include plans to improve the timescales of Education Health Care Plans and the outcome and impact of the additional funding of services in relation to speech and language and occupational therapy services.

Suffolk backs national campaign to tackle food waste

Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) is backing a national campaign highlighting the problem of food waste and encouraging people to take action. Food Waste Action Week runs from March 6 – 12 and is run by international action charity Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

This year's theme is 'Bin. Don't Win', which encourages everyone to make the most of their leftovers and to understand the financial saving by doing so.

In Suffolk, there will be information events organised by the SWP at libraries in Ipswich, Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Haverhill and Stowmarket.

Visitors will be given Food Savvy leaflets, recipe cards and food saving giveaways such as spaghetti measures and rice scoops to help get portion sizes right.

There will also be a short film on YouTube throughout the week featuring The Nuffolks, the SWP's own cartoon family, who support the [FoodSavvy](#) campaign on how to plan meals, store food and use leftovers.

There will also be a competition on the Food Savvy Suffolk Facebook page, and a [FWAW information page](#) on the [Food Savvy website](#).

A food waste session will also take place with youngsters at Tudor Church of England Primary School in Sudbury on Thursday 9 March.

WRAP estimates annual food waste within the UK households is at around 9.5 million tonnes, with a value of more than £19 billion a year and equivalent to 36 million tonnes of greenhouse gas.

In Suffolk, food waste accounts for:

- 36% of the total household waste disposed.
- Costs approximately £4.5 million to dispose of
- Creates 52,500 tonnes per year, of which 19,500 tonnes is still unopened and 22,500 could be composted in a standard home compost bin

The SWP is a partnership between the county, district and borough councils within Suffolk working together to improve waste management services.

There are so many simple ways we can avoid throwing food away and instead put it to good use. Food is valuable- through the resources it takes to produce it and what we pay for it in the shops. By reducing food waste in the home, not only do we save money we also contribute to protecting our environment and help fight the climate emergency.

For more information about WRAP [go to its website](https://wrap.org.uk/taking-action/citizen-behaviour-change/love-food-hate-waste/key-campaigns/food-waste-action-week).

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98% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 93% were offered a place at their first preference school.

Suffolk County Council received 8,083 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2023. This is approximately 300 more applications than received last year.

Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal from today to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post today (1 March 2023).

Starting secondary school is a big step in a child's education so it is really positive that the vast majority of families have once again been offered a place at one of their preferred schools. Published criteria was used to decide who has priority for places so that the process is fair and clear. We do appreciate that not all families will have received a place at their preferred school. If a parent or carer's preference for a Suffolk school is refused, their child's name will automatically be added to the waiting list for that school. We will also advise them about how to lodge an appeal should they wish to do so.

Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for Suffolk County Council funded school travel, they will receive an email by the end of March 2023 with details of how to opt-in.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions.