

## County Council report – April 2023

### 98% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred secondary schools on National Offer Day

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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).

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](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions).

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

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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.

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 Queen's 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](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation)

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## State-of-the-art emergency services hub opens in Stowmarket

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A new police and fire station off Needham Road, Stowmarket, has now opened – providing the facilities needed to enable efficient, effective, and environmentally responsible emergency services for Suffolk.

Collaborative working remains a priority for Suffolk’s emergency services, who recognise that this provides excellent value for money and further benefits for the county’s communities.

Stowmarket’s new station, situated on the A1120 junction with the B1113 Needham Road, is the latest in a programme of joint blue light hubs across Suffolk. However, it is the first new build, as the other 12 combined fire and police facilities comprise of existing sites which have been extended or refurbished.

The building has a range of green credentials, including photovoltaic panels to convert the sun’s rays into electricity, an air source heat pump system, 14 electric vehicle charging points, and insulation informed by thermal modelling to ensure this is of the highest standard and reflects the needs of the hub’s users.

In addition, the station’s location will enable easy access to the A14, the local road network, and in and around Stowmarket, one of Suffolk’s largest market towns, helping to ensure a swift response to whatever emergencies may arise.

Suffolk-based business Concertus designed the new station, which Morgan Sindall began constructing in July 2021. The project was made possible by funding of £1.24m from central government and a £431k contribution from Mid Suffolk District Council through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Space has been provided within the station to accommodate the Salvation Army charity, which continues to provide welfare support to response staff during major incidents.

The hub may also be used in future by the East of England Ambulance Service as a drop-in facility for their crews, enabling truly joined up working for Suffolk’s three emergency services.

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## Children’s expert brought in to strengthen council’s focus on real-life experiences of children with special educational needs

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An independent special advisor has been commissioned to further strengthen reform of special educational needs and disabilities services (SEND) at Suffolk County Council.

Well-respected senior leader in children's services, consultant Anthony Douglas CBE, will work with SEND system leaders and the SEND networks to support the reforms already underway. He will draw on his years of experience to focus on how services are impacting upon the everyday experience of children and young people with SEND.

In chief executive and director roles for the last 20 years, Anthony Douglas has supported children and young people with SEND and their families, across health, care, and education. He also carried out a major inquiry in 2020 within a local authority about inclusive education practices in schools and colleges. He works with organisations internationally about the service developments needed for children with special needs of all types, with a view to improving those services. Anthony has chaired the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership since 2019.

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### Further support for Homes for Ukraine Sponsors

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Suffolk County Council will provide additional financial support for Homes for Ukraine Sponsors who are hosting Ukrainian guests, up to a value of £900.

From April, Sponsors who have hosted guests for a minimum of six months, will receive an additional £150 each month from the council.

This is in addition to the £350 monthly thank you payment Sponsors receive from the UK Government, whilst their guests are staying with them.

The Government's monthly payment rises to £500 after their guests have been in the UK for 12 months, at which point the council's additional payment will stop.

All sponsors who currently host guests that arrived under the Homes For Ukraine Scheme will receive an email from Suffolk County Council asking them if they wish to opt in to the offer of a top up.

Payments will begin from April 2023, paid one month in arrears.

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### New exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo telling the story of royal Anglo-Saxon Rendlesham

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Rendlesham Revealed: The Heart of a Kingdom AD 400-800 is a new exhibition opening on Thursday 23 March 2023 at the National Trust's Sutton Hoo, in Suffolk.

The exhibition takes visitors on a 400-year journey to reveal how the Anglo-Saxon royal settlement at Rendlesham grew and developed and celebrates the many volunteers from the local community who uncovered the long-lost archaeological remains.

This story is brought to life with over 150 archaeological finds from the settlement, ranging from food remains to gold jewellery, many of which have never been on public display before.

Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service is curating the exhibition to celebrate "Rendlesham Revealed", a community archaeology project funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Over 400 volunteers from the local community have been involved in uncovering Rendlesham's past, including young adults from the Suffolk Family Carers and Suffolk Mind, and local school children from Rendlesham, Eyke and Wickham Market primary schools. Volunteering has had a positive impact on many of those who took part.

The exhibition opens at Sutton Hoo on 23 March 2023 and will run until 29 October 2023. Entry to the temporary exhibition will be included in the normal admission charge to Sutton Hoo, which is free for National Trust members.

Smaller displays will also be on show at Norwich Castle and the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village and Museum in 2024.

To find out more about the Rendlesham Revealed project visit: [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham](https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham)

## Suffolk County Council secures £7.9 million for active travel schemes across county

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Suffolk County Council has been awarded £7.9 million to boost active schemes across the county.

The money has come from Active Travel England (ATE) and will be spent on seven projects encouraging cycling and walking through measures such as cycle lanes, shared-use paths and improved crossing points on roads.

The money from Active Transport England will fund schemes promoting walk and cycling across Suffolk.

They include two mini-Holland schemes totalling more than £5m for Woodbridge, £1.3m for Grange Road in Felixstowe, and £1.2m for the route between Ipswich Hospital and the University of Suffolk.