

Nedging Parish Council report by Robert Lindsay county cllr 1.9.26

Bildeston Road closure

Free Bildeston to Stowmarket bus for duration of closure (51s). Work a week or so ahead of schedule.

Wildfire on Dunwich Heath

Only a week after the Reform UK administration at the council voted to scrap the previous regime's Climate Emergency Declaration, a wildfire broke out on Dunwich Heath in east Suffolk which over a week to get under control and has devastated rare heathland habitat.

The Fire Brigade Union wrote to PM Andy Burnham to say they did not have correct equipment for tackling wildfires, whose occurrence has ratcheted up this summer due to the climate change induced heatwave.

Suffolk currently receives less than average funding from the government for its fire service, although it is one of the driest areas in the country and is therefore more likely to be hit by wildfires in our increasing hot, dry summers.

Claims that "rewilding" caused this or other wildfires are untrue. Dunwich has always been a managed heath habitat and as such has not been "rewilded". Areas that are "rewilded" often retain water better. The area that has been destroyed is the size of 210 football pitches.

Reform donor JCB promoted by Suffolk's Reform leader

As I write, (Tues 1 Sept) the Reform Suffolk administration just put out a release inviting press to attend a trial today of a "JCB pro" pothole repairer which it has been loaned from the Reform UK party's donor, JCB. It claims this is an example of how the council's new way of working putting the "community first" in everything it does. Actually the JCB pothole repairer has been found to be uneconomic and ineffective when it was trialled by Leicestershire officers – largely because its size means that if operated on a rural road it would require a road closure.

JCB gave Reform UK £200,000 in November last year. Several Reform run councils have also announced trials.

£18k on remodeling leader's office

The new Reform UK administration at the council have decided to spend around £18,000 to remodel the Leader's office at Endeavour House, claiming these works were needed as there was not enough room in the current Leader's office. Other changes prioritized by the new Reform administration include a new policy on Pets in the Workplace, which

enables the Leader to bring in his dog while making it clear employees of the council are not to do this, and a new dedicated carparking space for the Leader (since removed).

Help to Replace Ageing Heating Systems

All Suffolk councils are partnering with Switch Together, a community group-buying scheme, to make it easier for Suffolk residents to choose installers to replace ageing gas, oil or LPG boilers with heat pumps. Through the government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme, eligible homeowners in England can receive a grant of £7,500 toward an air source heat pump, or £9,000 for households currently heating with oil or LPG. The grant is applied for upfront by the installer, so residents do not need to claim it back or repay it. Switch Together works by bringing residents together so that installers compete to win their business which secures better prices than homeowners could negotiate individually. Switch Together's group-buying savings apply on top of the government grant. For more information about the scheme, please visit the Sustainable Suffolk website: <https://sustainablesuffolk.org.uk/what-we-do/projects/switch-together-suffolk/>

Warm Home Loan

Homeowners across Suffolk can now apply for a loan to help fund energy efficiency improvements to their homes, thanks to a partnership between Suffolk County Council and Lendology. The Warm Homes Suffolk Loan scheme offers eligible homeowners access to loans from £2k to £15k at a fixed interest rate of 2.2%, with repayment terms of up to seven years. **Further info:** <https://www.lendology.org.uk/partner/suffolk-council/>

Public Consultation on Cuts to Healthy Child Service

Suffolk County Council's public consultation on proposed changes to its Healthy Child Service has been extended for an extra month. The proposed changes include cessation of the Young Person Pathway and Family Nurse Partnership, which provides specialist support to parents under the age of 21 after they have a baby. The proposals also include removal of the Community Staff Nurse role from Health Visiting teams, and the School Nursing service becoming term-time only. The consultation now runs until 18 October, with a decision likely to be made at Cabinet in November.

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