



**January 2023**

Welcome to my monthly newsletter

### **World Championship off-road cycling event returns to Trinity Park**

An action-packed championship cycling event returned to East Suffolk in December.

More than 600 riders, representing 20 different nations, descended on Trinity Park for the UCI Masters Cyclo-Cross World Championships, racing along a purpose-built circuit featuring obstacles, bends, muddy slopes and bridges.



Supported by East Suffolk Council and staged at the same venue for the first time last year, the event sees riders aged 35 or over, who no longer compete in an Elite Professional Team, pitted against each other across five age groups containing many former pros, Olympians, national champions and some of the best Cyclo-Cross age category riders the world has to offer, including European Champion (50-54), Cordula Neudörffer (pictured).

The weekend of competition also featured open races for riders of all ages, as well as a Special Olympics Cyclo-Cross event.

Schools in the Ipswich and South Suffolk School Games partnership also came together for a morning of cycling activity organised in partnership between Active Suffolk, British Cycling, East Suffolk Council and Elmy Cycles, and involving the Suffolk RoadSafe partnership, Suffolk Constabulary, schools outreach organisation Kinetic Science, art organisation Rock Paper Scissors, British Cycling and Loose Cannon's Conditioning.

**Digital Springboard launched to provide digital boost for businesses**



A new online service has been introduced to provide a digital boost for businesses in East Suffolk.

Launched on behalf of East Suffolk Council by not-for-profit company MENTA, the Digital Springboard offers access to support, resources, workshops and grants for businesses hoping to create or improve online presence.

The project is the latest component of a wider Digital Towns programme already being rolled out across East Suffolk with the installation of free-to use public Wi-Fi linked to footfall counter technology and accompanying analytics.

The ambitious programme has been funded by the New Anglia LEP's Innovative Projects Fund, the Getting Building Fund, and East Suffolk Council internal funding, and aims to strengthen the local economy and improve connectivity within the district's market towns.

Alongside masterclasses on various digital themes, the launch of a 'Digital MOT' profiling tool will provide analysis and insights for businesses on their current digital capabilities, while businesses that progress through the programme will also be able to apply for a small Digital Grant to support their business growth journey.

The Digital Springboard website is simple, quick, and fun way to access the full programme including free resources, one-to-one support and events, to help people grow their digital skills and business reach.

### **Suffolk councils' successful bid for housing fund pot**

Suffolk's local authorities are delighted to have been awarded funding by the Local Government Association to commission a vital, county-wide housing strategy review. The £20,000 pot will kickstart a programme which aims to increase the number of genuinely affordable properties available to meet those in housing need.

The Housing Advisers Programme grant is designed to support councils seeking to innovate and will fund the provision of bespoke expert support to councils.

Suffolk's successful bid was led by East Suffolk Council, which will work with Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Babergh District Council, Mid Suffolk District Council and West Suffolk Council – identifying opportunities to bridge the gap between supply and demand.

Working together as the Suffolk Housing Board, the councils have identified 900 properties available for rent, 5,000 properties marketed for sale, 1,000 long term empty homes and

6,000 second homes. And yet, despite this, there are currently a significant number of households living in unsatisfactory, unsuitable accommodation, experiencing, or at risk of homelessness.

The Suffolk Housing Board has agreed to establish a project which will agree proposals that remove barriers to accommodating people, as well as gaps in policies where accommodation solutions could be encouraged. The councils will use this opportunity to join up their approaches, exploring ideas such as resource pooling, funding empty home renovations, early engagement, legal advice and community engagement.

### **Free augmented reality walking trail app launched during Christmas holidays**



A new augmented reality app was launched in the lead up to Christmas, offering a free activity for children and their families to enjoy in Lowestoft and Felixstowe.

Launched by East Suffolk Council in partnership with AR Trails, and free to download on Apple and Android devices, the ESCape Trails app challenges users to solve clues, collect characters and earn badges as they go.

The inaugural trails move through East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi zones in Lowestoft and Felixstowe, so participants need not use their own data to take part. The Lowestoft Christmas Adventure (2.4 miles) and the Felixstowe Christmas Adventure (two miles) were lined with virtual presents for youngsters to find, collect and interact with along the way.

East Suffolk Council has also worked with Go Jauntly to develop outdoor adventures across all 12 of the district's principal towns and villages as part of the Digital Towns programme, which has seen the installation of free public Wi-Fi, digital footfall counters and town marketing platforms, alongside business support, in nine East Suffolk towns to date, including Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Southwold and Woodbridge.

### **New and improved beach access ramp unveiled at Felixstowe seafront**



Local residents and visitors to Felixstowe can enjoy improved access to the seafront following completion of a new ramp.

Work began in autumn to install a replacement ramp at the South Seafront, linking the pavement along Sea Road and Orford Road to the beachfront, over the sea defence wall.

Located within Flood Zone 2, to the northern extent of Martello Park, the ramp will also provide a safe escape route in the event of the sea wall gates being closed in bad weather.

Wider by about one-and-a-half metres and longer by about five-and-a-half metres, the ramp also features the addition of steps from the beach on the southern elevation and a landing area within the mid-section along the Martello Park side, as well as slip resistant material and railings.

Designed by Framlingham based architect, Hollins, the main structure was built off-site in Great Blakenham by Elliston Steady & Hawes (Building) Ltd, before installation began on-site in September – overseen by local authority commercial partner, East Suffolk Norse.



The development forms part of wider ongoing investment in the South Seafront area, where the Martello Park has already delivered new homes, a play area and new car parking facilities, while East Suffolk Council has also invested in the development of a contemporary café, the refurbishment of two public shelters, and the long-term maintenance of an historic Martello Tower.

Meanwhile, work continues on a new Seashore Village and activity park further north along Sea Road.

Further along the East Suffolk coast, at Lowestoft's South Beach, a new boardwalk was completed earlier this year to provide year-round access for people with disabilities, particularly wheelchair users, as well as people with pushchairs.

## **Voter Photo Id**

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections. This new requirement will apply for the first time in England at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Which forms of ID can I use to vote?

You may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable. You can use any of the following:

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional license)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card



- Certain national identity cards

For more information on which forms of photo ID will be accepted, visit [electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](http://electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID) or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

If you don't have an accepted form photo ID

If you don't already have an accepted form of photo ID, or you're not sure whether your photo ID still looks like you, you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. You can apply for this at [voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk](http://voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk). Alternatively, you can complete a paper application form and send this to the electoral services team at your local council.

If you need any help with applying for a Voter Authority Certificate or want to request an application form, contact your local council. To find their contact details visit [electoralcommission.org.uk/voter](http://electoralcommission.org.uk/voter).

Find out more

If you have any questions or would like to find out more, go to [electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID](http://electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID), or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

## Water letter

At the meeting of East Suffolk council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November councillors unanimously passed the following motion :

'this council notes that the sewage pollution continues to be allowed to flow untreated into our local waterways and coastal waters . It is imperative for our resident's health , the environment and our economy that water quality issues are addressed .

This motion calls upon this council to write a letter to Anglian Water to ask that it

- Improves water quality checks in a bid to protect our rivers and coastline from pollution
- Takes action to address all recent sewage discharges as a matter of urgency
- Ensures that all its outfalls are equipped with operationally functioning event monitors or other sensors that are checked and maintained regularly
- Ensures that all its communication with council environmental officers is prompt and informative
- Reduces surface water run-off overwhelming the combined Sewer System .

Initially the motion was to contact Anglian Water but I amended and we also wrote to our Mp who as Sec State for the environment has direct responsibility for water quality . If nothing results of this at least we highlight the issue and hopefully it moves up the political agenda .

## MISC

And finally I wish you all a very happy new year - and I was delighted to ring in the new year with my fellow bell ringers at Hollelseey



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Spring surgery announced 4<sup>th</sup> March more details to follow - but will be attending village halls across my ward to answer questions and meet residents

And lets not forget the battle against inactivity over environmental issues is now more urgent than ever before . Not only in influencing and highlighting the lack of action by other authorities but in new and better legislation through parliament - we need strong serious focus with a vision to how we protect and champion our biodiversity . The time is now and I continue to push the agenda at every opportunity .

**James Mallinder**

**Deben Ward**

**Environment Portfolio holder**