

January 2026 Westhall Parish Council Report
East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

Tackling health inequalities in East Suffolk

A new collaborative approach to tackling health inequalities affecting East Suffolk residents has been launched, with partners working together to improve people's access to health services, education, employment and housing.

The East Suffolk Marmot Place was officially launched on Thursday 27 November at High Lodge in Hinton and was attended by representatives from the main partner organisations; East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and both the NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB and NHS Suffolk and North East Essex ICBs which cover East Suffolk.

Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in people's health, including how long people are likely to live, the health conditions they experience and the care available to them. A Marmot Place recognises that health inequalities are shaped by people's living, learning and working conditions, sometimes known as the 'social determinants of health' and include people's access to services, education, employment and housing.

At the launch of the East Suffolk Marmot Place, Sir Michael Marmot delivered a presentation on health inequalities in the district, delegates took part in a workshop looking at the key data around those inequalities and then heard from a range of experts working first hand to tackle them. The event closed with a talk from Alicia Phillips from the Institute of Health Equity about the Coventry Marmot Place and what becoming a Marmot Place means in practice.

GLI Cllr Caroline Topping, Leader of East Suffolk Council said:

“Meeting Sir Michael has been one of the most humbling of highlights of being Leader of East Suffolk Council. He and his team are an inspiration.

“Achieving health equity for our residents requires improving the conditions which shape their lives and this requires a joint approach. By working with partner organisations across the district, we will focus on tackling root causes of health inequalities, deliver better health outcomes and create communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.”

Marmot Places were developed after an independent report by Professor Sir Michael Marmot in 2010, commissioned by the then government, identified the most effective ways to reduce health inequalities in England using a set of eight principles:

- Give every child the best start in life.
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives.
- Create fair employment and good work for all.

- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities.
- Strengthen the role and impact of ill health prevention.
- Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes.
- Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together.

More than 50 areas across England, Wales and Scotland have already signed up to be Marmot Places; 37 of them are local councils and East Suffolk is the latest area to join.

Extended free Wi-Fi network helping more people stay connected

Extensions to East Suffolk Council's free Wi-Fi network in four of the district's market towns have proven popular with residents and visitors, with data showing a large increase in sign-ups to the service.

The existing free to use Wi-Fi networks in Aldeburgh, Halesworth, Leiston and Saxmundham were all extended earlier this year for the benefit of residents, visitors and businesses. Data collected shows a significant increase in registrations to the service since the extensions were launched, with an 86% increase in Saxmundham and a 73% in Aldeburgh.

GLI Cllr Tim Wilson, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Economic Development and Transport said: "Our free Wi-Fi is available across East Suffolk as part of the Digital Towns programme which supports our market towns and businesses by strengthening the local economy and improving connectivity.

"The extensions to the Wi-Fi coverage in Aldeburgh, Halesworth, Leiston and Saxmundham mean more of the main shopping areas are now covered and we hope this will encourage more people to visit and stay longer, supporting local businesses."

"As well as free public Wi-Fi, the Digital Towns programme provides information on the number of visitors to each town, identifying the busiest times of day and where people visit most frequently and this enables us to offer tailored support to local businesses."

When visitors register for the free Wi-Fi, they can also choose to receive a quarterly email newsletter highlighting local events and information.

East Suffolk Free Wi-Fi is also available in Beccles, Bungay, Felixstowe, Framlingham, Lowestoft, Southwold and Woodbridge.

The Wi-Fi equipment is provided and managed on the Council's behalf by Elephant Wi-Fi.

Details can be found at: eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/digital-towns/east-suffolk-free-wi-fi/

Council Joins Call to End Gambling Advertising

East Suffolk Council has joined a coalition of organisations calling for a nationwide end to gambling advertising.

As part of its commitment to promoting wellbeing and protecting vulnerable people, the Council has joined nine other local authorities from across the country to become part of the Coalition to End Gambling Ads (CEGA).

East Suffolk Council also joins leading public health bodies, including the Royal Society for Public Health, the Association of Directors of Public Health, and the Faculty of Public Health, as members of the CEGA.

The campaign aims to reduce exposure to the potentially harmful consequences of gambling by calling on the Government to restrict advertising, promotions and sponsorship.

The Gambling Commission's latest annual survey revealed that 2.7% of almost 20,000 respondents had experienced adverse consequences from gambling and may have lost control of their behaviour. Meanwhile, 69% of 3,869 young people recalled having seen or heard adverts or promotion about gambling through at least one online or offline source, including television, sporting events, posters or billboards, social media and video sharing platforms.

As a licensing authority, East Suffolk Council is responsible for issuing premises licences and permits for local gambling venues. Although its powers to restrict advertising are limited to spaces and channels over which it has control, joining the coalition provides a way to collective support reforming the regulations which govern the industry.

In January, Haringey Council became the first local authority to join the Coalition. East Suffolk Council is among nine newly announced members, alongside Barnet, Blackpool, Brent, Bristol, Devon, Hackney, Lewisham and Southampton. Earlier this year, joined by more than 40 other council leaders, East Suffolk Council's Caroline Topping co-signed a letter calling on the Government to launch a six-point plan of action to help curb harms related to the industry.

GLI Cllr Topping said:

"This is a subject that I feel very strongly about. I have been speaking out against this and for toughening up gambling restrictions since I was at Waveney District Council. I'm pleased to support the campaign and for the Council be part of the Coalition in order to strengthen restrictions."

GLI Cllr Jan Candy, cabinet member for Community Health, said:

"For many, gambling can be enjoyed as harmless entertainment. But, for a significant minority, it can become a destructive addiction and have severe financial and social consequences.

"Gambling advertising is often difficult to avoid encountering – and that applies for young, susceptible and vulnerable people.

"Joining the Coalition demonstrates our support for stopping the negative impacts and reducing the risk of harm caused by gambling."

Will Prochaska, Director of CEGA, said:

“It’s inspiring to see councils stepping up to protect the health of their populations where national government is still wanting. Councils across the UK are recognising that gambling is a public health crisis fuelled by relentless advertising. By joining this coalition, they’re standing up for their communities and sending a clear message: it’s time to stop allowing companies to profit from promoting harmful products. We urge others to follow their lead.”

If anyone in East Suffolk is struggling with the impact that gambling has had on their finances and needs advice and support, they can contact the Community Help Hub by visiting the Money advice and support page of the East Suffolk Council website and completing a referral form, or by calling 0333 016 2000 and asking for ‘help with money’. You can also do this on behalf of someone else that you are worried about.

To do so, please visit: **eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/i-need-help/money-advice-and-support/**

East Suffolk Council’s Annual Photo Competition – Still Open

East Suffolk Council’s “Through the Lens” photo competition is back, and entrants are being given more chances to win with the introduction of two new categories. Last year’s competition welcomed more than 230 entries.

This year, photographers of all ages and experience are invited to submit entries for two categories, ‘People’ and ‘Place’. Under-16s will also have their own category, like previous competitions.

High street retail vouchers will be awarded to the winner of each category.

From the three winners, one overall winner will be selected. This photograph will grace the cover of the East Suffolk Magazine when it is delivered to every household in the district next spring.

Entrants are encouraged to capture the essence of the district by photographing the people, places and communities that make East Suffolk amazing.

GLI Cllr Caroline Topping, Leader of East Suffolk Council, said:

“Last year’s photo competition was extremely successful, proving that we have some keen photographers across the district, and I am excited to see what this year’s competition brings.

“Our district is full of amazing people, places and communities with unique stories, all waiting to be captured through the lens. It could be an image of an inspiring person in East Suffolk, a beautiful landscape picture that reminds us just how amazing our district is, or an active and supportive community.”

Entries should be submitted before midnight on Saturday 31 January. Previous entries will not be considered.

Winners will be announced during the week commencing Monday 23 February, with the three winners each receiving a £100 high street voucher. The overall winner will also have their photograph featured on the cover of the East Suffolk Magazine in the spring.

For more information, and to submit your entry, please visit:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/leisure/east-suffolk-through-the-lens/

Ease the Squeeze on Cost of Living

Are you, or someone you know, worried about the increasing cost of living? We understand the pressures faced by many people today and we are working closely with key partners to ensure support is available to help ease the squeeze for households in East Suffolk.

To make it as easy as possible for you to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:

www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk

View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet: tinyurl.com/9xhka624