



# East Suffolk Community Partnerships

*Bringing ideas to life*

## December 2022 Newsletter



### Welcome

to the latest issue of the Community Partnerships newsletter, providing quarterly updates and information about the fantastic range of work of East Suffolk's Community Partnerships and the difference it is making.

### What's inside?

- About Community Partnerships
- Why is transport and travel a priority?
- Community Projects
- Community Partnerships Forum
- Ease the Squeeze

# *About Community Partnerships*

East Suffolk Community Partnerships are an innovative way for East Suffolk Council, partners and communities to informally work together through workshops, events and Task and Finish Groups to understand the root causes and the impacts of the challenges people are facing locally. This work is then used to develop innovative solutions together, sometimes requiring funding but more frequently using existing resources more effectively, enabling Town and Parish Councils, community groups and local organisations to lead work in their areas and make a difference on the ground in our communities.

Each Community Partnership, and the Community Partnership Board, has identified its own priorities based on both data and local insight about what matters to the people living in each area.

The data packs that inform these priorities are currently being refreshed and each Community Partnership is holding a workshop to review its priorities. As an example of these renewed priorities, the Felixstowe Peninsula Community Partnership has agreed to focus on the cost-of-living crisis.

Community Partnerships represent a major investment by East Suffolk Council, with a total delivery budget of **£1,730,000** over four years.

Overseen by the Community Partnership Board, there are eight Community Partnerships, each establishing a programme of activities to address priorities in their area.



The main Community Partnership Board priorities for East Suffolk as a whole are:

- Tackling isolation and loneliness
- Transport and travel
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Covid impact
- Financial inequalities



Each edition of this newsletter will focus on one of these priorities and review the progress made so far. In this issue, we are looking at transport and travel.

# *Why is transport and travel a priority?*

It is harder for rural residents to access education, training and employment by means other than car – leading to lower incomes, health inequalities and educational outcomes -- Transport East



The majority of the eight Community Partnerships identified 'transport and travel' as one of their key priorities and this led to the formation of the East Suffolk Transport and Travel Group. A lack of public transport or community transport options, especially in rural areas, can negatively impact on residents' physical and mental wellbeing, and increases the risk of social isolation and loneliness.

It can also mean residents are reliant on private vehicles, which impacts on the environment, air quality and road congestion. One Community Partnership – the Kesgrave, Martlesham and villages Community Partnership – also identified road safety as a key priority for their area, due to concerns about rural roads, lack of footpaths, road layout and speeding drivers.

# What are the Community Partnerships doing?

The Transport and Travel Group is working to identify parts of the district lacking in rural transport and is working across East Suffolk to introduce new on-demand transport options.



## Buzzabout

In July, a new community transport service was launched within the Lowestoft and northern parishes Community Partnership area to help people living in the villages north of Lowestoft to get out and about more easily.

Operated by BACT and funded by the East Suffolk Community Partnership Board, Buzzabout is a new bookable bus service for residents in Gunton, Somerleyton, Lound, Blundeston and St Olaves.

Using a 16-seat minibus, Buzzabout can be booked to pick people up at existing bus stops, from their home or anywhere else they need and take them exactly where they want to go,

including into Lowestoft town centre, Somerleyton and Lowestoft train stations, the Tesco superstore at Leisure Way, Somerleyton Hall or into other neighbouring villages. Buzzabout is fully accessible, including for wheelchair users.



A survey found that **23%** of residents in the villages to the north of Lowestoft do not have access to a car or traditional public transport, leaving them feeling isolated and dependent on other people.

Buzzabout was launched as a direct response to this issue, to help people of all ages access shops, services and social activities more easily and is operated by BACT community transport.

The service operates on Mondays and Thursdays between 8.30am and 4.30pm and can be booked by calling BACT on 01986 896896, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.



Since its launch, Buzzabout has been well received and is being promoted locally at events, by the Community Partnership members, parish councils and on social media. To further boost users, a poster and bus stop campaign and another mail-out to local residents is underway. Users were also surveyed during October to understand how and why the service is being used.



The Transport and Travel Group are keen to use technology to help increase awareness and access to transport services. A new relationship has been established with a technology provider, IYGI, to explore the development of a mobile app which can help with booking transport. The app would be focused on community transport operators, and Buzzabout will be an initial trial service. Users will be able to view and book transport whenever is convenient to them. A workshop has recently been held to scope out a first version of the app to determine what features and functionality is required.

Once the app has been established, it will be offered to community transport operators across the district to help raise awareness of the services available. This is especially important in areas where people are unable to access public transport.

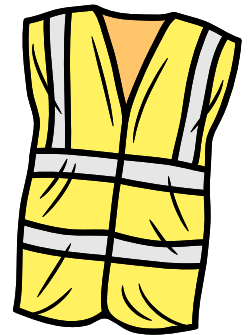


## CATS

Following a public survey earlier this year, a possible on-demand community transport service in the Leiston area is being considered. The service would be similar to Buzzabout, using Coastal Accessible Transport Services (CATS) and serving Leiston, Knodishall, Friston, Benhall, Saxmundham, Theberton and Kelsale. Further development on this project is expected once the Buzzabout app has been introduced.

## Hi-vis vests

In January, the Kesgrave, Martlesham and villages Community Partnership provided £3,000 to supply hi-vis vests to 2,000 pupils at six local primary schools.



The vests were issued to improve visibility of pupils and families on their journey to and from school, with some children needing to walk on public roads where there is no footpath.

The vests will be given to pupils at the beginning of term and collected at the end of the year, to enable them to be re-used for future years.

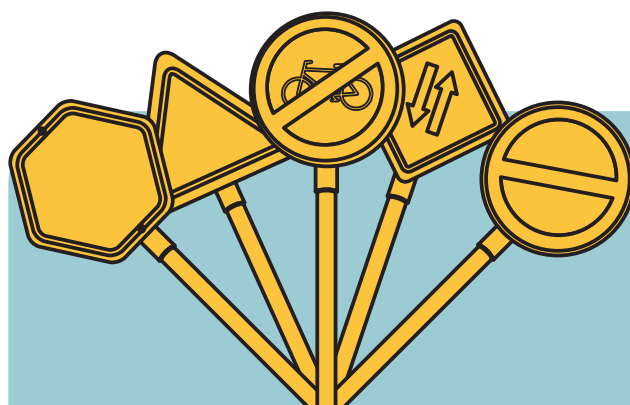
# Road Safety Week

Road safety activities took place in East Suffolk during Road Safety Week in November, organised by the Kesgrave, Rushmere St Andrew, Martlesham, Carlford and Fynn Valley Community Partnership.

One of the priorities of the Kesgrave, Martlesham and villages Community Partnership is improving road safety education and the Partnership holds a regular Road Safety Forum which brings communities and partner organisations together to share skills and data and tackle local road safety issues.

A range of activities were organised by members of the Road Safety Forum to support Road Safety Week, between Monday 14 and Sunday 20 November.

Activities included the installation of roadside banners reminding drivers to reduce their speed, the launch of a funding scheme to enable primary schools to teach cycle safety and large businesses within the Community Partnership area were encouraged to engage with Road Safety Week. Additionally, pupils from Heath Primary School in Kesgrave, Birchwood Primary School in Martlesham, Broke Hall Primary School in Rushmere St Andrew and Charsfield C of E Primary School were involved with road safety and Speed Watch activities, supported by Communities Officers and Suffolk Police. Several of the schools also re-launched their hi-vis jacket scheme.



Every 22 minutes, someone is killed or seriously injured on a UK road.



Officers from East Suffolk Council's Parking Team visited various school and spoke to parents about safer parking. Members of the Road Safety Forum also visited Suffolk New College - Suffolk Rural to speak with students about road safety.



## Lowestoft Mile and East Walks

Originally launched in March 2021, the Lowestoft Mile is a virtual walking project for people in the Lowestoft area who may be unable to get outside to get active.

Funded by the Lowestoft and Northern Parishes Community Partnership, the Lowestoft Mile now comprises five virtual walks around the local area, filmed using 360 ° virtual reality and drone footage.

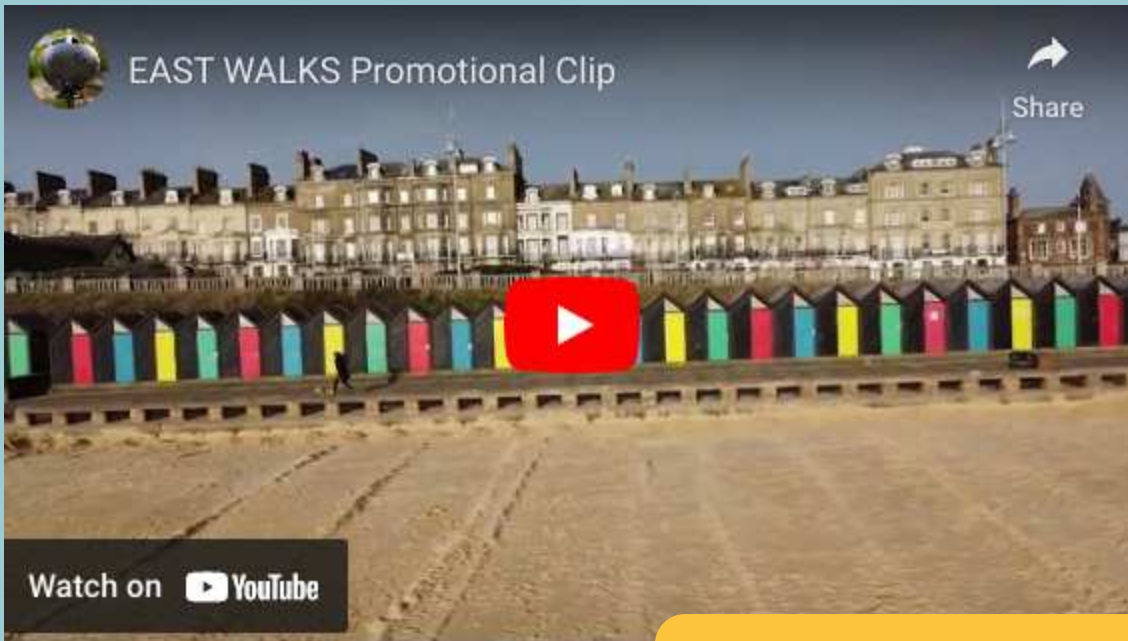
Due to the success of the project, more walks were introduced elsewhere in the district, known as East Walks. There are currently three East Walks, covering Southwold seafront and two routes in Carlton Colville.

Developed by the East Suffolk Communities Team, all the walks are approximately one mile and have been created especially for people who are unable to leave their homes, including elderly people and those with health conditions. The videos can also be used with virtual reality goggles which work with a smartphone to give the user an immersive experience.

If able, viewers are encouraged to walk on the spot, take seated steps or just move their arms whilst watching the walk.

**The Lowestoft Mile**





## East Walks Video

# Quiet Lanes

Quiet Lanes are a nationally recognised designation for tranquil rural roads which can be shared with walkers, horse riders, cyclists and other road users. The scheme aims to encourage everyone using the lanes to travel with caution, so everyone can enjoy the rural lanes with greater safety.

Quiet Lanes are routes where visitors and locals can enjoy the natural surroundings and use them for more active travel and exercise. Motor vehicles are not restricted on these rural routes, but drivers are urged to use them considerately, so they can be shared and used by all.

There are now more than 350 designated Quiet Lanes in Suffolk, covering approximately 400 km (248 miles) of country road in more than 100 participating parishes.

Launched across Suffolk in 2020, the project is overseen by a volunteer steering group supported by the East



Suffolk Greenprint Forum and the East Suffolk Community Partnerships. The project is funded by East Suffolk Council (via the former East Suffolk Partnership), Suffolk County



Council's 2020 Fund, Babergh District Council, and Mid Suffolk District Council.

All Quiet Lanes are marked with green signs at either end, which remind users to expect to encounter others using any mode of transport, as well as animals, using the road, and the project urges all users to take their time when they see the Quiet Lane sign.

Residents and visitors can use an interactive map to see where Quiet Lanes are online:

**Quiet Lanes Suffolk |  
What is a Quiet Lane?**



## Active Travel

In October, East Suffolk's Cycling and Walking Strategy was adopted. The new planning document will ensure that communities have access to high quality infrastructure across the district.

The strategy sets out to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion and support economic growth.

In order to create these environments, the strategy identifies cycling and walking infrastructure recommendations across East Suffolk, including in the Broads Authority Area.

The strategy can be viewed here in a webpage-based, interactive form.

Community Partnerships have been involved in the development of this strategy and any Partnerships looking for an update on the strategy can contact their Communities Officer.

# *Community Partnership Forum 2023*

The East Suffolk Community Partnership 3rd Annual Forum takes place on 3 March 2023 at Trinity Park Conference Centre.

Each year the Community Partnerships host an important conference for representatives from our communities, voluntary organisations, public services and local businesses. This popular event gives us all the opportunity to share our knowledge and expertise, and

work together to benefit our communities and businesses in East Suffolk.

This forum is always an exciting opportunity for participants to be brought up to speed on East Suffolk priorities, share their knowledge and expertise, and work together to help find solutions.

To book your place, please go to [www.eelga.gov.uk](http://www.eelga.gov.uk)



# HELPING EAST SUFFOLK EASE THE SQUEEZE ON COST OF LIVING

East Suffolk Council understands the pressures faced by many people in their daily lives due to the rising cost of living and 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 people to access the services and support available, locally and nationally, we have gathered information about them in one place.

[WWW.EASTSUFFOLK.GOV.UK/SQUEEZE](http://WWW.EASTSUFFOLK.GOV.UK/SQUEEZE)

**EASE THE  
SQUEEZE**



In the first 10 weeks of our referral form being live, we were able to help more than 150 people with a range of things relating to the cost of living, including money, food, housing items and/or housing issues.

Initially, 12 projects will be delivered through the Ease the Squeeze Programme, which focuses on money, fuel and energy, food and essentials and housing.

So far, East Suffolk has committed £350,000 to the programme, and is working to secure further funding to ensure we can continue to provide the support our residents need during this difficult time.

Some of the projects in the programme include:



# EAST SUFFOLK COMFORT FOOD

This voucher-based food support project will provide hot meals and drinks to households in East Suffolk who are struggling with the cost of living.

Eligible households must be issued with a voucher from a referral hub which can then be redeemed at participating local cafes.



Thanks to donations from councillors, the scheme launched in Beccles in September, and we are working on rolling it out across East Suffolk as soon as possible to help provide food for those who need it.



# EAST SUFFOLK FIELD TO FORK

Our Field to Fork project launched at the end of November and includes grants of up to £2,000 to create or expand spaces to grow food across the district.



Do you want to help? Whether it's volunteering in your local community, donating money or items for a charity or project, helping with transport or something else, there are plenty of ways you can help! Head to our website for more details:

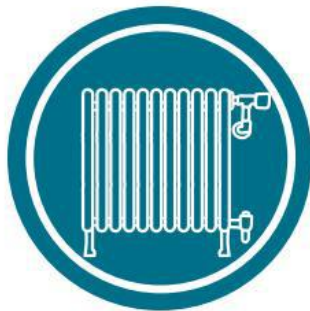
**I WANT TO HELP**



# EAST SUFFOLK WARM ROOMS

This project will provide a place where people can stay warm without increasing their own energy bills as well as connect with others in their community, therefore also helping to address isolation and loneliness.

We have already identified more than 30 Warm Rooms across East Suffolk who will benefit from a grant towards their costs.



Other projects in the programme include Community Pantries, Uniform Banks, Winter Warmth packages and cooking classes.

More details will be available on all the projects as they launch, on our website.

If someone you know needs immediate support with the cost of living, please complete our online referral form at

[WWW.EASTSUFFOLK.GOV.UK/SQUEEZE](http://WWW.EASTSUFFOLK.GOV.UK/SQUEEZE)

One simple way to help is contributing just **£1** per week to Suffolk500reasons – with the aim of reaching **£500** a week to give to individuals and families who need a helping hand – could you be one of the **£500**?

MERRY  
CHRISTMAS