October 2026 Parish Report
East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update

Thousands of Spring Bulbs to be Given to East Suffolk Communities

Communities in East Suffolk are being given packs of early spring flowering bulbs to help to support pollinators.

Town and parish councils, community groups and organisations were invited to apply to receive free packs of pollinator-friendly bulbs earlier this year as part of East Suffolk Council's annual East Suffolk Blooms campaign.

This week groups can collect their packs of mixed crocus bulbs that are ready to be planted this autumn with flowers expected to bloom between February and March. As one of the earliest flowering plants in spring, the crocus flowers will provide much-needed nectar to pollinators as they emerge from hibernation.

GLI Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk's cabinet member for the Environment, said:

"Thank you to all the groups who applied to receive bulbs for planting this autumn. Each year we receive lots of interest in the scheme and we were delighted to hear from some new groups this time around.

"The project links closely to our East Suffolk's Amazing campaign which encourages everyone to take pride in where they live, so it's inspiring to see communities coming together to brighten up their local area. This year we've chosen pollinator-friendly crocuses which will be a welcome boost to wildlife next spring and for years to come as they naturalise."

The 56 successful groups have been invited to collect their bulb packs this week from East Suffolk Services Ltd depots in Lowestoft and Ufford.

The East Suffolk Blooms campaign has been supported by East Suffolk Council's trading company and services operator, East Suffolk Services Ltd, which has provided 28,000 bulbs through £3,000 in funding.

Communities Invited to Take Part in Community Energy Programme

An energy programme that is empowering communities to lead renewable energy projects within the district is growing in popularity.

Launched in May this year, the Community Energy Programme supports the delivery of community-owned and led renewable energy projects – empowering communities to take control of their energy future and contribute to a more sustainable energy system, alongside offering local benefits.

Funded by East Suffolk Council, the Programme is being facilitated by the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Community Energy England and Ashden, organisations with vast experience in the community energy space.

In this next phase, local residents are being invited to join interactive workshops taking place across autumn/winter 2026, to share thoughts on community energy.
Workshops will be held in the following areas:

- Halesworth (Westhall) – Saturday 26 September, 10am - 12.30pm
- Woodbridge – Tuesday 29 September, 6pm - 8.30pm
- Leiston – Thursday 8 October, 6pm - 8.30pm
- Framlingham – Wednesday 11 November, 6pm - 8.30pm

These are being held in collaboration with the following community groups that are already operating in East Suffolk:

- Halesworth ASH
- Deben Climate Centre
- Transition Woodbridge
- Net Zero Leiston
- Greener Fram
- Charsfield Community Energy

Attendees will be able to use maps interactively to indicate where they would like to see installations such as solar and wind be investigated for feasibility, or areas of the local land that are special and should be avoided. The workshops will also investigate people's views on rooftop solar in the area.

These workshops pose an exciting opportunity - allowing local people to design from scratch what energy infrastructure is built and where, and also how it can benefit the local community. As well as being in the driving seat for what technology is installed and where, another benefit of community energy is that being community-owned, the groups can decide where surplus revenue from energy generation should be spent in their local area.

One of the community energy groups we are working with is looking to how a community energy project could help reduce electricity bills for local people in Westhall, near Halesworth.

GLI Cllr Tom Daly, East Suffolk Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Energy and Climate Change, said:

“It’s great to see growing interest and uptake of the programme. Our region has enormous experience of energy projects being done to us. This, however, is the other end of the de-carbonisation revolution. This is our chance to control and own energy production to reduce energy bills as well as carbon emissions. We are perfectly poised to take advantage of newly announced Great British Energy funding for feasibility studies and other preparatory work.

We are working with five areas in the district already and I would greatly encourage any Parish Councils, Community Groups and more to contact our team to explore possibilities for your community.”

If you know of a community group that may be interested in receiving support as part of the East Suffolk programme or attending one of the events, please contact katie.hickford@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Places can also be booked online at: **tinyurl.com/3tuenzsh**

Strengthening the Fight against Hare Coursing and Rural Crime

East Suffolk Council is renewing its support for the efforts of rural police to crack down on hare coursing and related criminal activity.

The Council's backing comes in anticipation of the main season for hare coursing and as part of an ongoing campaign to help better protect the species.

Hare coursing is the illegal pursuit of hares by longdogs or other sighthounds. Frequently tied to organised crime and high-stakes illegal gambling, it primarily takes place after crops have been harvested – peaking between late summer and the start of spring.

The cruel practice not only harms hares but can cause damage to crops and farm property when trespassing is involved – with landowners sometimes facing intimidation and violence.

Hare coursing can involve significant amounts of money illegally changing hands, with the most lucrative events sometimes even livestreamed online to viewers in other countries.

Before 2021, the offence could only be dealt with in a magistrates' court and carried a maximum sentence of a relatively small fine. But, since a change in the law, perpetrators can face an unlimited fine, with police now empowered to seize the dogs involved and recoup any kennelling costs.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act also created two new offences of 'trespassing in pursuit of hares' and 'going equipped to hare course', making it simpler to secure a successful prosecution.

GLI Cllr Sally Noble, East Suffolk Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Environment, said: "Hare coursing is a cruel and destructive crime which has a devastating impact not only on wildlife but also on farmers and rural communities. East Suffolk Council is proud to support Suffolk police and our partners in tackling the crime and ensuring perpetrators face the consequences.

"Our Protect our Hares campaign reflects our commitment to safeguarding this iconic species and raising awareness of the threats it faces. By working together, reporting suspicious activity, and supporting stronger protections for hares, we can help preserve them for future generations.

"I would encourage anyone who witnesses hare coursing or any suspicious behaviour in the countryside to report it. Information from the public plays a vital role in helping the police prevent offences and bring offenders to justice."

East Suffolk residents have a key role in helping to stop illegal hare coursers by reporting information and suspicious activity.

The what3words app can help pinpoint accurate locations to a three-metre square, using a unique combination of three words.

Suffolk Constabulary also has a free messaging service, Suffolk Connected, providing users with news and updates on relevant policing matters, as well as crime prevention advice and the opportunity to reply directly to neighbourhood officers and have a say on local policing priorities.

Hare coursing isn't the only threat to the safety of hares, with catapults increasingly being used to deliberately harm small mammals or birds.

Police and animal charities warn that the powerful devices, obtainable without age restrictions, have been used to shoot steel ball bearings at animals like hares, rabbits, swans and ducks on parkland, waterways and farms – with evidence found of perpetrators sharing footage on social media.

Anyone who witnesses wildlife crime in progress is urged to phone 999, or to call 101 to report a crime that has already happened.

The wider Protect our Hares campaign was launched earlier this year as a result of a motion passed by Full Council in January, and as part of efforts to preserve and improve the welfare of the species, including support for the introduction of a 'closed season' to prohibit shooting during months when hares are pregnant or raising young, to prevent the starvation of orphaned leverets.

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