



Thedwastre North June 2019 Newsletter

T

Conversations start as county council seeks solutions to bus funding challenge

On 19 June, Suffolk County Council met with representatives from Suffolk's bus operators to see whether they can run a number of bus services without public subsidy. This follows a reduction in the amount of public money available.

The meeting, involving 11 of Suffolk's biggest bus operating companies, follows decisions taken in February 2019 on how to save £13 million from Suffolk County Council's budget, including £340,000 from the authority's passenger transport budget.

This led to a cross-party policy development panel being set up to agree how decisions should be made about the funding of services. A new, fair and thorough set of criteria was adopted in May 2019, including passenger numbers, subsidy per single ticket, integration with other services, the number of entitled students using a service, and the percentage of journeys made by concessionary pass holders.

Of the 211 bus routes currently operating throughout Suffolk, 61 are subsidised by public money. 23 of these will have their public funding removed. This does not mean that these services will necessarily end, just that public funding is no longer affordable.

In 2017/18, the 23 services were responsible for 107,624 single journeys out of a total of 14.9million journeys made across the county. This means that the services are responsible for only 0.7% of journeys per year.

A full list of the affected routes has been published on Suffolk County Council's website www.suffolkonboard.com and includes services where the council is currently paying a subsidy of £12.64 per single ticket which equates to over £25.00 per round trip.

The services that run through Thedwastre North are the 384/385 from Stowmarket to Bury St Edmunds, which has not been listed as affected, and the 456 - from Stowmarket through Bacton, Wyvverstone and Finningham, which IS listed as affected. This service was under threat a couple of years ago. I will be arguing against the cuts to this service. However, the link to SuffolkOnBoard suggests contacting the Communiy Transport service. The link is here <https://communities.suffolkonboard.com/my-area/mid-suffolk/>

BOOK MY JOURNEY ONLINE

CONNECTING  **COMMUNITIES**

Call: 01449 614271

Booking hours:

Mon-Fri - 9.00am - 4.00pm

Service hours:

Mon-Sat - 7.00am - 7.00pm

The County Council want to explore other sources of funding to support these services once SCC funding ceases. They are also open to conversations with community groups and partners to see if local solutions can be developed.

Following conversations with bus operators and partners, the county council will review the situation at the end of July 2019 before determining next steps. The council aims to have operators taking on these services on a commercial basis from the end of October.

Suffolk pothole repair scheme to go countywide

A trial scheme to tackle potholes swiftly has been so successful it is being rolled out across Suffolk. The Suffolk Highways scheme, which started in Ipswich in October 2018, changes how potholes are categorised.

The new system allows engineers to repair potholes close to each other during the same visit, tackling smaller potholes before they can expand. Previously, they fixed larger holes first and smaller ones at a later date. The new policy reduces the amount of time workers have to travel between jobs.

The rate you pay the gangs is the same whatever they do, and the material they put in the pothole is the same, so the efficiency savings comes from the travel time - it's about looking at ways the system can be more efficient.

New fire engines and uniforms making Suffolk safer

Suffolk's firefighters are now kitted out in new state-of-the-art uniforms, making them safer than ever before.



The new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) saw its first action on 1 May 2019, as firefighters responded to reports of a washing machine fire near Bury St Edmunds.

The new clothing was on display at the Badwell Ash Village Hall fete where Elmswell on call firefighters had samples of the new kit to show anyone interested. It is more lightweight, comfortable and tailored, and includes specific designs for men and women. There are also different uniforms for different incidents.

This is the first major upgrade to firefighters' equipment since 2011.

The old uniforms will be returned to their previous supplier, where they are recycled and often exported abroad, predominantly to African

countries.

Foster carers for Suffolk children

As a local authority, Suffolk County Council is responsible for more than 800 children in care in Suffolk. The Suffolk Fostering & Adoption service is part of Suffolk County Council, and their goal is to secure families for Suffolk children, either on a short-term or permanent basis. The service has been rated Outstanding by Ofsted.

Fostering is a big commitment, but it is an incredibly rewarding journey. Foster carers can make a real difference to a child's life, providing them with the nurturing home life they need to give them every chance of a happy childhood and to succeed in life.

Suffolk Fostering & Adoption aren't looking for perfect families. They need people with a passion and an ability to provide children in their care with love, patience and a sense of belonging.

When you foster for Suffolk you:

- Give back to your community and offer help and support to the most vulnerable children in Suffolk.
- Enrich your own family life by gaining new insights, interests and skills.
- Develop your own skills and career opportunities through support and training, including a Level 3 Diploma in Childcare.
- Are part of a team – the largest family in Suffolk.
- Have access to therapeutic support services for the children you foster and your own family.
- Are given 24-hour support and up to 21 days paid leave.

Suffolk offer competitive financial rewards for foster carers. Fostering for Suffolk really can be a career choice.

To find out what Suffolk Fostering & Adoption Service can offer foster carers:

- Call 01473 264800
- Email fosterandadopt@suffolk.gov.uk
- Visit www.fosterandadopt.suffolk.gov.uk
- Find them on Facebook - Suffolk's Fostering Service - or on Twitter @suff_fostadopt

Further details are on the SCC website.

Jane Storey
1st July 2019