

May 2026

# Parish Report

**Cllr Matt Bentley**

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## **2026 Council Elections**

I am the new Green councillor for your division, elected during the local elections on Thursday 7 May. Along with other Green councillors at Suffolk County Council, I will be part of the official opposition. Our group will not be in charge of making decisions, as Reform UK have 41 councillors and will have the majority of votes in the council chamber to pass their decisions. However, we will work hard to hold the council and the Reform administration to account and challenge them and their decisions. If you have enquiries relating to services provided by Suffolk County Council, please make contact with me using the above contact information and I will investigate the issue for you.

## **Suffolk County Council Annual General Meeting**

On Thursday 21 May, Suffolk County Council held its AGM and the first meeting of its new administrative term. Councillors from Reform UK, as the largest group at the council, were appointed to the positions of Leader, Chairman and members of the council's Cabinet were announced. Two motions were also tabled at the meeting. My group tabled a motion based on Reform UK campaign literature which had criticised the council's spend on translation services, proposing support for the service this money was providing to families in need of support, Ukrainian guests, children seeking sanctuary who arrived alone and British Sign Language for the hearing impaired. This motion was voted down by the Reform UK councillors. The other motion was originally tabled by the Labour group in favour of the proposed Northern Relief Road for Ipswich, but was subsequently amended and tabled by an Independent councillor and seconded by Reform. This motion was passed and detailed the council's commitment to look into options again to reduce reliance on the Orwell Bridge and the impact of the crossing on Ipswich traffic when it was closed or partially closed.

## **Removal of Ukrainian flag at Endeavour House**

Flags remain a contentious issue around the country, mostly recently in Suffolk the Reform administration at the county council have taken down the Ukrainian flag at its headquarters in Ipswich, raising the St George cross instead. The council raised the Ukrainian flag in solidarity with Ukraine when

Russia invaded them in 2022 and it has been flying since that time, with the council administering the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme and hundreds of Suffolk residents welcoming Ukrainian refugees into their homes. My group and other opposition groups at the council have criticised this decision in the local press and have emphasised their ongoing support for Ukraine during the conflict.

## **Latest Update on Local Government Reorganisation**

Following the government's decision that it was minded to approve creation of three unitary councils in Suffolk, the councils in the county have banded together to create a website to provide the public with information on the plans and timeline for the changes. If all proceeds as planned, elections for the new 'shadow' authorities will be held next May in 2027, with the councils up and running from April 2028.

However, the Reform UK leadership at Suffolk County Council have announced that they will be making a legal challenge to the government about this decision, on the basis that they do not want the county split in three. Norfolk and Essex county councils, who are also run by Reform, are also challenging the reorganisation decision in their counties.

For information on the plans for Local Government Reorganisation in Suffolk, please see link to the website here: <https://www.suffolklgrhub.gov.uk/>

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## **Social Media and Helpful Links**

**Follow us on:**

**Instagram** - <https://www.instagram.com/scc.green/>

**Facebook** - <https://www.facebook.com/suffolkgreens/>

**Group Website** - <https://suffolkgreens.org.uk/>

Cost of Living help and advice:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=6>

Benefits advice and support:

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/adult.page?adultchannel=0>

Flood preparation advice: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service/fire-and-rescue-safety-advice-in-the-community/what-to-do-in-a-flood>

<https://suffolkprepared.co.uk/get-prepared/risk-advice/flooding/>

Flood recovery advice and support: <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/about/flood-recovery-information-for-suffolk>