

## **April 2026 Parish Report East Suffolk Council GLI Group – Councillor Update**

### ***Energy Projects Update – from GLI Cllrs Daly and Graham*** **Engagement Session with Town and Parish Councils**

In March, Cllr Daly hosted a session for Town and Parish Councils to discuss the potential Sea Link development and hear the aspirations of the local community regarding community benefits associated with the project. The meeting was well attended and a range of important areas for community benefits were raised.

These aspirations will be used to inform ongoing engagement with NGET regarding community benefits from the Sea Link project and will ensure that voice of the local community is heard during these discussions.

### **Co-Funding Support with Suffolk Association of Local Authorities**

Elma Glasgow has recently joined the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) as their first NSIPs Community Engagement Coordinator. This role is jointly funded by East Suffolk Council, in conjunction with Local Authority Partners and NSIP developers. Elma has a background in communications and community engagement, and this role will provide guidance and support to communities during key phases of the NSIP development process, supporting Town and Parish Councils to engage with residents and businesses in areas impacted by NSIP developments.

The Energy Projects team were delighted to welcome Elma to East Suffolk House in March to give an introduction to NSIPs in the district, and share information regarding the concerns of residents. The team will continue to work closely with Elma to ensure that Town and Parish Councils in the district are fully supported in their engagement in the NSIP process.

### **The Sea Link Examination**

The Examination for National Grid Electricity Transmission's Sea Link project began in November 2025. The Examination is the statutory period during which an independent panel of Planning Inspectors, known as the Examining Authority, scrutinises the application before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, who will make the final decision.

It is an intense period for East Suffolk Council members and officers. In recognition of the complexity and importance of the Examination, East Suffolk Council instructed Clyde & Co as its legal advisers, alongside Mark Westmoreland-Smith KC of Francis Taylor Building (ftb) Chambers. This highly specialist legal advice is invaluable in ensuring the Council can engage robustly, protect and promote community interests, and navigate the examination process effectively and lawfully.

The Examination is largely a written process, involving stakeholders on all sides making representations and responding to submissions from other parties, answering rounds of written questions issued by the Examining Authority, as well as participating in a

range of hearings- Issue Specific Hearings on a range of topics including ecology, coastal matters, environmental protections (to name a few), Compulsory Acquisition Hearings on land acquisition and rights, and Open Floor Hearings where people can register to speak.

Cllrs Daly and Graham both spoke at the Open Floor Hearings held in late March, and set out their serious concerns with the project. Cllr Daly raised serious concerns about NGET's engagement with East Suffolk Council as the Local Planning Authority, stating that unlike other promoters, NGET appears to assume its project will be consented regardless of constructive engagement or coordination with other schemes, to the detriment of local communities. He highlighted key issues of working hours and stressed the need for communities to have respite from Sea Link alongside several other planned and consented NSIPs in our area. Cllr Daly once again stressed the importance of coordination of all projects to minimise impacts on communities and the environment, stressing the necessity of proper assessment and consideration of cumulative impacts alongside the extensive other consented and planned energy development in the area.

Regarding post consent planning arrangements, Cllr Daly highlighted the importance of appropriate timings to manage these major works, stating that NGET is pursuing 35-day timescales for the Council to discharge post consent requirements, with a mechanism to grant deemed consent if no decision is made within this time. These timings present particular challenges for officers.

Cllr Graham emphasised the lack of strategic planning for energy infrastructure in east Suffolk, stating the application for Sea Link is reflective of the chaotic and careless approach of the developer-led transition. This approach has left the energy transition largely developer-led, creating poorly coordinated projects that burden communities and undermine public support.

Cllr Graham praised the communities, the town and parish councillors, the tireless campaign organisers, and the hundreds of residents who have given hundreds of unpaid hours to scrutinising a succession of complex and unconnected project proposals over several years. Our communities are the future inheritors of the energy transition and they have shown once again with the Sea Link examination their willingness to step up to share expertise, commission legal research, and appoint legal counsel to scrutinise these proposals and explore alternative solutions.

Cllr Graham recognised the many outstanding areas of disagreement between the applicant and East Suffolk Council, and repeated frustration about the applicant's position on opportunities for coordination, reluctance to align working hours with other projects, and cumulative impacts. Cllr Graham raised a central concern of the need case for the project, and called for further discussion and information.

Cllrs Daly and Graham repeated their desire for a constructive, productive working relationship with NGET, so that if consented, it can be delivered in the best interests of all involved, particularly our communities most impacted by so much at this time.

### ***Council launches 2026 apprenticeship scheme to help grow local talent***

East Suffolk Council is helping people unlock their potential with the return of its successful apprenticeship scheme.

There are six new opportunities available in a number of teams, including Coastal Properties, Communities, Finance, Private Sector Housing and Planning.

Potential apprentices can learn more about the scheme and about working for the Council by attending a special open evening, which will take place between 5.30pm and 7pm at East Suffolk House in Melton on Tuesday 12 May, and at Riverside in Lowestoft on Thursday 14 May. Please email [HR@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:HR@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) to book your place.

Chris Bally, East Suffolk Council's Chief Executive, said:

"We are once again proud to see our apprenticeship scheme return for a fourteenth year. Each cohort is full of talented apprentices that bring unique qualities to the work they do. Apprenticeships provide the opportunity to gain workplace experience, high quality training, and a recognised qualification - all while in paid employment.

"Our apprenticeship scheme has no upper age limit, and we pride ourselves on being an inclusive employer. Prospective apprentices can be reassured that our supportive culture will enable them to get more out of their apprenticeship than just a qualification.

"I'm looking forward to welcoming the next cohort of apprentices and would encourage anyone to apply, as you never know what opportunities it may unlock."

Keira joined East Suffolk's Corporate Health and Safety Team as an apprentice in 2024 and is now working as a Support Officer in the Environmental Protection Team. Speaking about her apprenticeship, she said:

"My apprenticeship has really helped me improve my communication and social skills, as I have been involved in lots of big meetings. I'm also well connected with a lot of the other apprentices, meaning I can reach out for help whenever I need it.

"The biggest perk of doing an apprenticeship is gaining experience within the workplace whilst learning and earning. This isn't something you would be able to do at university."

Applications close on Monday 8 June, with all apprentices expected to start in September.

For more information, please visit: [tinyurl.com/5fu5unv9](https://tinyurl.com/5fu5unv9)

### ***Council welcomes government coastal erosion report***

East Suffolk Council has welcomed the publication of a government report outlining the wide-ranging impacts of coastal erosion on communities.

The report by the Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, published on 20 March, acknowledges that coastal erosion is "a cross-government challenge that touches housing, health, local growth, infrastructure, and community resilience." The

Committee also found that “rebuilding the relationship between coastal communities and the Government will require a coordinated response that recognises the lived experiences of affected communities and ensures they have a meaningful role in shaping future decisions.”

A number of recommendations to the Department for Environmental, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) were made, including strengthening Shoreline Management Plans, and the establishment of a long-term national strategy to provide financial assistance and relocation support for properties at risk of coastal change.

GLI Cllr Mark Packard, Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management said:

“Councils simply cannot support communities at risk in isolation, without a co-ordinated national approach. Having provided evidence and information about the experience of communities in East Suffolk, including in Thorpeness, we are grateful that this report recognises the issues we face and makes recommendations that could help address the challenges we face in managing an eroding coast.

“We will continue to work with DEFRA and the Environment Agency (EA) on progressing the Resilient Coast project, which is part of the government’s £200m Flood and Coast Resilience programme. We look forward to embedding the recommendations into our new Coastal Adaptation Pilot bid for later in 2026.

“The wider recommendations regarding funding for the coast, and not just erosion frontages, are particularly welcome as we continue to identify a permanent solution to tidal flood risk in Lowestoft.

“We are also looking to undertake discussions with MHCLG and other government departments to demonstrate the value of the coast, despite climate change challenges - and the outcomes the coast can offer the nation in terms of sustainable growth, economy, green energy and the wider health and well-being.

“We anticipate that these recommendations will support strategic and local coastal management needs and deliver cross-government support and investments, which are needed to provide place-based solutions and adaptation to create a resilient coast, so that we can meet the needs of our communities.”

### ***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/](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/community/squeeze/)**

For the most up to date information regarding East Suffolk Council, please visit:  
**[www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk)**

**View the Well Minds East Suffolk booklet:** [tinyurl.com/9xhka624](http://tinyurl.com/9xhka624)