

Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum

Minutes of the Meeting (via Zoom) on Tuesday, 25th January, 2025 at 2pm

Abbreviations used:

CATS	Coastal Accessible Transport	DAS	Disability Advice Service East Suffolk
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions	ESC	East Suffolk Council
IBC	Ipswich Borough Council	PC	Parish Council
SCDF	Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum	SWT	Suffolk Wildlife Trust
VASP	Voluntary and Statutory Partnership	WDF	Waveney Disability Forum

Present:

Linda Hoggarth	Disability Forum for Suffolk [SCDF Chair]
Paul Kelly	SCDF Secretary
Simon Daws	SCDF Vice-Chair
Pati Ferreira-Whittaker	ESC Communities Officer for Beccles, Bungay & Halesworth
Sue Abel	Leading Lives
Sarah Ashleigh	Disability Employment Adviser - DWP
Julia Carr	Suffolk VASP
Nigel Crisp	Staff Manager - Ipswich Depot, First Bus
Bryan Frost	Councillor - Trimley St Mary PC
Benjamin Gulliford	CATS
Steve Hodgkiss	Suffolk Sight / Disability Forum for Suffolk
Jenny Riddell-Carpenter	MP for Suffolk Coastal
Cllr Edward Thompson	Councillor - ESC & Martlesham PC

Guest:

Robert Stammers	ESC Lead for Waste, Recycling & Street Cleaning
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Apologies:

Simon Barnett	SCC Integrated Transport & Enhanced Partnership Manager
Deborah Derby	Melton PC
Rob Dunger	Suffolk Sound
Matthew Finch	Suffolk Police
Alan Neville	Greater Anglia
Margaret Oldham	Chair, WDF
Steve Race	Manager, DAS
Yvonne Smart	Trimley St Martin PC
Graham Walker	DAS

1. Welcome

Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

The above apologies were received and noted.

3. Introduction to Simpler Recycling

3.1 Robert Stammers, ESC Lead for Waste, Recycling and Street Cleaning was welcomed to the meeting. He gave a short introduction to ‘Simpler Recycling’.

3.2 In 2018, the Conservative government launched ‘Resources and Waste Strategy [RAWS]’, a far-reaching scheme to improve recycling collections in this country which had plateaued for many years. Before the last General Election, Rishi Sunak rebranded the scheme as ‘Simpler Recycling’. The new Labour government have made further changes to the scheme.

3.2 The current recycling kerbside collections: In Suffolk, we collect paper, card, plastic, metal and cans as recycling. All go into one bin and co-mingle.

3.3 The future recycling kerbside collections will change as follows:

From March / April 2026 ESC will also provide glass and carton collection (e.g. Tetra-Paks), plus a separate weekly food waste collection.

From March / April 2027 ESC will have to collect films & flexible plastics (e.g. of plastic bread wrappers and the cellophane you might peel off containers).

3.4 Current Bin Collection Schedules:

Currently the grey/black rubbish bin is collected every fortnight and the blue recycling bin is collected every fortnight. If the Householder has opted for a garden waste collection, the brown/green garden waste bin is collected every fortnight (the recycling the garden waste bins are collected on the same day).

3.5 Future Bin Collection Schedules:

Householders will be provided with an extra recycling bin ((grey with a green-coloured lid).

The grey/black rubbish bin will be collected every 3 weeks. If the householder has opted for a garden waste collection, the brown/green garden waste bin will

be collected every fortnight. On the collection days when the rubbish bin is not collected - one week the blue recycling bin will be collected (this bin can include glass) - on the alternate week the extra recycling bin (grey with a green-coloured lid) containing only paper and card will be collected.

For food waste food collection the householder will be provided with a 21-litre outside bin, plus a 5-litre kitchen caddy for temporary storage of food waste. The larger bin will be collected weekly by a fleet of food waste vehicles.

Food waste will be put through an anaerobic digestion process to produce energy, with the residue used as fertiliser.

3.6 Issues:

ESC knows that approximately 10% of residents will have difficulties with the extra bins. Space to store the bins and blockage of pavements before and after collections are just two of the issues.

ESC have looked into putting bin stickers on bins with Braille, for example, for those who have sight issues and are able to read Braille.

ESC are willing to answer any queries and will make necessary site visits to assess the problems and resolve them.

If any members of the Forum have any ideas or experience of how things like this might work elsewhere, ESC are more than happy to listen to any ideas and look at whether they are relevant.

Residents will have more capacity for disposal of waste & recycling. ESC is asking residents to carry out a bit more sorting, rather than just throwing everything into one recycling bin.

3.7 Recycling Targets:

It is hoped that recycling rates will go up from the present 40% to around 56% to 58%. Government statutory targets by 2030 are 60% recycling, increasing to 65% by 2035.

3.8 Issues raised by members present:

Simon D said out that most blind people who were not born with the condition cannot read Braille and asked if tactile stickers, with different shapes, to distinguish different bins had been considered.

Simon was concerned about additional pavement clutter for people, who are visually-impaired, wheelchair users, mobility scooter users and other members of the public, to deal with.

He also pointed out that agency care workers tend not to sort out recycling from waste (including incontinence waste) and this would be a bigger problem with more bins.

Sue asked about trade waste collection for support organisations, particularly about the issue of food waste.

3.9 Response:

Robert acknowledged the issues raised by Simon and said that all concerns should be reported to ESC and site visits would be arranged if necessary.

He stressed that ESC wanted to be inclusive as possible on this project and that ESC will engage with organisations to try and solve problems using their experience and knowledge.

He also pointed out that anyone disabled with particular problems about bin collection could register with ESC for 'Assisted Collection'.

Robert said that for organisations with a trade waste contract, the contractor should be in contact because from 31st March or 1st April this year contractors should be providing separate food waste and recycling services to companies with more than 10 employees. If the contractors have not been in contact yet, organisations need to phone their contractors.

3.10 Publicity about Changes to Recycling Collections:

Robert said there would be a big communications campaign to announce these changes. Householders will be informed about the delivery of new bins. As part of these changes all waste collection routes would be re-assessed and this might result in changes to particular delivery days.

3.11 Robert was thanked for his presentation and for listening to members' concerns. His slides will be attached to the minutes.

4. **Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP**

Members were pleased to welcome Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP to the meeting. Jenny was keen to learn more about the Forum and its aims and objectives but had limited time available at this meeting.

It was agreed that the Planning Group would arrange a meeting with Jenny to explain what the Forum does.

Action: Planning Group

5. National Disability & Carers Card Scheme

Oliver Horsman, Partnerships Director, Disability ID was unavailable for this item.

6. Minutes from the Meeting held on 22nd October 2024

The minutes were agreed.

7. Matters Arising not elsewhere on the Agenda

7.1 Item 7.1 Beach Wheelchair at Felixstowe: Pati said that after much prompting, she had received an update about the Felixstowe Beach wheelchair: “The task of beach wheelchair provision at Felixstowe has been deferred due to staffing and workload issues. The task would be picked up next month in order to make plans for the 2025 seasonal beach wheelchair hire at Lowestoft, Southwold and Felixstowe. There are still some challenges to be overcome with the beach wheelchair at Felixstowe”.

Pati said that the Forum would be interested in hearing about anyone’s experience of beach wheelchair hire at Lowestoft or Southwold.

Linda pointed out there were still concerns over the provision of a boardwalk at Felixstowe.

Pati also raised the issue of A-boards blocking pavements. Both the WDF & SCDF had expressed concern. She said that anyone who had a complaint about A-boards or other advertising contraptions blocking pavements should report it to this Forum. SCDF would then engage with ESC to resolve issues.

7.2 Item 8.5 Bus Services: Bryan wanted to take up the point of poor bus services to the Grove Medical Centre in Felixstowe and also between Woodbridge and the Martlesham Retail Centre. He said a bid for funding from the SCC Bus Service Improvement Plan was turned down. SCC said that some more money might be available under the Plan from March this year, but Bryan pointed out that these were vital services; there is a large population in Old Felixstowe that does not have a bus service into Felixstowe or the Grove Medical Centre before 11am. Nigel said that he was be working with Simon B. [Integrated Transport & Enhanced Partnership Manager - SCC] over this issue

Additional issues about Bus Services could be raised with Simon B at any time. Bryan said that he would be in contact with Simon B and it was suggested that the Forum is copied in to any correspondence in order to emphasise the importance of the issue.

Simon D. said that he was still pushing for the Number 64 Bus to go through Old Martlesham rather than up the A12 bypass on its way to Martlesham Retail Centre. The current route is considered illogical. Simon D. said that now he was a Martlesham Parish Councillor he would be contacting Simon B.

7.3 Item 8.7 A12 Major Road Network Improvements: At the time of the previous SCDF meeting, the Forum had not seen the consultation document but that Paul had duly submitted our response to the document on 27th October last year. In our response we noted that there would be increased danger to pedestrians and wheelchair users attempting to cross major junctions using ‘uncontrolled crossings’, particularly at Woods Lane; the increased distances that pedestrians and wheelchair users would have to travel to successfully cross various junctions on the scheme; the proximity of cycleways and footpaths to fast-moving traffic would mean: increased danger to pedestrians and wheelchair users in the event of a traffic ‘incident’ and unhealthy ingestion of high levels of traffic pollution.

Simon D. said that a £1.25m update to Main Road, Martlesham was planned, including footpaths, cycle paths and pedestrian crossings. He said that his aim was to make Main Road, Martlesham a much safer place for older and disabled people. He added that he had agreed with Edward that as fellow Parish Councillors they would respond to any consultation process. Linda asked that the Forum be kept informed.

8. Issues, Concerns and News from Members

8.1 Regent Theatre, Ipswich: Simon D. reported that the Regent Theatre was being re-developed. He said that performances in the past, when required, were not made accessible to all, lacking captioning or audio description for people with sensory impairments. He was glad to report that when the theatre re-opens it will have these facilities.

In response to a question Steve said that Suffolk Sight had offered to assist with any trials of the new equipment but had heard nothing further.

8.2 Disability Pride March in Felixstowe: It was noted that a Disability Pride event was being held in July in Felixstowe and would involve a march along the seafront ending at the Leisure Centre.

The Forum was considering whether a SCDF Information Day could be linked to the event. A discussion for the end of January has been set up with the organisers of the event. It looks like there will be a trade exhibition of equipment for disabled people in the Leisure Centre as part of the event.

A lack of availability of disabled parking spaces down on the seafront was mentioned as a possible drawback for all involved in the event.

8.3 Ipswich Hospital Issues: In response to issues raised about the difficulties of parking at the Hospital, the reliability of passenger lifts, further contact will be made with Steve Bruce to progress the offer of a site meeting to discuss the issues.

8.4 Volunteer Fair, Leiston: A Volunteer Fair is planned in Leiston, and will have taken place on Friday, 31st January.

9. Update from Healthwatch Suffolk

Unfortunately, Sally Watson could not attend the meeting, so it was agreed that the Healthwatch Suffolk update she would have presented would be attached to the minutes.

The update contains references to issues that the Forum knows well - access to medication - access to dentists - families who do not have English as a first language, and transport, and projects such as Ageing Well in Suffolk and getting people's experiences of specific health conditions.

Simon D. said that he had been in touch with Sally on the subject of the NHS app. Patient letters added to the app by the NHS were in JPEG which cannot be read by screen readers used by people who are visually-impaired, because JPEG is an image format not textual. Sally has escalated the issue to her manager and it has now gone national. The NHS are expecting people to use the NHS app more and more for appointments and for follow-up letters about outcomes from appointments.

The issue for visually-impaired people and the NHS app was not highlighted by Sally in the update, but she did report a lack of accessible transport options available for wheelchairs users, making attending appointments difficult.

There followed a discussion about the difficulties arranging hospital transport via E-Med who require two weeks' notice & then a patient having to allocate a whole day to the 'experience'.

Benjamin pointed out that there were anomalies with the E-Med service. He gave an example of a frail lady who was unable to stand for more than a few

minutes and had bought a small electric wheelchair to use as a portable seat. E-Med did not class her as disabled and she was refused transport because ‘a disabled person might need the place’ on the transport vehicle.

Benjamin said that arranging community transport was easier because you can book by e-mail. However, CATS was having to refuse requests for transport because of the lack of volunteer drivers. Volunteers are paid a mileage rate and patients would pay £25 to £30 whereas a standard taxi costs a lot more for the patient, potentially £140 for the round trip to hospital & back.

He said that people should engage more with community transport and that he would be happy to accept new volunteer drivers, even for 2 or 3 hours per week. CATS area of operations encompasses Walberswick, Clopton, Chediston & Bawdsey. Potential new volunteers were older drivers who typically do not engage with social media, so he was splitting his publicity between social media and in person leaflets and flyers.

10. Information Round / Any Other Business

10.1 Suffolk Coastal Voluntary and Statutory Partnership: Julia said that meetings of the Suffolk Coastal Locality VASP had not taken place for a while and that they were hoping for a relaunch. A survey would be sent to anybody on the VASP distribution list. Contact Julia by email to be added to the distribution list. julia.carr@healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk

Julia invited Benjamin to send information about CATS to her to put in the weekly county-wide Suffolk VASP newsletter and extended this invitation to anyone who had information for the newsletter. The newsletter’s circulation is more than 2,000 and it goes out usually on a Tuesday.

She said she had put information about today’s SCDF meeting in the VASP newsletter. Sarah said she had taken notice and that was why she was in attendance.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the SCDF would be on Tuesday, 15th April 2025, from 2pm to 4pm, via Zoom. The link for the meeting will be sent out in due course.

A speaker from Suffolk Wildlife Trust was probable after a Planning Application regarding Martlesham Wilds Reserve indicated very little provision for disabled people. It was thought it would be interesting to learn what the SWT does to encourage disabled people to visit their sites.