

Shimpling Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Monday 10th July 2023, 7:00pm at Shimpling Village Hall

Present:

Councillors: Gerry Shrimpton, David Dunkley (Chair), Liz Brunwin

District Councillors: Stephen Plumb

County Councillors: Richard Kemp

Clerk: Natasha Byford

- 1.1 **Declaration of Acceptance of Office:** Cllrs Shrimpton and Brunwin signed their Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Action: Clerk to send this off to the monitoring officer.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Brown, Engstrom and Holt sent their apologies, these were noted and accepted.

2. Declarations of Members Interest(s):

- a) **To receive disclosure of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest(s) including gifts of hospitality in excess of £25:** None received.
- b) **To consider requests for dispensation for the agenda item(s) under discussion:** None received.

3. Public Participation session

Two members of the public (MOP) attended.

4. Approval of minutes of the previous meeting:

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 15th May 2023 were approved.

Action: Clerk to publish these on the website and Social Media.

5. Chair's report:

Cllr Dunkley's read the below report from his last couple of months as Chair:

Since May we have been consolidating work in a number of existing areas rather than introducing new ones.

We have been progressing estimates for 2 pieces of work on the Village Hall and the funding to complete them. The two projects are the new doors to the side of the building and to provide Solar Panels. Both are progressing but ensuring comparable estimates are provided so we can reach a considered decision and identifying funding sources has taken more time than expected.

On the Village Hall, there have been ongoing discussions / negotiations with the Richards family over the length of the new lease, which has been agreed as 21 years. I would like to thank the family for their flexibility in coming to that agreement. It is now down to solicitors to put the new lease together.

The old play area equipment has been checked and there are no significant risk areas associated with it. The main issue seems to be bird poo which is easily resolved, if only temporarily. The new play equipment had two issues with fixings, both of these have now been resolved.

The new SID will be installed in August by Stuart. Thanks to him and also to Councillor Kemp who provided the funding for its purchase.

The Communications working party have reviewed the website and have agreed on making it more inclusive of the various village groups and work will go on over summer to implement this. Some changes have already been made to make the information available more up to date.

We are still in discussion with Babergh over the Joint Local Plan. More meetings have been held recently and we are now waiting, again, for decisions to be made to include the existing AVRAs as amenity green spaces into the plan for Shimpling. Colin has been our representative on this matter and we thank him for his patience.

Lastly, we have been discussing whether we should undertake a Neighbourhood Plan. To gauge local interest in the matter we will be holding an open day in October, exact date to be confirmed.

- 6. District Councillors report:** Cllr Plumb read out their report and there were no further questions on this. The report is in Appendix A below.

Cllr Plumb left the meeting at 7:06pm.

- 7. County Councillors report:** Cllr Kemp read out his report and there were no further questions on this. The report is in Appendix B below. Cllr Kemp did add that there had been a number of burglaries in Long Melford over the last few weeks.

Cllr Kemp left the meeting at 7:11pm.

8. Crime matters:

The new county wide newsletter available was dated May 2023 and is available online:

<https://www.suffolk.police.uk/your-area/snt-newsletters>

The Clerk reported that the May newsletter was circulated to Councillors along with the papers for the crime update but they have already had this last meeting. Nothing Shimpling specific. Cllrs asked the Clerk to follow up with Cllr Holt to see if he had managed to get a meeting together with the Police and local parishes. Clerk to write to Police to see if they would attend any of our PC meetings.

Action: Clerk to speak with Cllr Holt regarding local Police meeting and to write an email to the Police inviting them to our meetings.

9. Village Hall:

- a) Jenny Pine updated the PC that the VHC finances were reasonable and that the PAT testing had been completed with no issues except the external lights which the VHC were looking at.

The Clerk read out Cllr Browns report for the VHC, which is below:

A quiet couple of months for the village hall.

Pilates, Zumba and dance club are well attended.

Monthly rural coffee caravan and film clubs are also going strong.

Future events include:

August-

*rock n roll night

a joint venture with Alpheton VH to be held at Shimpling park farm.

October-

*Silver jewellery workshop

*Quiz night.

Projects

*Side double doors - still to be discussed and approved.

*solar panels - Awaiting funding approval

*fire doors - Will be done in the next few weeks.

*I have noticed there are quite a few weeds in the car park, Natasha was going to speak with Chris.

*Fire alarm system - On Monday 26th June the 9.30am Pilates class was disrupted by the fire alarm going off. This has highlighted a problem as there was no way to turn it off and no one to contact. Another member of the VHC committee removed the battery, however a new battery has not solved the problem, we are therefore without a working fire alarm system and therefore uninsured should there be a fire.

We are looking for a company to come and inspect and repair the alarm system in the short term, but this has brought into question who is responsible for the fire alarm system, the PC or the VH. I feel this is something that will need to be discussed urgently.

- b) At the last meeting - Laurence Rooke said he would fix the two external doors at just the price of materials. Members agreed to go ahead with Laurence's quote. PC agreed up to £250 for materials and this will come out of Village Hall Maintenance budget line. This has now been done and the fire door mended.

- c) Members received quotations for adding new doors to the Village Hall. It was discussed that the current quotes aren't comparable and we need to have a full job spec for builders to quote from. Members wanted to purchase the doors from the PC ourselves so we could claim the VAT back. It was discussed that the VHC need to agree the type of doors they would like (ie bifold, French doors etc) and a rough size of opening so that a job spec can be created from that to enable us to get 3 comparable quotations for the works.

Action: Clerk to liaise with VHC to produce a job spec and know which doors they would like.

The issue of a ramp and the Doc M compliance was also raised. The PC currently only have tenancy on the footprint of the Village Hall so a ramp would be outside of that. The PC need to know of their obligations with regards to ramps and access for the new doors. A temporary ramp was mentioned if this is a possibility.

Action: Clerk to speak with SALC to see if they can tell us what we are required to do in terms of wheelchair access.

Funding for the doors would be attempted from Capital Grant funding, external CIL funding or Locality award from District Cllrs but we need quotations before we can proceed with grant funding applications. Jenny also reminded Cllrs that the Hallifax trust may be able to help with funds.

- d) It was discussed that the PC are still working on the Solar Panels funding - Capital grant funding (reopens 31st July) we will apply for £6,000. Matchfunding we applied for £6,400 and were not successful so we are going to up our Capital Grant fund, ask for some external CIL money and/or some locality grants.

Action: Clerk to continue with funding applications to try and get this secured.

- e) The Village Hall Fire Alarm was discussed, members received quotes for call outs and servicing and agreed to go ahead with Ace Fire (who do the extinguishers) for £130 plus VAT, they would service the Fire Alarm and look at the fault at the same time.

It was suggested that we should try and bring the Fire Alarm, Emergency Lights and Fire Extinguishers all under one contract so we have 2 visits a year.

Action: Clerk to arrange this visit.

10. Responsible Finance Officer's Finance Report:

10a) The Clerk gave a finance report, details of which were circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The Clerk stated which invoices (please see below) needed to be paid.

Leaving balances as follows:

Treasurers Account	£3,384.09
Business Account	£28,075.84
Including CIL of	£4,018.06
Earmarked Reserves of	£20,996.05
General Reserves of	£4,698.00
COVID Grant of	£2,438.87

10b) To acknowledge payments made outside the meeting

- **Zen Internet (16 May-15 June)** **£38.99**
(LGA 1972, s.111)
- **Zen Internet (16 June-15 July)** **£38.99**
(LGA 1972, s.111)
- **Lark Valley Willow** **£1,005.60**
(Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10)
- **Playquip Playground Inspection** **£696.00**
(Open Spaces Act 1906, ss9-10)

10c) The following amounts were approved for payment:

- **Clerk's Net salary after Tax** **£432.83**
- **HMRC Tax payment** **£108.20**
- **Clerk's expenses (Fuel)** **£25.65**
LGA 1972 s. 111 (ancillary Powers)

The above payment schedule was approved by members.

10d) The Clerk noted that The Council have received money from bank interest of £15.94 and £17.87.

11. Clerks Report: A full copy of the Clerk's report was circulated to members prior to the meeting. The following matters were considered for resolution:

11a) Summary of Progress: During the period (8th May 23 – 2nd July 23), I have worked 2.5 hours over the given time frame of 5 hours per week, this included organising all the paperwork for the May meeting, agendas, actions from the May meetings, a communication working party, organising payments, quotes and grant applications, working on the website, as well as general administration. The Clerk's record of work was reviewed and accepted.

12. Playground:

- a) The Clerk informed members that Playquip inspected the playground in June. Cllrs has read the inspection report. There were a few medium risk items, notably bird poo on the play equipment, the new football goal and basketball hoop was missing a fixing and the screws were in the wrong way round, the goal anchors have been removed and there were some loose and rotten fence posts.
- b) The new football goal works was rectified very quickly and for no cost by Sovereign who installed the equipment earlier this year. The quote for bird poo cleaning was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Dunkley would scrub the play equipment himself this time to remove the bird poo. Cllrs asked the Clerk to get quotes for the fence remedial works and to purchase more goal anchors.

Action: Clerk to get quotes for the playground fence remedial works and purchase more goal anchors.

It was also suggested that the PC get an 'odd job/maintenance person' in order to get these little bits one quicker.

Action: Clerk to advertise this.

13. Planning:

Planning Decisions:

- a. AP/22/00010 Land Opposite To Stone Cottages, Bury Road, Shimpling, Suffolk - Appeal - Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an Existing Use or Operation or activity including those in breach of a planning condition. Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Section 191 as amended by section 10 of the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. Town and Country Planning (General Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Conversion and use of former second world war building as a dwellinghouse – Appeal in progress
- b. AP/22/00071 - Aveley House Aveley Lane Shimpling Part In The Parish Of Alpheton IP29 4HB - Planning Application - Erection of 1No detached holiday let. – Appeal Dismissed
- c. DC/22/06142 - The Hermitage, Bury Road, Shimpling, IP30 0JL - Planning Application. Erection of stables and two-storey outbuilding. Refurbishment of existing outbuilding. Stationing of temporary outbuilding for storage. Additional detail as per Design Access and Heritage Statement – Awaiting Decision
- d. DC/22/06143 - The Hermitage, Bury Road, Shimpling, IP30 0JL - Application for Listed Building Consent - Erection of stables and two-storey outbuilding. Refurbishment of existing

outbuilding. Stationing of temporary outbuilding for storage. Additional detail as per Design Access and Heritage Statement. – Awaiting Decision

- e. DC/23/00944 - Cherry Trees, Old Rectory Lane, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4HG - Householder Application - Conversion of garage to additional living accommodation; Raising pitch of roof and gable extensions including construction of rear dormer extension in conjunction loft conversion – Awaiting decision
- f. DC/23/01751 - Coppins House Blooms Hall Lane Stanstead Sudbury Suffolk CO10 9AY- Householder Application - Erection of a detached garage block and first floor annexe -Granted
- g. DC/23/02104 - Giffords Hall, Hartest Hill, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4EX - Listed Building Consent - Conversion of existing garage to ancillary accommodation, replacement roof and new glazed frames to existing conservatory, and internal alterations – Awaiting Decision
- h. DC/23/02103 - Giffords Hall, Hartest Hill, Shimpling, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP29 4EX - Householder Application - Conversion of existing garage to ancillary accommodation, replacement roof and new glazed frames to existing conservatory (amended scheme to DC/22/00672) – Awaiting Decision

Planning Applications:

- i. DC/23/02958 - Laburinthos Cottage, Bury Road, Shimpling (part In The Parish Of Alpheton), Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP30 0JJ - Full Planning Application - Erection of detached annex for family members (following demolition of outbuilding/s)(re-submission of withdrawn application DC/23/00095).

Members discussed this application and agreed not to comment.

14. Covid19 Emergency Fund:

No applications received.

Cllr Shrimpton noted that the PC paid a lot of money for the new footpaths and they are overgrown and in danger of being ruined. Clerk to ensure we have SCC footpath cutting schedule and Lark Valley are aware of this so the footpath is maintained.

Action: Clerk to speak with SCC and Chris at Lark Valley to ensure footpath cuts are scheduled.

15. SID

The Chair updated members that the second SID for the Village has been ordered and should be delivered in August. Stuart (our Volunteer Assistant Clerk) has been kind enough to offer to put this up for us when it arrives. Our thanks also to Cllr Kemp who funded this from his locality budget.

16. Village Hall Lease:

Cllr Dunkley updated members that the Richards family are happy with a 21 year lease. However, they wish to use Ashton Legal which means that we cannot. Ashton legal will draw up the lease as they are acting for the owners and the PC will need to find another Solicitor to act on our behalf. Members agreed to go with the cheapest quote for this as it was felt that the work required to be undertaken is prescriptive and will be the same for all organisations.

Action: Cllr Dunkley to keep tabs on this situation and Clerk to get quotes for a Solicitor to ask on the PCs behalf and then go ahead with the cheapest quote.

17. Projects

Cllr Dunkley updated members that the project list hadn't really changed since the last meeting and to send over any ideas if there was any. The new doors in the Village Hall, the Solar Panels for the Village Hall were still projects we were undertaking but these are slowly progressing.

18. Bus Service

The 4 week bus trial with Vertas that was previously discussed was agreed to try and get the go ahead for September. It was noted this would be an exercise about demand for buses within the Village. Once we have firm dates it would need to be advertised. A Shimpling Village Mini bus was considered as another option, or a shared one with another Village. A resident noted that there was talk of losing the weekly Felix bus to Sudbury every Thursday.

Action: Cllr Shrimpton to speak with Vertas and get dates for the trial. Cllr Shrimpton to talk to Felix to see if there was any further information about the Thursday bus.

19. Communication Channels

Chair Dunkley updated members that the Clerk has tidied up a lot of the website and implemented a few smaller changes. We hope to keep this going and publish in the Village Newsletter in August that we have a new Village Website!

Action: Clerk to contact the WI, Church, Bush and Shimpling Farm Park to see if they would be happy to have a website page on there with information and pictures that they send over. Clerk to carry on with updating this. Chair Dunkley to have his session with Matthew for training on this on Tuesday 11th July.

20. Neighbourhood Plan:

Members discussed the neighbourhood plan promotion event and agreed a date of Saturday 14th October. Cllrs would like to know more about what kind of this is on the information boards that Ian would provide when setting up this day. Also need to ensure this is fully funded before we go ahead. The promotion event would be about gauging the interest from Village residents and seeing if there would be enough volunteers to create a Shimpling Neighbourhood Plan as it isn't something the PC can do alone.

Action: Clerk to speak to Ian regarding the information on the boards and secure the funding options for the information day. This would then need to be advertised in the Village Newsletter.

21. Correspondence Received:

An email from a resident regarding a Kings Coronation bench.

Members discussed this request and thought that the new bench wouldn't be a good idea at this moment in time. It was noted that the bench the PC purchased last year was not really used and was now covered in bird poo and maybe should be relocated.

Action: Clerk to respond and let them know that Cllrs decided not to pursue the new bench presently.

22. Urgent Matters to be brought to the attention of the council:

We are concerned at the number of Councillor vacancies and need to put more activity into finding suitable candidates. Clerk to keep advertising but it was thought a more direct approach was always better, Cllrs to ask residents they thought may like to become Councillors.

The pile of wood with blue netting and fencing round near The Bush has been mentioned as being a bit of an eyesore. Cllrs asked Clerk to see if she would liaise with the builder to see what the intentions with this were and if it could be moved.

Action: Clerk to email the builder regarding relocating this.

It was noted that the white lines on the junction and down Gents Lane were now barely visible and the general road conditions in Gents Lane and the pot holes on the way out of the Village were very poor.

Action: Clerk to speak with Highways to see if they could repaint the lines and check/mend the road.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9:40pm.

Appendix A: District Councillors Report:

Anti-social behaviour awareness

Our community safety team will be out in our market towns this month, sharing information and answering questions from residents, working alongside partners in tenancy management, environmental health and officers from Suffolk Police on the following dates:

- Monday 3 July: Hadleigh, Morrisons
- Tuesday 4 July: Eye, Broad Street
- Wednesday 5 July: Stowmarket Cedars Park Tesco
- Thursday 6 July: Sudbury market

Summer holiday activities and free family fun days

We will soon be promoting our summer holiday activity programme to encourage everyone to stay active and healthy during the school break.

Our holiday, activities and food (HAF) programme, funded by the Department for Education, ensures children in need, for example those eligible for free school meals, continue to receive support through holidays - with places also available to book by others looking to entertain their youngsters locally for a small fee. [Find your local activities.](#)

Also during July we will be holding a series of free family fun days across the districts - offering everything from climbing walls to archery, face-painting to sports. The events will be 10am to 2pm on:

- Monday 24 July at **Eye** Community Centre
- Tuesday 25 July at **Stowmarket** Recreation Ground
- Thursday 27 July at **Shotley** Community Centre
- Friday 28 July at East House Park, **Hadleigh**
- and Monday 31 July at Belle Vue Park, **Sudbury**

Look out for further information on social media over coming weeks and please help us spread the word within your towns and parishes.

Works get underway to install almost 30 new electric vehicle charge points in council car parks

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils are set to install 28 new electric vehicle chargers across their car park network this year, to help tackle climate change. [More information](#)

Districts welcome the Tour of Britain

The UK's biggest professional cycle race, the men's Tour of Britain, is heading to Suffolk on Thursday 7 September. Route details are due to be announced soon, so please keep an eye on our councils' social media pages for the latest information.

Meanwhile we are promoting a competition to design the jersey to be presented to the winner of the Suffolk stage. [More information](#)

Joint Local Plan examination

Examination hearing for our Joint Local Plan took place this week. The virtual sessions can be viewed via the [Joint Local Plan YouTube channel](#). [Find out more about our Joint Local Plan](#).

National Grid pylons consultation

National Grid has launched its latest public consultation on plans for a new high-voltage power line across East Anglia, including Mid Suffolk and Babergh.

The Norwich to Tilbury project has previously been opposed by both councils amid significant concerns, particularly over the impact on the environment.

The public consultation events in our area are:

- Tuesday 11 July, 11am-4pm at Blackbourne Community Centre, Blackbourne Road, Elmswell.
 - Wednesday 19 July, 2pm-7pm - Copdock Village Hall, Old London Road, Copdock.
- There are also consultation webinars on July 5 (1-2pm), July 25 (7-8pm), August 12, 17 (both 10-11am). [For more details visit the National Grid website.](#)

Babergh Chair supports a cause close to her heart

The new Chair of Babergh District Council will be supporting a cause close to her heart which "offers hope to others". [More information](#)

Neighbourhood plan referendums

Three Neighbourhood Planning Referendums will be held in the Babergh District on Wednesday 19 July for [Leavenheath](#), [Stutton](#) and [Wherstead](#).

Voters will be asked *"Do you want Babergh District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area?"*

Please help us to remind electors choosing to vote in person for the Referendums that they will need to bring [photo ID](#).

Appendix B: County Councillors report:

Information Updates

For information on local support during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, visit:
www.suffolk.gov.uk/CostOfLiving

For information on supporting Ukrainian refugees in Suffolk, email: refugeesupport@suffolk.gov.uk or
ukrainesupport@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk

Concern over SCC budget position

At Cabinet on 13 June, our group raised concerns about the significant extra expenditure announced by the Conservative administration since the 2023-24 budget was set in February. Cabinet were reviewing the 2022-23 finances against the budget that was set, including an overspend of £27.7m and a significant £57.2m taken out of Council reserves – the council's 'safety net' funds to be used when needed.

On 16 May 2023 the Cabinet announced that an extra unbudgeted £720k would be found to cover the £60k monthly shortfall for Suffolk Libraries for a year, and at the council AGM on 25 May the Leader of the Council, Cllr Matthew Hicks, announced a further unbudgeted additional £10m for road surfacing in the next 20 months. Given that neither of these items were budgeted for only a few months ago when the current budget was set, my group raised concerns in the meeting whether the administration's budget setting procedures were sufficiently robust.

Missing Child Reports in Suffolk

The recent reports in the press that nearly 3000 missing child reports were received by Suffolk Constabulary between April 2022 and March 2023 deeply shocked our group. The reports involved 719 children across the county with some going missing several times during the period. The majority of the children reported missing are in care settings such as children's homes and foster care.

We asked the administration at Suffolk County Council to do more to support children in care, who are among the most vulnerable in Suffolk.

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm

On 13 June, Cabinet reviewed the consultation response for the extension of the North Falls wind farm. The wind farm is situated just off the Essex coast so Suffolk County Council is a consultee rather than a decision maker.

A number of issues were discussed which will be included in the consultation response, for example the impact on A12 traffic, the views from Suffolk coastal Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the need to consult with communities on the Suffolk coast. The developers will also be asked to time construction so it does not clash with the tourism season.

National Grid Reinforcement Works between Bramford and Twinstead

The Cabinet also reviewed and approved a response to the Planning Inspectorate on upgrading the power lines between the villages of Twinstead in Essex and Bramford in Mid Suffolk.

There were concerns about the impact of the works to the local countryside, particularly the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where the National Grid have agreed to lay cables underground.

The government's aspiration is for 50GW of offshore wind power by 2023, and in East Anglia this means that our throughput must increase from 4.1GW currently to 24.5GW. The existing power line between Bramford and Twinstead is at full capacity and it was acknowledged that the works were necessary to facilitate the increases to wind farm development

Suffolk Fire Service to bring control room back to County

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has announced plans to create a new fire control centre here in Suffolk. Since October 2011, Suffolk has shared a control room with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire and Rescue Service in Huntingdon. The joint project has worked well, saving both fire services money and enabling greater cross border resource sharing.

However, the company behind a project to deliver a new IT system, initiated in 2019, has run into technical and financial problems, causing a significant delay. This, in addition to advancements in technology, has led to the decision to bring fire control back into the county by the end of 2024.

The proposed new control centre will be brought to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet for approval in September 2023

Residents urged to walk or cycle a Mile for your Mind, this Clean Air Day

Suffolk County Council and partners are encouraging people to walk or cycle one mile, to mark national Clean Air Day on Thursday 15 June. This year's theme is 'Clean up our air to look after your mind', which highlights the link between pollution and mental health.

Research, published by Global Action Plan, shows that there is an association between air pollution and conditions including schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, and mood disorders. Air pollution can also lead to a more rapid decline in cognitive function including an increased risk of developing dementia.

For this year's Clean Air Day, Suffolk County Council is inviting people from across Suffolk to take part in a 'Mile for my mind' walk and cycle at 12noon. To take part, residents can set off from anywhere in Suffolk and tag Suffolk County Council (@SuffolkCC) in their photos using the hashtags: #CleanAirDaySuffolk and #AMileForMyMind. For anyone that can't take part at 12noon, the 1 mile can be done anytime on Clean Air Day.

A mile for my mind is supported by organisations and groups across Suffolk including Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Mid Suffolk, East Suffolk and West Suffolk Councils along with the Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board, Suffolk Mind, Talk Club Ipswich, Bury Eco Carriers, Future Female Society.

The Clean Air Day activity marks the start of a programme of air quality engagement work planned for 2023 with officers from Suffolk County Council attending events across the County to speak to people about air pollution and its impact on health, including the Indian Summer Mela on 1 July, Ipswich Music Day on 2 July, Global Rhythms on 8 July and the Multicultural Festival on 23 July.

The council has also just launched its Air Quality Strategy, which has been developed in partnership between Suffolk County Council's Public Health and Communities directorate and the Growth, Highways and Infrastructure directorate, with contributions from district and borough councils, NHS and the University of Suffolk. The strategy sets out actions identified as being important to the improvement of air quality, along with who is the lead authority for the work, timescales, and what will be achieved. The strategy can be viewed at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/airquality

Help for Suffolk Pre-Payment Meter Customers

A package of support has been created for pre-payment meter customers in Suffolk who are struggling with their energy bills.

Warm Homes Suffolk is a Suffolk wide Council partnership service, delivering energy efficiency support to lowincome households affected by cost of living pressures.

Supported by Suffolk's Collaborative Communities Board and funding from Public Health Suffolk's Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), the service is now able to offer specific help for households struggling to pay their energy bills via a pre-payment meter, in addition to its existing support.

The support covers the whole of Suffolk and is available for all residents, whether they are in social housing, council tenants, owner occupiers or private renters.

The Warm Homes Suffolk Service can check eligibility and support applications for grants to increase household energy efficiency, with measures such as loft and wall insulation to air source heat pumps, draught-proofing and more.

It is estimated that more than 24,000 people in Suffolk are pre-payment meter customers. The service will work with each individual to understand the pressures on their finances and the impact this is having on their lives. The service can carry out a home visit, as well as providing advice over the phone and by email.

The COMF funding of £180,000 will enable this project to run for 12 months

Pre-payment meter customers who would like support can contact prepay@eastsuffolk.gov.uk to find out more, or call: Prepay West 07769 365796, or Prepay East 07769 366229.

Referrals can be made directly from households, voluntary sector and professionals to find prepay households who can benefit from an independent look at their bills.

Warm Homes Suffolk also offers support and advice for residents who are not pre-payment meter customers. To find out more about the support on offer, visit: <https://www.warmhomessuffolk.org/>