

Great Blakenham Annual Parish Meeting- Draft



Minutes meeting held on Thursday 14th May 2026 at Parish Rooms 7pm – 7.30pm.
Present: Chair Nick Leonard, Cllr Matt Powell, Cllr Karen Wheeler, Karen Grimwood (Parish Clerk), 6 members of the public.

1. Welcome
2. To receive and approve any apologies for absence. **Cllr Debbie Kemp**
3. To approve the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 8th May 2025 - **Approved**
4. To receive the Chairman's Annual Report covering the past year and plans for the new year
- **See attached**
5. To receive the County Councillor's report – **Due to change of councillor in recent elections no report was received.**
6. To receive the District Councillor's report – **See attached**
7. To receive any other reports – **See attached report from Gt Blakenham Village Hall and Suez**
8. To receive questions from members of the public (allow 15 minutes). **None**
9. To note the date of the next scheduled meeting – **May 2027**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MSD'.

11/6/2026

Chairman's report 2026

I would like to start with placing on record my thanks to Chris Chambers. I always found that Chris took us seriously as a parish council, rarely missed a meeting, listened to our concerns and then took the fight to the powers that be. I hope that our new county councillor proves to be as attentive and effective as Chris.

In a similar vein I would also like to thank Adrienne our district councillor. Again she has worked hard on our behalf holding Mid Suffolk District Council and Port One to account for their actions (or lack of them).

I would also like to thank my fellow councillors and Karen our clerk. Debbie, Matt & Karen W all work fulltime and give their time freely inside and outside of council meetings. I would like to think that between us we work together effectively as a team and the whole is definitely greater than the sum of its parts.

So what have we achieved in the past year ?

On a practical note we have replaced broken street lights on Stowmarket Road, put up solar powered lights for Christmas, arranged for the bus shelter to be repaired, organised for a dangerous tree to be taken down from the churchyard, checked and laid down all unsafe gravestones in the churchyard & cemetery. We have also continued to fund work at the Village Hall and the Bowls Club. We have donated funds to the River Gipping Trust to allow them to continue keeping the river and the river walks clear.

On a governance note our auditors found very little to report on and we have reviewed all the policies etc that we need to. We never forget that the money we spend comes from the pockets of the people of the village and put the maintenance contracts out to tender to ensure that we were getting good value for money.

We have discussed all planning applications in the village and listened to all those who attend the council meetings before agreeing our comments. We cannot control the decisions of Mid Suffolk planners but we can try to let them know what the village thinks.

Which brings me on to Port One... We have met with MSDC & Port One on multiple occasions trying to get them to undertake the legal conditions attached to their previous applications. It was at one of the meetings with Chris & Adrienne when we got Port One to agree to send out the newsletters and hold the public information days at the village halls. Following the information day we conducted a survey to find out the views of the village towards the proposal so that we could properly reflect these. We have attended numerous meetings with other parish councils, MSDC and various experts to try to fight the current application as effectively as we possibly can. Port One are coming to tonight's council meeting to give us the latest updates but at present we anticipate that Port One will resubmit their application in 6-12 months time having changed it to try to overcome the various objections raised.

We have also attended meetings of the Port One Biodiversity Fund and tried to publicise this fund so that the funds can be used within the village.

 11/6/2026

We have also met with MSDC & SCC regarding the local government reorganisation – prior to their placing their submissions to the government. On a personal note I am very worried that the the new Ipswich and South Suffolk council will be run solely for the benefit of Ipswich and the interests of villages such as ourselves will be sacrificed for the “greater good” of Ipswich.

So what does the future hold?

On a bigger picture we will see what the new administration of Suffolk County Council does and how our new county councillor fits in with this.

Over the next year or so the parish council will continue to fight against Port One’s application or should MSDC planners give it the go ahead then we will work with other parishes to obtain more meaningful mitigation from Port One.

We will continue to try to improve the environment of the village. This may only be planting more bulbs, or working with MSDC to plant some more trees but it would be nice to get grant funding to improve the area around Hackneys Corner

Sadly the land owners of the allotment have given us notice to quit the allotments by October. Communication with their agents is difficult but we are trying to get clarity as to what they require and to also sign a lease on the wet meadows between Stowmarket Road & the Gipping

We are aware of the need for suitable replacement site for the allotments or an extension of the cemetery but these are hard to find but if they do arise then then we will try to take advantage of these.

If as expected a planning application for housing is submitted for the field opposite JT Fews then in the absence of a Neighbourhood Plan and given the governments changes to housing requirements etc, we will probably be unable to prevent this but we can strive to make any development the best we can for the village.

Sadly with only 4 councillors who all work fulltime we don’t have the time to create a full Neighbourhood plan but we hope to make progress on a Parish Infrastructure Plan that the planning authority will take into account when considering future planning applications.

Of course many hands make light work so if anybody can give a few hours to the village and join us as councillors then please contact us. There is no particular skill set that is necessary and full training is given so please don’t be backwards in coming forwards. Your Village needs you!



11/6/2026

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT MAY 26

Local Elections: 7 May

On Thursday 7th May, polls across the county will be open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. for residents to vote in local elections. In Mid Suffolk, residents will be able to vote for their next Suffolk County Councillor. Results will be promoted by Suffolk County Council on their website and social media channels. In the meantime, relevant information remains on Mid Suffolk District Council website and on their Facebook page.

New Recycling Collections in Suffolk

From 8th May onwards, residents will begin to receive an information pack which includes details on what items can be put in each of their bins in preparation for the new service starting on 1st June. There are digital versions of the information packs on the Suffolk Recycles website.

Port One Legacy Biodiversity Enhancement Fund

The deadline for Mid Suffolk District Council's Port One Legacy Biodiversity Enhancement Fund has been extended until the end of June.

Community groups that apply for the fund can use it for projects that enhance biodiversity, improve habitats, support community gardens and much more. Details of how to apply can be found on MSDC's community funding page.

Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption

One of the items discussed at the last Joint Audit and Standards Committee (JASC) meeting of MSDC was their annual report on managing fraud and corruption. Internal Audit look at this under the new Global Internal Audit Standards. They have produced a Fraud Risk Register which contains a list of areas where they and Heads of Service believe the councils are susceptible to fraud.

Work on raising fraud awareness is to be furthered through a series of presentations to all Heads of Service and staff responsible for financial transactions undertake a compulsory online e-learning module.

Members of the JASC, including myself, have been offered training on “Countering Fraud and Corruption in Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils”, to be given by the Head of Internal Audit and a Senior Auditor.

Mid Suffolk Youth Council

A standard letter has been composed and sent out to eight high schools chosen to participate in the scheme and was signed by Keith Scarff, Chair of Mid Suffolk District Council. It informs participants that the Youth Council will meet three times a year, once per academic term. These meetings will be half-day sessions, to be held in person at Endeavour House and they are scheduled to begin in October 2026. Currently positive responses have been received from six of the eight, i.e.

Claydon, Debenham, Finsborough, Hartismere, Stowupland and Thurston.

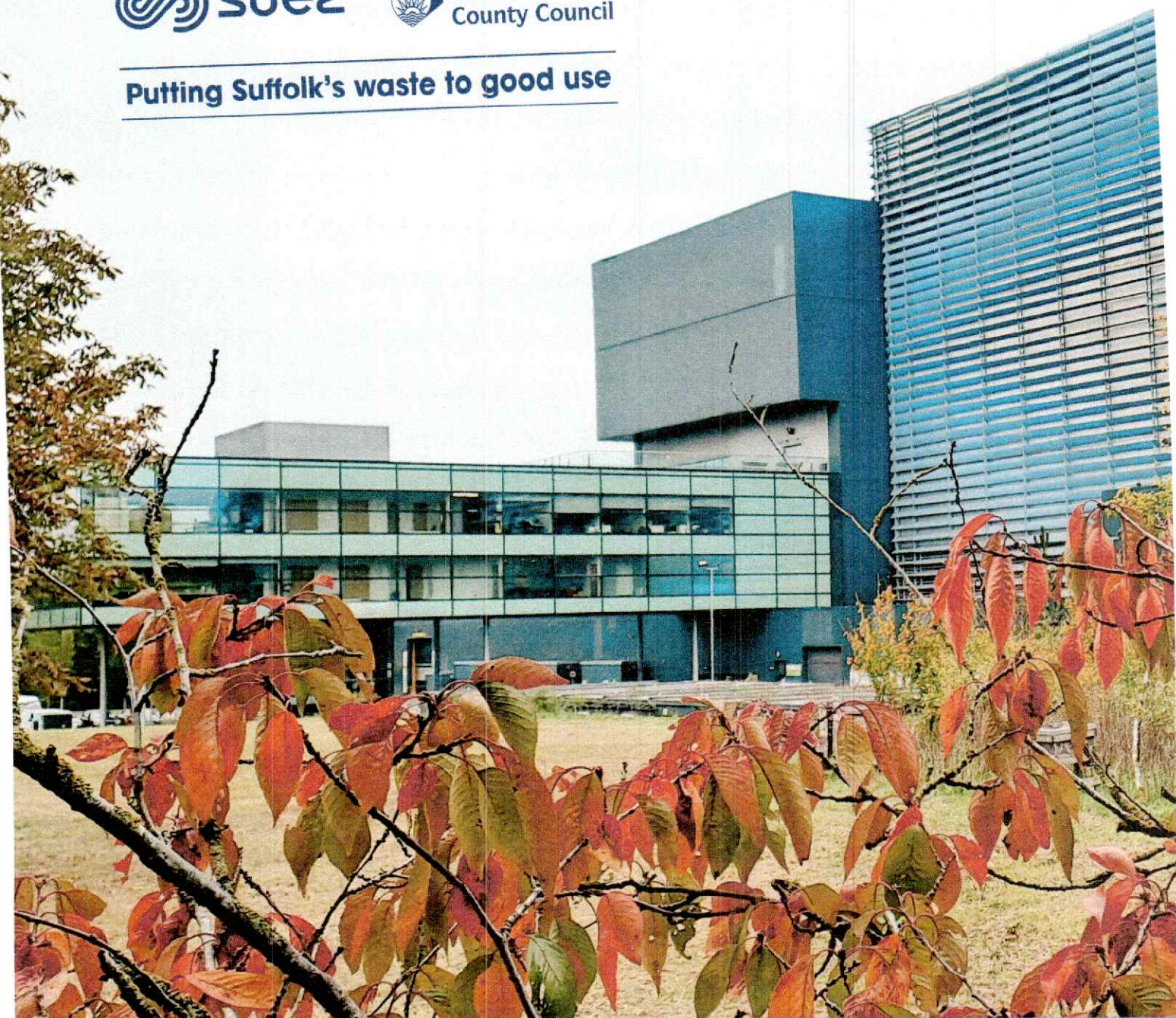
No response has been received from Stowmarket and Stradbroke has declined to participate.

Each school is asked to elect three students to participate in the Youth Council. These students should be of varying ages and show an interest in community involvement, leadership and taking action. Students on the council should work collaboratively with other students across Mid Suffolk, represent their peers and share their perspectives and ideas. They will be able to develop communication and problem-solving skills and influence and contribute to local policy and community initiatives.

Code of Conduct and a Safeguarding policies are currently in draft form.



Putting Suffolk's waste to good use



Suffolk energy-from-waste facility

Winter 2025 newsletter

Telephone: 01473 839149

Email: suffolkefw.uk@suez.com

Website: www.suffolkefw.co.uk

@SuffolkEFW

Operational update

We have now been in partnership with Suffolk County Council for eleven years as we continue to generate electricity for the National Grid using Suffolk's non-recyclable waste.

In 2024, the facility processed 286,588 tonnes of waste and exported 184,402 megawatt hours of electricity to the National Grid. This is enough to power 51,584 homes. We also recovered 62,432 tonnes of bottom ash for use as an aggregate in the construction industry and another 9,552 tonnes of metal for recycling.

This year our annual maintenance shutdown was longer than usual. In addition to carrying out the usual inspection and repair of the furnaces and boiler and any necessary maintenance on all other systems, extensive boiler tube replacements and an overhaul of the ID fans were undertaken. For the first time since going into operation, the grate surfaces inside the furnaces were completely renewed. Work on the furnaces was staggered to enable us to continue to accept direct delivered waste throughout the shutdown period.



**In 2024 we put
286,588 tonnes of
waste to good use
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Visitor centre update

The refurbishment of our visitor centre is now complete. The new-look centre is designed around the waste hierarchy of reducing waste first, followed by reusing, recycling and recovering energy. In line with this, we have used as many reclaimed and repurposed materials as possible in its construction, including some charming "old-school" gym benches, which have brought back memories for some of our visitors!

The new design is primarily aimed at our younger visitors, and the open, classroom-like arrangement has enabled us to offer more focused, hands-on activities around waste and recycling. This, together with the tour of the facility, is proving popular with the primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and youth groups such as Brownies and Cubs that have visited since the relaunch. All in all, our community liaison managers have hosted 77 tours over the past year, welcoming over a thousand visitors.

The Suffolk EfW holds the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, which recognises quality learning opportunities and effective risk management and gives schools peace of mind when organising visits to our site.

Tours of the site are free of charge to all visiting groups. If you are part of an educational or adult group, or a local resident who would be interested in visiting the site, please contact us at suffolkefw.uk@suez.com.

Alternatively, groups of less than five people can book onto one of our upcoming open days at: suffolkefwopenday.eventbrite.co.uk.



Visitor centre relaunch

We celebrated 10 years of working in partnership with Suffolk County Council to put Suffolk's waste to good use and the relaunch of the visitor centre in July.

The event was attended by some of the people who have been part of our journey over the past decade as well as those who were instrumental in the refurbishment of the visitor centre.

Among the people who spoke at the event were Councillor Chris Chambers (Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, Suffolk County Council), Steve Palfrey (Assistant Director, Waste & Environment, Suffolk County Council), John Scanlon (Chief Executive Officer, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK) and Tim Otley (Managing Director, Energy, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK).



Sustainability

COMMITMENT TO BIODIVERSITY

The Suffolk EfW has remained steadfast in supporting SUEZ recycling and recovery UK's commitment to improving biodiversity and sustainable practises on all sites across the country.

A report produced by Suffolk Wildlife Trust last year identified improvements to support the future management of the various habitats on our site and increase the biodiversity. Based on these suggestions, our sustainability champions developed an action plan that has been implemented by members of the operations teams.



These included:

Bat boxes, which were built using suitable recovered materials and have been installed on the monolith tree near the scrub woodland on our site.

Stag beetle pyramids, to provide habitats for stag beetles, which rely on decaying wood that is in contact with the soil to feed on as larvae, and in which to lay their eggs.

Planters were built using reclaimed wood to replace the original planters, which had begun to rot. In spring, these will be planted with wildflowers to attract butterflies and bees.

Compost bins were constructed and placed near our car park to make it easy for staff to drop off their grass cuttings, leaves, wood ash, shredded paper and other compostables. The compost produced will be used in the planters on the meadow.

PEREGRINE FALCONS

With the help and guidance of Mr Peter Merchant, a Defra registered bird of prey rehabilitation expert, the nesting box was refurbished early this year, in preparation for the arrival of the pair of peregrine falcons that has used it for the past three years.



Sadly, although the male was seen on site in April, the female did not arrive and so no eggs were laid. Peter explained that the number of breeding pairs of peregrine falcons was lower than usual across England this year, although we cannot be sure of the reason. The nesting box, with its new ventilation holes and shingle, is ready and waiting for the next breeding season and we hope to have better news then.

Out in the community

OUTREACH PROJECTS

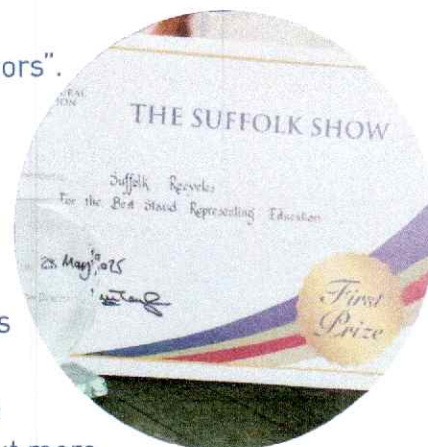
Visits to local schools, youth clubs and adult groups across Suffolk have continued to be an important part of our interaction with the community. Our community liaison managers delivered talks about waste in Suffolk, the waste hierarchy, and the energy-from-waste process. Over the past year we have supported 13 different outreach events, connecting with over 800 people at schools, youth clubs and adult group meetings.



SUFFOLK SHOW 2025

The Suffolk EfW team once again participated in the Suffolk Recycles stand, which was awarded first prize for the Best Stand Representing Education at the Suffolk Show this year!

The theme was "Celebrate the Outdoors". Over the two days, more than 6,000 people visited the stand and participated in the range of fun activities that were available, as well as having the opportunity to find out more about how the waste and recycling collection services will change in 2026. Following on from its popularity last year, SUEZ took along the grabber game again. This had children and adults of all ages testing their skills in moving bags of "waste" from the bunker into the furnace!



LATITUDE FESTIVAL

In July one of our community liaison managers joined the Suffolk Waste Partnership at Latitude festival to engage with festival goers over the three-day event. The team led interactive sessions making a variety of recycled crafts including head bands and bracelets from scrap fabric and disused hi-vis vests to reinforce the important reuse message. Another popular activity involved making signs from scrap paper and old cardboard boxes.

Out in the community

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

We were once again a part of the national Heritage Open Days festival, with both tours being fully booked. This year's theme was "Architecture", so visitors were given some insight into the design and construction of our BREEAM Outstanding building. The BREEAM scheme measures a building's environmental performance, with points awarded for environmental features incorporated into its design, construction and use. The building, designed by Grimshaw architects, is one of only 2% of buildings worldwide that have achieved the outstanding rating.



Visitors were given a presentation about waste and recycling and were able to ask questions of the site's community liaison manager and a member of the waste team from Suffolk County Council, before spending some time in the control room, and having the opportunity to interact with the operatives on duty. They were then taken on a guided tour of the facility, including the boiler house and ash processing facility.

We were delighted with the feedback received through Heritage Open Days, with one visitor saying *"The event was brilliant - I thoroughly enjoyed the tour and found the explanation easy to understand. I attended as I was looking to enhance my knowledge of waste, but the information provided was over and above what I expected. The tour manager was fantastic - very knowledgeable and was able to answer all questions posed. I certainly left the tour knowing a lot more."*

For more information about Heritage Open Days, visit www.heritageopendays.org.uk.

SPONSORSHIP

This year the Suffolk EfW provided sponsorship to three local schools for various projects.

Somersham Primary School built a cover for their outdoor learning area, which will promote more inclusive and engaging learning, and deepen the children's connection with nature.

Claydon High School purchased raised planters to support their mini garden and allotment, which provides a calm space for students as they take care of the plants and connect with nature.

We sponsored Claydon Primary School's colour run, which raised over £3,000 to fund trips and experiences for the children.



Out in the community

A DAY A YEAR TO VOLUNTEER

The Suffolk EfW team supported SUEZ's "Day a Year to Volunteer" initiative, which offers every employee a day's paid leave each year to volunteer for a charitable organisation of their choice. Some of the locations that benefited from their enthusiastic participation include Orford Ness, Landguard Fort, Mildenhall Cricket Club and Lackford Lakes.

A group also had the privilege of volunteering at the home of Mr Peter Merchant, a Defra-licensed bird of prey rehabilitator/keeper who provides information and support to several industrial sites throughout East Anglia where peregrine falcons have established nesting sites. His work at the Suffolk EfW has been invaluable, and with his assistance we have had six young peregrines fledge from our boiler house roof.

Pete has personally rehabilitated about 1,500 birds of prey, 35 of which were peregrine falcons. He does this at his home in Ipswich on a voluntary basis, and pays for everything out of his own pocket, so when he told us that he needed to do some work on his aviaries, we were happy to assist. Pete was also the very deserving winner of the Animal category of the BBC Suffolk Make a Difference Awards this year.

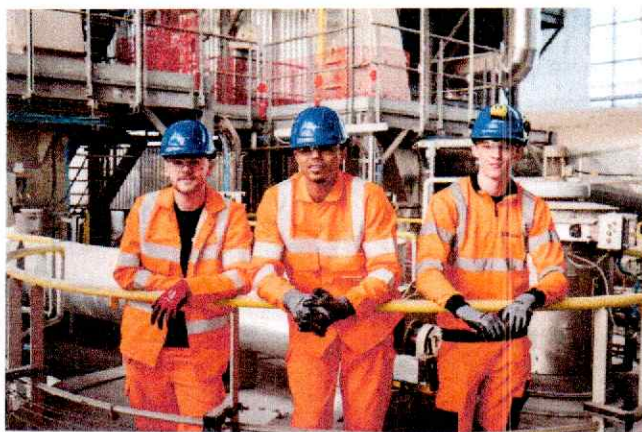


Supporting future careers

WORK EXPERIENCE

We have continued to support young people to gain a better understanding of life beyond school and college. This year we hosted two Year 10 students for their work experience week, providing them with the chance to engage with the world of work and to find out more about the roles played by the staff in various departments of the energy-from-waste plant.

We also hosted a BTech student from Suffolk One College for his two weeks of work experience. He spent time with members of our maintenance and operations team, gaining valuable insight into the attitudes and competencies required to succeed in an engineering environment. These experiences will also enable him to make more informed career decisions once he has completed his course.



APPRENTICES

Although our apprentices are officially in the third year of their Level 3 Diploma in Engineering at West Suffolk College, they have all been offered permanent positions at our site. It is very pleasing that the skills and knowledge that they have developed during their time with us will continue to benefit the site, and we look forward to supporting their continued career progression.



CAREERS EVENTS

We continue to support SUEZ's aim to inspire and develop the next generation of green talent, participating in a range of events at local schools and colleges presenting career options to over 400 young people.



The team once again took part in the Suffolk Youth Climate Conference as well as Framlingham College's Green Careers Fair and Green Careers Week at Suffolk One College.

This year we have also worked with Suffolk New College, running a day workshop with Level 1 T-level Engineering students.

In addition, our relationship with Claydon High School's LIFE faculty is ongoing, as we once again supported their annual Learning About Work day. This is an event aimed at guiding year 11 students in their choice of career and the challenges of the process of applying for employment.



Charity fund raising

SUEZ has continued the partnerships with Macmillan Cancer Support and the British Heart Foundation. The focus for this year has been the Big Four, a campaign aimed at raising funds for these charities through challenges inspired by the four natural elements – earth, air, water and fire. SUEZ employees have been enthusiastic participants, taking part in a range of activities including skydiving, cycling and hiking challenges.

The Suffolk EfW team kept things a little tamer, taking inspiration from the fire element to raise funds by partaking in a chilli lunch.

In addition to supporting our corporate charities, we also raised funds for other charities.



ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

The site team celebrated Easter by holding a tea and cake morning. Staff purchased tickets for the Easter egg raffle and made donations for a slice of cake or one of the other delicious treats. We raised £210 for the Alzheimer's Society's Forget Me Not Appeal.

SCOPE FESTIVE FUND

Helping to raise a smile,
and make the festive
period enjoyable for all

Three Suffolk charities, Red Gables and Jam Community Pot in Stowmarket and Inspire Suffolk, each received £500 after being nominated by site staff and selected by the SCOPE Festive Fund.

Now in its sixth year, the fund has donated almost £180,000 to 396 good causes that are supporting those in need.

The focus of the fund is "helping to raise a smile, and make the festive period enjoyable for all", and we know that this money will have gone a long way towards assisting these charities with their community outreach over the festive season.

SUEZ recycling and recovery UK proudly presents

THE BIG FOUR

June – December 2025

EARTH AIR FIRE WATER
four elements, one purpose
raising £100,000 for charity

Register for your event pack online
www.suez.co.uk/thebigfour

Questions? Email givingsomethingback.uk@suez.com

In aid of
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

In aid of
British Heart
Foundation

suez

Only SUEZ recycling and recovery UK employees are eligible to register for The Big Four.
All money raised by The Big Four will go to Macmillan Cancer Support and British Heart Foundation.