

Parish Report - September 2019

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Hundreds of children still unsure about school transport arrangements

In September 2019, Suffolk County Council's new Home to School transport policy will be implemented. Children moving to a new school will only receive free transport from the council if it is their nearest school and more than 2 miles from their homes. All eligible parents were asked to opt-in and apply for transport, and those who were not eligible for free transport were offered the opportunity to buy a spare seat on SCC school buses.

However, 472 applications for home-to-school transport remained outstanding at the end of August, with families unsure of whether they would be allocated a seat on an SCC school bus in time for the start of the new school year.

First stage of Boundary Commission review

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently undertaking a review of Suffolk County Council, to determine both the number of councillors and the boundaries between divisions.

For the first stage of the review, the Liberal Democrat, Green and Independent Group submitted a proposal to keep councillor numbers in Suffolk at a minimum of 75, with the potential for an increase to 80. This was based on the need to ensure proper local representation and encourage diversity amongst councillors, which consequently requires a more manageable workload. Furthermore, given the predicted population growth in Suffolk and the reduced funding that local government is receiving, it is likely that councillor workloads will only continue to increase in the future.

The Conservative and Labour Groups submitted a joint proposal asking for a reduction to 70 councillors.

The next stage of the review will determine the new division boundaries and will include two public consultations. The review is expected to be completed by July 2020.

My sponsored walk

I'll be completing my sponsored 60-mile walk along the Suffolk coast on 13-16th September, to raise money for Multiple System Atrophy Trust in memory of my wife. If you would like to sponsor me, my Just Giving page is: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/david-wood143>.