



## **East Suffolk Council - 2019**

We are delighted to update Felixstowe Town Council on creation of East Suffolk Council.

East Suffolk Council was created on 1 April 2019 and is now the largest District Council in England. The Conservative Group will form the first ever Administration of East Suffolk Council, following the election of 55 councillors to the new authority: the Conservatives claim 39 seats, with Labour taking seven seats, the Greens winning four, Liberal Democrats three and two seats going to Independent candidates. The first ever Full Council meeting will take place on Wednesday 22 May at East Suffolk House in Melton. This meeting will see confirmation of both the new Leader and Chairman of the Council.

The key message is that whilst we are in a time of change, it is business as usual in Felixstowe.

Felixstowe is a great place to live, work and visit and there is a real buzz about the town – and part of the credit for that must go to the partnership working being carried out in the town that is being spearheaded by Felixstowe Forward.

Felixstowe Forward was set up in partnership with East Suffolk Council, Felixstowe Town Council and Suffolk County Council in 2015 to develop a collective approach to tackling the town's key challenges and opportunities.

It was agreed to extend this initiative until 2021 to provide continuity within the town as East Suffolk Council emerges.

At the 2018 Felixstowe Forward annual engagement event aspirational plans were shared with the town. These included plans for a new iconic leisure centre, the North Felixstowe Garden Development, and the South Seafront. A lot has happened to move these plans forward.

The South Seafront beach shelters and public conveniences have been renovated and a successful application to the Coastal Communities Fund and Coastal Revival Fund of £980k means that work can progress to provide a new café/restaurant destination and new information and heritage boards.

East Suffolk Council recognises the challenge faced by town centres and is committed to finding ways to support businesses.

For this reason, a shopper's survey and business confidence survey has been commissioned and we are awaiting the report on this work.

Felixstowe Forward is exploring with a business-led working group the feasibility of a Business Improvement District, a proven intervention model in other successful towns, as well as identifying key priorities and aspirations to support future applications to potential funds as they become available, such as the Future High Streets Fund for town centre revitalisation.

Through Felixstowe Forward, East Suffolk Council has continued to support initiatives to grow the visitor economy and raise the profile of 'Visit Felixstowe – Great Days by the Sea'.

As anyone living in Felixstowe will know, if it is a fine day or an event day Felixstowe is 'heaving' with visitors which is good for our businesses and tourist attractions. Visitor impact studies in 2016 estimated the total value of tourism in Felixstowe at £55m, a growth of approximately 14% when compared to 2013 figures. This growth is expected to continue.

Communities are at the heart of all towns and East Suffolk Council is delighted to be working in partnership with Felixstowe Town Council to invest in three public parks - Gosford Way, Allenby Park and Cavendish Park.

East Suffolk Council also remains committed to local groups and organisations including Felixstowe Dementia Friendly Community, Time banking Initiative, Men's Sheds, Leading Lives, Laydon's and Stennetts Community Café's and the Ambitions Network.

The Felixstowe Academy promoted the Period Poverty initiative which has now been rolled out with schools across East Suffolk. An Intergenerational event in December 2018 was well attended and brought together young people from 3 schools to work with residents from 5 care homes in the town.

On June 18<sup>th</sup> Felixstowe Forward will be holding its 2019 annual event, updating the town on developments, launching a Felixstowe prospectus and continuing to explore ways in which East Suffolk Council and partners, including Felixstowe Town Council, can continue to make Felixstowe a great place to live, work and visit.

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