

Parish Report July 2007

Councillor

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Securing the Future

At the Full Council meeting on 22 February, agreement was given for the council's chief executive to develop plans to design a new organisational model for the County Council, the report which will be discussed at the Full Council meeting on 12th July is the results of this.

On 12th July the Full County Council will be discussing the suggested changes to the structure of the county council. The programme, which has been given the name 'Securing the Future' proposes a radically different way of working to deliver Suffolk County Council's services. It is expected that if it gets the go-ahead it will be implemented over the next three years. As yet we do not have any definite information about what the new structure will look like or how it will work. I will update you further when I know more details.

July Smoking Ban

As Suffolk goes smoke free on July 1, the county council has warned residents of the increase risk of home fires. As smoking in public places becomes outlawed, safety experts fear that many more residents will choose to smoke at home, at private parties, picnics and barbeques or even in their cars, so increasing the risk of smoking related fires.

The latest figures from the Department for Communities suggests that those households with a smoker living in them are nearly 35 per cent more likely to have a fire than non-smoking homes, something that could increase if more people choose to smoke at home. More people die in smoking-material related fires than any other. Nearly a third of all households in England include a smoker and these households are nearly 35% more likely to have a fire than non-smoking homes.

Some simple tips have been suggested:

- Never leave a lit cigarette unattended.
- Put it out, put it right out - make sure cigarettes are completely extinguished before disposing of them.
- Use a sealed ashtray instead of a bin.
- Do not smoke in bed.

- Avoid smoking late in the evening, especially if you are tired or have been drinking - this is most likely time for accidental fires.
- Cigarettes and alcohol is a risky mix - make sure guests at parties smoke in one room where the risks can be better managed and monitored, or even better, outside in the garden.
- If you are smoking in your garden, remember, even if its been raining, the ground can be tinder dry and fire can spread through dry grass in seconds.
- Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.

Decision makers questioned from Suffolk's refugees and asylum seekers

Refugees and asylum seekers living in Suffolk will be questioning key decision makers at a special forum event on 22 June. As part of Refugee Week, a 'Question Time' style event was held at Endeavour House in Ipswich, with a panel including John Gummer MP and Richard Howitt MEP.

This was an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to raise issues that concern them with political representatives and experts on asylum and immigration issues. Suffolk County Council Chairman welcomed people to the event, and the panel was chaired by Ian Beattie, from the East of England Regional Assembly's Consortium for Refugee Integration.

There were Farsi, Arabic and Kurdish interpreters at the event to assist people to make a full contribution to the debate.