

**TOP-TEN REPORT FOR BUNGAY AND THE VILLAGES (MARCH & APRIL 2024)**  
**East Suffolk Councillors Toby Hammond and Anthony Specca**

1. As Cabinet Member for Transport, Toby has very nearly halved the cost of annual parking permits in East Suffolk car-parks from £650 to £350 per year. A huge hike in prices by the previous Administration in 2021 caused uproar in our communities, especially in Bungay where many residents have no parking alternatives. The price reduction took effect on 1 April 2024, and we hope it will provide relief to hard-pressed residents at a time when general living costs are high.
2. Anthony and Toby are happy to report that we've allocated the full £15,000 of our 2023-24 Enabling Communities Budgets to worthy projects, including to town and parish councils in the ward; cultural organisations such as the Black Shuck Festival and Fisher Theatre; and community groups focused on youth and the elderly, such as Back in the Groove and Bungay Sea Scouts. With local elections now behind us, we're able to accept new grant applications for 2024-25.
3. East Suffolk Council recently passed a motion declaring a Biodiversity Emergency. Everyone is aware of the alarming loss of species and habitats at home and abroad, and our declaration underscores our commitment to take care of our environment. It also builds on and complements the Climate Emergency declaration that East Suffolk Council declared in 2019, and together the two declarations will help guide future policies and programmes.
4. Toby and Anthony are pleased that Suffolk County Council unanimously rejected a proposal for a large extension to the Ellough Anaerobic Digester plant, after strong local opposition including our own. AD is presented as green, but the current system rewards unsustainable farming, generates significant lorry traffic on unsuitable roads, and disturbs local residents with smells and noise.
5. Toby and Anthony were alarmed to read of the apparent insolvency and closure of Ringsfield Hall, a much loved outdoor-education centre that has welcomed groups of children since 1971. On investigation, we believe that it could be saved by another educational charity that has expressed a serious and credible plan, and we're pushing hard for trustees to consider this solution.
6. Anthony and Toby also strongly objected to the blanket felling of trees along the B1062 in Flixton. The private landowner felled the trees after instruction from Suffolk County Council's highways division regarding traffic safety. The Forestry Commission was not consulted, and though traffic safety is paramount, we believe proper consultation could have helped avoid such destructive felling. We've sought assurances that similar future situations will be better managed.
7. Bungay has suffered from a spate of serious anti-social behaviour, including property damage and violent assaults by youth on other youth. Toby and Anthony maintain contact with the Kestrel Team police-response unit recently patrolling the town. They've engaged with youth suspected of offences, some of whom have difficult home-lives. We've pressed for continued police presence on our streets, and we've allocated some of our own communities funding to youth initiatives.
8. Anthony is delighted to announce that East Suffolk Council unanimously passed his Chair's motion to establish a permanent East Suffolk Youth Council (ESYC). Planning for the ESYC is now underway, and Anthony hopes our first youth councillors will take their seats in the 2024-25 school year. ESYC will be open to secondary-school-age youth across East Suffolk, and it will have real and robust connections to discussions and debates at the regular East Suffolk Council.
9. As Chair of Council, Anthony was pleased to attend a production of *Draining the Swamp* at Beccles Public Hall, a play about Oswald Mosley and the worrisome state of political discourse today, the 50th-anniversary celebrations of the Felixstowe-Wesel Twinning Partnership at Harvest House in Felixstowe, and the Suffolk County Chairman's Reception at SWT Carlton Marshes.
10. The series of flagship regeneration projects in Lowestoft are now well underway with the construction of the Jubilee parade seafront cafe complex having begun this month under Toby's Economic Development brief. This is part of £84m which is being invested in a brighter future for Lowestoft, which has included an award-winning programme of heritage restorations.