

TOP-TEN REPORT FOR BUNGAY AND THE VILLAGES (JUNE, JULY & AUGUST 2025)
East Suffolk Councillors Toby Hammond and Anthony Specia

1. The owner of the long-derelict building on Priory Lane in Bungay opposite the Factory Shop has not been identified, despite exhaustive detective work. He is presumed deceased. As the building was becoming a risk to the town, Toby and Anthony have dedicated a small amount of funding from our Enabling Communities Budget to tidy up and secure the property. It's a good example of the diverse purposes to which our ECB funding can be put.
2. Campaigning from Anthony and Toby has resulted in a change of position on the planned withdrawal of Resident Exemption Parking Permits, a district-wide scheme designed to help property owners without parking provision to find practical places to park in historic market towns such as Bungay. The scheme has been extended for at least six further months whilst ESC pressures Suffolk County Council to formalise the scheme in their Highways regulations.
3. Local Government Reorganisation, which will see the streamlining of local government into a single tier, continues apace. ESC and other district councils have launched their campaign for three unitary councils within Suffolk under the slogan: '*Three Councils For Suffolk: Big enough to deliver, local enough to care*', in contrast to the Conservative-led Suffolk County Council's preference for a single mega-council. There are signs that the Minister of State for Local Government is listening to our perspective, and we should hear more this autumn.
4. Thanks to a strong and innovative carbon-emissions condition for which Anthony and Toby successfully lobbied, the VC Cooke waste incinerator at Ellough will be perhaps more tightly regulated than any in the country. But thanks to Suffolk County Council's decision to permit the incinerator in the first place, it proved impossible to do more. We continue to believe that waste incineration is the wrong way to generate energy today, and we would like to see changes in attitude at County level on these sorts of developments.
5. Toby has been appointed Vice-Chair of the Planning North Committee. As well as occasionally chairing the meetings, the Vice-Chair also helps determine which applications are controversial enough that they should be deliberated in public by the Committee, selected from amongst the many thousands for which the ESC Planning Team is delegated to make decisions.
6. The Kings Head Hotel in Bungay remains in a very sorry state under its current owners, waste company VC Cooke. Their severe and damaging alterations to the building without planning permission or listed building consent proves, in our view, that they are unsuitable owners for this significant and historical town-centre asset. They have now applied for retrospective consent for these alterations, which may now be the only pragmatic way forward. However, on our insistence, their application will be considered publicly in an open session of Planning Committee North.
7. The long-running application for a huge poultry unit at Shadingfield is going to Planning North Committee on 9th September, in the face of resolute opposition from the local community. Anthony and Toby have made a strong objection in support of the Parish Council, and we are hopeful of the right outcome.
8. The deadline to apply for an East Suffolk Council grant for upgrading village halls, community centres and other community hubs has been extended to 23rd September. We strongly encourage applications from our communities: see eastsuffolk.co/building-grants-application.
9. Congratulations to all those involved in the Bungay Black Shuck Festival, another huge success, bringing much attention and many visitors to the town. Anthony and Toby assisted with the parade and security arrangements, and also with financial support from our ECB funding.
10. As Chair, Anthony was delighted to 'drop the flag' once again at the official start of the Men's Tour of Britain in Woodbridge. We're pleased that the Tour continues to begin in East Suffolk, and that ESC continues to be a major supporter of this international elite cycling event. The peloton raced through our ward once again this year, and we hope local residents were able to enjoy it.