

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a rural Suffolk landscape. In the foreground, there's a lush green field with some taller grass on the left. In the middle ground, a church with a prominent square tower stands among other buildings and trees. The background shows more rolling green hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A large tree with green leaves is visible on the far left side of the frame.

SUFFOLK

PRESERVATION SOCIETY

A Manifesto for Suffolk

2019-2029





Welcome to our **Manifesto for Suffolk**

As part of the celebration of our 90th Anniversary in 2019, we have prepared this Manifesto to set out our promise to Suffolk for the next 10 years. The Suffolk Preservation Society was set up in 1929 with the charitable object to protect and promote the unique beauty of the heritage and landscape of our county.

Suffolk is home to a dazzling wealth of beautiful landscapes and sites of archaeological interest and built heritage. We all love our big skies, the church towers that reach up to meet them, the wonderful wool towns, the tranquil estuaries, the Brecks and the sunny coast.

The county has two nationally designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – The Dedham Vale and Suffolk Coast & Heaths. We are also home to many locally valued landscapes including nature reserves, river valleys, greens and commons.

Suffolk ranks as one of the richest counties in terms of its built heritage. We are host to 173 conservation areas and over 13,000 listed buildings as well as over 200 scheduled ancient monuments and 44 registered parks and gardens. It is for this reason that the Suffolk Preservation Society was established and why we have campaigned tirelessly for the last 90 years, to fight to protect the things that we value most about Suffolk. This Manifesto sets out the challenges we see facing Suffolk in the decade ahead and how we will strive to keep Suffolk such an extraordinary place.

Geoffrey Probert DL. President

*The Society does not argue for an unchanging Suffolk;
rather we seek future changes of the right sort, and in the
right place, for those who live, work and visit here*



Trustees at 2019: Ralph Carpenter DipArch RIBA, Jessica de Grazia BA JD, Andrew Fane OBE MA FCA, Lois Hunt, Bob Kindred MBE BA MRTPI IHBC, Nicholas Pearson OBE FCSI, Geoffrey Probert DL, Rev Tony Redman MA BSc FRICS IHBC, Cerys Shepherd, Jess Tipper MA PHD Cantab FSA, Robert Townshend DiplA CMLI Hon FRBS, Jackie Ward BA (Hons) Dip.TP MBA MRTPI.



A message from the Chairman

It is an almost commonplace statement, but one still worth repeating: all is change.

Suffolk has undergone significant changes over the centuries, resulting in the varied landscapes, distinct architectural styles and diverse economic activities we see around us today.

Yet the inevitability of change should not instil in our society a weary acceptance of everything that is happening to us.

We the people who live, work and visit this fine county, have the right and the duty to ask difficult questions: What is causing these changes? Who benefits? Who loses out? Do these changes respect our past? Do they point to a better future? How can we shape them?

For the last 90 years the Suffolk Preservation Society has been persistent in asking those difficult questions.

We are not against change – far from it.

But the Society does believe that today Suffolk faces an unprecedented coalition of forces that, unless directed and moderated by local communities, will result in a county that has been badly degraded for its residents or those who visit us.

Hence, this Manifesto for Suffolk. In the following pages, I hope you will see our positive programme over the next decade for shaping a truly modern Suffolk: one that changes in line with the aspirations of its communities – where economic opportunity and prosperity go hand-in-hand with a high quality environment for all.

Andrew Fane OBE MA FCA. Chairman

Suffolk Preservation Society

an introduction

The first 90 years

In 1929 Suffolk was at a crossroads, exposed to rapid change: its old buildings neglected and in poor condition and the landscape vulnerable to insensitive alteration.

Enter Muriel Schofield, who had moved to Otley in 1925. She had an interest in architecture and archaeology, and fell in love with Suffolk. She persuaded people of goodwill to join her in her quest to 'rescue' Suffolk, and the Suffolk Preservation Society was founded.

Thanks to helpful publicity provided by the local press, floods of letters flowed in to the Society with many concerns. It was the fate of water and of windmills that caused the greatest agitation, most had been completely lost by the 1930s. The Society successfully saved one, Pakenham Water Mill, which survives today and is a valuable contribution to social history and the rural landscape.

During the early years the Society took on many issues such as registering important buildings worthy of preservation, speaking to schools to attract young people, and campaigning against pylon blight and atomic power.

Today, the Society has a focused approach working within the current planning system. It works with other like-minded bodies, societies and people to create the momentum for appropriate challenge and change.

It campaigns to highlight the important issues affecting Suffolk's landscape and heritage today and in the future.





In 1929 Suffolk was at a crossroads, exposed to rapid change: its old buildings neglected and in poor condition and the landscape vulnerable to insensitive alteration. 90 years on, the county faces even greater challenges from large scale and inappropriate development

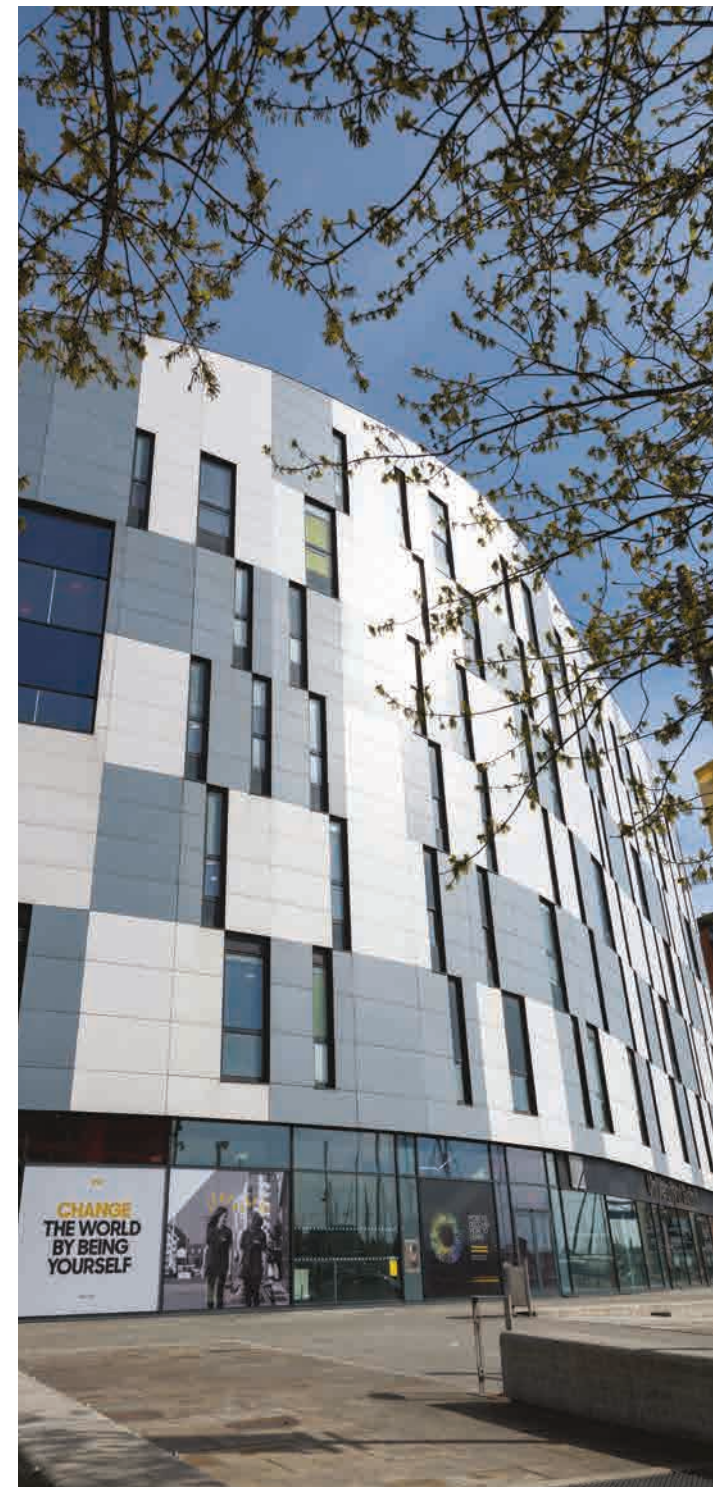
Suffolk today's challenges

Suffolk's landscapes, towns and villages – the challenge ahead

Government house building targets and the economic revival of the county, especially in the high-tech, renewable energy and logistics sectors, is creating unprecedented pressures in Suffolk. The challenge is to maintain a healthy balance between development and protecting our landscapes, towns and villages.

In the 1980s, Suffolk's population was around 550,000. By 2017 that had grown to nearly 760,000 and is projected to reach over 820,000 by 2039. This has required, and will continue to require, large numbers of new houses to be built. At the same time, there is an increasing demand for more employment, better roads, broadband and mobile telephone infrastructure as well as a national demand to support nuclear and renewable power generation. All of this threatens the character of Suffolk's prized landscape and historic built environment.

The Suffolk Preservation Society believes that a sustainable balance must be struck between these competing elements. If the present imbalance continues between the requirement for development and the need to cherish what we have, Suffolk will lose out. Its special landscapes will be degraded, its historic centres harmed and its sustainable economic growth threatened.





Suffolk today's challenges

Housing development and 'anywhere' design

Suffolk's character is at risk from mass standardised housing on a scale never seen before. Whilst our county has not yet been affected to the extent of some parts of the country, it is impossible to ignore that with every passing year the nature of our towns and villages is being impacted by generic housing.

These developments often bear no relation to their surroundings as the designs and the materials used in their construction make little use of local techniques, colours or styles. Such large housing estates often lack trees and open spaces and are dominated by poorly thought out car parking. The fundamental character of their host settlement can be forever lost.

The population of some of Suffolk's villages is projected to nearly double following the granting of planning permission for multiple large housing developments. The primary cause of such an explosion of large scale housing developments is central Government policy of increasing housing numbers. The Government's agenda is for 300,000 new houses to be built nationally each year to meet the needs of a growing population and changing demographic. This means Suffolk can expect to host in the region of 3,000 new homes every year.

Ideally, many of these would be constructed on brownfield sites, but there are very few of those in Suffolk. This means that inevitably our countryside will be developed – usually on sites on the edges of our towns and villages.



*We encourage high quality design,
both vernacular and contemporary,
to avoid 'anywhere' houses that
are identical whether they are in
Suffolk, Surrey or Sussex*



Suffolk today's challenges

Green Energy and Suffolk

The future of energy generation presents particular challenges for Suffolk, as one of the largest providers of the nation's energy. The county is host to a number of current and future nationally important energy infrastructure projects.

The Suffolk Preservation Society recognises the importance and value of such projects, not least in terms of addressing climate change as well as job creation during both their construction and operational phases.

Our concern, however, shared by many local communities, is that Suffolk is expected to shoulder such projects with insufficient consideration given to their environmental and community costs.

Whether it is a new nuclear power station, large off-shore wind farms, transmission lines, on-shore substations, the installation of underground cabling or the impact on the local road system of huge numbers of construction vehicles, the impacts across Suffolk will be substantial.

In addition, the impact on Suffolk's tourist sector from the damaging effects of energy industrialisation is a real concern.

The lack of a strategic and coordinated approach to energy production makes the cumulative impact of these individual projects particularly threatening. Without a Government-led holistic plan that links together all the existing and future energy projects in Suffolk, the county risks being degraded forever.





The implications for this county's most precious landscapes, especially those in the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, must be fully understood, costed and mitigated



Photo: Dave Palmer Birds | Images. Burstall substation. ©

Suffolk today's challenges

A shrinking public sector

In the last 10 years, constrained public finances have negatively impacted on the level of public service. The merger of many district councils has created local government with fewer councillors, planning and conservation staff, and is viewed by many as being more remote.

In addition to a loss of capacity, the last decade has seen the loss of some of the most experienced and senior staff.

We believe that stretched resources will inevitably lead to a reduction in the effective scrutiny of planning applications and delays in updating council planning policies.

The Suffolk Preservation Society, therefore, believes that it is more important than ever that everyone associated with the county: parish and town councils, communities, developers, and amenity groups work with local authorities to ensure that the planning system works to the best advantage of Suffolk.

When all of these elements are working together the system is in a balance of sorts – which is an essential prerequisite for the delivery of sustainable development.



*By working together we
can deliver attractive and
sustainable homes for
communities to thrive*



Suffolk Preservation Society

our manifesto

Protecting our landscapes and heritage


The Suffolk Preservation Society is the county's guardian: our core purpose is to protect our landscapes and heritage from damage through inappropriate developments.

We will continue to use our professional staff, expert board of trustees and specialist volunteers to hold the decision makers to account.

This means we will:

- Scrutinise draft local and national policy documents and lobby for changes to better protect our county's landscape and heritage
- Review and respond to key planning applications
- Lobby councils' planning teams to ensure that they give proper weight to conserving our natural and built environment
- Support local authority heritage teams in their efforts to protect the county's important heritage buildings
- Advise local communities and parish councils where they aim to modify or oppose damaging planning applications or influence emerging local policy
- Provide training on landscape and heritage planning issues to aid local communities and parish councils in responding to planning issues
- Raise awareness of the value of Suffolk's unique landscapes and heritage by actively engaging with media organisations, using our own digital media channels and by launching appropriate campaigns and competitions



A photograph of a village street in Suffolk. On the left, a large white-washed house with a red-tiled roof and a dormer window is partially obscured by trees. The street curves to the right, lined with more traditional houses and lush greenery. In the background, a green hill rises under a clear blue sky. The text "Our core purpose is to protect Suffolk's landscape and heritage" is overlaid in the upper right corner.

*Our core purpose is to
protect Suffolk's landscape
and heritage*

Suffolk Preservation Society

our manifesto

Addressing the design quality of new homes

The Suffolk Preservation Society recognises that the population of Suffolk is growing in number and growing older. We also know that for many Suffolk residents the cost of buying and renting a home is becoming increasingly challenging. There is a need for more affordable housing across the county.

The local planning system has to deliver new houses to meet these changing needs.

However, we challenge the idea that there is a stark choice between volume and quality. We will campaign for new homes which make positive contribution to the local area and something Suffolk can be proud of.

This means we will:

- Scrutinise planning applications and call for the highest standards of design quality and landscaping
- Encourage local councils to utilise adopted local design guides in their discussions with developers and in their decision making
- Be an active and supportive participant in the development of the new Suffolk Design Guide and any other similar initiatives to ensure design guidance is both up-to-date and reflective of vernacular Suffolk styles in a modern context
- Use our resources to engage specialist urban design advice on major and contentious housing schemes
- Provide training on urban design and landscaping for local councils and amenity societies to enable them to make well informed responses to planning applications in their areas
- Actively promote and celebrate examples of good modern design



*We will actively promote and
celebrate examples of good
modern design*



Suffolk Preservation Society

our manifesto

Energy Generation: balancing the environmental price

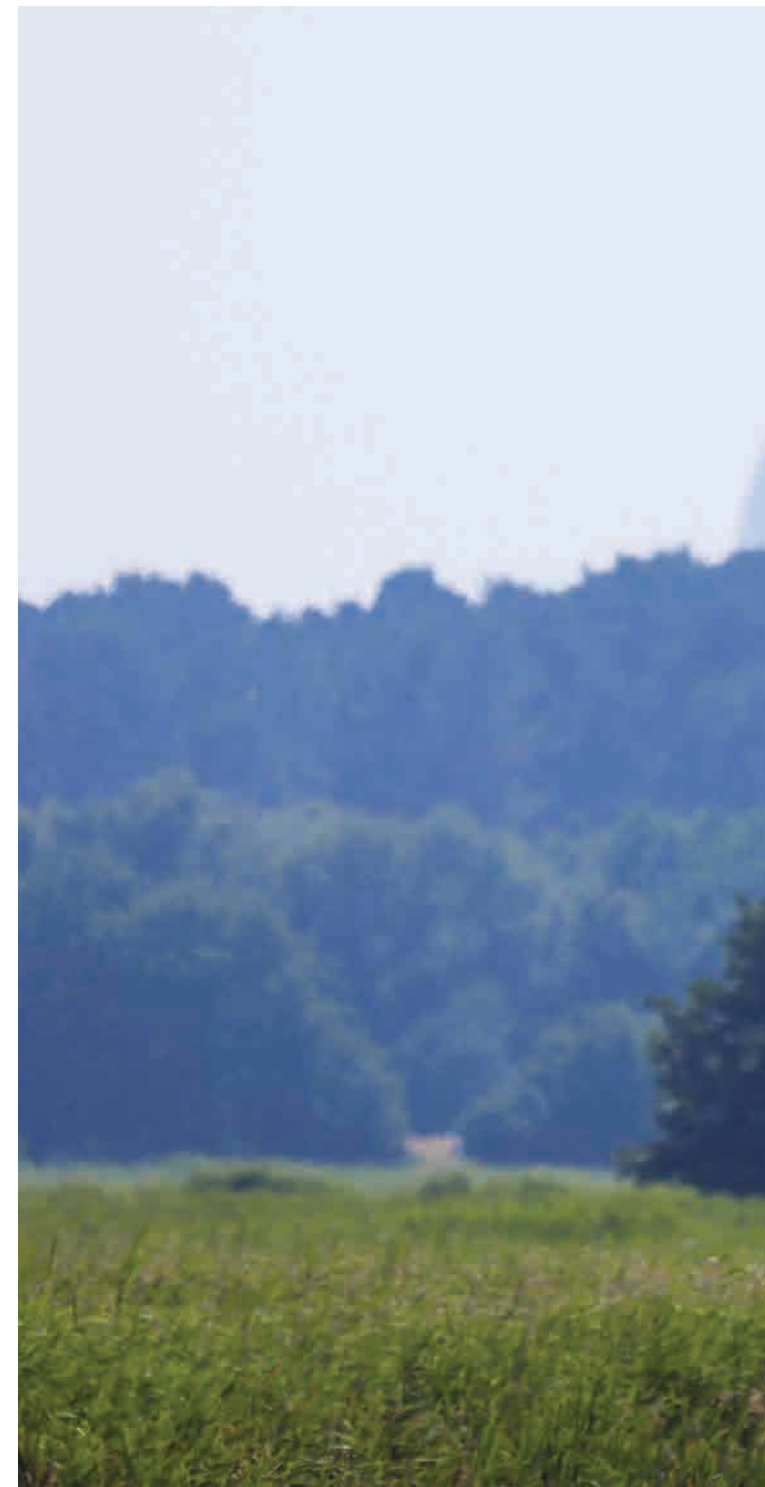
The Suffolk Preservation Society recognises that our county has a vital role to play in securing the energy needs of the nation.


However the infrastructure needed to underpin both the construction and operational phases of proposed new nuclear and offshore renewable power sources will impact some of the most beautiful Suffolk countryside, coast, towns and villages.

We support local communities who are alarmed at the sheer scale of the cumulative environmental impacts on the east of the county.

This means we will:

- Campaign for coordinated overarching policy to deliver forthcoming energy projects
- Where possible engage in direct constructive dialogue with developers
- Be an active and supportive participant in the consultation processes aimed at shaping major infrastructure projects
- Support campaign groups, local councils and other environmental organisations as they seek to better resist and offset the negative impacts of such schemes
- Lobby the county's MPs and other key local stakeholders to better understand the negative impacts of these energy projects and what they can do to help mitigate them
- Continue to call for environmental enhancement funds to offset damage caused by large energy projects



A landscape photograph featuring a white bird in flight over a green field. In the background, there is a dense forest of green trees, a large rainbow arching over the horizon, and a distant, hazy building. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

*We will campaign to reduce
the negative impacts of
energy projects and call
for effective mitigation*

Suffolk Preservation Society

our manifesto

Engaging communities in the planning process

The term 'NIMBY' is used whenever communities object to having development imposed on them. Yet many towns and villages in Suffolk not only recognise the importance of ensuring that their communities thrive in the future, but are willing to help shape that future.

Neighbourhood Plans are a crucial means of ensuring that local knowledge and aspirations are incorporated into our communities' growth and development. Over recent years, the number of Neighbourhood Plans being developed in Suffolk has grown considerably. The latest National Planning Policy Framework gives even greater weight to these plans than previously, especially where borough and district councils have failed to identify a five year housing land supply.

The Society therefore supports local councils and other groups in their engagement with the planning process.

This means we will:

- Strive to support local councils and Neighbourhood Plan groups, with regard to issues related to heritage, design and landscape
- Urge local authorities to give due regard to Neighbourhood Plan policies when determining planning applications
- Provide training events for local councils and amenity groups to build their understanding of issues relating to heritage planning, landscape and urban design
- Provide training on the best ways for local communities to make their voices heard, including via the media and social media





*The voice of the county's
communities needs to be
maximised so future
developments are both
sustainable and meet the
needs of these communities*

Suffolk Preservation Society

the next ten years

Our promise

After 90 years of campaigning and many successes, we are looking to redouble our efforts. Suffolk remains a beautiful county and there is much to campaign for over the next ten years.

We promise to:

- Work to protect our historic buildings and valued landscapes through engagement with the planning process
- Engage with councillors, planning and conservation teams, developers and architects to achieve best outcomes
- Empower communities, local councils and amenity groups through advice and training
- Lobby the government and others for a better balance that safeguards our natural and built environment within the planning system
- Celebrate the beauty of Suffolk through high-quality member events
- Grow our membership in order to build our mandate, capacity and strength





*We work for Suffolk to secure a
future that conserves the best of the
past and helps deliver a high quality
environment for the future*

Suffolk needs you

If this Manifesto for Suffolk resonates with you, please join the Suffolk Preservation Society. Best of all, please consider becoming a life member to signal your lifelong commitment to the county. You will be helping us to continue to preserve and protect all the things that make Suffolk special.

As a member you will:

- Have direct access to our senior leadership team to help advise and guide on specific issues.
- Have the opportunity to get involved in local campaigning.
- Be invited to exclusive visits to Suffolk's finest historic houses and interesting talks by renowned experts as well as social functions.
- Receive two copies a year of Suffolk View, our glossy magazine packed with news, features and articles.



"Much has been lost, by rebuilding more than by war. What remains speaks reticently of a continuous history of pragmatic adaptation. The counties of England implicitly argue in their architecture that our ancestors knew what they were about and that their wisdom is worth preserving. No county makes the argument more convincingly than Suffolk."

Christopher Howse writing in the Daily Telegraph, 2015

The Suffolk Preservation Society's Manifesto is to ensure another 10 years of such pragmatic adaptation.



**For Suffolk's sake –
it's time to join the Suffolk Preservation Society.**

For more information about the Society and to join us:

 www.suffolksociety.org  twitter.com/SuffolkSociety  sps@suffolksociety.org

This Manifesto has been generously sponsored by a supporter of the Society.



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