

Suffolk energy-from-waste facility

Winter 2022 newsletter



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Putting Suffolk's waste to good use



Operational update

We're now coming to the end of our eighth year of partnership with Suffolk County Council, continuing to divert as much waste as possible away from landfill. In 2021, we put 291,609 tonnes of waste to good use and exported 180,346 megawatt hours of electricity to the national grid, enough to power 43,352 homes. We recovered 53,574 tonnes of bottom ash to be used as an aggregate in the construction industry and another 10,723 tonnes of metal for recycling.

Shutdowns are a normal part of operational life at energy-from-waste facilities. This year in Suffolk, we moved from two shutdowns to one. The facility has been operational for over seven years with continually improving levels of efficiency. Following an extensive risk assessment, the team identified that a single shutdown would allow the required works to take place with less disruption to services. Moving to a single shutdown also reduces the potential for waste diversion during the year. During our 6-week spring shutdown, we completed large scale works including replacing two superheaters within each boiler. We also carried out a minor service on the turbine and generator unit, extensive bag house casing repairs, alongside the general cleaning and maintenance that is carried out each shutdown.

Visitor centre update

After being closed since March 2020 due to Covid 19, the visitors centre reopened in March 2022. To date the site has welcomed over 800 visitors including 15 school groups. We are particularly proud of our education offering for primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities, and youth groups such as Brownies and Cubs. We provide age-appropriate educational activities for all visitors from age seven and have been awarded a Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge for our commitment to sustaining high quality learning on site.

At the energy-from-waste facility, we offer tours of the site to visiting educational and adult groups. Visitors can witness the energy-from-waste process in action, and experience our purpose-built visitor centre, which features information and interactive activities on the topics of waste, energy, and the environment. Our community liaison manager has also been developing a lower-level tour for those who are not keen on heights but are able to climb three flights of stairs.

Tours of the site are free of charge to all visiting groups. If you know of any educational or adult groups, or local residents who would be interested in visiting the site, please contact us at suffolkefw.uk@suez.com.

Alternatively, groups of less than five people can book onto one of our upcoming open days at suffolkefwopenday.eventbrite.co.uk



Out in the community

HERITAGE OPEN DAY

In September, the facility took part in the national Heritage Open Days festival for the fourth year running. After two years of virtual events, this year we were pleased to be able to welcome 42 visitors onto site.



Visitors watched a presentation about the facility and its role in managing household waste in Suffolk, had a tour of the control room, boiler house and ash processing facility as well as a question-and-answer session led by our Community Liaison Manager and a member of the waste team from Suffolk County Council. The event was supported by our local ornithologist, Peter Merchant, who spoke with visitors about our peregrine project. Optical equipment was available to use, however prevailing winds meant that the peregrines were not visible on the day.



A DAY A YEAR TO VOLUNTEER



This year, SUEZ developed an initiative offering every employee the opportunity to volunteer for a charitable organisation of their choice. This opportunity has been embraced by the site team with over 40 colleagues having taken up the opportunity. Many from the team used their day to volunteer at a new local charity, Kinetic Science. Less than two miles from site, the new centre in Claydon focuses on encouraging children to explore STEM – science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Empowered by the STEM ethos of the new centre, colleagues supported in several different ways including installing displays and lights, painting, decorating, making planters as well as administrative tasks. Other charities that benefited from the support of one of our site team included Girl Guiding UK, a local preschool, and a local youth football team.

OUTREACH PROJECTS

Along with the reopening of the visitor's centre, this year has also seen the restart of many different outreach projects. Our community liaison manager has been busy visiting schools, youth clubs and adult groups leading sessions about energy from waste, the waste hierarchy and waste reduction. During the summer term, she visited local secondary schools to talk to the GCSE students about energy-from-waste ahead of their GCSE geography paper which centred around a case study examining the energy-from-waste process.

CAREERS OF THE FUTURE

This year, the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility has continued its partnership with Career Ready, a national social mobility charity that works with employers and educators to support young people, regardless of background, to kickstart a rewarding future. The site has hosted three careers events which included a tour of the facility and careers talks from staff members in various roles and routes into employment. Our community liaison manager also supported a virtual event for careers leads which discussed wider jobs and upcoming changes within the waste industry.

The site team have also been involved in two local secondary school careers days, showcasing many different education and career options to young people.

The team at SUEZ enjoy engaging and empowering young people into upcoming careers and opportunities in the waste industry and related STEM fields.



SUFFOLK SHOW

A wonderful two days were spent at Suffolk Show in late May. The theme of the Suffolk Waste Partnership tent was 'Flying high for Suffolk' and local school and community groups made a whole host of different birds out of recycled materials to decorate the Suffolk waste partnership tent.

To keep with this theme, SUEZ hired a high striker to see if visitors could get the machine to 'fly' up to the bell. The high striker encouraged people to see how much energy was stored inside their body and prompted the discussion about the hidden energy we get from inside rubbish that we unlock at the energy-from-waste facility. We also set up the stand with a short clip of our peregrine chicks and asked for creative suggestions for names for the chicks. More than 1000 people visited the stand each day!



CHARITY FUND RAISING

In June, Paul Kinnaird, Assistant Maintenance Manager at the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility, took part in the 300-mile Big Battlefield Bike Ride 2022 in aid of Help for Heroes. Paul and three other riders from the SUEZ veterans' network participated in the five-day event along with 130 other cyclists. As both a veteran and a keen cyclist, Paul decided to take on the meaningful challenge to bike along the British front line from WW1, from Nieuwpoort in Belgium to Compiègne in France. During their challenge the group visited many different cemeteries and memorials including the Tyne Cot cemetery and the Ulster memorial. Paul raised an amazing £3,250, adding to SUEZ team total of over £11,000. The final event total raised over £490,000 for the Help for Heroes charity.



You can watch a video of their journey at: vimeo.com/721734572/a35720eb09

In November, Paul was honoured to be asked to be part of the SUEZ team who laid a wreath at the Normandy Memorial on behalf of SUEZ and the Veterans Group.



MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

For over nine years, SUEZ have been supporting the work of their corporate charity partner, Macmillan Cancer Support. With over 3 million people in the UK diagnosed with cancer every year, the charity's purpose is 'to do whatever it takes to support people living with cancer'. From reuse shops to sponsored events and cake sales, the company have been keen to support this worthwhile charity. In April, SUEZ celebrated reaching the amazing milestone of £500,000 raised for Macmillan Cancer Support.

In September, the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility took part in the World's Biggest Coffee morning and raised over £150. With over 10 bakes in the running, the title of star baker was awarded to Andrea for her sausage rolls. As a company SUEZ raised over £4,900 for Macmillan through the coffee morning initiative.

COMMUNITY LIAISON GROUP

We have spaces available on our Great Blakenham site's community liaison group. These regular meetings are an opportunity for residents to ask us questions about our operations and are open to any local resident who is interested in finding out a little more about what we do. The group meets 3 times annually at the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility. If you are interested in joining email suffolkefw.uk@suez.com.

Biodiversity

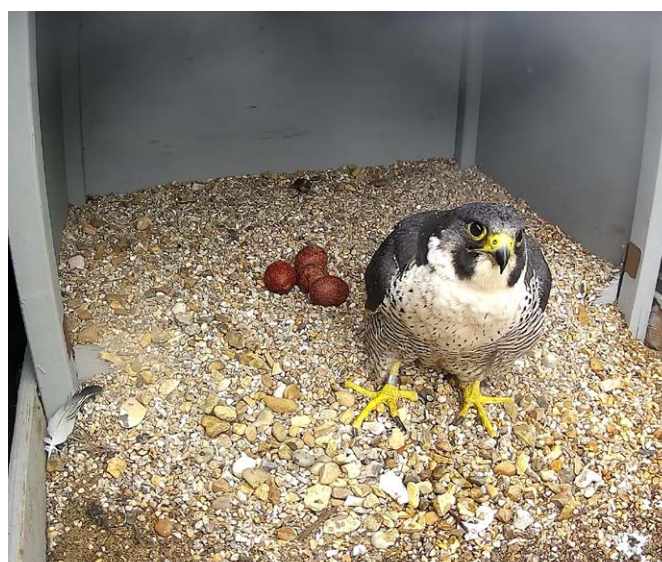
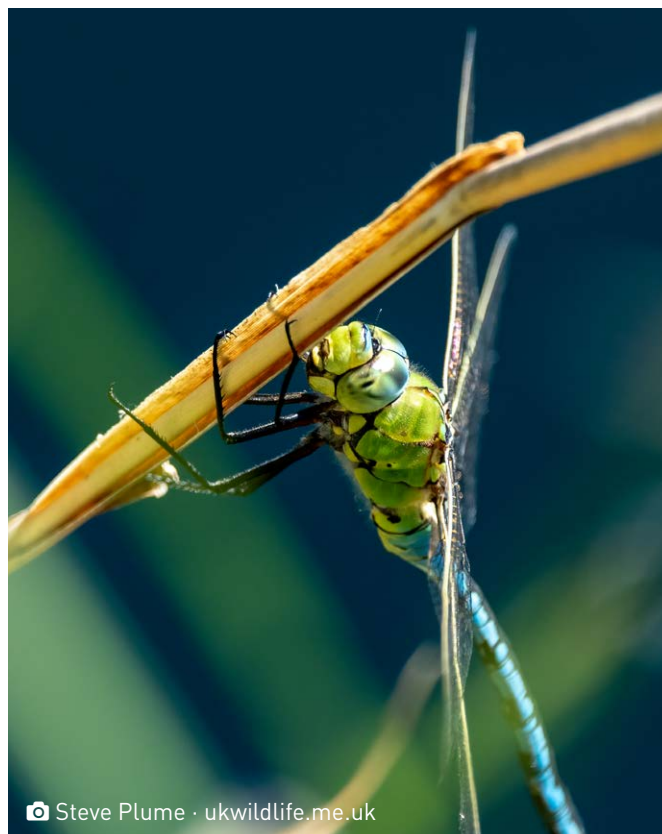
OUR COMMITMENT TO BIODIVERSITY

In 2020, SUEZ committed to improving biodiversity on every SUEZ site across the country. In early 2021, we invited the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to the site to conduct a survey and provide advice and guidance on where to target biodiversity improvements. Throughout 2022, the site has continued its commitment to developing biodiversity. In Spring, we planted a new hedgerow from six varieties of fruit trees and edible hedges. We reused old scaffold boards leftover from maintenance to make raised flower beds for our on-site picnic area; these have been planted with an array of shrubs and flowers to compliment bees, butterflies, and other insects. The team have also installed bat, bird and swift boxes along the side of the building.

BEEHIVES

The facility is also home to a colony of bees, located towards the back of our wildflower meadow and managed by a local beekeeper. The colony has grown considerably since their introduction in 2018, from 50,000 to over 250,000. The meadow has proved to be an ideal location for the colony, providing a great source of food for the worker bees.

Bees are crucial for global food production and the varied, nutritious diets we need, providing a vital role in pollination, helping plants grow, breed, and produce food. They do this by transferring pollen between flowering plants, keeping the cycle of life going. With bee populations declining across the UK, we are happy to be able to provide a safe home to pollinate the local land.



PEREGRINE FAMILY

Attracted by the tall cliff-like buildings, two peregrine falcons have made the site their home since 2019. Peregrines are a large and powerful falcon with long, broad, pointed wings that chase prey in flight. In the mid 1960's 80% of the peregrine population was lost due to illegal persecution from humans and persistent toxic agricultural chemicals contaminating their food supply. After the banning of these pesticides the peregrine numbers have been slowly recovering, with the East of England being one of the slowest to recover.

After the pair were regularly spotted at the site, the team at the Suffolk energy-from-waste facility alongside Peter Merchant, a local ornithologist, were keen to support the growth of the peregrine population in the East of England by creating a purpose-built nesting box. After a few tweaks to the positioning and grit size, in April the team were pleased to see four eggs in the box, all of which hatched successfully. Over the summer months the site team followed the journey of the chicks via a live webcam. In May, the team arranged an ascent to the birds nest so that the chicks could be rung and registered with the British Trust of Ornithology.



At the Suffolk Show in May, visitors were given the opportunity to suggest creative names for the four chicks. Over 400 names were suggested and voted on via Twitter and LinkedIn polls. The winning names were Sky, Bolt, Millennium and Jubilee.

Peregrines are still persecuted today and are a Schedule 1 listed species under The Wildlife and Countryside Act. By providing a safe and protective environment for the nest to thrive, SUEZ are helping the recovery of this protected species. The four chicks successfully navigated infancy on site; learning to fly and hunt independently. They all fledged in September, and we look forward to finding out where these birds will set up home over the coming years. The parent peregrines remain on site and we hope that they will nest again next year.





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