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**Putting Suffolk's waste to good use**

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# Suffolk energy-from-waste facility **Winter 2025 newsletter**

## Operational update

We have now been in partnership with Suffolk County Council for eleven years as we continue to generate electricity for the National Grid using Suffolk's non-recyclable waste.

In 2024, the facility processed 286,588 tonnes of waste and exported 184,402 megawatt hours of electricity to the National Grid. This is enough to power 51,584 homes. We also recovered 62,432 tonnes of bottom ash for use as an aggregate in the construction industry and another 9,552 tonnes of metal for recycling.

This year our annual maintenance shutdown was longer than usual. In addition to carrying out the usual inspection and repair of the furnaces and boiler and any necessary maintenance on all other systems, extensive boiler tube replacements and an overhaul of the ID fans were undertaken. For the first time since going into operation, the grate surfaces inside the furnaces were completely renewed. Work on the furnaces was staggered to enable us to continue to accept direct delivered waste throughout the shutdown period.

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## Visitor centre update

The refurbishment of our visitor centre is now complete. The new-look centre is designed around the waste hierarchy of reducing waste first, followed by reusing, recycling and recovering energy. In line with this, we have used as many reclaimed and repurposed materials as possible in its construction, including some charming "old-school" gym benches, which have brought back memories for some of our visitors!

The new design is primarily aimed at our younger visitors, and the open, classroom-like arrangement has enabled us to offer more focused, hands-on activities around waste and recycling. This, together with the tour of the facility, is proving popular with the primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and youth groups such as Brownies and Cubs that have visited since the relaunch. All in all, our community liaison managers have hosted 77 tours over the past year, welcoming over a thousand visitors.

The Suffolk EfW holds the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, which recognises quality learning opportunities and effective risk management and gives schools peace of mind when organising visits to our site.

Tours of the site are free of charge to all visiting groups. If you are part of an educational or adult group, or a local resident who would be interested in visiting the site, please contact us at [suffolkefw.uk@suez.com](mailto: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](https://suffolkefwopenday.eventbrite.co.uk).



## Visitor centre relaunch

We celebrated 10 years of working in partnership with Suffolk County Council to put Suffolk’s waste to good use and the relaunch of the visitor centre in July.

The event was attended by some of the people who have been part of our journey over the past decade as well as those who were instrumental in the refurbishment of the visitor centre.

Among the people who spoke at the event were Councillor Chris Chambers (Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy, Planning and Waste, Suffolk County Council), Steve Palfrey (Assistant Director, Waste & Environment, Suffolk County Council), John Scanlon (Chief Executive Officer, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK) and Tim Otley (Managing Director, Energy, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK).



# Sustainability

## COMMITMENT TO BIODIVERSITY

The Suffolk EfW has remained steadfast in supporting SUEZ recycling and recovery UK's commitment to improving biodiversity and sustainable practises on all sites across the country.

A report produced by Suffolk Wildlife Trust last year identified improvements to support the future management of the various habitats on our site and increase the biodiversity. Based on these suggestions, our sustainability champions developed an action plan that has been implemented by members of the operations teams.



These included:

**Bat boxes**, which were built using suitable recovered materials and have been installed on the monolith tree near the scrub woodland on our site.

**Stag beetle pyramids**, to provide habitats for stag beetles, which rely on decaying wood that is in contact with the soil to feed on as larvae, and in which to lay their eggs.

**Planters** were built using reclaimed wood to replace the original planters, which had begun to rot. In spring, these will be planted with wildflowers to attract butterflies and bees.

**Compost bins** were constructed and placed near our car park to make it easy for staff to drop off their grass cuttings, leaves, wood ash, shredded paper and other compostables. The compost produced will be used in the planters on the meadow.

## PEREGRINE FALCONS

With the help and guidance of Mr Peter Merchant, a Defra registered bird of prey rehabilitation expert, the nesting box was refurbished early this year, in preparation for the arrival of the pair of peregrine falcons that has used it for the past three years.



Sadly, although the male was seen on site in April, the female did not arrive and so no eggs were laid. Peter explained that the number of breeding pairs of peregrine falcons was lower than usual across England this year, although we cannot be sure of the reason. The nesting box, with its new ventilation holes and shingle, is ready and waiting for the next breeding season and we hope to have better news then.

# Out in the community

## OUTREACH PROJECTS

Visits to local schools, youth clubs and adult groups across Suffolk have continued to be an important part of our interaction with the community. Our community liaison managers delivered talks about waste in Suffolk, the waste hierarchy, and the energy-from-waste process. Over the past year we have supported 13 different outreach events, connecting with over 800 people at schools, youth clubs and adult group meetings.



### SUFFOLK SHOW 2025

The Suffolk EfW team once again participated in the Suffolk Recycles stand, which was awarded first prize for the Best Stand Representing Education at the Suffolk Show this year!

The theme was "Celebrate the Outdoors". Over the two days, more than 6,000 people visited the stand and participated in the range of fun activities that were available, as well as having the opportunity to find out more about how the waste and recycling collection services will change in 2026. Following on from its popularity last year, SUEZ took along the grabber game again. This had children and adults of all ages testing their skills in moving bags of "waste" from the bunker into the furnace!



### LATITUDE FESTIVAL

In July one of our community liaison managers joined the Suffolk Waste Partnership at Latitude festival to engage with festival goers over the three-day event. The team led interactive sessions making a variety of recycled crafts including head bands and bracelets from scrap fabric and disused hi-vis vests to reinforce the important reuse message. Another popular activity involved making signs from scrap paper and old cardboard boxes.

## Out in the community

### HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

We were once again a part of the national Heritage Open Days festival, with both tours being fully booked. This year's theme was "Architecture", so visitors were given some insight into the design and construction of our BREEAM Outstanding building. The BREEAM scheme measures a building's environmental performance, with points awarded for environmental features incorporated into its design, construction and use. The building, designed by Grimshaw architects, is one of only 2% of buildings worldwide that have achieved the outstanding rating.

Visitors were given a presentation about waste and recycling and were able to ask questions of the site's community liaison manager and a member of the waste team from Suffolk County Council, before spending some time in the control room, and having the opportunity to interact with the operatives on duty. They were then taken on a guided tour of the facility, including the boiler house and ash processing facility.

We were delighted with the feedback received through Heritage Open Days, with one visitor saying *"The event was brilliant - I thoroughly enjoyed the tour and found the explanation easy to understand. I attended as I was looking to enhance my knowledge of waste, but the information provided was over and above what I expected. The tour manager was fantastic - very knowledgeable and was able to answer all questions posed. I certainly left the tour knowing a lot more."*

For more information about Heritage Open Days, visit [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk).



### SPONSORSHIP

This year the Suffolk EfW provided sponsorship to three local schools for various projects.

Somersham Primary School built a cover for their outdoor learning area, which will promote more inclusive and engaging learning, and deepen the children's connection with nature.

Claydon High School purchased raised planters to support their mini garden and allotment, which provides a calm space for students as they take care of the plants and connect with nature.

We sponsored Claydon Primary School's colour run, which raised over £3,000 to fund trips and experiences for the children.



## Out in the community

### A DAY A YEAR TO VOLUNTEER

The Suffolk EfW team supported SUEZ’s “Day a Year to Volunteer” initiative, which offers every employee a day’s paid leave each year to volunteer for a charitable organisation of their choice. Some of the locations that benefited from their enthusiastic participation include Orford Ness, Landguard Fort, Mildenhall Cricket Club and Lackford Lakes.

A group also had the privilege of volunteering at the home of Mr Peter Merchant, a Defra-licenced bird of prey rehabilitator/keeper who provides information and support to several industrial sites throughout East Anglia where peregrine falcons have established nesting sites. His work at the Suffolk EfW has been invaluable, and with his assistance we have had six young peregrines fledge from our boiler house roof.

Pete has personally rehabilitated about 1,500 birds of prey, 35 of which were peregrine falcons. He does this at his home in Ipswich on a voluntary basis, and pays for everything out of his own pocket, so when he told us that he needed to do some work on his aviaries, we were happy to assist. Pete was also the very deserving winner of the Animal category of the BBC Suffolk Make a Difference Awards this year.



# Supporting future careers

## WORK EXPERIENCE

We have continued to support young people to gain a better understanding of life beyond school and college. This year we hosted two Year 10 students for their work experience week, providing them with the chance to engage with the world of work and to find out more about the roles played by the staff in various departments of the energy-from-waste plant.

We also hosted a BTech student from Suffolk One College for his two weeks of work experience. He spent time with members of our maintenance and operations team, gaining valuable insight into the attitudes and competencies required to succeed in an engineering environment. These experiences will also enable him to make more informed career decisions once he has completed his course.



## CAREERS EVENTS

We continue to support SUEZ’s aim to inspire and develop the next generation of green talent, participating in a range of events at local schools and colleges presenting career options to over 400 young people.



The team once again took part in the Suffolk Youth Climate Conference as well as Framlingham College’s Green Careers Fair and Green Careers Week at Suffolk One College.

This year we have also worked with Suffolk New College, running a day workshop with Level 1 T-level Engineering students.

In addition, our relationship with Claydon High School’s LIFE faculty is ongoing, as we once again supported their annual Learning About Work day. This is an event aimed at guiding year 11 students in their choice of career and the challenges of the process of applying for employment.



## APPRENTICES

Although our apprentices are officially in the third year of their Level 3 Diploma in Engineering at West Suffolk College, they have all been offered permanent positions at our site. It is very pleasing that the skills and knowledge that they have developed during their time with us will continue to benefit the site, and we look forward to supporting their continued career progression.



# Charity fund raising

SUEZ has continued the partnerships with Macmillan Cancer Support and the British Heart Foundation. The focus for this year has been the Big Four, a campaign aimed at raising funds for these charities through challenges inspired by the four natural elements – earth, air, water and fire. SUEZ employees have been enthusiastic participants, taking part in a range of activities including skydiving, cycling and hiking challenges.

The Suffolk EfW team kept things a little tamer, taking inspiration from the fire element to raise funds by partaking in a chilli lunch.

In addition to supporting our corporate charities, we also raised funds for other charities.



## ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

The site team celebrated Easter by holding a tea and cake morning. Staff purchased tickets for the Easter egg raffle and made donations for a slice of cake or one of the other delicious treats. We raised £210 for the Alzheimer's Society's Forget Me Not Appeal.

## SCOPE FESTIVE FUND



Three Suffolk charities, Red Gables and Jam Community Pot in Stowmarket and Inspire Suffolk, each received £500 after being nominated by site staff and selected by the SCOPE Festive Fund.

Now in its sixth year, the fund has donated almost £180,000 to 396 good causes that are supporting those in need.

The focus of the fund is “helping to raise a smile, and make the festive period enjoyable for all”, and we know that this money will have gone a long way towards assisting these charities with their community outreach over the festive season.

SUEZ recycling and recovery UK proudly presents

# THE BIG FOUR

June – December 2025

EARTH AIR FIRE WATER

four elements, one purpose

raising £100,000 for charity

Register for your event pack online  
[www.suez.co.uk/thebigfour](http://www.suez.co.uk/thebigfour)

Questions? Email [givingsomethingback.uk@suez.com](mailto:givingsomethingback.uk@suez.com)

In aid of

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Only SUEZ recycling and recovery UK employees are eligible to register for The Big Four. All money raised by The Big Four will go to Macmillan Cancer Support and British Heart Foundation.



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