

## Welcome to the fourth edition of Healthy Ambitions Suffolk News, which gives you the chance to catch up with all the latest from our exciting project to make Suffolk the healthiest county in Britain by 2028.

There's plenty to report this month, including some really good news for everyone involved with Healthy Ambitions Suffolk. During the summer, the initiative won a prestigious Royal Society for Public Health award in recognition of the work which has taken place to help everyone in the county improve their health and wellbeing. We were just one of three organisations, and the only partnership scheme, to

pick up the accolade, called the "Health Promotion and Community Wellbeing Organisation and Partnership" award. There's more information on what this means for Suffolk later in this bulletin.

This month, we're also including some health and wellbeing success stories from people around the county. We hope their tales will inspire you to make your own

Healthy Ambitions Suffolk pledge, which you can do through the members section of our website at [www.healthyambitions.suffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitions.suffolk.nhs.uk)

During September, people from across the county will be descending on Alton Water, near Ipswich, to take part in the Great East Swim. This promises to be a fantastic event, giving people of all abilities the chance to

complete the mile-long open water swim in a safe and enjoyable environment. Keep reading for more information on how you can sign up.

And finally, just a quick reminder that you can keep up with the latest developments by logging onto [www.healthyambitions.suffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitions.suffolk.nhs.uk) or following us on Twitter. Just visit [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and search for "Healthy Ambition".



Dr Peter Bradley  
Director of Public Health for  
NHS Suffolk and  
Suffolk County Council

### Top national award for Healthy Ambitions Suffolk



During August, the Healthy Ambitions Suffolk initiative picked up a prestigious national Royal Society for Public Health award. HAS was one of just three organisations to pick up the "Health Promotion and Community Wellbeing Organisation and Partnership" accolade.

To win the award, project leads were asked to submit evidence showing that Healthy Ambitions Suffolk met tough judging criteria, made up of 13 different sections. This included demonstrating that top

level leadership and health promotion and wellbeing strategies were in place, as well as proving the public had been involved throughout the project.

This evidence went through a rigorous and robust peer review process before key figures from the project took part in a "panel challenge", where they were asked to answer a series of questions before a final decision on the award was made.

The RSPH awards are designed to highlight the importance of health

promotion and community wellbeing, as well as sharing good practice across the UK.

As a result of winning the award, the Healthy Ambitions Suffolk initiative will be highlighted as an exemplar at conferences taking place throughout the country.

The award lasts for three years. After this time, Healthy Ambitions Suffolk will be able to reapply – but will need to go through the rigorous appraisal process for a second time.

### Take the plunge with the Great East Swim!

Sept  
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During September, Suffolk will be hosting the Great East Swim, giving people the perfect chance to take the plunge and swim one mile in open water.

The event, which is one of four taking place across



the country, will be held at Alton Water Reservoir near Ipswich. It's open to people of all abilities including fun swimmers, club swimmers and triathletes, and has generated huge interest across the county, with more than 1,000 people already signing up.

And if you haven't visited the pool for a while, don't worry! The Great East Swim offers the ideal opportunity

to get back into the sport and experience outdoor swimming in a safe and enjoyable environment.

The event will be televised on Channel 4 and some of the world's leading swimmers, athletes and TV celebrities will be taking part. Beijing Olympic medallists Cassie Patten and Keri-Anne Payne, GMTV's Dr Hilary Jones and Ireland's greatest ever runner Sonia O'Sullivan will all be taking the plunge – so why not join them?

Anyone aged 16 and over can take part. To register, find out more and pick up handy training hints, visit [www.greatswim.org](http://www.greatswim.org)

Lots more  
**inside**

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# Lord Coe's praise for Healthy Ambitions Suffolk!

During July, Suffolk was lucky enough to welcome Lord Sebastian Coe to the county. Lord Coe, who is chairman of the London 2012 Organising Committee, came to Bury St Edmunds to witness first-hand some of the innovative and exciting opportunities that the 2012 Games has already brought to the area.



Projects showcased during his visit included the Great East Swim and Fit4Future, which is a subsidised gym membership pilot scheme designed to get young people aged 16 to 22 active.

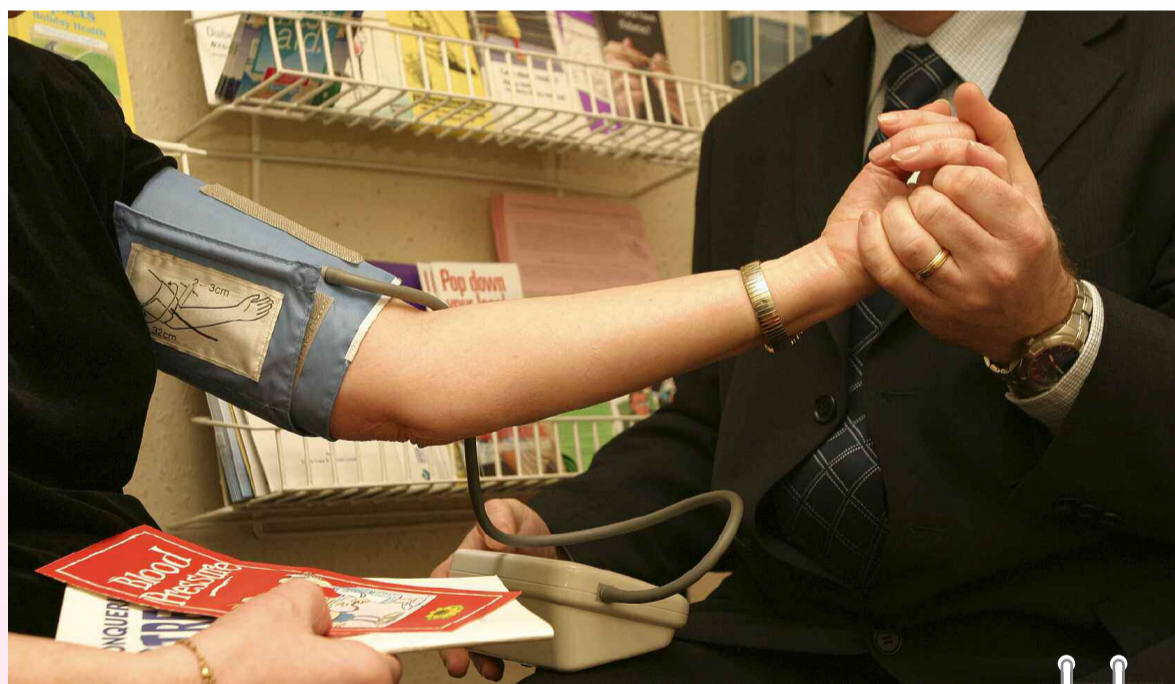
Lord Coe also used the visit to find out more about the NHS Suffolk and Suffolk County Council funded Healthy Ambitions Suffolk Challenge, which aims to make Suffolk's

children the healthiest in the UK. More than 6,000 primary school aged children have so far registered for the project, which encourages them to do one hour's worth of activity every day.

And Lord Coe, himself an Olympic gold medallist, was full of praise for the work taking place in the county. He said: "There is an extraordinary amount of

commitment and enthusiasm which has already taken place. Healthy Ambitions, to get children more active and involved in sport, has happened off the back of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It's very encouraging.

"Getting more young people active and leading a healthy lifestyle is very important. Suffolk is working hard to achieve that."



## Give your heart an MoT!

AUG & SEPT

**If you're between 40 and 74-years-old, why not give you body a mini "MoT" during August and September by dropping into Sainsburys supermarket in Ipswich for your free healthy heart check?**

The quick check will only take around 30 minutes, and will help identify if you are at risk

from cardiovascular disease. Following your assessment, you'll also be given plenty of advice about the simple steps you can take to reduce your chances of suffering from heart problems.

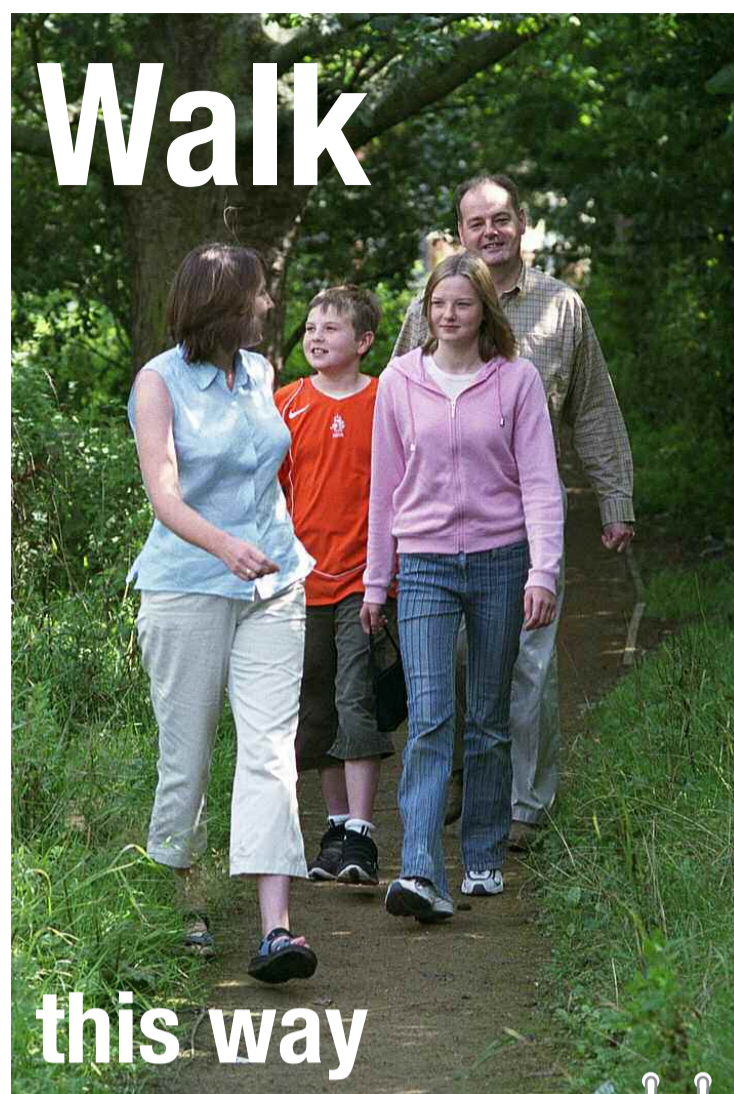
The sessions are particularly useful for people of South Asian and Afro-Caribbean descent, who are 40%

more likely to die of heart disease or stroke.

Sessions will take place at Sainsburys in Hadleigh Road on:

**Sunday 23 August  
Sunday 20 September  
Sunday 27 September**

You can book your appointment by calling **01473 287732**.



this way

and improve your health

right NOW

**People in Suffolk are being encouraged to walk their way to better health this autumn by taking part in specially organised health walks taking place across the county.**

The free walks are open to everyone, regardless of age and fitness levels, and give those taking part the opportunity to socialise, enjoy their surroundings and get more active at the same time.

All of the "Stepping out in Suffolk" walks last between thirty and ninety minutes and are graded according to their difficulty.

They cover some of the county's most picturesque areas, such as the Abbey Gardens in Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe Promenade, Westleton Common, Walberswick, Ipswich's Bridge Wood and Ickworth Park in Horringer.

Organised by Suffolk Coastal District Council in partnership with Healthy Ambitions Suffolk, the walks are especially beneficial for people recovering from illness or surgery, or who have not exercised for some time.

Everyone who takes part can go at their own pace, while all of the walks are led by trained volunteers.

For a full list of walks taking place across the county, visit <http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourfreetime/steppingout> and click on "programme of all walks July to September 2009".

Anyone who is interested in receiving free training to become a walk leader can contact the Health Walks Team at Suffolk Coastal District Council on **01394 444 501** or by email at [walks@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:walks@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

# Have you logged on to our website recently?



If you haven't visited the Healthy Ambitions Suffolk website for a while, now's the time to log back on. Lots of new, interactive features have been added which will allow you to share healthy recipes, fitness tips and your own HAS pledges with others, while you can also sign up as a volunteer or offer feedback on the project.

Simply visit [www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk) and click on "members". Registering is free and only takes a few minutes and will give you access to a wealth of exclusive new information and resources.

You will also soon be able to use the site to access the new Healthy Ambitions Suffolk Health Manager, which will give you all of the specially tailored help, support and advice you need to improve your own health.

The innovative web-based programme provides simple suggestions about steps which you can take to improve your own long-term wellbeing, as well as information on local sports clubs, support groups and exercise classes.

To access the Health Manager, simply follow the links from our website, at [www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk).

After answering a short survey about your current health, lifestyle and family history, you'll be provided with a picture of your health now, including areas where you're doing well and those which you could improve. You'll then be asked to pick one personal health goal and given access to a range of online tutorials and weekly emailed encouragement to help you meet that goal.

We want to make it as easy as possible for the whole county to get involved with Healthy Ambitions Suffolk.

So tell your family, friends, colleagues, team mates at your local sports club and even people you meet at social events – and help us make this fantastic county even better!

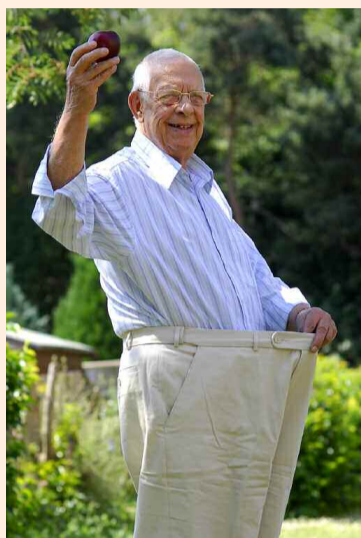
## Two of Suffolk's success stories!

This month, we're bringing you the inspirational success stories of two Suffolk residents who have already taken steps to improve their health and wellbeing.

Don't forget, you can join them by making your own Healthy Ambitions Suffolk pledge by visiting [www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk) and registering in the members' section.

### Case study: 1

## William shows it's never too late!



Picture courtesy of Archant Suffolk

**William Smith has proved it's never too late to change after losing three and a half stone in just seven months.**

And the 81-year-old, who lives in Bury St Edmunds, is now encouraging others to follow his lead, saying: "If I can do it, anyone can!"

Mr Smith started losing weight after his GP referred him to his local Slimming World class last November. He then weighed 15 stone 8lbs, but has been losing an average of 1.5 – 2lbs a week ever since by following a sensible diet of low fat foods such as salad, salmon and chicken. He's now reached his target weight of 12 stone and feels like a new man as a result.

"I only wish that I'd done it years ago – but who knows, by doing it now, I might have added another ten years to my life!" said Mr Smith.

"I'd been trying to lose weight myself but found it very difficult on my own. My GP put the idea in my head to go to a class. I was a bit reluctant at first but, once I got there,

everyone was really friendly and welcoming. They're all behind you, which really gives you a lift.

"I've learnt that you have to be patient and keep at it – just do what you're told and eat the right foods, and you'll lose weight.

"I've surprised myself with what I've done. Never in a month of Sundays did I dream I'd lose all that weight! I feel so much better in myself, have more energy and am sleeping better. I don't get out of breath any more either.

"The only problem is that I brought some brand new trousers before I started the diet and now they're far too big for me so unfortunately I can't wear them!"

### Case study: 2

## 'Coast to coast' for the Fishermen's Mission



**Ruth Cheesley has literally gone the extra mile for Healthy Ambitions Suffolk – well, 200 of them to be precise!**

During July, Ruth, who works for NHS Suffolk, spent two weeks walking from St Bee's Head, on the west coast of England, to Robin Hood's Bay

in the east. Her 200-mile journey took her through some of the country's most spectacular scenery, and saw her raise valuable funds for the Fishermen's Mission at the same time.

"Last year, following a change in job, I decided I wanted to focus on my fitness – and was also looking for an exciting challenge to take on," said Ruth. "I've always been a keen walker and had been thinking about doing the coast to coast for some time.

"I walked with my Dad and we camped every night, which meant we needed to carry our tents, sleeping bags and all of our clothes on our backs for the whole two weeks.

"It was extremely hard going as we had an awful lot of bad

weather, plus I came down with an illness on the third day and my Dad picked up some pretty terrible blisters. But it was hugely rewarding to complete the walk while also raising money for a really important charity, so we're really pleased we did it.

"I'd encourage anyone thinking of doing something similar to go for it! Just make sure you build up your levels of activity first and train sensibly before setting off!"

Ruth has so far raised more than £1,000 for the Fisherman's Mission, while her Dad, a headteacher, has raised £500, which he will send to a school in Kenya. Anyone who would like to donate can visit [www.justgiving.com/c2cwalk2009](http://www.justgiving.com/c2cwalk2009)

# Introducing...Your chance to meet the team members.

Two more members of the Healthy Ambitions Suffolk team – Elspeth Gibson and Rebecca Hams.

## Elspeth Gibson - Healthy Ambitions Suffolk senior strategy lead with Suffolk County Council

### Why did you become involved in the Healthy Ambitions Suffolk project?

I've spent most of my career working with the NHS, voluntary sector and local government, and have also always had an interest in workplace health. I jumped at the chance to work with Healthy Ambitions Suffolk as making the county the healthiest in the country is a huge challenge - but one I really believe we can achieve if we work together and get as many people as possible involved.

### What do you think is the biggest thing people in Suffolk could do to improve their health and wellbeing?

It has been said before but a small change really does make a big difference! For me, it has involved making changes like always using the stairs rather than the lift at work and walking or biking instead of using the car whenever possible.



### Have you made your own Healthy Ambitions Suffolk pledge? If so, what is it?

I turned 50 this year and pledged to lose weight by exercising more and eating better. As well as cycling regularly, I've joined a lunchtime running group and have also signed up to take part in the Great East Swim at Alton Water in September. My ultimate goal is to complete a full ironman triathlon during 2010.

### What would you say to inspire people in Suffolk to make their own healthy ambitions become a reality?

It helps with motivation to set yourself a goal - but make sure it's realistic. If you want to run a marathon, start off tackling short distances and build up slowly. If you want to lose a

stone, concentrate on shedding a few pounds at a time. Above all, take it gradually - and there's nothing you can't achieve! I also find it helpful to ditch the 'negative messages' which sometimes get stuck in our heads telling us we can't do this or that, that it's all too difficult or that we don't have the time to exercise. My advice would be to challenge these thoughts and instead say, 'Why not?' or 'What would it take to plan my day differently so that I can build in some exercise?'

### Do you have any handy hints or tips which you can share to help others lead a healthier lifestyle?

Try and find time every day to do something which will benefit your health and wellbeing. For example, if you work in an office, ditch lunch in front of your computer and go for a walk or run instead. Not only will you find it easier to concentrate during the afternoon, but you'll soon notice your stamina improving and stress levels reducing!

## Rebecca Hams - Healthy Ambitions Suffolk project officer with NHS Suffolk

### Why did you become involved in the Healthy Ambitions Suffolk project?

I've always been interested in health and fitness, and studied paediatric exercise physiology at university. I've also worked as an athletics coach all across the country, and part of my final project involved designing programmes to help children get more active and maintain a healthy weight. I'd always wanted to work in the health promotion field so was especially delighted when I was offered a job with Healthy Ambitions Suffolk.

### What do you think is the biggest thing people in Suffolk could do to improve their health and wellbeing?

If you don't have much time to spare, think about how you can add extra activity to your everyday life. Why not take up an allotment and start growing your own vegetables? You can involve the whole family and do something educational and productive at the same time.



Housework is another great example - vacuuming, cleaning windows and dusting all help keep the cardiovascular system in good shape if you do them vigorously enough - and you'll end up with a sparkling home!

### Have you made your own Healthy Ambitions Suffolk pledge? If so, what is it?

I've always been active in the past but recently picked up an injury. My own pledge is to start building up my levels of activity again, starting with the Great East Swim next month. I've put together a structured training programme involving cycling and running, and eventually plan to complete the London Marathon in 2011. I've made sure I've given

myself lots of time to achieve that goal and will be taking it one step at a time.

### What would you say to inspire people in Suffolk to make their own healthy ambitions become a reality?

Suffolk is a beautiful part of the country, with so much to explore. I'd encourage everyone to get out there and make the most of it. Whether it's walking your dog, walking for fun or cycling in the woods - it's all there on our doorsteps and ready to be enjoyed.

### Do you have any handy hints or tips which you can share to help others lead a healthier lifestyle?

Have belief in yourself and make sure what you're doing is fun - that way it will be much easier to keep motivated. There are plenty of great resources which will give you inspiration on the NHS's Change 4 Life website, at [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) - so give it a go and start today!



## Don't forget to register!

Don't forget that you can register through our website to help make Suffolk the healthiest county in England by 2028. It only takes five minutes and will give you the chance to make your own health pledge, share tips with others and gain access to all of the help and advice you need to make your own personal health goals a reality. Simply log on to [www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk) and click on "join now".

## Keeping up to date with our future news

We'll be sending out regular bulletins giving details of all the latest Healthy Ambitions Suffolk news over the coming months. To subscribe, email [info@healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk](mailto:info@healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk) adding "HAS News" to the subject line.

For more information about any of our new projects, contact NHS Suffolk's communications team on 01473 770014 or visit [www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyambitionssuffolk.nhs.uk)

