



Parish Council
Rushmere St Andrew
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Cllr P Faircloth-Mutton
Suffolk County Council
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Ipswich
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Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council
Tower Hall, Parish Office
5 Broadlands Way
Rushmere St Andrew
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10th March 2025

Re: Suffolk Libraries – Proposed In-House Takeover by Suffolk County Council

Dear Philip,

We write to express our deep concern regarding Suffolk County Council's proposal to bring the operation of Suffolk Libraries in-house. Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council stands firmly with Suffolk Libraries and the many residents who rely on the invaluable services they provide. We have supported the success of Suffolk Libraries for many years, the Mobile library in particular provides an invaluable asset to our community.

For the past 13 years, Suffolk Libraries has successfully operated as a charity, transforming libraries into essential community hubs that offer not only books but also vital services for families, children, and vulnerable residents. The charity has achieved remarkable efficiency, delivering a service that costs £3 million less than in 2011 while providing greater benefits to local people. Independent research has demonstrated that Suffolk Libraries generates £41 million worth of social value, returning £6 for every £1 invested and saving NHS services in Suffolk £542,000 annually.

Despite this undeniable success, Suffolk County Council now intends to take the service in-house at an additional annual cost of over £1 million. This move threatens jobs, puts the future of libraries at risk, and lacks clear justification - particularly when all quarterly and annual service reviews have been problem-free, and SCC's own internal audit found no concerns regarding financial control or governance. Furthermore, given the uncertainty surrounding potential devolution in Suffolk, we question the wisdom of making such a significant change when the long-term future of the County Council itself is unclear.

Equally concerning is the absence of public consultation on this matter. Libraries are a vital resource for communities, and decisions about their future should not be made without input from those who use and value them. The grassroots petition opposing this move has already amassed over 5,500 signatures and continues to grow, reflecting widespread public disapproval.

Suffolk Libraries has been a trusted and effective partner of the County Council, delivering a high-quality service that provides real value for money. Instead of destabilising this successful model, we urge Suffolk County Council to engage in open discussions with Suffolk Libraries to ensure a future that prioritises service continuity and community benefit.

Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council strongly opposes this proposed takeover and calls on Suffolk County Council to reconsider its decision before the vote on March 18th. We ask that you listen to the residents of Suffolk, acknowledge the outstanding work of Suffolk Libraries, and preserve a service that has served our communities so well.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P. Massey

Mr P Massey

Clerk

On behalf of Rushmere St Andrew Parish Council