May 2020 Parish Newsletter

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Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on COVID-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

COVID-19 related news

HOME, BUT NOT ALONE



You can call the Home, But Not Alone phoneline if you live in Suffolk and need urgent help during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is a free service.

This emergency phoneline is for people who:

- **do not have support available from friends, family or neighbours**
- **are struggling for food, medicines or other essential supplies**
- **are feeling lonely and isolated**.

If any of these apply to you, call 0800 876 6926 (available 9am to 5pm every day, including weekends). The telephone line is not a general information line for COVID-19 queries.

The Home, But Not Alone phoneline takes on average 1,300 calls a week, which include calls for support with food, calls for support with collecting medication, and calls relating to loneliness or isolation.

National Domestic Violence 24h Helpline 0800 200 0247

Mental Health Helpline 0800 196 3494

Police Matters (non emergency) www.suffolk.police.uk

Government opens COVID-19 testing site on outskirts of Ipswich

On 17 April, as part of its national COVID-19 testing programme, the Government opened a 'Drive Thru' testing facility on the outskirts of Ipswich.

Based on the existing Park and Ride site at Copdock Mill, off the A12 and A14 Junction, this is one of up to 50 sites being created around the country. This is a Government-led programme, supported by the Suffolk Resilience Forum and partners in Essex.

The site only offers testing on a pre-booked basis.

The Government is now offering testing for COVID-19 for:

- all those working on the frontline in health and social care (with or without symptoms)
- patients in the NHS and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms)
- all other essential workers with symptoms
- anyone over 65 with symptoms
- anyone who goes into work because they cannot work from home (for example, construction workers) and has symptoms
- anyone who has symptoms and lives with someone who meets any of the above criteria.

Visit https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus for more information on testing for COVID-19.

Stay at home and record life in lockdown

Suffolk Archives is calling on people across the county to record snapshots of their life whilst they stay at home during the COVID-19 pandemic.

'Life in Lockdown' is a brand-new archive collection, which will preserve the history of today and help future generations better understand the lives we lead and the environment we live in.

Rebecca Harpur, Volunteer Engagement Coordinator, said:

“We want to hear from people from all walks of life and all ages, from right across Suffolk. In years to come we will want to look back on this important period of history, and the responses we receive could become a valuable part of Suffolk Archives’ collection.

“It is up to you how much information you want to contribute; it could be a few immediate impressions or a more in-depth representation of life today.

“You can also upload digital content such as scans of documents, emails, social media screenshots, photographs, artwork, posters or diary entries, that capture life during lockdown.”

To contribute simply visit **www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/life-in-lockdown** and complete the online survey. You can also sign up to keep a diary, make a scrapbook, or record the lockdown using photography or by producing artwork.

There are also activities available that can be done at home, including a challenge to create a miniature of a Suffolk building out of Lego bricks, printable colouring sheets and online jigsaw puzzles of documents from the Suffolk Archives collection.

A time capsule competition has also been launched by the Engagement Hub, part of Suffolk County Council’s Children and Young People’s services, in partnership with Suffolk Archives and The Hold. **‘The Art of being 2 metres Apart!’** time capsule competition is to help children and young people to express and share their feelings during this difficult time through art, music or creative writing.

Councillor Paul West, Portfolio Holder for Heritage, said:

“We wanted to engage with young people and, as we can’t see them face-to-face at the moment, this is a great way to connect with them.

“It gives young people a place to express their emotions about the virus, how their lives have changed and adapted, and how they are managing hopes and fears.

“They will be helping to record Suffolk history from a different viewpoint and help people in the future understand what it was like. The selected entries will go into The Hold for future generations to see.”

There are three categories (artwork, music or creative writing) and two age groups: 5-11 years old and 12-19 years old (up to 25 with SEND). You can enter more than one category, and the creative work submitted will be exhibited later in the year.

To enter, and for more information, visit: **www.thesource.me.uk/timecapsule**. The deadline is 1 September 2020, and there is a £30 voucher for the winner in each category and age group.

Financial assessments for those receiving care to be postponed

Each April, Suffolk County Council carries out an annual financial assessment review for those with care packages.

This year, in light of the current Coronavirus pandemic, a decision has been made to postpone the financial review until further notice.

On 16 April, the Council announced that those in receipt of care will continue to be charged in the same way that they are currently and there will be no change in the way in which people make their payments.

The situation will be kept under review, and customers will be informed when the time is right to consider undertaking the annual financial review. No back charges will be incurred as a result of this postponement.

Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, said:

“I recognise what a difficult time this is for those who receive a care and support service from Adult Care Services and I do not want to the council to add to the stress and anxiety that many of our customers and their families may be experiencing.

“Therefore, we will continue to charge our customers in the same way that we are currently doing, and there will be no change in the way that they make any payments.

“I, and the senior management team in Adult Care Services, will keep this situation under review and we will let customers know when it changes.

“I also want to give my assurance that when we do complete the annual review of customer finances, we will not backdate any changes in charges.”

The fight against scams

Times of distress and disruption are a magnet for scammers and, sadly, now is no different.

Action Fraud has reported that, in February alone, victims lost over £800,000 as a result of COVID-19 related scams. This figure is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg, as many will have felt too scared or ashamed to report, and others will be completely unaware that they have been duped.

Here in Suffolk both residents and businesses have been targeted by fraudsters in a variety of ways.

Trading Standards have seen emails that contain malware links and attachments, as well as those sending you to phishing sites, where the criminals attempt to steal your personal information. There have been reports of criminals knocking on doors and offering to go shopping for people who are self-isolating at home. Some purport to be from well-known charities such as The Red Cross, with others claiming to be from local community groups, including working on behalf of Suffolk County Council’s Home, But Not Alone.

Other scams include online shopping scams involving sought-after items like face masks and hand sanitiser, with either no products being supplied or, worse still, products that don’t comply with safety standards. There are also reports of fake websites that imitate agencies including HMRC, offering false tax relief assistance.

Trading Standards have highlighted all these scams on their social media channels as well as in their weekly email to over 700 Trading Standards Champions. Their followers on social media have helped share the information to thousands of people, who in turn have shared it with friends and family both on and offline. Consumer

Champions are residents, businesses and community groups of Suffolk, many of whom share the information on their community websites or in newsletters.

You can join the fight against scams by:

- Reporting scams to Suffolk Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133
- Following Trading Standard on Twitter, www.twitter.com/SuffolkTS, and Facebook, www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards, to help share messages to your friends, family and followers.
- Signing up to receive a weekly email alert by going to www.suffolk.gov.uk/JoinTheFight

Council continues to work with providers during Coronavirus pandemic

As the Coronavirus pandemic continues, the county council is keen to reassure people that it is doing everything in its power to support care providers.

Along with the NHS and health providers, the care system is vital to our response to Coronavirus and they are truly on the front line in terms of supporting our most vulnerable. The demand for their services has never been higher and the council is supporting them meet this challenge.

The council has changed the way in which it pays care providers in order to ensure they are able to remain operational during the crisis.

The council has also moved quickly to obtain extra capacity for care needs to be met by using CQC registered providers of home care that do not normally contract with the Council and buying more beds in care homes.

The council's own Home First service is also preparing for increased demand and planning for sickness levels by initially redeploying staff from across Adult Community Services. Basic training is already underway to upskill or refresh the skills of these staff in order to be ready for redeployment.

Adult Care Services are also working closely with the Home, But Not Alone hub to identify what other support can be offered to ease the pressure on carers as the crisis continues.

The council also recognises that the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) is an ongoing, national issue for care providers. Whilst care providers are responsible for sourcing PPE for their service, the high demand globally has made this increasingly difficult, adding to the pressure and anxiety of frontline workers. The council has lobbied tirelessly to ensure that care providers are given the same prioritisation as health workers in terms of receiving PPE and will continue to do so.

In order to support our local care providers Suffolk County Council are providing a centralised cell for PPE in Suffolk with a dedicated email address.

The council has been collating information for Adults and Children's services, districts and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, and the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and this is then fed into the stock and procurement system. The

council's procurement team has established some good supply chains, both nationally and internationally. Endeavour House, Ipswich, is the central base for all PPE delivery, storage, pack prep, and distribution. Packs are being sent out to frontline services in Suffolk on a daily basis.

In the week of 6 April alone, 65 care homes were provided with the emergency PPE they asked for and the council has responded to every care provider that has approached the council for support.

Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, said:

"I am incredibly grateful for the dedication of our care providers and I am totally committed to supporting them as we all face this unprecedented crisis.

"Our carers are our hidden heroes who are continuing to take care of our most vulnerable even when the risks are high for themselves. I and my colleagues at the council are working hard to ensure we do right by these incredible people. We have successfully lobbied for more supplies of much needed PPE and will continue to do so as the pandemic continues.

"I want to assure people that we are standing with them in this and we are doing everything that we can to ensure we look after those who need us now more than ever."

Residents show their support for Keep Moving Suffolk campaign

Residents and organisations in the public and voluntary sector have come out in support of the county's Keep Moving Suffolk campaign.

Led by Suffolk's Most Active County Partnership, the campaign supports everyone in Suffolk to get active from the safety of their homes and gardens, or during their one session of daily exercise away from their home, under the current COVID-19 pandemic social distancing arrangements.

It's all about giving people tips and advice to support a healthy mind and body. The key focus is the website **keepmovingsuffolk.com** which is full of local and national information and resources that have been developed specifically to make it easy for people to become, or remain, active at home during these challenging times.

The website has come about as a means to address the need to give people a range of options following the closure of gyms, leisure centres, and swimming pools and the cancellation of classes and activities. Without us all taking positive action, physical activity levels could tumble and cause a long-term impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing in the county.

The website launched on 1 April and, within its first week, the website was used over 2,500 times. There has also been great support through the Keep Moving Suffolk social media channels, where you can share with us your stories of how you are keeping active. On Facebook, visit **KeepMovingSuffolk** or on Twitter **@Most_Active**

Councillor James Reeder, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention said:

"I encourage everybody to share details of the Keep Moving Suffolk campaign with their family, friends, neighbours and wider contacts whether through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or encouraging them to visit the website.

"It's a really helpful resource that has the potential to make a really positive impact on our health and wellbeing so let's keep moving Suffolk."

Suffolk County Council to offer tenants rent deferral as part of support efforts during COVID-19 pandemic

Suffolk County Council owns and lets a range of properties and land to tenants throughout the county which are used in a number of ways, including the provision of care and education. During this challenging period, as residents of Suffolk stay at home to reduce the spread of infection and the majority of businesses remain closed, as a considerate landlord the council believes it should do what it can to support the local and regional economy through the management of its rental agreements with tenants.

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Housing & Enterprise, Councillor Nick Gowrley, said:

"The authority has identified 87 of its most vulnerable tenants, which encompasses 123 properties. We have been in touch with each tenant to ask if there is anything we can do to support them at this difficult time. We believe these tenants should be given the opportunity to arrange deferral of their rent and charges for three months, should they wish to do so. This would give them a degree of financial support for a short period of time as the impacts of coronavirus on business continue.

Decision reached on the improvements to the Tollgate junction in Bury St Edmunds

On 29 April, it was reported that a decision has been reached on the best option to reduce traffic congestion and improve sustainable transport facilities for pedestrians at the Tollgate junction.

The three options which were consulted upon contained a variety of solutions for the junction, including adding a pedestrian phase to the traffic lights, the addition of extra lanes and changing the direction of travel. Options also considered the value of the greenspace to the local area, with the proposals seeking to maintain as much of this space as possible.

Suffolk County Council will proceed with option two. Option two sees additional lanes added to both Tollgate Lane and Fornham Road, so vehicles can move through the junction more easily and efficiently. The junction will also see a new pedestrian crossing.

Following feedback from members of the public, option two will now include a right turn from Mildenhall Road to Tollgate Lane subject to safety standards, and

improved facilities for cyclists as well as pedestrians linking to the train station and the town centre.

Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation and attended the information events. We had over 140 attendees at the two drop-in events and 321 responses to the consultation.

"These improvements will enhance access for vehicles around the North West area of Bury St Edmunds and provide better connection for pedestrians and cyclists to the train station and the town centre, promoting sustainable modes of transport in the town.

"Work is due to start early in 2021, but this is very much dependent on the current situation we are facing with COVID-19 and the impact it will have on all the county's highways improvement schemes. The time frame for the Tollgate junction cannot be guaranteed at this stage, but we will keep stakeholders and local people informed."

Funding for the improvements will be provided jointly by Abbeygate sixth form centre on Western Way, the Marham Park housing development in Fornham All Saints as part of their planning conditions, with a contribution from Suffolk County Council as the highways authority.

More than 98% of pupils receive a preferred primary school on National Offer Day

On 16 April, it was reported that over 98.57% of Suffolk children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of the schools preferred by their parents.

Suffolk County Council received 7,602 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2020.
Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.

Councillor Mary Evans, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, said:

"We have a good track record of offering places at preferred schools and this year is no exception. I am delighted that we have been able to give most parents a place for their child at one of the schools they want."

"We use published criteria to decide who has priority for places so that the process is fair and clear. I appreciate that not all families will have received a place at their preferred school and where a parents' preference for a Suffolk school is refused, we will automatically add their child's name to the waiting list for that school. We will also advise them about how to lodge an appeal should they wish to do so."

Any parents or carers with a child born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016 who have not yet applied for a school place should make an application immediately by downloading the **CAF1 application form from our website** or contact Suffolk County Council on **0345 600 0981**.

Once school places have been confirmed, parents need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for SCC funded school travel, they will receive an email by 15 May 2020 with details of how to opt-in.

Suffolk councils tackle dangerous parking to aid key services

Parking management in Suffolk moved from the police to local councils from 6 April – it has been in operation in Ipswich since 2005 – with the aim of driving down unlawful parking. However, given the current COVID-19 situation, councils will be taking a common-sense view and focusing on tackling obstructive and dangerous parking to ensure emergency, care, delivery, refuse and highways services can get around safely at this challenging time.

As part of the national response to the pandemic, advice from the British Parking Association and the Local Government Association is that parking enforcement is an important public service that keeps roads safe and ensures access to goods and services.

This is vitally important, particularly for key workers, as Suffolk's councils strive to continue providing essential services to their residents.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"Despite the unprecedented challenges we are experiencing currently, there are certain projects that continue in the background, and the move of statutory parking enforcement from the police to districts and boroughs is no exception.

"Although this move must take place now, it is extremely important that we are pragmatic in our approach to parking management and enforcement at this time. This builds on the continuing county-wide efforts to tackle the challenges and impacts of COVID-19, with our priority fixed on keeping roads open and safe and to protect parking spaces for healthcare workers, volunteers and people supporting the most vulnerable.

"That is why it is vital that we focus our resource on tackling dangerous and obstructive parking which could hinder key services from carrying out their duties.

"I am pleased that we have reached a consistent county-wide approach in how parking is managed during the coming weeks and months. I very much welcome the cross-council collaborative working in order to deliver better parking for Suffolk. Our colleagues will continue working together to ensure CPE is successfully launched and I look forward to seeing the benefits locally that these changes will bring, now and in the near future."