

Little Bealings Parish Council
SCC Newsletter - October 2020



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

Message from Councillor Matthew Hicks, Leader of Suffolk County Council

Suffolk County Council is supporting families and children in need as we don't want any family to go hungry. In August, DEFRA awarded Suffolk County Council £770,000 as our share of the hardship grant. Suffolk Public Sector Leaders provided further match funding of £800,000 in September. So far, the Suffolk system has spent £600,000 and this covers:-

- The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme that funds supermarket, food and fuel vouchers; school uniforms; essential furniture items; white goods; and oil heating refills.
- The Suffolk Advice and Support Service phoneline.
- A donation of £100,000 to the Suffolk Community Foundation to provide grants to organisations to help communities with immediate hardship.

Some of the help provided to date by the hardship fund includes: -

- Supporting families with food and fuel vouchers, paying utility bills, and buying school uniforms.
- Buying a bike for a man to get to his new job, after losing his old job due to Covid-19 and having to sell his car to cover expenses.
- Buying special boots for a child with disabilities, which the family could no longer afford.
- Covering rent arrears for people.

On top of this, Suffolk County Council has also committed £250,000 to Suffolk Foodbanks and awarded a further £60,000 to the Suffolk Community Foundation's emergency hardship fund. Schools receive government funding to provide free school meals. For maintained schools, this funding comes through Suffolk County Council

and is forwarded to our community and voluntary controlled schools annually. In Suffolk, there are now about 19,000 children receiving Free School Meals.

In the early summer, we widened the support given in Suffolk by providing vouchers to families once they apply for Universal Credit and giving vouchers to children entitled to Free School Meals but who are not in school. As you will be aware, the Government funded an extension of the provision of meals for children throughout the school holidays. At SCC we provided extra funding to ensure that children who qualified for FSMs after the Government's deadline still got the vouchers throughout the summer holidays.

Families who need help to feed their children or with any other financial concern can access support in many other ways in Suffolk. In the early days of the pandemic, one of our main challenges was helping those who were isolated and struggling for support. This was addressed through the Home But Not Alone phoneline, which is ready to stand up again if needed. We recognise that the challenges that many families face now are financial – and many of these families will be facing hardship for the first time in their lives. The Suffolk Support and Advice Line has been set up to help address these issues. It can help with debt advice, budgeting, mortgage, rent or credit card problems and employment queries. The number is **0800 068 3131** and is manned Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. People can also go to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

We appreciate that the needs of people across our county will change as we go into winter. We will work with our partners to ensure that we can adapt and flex to address these needs and offer the right support at the right time.

Council announces £228,000 for tree-planting, protecting hedgerows and verges across Suffolk

Suffolk's natural environment will receive investment for tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife. £228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable Suffolk County Council to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. The authority will do this through a number of new schemes, as well as building on existing work.

Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. It will also help establish around 10 community tree nurseries, which will support more planting in years to come. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities.

The funding will also be used to trial better ways to manage roadside verges for wildlife. This includes exploring the use of new technology and cutting techniques, as well as developing new partnerships with parishes and landowners. The funding will help expand the existing Roadside Nature Reserve network managed by the council

with the help of volunteers, seeing a 25% increase in the overall length of verges managed for wildlife.

Councillor Richard Rout, Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection at Suffolk County Council, said:

“This funding will boost the council’s existing work to protect Suffolk’s environment and wildlife. Increased tree planting will allow us to offset carbon emissions, though we are continuing to work to eliminate the council’s emissions where possible, as part of our commitment to our climate emergency declaration.

“But this is much more than just planting trees and walking away. We are setting up the support needed to allow trees, hedgerows and verges to thrive for years to come, including in urban areas. We are committed to a ‘right tree, right place’ policy and to working with others. This will be achieved through a new Suffolk Tree Partnership, involving many others across Suffolk, to support local communities and landowners to help manage and increase tree cover.

“We will also work with others to develop a ‘healing wood’ initiative as a way of recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our communities.

“With Suffolk’s healing woods we will all have access to natural spaces, where we can reflect on our own experiences of the pandemic or take a quiet moment to grieve for loved ones.”

People in Suffolk can have their say on plans for a ‘healing’ woodland space in memory of those who died from Covid-19. A survey has now been launched online for people to share their thoughts and preferences on what they would like to see.

Among the questions people can answer are whether they believe there should be multiple woods spread across the county, and whether it should be on existing public ground. The potential locations are to be identified in the new year.

The survey will run online until 25 November. The council will then collate and publish the results with a plan for the next steps.”

[Visit the website here to take part in the survey.](#)

New cycle parking installed thanks to Government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund

New cycle parking has been installed in two Suffolk towns thanks to the Government’s Emergency Active Travel Fund to help make cycling safer and easier.

One of the positives to come out of the COVID-19 crisis is the noticeable increase in people cycling. Whether that is for commuting to work to avoid overcrowding the transport network, for leisure, or as part of daily exercise.

This has resulted in reduced congestion and improved air quality, as well as supporting people’s health and wellbeing.

Suffolk County Council has used some of their grant from the fund to install cycle parking bays in Stowmarket and Sudbury.

In Stowmarket the parking bays have been installed outside the John Peel Centre, at the Stricklands Road junction with Ipswich Road and on Wilkes Way.

In Sudbury the parking bays have been installed on North Street near the Masonic Hall, King Street near to Rees Café and by the Belle Vue artwork.

The locations of the cycle parking were selected in partnership with Sudbury Town Council and Stowmarket Town Council.

To keep up to date with how Suffolk County Council is making it safer and easier for residents to choose active travel – walking and cycling – visit suffolk.gov.uk/walkingandcycling

Changes submitted for Sizewell C project to cut HGV construction traffic

Significant changes have been put forward to the plans for the Sizewell C nuclear power station, to cut the number of lorries on Suffolk's roads and curb its impact on the environment. EDF Energy has submitted 14 changes to the twin reactor project, with the full details released on 16 October. A 30-day public consultation will take place next month.

The main changes involve making more use of rail and sea to deliver construction materials for the massive project, with an increase in trains and alterations to the proposed beach landing facility. EDF also plan to reduce the use of AONB land on the Sizewell estate by working closely with Sizewell A, which is being decommissioned, and by using existing land for critical buildings that need to be moved to allow construction to get under way. In addition, EDF is proposing additional land for the creation of fen meadows to further increase the 'net gain' in biodiversity following completion of the project.

The changes are a response to feedback from Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council, as well as residents, MPs and other stakeholders.

The consultation on the changes will start on 16 November. The consultation will be operated in strict accordance with the pandemic guidelines. The next stage in the process is the public examination, which is unlikely to start until next year.

Adopt East launches

14 October marked the launch of Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England. Adopt East will work across local authorities in Southend, Thurrock, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. Adoptionplus, Barnardo's, and Adoption UK are also part of the partnership. The Adopt East alliance will deliver the highest quality adoption service to children and families throughout the region by bringing together the expertise and skills of all its partners.

The scale of the organisation means that adopters will have access to a larger number of children waiting for adoption. This will help partners to match children with the right family for them, at the earliest opportunity.

Adopt East is committed to providing good quality adoption support services to support all families with their adoption journey.

To find out more about the Adopt East Alliance [visit the Adopt East website](#).

Councils ready with Test and Trace Support Payment for most vulnerable

Councils in Suffolk are helping administer a Government scheme to provide financial help to those on low incomes and benefits who must self-isolate. Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments, and how to apply, can be found on District and Borough Council websites. If you have been contacted by NHS Test and Trace and told to self-isolate, you are under a legal obligation to do so, and could be eligible for a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment.

Those who are eligible will need to meet all the following criteria:

- Told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- Employed or self-employed.
- Cannot work from home and will lose income as a result.
- Currently receiving at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit; Working Tax Credit; income-based Employment and Support Allowance; income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; Income Support; Housing Benefit; and/or Pension Credit.

Applications are made for one person only and any further applications within the same household must be made by each individual. Payments are subject to tax but not National Insurance. People must make the application within 14 days of the last day of their NHS test and trace self-isolation period.

Applicants should ensure that they have the below information available before starting the application:

- NI number
- 8-digit test and trace ID number
- Recent bank statement, proof of self-employment, or wage slips.

If asked to do so by Test and Trace, you must self-isolate by law. Failure to do so will mean you are no longer eligible for the payment and steps will be made to recover the funds. Please visit the [NHS Test and Trace](#) website for more details of the NHS Test and Trace self-isolation requirements for those:-

- Testing [positive](#)
- Those who have been in [contact with someone](#) who has tested positive and now has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.

Visit your District or Borough Council websites for details on how to apply for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment:

- Babergh District Council www.babergh.gov.uk

- East Suffolk Council www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk
- Ipswich Borough Council www.ipswich.gov.uk
- Mid Suffolk District Councils www.midsuffolk.gov.uk
- West Suffolk Council www.westsuffolk.gov.uk

Support to help businesses prevent spread of COVID-19

From 12 October, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), working with Suffolk councils, has been speaking to businesses to offer guidance and advice on how they can manage risk and protect workers, customers, and visitors from COVID-19. All of Suffolk's district councils, working together as part of the Suffolk Resilience Forum's Safer Places Group, have agreed to work in partnership with the HSE to enable them to support thousands of businesses more quickly through a targeted approach. Both the HSE and the councils are also working alongside local public health authorities to support the understanding of any patterns in confirmed coronavirus cases in the area.

For further information on how to manage the risk of coronavirus in different business sectors please read the Government guidance at www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19.

Andrew Reid

County Councillor Wilford Division

Tel: 07545 423799

Email: andrew.reid@suffolk.gov.uk