

District Councillors Report

1 August 2020

Cllr Colin Hedgley

Cllr Tony Fryatt

Communities and supporting residents

Home But Not Alone

19 referrals through Home But Not Alone last week (down from 22 the previous week). This is the last week that the service will operate fully; from 1 August, the Home But Not Alone telephone line will provide signposting, advice and information.

Emergency food parcels and medication deliveries cease on the 31 July.

We will be able to 'stand up' the service again in the event of further waves of Covid-19 or local lockdown.

Community Partnerships

More Community Partnership meetings are taking place – Framlingham, Wickham Market and Villages met on 30 July and both Carlton Colville, Kessingland, Southwold and Villages and Felixstowe Peninsular meetings take place on 5 August.

The Community Partnership Board has set up a new multi-agency Task and Finish Group to consider its three priorities – Social isolation and Loneliness, Community Hubs/Resilience and Vulnerable People and Places. The Board meets for the first time next week.

Grants, funding and business matters

Response

We have now allocated over £63m to over 5,500 businesses across the district to support their survival during the initial lockdown and now recovery phase. The Government has now signalled that all payments from these grants should be made no later than 28 August as this is when the funds will be closed. We have seen very few recent applications for the original grant scheme and anticipate that we will have fully allocated the discretionary fund within two weeks – well within the Government deadline.

Overall, these schemes have been a great success and the Council has received a number of letters and emails stating that they have been a lifeline and have supported the survival of numerous businesses and countless jobs.

Recovery

Various strands of the Economic Development and Regeneration Teams's work programme have now been adapted to ensure they take account of the additional challenges caused by the Covid-19-induced economic downturn.

These include the recently agreed and ambitious Lowestoft Town Centre Masterplan, the ongoing work to revitalise all our town centres through the 'People & Places' work, the Smart Towns project, which is strongly aligned to our overall town centres approach and the proposed Felixstowe BID.

The positive approach the Council has adopted towards development in recent years across the district is now paying dividends in the recovery phase as we see investment taking place in our towns and resorts at just the right time to support the recovery e.g. the iconic café at Martello Park in Felixstowe, the redevelopment of the East Point Pavilion in Lowestoft and the recently fully funded flood defence scheme, also in Lowestoft.

Environmental Health

Test & Trace

A multi-agency virtual desktop exercise will be taking place on the afternoon of 5 August. This will test the Suffolk Covid Outbreak Control Plan to make sure that the plan we have in place across the county to manage any local outbreaks of Covid-19 is fit for purpose, has been tested and any learning identified is used to refine our existing plans. The objectives of the exercise will be to:

- Increase the multi-agency understanding of the Plan and how the Suffolk Health Protection Board will lead the Plan.
- To test and then inform the refinement of the new Outbreak Control Plan.
- Consider the media and communication messages required in the event of an outbreak.
- To test mobilisation of local rapid response.
- To clarify roles and responsibilities

Operational updates

Electric Vehicles

Six new electric vehicles are on the road this week, purchased by our partners Norse. This supports our ambition of migrating all of the existing council fleet, including vehicles used by housing, and by our partners such as Norse, to a low carbon alternative.

Claremont Pier, Lowestoft

The sale of the Claremont Pier has completed. This is an iconic building on Lowestoft's seafront and great news for the town. The Asset Management Team are working to prepare a new license, which will come to Cabinet for approval in August.

Southwold Caravan Site

Southwold Caravan Site owners will receive a three-month refund, for the period the site was closed. Credit notes are being prepared and will be complete by the end of next week.

Building re-occupation

We are working collectively with other teams, such as Licensing, to ensure some staff members can utilise the office facilities with members of the public whilst adhering to Government guidance and in accordance with the principles of re-occupation. Licensing are to start providing a limited service within Riverside and East Suffolk House from 17 August. ARP have also commenced services at the Marina Centre, albeit with limited staff members.

Refuse collection

Discussions with Norse are ongoing with the desired return to a 5-day working week, with three in a cab, potentially commencing on Monday 31 August. We will have agreed position on this by the second week of August (to either commence or postpone) to ensure the appropriate communications can be issued to all Garden Waste subscribers in time for their first revised collection, utilising the original pre-Covid schedule.

Reopening of Leisure Centres

Following the latest Government announcement, East Suffolk Council's leisure centres will be re-opening from Monday 3 August. This will be on a phased return. Deben Leisure Centre, Leiston Leisure Centre and Felixstowe Leisure Centre will re-open on Monday 3 August at 7am for gym and fitness classes, which will be followed by lane swimming on 10 August and swimming lessons in September. Brackenbury Sports Centre will re-open on Monday 17 August at 10am. All activities will be operated in sessions which must be pre-booked via the Places Locker App or Places Leisure website. Gym sessions will last 60 minutes and swim sessions, where applicable, 45 minutes.

Waterlane Leisure Centre in Lowestoft will be partly re-opening by Sentinel Leisure Trust for members from Monday 3 August with opening times initially from 7am-7pm Monday to Friday and 8am-4pm on Saturday and Sunday. The first areas to be re-opened are the fitness suite and group exercise studios, which will be followed by the pool and other areas at a later date, which has yet to be confirmed.

To ensure a safe re-opening in line with industry best practice and official Government guidance, our operators have taken advice from the fitness industry trade body, ukactive and Public Health England. As a result, people returning to the centres will see additional safety measures and cleaning regimes in place, as well as social distancing measures. This includes new hand sanitiser stations and cleaning stations to wipe down equipment before and after use, new floor and wall signage throughout and repositioned equipment to enable social distancing.

Bungay Leisure Centre

Work continues at Bungay Leisure Centre, which will be renamed Waveney Valley Leisure Centre prior to reopening and is on target to be open for early October. The retiling of the pool tank is progressing well and will be ready to refill the pool in September.

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