

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – MAY 2022

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



- **REFLECTIONS ON TWO YEARS OF THE KEEP MOVING SUFFOLK CAMPAIGN**

On April 1st 2022 this date marked the second anniversary of the Keep Moving Suffolk campaign. Mobilised within nine days of the first lockdown, its ambition has been to help people stay active or become active during the pandemic. Two years on, the campaign is being celebrated for helping thousands of Suffolk residents to move more in ways that suit them to stay fit & healthy.

- **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS FUNDING ANNOUNCED**

On April 4th, Suffolk County Council announced £350,000 of funding to support the ambitions set out in the Suffolk Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2022. This fund has been provided by Suffolk County Council to support the work of the strategy in preventing violence, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and strengthening the system. Organisations will be able to apply for this funding to support initiatives that are synonymous with the objectives of the strategy and aim to stop violence against women and girls.

The fund is to be launched in partnership with Suffolk Community Foundation. Any organisations wishing to make an application can do so by visiting Suffolk Community Foundation or contacting them on grants@suffolkcf.org.uk or 01473 602602. Organisations can make an application for funding for up to £5,000 for pilot projects or up to £50,000 for projects which have already been piloted. These grants are available for up to 3 years.

Suffolk has launched its 3-year strategy for Violence Against Women and Girls, in line with the Government's plan to reduce and prevent this type of crime, improve collaboration between services and ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. The strategy has been prepared collaboratively by the Safer Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) – consisting of representatives from Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk's Police & Crime Commissioner, community safety partnerships, health and probation services, the Norfolk & Suffolk Criminal Justice Board and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership.

The SSCB have a shared commitment to tackle the incredibly important issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) which includes, but is not limited to, domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking, coercive and controlling behaviour, and revenge porn – all of which have a devastating impact on victim-survivors, families, and communities

- **IMPORT SURVEILLANCE TEAM HELPING TO KEEP CONSUMERS SAFE**

By Councillor Andrew Reid, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection.

As the weather hopefully warms up again soon, I'm sure that many of you will be likely to pay Felixstowe a visit over the coming weeks and months. Whilst the seaside town is known for its fish and chips, arcades and shingled shoreline, you may not be aware that it is also home to Britain's biggest and busiest shipping container port, which welcomes approximately 2,000 ships per year.

Since it opened in 1967, the Port of Felixstowe has continued to grow and now employs 2,500 people, who help handle the millions of container units passing through. These contain goods which originate from, or are destined for, one of over 700 ports around the world, from far flung places such as Singapore, to across the channel at Calais. A variety of products are transported in this way including toys, cosmetics, bicycles and

electrical equipment – meaning that you probably have items in your home which have entered the country via Felixstowe.

Although the majority of these goods will be legitimate, this sadly isn't always the case. Fortunately for consumers, Suffolk Trading Standards' Import Surveillance Team continues to operate from the Port of Felixstowe to find these dangerous items and stop them from making their way into the marketplace.

Last Friday, I had the pleasure of visiting the team at the port to learn more about their important work and see some of the unsafe items detained already this year. Officers operate from one of the port's examination warehouses, 70 Shed, where they examine containers identified by the Office for Product Safety and Standards as potentially carrying high-risk consumer products. As I entered the warehouse, I was met with items recently detained by the team, including hundreds of welders probably destined for online marketplaces. Whilst these may have seemed like a good deal for DIY enthusiasts, they did not meet electrical safety requirements and posed a risk of fire, explosion or electric shock due to the poor construction and design, which included a fuse modified with wire.

These weren't the only dangerous electrical items shown to me during my visit, with poor plugs, faulty air fryers and lethal lights all due to be destroyed after being discovered by the team. Even more worrying was a host of unsafe LED anti-aging face masks confiscated by Trading Standards officers. Although I've not used one myself, I'm informed that these are taking the beauty industry by storm and have a price tag of hundreds of pounds. This makes it even more tempting for people to seek out a budget alternative but, having heard first-hand about the dangers of these masks, I can assure you that it isn't worth the risk.

It's not just electrical goods posing a danger to life, with the team often finding non-compliant toys that could cause death or serious injury to children and toddlers. I was absolutely appalled to learn of the number of dodgy dolls or cuddly toys that contain loose parts or unsecure battery compartments, which could easily lead to a child choking or swallowing harmful batteries. Thankfully for the UK's families, these have been detained and destroyed before they can even go on sale.

There is no doubt that the efforts of the Import Surveillance Team have prevented fire, serious injury or even death by keeping dangerous goods out of our county. But your help is also needed with this. At a time of energy price increases and rising fuel costs, it can seem like a great idea to try to grab a bargain. However, no saving justifies the potential consequences of having an unsafe product in the home. It is crucial to only buy items from reputable retailers and remember that if a price looks too good to be true, there's probably a reason why. Although you think you're getting a good deal, you could end up paying for it with your life.

If you're concerned that you may have purchased substandard goods, please contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0808 223 1133 so that we can help you and other consumers.

And when you're next at Felixstowe and spot a ship laden with cargo, I hope that it will serve as a reminder of the tireless work going on behind the scenes from Trading Standards to keep Suffolk, and the rest of the UK, safe from high-risk products.

- **'JUST SAY HELLO, JUST LISTEN, JUST REACH OUT'**

A new film featuring various partners from across Suffolk has been released which aims to prevent suicide. The 'Just Say Hello' campaign aims to raise awareness of how a simple 'hello' can make the difference to a person's mental wellbeing, whether it be a loved one or a stranger. With evidence suggesting that 75% of people who die by suicide have no contact with mental health services, or even their GP within the 12 months preceding their death, it is important that everyone knows they can play their part. Simply reaching out and starting a conversation can be enough to help someone or by interrupting their thought process and encouraging them to get further help.

Featured in the film is Terry Waite who used to work as a hostage negotiator in some of the most dangerous parts of the world and unfortunately was captured and spent almost five years in strict solitary confinement.

He says, "Each year in Suffolk alone, 65 people die this way. And those figures are frankly tragic and unacceptable."

This video highlights suicide being the biggest killer for men under the age of 45, with 3 in 4 deaths by suicide being men.

If you would like to learn more about helping someone who may be in need, useful resources are available, and you don't need special skills to speak to someone. Free online training is available from the Zero Suicide Alliance that provides the knowledge and the confidence to talk to someone who might be at risk of or thinking about suicide.

Alongside this, the Samaritans website provides more advice on becoming a better listener to support loved ones who may be struggling to cope or to open up about how they are feeling. Everyone in Suffolk can play their part by talking openly about their mental health and knowing that help is available.

More 'Just Say Hello' campaign films will be available over the next coming weeks including bereavement by suicide liaison workers Annabelle Bennett and Chelsea Thorpe speaking on the new service available throughout Suffolk and Northeast Essex. If you or someone you know is in mental health crisis and requires serious or life-threatening emergency mental or physical care, dial 999 immediately.

- **SUFFOLK SCHOOLS RECOGNISED FOR ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AND ROAD SAFETY**

Pupils at three Suffolk schools have been recognised for their efforts in promoting active and sustainable travel. Wetheringsett Manor School, Castle Hill Infant and Junior School and Thurston Church of England Primary Academy have received Modeshift STARS accreditations. Wetheringsett Manor School, in Stowmarket, received a bronze award and is the first Suffolk school which caters for pupils with special educational needs and disability to receive accreditation. It promoted road safety and independent travel training to the students, involving assemblies and accompanied walks.

Castle Hill and Thurston schools receive green accreditations for their sustainable travel work.

The three schools now join previous winners Bosmere Community Primary School, Barrow CEVC Primary School, Great Barton Church of England Primary Academy, Great Whelnetham Church of England Primary School, The Limes Primary School, and Exning Primary School in holding Modeshift STARS Accreditation.

- **99% OF PUPILS RECEIVE A PREFERRED PRIMARY ON NATIONAL OFFER DAY**

This year 99.22% of children were offered a place at one of their parents' three preferred schools and 95.6% were offered a place at their first preference school. Suffolk County Council received 7144 applications from parents indicating which primary school they would prefer their child to join in September 2022.

Families who applied online were able to log on to the Admissions Portal to see the school their child had been offered. They also receive an email with details of the school place offered.

Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post today.

Any parents or carers with a child born between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2018 who have not yet applied for a school place should make an application immediately. Information on how to make an application can be found on the School Admission pages or by contacting 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 Suffolk County Council funded school travel they will receive an email by 13 May 2022 with details of how to opt-in. For further information on how to view your offer online and guidance on what to do if you have not received your preferred offer, please read the School admissions FAQ page.

- **FIRE SERVICE DELIVERS MUCH-NEEDED EQUIPMENT TO UKRAINE**

It was announced on April 19th that Staff from Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service embarked on a 1,000 mile journey to transport vital firefighting kit to help their counterparts in Ukraine. The deployment team,

consisting of six volunteers, will drive across Europe to deliver Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's donation of two fully operational fire engines and accompanying equipment, which forms part of the wider National Fire Chiefs Council and Fire Aid initiative. Team members Graham Abrey, Jason Anderson, Jake Booth, Paul Buck, Matt Hassey and Sean Ryan set off from Ipswich East Fire Station this morning after being waved off by well-wishers.

Their journey will see them travel to Kent to join the national convoy of vehicles departing for Ukraine. From there, they will head to Poland, where they will hand over the vehicles and kit to the Polish Fire Service, who will distribute the items to the Ukrainian fire stations most in need.

Jon Lacey, Chief Fire Officer for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, said:

"Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service was devastated to hear of the loss experienced by the Ukrainian Fire Service so far, which has seen 100 fire stations and 250 fire engines needlessly destroyed in the conflict.

"We are pleased to be able to support the national effort to assist our counterparts at this difficult time by replacing some of the damaged kit, and I'd like to thank everyone who has made delivering our donation to Ukraine possible. It's been a real team effort with staff working tirelessly around the clock to prepare the team and ensure that equipment is serviced and ready for use on arrival to the country."

Those wishing to show their support for the convoy can follow the team's journey on Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service's Twitter and Facebook accounts over the coming days.

Councillor Andrew Reid, cabinet member for Public Health and Public Protection commented:

"Our council has been deeply saddened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and remains committed to doing all that we can to help the country and its people.

"I am immensely proud of our fire service for donating two engines along with other lifesaving equipment to Ukraine, which I know will make a real difference to the firefighters continuing to protect their communities during the conflict. It was a privilege to be part of the deployment team's send off this morning and I wish them the very best of luck and a safe journey."

The donation builds on the success of last month's charity car washes, which saw Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service raise over £8,000 for the Disaster Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal and the Fire Fighters Charity.

● **SUFFOLK DIGITAL CARE PROJECT HITS UNPRECEDENTED MILESTONE**

A team of social care professionals in Suffolk is making strides in digital transformation by achieving a milestone in referrals for its digital care service. Suffolk County Council, in partnership with Alcove and Rethink Partners, is pleased to have achieved a landmark number of 1,000 referrals for care technology in under nine months since the ground-breaking Cassius service went live on 19 July 2021.

The service has seen over 1,600 devices installed in people's homes to enable Suffolk residents to stay at home and live independently and delay the need to access additional care or move to supported accommodation.

Devices such as movement sensors, smart watches, wearables, falls prevention devices and other technology are allowing people to stay independently at home for longer and better manage risk when previously they may have needed additional help, such as home care or moving to a residential care home. Pioneering care technology such as this has also helped prevent the need for urgent care, thanks to its smart technology.

Suffolk County Council believes it has saved up to £2.2 million by enabling people to live well at home for longer, rather than having to access formal care and support before they were ready.

● **PUBLIC VIEWS SOUGHT OVER PROPOSED LOWESTOFT GARDEN VILLAGE MASTERPLAN**

It was announced on April 26th that a public consultation into a Suffolk County Council masterplan for more than 1,000 new homes in Lowestoft is underway. The eight-week exercise is for the proposed North of Lowestoft Garden Village and follows on from a consultation last year where the public was asked for its initial views. Those views were incorporated into this final proposed masterplan that is now being presented to the public.

The proposed scheme forms part of the Waveney Local Plan and is for up to 1,300 dwellings, eight hectares of employment land, a new primary school, a local centre for community use and retail, and 23 hectares of green space. It will be built on 71 hectares of arable land to the north of Lowestoft and to the west of Corton, The A47 is to the west, Corton Long Lane to the south and Stirrups Lane to the north.

The proposed new dwellings would include 30% being classed as affordable homes, and a retirement community comprising a care home/nursing home and extra care and/or sheltered dwellings.

The final number of homes to be provided will be confirmed within the subsequent planning applications that would follow the approval of the proposed Masterplan.

The exact mix of employment is not known at this stage but it is anticipated a new business park will be created, providing space for business and investment in this part of the town. It is intended that an outline planning application will follow later in 2022. For more details and to leave comments on the proposed Masterplan go to the North of Lowestoft Garden Village website. The deadline for comments is 4pm on Friday 17 June.

• **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL TO FREEZE POST-16 TRAVEL COSTS TO SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

It was announced on April 28th that Suffolk County Council is to freeze charges for travel for over 16s to schools and colleges from September. The council's Cabinet agreed fares should remain at 2021/22 levels for another 12 months to help families faced with soaring living costs. The decision means costs for the 2022/23 academic year will remain at £930 per year for mainstream transport and £750 for SEND pupils. The decision will be reviewed in 12 months' time.

The Post-16 Travel Policy applies to full-time learners aged 16-18 years, and those aged 19 years and over if they are continuing the same course started before their nineteenth birthday. It also applies to continuing learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) aged 19-25 years.

To qualify for funding under the scheme young people need to continue to study or train in one of three ways:

- Study full-time in a school, college or with a training provider (at least 540 hours of planned learning per year)
- Full-time work or volunteering (20 hours or more per week) combined with part-time education or training leading to relevant regulated qualifications (at least 280 hours of planned learning per year)
- Be working in an apprenticeship, supported internship or traineeship

The council is not required by law to fund Post-16 Travel and does not receive any funding from central government to fund it.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

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