

District Councillors Report to Playford Parish Council



January 2021

Cllr Colin Hedgley

(Apologies for the length of this report. I have tried to put as much in as possible to keep you up to date. Please note that Cllr Tony Fryatt is presently off sick with Covid)

New Environmental Guidance Note approved

I did last month, send round the environmental Guidance note but if you haven't seen it then put the link below into your browser. East Suffolk Council continues to put the environment first as it approves new guidance which tackles the impact development can have on the environment. The Guidance Note was produced after the Council declared a climate emergency and aims to support the Council's environmental vision in building the right environment for East Suffolk and its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. It provides simple, concise information on best practices for reducing the impact on the environment in any new developments or renovations and measures to help achieve this, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, nature and wildlife, sustainable travel, water conservation, materials and waste and more.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Environment/Environment-Guidance/Environmental-Guidance-Note.pdf>

Melton Hill case dismissed

East Suffolk Council successfully defended its decision to grant planning permission to develop homes at the site of former offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge. A Judge in the Administrative Court dismissed all of the claims made against the Council and found that its approach to the granting of planning consent was lawful. With full Planning Consent in place, East Suffolk Council will now begin the process of marketing the site to interested developers, bringing much needed housing to the area in a prime location.

Suffolk's Police and Crime Commissioner, Tim Passmore has just published his proposals for the policing element of the council tax precept for the next financial year.

The details are here: [pcc-proposes-more-officers-for-the-county-through-policing-precept](#).

He is asking Suffolk residents for their thoughts on his proposals through an electronic survey which can be accessed through the website link above .

The survey is open until **9am on Thursday 28th January**.

Tim Passmore says "We would be really grateful if you could share this email with anyone you think would be interested in taking part in the survey." <https://suffolk-pcc.gov.uk/news/pcc-proposes-more-officers-for-the-county-through-policing-precept>

Council welcomes progress on windfarm proposals

East Suffolk Council has today welcomed progress from Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) in addressing a number of concerns raised by the Council about their applications for offshore windfarm developments off the East Suffolk coast.

SPR submitted two separate nationally significant applications for offshore windfarm developments - East Anglia One North (EA1N) and East Anglia Two (EA2) – in 2019 and the projects propose offshore export cables which would run underground for approximately 9km between Thorpeness and a site north of Friston village where the onshore substations would be located.

East Suffolk Council's Cabinet, at its meeting in January 2020, resolved that whilst maintaining overall support for the principle of offshore wind as a significant contributor to the reduction in carbon emissions, and for the economic opportunities it may bring to the locality, that it would raise an objection to specific aspects of the proposals which have significant impacts onshore.

However, subsequent discussions between both parties have provided further information and led to an enhanced package of mitigation and compensation in relation to works being proposed. Therefore, with this in mind, the Cabinet now agrees that the Council can move towards a 'neutral' position regarding the proposals.

Cllr Craig Rivett, East Suffolk Council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development said: "There are still areas of disagreement with regards to operational noise at the substations site and the cumulative impacts of future energy development which have not yet been satisfactorily addressed. We would also like to see further commitments in relation to the design of the substations and will continue to work with the Applicants to reduce the impacts of the projects.

"However, we do of course continue to support the principle of offshore wind and we are pleased that SPR have responded to our request for additional compensation and mitigation in relation to the onshore cables. This is a positive sign and means that we can move our overall position towards 'neutral' on both proposals."

The Council will also continue to engage with the Applicants to address areas of concerns raised within the Council's Relevant Representation and Local Impact Report.

Active Suffolk

From Monday 18 January 2021, Active Suffolk and This Girl Can Suffolk will be hosting a week of free online activities. Throughout the week, local women will be invited to join a series of live online events including physical activity taster sessions, workshops and talks with some of our local This Girl Can ambassadors.

Check out the full schedule below and book your place on any of the FREE events today!

Look up **Active Suffolk – Events** on your computer

COVID-19

You can find the latest information relating to COVID-19, including the support that is available to residents, businesses and other organisations and what changes have been made to council services in a response to the outbreak.

We know that the outbreak is a major concern for everyone in East Suffolk, and we are working hard with partners and local communities to ensure that we continue to deliver essential services and that help is available for those who need it [Go onto the East Suffolk Council website](#).

Business Grants update

We are currently awaiting further guidance on the new Covid-19 business grants announced by the Government and will update our website as soon as we have more information. The key thing that businesses can do at this stage is to apply for the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRS), which has been available since the lockdown in November, if they haven't already. See the online form and full details about how to apply with full eligibility criteria. There is no need to apply if your business has already received this grant, as all subsequent additional support payments will be calculated automatically, and appropriate Tier 2 and Tier 4 grants will be paid based on your successful LRS application. There is also a further scheme available, the Additional Restrictions Grant, for those businesses who may fall outside the eligibility of the LRS scheme. If you have any further questions relating to business grants and support, please email COVID19BusinessGrants@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

[Go onto the East Suffolk Council website](#)

Have your say on Council's budget priorities

Local residents and businesses are invited to have their say on East Suffolk Council's spending priorities before budget is set next month. East Suffolk Council has launched a consultation to enable local people and businesses to have their say on what they would like the Council's 2021/22 budget to focus on to ensure it continues to deliver vital services and support to communities and businesses. Cllr Maurice Cook, cabinet member for Resources, said: "The Covid-19 pandemic has shown just how important council services are to our communities and businesses, but it has also presented a significant financial challenge to the Council. However, we are committed to continue to deliver the services our communities and businesses need and rely on by making careful, yet bold decisions in our budget plans. "This consultation reflects the challenges we face, but it also set out our approach to support our communities and businesses through this difficult time and beyond, to help them recover and thrive. "I want to urge everyone who lives and works in East

Suffolk to take part and share your views with us so we can efficiently plan for the future and continue to meet the needs of our communities and businesses.”

East Suffolk Council wants to encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation, which provides an opportunity to review and comment on the Council’s approach to financial sustainability and meeting the budget challenges ahead.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HN3SJVJ>

The consultation closes on Friday 22 January 2021 at 5pm.

Latest countywide figures and information

As of the 6 January there were 16,859 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 2,214 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people.

District case rate as of 6 January 2021:

| Area name | Daily Cases reported | Weekly Cases reported | Weekly case rate* | Wk on wk trend* | Cumulative cases | Cumulative case rate | National Rate Rank (of 315) |
|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Babergh | 72 | 550 | 567.2 | ↑ | 2,450 | 2662.00 | 254 |
| East Suffolk | 199 | 1,083 | 386.0 | ↑ | 4,757 | 1906.90 | 297 |
| Ipswich | 178 | 897 | 583.6 | ↑ | 4,168 | 3044.30 | 233 |
| Mid Suffolk | 73 | 483 | 380.2 | ↑ | 1,902 | 1830.70 | 302 |
| West Suffolk | 127 | 836 | 410.5 | ↑ | 3,582 | 2000.60 | 294 |
| Suffolk | 649 | 3,849 | 448.4 | ↑ | 16,859 | 2,214.4 | |
| East of England | 7,408 | 50,326 | 769.6 | ↑ | 235,253 | 3,772.5 | |
| England | 56,060 | 360,537 | 579.8 | ↑ | 2,450,983 | 4,354.4 | |

A new national lockdown in England began on Wednesday 6th January for an indeterminate period. The national COVID-19 alert tiers are suspended while the national lockdown is in place. In the week to the 6th January there were 3,849 new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has nearly doubled compared to the previous week.

The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has increased and is now at 448.4 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (769.8 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (579.8/ 100,000).

Vaccinations

We at ESC understand and share concerns about ensuring our communities receive information about the vaccination roll out as quickly and effectively as possible, and it is clear that local authorities can play a role in this process. Therefore, we are pleased to confirm that the Suffolk Communications Cell, which includes representation from East Suffolk, has led on the delivery of a web resource which aims to provide clear, up to date information for stakeholders and residents.

www.suffolk.gov.uk/covidvaccinations

You will of course be aware that East Suffolk straddles two separate health CCG 'areas' which we note can cause some confusion, particularly in the media when referring to Suffolk as a whole. Therefore, this resource will hopefully be a really useful way of sharing local information.

Stay at home and stay safe

We have been speaking with the media earlier this week about the importance of staying home and saying safe. We think it is important that we are not seen to demonise people who would like to visit this part of the country, or even travel around it - however, we must be very clear that guidelines must be followed to keep everyone safe.

So we are saying:-

"East Suffolk is a truly beautiful part of the country with an incredible coastline which draws millions of visitors each year. But this is not a normal situation and people really should not travel anywhere unless for absolutely essential work or care related reasons, no matter how tempting it is. We can't wait to welcome people back to our fantastic destinations once restrictions are lifted but for now, please stay at home and stay safe."

Communities and supporting residents

The Home But Not Alone phone line continues to be active and will be re-promoted shortly – 27 referrals have been received since the third lockdown started on Boxing Day. Calls were completed between Christmas and New Year to the 187 people added to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) list since the end of the second lockdown in November, to ensure that they know that support is available.

This week the Communities Team are calling all those who needed support during lockdown 2. This includes anyone who was either referred to Home But Not Alone or Suffolk Advice and Support Service, are lonely or isolated, were helped to register with the National Shielding Support Service or had other needs identified – this is just over 200 people.

Meanwhile, funding secured through our work to support the CEV group during the November lockdown has led to the purchase of 30 additional Grandpads, topping up the Covid-19 Community Fund (£25,000) and the Bounce Back Fund (£25,000).

Finally, Three Community Intervention posts (six months) are currently out to advert to pro-actively support self-isolation and outbreak management in East Suffolk.

Environmental Services

Food & Safety

The food and safety team are currently working with Suffolk Public Health and other agencies to respond to the high incidence of Covid-19. County and district level data and intelligence is shared via live daily briefings led by Suffolk Public Health's Covid Response Hub. The team follows up

investigations in workplace settings to help ensure businesses have controls in place to prevent the spread of disease in the workplace and to minimise business disruption.

The food and safety team are managing high levels of complaints and enquiries relating to business closures and Covid secure matters. The team provides updates to the Covid-19 section on the Council's website where an online complaint form is available for residents https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/service/COVID_19_Health_and_Safety. Enquiries can also be made to environment@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Environmental Protection

The emergence of the more contagious variant of covid will affect the activities of the Environmental Protection team. As a general rule the team will not be undertaking visits to premises for any purpose. This will have an effect on proactive inspections and reactive visits for all purposes including water sampling, nuisance monitoring visits, licence and permit inspections and many other site-visits involving entry to premises. They will be exploring ways of undertaking these activities remotely.

The team had begun to make some headway in tackling the backlog of work caused by the first lockdown which led to 15% to 20% increase in reactive work from for example, noise complaints, bonfire nuisance complaints, fly tipping etc. However, they have not reached the stage yet of turning work away, since there is traditionally a seasonal lull in reactive work at this time of the year. Whether or not the situation continues depends upon progress of the pandemic and whether we will be in a better situation by the time the weather improves in the spring.

Meanwhile an outbreak of Covid 19 was identified and managed on the Romany Lane traveller site from early December with seven confirmed cases but no new cases apparent in the week before Christmas.

There has unfortunately been a resurgence of cases following the holiday period, with 8 new confirmed cases as of today. An incident team led by Suffolk Public Health has been re-established and the residents are being offered on-site testing with support from the site managers, the police, the Norfolk and Suffolk Gypsy, Roma Traveller Liaison service and the CCG to reinforce the importance of social distancing and hygiene and the need to remain on the site to prevent spread to the wider community. No linked cases have yet been identified in the wider community and containing the outbreak will be the main focus of the activity today and over the coming days.

Operational update

There has been no impact on refuse collection or other Norse services, however we will continue to work with partner organisations who deliver council services on our behalf to monitor sickness too and will work with them to minimise any disruption. Leisure centres closed on Boxing Day until further notice as part of the original Tier 4 regulations and the Caravan site at Southwold is also closed.

All East Suffolk Council tennis courts, outdoor gyms and sporting locations under the management of the council will have signage put up saying that they are closed. We await the guidance for skateparks (as there is no specific mention in the government guidance) but at this time they will remain open as are the playgrounds.

Grants, funding and business matters

On Tuesday, the Chancellor announced further support for businesses as we entered the new national lockdown. In addition to the current Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) and the Additional Restrictions Grant (discretionary funding aimed at those businesses without a rateable value) £4.6bn is being made available via Closed Business Lockdown Payment. This is aimed at retail, hospitality and leisure businesses and provides a one-off payment of up to £9k dependent on the businesses Rateable Value. There is also a further £500m being made available to top up the ARG scheme. As soon as the details of these new schemes are made available ESC will go live and promote these new funding streams in addition to the existing grants.

In terms of current grants, ESC has received 2,132 applications for the Local Restrictions Support Grants scheme and paid 1,873 of these totalling £2.8m. We also paid 136 applications for the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme totalling £127k. For both these schemes take up by businesses had been low (this is a nationwide issue with applications around 7%) due to the relatively low amount of funding being made available, businesses adapting to the restrictions and confusion around the plethora of schemes available. ESC will be clarifying what funding is available and to which businesses in updated communications which will be issued across all channels. We will also be making direct contact with those businesses we know are eligible.

As the LRS scheme is a rolling fund we are now making automatic payments to eligible businesses that have provided current bank details. These payments will cover the period 26 Dec – 15 Feb ie the current lockdown period. This will allow ESC to rapidly make substantial payments to those businesses in need. On top the above ESC has made 'wet led pub' payments to 45 pubs totalling £45k.

Recovery

The ED and Regeneration team continue to pursue their long-term economic growth programmes which will ensure we are well placed to recover strongly and build back better and greener from the Covid downturn.

This includes the Towns Revitalisation initiative, Smart Towns Programme, Lowestoft Town Investment Plan, Sizewell C Economic Development Programme, exploring opportunities for an ES hydrogen economy, Freeports initiatives, delivering the Felixstowe Vision and supporting the new Felixstowe BID.

In addition to these programmes, we are also developing specific business support schemes to enable start-up businesses, introduce a full fibre voucher scheme to enable businesses to connect to new ultrafast network in Lowestoft and looking at capital investments to support our ambitions

to develop an energy campus linked to SZC and the emerging hydrogen economy. We also continue to work with partners at the Local Enterprise Partnership and across the county to cover Suffolk and region wide economic recovery programmes that build on our existing sector strengths and emerging economic growth opportunities.

Customer Services

Our service remains unaffected as measures are already in place with a remote call centre, maintaining staff resilience to reduce absences and alternative channels of access for customers. We are encouraging people to access our services and information online where possible. Public access remains closed; however emergency access / support measures are in place if required. The Marina Customer Services Centre will now close entirely for the remainder of this period of restrictions. This will not only help reduce running costs at this time but also reduce the risk of transmission and we will of course continue to support those staff who need to access offices.

The team absolutely recognises the needs and expectations of our customers will continue to evolve during this period and we are responding with a revised service delivery model, which has already seen careful planning of our response and resources which has enabled front-facing staff to take on new duties. Positively, for example, our present mailbox queries are being answered much quicker than previously and we do of course remain accessible to our customers despite the restrictions.