

# District Councillors Report to Playford Parish Council



## March 2021

**Cllr Colin Hedgley**

**Cllr Tony Fryatt** (nearly fully recovered from Covid)

### Council Tax

At the full Council meeting of East Suffolk Council on Wednesday evening the Budget for 2021/22 was presented and debated. During that debate the Cabinet Member for Resources paid tribute to all Parish Councils for keeping their precept rises to a minimum. This in turn helped ESC to achieve what many had thought not possible, ie keeping the ESC Council tax rise to 0%. This should help families that are finding budgeting in these desperate times very tight. The voting for the 0% rise was 43 for, 6 against and 1 abstention.

### “School lessons”

Many schools have been closed or semi open, which under new Covid behaviour likely means fewer lessons from teachers, ie lessons at home.

However learning never stops and I just thought it might be a good opportunity to mention the Suffolk Waste Partnership has a designated website on lessons and fun games and ideas on recycling Link :

<http://www.suffolkschoolsrecycling.org.uk/>

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/environment-learning-zone/>

### Remote meetings

You will all be aware that the provision for remote council meetings, made possible by the Coronavirus legislation, is due to expire in May. The concerns about this have been raised with ministers at every opportunity. The response from Ministers has been that they have heard these concerns ‘loud and clear’, but that they are advised that to extend these remote working provisions will require primary legislation. That in turn has been challenged

by others who have gained their own legal advice. The issue rumbles on, but everyone is working hard to get it resolved - the provision expires in May.

## **Communities and supporting residents**

Our new East (Everyone, Active, Supported Together) Bags are going down really well with our communities. The bags are reusable jute bags with exercise bands and cards, water bottles, handwarmers, flower and veg seeds, soft drinks donated by Adnams, recipe card and ingredients, tea bags and biscuits and a bespoke puzzle book.

They are aimed at 65+ year olds who live alone or are caring for someone else and at risk of loneliness. We have now packed 1,000 but the Communities Team would like your help to pack the second 1,000 so that we can get them out as soon as possible. If you are able to help for half a day during the week beginning 26th February in the Annex at East Suffolk House - there are a range of roles, some not involving lifting, please contact [communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk) if you can help.

We have been made aware that the Government is likely to add a further 1.8 million people to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) list over the next few weeks. This is part of a risk stratification programme that the NHS is undertaking. Just to put this into context, this will almost double the size of the CEV list and is likely to mean an additional 10,000+ East Suffolk residents are classed as CEV.

A total of 82 new Home But Not Alone referrals have been received through Home But Not Alone since Boxing Day when we moved into Tier 4 and then lockdown. A range of outbound calling is continuing, including Keep in Touch calls to those who are isolating.

## **Environmental Services**

### **Engagement with businesses – HSE/LA Spot Checks Programme**

In August 2020 the Food and Safety Team joined an early cohort of local authorities to work with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on a programme of Covid-secure spot checks to ensure businesses were aware of the guidance that applied to them and that they are acting on it.

Spot checks begin with an initial stage 1 contact over the telephone to assess the level of Covid awareness a business has and the control measures in place. For businesses where there are concerns, a follow up stage 2 escalation call is made by the HSE to further assess the concerns and provide information. Businesses that fail stage 2 are passed over to the local authority to carry out a stage 3 follow up visit.

Many of East Suffolk's hospitality businesses, food retailers, care homes, warehouses, taxi offices and close contact services such as beauty salons, hairdressers, and tattooists etc. have been submitted to the programme. The next cohort of businesses, starting next week, are businesses based at the Port of Felixstowe.

The HSE provides findings from the programme to Public Health England and the Cabinet Office and ran a recent campaign aimed at engaging local authorities who are not involved.

HSE has produced specific guidance on how to manage risks associated with the coronavirus on its website including social distancing in the workplace

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/social-distancing/index.htm>.

HSE has also produced a helpful video about the spot check and inspection process

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/regulating-health-and-safety/spot-inspections.htm>.

## Grants, funding and business matters

### Covid Business Grants

In total, since the launch of a plethora of new business grants in November 2020, ESC has made almost 11,500 payments totalling £23m to businesses struggling due to enforced closure or severe restrictions on trading. Since the beginning of the pandemic the Council has allocated £89.5m of grants. A further lump sum payment totalling £792k was made to 280 businesses who qualify for the Additional Restrictions Grant mirroring the Closed Business Lockdown Payment which recipients of the Local Restrictions Support Grant received in January.

The Finance, Economic Development and Business Solutions team are currently finalising a new one-off payment for businesses in the hospitality sector which will be worth up to £9k, reflecting the severe pressure this sector had faced due to Covid trading restrictions.

### THE WOMEN'S TOUR POSTPONED

Organisers of the Women's Tour, SweetSpot Group, have announced that the upcoming edition of the race scheduled for 7 to 12 June 2021 will be postponed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. SweetSpot are working with the UCI and British Cycling to re-arrange the Women's Tour for later in 2021 and have requested alternate race dates of Monday 4 to Saturday 9 October\* from the sport's governing body.

The Women's Tour, which forms a part of the prestigious UCI Women's World Tour, will start in Oxfordshire at Bicester and finish with a stage from Haverhill to Felixstowe in Suffolk. SweetSpot are working with all the regional stakeholders in the 2021 Women's Tour to accommodate them within the rearranged race.

SweetSpot will announce full details of the 2021 route in the summer once alternative dates are confirmed.

Commenting on the announcement, Race Director Mick Bennett said, *"We are obviously disappointed to be postponing the Women's Tour from June but hope that by aiming to stage the race in October we can give the teams and public something to look forward to at the tail end of the summer."*

Cllr James Reeder, Suffolk County Council Cabinet Member for Public Health and Prevention, said: *"Whilst it is disappointing to hear that the race has been postponed until later in the year, I can completely understand why this decision has been taken by the race organiser SweetSpot."*

Cllr Letitia Smith, East Suffolk Council's cabinet member for Communities, Tourism and Leisure added: *"We completely support the decision to postpone the Women's Tour until later in the year. This continues to be a challenging time, and it goes without saying that the health and wellbeing of participants, spectators and – of course – people in general remains the number one priority. This will give us something to look forward to, and no doubt all our local communities and businesses will be as supportive and celebratory as ever, if not more."*

### **Open spaces survey**

We are asking residents, businesses and interested parties for their opinions on public open space in the district. Public open space provides opportunities for sport and recreation, socialising, tourism and wildlife, making an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities, ecosystems and economies. East Suffolk has a variety of public open spaces from allotments, to small local play areas and the larger parks.

<https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=160276983074>

### **Celebrating East Suffolk's best building design**

The winners of an annual awards programme which celebrates the best building design and conservation projects in East Suffolk have been announced.

East Suffolk Council's 'Quality of Place Awards' recognise the efforts of people across the district to enhance the quality of the environment, by creating high-quality designs in both the built and natural environment and helping to conserve historic buildings.

Nominations were invited during the summer and the winners, judged on quality of design and detailing, quality of workmanship, use of materials and sustainability, were chosen last month during a series of Covid-secure visits.

Cllr David Ritchie, East Suffolk's cabinet member for Planning and Coastal Management said: "As always, we received an incredibly high standard of entries with some extremely impressive builds. The winning schemes reflect both modern building designs and historic conversions that all add to the character of our district and although more difficult to undertake during these challenging times, we are pleased to have been able to safely continue with these awards for another year."

The winners of this year's Quality of Place Awards are:

#### **Design Award - joint winners**

- Gainsborough House, Nacton. Architect - Craig Beech, owners - Graham and Nicola Christison.
- Pightle House, Ufford. Architect - Peter Wells Architects Ltd, owners - Simon Read and Ros Conway, designers – Peter Wells and Keith Webber in collaboration with Ros Conway and Simon Read, contractor - Harrison Wildon Ltd.

#### **Design Award - Highly Commended**

- CEFAS, Lowestoft. Designed by Maddie Negus at AWW.

### **Building Conservation Award - Winner**

- Wingfield House, Saxmundham. Developers - Skinner & Salter Partnership, architects - Hollins Architects, surveyors - Clive Tanner and Bob Foulkes, contractors - Amma Contractors, civil and structural engineers - Stroud Associates Ltd.

### **Building Conservation Award – Highly Commended**

- Aldeburgh Moot Hall Regeneration Project - nominated by Tony Bone on behalf of Aldeburgh Museum Charitable Trust, architect/designers - Hudson Architects with Sutton Vane (lighting) and Iris Butcher (graphics), digital design and implementation - Heritage Interactive, contractor - Elmwood Projects Ltd and Worsley Woodworking.
- Stanaway Farmhouse, Otley. Architect - Ed Thuell at Whitworth Architects, owners - Felix Thornley Cobbold Agricultural Trust C/O Lacy Scott & Knight, contractors – Rose Builders, quantity surveyor – Richard Sewell, structural engineer/principal designer – Nigel Wilson / Simon Wright at Andrew Firebrace Partnership.

### **Landscape Award - Winner**

- Wilderness Reserve and Heveningham Estates' Team, Sibton Park. Architect - Argus Gathorne Hardy, run by the Wilderness Reserve and Heveningham Estates Team, owners - Jon and Lois Hunt, design team - Kim Wilkie and Argus Hardy, landscaping team - Rob and Rowan Orford – Miles Water, Guy Newton – Heveningham Estate Team.

### **Community Award – Winner**

- Westleton Village Hall. Core consulting - Alex Alexander and Tony Ingram, core fundraising - Alex Alexander; Anne Ingram; Chris Wood; John Bebbington; Maddie Kerry, client procurement facilitator - Tony Ingram DArch Riba AoU, architects - OWL Architects (Simon Smeaton), quantity surveyor - Castons (Peter Dring; Simon Frost; Richard Sewell), historic building analysis - Trevor Garnham, contractors - Vickery Building and Renovation, main contract - Robert Norman.

### **Community Award – Highly Commended**

- St Michael's Church, Beccles (Phase 2). Nomination by John Bailey – Building Committee Member, charity - the Parochial Church Council of The Ecclesiastical Parish of St. Michael's and St Luke's Beccles, architect - Philip Orchard from Messrs Whitworth, main contractor - M S Oakes Ltd, Chairman of St. Michael's Building Committee – Phil Filer.

## Extra support for East Suffolk businesses

East Suffolk Council has launched a new £2 million business grant scheme for the hospitality sector as it continues to support local businesses through the pandemic. The new Hospitality Payment scheme offers further financial support to hospitality businesses in East Suffolk which continue to be severely impacted by the ongoing restrictions set by the Government in response to Covid-19.

The scheme consists of a one-off payment which will grant £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of under £15,000, £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000 and £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000. Businesses within the hospitality sector which have been identified as being eligible for this scheme should expect to receive an email which will require further action to receive the payment. These businesses fall into the following categories:

- Cafés
- Restaurants
- Coffee bars
- Ice cream parlours
- Public houses
- Public houses with restaurants
- Public houses with bed and breakfast accommodation
- Wedding and conference centres
- Nightclubs
- Social clubs
- Private members clubs

Cllr Craig Rivett, cabinet member for Economic Development said: “This has been an exceptionally tough year for our hospitality sector, and we’re committed to help them through this difficult time so they can come out at the other end in the strongest possible position to recover.”

The Hospitality Payment comes in addition to the Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRS), which have been available since the national lockdown in November 2020, and the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), which is available for those businesses who may fall outside the eligibility of the LRS scheme.

Following the Government’s announcement on Monday, 22 February, the Council is also preparing to process the next round of business grant payments for the 44-day period up to 31 March for all eligible businesses. This will result in another £6m in support for businesses in East Suffolk. Eligible businesses which have already received a LRS payment do not need to do anything to receive the next round of grant payments, as the Council will make the payment automatically.

If your business is eligible for a grant and you have not yet applied for the LRS scheme, [please apply as soon as possible](#) – and before 31 March which will be the closing date for the initial allocation of the grant schemes.