

I hope you are all staying safe, well and alert!

Locally, I am pleased to be able to support through my locality budget the improvement works planned for Lidgate Village Hall.

SCC Highways is working through the backlog of road repairs – please do report any faults so they can be fixed – do use the online reporting tool.

We are living in unprecedented times and it is heartening and reassuring to see how rural communities such as yours have rallied round. I have been sending out a daily bulletin, which I hope you have found helpful. Do please contact me if you need further information and more particularly if I can be of help.

Suffolk County Council reopened the household waste recycling centres today – Thursday 14 May. We had been waiting on Government guidance. To minimise the risk of traffic queues building up and to protect staff and visitors to the centres a booking system has been set up. If you turn up without an appointment you will be turned away. Slots can be booked on a “rolling week.” To make a booking, **please visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/recyclingcentres or call 0345 606 6067.**

We are getting advice from the Government today on how the national allocation of £600m for infection control in our care homes will be distributed. Coronavirus cases within care homes has become a serious concern for all of us especially those of us with relatives living or working in residential care homes. SCC is reporting weekly on the number of suspected or confirmed cases within Suffolk care homes, of which the county council has been made aware.

The county council is working with all care home managers to support them with allocations of PPE etc regardless of whether we have a contract with the home or whether there are SCC funded residents in the home. We are in regular contact with all homes, giving advice and support.

To date, none of the staff or children in the SCC own children’s homes have symptoms of Covid19

The total scale of financial implications of the Covid19 crisis for Suffolk County Council is in the region of £75m with £32.5m made up of “response” costs and £43m attributed to “recovery” at this stage.

So far, the Government has pledged more than £3.2bn to local government to cope with the Covid19 crisis. In the second tranche, announced a couple of weeks ago there is nearly £2m for West Suffolk Council. WSC like other district councils has taken a big financial hit as revenue from car parking fees has fallen dramatically while the costs of housing the homeless and vulnerable people, who maybe previously were sofa surfing, have soared. to the council,

A new Suffolk-focused community service was set up on 24 March to support people who need help during the COVID-19 pandemic. Called ‘Home, But Not Alone’, the service has been launched to help connect people who want to volunteer in their communities with neighbours who are most in need. The free-phone number for people to call if they are in urgent need and have no-one to help is taking about 1,300 calls a week. Often the callers have multiples and complex problems but the staff handling the calls – from district and county councils are getting help to where it is needed. A “postcard” has been sent to every home in Suffolk giving the Home Not Alone number and other key contact numbers to report domestic abuse and for those who are struggling with poor mental health. This has led to an increase in calls to the help lines so we believe it is was a really worthwhile exercise, For some people, new urgent needs have developed during the lockdown as maybe the family

member, who was able to go out shopping has fallen sick etc. The Government has again revised the shielding list of residents – those it advises directly to self-isolate because of their health. There are now 34,000 Suffolk residents on the shielding list.

Please share the following phone numbers

- If you are home alone and need shopping or medication and urgently need help, call 0800 876 6926
- If you are the victim of domestic abuse and need help but speaking puts you in danger, call 999 and press 55 The police will know it's an emergency.
- If you are worried a child or adult is suffering abuse call 0808 800 4005

Food banks across Suffolk were given initial funding of £60,000 by the county council to keep their supplies well stocked We have since under written the 42 foodbanks to the tune of a further £250,00. We continue to work closely with them. Last week FareShare continued to ramp up its deliveries, with another 13 x 100kg loads of food distributed.

A testing station has been set up at the Copdock Park and Ride site on the edge of Ipswich. Initially it was used for testing frontline health staff and their family members, but this has now been extended. The other national testing site is at Stansted airport. We now have mobile units, run by the military around the county.

This will continue to be of high profile and high importance as we move into Test, Track and Trace. Below is a link to the webpage run by the Testing Cell which gives the latest position with testing. You will see this is a fluid situation but gives you the best information available about testing in Suffolk. The SCC C19 testing web page <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/testing>

We are very grateful to Suffolk businesses who responded to our appeal for PPE with donations of stock they are not using during lockdown. It is helping maintain vital services for Suffolk's most vulnerable. Of course, there is always the need for more. If businesses have any unused: Fluid repellent face masks, Nitrile non powdered disposable gloves, Disposable aprons, Disposable eye protection/splash goggles and Sanitiser gel, please email PPE@Suffolk.gov.uk.

Equally, if people need PPE to work safely, they can contact us via that email address. We are keeping on top of demand but at times the demand is very high – 6,000 masks a day and 12,000 pairs of gloves.

West Suffolk Hospital publishes a weekly update.

According to the provisional figures released on 11 May there were that to date
187 patients testing positive for Covid 19 had been admitted for treatment
79 patients recovered well enough to be discharged home
Very sadly 52 patients have died at the hospital

Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership has set up a new website to promote of the protection of vulnerable children and adults. We now cases of violence in the home have increased during lockdown and we want to ensure that people know how to get help if they need it and that people know how to recognise and report abuse if they see it or hear it.

Suffolk County Council has joined forces with Norfolk and East Suffolk councils to fund call4fish a scheme to get the East coast fish markets open again so we can support the inshore fishing boats.

The council are now working on recovery plans looking at how we can support communities and commerce to re-build. The SCC Chief Executive Nicola Beech is leading the recovery group made up of public and private sector organisations across the county.

The Local Government Boundary Commission was due shortly to publish its proposals for Suffolk County Council and then consult on them for new divisional boundaries to be put in place for next year's elections. This is being put on hold and the existing divisions will be retained for the 2021 elections – if indeed they take place. There have been very strong hints from Government that it wants to move to unitary local government.

County Councillor Mary Evans

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