

Parish Report – May 2020

Councillor

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COVID-19 Update

Latest Government advice is available here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Latest SCC information is available here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Virtual SCC meetings

SCC will be holding some meetings virtually. If they are public meetings, they can still be attended by members of the public. The link to the virtual meeting will be included on the agenda for the meeting.

If meetings are cancelled, the Chief Executive will use her emergency powers to make any necessary decisions on behalf of the Cabinet/Council through the delegated decision-making process. Details of any decisions made will be published on the SCC website. I have been having regular meetings with the chief executive and group leaders to raise any issues and get updates from them. I have also held virtual meetings with the directors which has been extremely informative.

I have to say that the staff at SCC have worked tirelessly dealing with all that has been thrown at them and still continuing to do their day job.

Supply of PPE

Suffolk County Council are supplying emergency PPE to all primary care providers who are unable or struggling to source their own supplies.

More information on who is eligible to order PPE, and how to make an order, is available at: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolks-response/personal-protective-equipment-for-frontline-workers/>

Questions about ordering PPE should be sent to PPE@suffolk.gov.uk

Funding from Government

Suffolk County Council has received £34.7m from the government to help with the council's coronavirus response.

However, the council is currently forecasting that the financial impact of the crisis will be at least £56m (due to both extra expenditure and lost income) by the end of March 2021, and so more support from the government will be needed.

Street closures to protect walkers/cyclists exercising outdoors

My group are encouraging Suffolk County Council to close roads that are used by residents to get their daily exercise, to ensure that walkers/cyclists can exercise safely and maintain social distancing.

The county council have indicated that they are willing to consider these closures and have already closed Ipswich Waterfront to through-traffic for 3 weeks.

If you have suggestions for roads that could benefit from a temporary closure, please let me know and I will pass it on to the Cabinet Member.

Delay to review of Suffolk County Council boundaries

The Boundary Commission have announced that they will be delaying their review of Suffolk County Council's electoral arrangements and division boundaries. The Commission was due to publish their draft recommendations and consult on them in May-July 2020, with the intention of implementing the new electoral arrangements (including a reduction in councillor numbers) at the 2021 local elections. Given the delay to the consultation on draft recommendations, the new arrangements will now not be implemented until 2025.

Cost of post-16 Home to School transport increases by £90

Plans to increase post-16 school transport were approved by the Chief Executive using delegated decision-making powers, because the Cabinet were unable to meet.

The cost of mainstream post-16 school transport has been increased by £90, whilst the cost of post-16 transport for SEND students has increased by £30. This is despite the fact that a consultation on the proposed increase indicated that 75% of parents who responded felt that the increase would have an impact on them.

If families are concerned about their ability to pay for school transport, they can apply for the 16-19 Bursary Fund which is managed by post-16 provisions and can support eligible disadvantaged young people by up to £1,200.

Increase in social worker pay

Suffolk County Council has agreed to increase the pay of children's social workers to match the remuneration offered by neighbouring councils, in order to attract and retain skilled social workers in Suffolk. It is estimated that the pay increase will cost £1.4m and will be funded from council reserves.

I am pleased that the council has taken this step, because my group proposed this exact policy as part of our budget amendment in February.

A14 CLOSURE; following a meeting with highways England I have sent all clerks the info about the road closure which will be overnight from 11th May for 12 weeks. You will be contacted by them.

MID SUFFOLK.

The council is trying to contact as many small businesses as possible to make sure they apply for the support grant. The form is very simple. There are some businesses that have found they are not eligible and we have asked government to close that loop hole. If you know of any business in DRINKSTONE get them to go onto the website .this includes village halls. I do have a list so get in touch if you need help on this

I hope you are all well and coping with the lock down.

Best wishes. penny