

Parish Report January 2014

Councillor

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New Year message from Richard Kemp

Dear Residents, Once again the march of time has been swift and here we are again facing a New Year, with all the hopes and wishes running parallel to all the uncertainties of a restricted economy and the impact on Local Government Finance. As a result one thing is certain, if things have been tough over 2013, then 2014 will certainly be no better. Over the year having visited on a regular basis the nine parishes of the Melford Division, I am impressed and proud of the immense effort in volunteering in each of the Parishes.

Just to remind you all I still have a small amount left in my Locality Budget that has to be spent by March 2014. The other small budget is called a small Highways Budget and covers small works such as dropped kerbs and highway signage.

Melford Ward: Just to remind you the 'Ward' covers the Parishes of Long Melford, Glemsford, Boxted, Stanstead, Somerton, Hartest, Lawshall, Shimpling and Alpheton. There are approximately 7,600 voters and a population circa 10,000 residents. If you wish to contact me with any queries my telephone numbers are; 01787 377861 (office), 01787 378149 (home), or email richard.kemp@suffolk.gov.uk

To you all a peaceful, prosperous and joyous New Year!

Make a fresh start this New Year – and check your Fire Alarms!

Have you made your New Year Resolution? Why not make that promise to check your Smoke Alarm(s) and make sure they are working correctly!

January is the time for a fresh start and Suffolk Fire and Rescue is encouraging everyone to make sure they have enough working smoke alarms in their homes. This will only take a few seconds and it will save lives. Many homes are now fitted with smoke alarms but many people are unaware that they have a lifespan and the battery needs to be replaced every 10 years. Smoke alarms should be on ceilings not on walls or other vertical surfaces as this could delay the alert of a fire due to the smoke having to fill the room before detection by the alarm. Everyone should make sure that their alarms are regularly tested and up to the job of detecting a fire in the early stages. A working alarm can give someone those extra few seconds needed to escape in a fire. For people who live in a multi-storey home or a larger property, a single smoke alarm is simply not enough. Make sure there is one on every level.

Last year, there were 11 house fires where there were no batteries or defective batteries in the smoke alarm and 19 where the alarm was not close enough to detect the fire - at each of these incidents the consequences could have been devastating. Councillor Colin Spence, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for public protection said

"A smoke alarm can offer vital protection for you and your loved ones, but most people simply fit and forget. They don't know if it's coming to the end of its lifespan or not working at all. For most of us, there is nothing more important than keeping our loved ones safe and secure. So if your alarm is getting past its best or your top floor is missing an alarm of its own, make it your New Year's resolution to fit new ones, test them on the first of every month and protect your loved ones in 2014. "

Top tips for keeping your smoking alarm in working order:

- Test your smoke alarm by pushing the button on the first of every month;
- Check the packaging for your smoke alarm to make sure it's still up to date;
- Make sure there is at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home;
- Fit smoke alarms on the landings and hallways and near rooms which have an electrical appliance or heat source, e.g heaters and cooking appliances
- Where an alarm is fitted close to a cooking appliance ensure it is of the correct type to prevent false alarms
- Take a moment to check on your loved ones and elderly neighbours who may need help to ensure they're fully protected

Make a resolution to Adopt in 2014

With 30 children in Suffolk looking for a permanent adoptive family, Suffolk County Council is urging people interested in adopting to come forward.

There is a desperate need for more people to come forward to provide 'forever families' and it is hoped that this new year push will help inspire those wanting to make a difference and adopt a child in need in Suffolk. Suffolk County Council is particularly looking for families for sibling groups, older children and children with disabilities. Applications are welcomed from all sectors of the community.

Councillor Lisa Chambers, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for children and young people, said: "Many people think that they wouldn't be allowed to adopt a child but often this isn't the case. So please don't think we'll turn you down because of your age, relationship status, sexual orientation or even if you don't own your own home. What we really need are people who can offer a child or sibling group a loving and supportive family for life. Those who can help a child recover from the reasons they came in to care and help them go on to thrive in a new family. Initially, we are simply asking people to come forward and find out more about adoption. If you think you might have what it takes, please pick up the phone today".

There are an estimated 4,000 children across the UK needing adoption every year, many of whom will have suffered trauma in their short lives. Alan Wood, deputy chief executive of British Association for Adoption and Fostering, said: "Every child has the right to live in a safe; loving; happy home. For those children who are unable to live within their Birth Family adoption is one of the best ways to ensure this happens. There is no doubt that adoption is a life changing process for all concerned, and that there are children right now who need permanent homes to grow up in."

Anyone interested in finding out more about adoption can call Suffolk Adoption Agency on 01473 265595 or visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support/fostering-and-adoption/adoption

Primary School Place application deadline looms

Parents and Carers who need to apply for a full-time place for their child at their preferred primary school for the year 2014/15 have until 15th January 2014

Anyone with children born between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010 can apply for up to three schools either online (which is recommended) or using the paper application form. An application must be made, even if the child already has a place in a nursery class, pre-school or children's centre. Any applications received after the deadline will be considered after all the other applications have been processed. This could mean there are no places left at a preferred or nearby school. Last year, Suffolk County Council received over 800 late applications for primary school places. Councillor Lisa Chambers, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for education, skills and young people, said:

"Choosing the right primary school for your child is one of the most important decisions a parent or carer has to make. That is why we hope that by now, people will have considered the schools that they would like to apply for places in and visited them. That gives them the information they need to make informed choices about their child's future. If not, please make this a New Year priority as time is running out. It is important that parents and carers use the opportunity to apply for up to three schools,

in order of preference, so that we can best match their preferences within the application rules. Suffolk has a good track record of offering places at preferred schools but we really do need to know about all preferences in order to continue this. I'd urge anyone with questions to contact the County Council as soon as possible".

In 2013, more of Suffolk's four and five year olds received offers for a place at their preferred primary school than in the previous year. Suffolk County Council received 7489 applications from parents outlining which school they would prefer their children to be educated at from September 2013. Of those, 92% of applicants received offers for their first preference and 98% of applicants receiving an offer from one of their three preferences. In the same year, 99% of pupils moving to a junior school and 94% of pupils moving to a middle school went to their first preference place. There was also an increase in the number of people choosing to submit an application online, with 68% of applications made over the internet. In 2012, the figure was 53%.

Any parents or carers who have not yet applied for a school place should apply online or download an application form at: www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissionstoschools or contact Suffolk County Council immediately on 0845 6000981.

Businesses urged to heed changes to waste regulations

Businesses across Suffolk could be faced with a fine of up to £5,000 if they do not register as a waste carrier, broker or dealer from January 2014.

Businesses that normally transport their own waste must register as a lower-tier waste carrier to comply with recent changes to the England and Wales Waste Regulations. Registering costs nothing and lasts indefinitely. Businesses will not have to renew their registration unless their situation changes.

For more information on how to register, visit: www.gov.uk/waste-carrier-or-broker-registration
If you do not register, and you are found to be transporting business waste, you could be liable for a fixed penalty fine of £300, or prosecution and a fine of up to £5,000.

Councillor Andrew Nunn, chairman of the Suffolk Waste Partnership, said:
"The waste carrier regulations are an important tool in the fight against fly-tipping, helping to ensure that waste is only transported by authorised carriers, to ensure that all waste is properly accounted for and ends up disposed of in an environmentally friendly way. WE don't wish to see any businesses in Suffolk falling foul of the changes to the regulations inadvertently or otherwise. WE hope that Suffolk Businesses, the vast majority of whom are environmentally responsible, will now be aware of these changes to the law that affect them, and would urge all businesses to check that they comply with the changes".

Officers of the Environment Agency and Suffolk County Council are authorised to carry out checks and may do so at any time. It is therefore most important that all businesses check that they comply with these changes. All businesses must continue to complete 'Waste Transfer Notes' every time they collect, pass on, or dispose of any non-hazardous waste from their business, and keep these for a period of two years. Householders do not have to register as waste carriers in order to transport their own household waste to a Household Waste Recycling Centre or local recycling site and are therefore not affected by the new change. Householders still have a Duty of Care to ensure that waste is disposed of responsibly by carrying out reasonable checks whenever arranging for someone else to take waste away for them; failure to do so can result in a fine of up to £5,000.