

Parish Report January 2015

Councillor

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New Year message from Richard Kemp

Dear Residents, Once again we have reached that point where we are facing a New Year not only full of hopes, aspirations and elections, but also the challenges and uncertainties of an ongoing restricted economy and the impact on Local Government Finance with yet further cuts to Budgets. It is a certainty that however difficult the past two years have been, 2015 is likely to be equally challenging. Over the year having visited on a regular basis the nine parishes of the Melford Division, I continue to be both amazed and proud of the immense effort in volunteers in each of the Parishes who rise so admirably to the challenges placed upon communities by funding cuts from Government funds..

Despite all the recent cuts I am pleased to say 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: 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

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

Pioneering scheme will keep people warm this winter

The Warm Homes Healthy People scheme makes it cheaper for vulnerable people and families to stay warm over the colder months. Each winter, 1 older person in the UK dies needlessly every 7 minutes from the cold – that's 200 deaths a day that could be prevented. Keeping warm in the colder weather is essential to prevent colds, flu and more serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and the consequences of falls.

The project provides the following for eligible residents in Suffolk:

- Making fuel payments to the heating supplier
- Loaning electric heaters and carrying out assessments for financial assistance towards the cost of heating repairs or replacements
- Arranging for an independent surveyor to visit the home to discuss energy efficiency improvements that could make a real difference to heating bills
- Providing access to grants and interest free loans to help pay for insulation and basic draught proofing

Warm Homes Healthy People aims to reach those most in need of support. The following eligibility criteria applies:

- Those aged 60 or above or households including children under 5
- Household income below £17,000 per year and savings below £5,000
- Households including someone with a long term health condition or disability

The project is provided in partnership between Suffolk County Council, district and borough councils in Suffolk and a range of voluntary and not for profit organisations.

Eligible Suffolk residents can contact **0845 037 686** for free advice and support. GPs and other health professionals can refer people by secure email warmhomereferrals@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk.

If you drink drive, be prepared to face the consequences

As Christmas approaches, the Suffolk Roadsafe partnership is urging everyone, especially younger drivers, to think about the consequences of drink driving. Launched today at the Suffolk Roadsafe partnership board meeting, a radio and poster campaign with over 700 licensed premises will go live in Suffolk. Alerting people to the potential consequences if caught driving over the limit. The striking “drink drive and face the criminal consequences” poster features a montage of four faces, joined to become one, to identify the many faces people will encounter if caught such as the:

- officer who arrests you for drink driving
- officer who will put you in a cell
- officer who takes your fingerprints and DNA
- magistrate who will sentence you to a 12 month driving ban

As well as the poster campaign, the Roadsafe team will be visiting towns across the county in the next 3 weeks with a driver simulator, where people can see the effects of having an accident and rate their driving skills.

It takes a lot longer than most people think for alcohol to pass through the body. There may be a risk of responsible people, who would not dream of drinking and driving, being over the limit the following morning as a result. On average it takes around one hour per unit of alcohol, though this can vary depending on a number of factors such as weight and age.

Tim Passmore, Police Crime Commissioner said: “I thoroughly enjoy this time of the year, Christmas is a time of fun and merriment but this is too often fuelled by alcohol which can seriously detract from the goodwill of the season. I’m right behind the Constabulary’s approach to drink driving. I find it really staggering that despite the obvious dangers and the huge amount of publicity, every year drivers risk their lives and the lives of others by driving under the influence of alcohol, this is utter madness. It’s a very simple message and it needs to be repeated. Don’t drink and drive.”

New gritters join Suffolk Highways winter response

Nine new Econ gritters have been purchased this year to replace ageing ones in Suffolk Highways’ fleet.

A further 29 gritters have been upgraded since the contract between Kier MG and the county council began, significantly improving the winter service provided across the county. Suffolk Highways has 39 gritters each with an attachable snow plough and three ‘mini-gritters’ which are designed for areas with weight restrictions, for example bridges. In addition, as part of the highways contract Kier MG can call on additional vehicles, should they be required. There are 112 operators ready to help keep the county moving when temperatures drop and when there is snowfall. There are 1225 miles of priority one gritting routes which are treated in advance of predicted ice or snow. There are 34 priority one gritting routes taking two and a half hours to complete. When ice or snow is forecast to persist beyond 9am, a further 845 miles of priority two routes will be treated, so long as gritters are not needed on the priority one roads.

Further information on priority one and priority two routes can be found on our [salting, gritting and snow clearing](#) page. In addition to the work of the county-wide Suffolk Highways, borough and district councils support the winter response by clearing snow off footpaths on priority one routes. Farmers and local contractors are also on hand during periods of heavy snow to help keep the county moving with a range of equipment including powerful tractor ploughs, JCB type diggers and even snow blowers. Decisions on whether to grit or not are based on information received about predicted road surface

temperature which can be different to the air temperature, the latter being those that are generally reported on standard weather forecasts. On average gritters are out on the network 60 times during the winter period.

Suffolk Highways has stocks of almost 23,000 tonnes of salt. In addition to the gritters there are 34 snow ploughs which can be attached to the gritters in the event of heavy snowfall and a network of more than 2000 community grit bins/heaps to enable people to help themselves in local communities.

In severe weather conditions Suffolk Highways control hub, located at the Kier MG offices in Ipswich, is the central control point for winter activities and operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The Hub will prioritise reports received from residents to make sure the gritters are working in the most efficient way to keep the county moving as safely as possible.

A pair of 'velocity patchers' are also helping Suffolk Highways to tackle pot holes across the county. Velocity patchers are able to fill a pot hole in around ten minutes compared to the more conventional way which takes around 45 minutes. The velocity patchers, on hire until the end of March next year, are just one way in which the council is using some of the £5.8 million provided by the Government to tackle the significant effects on the highway of last winters heavy rain. Suffolk Highways is also carrying out a comprehensive programme of resurfacing across the county.

Further useful information about being prepared for winter can be found on our '[Winter - are you prepared?](#)' page. For gritting updates follow [Suffolk Highways](#) on Twitter.

Suffolk urged to show its support for White Ribbon Campaign

If you hear it or if you see it, don't ignore it; say no to domestic abuse. This is the message being delivered today across Suffolk supporting the White Ribbon Campaign 2014.

Officially launched today by the Suffolk Domestic Abuse Partnership with guests including county councillors, University Campus Suffolk (UCS) and the fire service, the campaign is supporting the international day against violence to women. An emotive short film featuring a domestic scenario and motivational monologue has been produced by third year BA (Hons) Film students at UCS. The film features Suffolk actors who donated their time; and messages of support from companies such as Live Well Suffolk, Trinity Park Events and Taipan Combat who do corporate self- defence classes; as well as partnership organisations including Realise Futures and UCS Ipswich. The motivational monologue is spoken by different, men and women, intercutting between each person saying a different part of the dialogue to form a continuous piece.

People across Suffolk are being urged to stand up and be counted by sharing the campaign video on social media and making their voice heard by pledging that they won't ignore domestic abuse with a hashtag of [#Makeyourvoicecount](#). People are also invited to show their support by taking a picture of themselves, whilst holding up a sign saying [#MakeYourVoiceCount](#), and email your pictures to: community.safety@suffolk.gov.uk or tweeting it to [@SaferSuffolk](#). Pictures will be used at the domestic abuse forum to show the campaign's support in Suffolk

In Suffolk, over the last 12 months, more than 8,000 domestic abuse incidents have been reported. A rise of nearly 1000 cases from last year's campaign. Statistics from Suffolk Police show that domestic violence is mostly committed by men, with approximately 77% of all incidents reported by women. The White Ribbon campaign aims to promote how victims can access guidance and help, and raise awareness of all aspects of domestic abuse

Campaign activities from companies in Suffolk include:

- Sainsbury's in Sudbury
- events in Lowestoft and Stowmarket are being organised by Mid Suffolk and Waveney Domestic Abuse Forums
- Lighthouse Women's Aid will be having an open event in Ipswich

- Suffolk Fire and Rescue service will be showing their support with all engines in the county having white ribbons displayed on their front

Further details about campaign activities can be seen at www.suffolk.gov.uk/whiteribbon

Anybody who is experiencing any form of domestic violence or who is concerned about a friend or family member can contact the National Domestic Violence Freephone 24hr helpline on **0808 2000 247** or visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/domesticabuse.

Deadline looms for residents spending priorities consultation

A range of proposals were considered by the county council's Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 26 November; with finalised proposals being discussed by Cabinet in January. The proposed budget is then debated at a Full Council meeting in February.

An online survey has been set up where residents are asked to rank their spending priorities. It is also possible to give views via email and post. Councillor Jenny Antill, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for resource management, said: "When there is such pressure on funding, it is important that we understand what is a priority for residents, before we take decisions on spending plans for the coming year. There are difficult decisions to be taken but we are working hard to make sure that we minimise the impact to services on which people rely - services may be delivered in different ways, or by different people, but the important thing is that residents can still access the support they need. I encourage those who haven't yet had their say to do so before the consultation finishes; ensuring we have a well-informed view. All views received will be fed into the budget setting process." For more information, including access to the online survey visit the county council's consultation web page www.suffolk.gov.uk/consultations.

Raising the bar: Suffolk County Council offers advice on how to support your child through bullying and friendship issues

Bullying can happen both in person and online. In whichever form the impact on a child can be significant and we must all do as much as we can to support those affected, with the ultimate aim of stamping it out altogether. We have provided advice on introducing your child to technology and the importance of e-safety, what to do if your child is being bullied and guidance on your child's friendships – when you should help and when it might be better to take a step back.

For more information, visit www.esafersuffolk.org – a website for advice and information for professionals, parents and carers. For tips and advice on children's internet safety, go to www.internetmatters.org (supported by the four major internet service providers in the UK; BT, Sky, TalkTalk and Virgin Media). To read the 2013 e-Safer Suffolk cybersurvey mentioned in this piece, visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-community/e-safer-suffolk/e-safer-suffolk-cybersurvey/

The Suffolk Children's Trust defines bullying as: "A deliberately hurtful act by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time. It often involves an abuse of power or use of intimidation and can affect an individual or a group. Information and advice is available on Different types of bullying, What should parents look out for? And How you can help your child

Bullying UK has a dedicated parents section with lots of helpful information www.bullying.co.uk/advice-for-parents/ Childline also has lots of useful support for children and young people, www.childline.org.uk If you think the bullying is related to any special education needs or disabilities, SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information, Advice and Support Service) has a helpline which offers local support; 01473 265210 (office hours only). You can also visit the website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/sendiaass If you would like to read the Suffolk Children's Trust Anti-Bullying Strategy 'Stand Out Against Bullying' visit www.suffolk.gov.uk/bullying/

I hope that you will find this useful. If you have any feedback about this instalment or any past editions of Empowering Parents, please get in touch by emailing raisingthebar@suffolk.gov.uk