

Parish Report September 2014

Councillor

Richard Kemp

Tresco
New Road
Long Melford
Suffolk
CO10 9JY
01787 378149
richard.kemp@suffolk.gov.uk



Why did OFSTED Inspectors choose to spot check highly regarded St Benedicts Catholic School

A Catholic school in Suffolk that was previously rated “good” by Ofsted has become one of the first in England to receive a ‘no-notice’ visit from Government inspectors, it has been claimed. Around 40 schools up and down the country have been selected for the two-day unannounced inspections which are taking place over a two-week period.

Although Ofsted refused to confirm if Suffolk was on the hit list, one school believes it is one of the 40. St Benedict’s Catholic School in Bury St Edmunds received ‘good’ ratings across the board at its last inspection in July 2013 and this summer celebrated its best GCSE results for three years with 71% of students achieving 5 A* to C grades - an 18% increase on last year. The wave of unannounced Ofsted inspections comes in the wake of reports into the alleged ‘Trojan horse’ takeover plot by hardline Muslims at a number of Birmingham schools. And according to St Benedict’s head teacher, Hugh O’Neill, the visit last Thursday and Friday was to ensure that the school was “maintaining core British values”.

He said: “The first we knew that we were to have an inspection was when the lead inspector phoned me at 8.10 that morning and then four inspectors arrived at the school reception at 8.15. We were aware of the agenda which the Prime Minister talked about after the Birmingham Trojan Horse case. But we were only inspected 15 months earlier and so this visit was quite unexpected. We are one of the first 40 and the reason they came to us was that they were following up on the issues to do with citizenship and British values. Apparently, they inspect schools to check whether they are maintaining core British values.”

But Graham White, secretary of Suffolk National Union of Teachers (NUT) said he did not believe that a visit to a school like St Benedict’s was a good use of Ofsted’s time. He told this newspaper: “Everyone knows that St Benedict’s is a very good school with great exam results and it is oversubscribed because of that, so I am not sure why Ofsted has picked on this particular school out of so many around the country. There were some issues in Birmingham which were blown out of proportion and so Ofsted coming to a school in Bury with excellent teaching and results does not make sense. I am not even sure what Ofsted regards as good British values and this visit makes me question their agenda. St Benedict’s is highly regarded and we don’t have any significant issues with it and have never heard any complaints. I don’t see how it can be a good use of Ofsted’s time or a good use of money. It’s a distraction for the staff and this impacts on the children.”

Ofsted would not discuss whether any other schools in Suffolk had been targeted in the first wave of spot inspections. Suffolk County Council also declined to comment. The St Benedict’s inspection report will be published later this month.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service launch event to help older people age safely

Created as part of UK Older People’s Day on 1 October, the initiative aims to help older people age safely. The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) Ageing Safely Week will take place from 29 September to 5 October 2014.

During this week, Suffolk Fire and Rescue will be holding a range of events and activities, engaging with older people in their communities, and showcasing the work they do on a daily basis to help keep older people safe. Working with Age UK, Suffolk’s fire service’s Community Safety team are holding

talks at residential care homes around the county as well as fitting carbon monoxide detectors, as part of their Safer Home Visits in Ipswich. These have been funded by Ipswich Borough Council. Statistics show that the risk of dying in a fire for those aged 65 and over is more than twice as high as the average risk for all ages. With an ever-increasing older population – 23% of the UK will be aged 65 and over by 2035 – activities to help older people prevent fires and keep themselves safe are likely to form a growing part of the fire service’s work over the coming years.

Last year, there were 824 primary fire incidents in Suffolk and 57 of those involved residents who were aged 60 and above. So far this year, older people have made up 50% of the total number of casualties in fire incidents. Throughout the UK, fire and rescue services identify those who are most at risk in their community, and undertake targeted prevention and protection activities to help them stay safe. UK fire services carried out 274,000 Safer Home Visits in households with a person over 65 years in 2012-13, with Suffolk FRS helping 2000 older people to stay safe in the county. This is just a small part of the work the fire service does with older people. They also work with partners to share resources and expertise whilst delivering integrated services to the local community.

Councillor Colin Spence, cabinet member for public protection said:
“CFOA Ageing Safely Week gives the fire service the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to protecting older people, particularly those who are vulnerable and may be most at risk. It was recognised at the LGA conference, the huge part fire fighters could play in delivering health and wellbeing interventions in people’s homes. During the week, the fire service will be raising awareness of the services available, building and developing existing and new partnerships with organisations with similar goals.”

Sarah Banfield, Marketing Manager from Age UK Suffolk said:
“Age UK Suffolk fully supports Suffolk Fire and Rescue’s Ageing Safely week, which coincides with our Inspiring Age campaign, recognising the contribution that older people make to Suffolk, for Older Person’s Day on 1 October. We would recommend that everyone follow the advice provided by Suffolk Fire and Rescue service, taking time to check their smoke detectors, installing carbon monoxide testers and assisting any older friends or family who may struggle to undertake these simple fire safety checks themselves.”

Suffolk Fire and Rescue will also be using the week to provide information leaflets about The Silver Line, the charity set up by Esther Rantzen CBE, which runs a free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people – and like the fire service, is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Hundreds of Suffolk Residents Identified on Scammers List

Suffolk County Council Trading Standards has identified nearly 1600 Suffolk residents on scam mail company hit lists. The list has been secured as part of a national trading standards project that Suffolk Trading Standards is contributing to. These types of lists are known to be exchanged between scammers who use the names and addresses to target people with scam mail and telephone calls looking to extract money from them.

A variety of scams are used that include:

- fake lottery draws
- prize draw wins
- bogus psychic predictions
- get-rich-quick investment cons
- ‘miracle’ health cures

Some of the victims identified as part of the national project have sent money to bogus prize draw companies that have been intercepted by trading standards services nationally. The cheques and cash that have been sent by Suffolk residents, as part of fake prize draw wins, are being returned to residents as part of the project. Suffolk Trading Standards is working closely with adult and community service professionals and other organisations to pool resources and expertise in assisting these victims.

Councillor Colin Spence, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for public protection, said: "Research has found that many victims are socially isolated or their families are unaware of the problem. Through our trading standards team working closely with colleagues from adult social care we are aiming to collectively prevent the most vulnerable adults from falling victim to mass marketing scams and suffering financial detriment in the future. I encourage those receiving a letter from trading standards to read it and get in contact; this will allow us to provide valuable and effective advice to prepare you for any future traps. We welcome being a part of this national project and would advise people not to respond to scam mail as the only winners are the scammers themselves."

Suffolk Trading Standards is contacting Suffolk residents found on scam mail companies hit lists. These residents are being contacted initially by letter and offered advice from a Trading Standards Officer, either over the telephone or via a home visit.

Anyone who is concerned that they, or a friend or family member, has been involved in a scam are encouraged to call the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on **03454 040506**.

Businesses called on to support first ever Suffolk Skills show

Suffolk businesses are being encouraged to support the first ever Suffolk Skills Show, set to reach over 4000 young people. A large scale skills and careers event targeting young people between 11 and 24 years old has been planned for 22 October at Trinity Park in Ipswich, and businesses are being called on to exhibit. The event will offer an insight into the opportunities available locally as well as sector based information. This will help young people make a more informed choice about their future and open their eyes to careers they may never have considered.

The day will offer employer stands with staff ready to speak about their experiences from education to work, 'have a go' and hands on activities, competitions and more. This will be supported by demonstrations and competitions from the colleges, their students, private training providers, as well as information, advice and guidance practitioners.

Councillor Lisa Chambers, Suffolk County Council's cabinet member for education and skills, said: "The Suffolk Skills Show presents an unmissable opportunity for local businesses to show their willingness to support our Raising the Bar initiative. This event is designed to make it easier for businesses to be proactive with those young people currently in education, or those who are considering their options when leaving school. The event will capture young people's interest at a stage in their development where it makes a difference, it's important our young people know about the wide range of local career options available to them. I firmly believe this approach of businesses engaging directly with young people will help create a real change in their aspirations and understanding around the importance of qualifications and the many routes they can take, whether that be academic or vocational. I strongly encourage any employer that shares our vision to get in contact and find out about how they can get involved."

County Council backs Bypass

Some of Suffolk County Council's top figures visited Sudbury this week to discuss plans for a western bypass.

County council leader Mark Bee and Graham Newman, cabinet member for roads and transport and planning, met local Conservative councillors, including James Cartlidge, the Assington-based Conservative candidate for the 2015 general election, to discuss how plans could be moved forward.

Meeting in Ballingdon – where many of the complaints of traffic and pollution are centred – the trio discussed how the county authority could work with Babergh District Council, Sudbury Town Council and Sudbury Steering Group to put forward a viable case for funding. Any future plans will have to go before the New Anglia Local Enterprise [Partnership](#) (LEP).

Mr Bee said he came to show the county council's support for resolving the town's traffic issues and to assure people they "hadn't been forgotten. We are going to look from a county view point to see what we can do," he

said. While clearly stating the council could not promise a bypass, he said it could help ensure the best possible case was put forward to the LEP.

He added: “Any scheme going through the LEP must have an economic benefit.”

Mr Cartlidge said: “What makes the case pressing today is that new housing planned for the town will add to the weight of traffic. People in these new homes will need access to employment and the bypass could deliver greater mobility to areas of employment growth, while relieving the pressure of lorries driving through the centre of town, helping to support the quality of life for all.”

Mr Newman confirmed he was in ongoing discussions with councillors in Essex, discussing the benefits and the disruption that could come from building a bypass in the future. County councillor Peter Beer, who also attended Monday’s meeting, argued that wildlife should not be allowed to disrupt proposals for a relief road. “People before wildlife,” he said. “People must come first.”

He said that, in previous projects, the environment had not been impacted negatively in the long term.

Suffolk: Red Cross to care for Discharged Hospital Patients in their home

Hospital patients in Ipswich and east Suffolk could soon be cared for in their homes by the Red Cross after being discharged. Plans will be discussed later this month to send Red Cross staff to the homes of patients in the three days following a hospital stay.

The move is designed to provide post discharge support to patients for 72 hours and is one of several direct services to be contracted to the third sector in an effort to curb unnecessarily long hospital stays. The county’s patient watchdog last night said it “cautiously welcomed” the move but stressed the importance of establishing clear criteria for the type of care being administered in order to prevent the risk of people being sent home too early. The NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) currently holds a range of third sector contracts valued at between £7,500 and £1.2m.

The total value of contracts – including a £2.7m deal with a community interest company for a range of services – is £5,793,000. The CCG last night said the proposed new service formed part of the its commitment to “quality healthcare services that offer improved patient outcomes”.

Along with Red Cross staff providing home support for recently discharged hospital patients, Suffolk Family Carers and Age UK are working with Ipswich Hospital, Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Community Healthcare to get older patients who are medically fit home earlier by providing community support. The Post Acute Care Enablement strategy is allied to ongoing schemes aimed at preventing unnecessary admissions to the acute wards and allowing for earlier discharge from hospital.

Meanwhile, the CCG’s governing board will also hear about the service provided by Town Pastors – commissioned to support people at risk of alcohol and substance misuse, and whose safety may be at risk. The Town Pastors, work in collaboration with the police and Ipswich Borough Council every Friday and Saturday night in Ipswich, Felixstowe, Stowmarket and Woodbridge.

Annie Topping, chief executive of Healthwatch Suffolk said that commissioning the Red Cross to provide post hospital discharge care had already been trialled successfully elsewhere but urged that the service be strictly and regularly monitored to ensure it was serving the interests of patients.

She said: “We have seen this initiative tried out in other parts of the country and have seen the importance of understanding what kind of patients will be supported and what kind of support they will be given. The CCG has to think creatively about allowing patients to go home early, but the details are important. We do hear of patients being sent home too early.”

Healthwatch Suffolk is preparing to release findings from an inquiry launched earlier this year with Healthwatch England into patients being prematurely discharged and put at risk of emergency readmission to hospital – more costly to local authorities than a patient remaining in hospital unnecessarily.

Ms Topping said: "There has to be an improvement for those patients sent home without the proper care and support. We know the CCG is looking at ways of supporting people in their own homes and what can be done to facilitate early discharge, so we cautiously welcome a scheme that benefits some patients, although stress the importance of there being clear criteria and seeing how it has been working after two or three months. Our focus is very much on patient outcomes. Whatever the contract, it needs to be looked at not in isolation but within the totality of services available to patients."

A spokesman for the NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group said: "This proposed new service forms part of the CCG's commitment to quality healthcare services that offer improved patient outcomes."

Bury St Edmunds – New Parking Restrictions revealed

Parking restrictions will be rolled out in selected Bury St Edmunds' streets to combat the number of people using residential areas as free car parks. Parking restrictions will be rolled out in selected Bury St Edmunds' streets to combat the number of people using residential areas as free car parks. Letters will be sent out at the beginning of next week to tell people living around the Grove Road area that a Neighbourhood Parking Scheme will be introduced from November 1 this year.

The move follows a Suffolk County Council consultation almost two years ago, where a large number of people requested the implementation of a permit scheme to stop cars belonging to shoppers and workers clogging residential streets. Mark Ereira-Guyer, who represents the area at Suffolk County Council, said: "The people of this area have been after improving the parking for a very long time as there is a huge displacement of parking from the town centre which makes their lives very difficult. We did a major consultation two years ago and now it's going to be there. I'm thrilled for the people I represent, because it has been a long wait. The council has worked hard, but they have been delayed by other priorities which has been unfortunate to say the least."

The scheme, known as Zone L, will cover Grove Road, Grove Park, Cornfield Road, Challice Road, Durbar Terrace, Spring Lane, Springfield Avenue, Springfield Road, Trinity Mews and parts of Risbygate Street and Out Risbygate. Those living in the zone will be able to buy up to two annual permits, with the first priced at £59 and the second at £76. The scheme will operate Monday to Saturday from 9.30am to 3pm and there will be a designated 1 hour waiting bay outside St Edmundsbury CEVA Primary School on Grove Road and on part of Risbygate Street.