

November 2020 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

The Home, But Not Alone free phonenumber is up and running again

The phone line which supports vulnerable people in our communities who may be struggling with the impact of Coronavirus was paused in August because of low demand and the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. However, in light of Thursday's national lockdown, the service is now up and running again. The phonenumber was absolutely vital during the first lockdown and it is only right that the same support is on offer as we head into the next wave of lockdown. The phonenumber helped thousands of people and families, who often didn't have a network of family or friends to call upon, access emergency support such as food and medicine deliveries and befriending schemes. It's success was down to the amazing local networks that sprung up across towns and villages in Suffolk and looked after those most in need. The telephone number is freephone 0800 876 6926 and will be staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

This Home, But Not Alone phonenumber compliments **The Suffolk Advice and Support Service** phonenumber (freephone 0800 068 3131). It can help with debt advice, budgeting, mortgage, rent or credit card problems and employment queries. This phonenumber, delivered by the Collaborative Communities Covid-19 Board. Call handlers use resources and information from across many Suffolk organisations and specialist providers, which are tailored to individual needs. Some of the help provided to date includes:

- Supporting families with food and fuel vouchers, paying utility bills, and buying school uniforms.
- Buying a bike for a man to get to his new job, after losing his old job due to Covid-19 and having to sell his car to cover expenses.
- Buying special boots for a child with disabilities, which the family could no longer afford.
- Covering rent arrears for people.

SCC announces £228,000 for tree-planting, protecting hedgerows and verges

Suffolk's natural environment will receive investment for tree-planting, restoring hedgerows, and improving roadside verges for wildlife. £228,000 from the Suffolk 2020 Fund will enable SCC to enhance its work to protect and encourage biodiversity in the county. Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. It will also help establish around 10 community tree nurseries, which will support more planting in years to come. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities. The funding will also be used to trial better ways to manage roadside verges for wildlife. This includes exploring the use of new technology and cutting techniques, as well as developing new partnerships with parishes and landowners. The funding will help expand the existing Roadside Nature Reserve network managed by the council with the help of volunteers, seeing a 25% increase in the overall length of verges managed for wildlife. Increased tree planting will allow us to offset carbon emissions, though we are continuing to work to eliminate the council's emissions where possible, as part of our commitment to our climate emergency declaration. But this is much more than just planting trees and walking away. We are setting up the support needed to allow trees, hedgerows and verges to thrive for years to come, including in urban areas. We are committed to a 'right tree, right place' policy and to working with others. This will be achieved through a new Suffolk Tree Partnership, involving many others across Suffolk, to support local communities and landowners to help manage and increase tree cover. We will also work with others to develop a 'healing wood' initiative as a way of recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on our communities. With Suffolk's healing woods we will all have access to natural spaces, where we can reflect on our own experiences of the pandemic or take a quiet moment to grieve for loved ones. People in Suffolk can have their say on plans for a 'healing'

woodland space in memory of those who died from Covid-19. A survey has now been launched online for people to share their thoughts and preferences on what they would like to see. The potential locations are to be identified in the new year. The survey will run online until 25 November. Please visit: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HealingWoods

Suffolk MP visits site at the A140 in Brome and is 'delighted' with the improvements

On 19 October, Member of Parliament for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich, Dr Dan Poulter, visited the junction improvement works at the A140 in Brome, near Eye Airfield. The visit was hosted by Suffolk County Council and Interserve, the improvement scheme's contractor. The works will improve journey time and road safety in the area and provide better access to the Eye Airfield Development Area. The improvements include:

- Two new roundabout junctions on the A140 Castleton Way and south of Rectory Road.
- A link road through to B1077 from the Northern roundabout.
- Restricted movements at the A140/B1077 junction: prohibit right turns in and out, improving journey times and safety
- Closure of the A140/Rectory Road junction.
- Landscaping and new pathways for walkers and cyclists.

Feasibility studies were carried out along the stretch of road by SCC following concerns expressed by members of the public and local stakeholders about access to and from businesses based on the Industrial Park, with lengthy queues and delays entering and exiting the area. The main access into the Industrial Park is via a busy junction and the flow of traffic is regularly slowed or halted by vehicles attempting to enter or leave the site, creating the risk of accidents and diminished road safety. SCC would like to thank residents for their patience regarding these vital improvement works. There have been delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which have been unavoidable. We are trying to claw back some of the time we have lost, and we will keep the local community updated on the revised timescale. Once the improvement works are completed, the new road layout will unlock Eye Airfield for economic development. There will also be significant highway benefits because access to the A140 will be safer and more efficient, resolving long standing safety and congestion issues. To keep up to date with the project's latest developments visit the programme's dedicated website at www.eyea140scheme.co.uk

Adopt East launches

14 October marked the launch of Adopt East, a regional adoption agency which has been established to recruit adopters across the East of England. Adopt East will work across local authorities in Southend, Thurrock, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton to find families for children who are waiting to find their forever home. Adoptionplus, Barnardo's, and Adoption UK are also part of the partnership. The Adopt East alliance will deliver the highest quality adoption service to children and families throughout the region by bringing together the expertise and skills of all its partners. The scale of the organisation means that adopters will have access to a larger number of children waiting for adoption. This will help partners to match children with the right family for them, at the earliest opportunity. Adopt East is committed to providing good quality adoption support services to support all families with their adoption journey. In Suffolk we have been working hard to find loving and supportive families for children waiting for adoption. These children have not always had the best start in life and really do deserve to find their forever homes. The adoption process can seem daunting for families, but SCC have a wealth of experience and are there to support families every step of the way. Adopt East is great news for Suffolk as it will mean we can draw on expertise and skills from across the whole region to help us to find the right families for our children. To find out more visit: www.adopteast.org.uk

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk