

## **Wilby Parish Council Report by Councillor Julie Flatman March 3rd, 2021**

### **An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk**

Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins through existing fortnightly updates for councillors, or [via the Suffolk County Council website](#). An update on the vaccine rollout can be found on the [SNEE NHS COVID-19 Vaccination Service website](#).

### **Community testing**

1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 do not have symptoms and may be unwittingly spreading the virus to other people without knowing. To tackle this, Suffolk has introduced community testing (also known as lateral flow testing or rapid testing) for those who are unable to work from home. A number of community testing centres have recently opened across Mid Suffolk, including sites in Stowmarket, Elmswell and Needham Market. To find out more, or to make an appointment go to [the Suffolk County Council website](#).

### **Councils pledge to provide further financial support for struggling households**

Thousands of households across Mid Suffolk will be eligible for a reduction in their council tax bill after councillors approved further support for residents facing financial difficulties due to Covid-19.

[Read the full story](#)

### **Covid support grants for businesses**

There are several business support grants available which cover different local and national lockdown periods. For businesses mandated to close (including those in retail, leisure and hospitality) that have applied and received a lockdown grant since November 2020, our plan is to automatically pay additional grants following pre-payment checks.

However, for businesses that may be eligible but have not heard from us, or are yet to apply for any grants, we are encouraging them to find out more and to submit an application form as soon as possible. Further information about all the covid business support grants can be found on [our grant funding schemes webpage](#)

## **Green light for community car park**

Collaboration between councils, the NHS and a local housing developer is paving the way for a new community car park – providing parking for medical staff and patients attending Covid vaccination appointments.

[Read the full story](#)

## **Budget to ‘supercharge’ district’s recovery**

Councillors have agreed Mid Suffolk District Council’s budget for 2021/22 – keeping council tax low while ‘supercharging’ the district’s post-Covid recovery.

[Read the full story](#)

## **CIFCO portfolio nears completion**

Property investment company CIFCO Capital Ltd is set to increase the £1.5m it has already ploughed back into council services so far this year – with the recent purchase of a Coventry trade park.

[Read the full story](#)

## **Councils confirm support for Freeport East**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have confirmed their support for Freeport East. The bid, which includes Gateway 14 in Stowmarket, has been formally submitted to Government by Hutchinson Ports.

[Read the full story](#)

## **An extra £3m for warmer, greener Suffolk homes**

More Suffolk residents, including those in Mid Suffolk, are set to benefit from Government Green Homes Grants thanks to a further successful bid for £3m funding by a Suffolk consortium of local authorities.

[Read the full story](#)

## **Everyone will benefit from Census 2021**

Households across Mid Suffolk will be asked to take part in Census 2021 this spring. The census, run by the Office for National Statistics, is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every ten years since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

[Read the full story](#)

## **Councillors vote to refuse Needham Market development**

Mid Suffolk District Council recently refused outline planning permission for 279 homes to be built in Needham Market, citing concerns over the development's location, accessibility and impact on landscape.

[Read the full story](#)

## **Councils help combat holiday hunger**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils have continued to fund a joint initiative offering food and activities for families in need during the school holidays.

[Read the full story](#)

## **Plug in Suffolk**

Plug in Suffolk is now providing grants for the installation of Electric Vehicle charging points at non-profit locations such as community centres, parish council car parks and village halls. Visit [Green Suffolk's website](#) or contact Suffolk County Council's environment strategy officer [Peter Frost](#) to find out more about the funding.

## **The Postbox Project**

Many of our residents will have experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness since the Covid pandemic began. To combat this we've partnered with The Forge Church and Suffolk County Council to launch [The Postbox Project](#). Our aim is to connect people across Suffolk, using letter writing to build new friendships. We are currently recruiting volunteers to write letters, so if you can spare a little time, [please let us know](#). Alternatively if you're aware of someone who is experiencing loneliness and would benefit from a letter, you can [refer them directly to the project](#).

## **Postponement of the Women's Tour**

The Women's Tour, the international cycle race originally scheduled to finish in Suffolk on 12 June 2021, [has been postponed](#) due to COVID-19. Organisers, Sweetspot Group, have requested alternate race dates of Monday 4 to Saturday 9 October from the sport's governing body. Once new dates are confirmed, we will begin our community activity and work with local schools and businesses to promote the tour coming to our district.