

Report for Stansfield Parish Council Meeting 15th November 2021

1. West Suffolk Council has taken the regrettable decision to cancel the 2022 Bury Festival because of ongoing concerns about the suitability of such events in what they consider to be a sufficiently challenging time because of Covid-19. Performers have to be booked many months in advance and it cannot be certain they will be able to honour the bookings. Also, many performers were cancelled in the last two years and the Apex is trying to re-book those in first. You may feel this is very disappointing but the Council is trying to balance risk and safety for all.
2. West Suffolk Council is reminding all citizens that it is illegal to sit in your vehicle with the engine running – known as idling – and traffic wardens will issue fines to those who refuse to turn off their engines. There is likely to be an increase in idling as the weather gets colder but you are asked to remember this is now an illegal action. If you collect a child at school, or take someone to the doctor, you must turn your engine off whilst stationary.
3. As the Government has now designated Suffolk as an Enhanced Response Area due to our COVID case numbers and pressure on our hospitals, the Suffolk Resilience Forum (SRF) is naturally stepping up its communications activity.

The SRF is seeking to achieve three main aims:

- 1) To ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the latest Covid situation in Suffolk
- 2) To provide absolute clarity on the actions that best reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses
- 3) To influence people to make the best choices in order to reduce the spread

In the coming weeks and months, a range of very visual and clear PR, social media and advertising activities will be carried out, supported by and in line with central government messaging, to achieve these aims.

For example, during the week commencing 15 November, every residential property in Suffolk (and some across our borders) will receive a leaflet, raising awareness of the current COVID-19 situation in Suffolk and reminding people of things that we can do to best reduce the spread of viruses. This is being supported by

print and digital advertising, radio ads, social media promotion and billboards across Suffolk.

Alongside this, the Forum is launching a campaign encouraging people to think about what motivates them, very personally, to choose to follow the actions that best reduce the spread of viruses. Called 'What's it Worth?', the campaign will be positive about finding ways to live with COVID. To deliver this, we've created a family – the Garnhams – and will feature them all doing things that people enjoy – like having family for dinner – and the role relatively small acts can play in keeping it that way.

Again, a range of communications activities will be used to promote these messages, including radio adverts, videos, social media and bus station adverts. The campaign is deliberately, light and fun because we want to engage as wide an audience as possible and believe being positive is the best approach.

For clarity, these are the five actions we're promoting:

- Get fully vaccinated and have your booster when it's due
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water
- Always wear a face covering in crowded areas
- Ventilate indoor spaces
- Get tested regularly and stay at home if you feel unwell

The campaign will make a particular point of demonstrating that not everyone can follow all the guidance, but that's ok. It all helps.

4. Solar for Business

Andrew Oswald at West Suffolk Council is the Lead Officer for this scheme for businesses. This is a scheme whereby the Council rents your roof and installs solar panels on it to generate green electricity. If your property is not listed you do not need planning permission. If it is listed, you will. I have previously circulated explanatory leaflets to the clerk and would be happy to arrange for Andrew to come to a meeting to talk through the scheme if you would find this helpful. Suffolk County Council is running a scheme for residential property and Cllr Bennett can give you more information.

5. Rough Sleeping

West Suffolk Council works to prevent hundreds of households from becoming homeless each year as well as helping people out of homelessness, and people away from rough sleeping.

The Council, over a period of several years, has invested in a range of different types of accommodation to help support people with different, and sometimes complex, needs.

Alongside this accommodation, the Council has a service dedicated to helping people who are rough sleeping to get the support and accommodation that they need. Since it was set up in September 2018, the rough sleeper service, through providing support and accommodation, has reduced the number of people rough sleeping in West Suffolk from 36 to nine (although this figure can fluctuate).

Not everybody is ready to be helped and even when they are, the rough sleeper service works hard to ensure people don't slip back into old habits and get evicted from the accommodation we have found for them.

There are some whose behaviour when previously housed, makes it harder to find them accommodation without risking the safety of other vulnerable people we are helping – nevertheless the Council is continuing to do all that it can to help them.

All nine people who are currently rough sleeping have either previously been accommodated or have been offered accommodation but declined.

West Suffolk Council is continuing to try to help all nine, and any others who are identified, with support and/or accommodation.

If you know or suspect someone is sleeping rough, the quickest way to report it to the Council's rough sleeper service is using Streetlink www.streetlink.org.uk – the service then gets an alert and they will go and speak to the person (if they aren't already) to try to get them the help that they need.

6. West Suffolk NHS Public Consultation

We have been advised that the following dates and venues have been arranged to enable members of the public to give their opinions on the planned changes to West Suffolk Hospital. If you are unable to attend in person, you may complete an on-line form to give your feedback.

Tuesday 16 November – 3pm-8pm – Mildenhall – The Jubilee Centre IP28 7HG

Wednesday 17 November – 2pm-8pm – Bury St Edmunds, The Apex IP33 3FD

Thursday 18 November – 3pm-7pm – Sudbury – The Assembly Rooms, CO10 1TL

Tuesday 23 November – 2pm-6pm – Haverhill – Main Hall, Chalkestone Community Centre, CB9 0JP

Thursday 25 November – Newmarket – Memorial Hall, High Street, CB8 8JP

Monday 29 November – Stowmarket, Main Hall, Community Centre, IP14 2BD

Thursday 2 December – 4pm-8pm – Brandon – Leisure Centre, IP27 0JB

Tuesday 7 December – 1pm-5pm – Thetford – Main Hall, Charles Burrell Centre, IP24 3LD

For those unable to attend any of the planned events the information at the events and the on-line feedback form will be on the Trust website <https://www.wsh.nhs.uk/planning> from 1st November until Sunday 12 December 2021.