

In August, the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team got in touch with me to say they were looking to have more involvement with parish councils. They are planning to hold virtual meetings with local parishes where you can raise questions. They have divided the area in two groups. It is broadly the area covered by the Clare Division plus Kedington, Barnardiston, Chedburgh, Chevington, Hawstead and Whepstead. I have supplied them with the email addresses for the parish clerks covering our local villages.

At SCC we have set up a fund of about £3m for community enhancements projects to be undertaken this year. The idea is that the Suffolk 2020 fund will finance projects across the county and not be over bureaucratic! Schemes in the pipeline for approval are planting more trees including the establishment of a healing wood as a site of commemoration post Covid19; a network of electric car charging points at village/community halls; the designation of quiet lanes and – of interest to you I think – a new app and upgraded smart marker posts for rights of way prioritising walking routes which parishes have publicised with leaflets as well as long distance routes such as the Stour Valley Path.

We have worked very hard to make arrangements to get the 12,000 children entitled to free school transport to school safely. Full details are on www.suffolkonboard.com and I can talk you through what's been done. James might also find helpful a change to the exceptions criteria for home school transport. I will be able to provide an update on the situation at Samuel Ward, Haverhill, if required this evening.

The Local Government Boundary Commission is opening its consultation on the proposed new boundaries for Suffolk County Council divisions to come into effect for the May 2025 elections. All the documentation is attached including the covering letter sent to the SCC Chief Executive Nicola Beach the full report and summary. The consultation ends in November.

The re-opening of the Household Waste Recycling Centres has gone extremely well and we are looking at making the system of booked appointments a permanent feature.

Suffolk's Fire Chief Mark Hardingham is leaving us to take up the prestigious role of Chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). This is a nationally significant position with considerable responsibilities. Mark, who holds the Queen's Fire Service Medal, led the parade of UK's uniformed Civilian Services at the national Remembrance Day Service at The Cenotaph in 2018. He will be hugely missed when he leaves SCC. The deputy Chief Fire Officer Dan Fearn is stepping up in the interim pending a formal recruitment process.

Saturday 15 August was the 75th anniversary of VJ Day in the UK, marking Victory in Japan at the end of the Second World War. Troops from the Suffolk Regiment served across the Far East including in the Razmak District of Pakistan, Burma, and Singapore, as well as in Europe and Africa. It was following the loss of Singapore in February 1942 that the 4th and 5th Battalions spent three and half years as

Prisoners-of-War, initially in the infamous Changi Jail, then constructing the Burma to Thailand Railway. The team at Suffolk Archives have put together a [special online exhibition marking VJ Day](#), exploring the stories of two Suffolk men who were taken prisoner in the Far East, Able Seaman Harold Lock and Private Raymond Suttle, from the 4th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, as well as looking at the way our county marked the end of the Second World War.

Suffolk Highways has completed its 1,000th resurfaced mile, following the Council's commitment to relay new road surfaces on a quarter of Suffolk's road network. In 2017, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet committed to resurfacing 1,000 miles of road across Suffolk over a four-year period in a bid to improve the quality of roads, reduce the number of potholes and to help stop potholes from forming in the first place. The commitment also makes sound financial sense, as preventing the deterioration of road surfaces by machine surfacing or surface dressing helps reduce the need to spend more money on reactive maintenance repairing potholes now, and in future years.

The County Council's Bikeability team is now offering FREE cycling sessions to provide practical skills on how to cycle on today's roads. Everyone is welcome to take part - adults, families, and children. The sessions are aimed at those who want to cycle more regularly, whether to keep fit, to commute to work or school, or to visit friends. A session lasts between 2 and 2.5 hours and is delivered by a fully qualified Bikeability Cyclist Trainer. The trainer chats to you first about what you are trying to achieve and tailors the session to your specific needs.

Travel behaviour has transformed during lockdown, both nationally and in Suffolk, as more people turn to cycling for essential journeys and exercise. It has been a cycling revolution!

- Journeys made by bike rose by 120% during the pandemic, while bus, rail, ferry, plane and car journeys fell by as much as 95%.
- Latest research also suggests that as much as 16% of the population in England (8.9 million people) have been cycling per week during the pandemic. Suffolk County Council wants to encourage more people to get out and about by cycling and walking for their short journeys. The aim is to embed active travel as part of a long-term habit and reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits.

Suffolk has already implemented several cycling schemes in Ipswich as a result of funding received from the Department for Transport and further schemes are now being considered in Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Beccles, Felixstowe, Stowmarket and Sudbury. It is also promoting the Government's Fix Your Bike £50 voucher scheme, and has provided funding to Greater Anglia to install more cycle racks at their train stations across Suffolk to help more people make cycling part of their commute or daily routine.

Apprenticeships Suffolk is launching a reward package, **Recruit Retain Reward**, providing £1,000 grants for businesses taking on new and/or redundant young apprentices, aged 16-24. In a bid to give small and medium-sized Suffolk and Norfolk businesses as much support as possible, the project aims to offer a flexible

'Apprenticeship Incentive Fund' of £1000, giving businesses a boost to recruit their workforce for the future.

Employers who take on apprentices can experience a wide range of benefits. Developing apprentices' skills to be relevant to the organisation, along with improved productivity, better quality of product or service, and higher staff morale are benefits highlighted by around three-quarters of employers. More than 8 out of 10 employers recommend an apprenticeship to others *

The new incentive scheme across Suffolk and Norfolk, will complement and enhance the new Government apprenticeship incentives announced recently by the chancellor Rishi Sunak (£2,000 for 16-24, £1,500 for 25+), and also the existing age incentives of £1,000 for 16-18s (19-24 with an Education Health Care plan).

In addition to the one-off financial payment, there will also be continued support for organisations who are new to apprenticeships. A collection of online resources is being created to support businesses employing an apprentice for the first time. This includes practical guidance and useful information from existing, local apprenticeship ambassadors to help add real value to the business. Apprenticeships Suffolk provides an impartial service to all employers, providers, apprentices and stakeholders. Further details of the project can be found here: apprenticeshipssuffolk.org

We are supporting the Government's Kickstart scheme to fund employers to create job placements for 16-24-year-olds and we are exploring with our partners in the district and borough councils and business how to extend the scheme and make it really relevant to Suffolk residents. The ideas under consideration are *Suffolk Kickstart+* which would involve giving extra support to younger and more vulnerable candidates to enable them to secure placements and *ReStart Suffolk* to support mature workers aged 50+ to get back into employment including guidance on switching career.

New resources have been published to help young people in Suffolk understand how movement and physical activity can improve their emotional wellbeing. The resources, which include a handy, pocket-sized information card, have been developed for young people with input and feedback from young people.

Made possible by Suffolk Mind and the Suffolk Most Active County Partnership, with assistance from Suffolk County Council's Children and Young People's engagement hub, the resources provide essential information about seven ways young people can improve their mental health through movement.

They also include three simple and effective ideas that young people can try straight away to help them take control of their mind and mood through movement, as well as a range of key local contacts for further support. The resources will be distributed to schools, GP surgeries and libraries across the county. They are also available as a direct download from keepmovingsuffolk.com/wellbeing and thesource.me.uk/move.