

## **May 2020 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks**

### **Firefighters support paramedics to help deliver life-saving care**

Firefighters in Suffolk are joining forces with the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) to help provide frontline care during the coronavirus pandemic. Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has volunteered and trained around 30 firefighters to work alongside paramedics to respond to 999 calls over the coming weeks. The firefighters are already blue light trained and will drive frontline emergency NHS ambulances, in turn freeing up paramedics to care for patients. The firefighters have completed an induction course at Newmarket Ambulance Station, which included familiarising them with EEAST's vehicles and equipment. They were also taught basic life support and safe moving and handling skills so that they can help transfer patients.

### **The fight against scams**

Times of distress and disruption are a magnet for scammers and, sadly, now is no different. Action Fraud has reported that, in February alone, victims lost over £800,000 as a result of COVID-19 related scams. This figure is likely to be just the tip of the iceberg, as many will have felt too scared or ashamed to report, and others will be completely unaware that they have been duped. Here in Suffolk both residents and businesses have been targeted by fraudsters in a variety of ways. Trading Standards have seen emails that contain malware links and attachments, as well as those sending you to phishing sites, where the criminals attempt to steal your personal information. There have been reports of criminals knocking on doors and offering to go shopping for people who are self-isolating at home. Some purport to be from well-known charities such as The Red Cross, with others claiming to be from local community groups, including working on behalf of Suffolk County Council's Home, But Not Alone. There are also reports of fake websites that imitate agencies including HMRC, offering false tax relief assistance. Trading Standards have highlighted all these scams on their social media channels as well as in their weekly email to over 700 Trading Standards Champions. Their followers on social media have helped share the information to thousands of people, who in turn have shared it with friends and family both on and offline. Consumer Champions are residents, businesses and community groups of Suffolk, many of whom share the information on their community websites or in newsletters. You can join the fight against scams by:

Reporting scams to Suffolk Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133 Following on Twitter, [www.twitter.com/SuffolkTS](https://www.twitter.com/SuffolkTS), and Facebook, [www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards](https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards), to help share messages to your friends, family and followers. Sign up to receive a weekly email alert by going to [www.suffolk.gov.uk/JoinTheFight](https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/JoinTheFight)

### **Suffolk County Council to offer tenants rent deferral as part of support efforts during COVID-19 pandemic**

Suffolk County Council owns and lets a range of properties and land to tenants throughout the county which are used in a number of ways, including the provision of care and education. During this challenging period, as residents of Suffolk stay at home to reduce the spread of infection and the majority of businesses remain closed, as a considerate landlord the council believes it should do what it can to support the local and regional economy through the management of its rental agreements with tenants. The authority has identified 87 of its most vulnerable tenants, which encompasses 123 properties. We have been in touch with each tenant to ask if there is anything we can do to support them at this difficult time. We believe these tenants should be given the opportunity to arrange deferral of their rent and charges for three months, should they wish to do so. This would give them a degree of financial support for a short period of time as the impacts of coronavirus on business continue.

### **Council continues to work with providers during Coronavirus pandemic**

As the Coronavirus pandemic continues, the county council is keen to reassure people that it is doing everything in its power to support care providers. Along with the NHS and health providers, the care system is vital to our response to Coronavirus and they are truly on the front line in terms of supporting our most vulnerable. The demand for their services has never been higher and SCC is supporting them meet this challenge. The council has changed the way in which it pays care providers in order to ensure they are able to remain operational during the crisis. The council has also moved quickly to obtain extra capacity for care needs to be met by using CQC registered providers of home care that do not normally contract with the Council and buying more beds in care homes. The council's own Home First service is also preparing for increased demand and planning for sickness levels by initially redeploying staff from across Adult Community Services. Basic training is already underway to upskill or refresh the skills of these staff in order to be ready for redeployment. Adult Care Services are also working closely with the Home, But Not Alone hub to identify what other support can be offered to ease the pressure on carers as the crisis continues. The council also recognises that the supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) is an ongoing, national issue for care providers. Whilst care providers are responsible for sourcing PPE for their service, the high demand globally has made this increasingly difficult, adding to the pressure and anxiety of frontline workers. The council has lobbied tirelessly to ensure that care providers are given the same prioritisation as health workers in terms of receiving PPE and will continue to do so. In order to support our local care providers SCC are providing a centralised cell for PPE in Suffolk with a dedicated email address. The council has been collating information for Adults and Children's services, districts and borough councils, Suffolk Constabulary, and the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service and this is then fed into the stock and procurement system. The council's procurement team has established some good supply chains, both nationally and internationally. Endeavour House, Ipswich, is the central base for all PPE delivery, storage, pack prep, and distribution. Packs are being sent out to frontline services in Suffolk on a daily basis. In the week of 6 April alone, 65 care homes were provided with the emergency PPE they asked for and the council has responded to every care provider that has approached the council for support.

### **Residents show their support for Keep Moving Suffolk campaign**

Residents and organisations in the public and voluntary sector have come out in support of the county's Keep Moving Suffolk campaign. Led by Suffolk's Most Active County Partnership, the campaign supports everyone in Suffolk to get active from the safety of their homes and gardens, or during their one session of daily exercise away from their home, under the current COVID-19 pandemic social distancing arrangements. It's all about giving people tips and advice to support a healthy mind and body. The key focus is the website [keepmovingsuffolk.com](http://keepmovingsuffolk.com) which is full of local and national information and resources that have been developed specifically to make it easy for people to become, or remain, active at home during these challenging times. The website has come about as a means to address the need to give people a range of options following the closure of gyms, leisure centres, and swimming pools and the cancellation of classes and activities. Without us all taking positive action, physical activity levels could tumble and cause a long-term impact on physical and mental health and wellbeing in the county. The website launched on 1 April and, within its first week, the website was used over 2,500 times. There has also been great support through the Keep Moving Suffolk social media channels, where you can share with us your stories of how you are keeping active. On Facebook, visit [KeepMovingSuffolk](https://www.facebook.com/KeepMovingSuffolk) or on Twitter [@Most Active](https://twitter.com/MostActive)

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