

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2020

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



Visit suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus for health advice, service changes, business support and schools' guidance.

Keep up to date on the latest guidance on Covid-19 from central government here: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

• LOWESTOFT THIRD CROSSING OFFICIALLY NAMED AS PROJECT IS GIVEN FINAL GREEN LIGHT

Suffolk County Council's Cabinet has unanimously approved the building of the Lake Lothing Third Crossing in Lowestoft, now officially named as *Gull Wing* by children from Somerleyton Primary School. The bridge will be Suffolk's most significant infrastructure development in recent memory and one of its most visually iconic. It sits alongside several integral projects to transform Lowestoft in the coming years, showing that the area is well and truly open for business. With no unforeseen delays, construction work is planned to begin in Spring 2021, with a target of Summer 2023 for the *Gull Wing* to officially open.

Somerleyton Primary School pupils thought up the name *Gull Wing*. Headteacher, Louise Spall, explains the thinking behind it: "The children wanted to come up with a name which reflected living by the seaside, but they also thought that the shape of bridge was really interesting. The V-shape of the new bridge looks like a bird's wings and, of course, what seaside town is complete without gulls! "They are really excited that their name is going to be part of Lowestoft's history, it is something they can be proud of and tell their children in years to come."

A panel of representatives from the local councils, local organisations and the town council, led by Peter Aldous MP, unanimously agreed that *Gull Wing* was an excellent suggestion and agreed that it would become the new bridge's name.

• PREPARATIONS ARE FINALISED FOR SCC FUNDED SCHOOL TRAVEL FOR THE NEW SCHOOL TERM

Suffolk County Council (SCC) have made preparations to ensure all pupils who are eligible for SCC funded school travel are transported to school safely for the start of term. SCC transports approximately 12,000 pupils, which is around 12% of the school population. On 11 August 2020, the Department for Education published official guidance on the measures that need to be in place to ensure that school transport is COVID-19 safe. SCC have been working closely with bus operators and schools to put these into place.

There are three types of school transport that children travel on - either a dedicated closed contract, shared route, or public transport route. The guidelines for these routes are slightly different. The majority of eligible pupils travel to school on dedicated, closed routes. This means that the vehicle only carries school children. On these routes, social distancing will not apply. There will be other measures in place to ensure pupils' safety. For example, children need to make sure they wash their hands before and after travelling, and no eating and drinking will be allowed on these vehicles. Face coverings are also recommended for children aged 11 and over.

Some children travel to school on shared routes. This is where most passengers are pupils going to school or college, but there are also a few members of the public travelling on the vehicle. SCC have worked closely with operators to ensure that there is enough space on these shared transport routes. Pupils should observe social distancing guidelines with members of the public and sit in the seats marked; they can sit next to members of

their family or fellow pupils. On these routes, face coverings will be mandatory unless a child is exempt from wearing one, in line with guidance. For pupils who travel to school by public transport, where routes are used mainly by the general public, social distancing will apply and face coverings will be mandatory unless the child is exempt from wearing one.

For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) most of their routes are dedicated, so this means there is little change to their transport. Where changes are being made, we are getting in touch with the families to explain the arrangements for the new term.

A child **must not** travel on any of these routes if anyone in their household has symptoms of COVID-19, which are a new persistent cough, high temperature and/or a change in their sense of taste or smell. If the child or anyone in the household has these symptoms, then public health advice should be followed as usual.

For further information visit www.suffolkonboard.com.

- **WORKING TOGETHER TO ENSURE A SAFE START TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

Article by Councillor Mary Evans, Suffolk County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills; published 25 August 2020.

The start of the new school year can present challenges for families and schools alike. The prospect of walking back through the school gates for the first time since mid-March may feel both exciting and daunting. COVID-19 has impacted on all of us in different ways and for many children and young people this has affected their education, with thousands not being in school for five months. Parents and carers across Suffolk have done a wonderful job educating their children at home. I thank them for all their hard work. It is important that we get children back into schools, nurseries, and colleges as it is the best place for their education and wellbeing.

While many children and young people will be looking forward to a full-time return, I know some families may be feeling anxious about the return to schools, nurseries and colleges; it could feel quite difficult for many children and young people. I would like to reassure them that we have been working very closely with schools to make sure safety measures are in place for the start of the new term. These include staggered start times, staggered breaktimes, increased hygiene and children remaining in consistent groups. These steps will all contribute to minimising the risk, while allowing teachers to get back to teaching children. Each school is different and will have put specific systems in place, based on individual risk assessments. School leaders will be in contact with parents prior to the start of term to advise on the arrangements. If parents do have any concerns, I would recommend they have a conversation with their school.

I realise that going back to school after weeks, indeed months, at home could feel quite difficult for many children and young people. It may take time for them to get back into a routine and adjust to life back at school. Children who continued to go to school throughout lockdown may also find it hard with the return of more children and a focus back onto academic work. Schools will work closely with children to listen to their concerns and help them make the transition back into the classroom and there is a wealth of helpful resources and top tips for parents on our website. For example, getting back into a routine can be a good way to prepare for the return to school. Bedtimes, waking times and mealtimes may well have changed during lockdown so adjusting these gradually to establish a routine to prepare children for the new school term will help them.

To access these resources visit; www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/if/five-tips/

In preparation for the start of term, we would also advise families to think about how children will travel to school as arrangements may be a little different. Families are encouraged, where possible, to walk or cycle to school, but I appreciate that this is often not possible. If children or young people use public transport to travel to school, we would advise families to check that their route is still running as some changes may have been made due to the pandemic. Families also need to take into account that, due to social distancing, there will not be as much space on the vehicle. If children and young people travel by public transport, they will need to

understand whether they need to wear a face covering and how to do this safely, unless a child is unable to wear one for health, age, or other reasons.

The months out of school will doubtless have had a bigger impact on some pupils than others. We fully expect that there will be gaps in learning. The Education and Learning team at Suffolk County Council is committed in its work with all schools to help them bridge these gaps. Where parents have particular worries about their child's education and the impact of the lockdown, we would encourage them to talk to their child's school. Staff at the school will be best placed to offer advice about how individual children can be supported in the post-lockdown period, how learning topics can be prioritised and how parents can support their children.

I would like to thank leaders and teachers across the childcare and education sector for the huge part they have played in the COVID-19 pandemic response and their hard work in getting everything organised and ready for the start of term. I wish children and young people and all school staff the very best as they return for the new school year.

• **NEW PROJECT WEBSITE FOR SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL'S A140 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

Suffolk County Council has partnered with Interserve Construction to deliver a vital upgrade to the A140 road near Eye, Suffolk. This stretch of road has seen a number of issues over the last five years. The scheme will improve journey time reliability and road safety in the area, and advance 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.

Keeping the local community and key stakeholders updated and informed is a vital part of the project. Therefore, the project team is happy to announce that a dedicated website has been developed.

<https://eyea140scheme.co.uk/> aims to update all interested stakeholders regularly about the project's recent activities and any traffic management measures which may be in place to help support the work. A phone number is also available (07917 598 686) to directly contact the project's representatives.

More stakeholder events, including face-to-face events, are planned once the current COVID-19 situation is resolved. The scheme is expected to be finished early 2021.

• **REMEMBERING VJ DAY, 75 YEARS ON**

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. With celebrations often centred around VE Day earlier in the year, this period of the Second World War is sometimes overlooked, but it is important to remember that the war between the Allied Forces and Japan continued until August. In fact, on VE Day in 1945, Churchill reminded the British public that the country should "not forget for a moment the toil and efforts that lie ahead" and for many people this certainly proved to be true.

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. The Suffolk Archives display also features a digitised version of a 1944 War Office handbook explaining the challenges of contacting and supporting POWs in the Far East, and a series of extracts showing how VJ Day activities across Suffolk were reported in local newspapers.

The development of online displays such as this has been made possible thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, aimed at increasing use and understanding of the archives through a series of countywide initiatives.

• **SUFFOLK CELEBRATES 1,000 MILES OF NEWLY SURFACED ROADS**

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 1,000th mile was laid at Horham Road in Eye on Tuesday 4 August 2020.

• **FREE CYCLING SESSIONS FOR THE PEOPLE OF SUFFOLK**

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.

For further information on the active travel measures Suffolk County Council is putting in place across Suffolk and to sign up for a free cycling session visit: suffolk.gov.uk/cyclingandwalking

• **SUFFOLK AND NORFOLK BUSINESSES SET FOR EXTRA BOOST FOR APPRENTICES**

Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships Norfolk are 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. It is hoped that the project, which is sponsored by the East of England Employer Ambassador Apprenticeship Network, will encourage apprenticeship starts across Suffolk and Norfolk, post COVID-19. Apprenticeships Suffolk and Apprenticeships Norfolk provide an impartial service to all employers, providers, apprentices and stakeholders. Further details of the project can be found here: apprenticeshipssuffolk.org and apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org

* Data source: [GOV.UK publications](https://www.gov.uk/publications)

- **NEW RESOURCES TO HELP UNDERSTAND THE LINK BETWEEN MOVEMENT & MENTAL HEALTH**

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.

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at:

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