

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT – DECEMBER 2019

Cllr Stephen Burroughes - Framlingham Division



- **NEW 'APP' FOR ASTHMATIC YOUNGSTERS**

An app that teaches asthmatic children to use their inhalers properly is being promoted across the county after being developed by a Suffolk company. MySpira, by Orbital Media of Stowmarket, teaches youngsters techniques in a fun way and is now being promoted in hospitals, GP surgeries, pharmacies and primary schools across the county by Public Health Suffolk. The app uses characters and interactions, to engage children with asthma with games they can play with parents, siblings or friends. Throughout the 20-minute experience the youngster is taught about asthma keywords, triggers, different types of inhalers, how to prepare the inhaler and spacer, and how to inhale the medicine correctly. Research has found that as many as 97% of asthmatic children misuse their inhalers, with potentially serious consequences. The app is available from the App Store and Google Play.

- **FINES FOR POOR PARKING IN SUFFOLK FROM 2020**

Parking fines will be the same across the whole of Suffolk from early next year, when stronger enforcement is set to take place. The long-delayed transfer of civil parking enforcement from police to local authorities is expected to take place from the end of January in Suffolk. This means each council will be responsible for issuing parking fines, warnings and notices in their area, although a deal has been struck by Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils to have their parking enforced by Ipswich and West Suffolk officers.

With police unable to dedicate resources currently, it is expected that once the powers transfer councils will be able to crackdown on poor parking more than police. A consistent approach is being planned across the whole county, meaning fines will be the same, regardless of which authority manages parking in that area.

- **PRIMARY SCHOOL WIN REGIONAL AWARD FOR WALKING & CYCLING TO SCHOOL**

On 13 November, Exning Primary School was awarded the Regional Modeshift STARS Award for Suffolk for increasing sustainable and active travel. Awarded each year to nominated schools, Modeshift STARS encourages schools across the country to increase levels of active travel to improve the health and well-being of staff, parents and most importantly children. The regional awards require schools to gain a local authority nomination to be considered. This year Suffolk nominated three schools and Exning was commended for its work on road safety, anti-idling and sustainable travel initiatives. Claydon Primary School and Barrow Primary School were joint runners up. Exning Primary School implemented their Travel Plan through Modeshift STARS following an invitation to join-up their travel initiatives with the Travel Plan for the new residential development in Exning.

The school's Travel Plan Champion Liz Kent, with support from the Head Teacher James Clark, was very pro-active in engaging with Suffolk County Council and the Suffolk Highways' Road Safety Team. The school used their Junior Road Safety Officers to help reduce congestion and improve air quality in the area around the school.

- **D-DAY HEROES & BRAVE EX-SERVICEMAN INSPIRE AT STARS OF SUFFOLK AWARDS**

Four heroes of D-Day were among the inspirational winners at this year's Stars of Suffolk Awards held on 7 November 2019. The ceremony, which was launched 12 years ago, honours the county's bravest, dedicated and caring individuals - from firefighters, to charity workers and life-saving teenagers. Hundreds of nominations were put forward, before the final 46 men, women, organisations - and even a heroic Labrador - were selected as finalists in the 13 categories. Among them were James Perry, Tony Pyatt, Francis Grant and Douglas Smith - four heroes from the county who played vital roles in the D-Day landings in 1944. Marking the 75th anniversary this year, organisers were honoured to hand them the Judges Special Award.

Ex-RAF serviceman David Norris' story of bravery, compassion and selflessness earned him the overall Star of Suffolk award. The Stowmarket man broke up an attack on a 15-year-old boy in a park. A build-up of blood was stopping the victim from breathing. After putting the boy in the recovery position, David protected him from further attack until paramedics arrived. Other winners included charity Fresh Start, New Beginnings, which provides invaluable support for victims of child sex abuse. They took home the Team of the Year award. Rita Harris took home the Carer of the Year award. The selfless sister has cared for her eight siblings for more than 30 years since the death of her mother. All her

siblings have learning difficulties, medical needs or personal challenges. Rita's story is made yet more incredible in that, despite having been diagnosed with cancer, she continues to work for them 24/7.

The Armed Services Award went to former serviceman Nigel Seaman, who after facing his own battle with post-traumatic stress disorder set up mobile coffee shop Combat2Coffee. The former Royal Anglian soldier works with ex-service people to train them as barristas in an attempt to combat stress.

Full list of the Stars of Suffolk award winners:

- Carer of the Year: Rita Harris
- Young Person of the Year: Georgia Wood
- Outstanding Sporting Achievement of the Year: The Ron Harrod Foundation
- Fire Service Award: Sally Hammond and Alice Guyett
- Community Group of Champion of the Year: Muncheon Mingle
- Outstanding Bravery of the Year: David Norris and Lexi-May Angel (joint winners)
- Hospital/ Ambulance Person of the Year: Sue Downes
- Team of the Year: Fresh Start, New Beginnings
- Search and Rescue Award: Jamie and Diesel Ketteridge
- Volunteer of the Year: Tina Vickers
- Armed Services Award: Nigel Seaman
- Police Person of the Year: Matt Kidd-Stanton
- Unsung Hero of the Year: Maureen Reynal
- Special Recognition of the Year: Alan Clapson and Ben Robinson, Kerry Dunnett, James Brewer and Johnathan Rawlings and Daniel Challenor (joint winners)
- Overall Star of Suffolk: David Norris
- Judges Special Award: Veterans James Perry, Tony Pyatt, Francis Grant, Douglas Smith

• WELLBEING SUPPORT FOR SUFFOLK VETERANS

During the November Remembrance period, the Suffolk Armed Forces Community Wellbeing Group raised awareness of veterans' wellbeing. There are an estimated 34,000 veterans living in Suffolk, some will be 100 years of age, others could be as young as 24. As a rural county, finding and reaching veterans and their families can be a challenge. Most veterans leave the armed forces and transition to civilian life without issue. They live fulfilling lives and contribute to society. However, a sizeable minority may struggle to adjust, struggle to find purposeful employment, and have the challenge of developing new connections or friendships. This can lead to a range of wellbeing issues. In the lead up to Remembrance Day, Suffolk County Council supported Parish and Town Councils involved in organising local remembrance events to promote Veterans Gateway and the Suffolk Military Covenant website, in the service cards they produce for their events.

The **Veterans Gateway** (www.veteransgateway.org.uk) is a national resource supported by all the major military charities. It is a web portal that helps veterans to find the right support. Additionally, Suffolk has one of the few dedicated local covenant websites which promote activities and services that support our local armed forces community. The website includes Veterans Wellbeing and Welfare Support Groups alongside the five Veterans Breakfast Clubs in Suffolk. A full list of Armed Forces community engagement and support groups in Suffolk can be found at suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk

• SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW OUTLINED

On 4 November, the group looking into the implementation of the new school travel policy outlined the scope of their review. The review, which is being headed up by Chief Fire Officer Mark Hardingham, will be delivered in two phases. In phase one the group will analyse a wide range of evidence from stakeholders about the implementation of the policy to determine the lessons to be learned. Evidence will be gathered using various approaches including data analysis, document research, appeals evidence and outcomes, stakeholder group discussions, written statements and one-to-one interviews. The findings will then be put together in a report, which will draw conclusions and make recommendations.

In the second phase, the report will be reviewed. This may well lead to further work on changes to the implementation of the current School Travel Policy, or to elements of the Policy itself to ensure it operates more efficiently.

- **DIRECTOR OF MOBILITY CHAIR BUSINESS FOUND GUILTY**

A Suffolk business and its director, who failed to fulfil orders and refused to refund customers, have been successfully prosecuted by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards for a total of 31 offences. David Waters, sole director of Anchor Mobility Limited, appeared at Ipswich Crown Court for a three-week trial, which started on Thursday 10 October 2019. The jury were unanimous in finding Anchor Mobility Ltd and Mr Waters guilty on 30 counts, and by a majority of eleven to one on the remaining count. The sentencing hearing will be on 19 December 2019. Mr Waters was found guilty of offences including fraudulent trading under the Companies Act 2006, engaging in unfair commercial practices, multiple offences of misleading consumers by taking large deposits with the promise of delivering goods without doing so, and failing to refund consumers under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

Anchor Mobility Limited was a business set up to supply bespoke armchairs and beds targeting elderly and disabled consumers. One customer paid over £8,000 for two beds, which were never delivered, and no refund was ever received. Mr Waters was involved in two previous companies which supplied similar products and were also prosecuted by Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards.

In 2013, he pleaded guilty to nine consumer protection offences as a result of his involvement in Mobility UK Limited. He was sentenced to a financial penalty and was ordered to pay the costs of the prosecution. In 2015, Westminster Recliners Limited pleaded guilty to engaging in an aggressive commercial practice. Mr Waters had been their company secretary, but had all offences against him dropped.

Regarding the latest prosecution, Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards received several calls in relation to Anchor Mobility Ltd and accumulated 26 witnesses, an indication of the scale of this operation. It is calculated that the loss to customers is around £82,000. However, it is likely that many other people have made payments to Anchor Mobility Limited and not received their goods.

Local businesses also lost out to Anchor Mobility Limited, who built up a debt of over £20,000 for lease or rental payments over a six-month period. Mr Waters and his business were eventually locked out of their offices as a result. Furniture manufacturers also suffered by not being paid for products they had made, or lost time which was set aside for production.

Finally, can I wish you a relaxing Christmas and thank you for all your hard work in 2019

For further information from my report or questions please contact me at: stephen.burroughes@suffolk.gov.uk

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