



# Thedwastre North

## Sept 2019 Newsletter

### **Schools in Suffolk see an improvement in results across a range of subjects at GCSE level**

Self-reported results from Suffolk schools, released on 22 August, indicate an increase in students achieving higher grades.

This includes a 4% increase in pupils achieving at least a grade 5 in all elements of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) and a 7% increase in the number of students achieving a grade 4, when compared with the previous year.

The English Baccalaureate constitutes GCSEs in English and Maths plus GCSEs from the Sciences, Humanities and Languages. This is seen by the government as an important academic foundation for all pupils.

The self-reported figures also show an increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 4 in English and Maths. There has also been a 2-point increase in the attainment 8 figure for disadvantage pupils, which is likely to see disadvantage students exceed the national average when provisional results are released in October. Attainment 8 takes into account a pupil's overall results across a range of GCSEs.

More than 6,500 pupils in Suffolk were entered for GCSE exams, according to self-reported results collated from around 70% of schools.

The results are subject to validation by the Department for Education.

### **The Hold - preserving Suffolk's history for many years to come**

Building work on The Hold, the new home of the Suffolk record office, is now well underway. Whilst The Hold is primarily a record storing facility, it has so much more to offer. It will be a completely accessible space - once through its front doors there's no need for visitors to use steps or lifts. There will be a dedicated exhibition space which will host four specially curated exhibitions per year, to encourage both young and old to interact with Suffolk's culture and history. Most of these exhibitions will be replicated at our Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft Record Offices, but with a local twist to ensure that the whole county gets involved.

Exhibitions make up just a small portion of events that will be held in the building. A 200-seat tiered auditorium will primarily be used by the University of Suffolk but will also host conferences and talks by archivists. There is no other auditorium space with this capacity in Ipswich and it's hoped that it can also be used by the wider community.

Another first, not just for Ipswich but for the whole of the county is The Hold's thermal mass maintained strong room. This record storage facility spans an impressive 1650 cubic metres, spread over three floors. It will have enough space to store the records we currently hold in Suffolk and should also comfortably house further records for the next twenty years. Whereas many storage facilities rely on costly air conditioning systems to ensure records are stored at optimum temperatures, the design and construction of The Hold has resulted in it

being able to maintain this with minimal intervention. Not only will this save money, but it also helps work towards our goal of being the Greenest County.

It has already been demonstrated to be incredibly effective, as initial readings show air permeability test results of 0.18 @ 50 Pascal (50 N/m<sup>2</sup>). This is one of the lowest readings ever recorded and shows that the strong room's air leakage is well within the required standard of 0.5.

The last thing we want to do is put our records at risk, which is why there will still be rigorous dummy testing and a requirement of stable readings for at least eight weeks prior to the actual records being stored. Once safely housed, we'll want to ensure that no new records pose any danger to those already archived. That is why the site incorporates a 'Quarantine Room' where new records can be treated for insects, mould and any other conditions which could spread to existing collections.

The £20m project is on target for completion by Easter next year and is set to come in on budget. The building will be part of the University of Suffolk campus and will be run by the county and the University together.

### **Suffolk bucks the national trend for vaccine rates as the UK loses its 'measles free' status**

On 21 August it was revealed that national rates for the second MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine have now fallen to just 87.2 %. This is thought to have led to the large increase in measles cases in England and Wales in 2018 (991 compared to only 278 the previous year).

However, as a result of the hard work of local healthcare professionals and the engagement of parents, Suffolk continues to buck this trend. Vaccination rates in Suffolk at the end of March 2019 reached 94.5% for the first MMR dose (by 24 months of age) and 90.3% for the second booster dose (by 5 years of age).

### **Unsafe goods totalling £23 million detained at the Port of Felixstowe**

On 19 August, it was reported that nearly one million unsafe items have been prevented from entering the UK consumer market in the last year.

This is thanks to the work of Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards Imports Team at the Port of Felixstowe.

Products such as baby carriers, strollers, child car seats and electric hot plates have been detained recently. The baby carriers were found to have non-compliant labelling, an easily detachable label which becomes a choking hazard, and the leg openings were too wide meaning that a baby could fall out.

Four in five of the UK's consumer goods arrive in the UK by a container. Half of these enter via the Port of Felixstowe, making it the busiest entry point of its kind in the country.

Suffolk is one of the few authorities to host a dedicated Imports Team, which is directly funded by National Trading Standards. As well as protecting the public from unsafe items, the team's work also helps to protect legitimate businesses trying to compete on a level playing field.

## **Keeping Suffolk's villages safe with Lorry Watch**

On 13 August, it was reported that two new Lorry Watch schemes have launched. The scheme are aimed at reducing the number of HGV drivers ignoring weight restrictions on the county's roads.

The villages of Fornham All Saints (near Bury St Edmunds) and Barnham (near Thetford) join nine other similar schemes across Suffolk, set up in conjunction with Suffolk County Council's Trading Standards and Suffolk Highways. Local residents in Fornham All Saints and Barnham have been noticing HGV drivers regularly ignoring weight restrictions and wanted to do something about it.

Suffolk's Lorry Watch started in 2012 and to date has reported nearly 3,000 incidents of HGV vehicles exceeding weight limits, where clearly marked restriction signs are in place. Volunteers monitor their area and report suspected offenders.

The existing schemes have been a great success with only four repeat offenders being issued with a warning, meaning that drivers are taking notice when they are first contacted.

Lorry Watch has proved highly effective in reducing the number of HGVs travelling through restricted areas. We are grateful to the volunteers who report potential offenders to us, so that we can do our best to make sure our local communities and highways are kept safe. Anyone with concerns about HGVs ignoring restrictions in their community, should get in touch and consider a Lorry Watch scheme. Trading Standards can enforce weight restriction orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

If you are interested in joining Lorry Watch in an area in which HGVs are abusing a weight restriction, contact [lorrywatch@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:lorrywatch@suffolk.gov.uk) or 01473 264859 (option A).

## **A number of bus services to continue despite funding challenge**

On 31 July, it was reported that a number of bus services in the county will continue to run, despite a reduction in public funding coming into effect this autumn.

Since announcing in June 2019 that 23 routes were at risk, Suffolk County Council has been working with operators and communities to find solutions to the funding challenge. The council is pleased to confirm that permanent solutions have been found for two services and a further five will continue to run until at least the end of March 2020. Conversations are also being taken forward about a further four routes that the council is hopeful can continue to be served in some way.

The council has secured £24,000 in extra grant money to extend the 387, 456, 112, 120 and 461 services until the end of next March. The 456 runs through Westhorpe. Operators, local communities and councillors in the areas served by these routes are actively working to find alternatives to keep the services running. This extension allows them time to find permanent solutions.

The criteria developed by the cross-party group to identify at risk services takes into account passenger numbers, subsidy per single ticket and integration with other services. It also considers the number of entitled students using the service and percentage of journeys made by concessionary pass holders. A full list of the affected routes and solutions is published on the [Suffolk on Board](#) website.

Jane Storey  
1<sup>st</sup> September 2019