



# The Wastre North December 2020



Visit [suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.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](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Current infection rates and pressure on county's hospitals among reasons for Suffolk entering tier two restrictions

Suffolk's current COVID infection rates, local hotspots and pressure on hospitals are among the reasons why the county entered Tier 2 restrictions on 2nd December.

Suffolk has so far seen comparatively lower levels of infection than elsewhere in the region and country. The infection rate is still higher than anyone would wish and parts of Suffolk, especially in Ipswich and Hadleigh, are seeing much higher numbers of positive COVID cases and this puts pressure on Suffolk's hospitals, which need to protect Suffolk's vulnerable residents whilst still treating non-COVID patients. The recent news about a COVID vaccine shows us clearly that there is light at the end of this tunnel.

From Wednesday 2 December 2020, there are new lockdown rules and these can be found on the Suffolk County Council website or by following the web address:-

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolks-response/tier-2-high-alert-level-covid-19-restrictions-in-suffolk/>

Everyone is encouraged to work from home and limit their journeys where possible.

It is important that we try to stick to these rules – then we will hope to become Tier 1 for Christmas!

## **Suffolk County Council delivers its largest digital care support project in record time**

Suffolk County Council has successfully delivered over 750 Carephone devices to elderly and vulnerable people, both in and outside of formal care settings, to help them, their families and care providers stay in touch during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Carephone service is provided through the Alcove Video Carephone, a simple communication device that allows people with little or no technological ability to have two-way video contact with care workers, family members and other approved service providers. The project also delivered comprehensive training to both the user and their care providers on how to get the most use from this new technology.

This technology is helping to keep families connected, easing the pain of separation that all families have felt at some point since the pandemic started. It also provides essential welfare reassurance for the family and is helping to reduce incidents of poor mental health on both sides of the call. There are indications that this technology can have a positive, measurable impact on loneliness in older and vulnerable people.

The technology has also helped maintain and enhance the communication between care giver and care receiver. The benefits of this project continue to be felt and have provided clear insight into using this technology to improve care outcomes, especially over the coming winter.

There is an infographic that explains how this works and I can send it to anyone that is interested.

## **Home, But Not Alone phonenumber goes live again**

The Home, But Not Alone free phonenumber, which supports vulnerable people in our communities who may be struggling with the impact of Coronavirus, went live again on 3 November.

The phonenumber helped thousands of people and families access emergency support such as food and medicine deliveries and befriending schemes during the previous lockdown period.

The telephone number is freephone **0800 876 6926** and is staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

This Home, But Not Alone phonenumber complements The Suffolk Advice and Support Service phonenumber (**0800 068 3131**) which helps those with debt, benefits, employment, or housing worries. This phonenumber, also delivered by the Collaborative Communities Covid-19 Board, is staffed by the Citizens Advice, Anglia Care Trust and Ipswich Housing Action Group.

## **Locality Budgets**

We have only 5 months until the County Council elections in May. There will be a 6 week moratorium period before the election. Some parishes have bids in to the Locality Budget process and these are being processed. The budgets will not be carried over so I would request that bids are put in as soon as possible. At the moment the SCC website is not showing an up to date figure but I believe that there is around £2,600 left to be spent.

## **County Council 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

There were three motions to be debated and some reports to be brought before the council members. The Annual Public Health report is available as a digital download – as are all the reports – from the council webpages. I was particularly pleased to support the call from Cllr Sarah Adams and Cllr Penny Otton to bring the Home to School policy to the new Education and Childrens Services Scrutiny Committee when it is established after May 2021.

Jane Storey

4<sup>th</sup> December 2020