



January 2021 Monthly Parish Newsletter

HANDS **FACE** **SPACE**

#StickWithItSuffolk

[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

As of Monday 4 January, Suffolk is in line with national Covid-19 Restrictions – Moving into a national lockdown. Testing capacity has increased in response to demand.

More than one third of Suffolk's total confirmed coronavirus cases were recorded in the last two weeks, government data has shown.

A total of 15,643 people have tested positive for the virus in the county as of January 2 – with 5,321 people testing positive from December 20 to January 2, making up 34% of all cases recorded in Suffolk by that point.

While the figures show cases are significantly on the rise, testing has vastly increased in recent months when compared to the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic. Mobile testing has increased countywide, while a walk-in test centre has also opened at Portman Road, Ipswich, alongside the permanent test centre at Copdock.

Support payments available for those told to self-isolate on low incomes

As of the 24th December, more residents on low incomes or benefits can now get financial help if they are told to self-isolate due to COVID-19.

Previously Test and Trace Support payments could only be given to people meeting certain criteria, including on benefits. Now Councils across Suffolk have extended this, using their discretion, to help those on low incomes but not on benefits.

Councils across Suffolk are helping administer the Government grant scheme to help people remain at home and do their bit to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Details about the Test and Trace Support Payments can be found on District and Borough Council websites and how to apply for it (**see below**). This is part of a range of measures that councils across Suffolk have introduced to support communities and businesses during the coronavirus pandemic.

Those who are eligible will need to meet all the following criteria:

- You have been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace on or after 28 September 2020.
- You have responded to your notification from the NHS Test and Trace and engaged with the service by providing the legally required information.
- You are employed or self-employed.
- You cannot work from home and will lose income as a result.
- You are currently receiving at least one of the following benefits: Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit, OR (under the new discretionary powers) you have a household income of less than £37,400 (couple or single parents) or £19,200 (single person) and have savings of less than £3,000.
- You made your application within 14 days of the last day of your NHS test and trace self-isolation period.

Applicants should ensure that they have the below information available before starting the application:

- NI number
- Your 8-digit test and trace ID number
- Your most recent bank statement, proof of self-employment or wage slips

Visit your District or Borough Council websites for details on how to apply for the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment:

- Babergh District Council: [babergh.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/](https://www.babergh.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/)
- Mid Suffolk District Councils [midsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/](https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/benefits/coronavirus-money-and-benefits-advice/)

Additional help, including financial aid, is also available from Suffolk Support and Advice Service. This additional help is available for those facing financial difficulty or needing support – especially for those who have never asked for help before. On 1 October 2020, the Suffolk Support and Advice Service phonenumber was launched to help people across the county access information or support relating to debt, benefits, housing or employment.

People can contact the Suffolk Support and Advice Service on 0800 068 3131 between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday or go to: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/suffolk-advice-and-support-service/>

Suffolk 2020 fund projects to deliver over £2.5 million in new community-focused initiatives across the county

On the 18th December, seven new projects were announced as part of the Suffolk 2020 fund to support residents and improve the county for years to come.

As part of the council's investment in Suffolk's communities and its ongoing commitment to protecting the environment, the authority launched a special one-off fund in March with the aim of setting up and delivering a range of initiatives and projects that provide a positive, tangible impact in what has proven to be an extremely challenging year.

The announced initiatives and projects are as followed:

New booking system and automatic number plate recognition at Household Waste Recycling Centres – Improving the efficiency and customer experience across all 11 recycling centres by enhancing the online booking system using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) and automated entry barriers.

Adult Digital Learning - Developing new virtual learning tools and techniques and setting up a laptop loan scheme to strengthen and extend access to the Adult Learning Service for those living in digital and/or rural isolation. This approach will enable people to enhance their knowledge and skills to secure employment. Building on the swift switch to virtual learning during lockdown, we will further develop virtual learning for adults across Suffolk and use new technologies to enrich and improve the quality of interaction and training, modernising the service's offer.

Youth Work - Developing and supporting growth of grass roots organisations to deliver accessible, high quality provision for youths across Suffolk. Includes creation of a virtual 'Centre of Excellence' to share best practice and provide a 'one stop shop' of support for youth groups across Suffolk.

Discovering Suffolk – raising awareness of Suffolk's countryside and the county's rights of way network, promoting local (Covid-safe) outdoor activities across all of Suffolk with the development of a smartphone outdoor app and QR codes to engage new audiences.

Automated Numberplate Recognition Speed Indicators – Devices will be installed at the roadside to tackle localised problems with speeding drivers. The devices will be periodically moved between sites of concern and the data will be forwarded to the Police to assist with targeted enforcement.

Virtual Reality therapy - Engagement and coproduction with people living with dementia and their carers to explore and develop interactive and therapeutic experiences to support wellbeing. These would be delivered through mobile virtual reality headsets and include bespoke content and interactions based around archive media of Suffolk.

Mobile Community 'Care Hubs' - Digitally equip and staff selected community vehicles accessing rural communities within Suffolk. This will support digital inclusion and provide a way to share information and provide help around the opportunities available with care technologies and other digital skills.

The work involved in setting up and enabling these projects will begin in early 2021, setting in motion a range of new community projects that will benefit people for years to come. The council's agreement to move forwards with these exciting projects listed above follows the

successful launch of the first three Suffolk 2020 projects that were announced over recent months:

EV Vehicle Charging Points – Making grants available to install around 100 vehicle charging points throughout the county. Particularly targeting rural areas and sites owned and managed by not-for-profit organisations such as Parish Councils, village halls, sports clubs, libraries and charities.

Tree Planting - Increasing tree cover, through rural and urban planting schemes, planting approximately 100,000 trees over the next 18 months, establishing 'healing woodlands' to remember those lost to Covid-19, and increasing biodiversity along roadside verges.

Quiet Lanes - Encouraging the use of non-motorised vehicles and more considerate driving at lower speeds along a range of the community's self-selected rural lanes, with a view to adding 200 new lanes across Suffolk.

Help shape guidance for new housing developments in Suffolk

On the 17th December, Suffolk County Council launched the Suffolk Design: Streets Guide, and is asking members of public for feedback in shaping new residential developments (details below).

The Streets Guide is part of the Suffolk Design initiative which is where District and Borough planning authorities and the County Council are working together to improve the design criteria and guidance for new developments across the county.

The guide seeks to draw together national policies, guidance and other best practice and set within the Suffolk context. It covers more than just technical standards for roads, as requirements for footpaths, cycleways, utilities, sustainable drainage are also set out.

Councillor Andrew Reid, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Rural Affairs, said:

"The Suffolk Design: Streets Guide sets out a different approach that focuses on the needs of all users rather than designing for motorised traffic first. By doing this, the opportunities for walking and cycling can be designed into and surrounding new developments and not treated as afterthoughts.

"The new guidance seeks to help designers and all local councils to understand and plan for streets that support sustainable travel, that are attractive places yet easy to maintain, and that reflect Suffolk's heritage and landscape."

Councillor Richard Rout, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Public Protection, said:

"I welcome this update to the existing guidance. Our streets function in many different ways, not just for cars to pass along or park. Streets are also places where people meet, where trees and other plants grow and how energy is conveyed for our homes and businesses.

"All these different elements need careful consideration as we look forward to a low carbon future and adapt to climate change."

The consultation is open until **5pm on Wednesday 10 February 2021**. Members of the public can take part by visiting, www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolkstreets.

Green light given for Council's new housing joint venture company

On the 9th December, Suffolk County Council's Cabinet gave the go ahead to create a joint venture company to lead new housing developments on some of its own land.

Since 2019 the county council, as a major landowner in Suffolk (the 3rd biggest in the County), has been investigating how it can do more with its own assets to support district and borough councils in their role as strategic housing authorities, boost the supply of much needed housing in the county and ensure more of its land is being used to create social value within communities.

The decision follows months of detailed preparation, which saw strategic real estate advisor Avison Young and multinational law firm Pinsent Masons appointed by Concertus Design and Property Consultants Ltd; the Service Delivery Group of the council's Corporate Property Division. Their role was to consider delivery and viability options for a range of potential sites across the county with a view to consider how best to bring each forward for development.

As part of this appointment, and in accordance with the original decision of Cabinet in January, the newly appointed advisors also assessed the option of creating a new joint venture company to manage development of the largest potential sites. A business plan for the joint venture was presented to a meeting of Suffolk County Council's Cabinet on the 16th where it was agreed to proceed to the next phase.

Councillor Nick Gowrley, Cabinet Member for Housing said:

"This is an important milestone for our housing approach, and I wish to thank Avison Young and Pinsent Masons for their work in pulling this comprehensive business case together. Whilst this new joint venture will represent a major part of bringing forward specific land assets for development, it will still only be one part of our overall approach to housing. Those sites not considered suitable for the joint venture, due to size or scheme objectives, will be developed in more traditional ways, such as by sale to a local housing developer."