

EAST SUFFOLK COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Stephen Burroughes – February 2021



• COVID - FIGURES AND INFORMATION

As of the 27 January there have been 25,142 total lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. In total there have been 3,302.3 cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. This is the lowest overall COVID-19 case rate in the East of England.

District case rate as of 6 January 2021:

Area name	Daily Cases reported	Weekly Cases reported	Weekly case rate*	Wk on wk trend*	Cumulative cases	Cumulative case rate	National Rate Rank (of 315)
Babergh	18	190	240.1	↓	3,437	3734.40	261
East Suffolk	58	604	278.6	↓	7,359	2950.00	291
Ipswich	60	486	368.1	↓	6,219	4542.30	205
Mid Suffolk	15	228	253.1	↓	2,808	2702.70	298
West Suffolk	51	476	277.0	↓	5,319	2970.80	290
Suffolk	202	1,984	286.2	↓	25,142	3,302.3	
East of England	2,467	21,821	396.6	↓	329,696	5,286.9	
England	22,914	190,545	386.6	↓	3,248,215	5,770.8	

A new national lockdown in England began on Wednesday 6th January for an indeterminate period. The national COVID-19 alert tiers are suspended while the national lockdown is in place. In the week to the 27th of January there were 1,984 new lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Suffolk. This number has fallen compared to the previous week.

The underlying rate of new weekly cases in Suffolk has noticeably decreased and is now at 286.2 cases per 100,000 people. This rate remains below the rates for the East of England region (396.6 / 100,000) and for England as a whole (386.6/ 100,000).

• VACCINATIONS – THE TRUTH

Unfortunately, criminals continue to use COVID-19 as a way of exploiting people, whether to get personal information or even money. Important information to remember and share:

- COVID-19 vaccinations from the NHS are free
- Anyone contacting you regarding a real NHS COVID-19 vaccination booking will never ask for payment or bank details, ask you to press a button on your keypad when on the phone, or ask you to send a text to confirm the booking
- Health professionals will never arrive unannounced at your door to administer vaccines
- If you are concerned if a call, text or email is genuinely from the NHS, hang up or do not respond to the message and confirm details by contacting your local GP surgery.
- A reminder that door-to-door sales and traders are not permitted during lockdown

How to report a scam:

- If you receive a suspicious call, hang up immediately. You can report it to Suffolk Trading Standards/Citizens Advice consumer service on 0808 223 1133
- If you receive a suspicious email, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk
- If you receive a suspicious text message, forward it to 7726 (free of charge)
- If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identity theft, report this directly to Action Fraud either online actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040
- If you have any information relating to vaccine fraud you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting Crimestoppers COVID Fraud Hotline online covidfraudhotline.org or call 0800 587 5030

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Suffolk, visit www.sneevaccine.org.uk

• **SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES & RESIDENTS**

There have been 13 referrals through Home But Not Alone in the last seven days. The focus of the Communities Team this week has been on packing our East (Everyone Active, Supported, Together) Bags. These are aimed at older people who live alone and are potentially isolated and lonely. The Bags include resistance bands and exercise cards, a water bottle, a reusable hand warmer, a specially compiled puzzle book, recipe card and ingredients, freezer boxes, face mask, face wash, wellbeing CD, seeds and food and drink treats kindly provided by Adnams.

We are working with community response groups and voluntary sector organisations to get them out into our communities. We are also seeking nominations at communities@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

Work is ongoing on pro-active calls to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, with 'Keep In Touch' calls to those who are socially isolating and work to support our community response groups, including with funding through the Covid-19 Community Fund

• **ENGAGEMENT WITH BUSINESSES & INDIVIDUALS**

Arrangements have been with the police to do joint monitoring visits to places based on intelligence from complaints and from follow up work. This approach brings us together in areas where the local authority and police have separate enforcement powers under the health protection regulations. Local authority powers relate to restrictions and requirements for business and police powers relate to individuals eg the wearing of face coverings and limits on gatherings of people.

A recent mailshot letter that went to over 400 supermarkets and other retailers in East Suffolk telling them about local concerns and asked them to review procedures and ensure measures are adhered to.

• **OPERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

The journey to find a new operator for the 'new look' Waveney Valley Leisure Centre in Bungay and Water Lane in Lowestoft has been completed. The procurement process but had to be paused earlier in 2020 due to the impact of the Covid pandemic & the first lockdown following govt guidance which clearly put all leisure operators nationally into a very challenging period and thus were not in a position to respond to the invitation to tender. The process was subsequently restarted in September 2020 with

a closing date in November. Due to the 'gap' between the ending of the previous contract in October and the appointment of a new operator due for February 2021, a temporary interim situation for maintaining these two assets was undertaken.

Following the closure of the tender process, we received very strong bids from very high level professional national operators. Following a full evaluation and scoring process by specialists covering Finance, Leisure, IT & digital project management, the criteria for which was very precise, a successful operator was identified and will be running these 2 sites from 1st March 2021 through to 31st March 2029 when all leisure facilities across East Suffolk will be put out to tender eventually resulting in high quality consistent services being delivered across the whole of East Suffolk. Clearly it has been a very challenging time with the closure and impact of the pandemic on our services, but we have managed to complete the process during this time which is a recognition of the skill and hard work of the officer team.

We have been, as we always do, working alongside our major partners during the challenges of 2020 and as it continues into 2021 dealing with the complexities and challenges of running the services, both with Places Leisure who operate of leisure facilities, and within the JV (joint venture) with have with East Suffolk Norse both of which do an amazing job.

It has been extremely vital that we have kept operatives and staff safe and continue to be able to deliver as full a service as possible and build in contingencies where appropriate. All the teams have responded well under some very difficult and challenging circumstances. The operational costs across our partners are closely monitored and the impact of changes undertaken to their working arrangements are continually monitored to ensure they are continually 'Covid Safe'.

Clearly, in respect of leisure staff, many have been furloughed and redeployed under the current arrangements and this is reflected on their balance sheets. We long for the day when we can resume a normal and comprehensive service offer, and there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Cllr Stephen Burroughes

Member for the Kelsale & Yoxford Ward

Cabinet Member for Customer Services, ICT & Operational Partnerships

Twitter @CllrStephenB

