

Report for Parish Council meeting 20 April 2020

Coronavirus 19

I have been sending the Parish Councils in the Debenham ward many of the updates, as I have been receiving them, with regard to the ongoing activities and statistics which are provided by government, Suffolk County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council.

I wanted to personally thank each and everyone of you in the Parish of Debenham for all the care, kindness and support you are all offering from the Parish Council, the shopkeepers, businesses and volunteers who have sprung into action delivering food and medicines to old and vulnerable people. Not to be forgotten are those neighbours who are just getting on with it and being neighbourly and helping and the young people who are picking up fish and chip lunches and suppers and delivering them to those not fortunate enough to be able to get out and about, and finally all those people who are staying at home. You are all doing your bit admirably. Thank you.

I too am self isolating but am carrying on with Council business and have arranged for a substantial sum of money to be sent to the Debenham Parish Council to help towards their project of distribution of food parcels for the needy and those struggling in these difficult times. This wonderful set up with Richard Blackwell, Jane Baldwin and the many volunteers and businesses also stretches to our outlying villages in our Parish of Aspall, Ashfield- cum -Thorpe, Bedingfield, Kenton and Winston and volunteers are springing up in those villages, even large bags of potatoes have been put out for people to help themselves to what they need.

There are many initiatives with collaborative working between all the Councils, District and County and I would suggest you all take a look on the updates and information contained on all those websites but here are a few initiatives which have been going on at Mid Suffolk District Council.

Urgent action has been taken for Rough Sleepers in the District and with his delegated powers the Chief Executive has authorised a hotel in Stowmarket to be funded for these unfortunate people.

Key foodbanks have been supported and MSDC has contributed £3000 which is in addition to any funding for local initiatives

Home but not alone – the Tribe app has recently been launched to connect people who need support with volunteers. Help for the most vulnerable they can ring 0800 876 6926 and phones are being manned between 9 – 5. On average they receiving up to 250 calls a day.

Many of MSDC staff have been working different hours to cover these and other emergency phones both over the weekends and the recent Easter Weekend.

All council car parks will be free to park until further notice but please note the car parking enforcement has now passed to Councils and Babergh and MSDC will use a pragmatic approach during the current pandemic crisis but that does not mean people should disregard the law and current parking restrictions

Garden waste collections have been suspended and all other services, particularly the collecting of dog waste, continues. The main bin collections will be reviewed as necessary. As a point of interest normally 80 million Easter Eggs are purchased nationally and along with cards this produces over 8000 tons of waste. I wonder what this year will have produced?

The Public realm team have withdrawn grounds maintenance for the time being but will be reviewed. Staff have been put onto other jobs and redeployed to help SERCO. Prior to the

shutdown in the month of March there were 28 incidents of fly tipping in Mid Suffolk and were all cleared within 48 hours. In Babergh included in their 20 reported incidents two truck loads of tyres and a caravan with a broken axle (because it was full of further tyres) were all dumped at Great Cornard. If you are out an about on your daily exercise please do report any such incidents

Planning – now I am sure many of you are wondering what has been happening or will happen. Well many cases have been reviewed and with the CEO delegated powers some cases have been settled with the input from myself as Chair of Planning A and chair of Planning B and the CEO and the Chief Planning Officer, Philip Isbell and some have been deemed to be suitable to be dealt with under delegated powers by the Planning Officers. So Planning matters have been proceeding

All, official and legal guidance can be found on the MSDC website for those powers. However there are still those cases which will still need to be hear by committee and I will be chairing the first Virtual Planning Committee in two weeks time. All relevant parties will have the correct and appropriate time to speak and the councillors will be able to debate within our Skype meeting. It will be daunting but with all the back up and legal support I am sure we will come to a satisfactory decision on those applications. None of which are for Debenham or surrounding area. I will let you know as and when anything does come to the fore.

As I have been typing I can advise you that I have secured £5000 for the initiative for the food parcels and volunteering in Debenham and surrounding villages and this will be sent out very shortly.

A final note please stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Thank you

Mrs Kathie Guthrie

District Councillor for Debenham Ward

01728 861752