

February 2022 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Suffolk proudly supports Register my Appliance Week

Residents are urged to make their homes safer by registering their appliances. We all rely hugely on our fridges, washing machines and microwaves for keeping our busy lives on track, but would your appliance manufacturer know which machines you have and where to find you if a fault came to light with your model? The answer is 'no' for some 100 million appliances, according to recent research. But this could all be remedied by people taking a few minutes to register their much-loved items. To mark Register My Appliance Week – Suffolk County Council is urging the public to register their many treasured appliances that, unlike our cars, are still off the radar if a free safety repair is ever needed. This is more important than ever, as it's estimated that we are now running over 212 million essential appliances to cook, wash clothes and dishes, clean floors and store our food. While the recent increase in online purchasing (reportedly soaring as high as 70%) and the advent of smart appliances will all help to improve traceability, research found that 49% of us have never registered a product, leaving millions of large and mid-sized older machines totally untraceable. As part of the Fire Kills Campaign, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, along with Suffolk Trading Standards, is encouraging people to make their homes safer by registering machines at registermyappliance.org.uk. We all aim to keep our appliances running efficiently for many years, benefitting both our wallets and the environment. This places an important emphasis on the maintenance and registration of machines – helping them to last longer, whilst also ensuring the safety of users. Registering an appliance can be easily done regardless of whether this was already in situ at a property when you moved in, bought second-hand, or installed many years ago, as you don't need to have a receipt or know exactly when the item was first purchased. Register My Appliance is a web portal developed by the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) to improve ownership data by making it quicker and easier for householders to register old and new appliances. Offering access to over 60 of the nation's leading brands, the vast majority of manufacturers on the site welcome registration of products up to 12 years old or even older. Handy tips guide the user through how to find the important model details, meaning all the user needs to supply is their name and address. This data then goes directly to the manufacturer for use exclusively in case of a recall. To increase safety and the life of appliances the Register My Appliance portal also offers: A listing of appliance safety repairs and recalls; Hints and tips on household safety; Recommendations for appliance care.

Keeping Suffolk safe from scams

As we find ourselves nearly midway through February, many of us will be having varying degrees of success with sticking to our New Year's resolutions, be these moving more, learning a new language or giving healthy eating a go. Of course, one of the most important resolutions that we should all hold is to stay savvy about scams throughout 2022 and beyond. These are, unfortunately, on the rise. Action Fraud received 413,553 reports of fraud in the UK between April 2020 and March 2021; an increase of 33% from the previous year. More than £2.3 billion was lost by victims as a result, although this is likely to just be the tip of the iceberg, as many will have felt too scared or ashamed to report and others will be completely unaware that they have been duped. Some of the rise in cases of fraud can be directly attributed to scammers capitalising on Covid, with new cons cropping up even now, almost two years into the pandemic. Scams include texts, emails, or phone calls supposedly from the NHS or your GP, requesting payment for the Covid-19 vaccination or the Covid-19 Pass. Although these can often appear genuine, the NHS will never ask you to pay for the vaccine or Pass, or to provide your bank account or card details. Our Trading Standards team have also received reports of fraudsters selling face coverings or hand sanitiser online which either never arrives or, worse still, doesn't comply with safety standards. Whilst internet shopping has been a lifeline for many during the pandemic, care should be taken when making any purchases online. Beat

the cyber crooks by only shopping at reputable retailers and doing your research first; try to make sure that they're legitimate if you haven't purchased anything online from them previously. This can be done by using independent review websites such as Trust Pilot: uk.trustpilot.com to search for customer feedback on a retailer before buying anything from them. Paying for items using a credit card is another great way to help you shop safely, as any individual item costing over £100 and up to £30,000 will be covered by section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act. This means that the credit card company has equal responsibility (or 'liability') with the seller if there's a problem with your purchase or the company you've bought it from fails. It's also worth remembering that if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Further advice on scams currently being seen in Suffolk is available on Trading Standards' Facebook page (www.facebook.com/SuffolkTradingStandards) and Twitter account (twitter.com/SuffolkTS) so if you're not already doing so, give them a follow, as this could prevent you from falling victim to fraudsters. If you want to stop others from being scammed, sign up to become a Friend Against Scams at: www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/. This will empower you to spot the signs of scams and take a stand against these. It doesn't require much of your time and will help to protect not just you and your loved ones, but also the wider community – making it the perfect way to give something back this year. Although scams may be on the rise, if we all work together, we can stop fraudsters in their tracks and ensure that Suffolk continues to be a safe place that everyone is proud to call home.

Suffolk County Council waives fees for Platinum Jubilee events

It was announced on January 18th that to mark the celebration of Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, SCC will be waiving street party road closure fees. On Sunday 6 February 2022, Her Majesty the Queen will celebrate her Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service. To celebrate this milestone, events will be taking place across the Country, particularly over the four-day Bank Holiday weekend, between 2 and 5 June 2022. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours.

For all events on Sunday 5 June 2022, which is being referred to nationally as the 'Big Jubilee Lunch', Suffolk County Council will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures. The following website has been set up for those who are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent>.

As part of the main criteria for a road to be closed, the road must be residential with no through traffic (i.e. a cul-de-sac or traffic not able to access another road from the event road, etc.) and only resident traffic will be affected. To be allocated traffic management to assist with an event, all applications must be received before 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022. Traffic management will consist of 5 traffic cones, 1 road closure sign and an advance warning sign, which may be delivered to the chosen drop off point, up to Thursday 2 June 2022. If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 27 March 2022, these may still be processed. However, SCC cannot cover the costs of traffic management for the event, nor will Suffolk County Council be able to provide any form of traffic management equipment. This is due to possible supply chain constraints and other operational demands. For full details, including street party event criteria, information on insurance and licences, please ensure you visit this link <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/PlatinumJubileeEvent> If you have any queries, please contact SCCs Customer Services team on 0345 606 6171 or email customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk

Find more information on how to get involved in celebrating Her Majesty's historic reign, at platinumjubilee.gov.uk. This is a prestigious achievement for Her Majesty the Queen. To help celebrations get underway, I am glad that we will be waiving fees for the events on Sunday 5 June, allowing communities to come together across Suffolk, whether it be a small gathering in a local street, or a larger event, organised by town or parish councils.

Council's Net Zero ambitions aim high with first-ever full carbon budget

On January 24th SCC published proposals for its first-ever full carbon budget, as it strives to be a Net Zero organisation by 2030. Inaugural full carbon budget to be presented alongside financial budget Policy to enhance biodiversity across 30% of Suffolk County Council's estate.

The Net Zero Carbon Budget will allow the council to measure its carbon emissions, and monitor and evaluate the impact of decisions it makes. This will mean it can report each year on its progress, tracking its ambitions towards Net Zero. There are many activities which the council will monitor, from the energy used powering its buildings to the miles travelled by council workers, from the waste it disposes to the fuel used to run buses and gritters. This is an historic budget – the first full budget of its kind that the council has ever produced. Becoming a Net Zero organisation by 2030 is incredibly ambitious, but I'm committed to doing everything we can to realise that vision. It is incredibly challenging to have an exact figure for every last gram of CO₂ that the council emits. But our officers have worked incredibly hard to collate data so far, giving us a baseline against which we can measure our future emissions. We'll continue to improve how we gather this data so that we can see our progress to Net Zero by 2030. The pandemic has also changed many of our routines, not least around travel and working from home. During 2021/22 we estimate that council workers saw a reduction of about 1.5 million miles commuting in their own vehicles, and around 1,800 working weeks of driving. We will continue to learn as we look to new ways of working at the council. SCC recently announced a £12.8 million investment to begin decarbonising the buildings that it owns, reducing emissions and making them cheaper to run. We have a history of providing dedicated investment to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and services. This has led to reductions in carbon emissions in recent years, through projects such as replacing fossil fuel boilers with bio-mass units, installing solar panels and solar hot water systems, rainwater harvesting, updating lighting and improving insulation.

Growing Suffolk's Biodiversity

Proposals have also been published which would see SCC enhance the biodiversity value of at least 30% of its land and assets by 2030. It would also see the council working with partners, communities and landowners to help substantially reverse the decline of biodiversity across Suffolk. The proposed policy is a result of the work undertaken by the Policy Development Panel (PDP) which was set up in July 2021. We want to grow Suffolk's biodiversity, using our role as a significant landowner and as the highway authority to help wildlife to thrive and to support nature's recovery. We want to extend the great work already going on through our protected landscapes and projects, such as our Roadside Nature Reserves, to increase habitats and species across the county. We will ensure we manage our highway verges for biodiversity wherever we can and support our county farm tenants to enhance biodiversity across our farm estate, as we have done through planting around twenty kilometres of mixed species hedgerows over the last two years. We will also deliver twice the biodiversity net gain required through our housing programme and work with our partners and local communities to enhance biodiversity on our properties. There is a clear link with our Net Zero ambitions for the county, with Suffolk's nature being an integral part of the carbon cycle. I want to ensure that the council is doing everything it can to support nature in the fight to slow climate change, and to show leadership in Suffolk in the way that we look after our natural environment. The policy proposal includes ambitions which stretch across the whole organisation, from looking at how it manages highway trees to the impact of street lighting, from how it procures goods and services to the potential nature-based flood management solutions. The Net Zero Carbon Budget proposal will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022 and discussed at the Full Council meeting on 17 February 2022. The Biodiversity PDP proposal will be presented at the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2022 and can be immediately implemented if agreed.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk