

County Councillor's Report to Great Waldingfield Parish Council Monday 17th May 2021

Covid-19 Rapid Testing Centres

The County Council has worked closely with the NHS to facilitate the opening of 28 centres across Suffolk to provide lateral flow tests.

For Great Waldingfield residents, the most local site has been the Stevenson Centre in Great Cornard from 7am – 2pm (excluding Wednesdays and Sundays). Due to the consistent decline in covid-19 rates, this site will close on 28th May.

Tree-planting and Hedgerow Replenishment

£228,000 has been allocated from the Suffolk 2020 Fund to promote biodiversity across the county, through a number of new schemes as well as building on existing work.

Working with The Woodland Trust, Suffolk Tree Wardens, landowners, and county farm tenants, the funding will support the planting of around 100,000 trees, including replanting hedgerows in suitable locations across Suffolk over the next 18 months. Local volunteers will be supported to collect seeds, set up nursery beds and grow trees in their communities.

In March, I enjoyed a tour of Great Waldingfield's Branchlines woodland and saw at first hand how such projects can benefit local communities. I will seek to bridge the link between the County Council and Branchlines, should local volunteers wish to participate in the project.

Highways Drainage

In response to increased snowmelt and higher than average precipitation over the 2020/21 winter months, there has been a £2 million boost in funding to support the fight against flooding.

This is welcome news after the flooding sustained by Folly Road in February, which was subsequently resolved by my predecessor, Colin Spence, liaising with the local fire service.

Electric Vehicle Charging Points Funding Boost

In September 2020, it was announced, following a £300,000 funding award, that 100 fast charging points for electric vehicles will be installed in rural parts of the county by Suffolk County Council.

The fast-charging points supplied by Plug In Suffolk do not require any registration, membership or apps - drivers simply park, plug in and charge using contactless payment.

There have already been expressions of interest for charging points from around 20 suitable sites. Suffolk County Council have contacted parish councils to investigate more possible locations.

Quiet Lanes

The County Council's Quiet Lanes programme has gathered pace in the past year, with parish councils being invited to participate and submit proposed locations.

I was pleased to learn that Great Waldingfield Parish Council has responded to the programme and is investigating The Street, Rectory Lane and Upsher Green as potential routes.

Digital Care Support

On November 2020, it was announced that Suffolk County Council successfully delivered the largest digital care project in its history, from procurement to delivery in just 16 weeks.

Working alongside care technology specialists, 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 and winter months.

Better Broadband Suffolk

By June 2020, an additional 100,000 households across Suffolk were using faster broadband thanks to the council-led Better Broadband for Suffolk programme.

I will be collaborating with neighbouring County Councillor for Stour Valley, James Finch, to ensure that such projects are delivered to our more peripheral areas, such as Badley Road in Great Waldingfield.

The importance of this project is underpinned by the uptake in remote working opportunities following the pandemic.

Primary School National Offer Day

Since the last Great Waldingfield Annual General Meeting, it has been confirmed that 98.6% of Suffolk children were offered a place at one of the schools, including Great Waldingfield Primary School, preferred by their parents.

Some 7,116 children received offers for their first preference school and 7,493 children received an offer for one of their three preferred schools.

Philip Faircloth-Mutton
May 2021