

## **April 2023 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks**

### **98% of pupils receive a place at one of their preferred secondary schools on National Offer Day**

98% of children were offered a place on National Offer Day at one of their three preferred schools and 93% were offered a place at their first preference school. Suffolk County Council received 8,083 applications from parents and carers indicating which secondary school they would prefer their child to transfer to in September 2023. This is approximately 300 more applications than received last year. Families who applied online can log on to the Admissions Portal to see the school their child has been offered. They will also receive an email to confirm this offer. Letters will be sent to parents who made a paper application by second class post on 1 March 2023. Starting secondary school is a big step in a child's education so it is really positive that the vast majority of families have once again been offered a place at one of their preferred schools. Published criteria was used to decide who has priority for places so that the process is fair and clear. We do appreciate that not all families will have received a place at their preferred school. If a parent or carer's preference for a Suffolk school is refused, their child's name will automatically be added to the waiting list for that school. We will also advise them about how to lodge an appeal should they wish to do so. Once school places have been confirmed, parents and carers need to consider how their child will get to and from school. If their child is eligible for SCC funded school travel, they will receive an email by the end of March 2023 with details of how to opt-in.

Further information on secondary school admissions can be found at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions).

### **Fees waived for communities to celebrate His Majesty the King's Coronation**

To mark the celebration of His Majesty The King's Coronation, SCC has waived fees associated with applications to close roads for street parties and other local authority led public events. Charles III's coronation will take place at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May, where the King will be crowned alongside Camilla, the Queen Consort. This is the first coronation of a monarch in the UK since the late Queen's ceremony which was staged on June 2, 1953. Events will be taking place across the country, between 6 and 8 May 2023. This bank holiday gives communities and people throughout the UK the opportunity to come together and celebrate with their neighbours. Many of Suffolk's residents will also be giving up their time as volunteers to bring people together as part of The Big Help Out. For all events planned over the weekend, which is being referred to as The Coronation Big Lunch, SCC will not be charging fees normally associated with road closures for events. Similarly, to the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, if you are looking to organise a street party as a group of residents, or if you would like to apply as a local authority, for an event in a large public space, such as a park, you can view more information at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation) As part of the main criteria for a road to be closed, the road must be residential and not on A or B roads and/or those roads which have a bus route operating during the proposed event. To be allocated Traffic Management to assist organisers/residents with an event, all applications must be received before 11pm on Sunday 2 April 2023. Traffic management will consist of 4 traffic cones, 1 road closure sign, which may be collected from a local highway depot. An online booking system will be shared with those successful applications. If any applications are received after 11pm on Sunday 2nd April 2023, these may still be processed. However, SCC cannot cover the costs of Traffic Management for the event, nor will SCC 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 [www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Kings-coronation)

### **Children's expert brought in to strengthen council's focus on real-life experiences of children with special educational needs**

An independent special advisor has been commissioned to further strengthen reform of special educational needs and disabilities services (SEND). Well-respected senior leader in children's services, Anthony Douglas CBE, will work with SEND system leaders and networks to support the reforms already underway. He will draw on his years of experience to focus on how services are impacting upon the everyday experience of children and young people with SEND. The challenge of transforming the way we deliver SEND services is extremely complex. We can all agree that effective improvement is being felt in parts of the system – and it is reassuring that the Department for Education confirms that progress is being made. However, we also recognise that there are some areas, especially those lived experiences of families, where improvement is not being clearly felt. This is where Mr Douglas will add significant value and strengthen the existing work of the SEND team. My thanks go to staff who work tirelessly to improve our SEND services. In Chief Executive and Director roles for the last 20 years, Anthony Douglas has supported children and young people with SEND and their families, across health, care and education. He also carried out a major inquiry in 2020 within a local authority about inclusive education practices in schools and colleges. He works with organisations internationally about the service developments needed for children with special needs of all types, with a view to improving those services. Anthony has chaired the Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership since 2019. SEND services nationally are under phenomenal pressure and Suffolk is no exception. Mr Douglas will work with the council initially for six months.

### **Ipswich Re-use shop returns to Foxhall Recycling Centre**

The popular Re-use shop had temporarily moved out as part of the ongoing £7.8m refurbishment of the centre. A popular shop selling items diverted from Suffolk's recycling centres has moved back to its Ipswich home. The Re-use shop has re-opened at Foxhall Recycling Centre after temporarily relocating as part of a £7.8 million refurbishment of the complex. The new shop design at Foxhall makes it more accessible for customers and it will be the first thing the public will see when entering the site. It will have dedicated customer parking and more outside space, along with a canopy. The shop sells furniture, sports equipment, kitchen supplies, books, toys, and bric-a-brac, collected at the 11 recycling centres across Suffolk and which would otherwise have been disposed of as waste. Its average footfall was 1,500 a month and since the shop first opened in 2016 it has sold a total of 343,721 items, equivalent to 2,429 tonnes of material. There is a sister shop at the Bury St Edmunds site. The shops are run by local charity The Benjamin Foundation, which has been supporting young people in Suffolk and Norfolk for more than 25 years. The new shop is part of the £7.8 million refurbishment of Foxhall Recycling Centre.

### **Deadly heaters detained by Suffolk Trading Standards**

Over 300 electrical heaters have been detained at the Port of Felixstowe following the Imports Surveillance team discovering the products pose a serious risk of electrocution. Officers raised concerns about the heaters after finding that the grills used on them didn't require tools to open, meaning live and hazardous parts could be accessed by hand. The supply voltage requirements stated on the heaters were also incompatible with the UK power network, posing a danger of explosion or electric shock. We are all incredibly grateful to Suffolk Trading Standards for their continued work to protect consumers by intercepting harmful products at the port before these can enter the UK's marketplace. The popularity of electric heaters has increased significantly during rising energy costs, with a recent survey carried out by Electrical Safety First finding that 22% of respondents had purchased a heater during the past year, often from an online marketplace. Anyone who believes they may have purchased a dangerous heater should stop using it immediately and contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

### **Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division**

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