

July 2024 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Roadside signage

I have been allocated some limited funding for roadside signage repairs. If you have any you would like me to consider please email me the location so I can consider it. Please note this is a limited pot of funding.

Rogue trader plumber admits defrauding customers

A rogue Suffolk trader has admitted taking thousands of pounds from customers for work that was never carried out or which was sub-standard. Grant Phillips took a total of £23,511 from eleven customers between April 2021 and October 2023 while operating under three different names. Phillips traded as Superdry Plumbing & Drainage, Rhino Plumb and Plumb Fix, operating around East Anglia before being brought to justice in a prosecution by Suffolk Trading Standards. At Ipswich Magistrates Court on Monday June 3, he admitted fraudulent trading contrary to Section 9 of the Fraud Act 2006 - trading fraudulently by failing to provide materials for work or not completing projects.

The prosecution was brought by Suffolk Trading Standards after customers complained to the Citizens Advice Helpline and Action Fraud. The victims said payments were made to Phillips for home improvement projects that were not completed or were substandard, requiring expensive remedial work. Some victims were elderly and had commissioned home improvement projects to improve accessibility to bathroom facilities in their homes. Some were not able to afford to complete the project or have the work re-done for a lengthy period and one elderly victim found it difficult to trust another trader in her property. You are advised people to use the Suffolk Trusted Trader scheme when having work done. It is a business partnership scheme where participants have completed a full vetting process and agree to trade fairly under a Code of Practice.

For details go to trustedtrader.team/Suffolk/

Fire service urges people to stay safe this summer

With summer well and truly here, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service is asking everyone to be fire safety aware. Last summer firefighters from the service responded to more than 200 fires in the open, which includes woodland, heaths, farmland, and fields, between July and September. For the same period in 2022 there were 500 fires due to extreme temperatures which resulted in the service declaring a major incident for the first time in decades. While such incidents are thankfully rare, Suffolk's senior fire officer is asking people to stay vigilant and play their part in reducing the risk of fires.

Chief Fire Officer Jon Lacey said: "Hot, dry weather can result in tinderbox conditions and in a rural county such as Suffolk a fire can quickly take hold and spread in open areas.

"I would ask that everyone do what they can to prevent fires breaking out as so many incidents can be avoided by people taking just that little bit of extra care and thinking about what they are doing. "Please help us to help you and the wider community by preventing incidents from happening in the first place, reducing the chance of anyone being seriously injured or even killed in a fire."

During hot and dry weather, people are encouraged to:

- Put litter in the bin when out and about.
- Avoid barbecues and campfires in public open spaces.

- Ensure that any cigarettes are totally put out and disposed of properly.
- Pick up any glass items instead of leaving them lying around after a picnic.
- Report any fires in the countryside immediately by calling 999.
- Farmers are also urged to slow the spread of fires by storing hay and straw with a break between stacks and away from other buildings, especially those housing livestock or containing fuels and chemicals.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service has been working closely with the National Farmers Union and county-based agricultural machinery manufacturers to ensure effective team working and knowledge sharing. The service also recently provided training and advice at an NFU health and safety event. The service also offers Home Fire Safety Visits, which involves specialist staff and operational crews visiting Suffolk residents in their homes to provide bespoke fire safety advice, including designing a fire escape plan to help people safely evacuate their property in the event of a fire, and fitting smoke, carbon monoxide and sensory alarms. Fire safety information can be found on the Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/suffolk-fire-and-rescue-service

Blue Badge abuser prosecuted for misusing Blue Badge in Ipswich

Nurul Rahman, of Kelvin Road Ipswich, pleaded guilty on the 17/06/2024 at Ipswich Magistrates to wrongful display of a blue badge contrary to Section 117 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Published: 18 Jun 2024. Rahman was fined £153 and ordered to pay £1,000 in investigatory and legal costs, and £61 as a victim surcharge. On the 19/10/2023 a joint blue badge enforcement day was carried out in Ipswich by Suffolk County Council's Blue Badge Team and Counter Fraud Service; together with Ipswich Borough's Civil Parking Enforcement Team and Corporate Fraud Team. During the day, Officers came across Rahman who was parked at King Street, Ipswich displaying a blue badge issued by West Sussex County Council to a Hospice. During the inspection of the badge, Rahman stated to Officers that he worked for the Hospice who also operated in Ipswich and had dropped off a disabled person in town. This appeared unusual to Officers and the County Council's Fraud Service launched an investigation. Enquiries found that the Hospice do not operate in Suffolk, had no link to Rahman and only support children. The Hospice was also unaware their Blue Badge was being used in Suffolk.

The County Council works closely with the Suffolk District and Borough Councils to tackle blue badge misuse and protect the rights of disabled motorists, including undertaking investigations and prosecutions where appropriate. This prosecution sends a clear message that the misuse of a Blue Badge will not be tolerated in Suffolk. This is not a victimless crime. Illegally using a badge that isn't yours is denying a disabled parking space to those who have a genuine need for them. I would like to thank our Counter Fraud Team for their work alongside the district and borough councils in tackling Blue Badge misuse as part of our ongoing commitment to helping the people of Suffolk to live happy and independent lives.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

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