

District Councillor Report – January 2021

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| <p>Home but not alone relaunch</p> | <p>This service was paused in August because of low call demand and the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. However, in light of Today’s national lockdown, the service is now up and running again.</p> <p>The telephone number is freephone 0800 876 6926 and will be staffed from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.</p> <p>This phonenumber was absolutely vital during the first lockdown and it only right that the same support is on offer as we head into the next wave of lockdown. It helped thousands of people, who often didn’t have a network of family or friends to call upon, access emergency support such as food and medicine deliveries and befriending schemes. The success of the service relied on the amazing local networks that sprung up across towns and villages in Suffolk and looked after those most in need.</p> <p>This Home, But Not Alone phonenumber compliments The Suffolk Advice and Support Service phonenumber (0800 068 3131) which helps those with debt, benefits employment or housing worries. This phonenumber, also delivered by the Collaborative Communities Covid-19 Board, is staffed by the Citizens Advice Suffolk Alliance, which includes the eight Citizens Advice Bureaus across Suffolk, and Anglia Care Trust and Ipswich Housing Action Group. Call handlers use resources and information from across many Suffolk organisations and specialist providers, which can be tailored to individual needs.</p> |
| <p>Arts Centre Expansion</p> | <p>Mid Suffolk District Council’s Cabinet voted in favour of giving the John Peel Centre for Creative Arts a new long lease on 11 market place Stowmarket – providing the venue with a ‘front door’ on to the Town Centre to bring arts, leisure and entertainment to the town centre.</p> <p>The 40-year lease, at a peppercorn rent, will fulfil the council’s aim to revitalise the former bank site. It will also pave the way for the John Peel Centre to expand its offer as a cultural and community venue, as part of the broader Stowmarket Vision.</p> <p>The decision will create the right conditions for the town to grow as a centre of excellence for creative arts, culture and technical innovations.</p> <p>After NatWest closed its doors in September 2017, the council purchased the property and secured planning permission to enable the building’s use for food and drink, assembly, and leisure. The centre’s expansion is among a number of developments set to help the town’s post-Covid recovery:</p> <p>The new look Regal Theatre is benefiting from £3.6m of investment for a comprehensive expansion and refurbishment programme which will see it boast three modern cinema screens, improved audio-visual experience, as well as a new front of house, café and bar area.</p> |

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| | <p>Works are also being undertaken to restore and preserve many of the original features of the existing building built in 1936.</p> <p>Two additional auditoria and a new café have been added in recent months.</p> <p>Across the wider town centre, funding has also been secured from the Department of Transport's Active Travel fund for the installation of bicycle storage in the town centre. Cycle parking bays have been installed outside the John Peel Centre, at the Stricklands Road junction with Ipswich Road and in Wilkes Way.</p> <p>Work as part of the wider Stowmarket Vision includes proposals to create a National Museum of Food at the Museum of East Anglian Life in Iliffe Way, as well as a new Festival for 2021. There are plans to build on the town's hugely successful Innovation Labs, and develop the concept of reusing empty shops and show windows as alternative spaces.</p> |
| <p>Castle Hill Chicken Application</p> | <p>Yesterday, the Development Control Committee of MSDC refused planning permission for 3 chicken sheds in Thorndon. The primary reason for the refusal was the ammonia odour discharge in close proximity to Covance Immunology Centre, although an informative note was also included expressing concerns at the lack of information regarding the traffic routing and generation.</p> |

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