

Report from County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Much of what is happening continues to be related to the current situation regarding the Coronavirus pandemic and I have outlined what is happening at County in this report. However, other work is continuing wherever possible and I have included details about a number of these in my report.

Information relating to return to lockdown

We are now approaching the end of the second week of the current lockdown. The County Council has worked to keep vital services running during the lockdown and has concentrated on continuing to deliver face-to-face services in line with the Government's guidelines. Where possible other services will be provided online, but others will need to be suspended during the current national restrictions in order to help curb the spread of the virus by reducing social contact. The aim is to protect the people of Norfolk and be able to return to tier one once the present national restrictions end.

We are continuing to work on supporting vulnerable people and also keep schools, public transport and recycling sites open and working. However, in line with national guidance, we have had to temporarily close libraries, museums and some other services but, where possible, some of these services will be available online.

Services which are still currently being delivered face-to-face services include:

- Social care visits and support for vulnerable people - children, families and adults
- Home care
- Schools
- School crossing patrols
- Household waste and recycling centres
- Registration of births (registration of deaths will continue by phone)
- Bus and park and ride services for key workers and school pupils
- Fire and rescue services

It has been necessary to stop some face-to-face services and, where possible, some parts of those services are being provided online:

- Museums
- Libraries
- Weddings
- Classroom-based adult learning
- Further details about specific elements of adults' and children's services will be outlined to service users.

The position regarding this provision is being watched and plans will be reviewed if circumstances change. As ever, I would remind that the County Council's website – www.norfolk.gov.uk – is the best place to find the latest, up-to-date information on all of these matters.

Consultation on Budget Proposals

There is still time for residents to comment on the Norfolk County Council budget proposals for the next year regarding the County's proposed share of Council Tax and its savings proposals. The opportunity to comment runs until the 14th December 2020 and details can be found on the County Council website at

www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget

Anyone wanting to respond can do so by following the link at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget or if doing so in writing, comments can be posted for free by sending them to:

Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK
Norfolk County Council
Ground Floor, South Wing
County Hall
Martineau Lane
NORWICH, NR1 2DH

Innovation Grant Mentoring Project Launch

On Thursday 26 November at 6pm, leaders from both Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils will launch a new grant mentoring and bid writing support scheme to help small to medium sized businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk develop skills in writing stronger bids to access money from a variety of innovation grant funding and related schemes. Any small to medium sized business owner or manager, including micro business owners and sole traders, is invited to attend the online launch meeting to find out more. Attendees will meet professional mentors and hear from a business that's already benefited from innovation funding. The link to the event is below

[Log on to Eventbrite at 6pm on Thursday 26 November.](#)

Free online support to help Norfolk businesses

The recent months have posed a difficult time for small businesses and business owners. As one way of helping redress this, the Business & IP Centre (BIPC) Norfolk, run by Norfolk County Council's Library and Information Service, has developed a free programme of business support that can be accessed online.

Alongside the national Reset. Restart programme of webinars run by the British Library Business & IP Centre, the BIPC Norfolk is offering a series of free local 1-to-1 support sessions, workshops and networking events. Delivered in partnership with business training provider MENTA, Reset. Restart is open to all business owners, especially those in the first years of trading.

During the two-hour online 1-to-1 support session, businesses will have the chance to review their overall business proposition and discuss how it could be rethought or repositioned in light of Covid-19. They will also be helped to identify and focus on any specific areas of concern and progression.

The series of five online workshops covers topics such as generating new business ideas, digital marketing tools, building customer relationships, and updating business plans. Participants can pick and choose from the workshops or book on the whole series.

For more information and to book on any BIPC Norfolk events, anyone interested should go to

www.norfolk.gov.uk/bipcnorfolk

Help continues to be available for Norfolk's families

Families across the county are being reminded that Norfolk's organisations and agencies are still here to help while England is under the current national restrictions. Colourful postcards featuring the rainbow, which were popular with families during the first national lockdown, are being distributed via post, schools, social media, and email to urge families not to struggle alone but to ask for help if needed.

The move is being made by the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP), which works to ensure children and young people are kept safe. The partnership includes dedicated professionals and volunteers from a variety of agencies and is led by Norfolk County Council's Children's Services, Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Children and Young People's Health Services. Earlier on in the year the NSCP reached out to Norfolk's children and young people encouraging them to come forward if they needed help via a text service and phone helpline. The campaign has also already encouraged the public to look out for Norfolk's children and report any concerns.

The Just One Norfolk support and advice line for families can be contacted on 0300 300 0123 or by logging on to www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk. Families are able to contact the helpline number provided for a range of support including emotional wellbeing, practical and mental health support and more.

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19th November 2020