

July 2014 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

New school improvement leader appointed

Suffolk's programme of improving educational attainment in schools took a further step forward this month with the appointment of a new assistant director. Nikki Edwards, who joins the council from Ofsted's school inspection contractor, Serco, on 21st July and will lead the team which helps schools to drive up standards. Nikki is currently a managing inspector responsible for 180 inspectors working across the midlands and eastern England. Formerly a teacher and head teacher, Nikki has 22 years' experience of working in education and improving standards. As executive head teacher at Berrybrook Primary School in Wolverhampton, she led the school from special measures to being rated good, with outstanding features, by Ofsted. She has been a head teacher at a small rural primary school in Shropshire and also worked for a number of education trusts, where she was responsible for school improvement. This new role will bring together leadership of the council teams responsible for education - including school improvement, school infrastructure, special educational needs and inclusion. This role will be central to continuing the county council's drive to improve school standards. Raising attainment levels in our schools is our number-one priority, and with this new appointment, we will be well-placed to press ahead with our mission to drive up standards across Suffolk's schools.

New £6m care home to open doors

A ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the official opening of a new £6 million state-of-the-art care home in Mildenhall recently took place. Members of the community along with representatives from SCC and Forest Heath District Council joined officials from Care UK for the grand opening of Mildenhall Lodge. The new 60-bed care home is the first of ten across the county which is being rolled out by Care UK, as part of their £60million investment in care facilities in Suffolk. Among the first people set to move into the new home will be those at the town's existing care home in Wamil Court, which will close up on the transfer of all the existing residents at the site, where it will be handed back to SCC. Following the official opening ceremony, conducted by Alan Murray, SCC's cabinet member for health and adult care, members of the public were able to take tours around the site, with further tours around the new home being staged the following day as part of an official open day. The £60million investment we will deliver the next generation of care homes for people in Suffolk, and it is great news that the first of these has now opened.

New team to safeguard Suffolk people

Organisations responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults and children in Suffolk are to form a new, single, team. This will make sure information needed to keep people safe is held, and immediately accessible, in one place. By the end of the summer, the organisations, including SCC, the police, health services, district and borough council housing services, education, Probation and the Youth Offending Service, will have come together to create Suffolk's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The MASH is being implemented in stages to make sure that the high standards of safeguarding already in place in Suffolk don't suffer during the transition from current arrangements. Once fully operational, the MASH will be made up of approximately 60 professionals from across the county. The majority of these staff will be located at Landmark House in Ipswich. Members of the public who are concerned that a child, young person or adult is at risk of abuse, harm or neglect, should still contact Customer First on 0808 800 4005 (free from landlines and most mobiles). Further information about the Suffolk MASH is available at www.suffolk.gov.uk/MASH.

And finally:

Biggest ever off-shore wind-farm given the go-ahead off Suffolk coast

Suffolk's place at the centre of the off-shore wind industry has been assured recently, after the green light was given to one of the world's biggest ever schemes. The East Anglia One project has been approved by the government, opening the door to an estimated £500million boost for the regional economy and the potential for over 1,600 new jobs. The planned development, for up to 240 wind turbines, is the largest to be approved in the UK and is predicted to generate enough power to meet the equivalent annual electricity demands of around 820,000 homes. The project, a joint venture between Scottish Power Renewables and Vattenfall, could see construction begin in 2017 with power being exported in 2019. Responding to the news, SCC leader Mark Bee said: "Suffolk is rapidly-becoming a world leader for renewal energy creation. The benefits to the county are staggering and will see new jobs created, fresh business opportunities opened and extra investment made in our local economy."

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