

December 2019 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

App for asthmatic youngsters backed by county health service

An app that teaches asthmatic children to use their inhalers properly is being promoted across the county after being developed by a Suffolk company. MySpira, by Orbital Media of Stowmarket, teaches youngsters techniques in a fun way and is now being promoted in hospitals, GP surgeries, pharmacies and primary schools across the county by Public Health Suffolk. The app uses characters and interactions, to engage children with asthma with games they can play with parents, siblings or friends. Throughout the 20-minute experience the youngster is taught about asthma keywords, triggers, different types of inhalers, how to prepare the inhaler and spacer, and how to inhale the medicine correctly. Research has found that as many as 97% of asthmatic children misuse their inhalers, with potentially serious consequences. The app teaches children vital skills to help manage their asthma condition in a fun and engaging way, which involves the whole family so parents, siblings and friends also know what to do should an attack occur. We are working closely with services across the health care system as well as in education settings in Suffolk to promote the app as a valuable resource to use alongside a child's existing asthma care plan. The app was developed by Orbital with the University of Suffolk, supported by Dr Simon Rudland from StowHealth surgery in Stowmarket and asthma nurse Karyn McBride. The app is available from the App Store and Google Play.

Fines for poor parking in Suffolk to be consistent across the county from 2020

Parking fines will be the same across the whole of Suffolk from early next year, when stronger enforcement is set to take place. The long-delayed transfer of civil parking enforcement from police to local authorities is expected to take place from the end of January in Suffolk. This means each council will be responsible for issuing parking fines, warnings and notices in their area, although a deal has been struck by Babergh and Mid Suffolk councils to have their parking enforced by Ipswich and West Suffolk officers. With police unable to dedicate resources currently, it is expected that once the powers transfer councils will be able to crackdown on poor parking more than police. A consistent approach is being planned across the whole county, meaning fines will be the same, regardless of which authority manages parking in that area. A parking management plan is being developed that sets out the priorities for different types of on street parking restriction, dependent on their location. This approach is supported by the borough and district councils. From the parking management plan, each of the councils involved will develop a parking enforcement protocol that sets out their plans for enforcement, including resourcing and how the sites are going to be visited.

Wellbeing support for Suffolk veterans

During the November Remembrance period, the Suffolk Armed Forces Community Wellbeing Group raised awareness of veterans' wellbeing. There are an estimated 34,000 veterans living in Suffolk, some will be 100 years of age, others could be as young as 24. As a rural county, finding and reaching veterans and their families can be a challenge. Most veterans leave the armed forces and transition to civilian life without issue. They live fulfilling lives and contribute to society. However, a sizeable minority may struggle to adjust, struggle to find purposeful employment, and have the challenge of developing new connections or friendships. This can lead to a range of wellbeing issues. In the lead up to Remembrance Day, Suffolk County Council supported Parish and Town Councils involved in organising local remembrance events to promote Veterans Gateway and the Suffolk Military Covenant website, in the service cards they produce for their events. The Veterans Gateway (www.veteransgateway.org.uk) is a national resource supported by all the major military charities. It is a web portal that helps veterans to find the right support. Additionally, Suffolk has one of the few dedicated local covenant websites which promote activities and services that support our local armed forces community. The website includes Veterans Wellbeing and Welfare Support Groups alongside the five Veterans Breakfast Clubs in Suffolk. A full list of Armed Forces community engagement and support groups in Suffolk can be found at www.suffolkmilitarycovenant.org.uk. Remembrance Day is a poignant and often difficult time for some serving members of the armed forces, veterans or family members as they reflect on people or incidents of the past. There is a huge network of organisations supporting the Armed Forces community and the gateway is a great resource to help people to find the local support they need. SCC would like to thank the groups we are working with for their support in promoting resources which are available in Suffolk.

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