



## Stonham Ward

January 2021

### **An update on Covid-19 in Suffolk**

Regular bulletins are being produced to give a snapshot of the current Covid-19 situation in Suffolk - along with updates on the work being carried out as part of Suffolk's Local Outbreak Control Plan. You can find the bulletins through existing updates or [via the Suffolk County Council website](#).

### **Vaccination Centres across Suffolk**

[www.suffolk.gov.uk/covidvaccinations](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/covidvaccinations)

### **Local Restrictions Support Grants for businesses**

National lockdown

With the announcement of a National Lockdown commencing on the 5th January, it is clear that many businesses will be impacted. We are awaiting detailed government guidance on the operation of business grant schemes for the National Lockdown and will update this page as soon as we have further clarification.

<https://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/business/business-rates/grant-funding-schemes/>

### **Councils look to slash fleet emissions**

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils will cut their fleet's carbon emissions by up to 90% – supporting the councils' carbon neutral aims.

The move follows approval by both councils' cabinets this week, to switch their vehicle fleet to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).



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Changes form a major step in [the councils' Carbon Reduction Management Plan](#), which sets out how net zero carbon emissions aim to be achieved by 2030.

Both councils will see a significant reduction in pollutant emissions from their fleet, including up to a 90% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>. It will also support a circular economy, as the HVO fuel is produced from sustainable feedstock, including waste cooking oil.

Currently, the councils' vehicle fleet represents 26% of the councils' total CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, approximately 880 tonnes per year.

The fleet includes the councils' 35 waste lorries, as well as some vehicles used by the public realm and housing services.

Moving to the new fuel will cost an initial £50k per council for new fuel tanks. A further estimated £56 - £97k per year, per council, over the next three years, will cover fuel costs.

However, by using HVO, lower maintenance costs and longer engine life for the vehicles are expected.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money collected from new development is anticipated to cover most of the initial cost of the two HVO tanks. These will be located at the councils' depots in Stowmarket and Sudbury.

HVO fuel provides an almost immediate and efficient way to reduce emissions. This is because, aside from slightly increased fuel costs and new tanks, the transition from traditional diesel fuel to HVO requires minimal changes to the councils' existing fleet.

Formal procurement of a fuel supplier will start straight away, with the changeover expected to be fully rolled out by Summer 2021.

## **Stowmarket arts centre gets major boost**



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Ambitions for Stowmarket to become a hub for arts and culture took a major step forward today, following Councillors unanimously giving the go-ahead to lease 11 Market Place to the John Peel Centre.

Mid Suffolk District Council's Cabinet voted in favour of giving the arts centre a new long lease on the empty property – providing the venue with a 'front door' on to the Market Place to bring arts, leisure and entertainment to the town centre.

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.

The decision will create the right conditions for the town to grow as a centre of excellence for creative arts, culture and technical innovations.

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.

By working with the John Peel Centre to give people a fresh and exciting offer we can increase visitor numbers to the town, which will provide an economic boost as well."

The centre's expansion is among a number of exciting developments set to help the town's post-Covid recovery:

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.

Works are also being undertaken to restore and preserve many of the original features of the existing building built in 1936.

Two additional auditoria and a new café have been added in recent months.



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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.

A second phase of Active Travel Fund will explore the potential to create new cycle routes through the town, linking key sites and open spaces. Proposals for the second phase have been published by Suffolk County Council and are now open for [consultation](#).

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.

### **Voting safely at next year's elections**

On Thursday 6 May 2021, residents in Suffolk will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at Suffolk County Council and who will represent them as the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner.

The elections may be a way off, but we are already making plans to help residents stay safe while casting their vote.

There are a number of ways to have a say in the elections in May – residents can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing a trusted person to vote on their behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

We are planning for these elections now, so that you can be confident that you will be able to cast your vote safely. As a result of COVID-19,



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we wanted to raise awareness, in particular for electors aged over 70, of the option of voting by post rather than visiting the polling station.

If you would like to vote by post rather than at the polling station go to our ['How to Vote'](#) page for more information on other ways to vote.

For residents that would still prefer to vote in person, be assured that COVID-19 secure measures will be in place at every polling station. For example you can expect to see many of the measures you have become used to in shops over recent months, such as the use of masks, hand sanitiser and floor markings.