

February 2015 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Raising the Bar funding opportunities for schools now available

Suffolk schools are being encouraged to show their ambition and enthusiasm by applying to the Raising the Bar (RtB) Challenge Fund. The second round of funding has now been made available to Suffolk schools who are operating or want to initiate ambitious and innovative projects that aim to raise attainment. Schools are invited to bid for funding and demonstrate parental engagement and sustainability through their planning. Schools are also expected to work collaboratively with other schools to access the funding. The project could be focused on a particular issue, subject or need. As long as the project can show how it aims to make a direct impact on pupil attainment or progress then it will be eligible for consideration. The Challenge Fund is designed to support projects which have ambitious targets. The fund will support up to 50% of the project costs, to a maximum of £5,000 per school (however there is some flexibility to recognise the varying sizes of schools). The fund will be open to any publicly funded school in Suffolk. Visit The Challenge Fund page for more information and how you can get involved.

Work to begin on transforming Ipswich market and link to waterfront

SCC and Ipswich Borough Council, together with Ipswich Central, have announced their plans for transforming the Queen Street and Princes Street area to improve the market and pedestrian link from the centre to the waterfront. The scheme will look to pedestrianise the area with alterations including extension of the present market into Queen Street, whilst changes to St Nicholas Street will improve routes for cyclists and pedestrians to and from the waterfront. Work will include additional upgrades such as new paving, kerbing, street lighting and other general enhancements to the area. A consultation took place last year regarding proposals for the area and a comprehensive set of traffic regulation orders is now being developed, where access will be restricted on both market days and non-market days. We are ambitious for our county town, and want to see it thrive and prosper and are working with our partners to help bring about improvements wherever we can.

New campaign calls on Suffolk people to make the connection with loneliness

A new campaign, launched by Suffolk's health professionals, invites people to play their part to beat loneliness; drawing attention to the fact that loneliness can affect any of us at any time. AgeUK Suffolk predicts that 15,000 older people in Suffolk can go a month without speaking to a friend, family member or neighbour. The campaign, entitled 'Loneliness. Make the connection', began last month and kicks off a year-long focus on loneliness and how it affects people in different ways, from new parents to bereavement and unemployment. A number of studies have linked the harmful effects of loneliness to both mental and physical health; claiming the same long-term harmful effects as obesity and smoking. SCC's public health team is joining forces with voluntary-sector organisations and other partners to co-ordinate the campaign, drawing attention to the support already available from befriending schemes and organised groups to telephone and on-line advice. More information about this campaign is available from www.healthysuffolk.org.uk including the ability to make a pledge, find out what support is available, read case study examples and download a range of useful resources. Supporting those most vulnerable in our communities is not only a key priority for us, but a moral obligation. That's why we heartily support this campaign to raise awareness about loneliness, the wide range of people it can afflict, and the effects it can have.

Norfolk and Suffolk appoint top agency to build cultural tourism

Norfolk and Suffolk have joined forces to deliver an ambitious three-year programme to promote the rich cultural tourism offer across both counties. Spring agency, based in Southwold, has been appointed to deliver this work and is tasked to make Norfolk and Suffolk 'must-see cultural destinations'; both counties are home to organisations, places and artists with national and international reputations but many do not receive the recognition they are due. Tourism is worth £4.6bn annually to the two counties, of which approximately £1.8bn is generated by Suffolk. This project will drive growth in the economy through tourism and culture. Tourism in Suffolk supports 17,131 full time jobs, and 34,237 tourism-related jobs in total, equating to 11.3% of the workforce. The total business turnover is £1,755,306,500. The Cultural Tourism project is financially supported by The Arts Council of England (£150K) and the New Anglia LEP (£100K). It is managed by SCC on behalf of the LEP Cultural Board. We are justly proud of our county: it is a wonderful place to live, work and visit. We will work closely with partners, both in Suffolk, and our neighbouring counties, to raise our profile and enable people across the country and beyond to appreciate the manifold delights of our wonderful county.

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