



Annual Parish Report 2020/ 2021

Wortham & Burgate Parish Council Appendix 1

Councillor Jessica Fleming, Hartismere Division, Suffolk

Jessica.fleming@suffolk.gov.uk Tel: 07714-597980 Twitter: @jesstfleming

It goes without saying that this has been one of the most extraordinary years in memory. A year of intermittent lock down has had varying effects on people across the country, from financial devastation and loss to a renewed sense of the importance of a stable home life. During this time the Council public health team along with the NHS and CCGs have achieved a very successful testing, tracing and vaccination effort across the County. Suffolk's economic recovery plans are now gearing up as restrictions lift, and attention is turning to support for businesses and people through grants, training and advice as the furlough period ends.

The council administration has continued during the past year, all meetings moving to virtual as of the end of March 2020. This has meant a leap in technology use and learning by officers and members as we have mastered chairing public meetings and voting remotely. The administrative staff and IT team have risen to the challenges. Moving forward, formal meetings will likely revert to being in person at Endeavour House shortly but less formal may remain remote.

During this period the Council has supported Suffolk schools as they too moved to remote learning but key worker children still needed to attend classes, which has challenged teachers and parents alike; the return to school is welcomed by most. There has been a cost due to lockdown in mental and physical health, with lack of organised sport for young people a particular concern. Other functions of the council have continued, such as the adoption and fostering programme, special education needs services and adult social care, all of which do not lend themselves well to remote working and have needed much organisational focus.

In 2019, most councils in Suffolk including the County declared a Climate Emergency, committing to work toward Carbon Net Zero by 2030. Initiatives have commenced over the past year with tree and hedge planting and the Plug-in Suffolk electric vehicle charging programme, which includes funds for fast charge points for parish and town councils and non-profit organisations in rural areas.

The Hold - Suffolk's flagship new heritage facility on Ipswich Waterfront- opened in September. It is now the permanent home of Suffolk Archives Ipswich and shares facilities with the University of Suffolk. This is possible thanks to a grant of £10.3m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and further support from national organisations and Suffolk heritage groups

Recycling Centres have remained open most of the time with a new requirement to book slots, plans to introduce automatic number plate recognition to easy site entry are planned later this year. Also upgrades are planned for Foxhall, Rougham and Stowmarket centres and reuse shops will re-open.

Without the support of community groups and volunteers the picture of our return to living more normally would be very different. The collective effort has been massive and life changing for many.