

**Barry Stone - County Councillor for Clavering**

*Parish Council News Update*



### **Community Tree Give Away Opportunity (2021 Pilot Scheme)**

Applications September-October 25<sup>th</sup>

Parish Councils should have all received information about the '1 Million Trees for Norfolk' project and should submit their planting schemes to County Councillors for the coming planting season (which runs from November 2021 to March 2022) as soon as possible.

County Councillors review the applications and identify which planting schemes to authorise under this 2021 pilot scheme.

The county councillor will then contact the successful parish councils and gives them the green light to proceed with the application process.

**Please remember to get your applications into me as soon as possible, I am anxious to get as many tree packs distributed as soon as we can and really make a difference, so let's get planting!**

### **Latest national announcements**

#### **GP investment:**

Health Secretary Sajid Javid has announced a £250 million investment in General Practices (GPs) to boost capacity ahead of the winter. The money will be designed to improve the number of face-to-face GP appointments and improve access. As part of the funding, GPs will be expected to provide clear plans on how they will do this.

The move is designed to boost GP capacity for regular appointments over the winter, following concerns that individuals cannot get GP appointments due to the pandemic.

#### **School Broadband:**

1,000 schools with the slowest internet speeds have been connected to gigabit broadband. By March, nearly 7,000 libraries, hospitals, police stations, and other public buildings will be upgraded also.

The work is part of the Government's ambition to "level up" internet across the UK by investing in gigabit technology and reducing barriers for the rollout of the technology.

### **COVID-19**

## **Booster jabs:**

A reminder that Covid booster jabs are now available to book if there's been six months since your last dose AND you are:

- An adult aged 50+
- Living in a residential care home for older adults
- A frontline health or social care worker, including in residential and nursing homes for older adults
- Aged 16-49 with underlying health conditions that put you at higher risk of severe COVID-19 (as set out here)
- An adult carer aged 16+
- An adult household contact of someone who is immunosuppressed

People can make an appointment for a booster via the National Booking Service if you're eligible: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/> or call 119 for free between 7am-11pm seven days a week.

Booster jabs are being offered in line with national and Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation guidance.

PLEASE NOTE: Walk in clinics are NOT currently providing booster vaccinations. Please don't contact your GP or attend a walk in clinic for a booster. They are by appointment only for eligible patients. Read more here.

## **Difficult Winter:**

England's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, has warned that the NHS faces an "exceptionally difficult winter, regardless of a Covid-19 surge or not. He has also praised GPs for their "outstanding" hard work during the pandemic.

## **Economy**

### **Apprenticeships**

Norfolk County Council has supported small to medium-sized businesses by launching its Insight Apprentice Programme at the B2B Exhibition today, organised by the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce. The team was on stand no. 30 from 10am to 4pm at the Norfolk Showground.

Insight Apprentice is a project part-funded by the European Social Fund which supports Norfolk's businesses, with fewer than 250 employees, to realise the full benefits of apprenticeships.

Companies that invest in apprenticeship programmes report many other benefits including reduced recruitment costs, higher staff loyalty, enhanced job satisfaction, improved knowledge and skills as well as achievement of corporate social responsibility outcomes.

86% of employers say apprenticeships help them develop skills relevant to their organisation.

The Team will be based countywide, working with key partners at the College of West Anglia, East Coast College, Poultec, City College Norwich and the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce. The project has also linked with Steadfast Training to provide expert learning and development to businesses and their future apprentices.

Insight Apprentice offers a bespoke package for employers providing help with setting up an apprenticeships scheme, access to funding and grants and ongoing support.

Find out more by emailing Insight at: [insightapprentice@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:insightapprentice@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Public Health**

### **MiQuit**

A new service named MiQuit is launching in Norfolk to help pregnant women to quit smoking and improve the health of their baby.

The MiQuit service, developed by experts at the University of East Anglia and University of Cambridge and commissioned by Norfolk County Council's Public Health team, provides free text message support for users, sending information and advice directly to their phone. The support is tailored to each user and their lifestyle, ensuring everyone who signs up get the support they need to quit.

Users can sign up for the MiQuit service from their mobile phone. This text will be charged at their standard rate, after which all texts received from MiQuit are free of charge.

A series of text messages will then be sent asking questions about their smoking. Answers to these questions will be used to tailor the support provided, giving users the advice they need.

The service can be stopped at any time by texting "STOP" to 07860 018344

Pregnant women can find out more about the service and sign up at MiQuit on Just One Norfolk.

## **Young people**

### **Project Mackenzie:**

A project to help care experienced young people in Norfolk get into work and education is being launched in Norwich next week by Olympian Kriss Akabusi MBE.

Project Mackenzie will provide the group of 20 young people, aged between 16 and 19, who are either in care or who are now moving beyond care, with a tailor-made four-week programme to develop their skills and support them into employment or education.

This potentially life-changing initiative will be delivered in partnership between Norfolk County Council's Virtual School for Children in Care and Previously in Care and The Akabusi Company.

Kriss Akabusi MBE, who is care-experienced himself, is an Olympian, media personality, professional keynote speaker and life coach. Project Mackenzie was first run as a partnership between The Grand Union Housing Group and The Akabusi Company in 2013 and has since helped a total of eight groups of young people in a number of different local authorities.

The project came to the attention of Norfolk County Council following Kriss's keynote presentation at the Small Steps, Big Changes Conference which was hosted by our Virtual School for Children in Care and Previously in Care in February this year.

The programme will run in November and will include opportunities for the group of young people to meet with local employers and training providers. In addition, they will receive specialist advice on areas including money management, safe social media, CV writing and interview skills.

## **Other Information**

### **Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service:**

A safety warning about costumes has been issued in advance of Halloween.

If something seems too cheap to be a good deal, it may be because safety standards have been compromised. That's the message from Norfolk's Fire Service and Trading Standards teams as they ask everyone to take extra care this Halloween to ensure the safety of their families.

Norfolk's Chief Fire Officer Stuart Ruff said: "Buying cheap costumes could put you at risk of fire, if the materials used do not meet safety standards. Materials which haven't been tested to ensure high standards could quickly ignite and cause serious injury or even death."

Flammability tests of some items on sale showed a monster Halloween t-shirt took less than a minute to be engulfed in flames. They also tested witches hats, capes, skeleton tights and pumpkin tops.

To keep your little monsters safe from harm this Halloween, Norfolk Fire and Rescue advises:

- Read the labels - products must have a UKCA or CE mark. As well as clothing, check any wigs or masks too

- Wear clothes under the costumes, they offer vital extra seconds of protection for the skin should the worst happen
- Ditch the scary mask for face paints instead (remember to do an allergy test first before applying!)
- Swap candles for battery operated tealights or glow sticks
- Do not leave candles unattended and ensure they are fully extinguished at bedtime

You can see the video of the clothing tests: Spooked out: Halloween costume safety checks with Fire Service/Trading Standards - YouTube (credit: Surrey Fire and Rescue Service).

“It’s frightening how quickly these unsafe costumes can become completely engulfed and residents should only buy from reputable suppliers. Check the packaging and labels for manufacturers or importers details.

"If anyone has concerns about the safety of Halloween products on sale they should call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on 0808 223 1133," said Councillor Margaret Dewsbury, Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships at Norfolk County Council.

### **Candle safety**

More than 300 people are injured each year in the UK in fires caused by candles. And a third of fires attended by fire and rescue services and started by candles result in death or serious injury.

Candles should be kept away from flammable materials such as curtains and out of reach of children and pets.

Even with precautions it’s vital to be prepared should the worst happen. Working smoke alarms can give you the vital time you need to get out, stay out and call 999.

Keep yourself and your loved ones safe by testing your alarm regularly and practicing your escape routes.

### **Bonfire/firework safety**

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service recommends going to an organised firework/bonfire display which is properly regulated and safer than organising one at home.

If you do host a bonfire at home, please build it well away from buildings, sheds, trees and fences. Do not throw anything dangerous on to it and make sure you have water nearby. Let your neighbours know your plans.

If you’re having fireworks at home, only buy from reputable retailers, store them correctly and read the instructions carefully. Never go back to a firework once it has been lit. Keep children and pets away from fireworks.

As always, I am here to help in any way I can and will always respond to email and telephone requests for assistance.

Email: [barry.stone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:barry.stone.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk)

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Kind regards

**Barry**