

## Parish Report March 2020

### Hartismere Parish Councils and Meetings

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This is a different type of report than usual given the extraordinary circumstances of the Corona virus pandemic. I hope that this finds you all well, and that those in need of support are receiving it through the network of local volunteers, voluntary organisations or other means. The response by local volunteers to this pandemic has been wonderful. Please get in touch if you need to.

### Community Volunteer Service - HOME, BUT NOT ALONE

'Home, But Not Alone' has been set up to link local Suffolk volunteers with those needing support such as delivering groceries or medication in line with Government social distancing guidelines. Download the free **app, Tribe Volunteer** from [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play Store](#).

Those in need of help should call freephone **0800 876 6926** which is staffed from **9am to 5pm**, seven days a week. The service will adapt to demand over the coming weeks.

**Support for Businesses** – The New Anglia Growth Hub has developed a 'toolkit' to help businesses manage virus related issues: <https://www.newangliagrowthhub.co.uk/covid-19-business-toolkit/>

Central gov business support can be found on:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

**Suffolk Resilience Forum declares COVID-19 major incident in County** - On 20 March, the COVID-19 situation led to declaration of a major incident in Suffolk. This position formalises the work of the Suffolk Resilience Forum (councils, health bodies, emergency services, military). Suffolk Police will now chair the Forum's Strategic Coordination Group, taking over from Suffolk County Council's public health team.

**Suffolk school closures** - Suffolk County Council has needed to close schools for all pupils except vulnerable children and those whose parents are key workers as of 18 March. [The current definition of a key worker can be found on GOV.UK](#). The government has advised that parents should keep children at home, schools should remain open only for those children who absolutely must attend.

SCC have launched a helpline for parents needing help to find a school, if needed. The helpline number is: 01473 263985. You can [find more information on school closures](#) on [suffolk.gov.uk](http://suffolk.gov.uk).

**Public transport operating on a reduced scale throughout the County** - New timetables are in place as of 24 March for most public transport services, including buses, trains and community transport until further notice. Suffolk County Council advises those who must use public transport to check with their local provider first, for bus or community transport go to [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com) or call 0345 606 6171.

**Concessionary bus passes may be used at any time in the day during the coronavirus outbreak** - As of 19 March, concessionary travel restrictions for elderly and disabled bus pass holders are lifted.

**Changes to care services for customers** - Customers will receive a phone call or a visit from their current care provider or Suffolk County Council's Home First team if or when their services are affected by the virus. Those currently receiving care and support may see differences to their service in the coming weeks.

**All Suffolk recycling centres close until further notice due to coronavirus** - As of 23 March, Suffolk recycling centres closed until further notice. Please hold bulky items and garden waste until the sites reopen. Do not put electrical items in bins at home. Where possible compost grass and hedge trimmings. For further information visit the [Suffolk Recycling website](#).

**Cancellation of Suffolk Walking Festival 2020** - Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Suffolk County Council and its partners have made the difficult decision to cancel Suffolk's 13th Walking Festival. If you have booked a place on a walk, the organisers of the Walking Festival will be in contact with you regarding your refund. For further formation visit [www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwalkingfestival.co.uk).

**Parents should opt-in now for Suffolk County Council funded school travel for 2020/2021** - Parents with a child already receiving SCC funded school travel must opt-in by the 31 May 2020 to continue to receive it.

Parents with a child starting primary school in September should opt-in when they receive a school place offer (15 April 2020). If eligible for funded school travel they will be contacted by 15 May.

Parents whose child is not eligible for SCC funded school travel but who wish to purchase a spare seat should apply as of 1 July 2020.

To opt-in or for more information on the Suffolk County Council school travel policy please visit [www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel](http://www.suffolkonboard.com/schooltravel)

**Firstsite art gallery (Colchester)** has created educational activity packs with well-known artists including Antony Gormley, Grayson Perry, Jeremy Deller for children and young people during the current coronavirus lockdown. The activities are designed for both young (and older) residents. Please see link for further information - <https://firstsite.uk/art-is-where-the-home-is/>

**Joint Statement on behalf of Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council following EDF Energy's decision to delay the Sizewell C Development Consent Order application – 26 March 2020** - Leader of Suffolk County Council, Cllr Matthew Hicks, and Leader of East Suffolk Council, Cllr Steve Gallant, said: "Both Councils absolutely agree that this is the right decision for EDF to take at this time. We believe there is no other choice as we focus on fighting Covid-19 across Suffolk. "

**Councils urge Government to change approach to offshore windfarms** - Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council are continuing to lobby the Government for improved coordination of offshore windfarm projects. On 2 March 2020, councillors and officials met with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to express their concerns. The meeting was followed up with a letter to the new Secretary of State for BEIS, Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP, in particular to asking the Government to initiate a new approach to how offshore windfarms and major infrastructure projects connect to the electricity grid, and make the policy changes needed to make this happen.

**Access for all at Suffolk rail stations** -Following successful bids for funding, Needham Market and Bury St Edmunds rail stations will now receive improved access to platforms for its

passengers. Needham Market station will receive an upgrade for disabled access to the Ipswich-bound platform. Bury St Edmunds station will benefit from a new accessible entrance on the north side linking to a new car park

**Finally – The Queen** gave a televised address to the nation on 5<sup>th</sup> April. She thanked frontline NHS staff and key workers for their selfless determination. She acknowledged the worldwide pandemic and common endeavour of nations across the globe to use the advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal. She stated “we will succeed – and that success will belong to every one of us”.

The Queen’s speech can be found on UTube [here](#)