

Season's Greetings to all our readers

Contents

Click on the hyperlink to go straight to an article:

[Awards for outstanding contribution to community safety](#)

[What a difference a day makes!](#)

[Strengthening families](#)

[Play Your Part DVD launched in Suffolk](#)

[Keep safe on darker nights](#)

[Working with parishes to improve community safety](#)

[Keep fireworks fun for new year](#)

["Survivor's Stories" DVD](#)

[Your future Link On!](#)

Awards for outstanding contribution to community safety

After the busiest year in living memory for national and local emergencies, Suffolk County Council's safety chiefs praised the commitment, bravery, stamina, and professionalism of both its staff and local people.

Community safety officers, Denise Whiting and Charlotte Foster and trading standards officer, Marc Tifford were recognised for their outstanding contribution to community safety in the form of impact events. These individuals have worked jointly

to coordinate these impact events across Suffolk which involves extensive multi-agency working to tackle problems such as graffiti, abandoned cars and antisocial behaviour. The objective of these events being to encourage local people to take greater care and ownership of their community.



(l-r) Denise Whiting and Charlotte Foster with their Portfolio Holder's Awards for 'Outstanding Contribution'

The annual awards ceremony, took place at Suffolk County Council's headquarters on Thursday 22 November, and showcased the actions and long service of those who work in the Fire and Rescue Service and Trading Standards in particular. The awards also recognise the work of the police, partners and the public during the year. This year saw the first presentation of awards from the Royal Humane Society which were presented by its Chairman, Mr Julian Spicer OBE. Her Majesty's

representative in Suffolk, the Lord Lieutenant, presented the Queen's Long Service and Good Conduct awards.

Announcing the awards, Suffolk County Council's portfolio holder for public protection, Joanna Spicer said: "This year has seen an unprecedented amount of work for our public protectors here in Suffolk. The past two weeks alone has seen their work showcased on the national stage in terms of flooding and bird flu. These people do their job through a sense of public duty, a commitment to serving their community and to saving lives. I am proud that I can represent them and humbled by the stories of their bravery and endeavour. Moreover, each day there are acts of service that go unreported, not to mention the unsung support from across the community, from voluntary groups to individuals"

[Back to top](#)

What a difference a day makes!

Contacts:

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The multi-agency Community Impact Day, held in the Springlands area of Sudbury earlier this month was a great success.

Sudbury Safer Neighbourhood Team members joined together with partners including Suffolk Fire and Rescue, Babergh District Council, Suffolk County Council and DVLA to clean up and improve the area by undertaking a variety of tasks.

The Education Welfare team checked shops early in the morning, to see if they held the work permits required to employ young people in roles such as newspaper delivery. Fourteen permits were missing and this will be followed up. Truancy sweeps found just one child out of school and advice was issued to the parent.

The Trading Standards team advised two builders of their requirements when they sell their services door-to-door, pulled over an overweight vehicle and intelligence was gathered on six road-side car sellers.

The DVLA found 24 untaxed vehicles, and Babergh District Council dealt with three abandoned vehicles and found a further four more to investigate. Police officers seized two vehicles which were uninsured, and advisory and prohibition notices were also given out for vehicles with defects.

One person was arrested and charged with driving whilst disqualified and he is due before Bury Magistrates on Thursday 20th December.

Babergh District Council's Waste Team found 22 incidences of graffiti,



County and Babergh councillor Colin Spence (pictured centre) cleans up in Sudbury.

which were either cleaned up or reported to be cleaned up later. 46 bags of rubbish were collected, and seven shopping trolleys were recovered.

A play area was safety checked, and Suffolk Fire and Rescue carried out 40 home fire safety checks.

Councillor Colin Spence, assistant portfolio holder for public protection and local county councillor said, "Today's Impact Day is a great example of joint working to combat issues affecting this area of Sudbury. These are real issues affecting real people and it is important that we take action and are seen by the whole community to improve local areas."

Sudbury Neighbourhood Inspector Tristan Pepper was very pleased with the results of the day. "It's great to see so many people coming together to make a real difference in this community. All their hard work means the Springlands area will be a more pleasant place to live and work. All the partners who took part in today's operation now have a shared knowledge of the issues and concerns present in this area of Sudbury, and we will continue to work together to build on today's achievements."

There are 47 Safer Neighbourhood Teams across Suffolk. The teams are made up of police officers, police community support officers and other police staff working alongside councils, community partners and volunteers. They will be listening to people's concerns, working together to solve problems and keeping the community informed about progress.

People can find out more about their local team by logging on to the Safer Neighbourhoods website: www.safersuffolk.org.uk - where they can search for their team by typing in their postcode, or by searching by parish or district/borough council ward. There is also an A to Z of the teams.

[Back to top](#)

Strengthening families

Contact: Jacci Spashett,
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Bringing up children is not easy and a wide range of help is at hand for parents in Suffolk – providing they know where to find it.

Jacqui Spashett was recently appointed as Senior Parenting Practitioner to co-ordinate parenting provision in Ipswich, look at gaps in services and work with other parents and agencies to ensure families can get help when and where they need it. Her role is part of Ipswich's Respect Zone status with funding from the Home Office to tackle anti-social behaviour through early intervention with families of children aged between three and 14 years.

An experienced family support worker, Jacqui draws upon her own memories of being a worried parent and not knowing where to turn when she had problems with her children: She said "When my children were almost grown up I discovered that there were an assortment of options I could have taken to help me gain some 'top tips'. I just didn't know that they were there. It is now my pleasure to be able to let parents know what support is available in the Ipswich area and introduce them to networks that will reveal the answers to the tantrums, tears and tribulations of being a parent."

"Parenting is not all common sense when it comes to handling children's

behaviour. My work with the Ipswich Family Support Service has convinced me that early intervention is the key to supporting families to help themselves.

“There are lots of agencies taking different approaches to parenting, but what’s important is that we all promote positive parenting, link up what we’ve got and work together to fill the gaps to provide what parents are asking for. There is less provision after school and in the evening when more working parents and carers could attend and transport is also a problem for many families,” she said.

Jacci is working closely with, Suffolk Primary Care Trust health visitors, Suffolk County Council’s Adult and Community Learning, Children Centres and education teams, CAMHS (Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services), Parent Partnership, Anglia Care Trust and other voluntary groups.

She is also co-ordinating the formation of new ‘Strengthening Families’ groups for parents of 10-14 year olds with potential anti-social behaviour issues, referred through the Anti-Social Behaviour Network and supported by two new Assertive Outreach Workers.

Parenting courses can now be made a condition of young people’s Anti-social Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) linked to a Parenting Contract to help families find out how they can adapt their own behaviour and work with their children.

One parent of a teenage girl recently wrote: “To know I can pick up the phone and know you will give me advice even if you think I won’t like it means a lot.”

[Back to top](#)

Play Your Part DVD launched in Suffolk

Contact: Alan Keely,
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A new Play Your Part DVD has been launched to show how staff and councillors across Suffolk can play their part in tackling community safety issues.

Produced by Suffolk County Council’s Social Inclusion and Diversity team, with the help of district and borough councils, the police and other partners, the 10-minute DVD is part of a training package to help people understand their responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Play Your Part

0845 603 4715

The high quality DVD is narrated by television presenter Eamonn Holmes and features a wide cross-section of staff, councillors and local people filmed on location throughout the county talking about what community safety means to them.

Suffolk is a safe place to live with low crime levels, but people’s quality of life can be affected by problems such as speeding cars, vandalism, graffiti, dog-fouling, litter, fly-tipping, abandoned cars, noise nuisance, potholes, faulty street lights, and rogue traders.

The DVD will be used to trigger discussions with staff in team meetings about how reporting small community safety issues we come across through our work can make a big difference by improving services and helping to resolve problems early.

A single Play Your Part telephone number and email address provided by Customer Service Direct makes it easy to report any concerns or observations, which will then be passed on for the appropriate service providers' response.

The free Play Your Part training package including leaflets, business cards, pens and coasters is being made available to all staff teams within the county council initially, and will be rolled out to district and borough councils, parish and town councils and other partners' staff in due course.

The Play Your Part contact details are not being promoted to the general public until the scheme has been tested with staff and stakeholders, who already represent a wide cross-section of the community.

For more information and to reserve a Play Your Part training package and supporting materials, please contact Tony Fuller in the Community Safety Unit on 07919 165092 or email tony.fuller@csu.suffolkcc.gov.uk

[Back to top](#)

Firebreak fires up young people

Contact: ADO Jon Illingworth on 01473 588888 or email jon.illingworth@fire.suffolkcc.gov.uk

The latest Firebreak course for Suffolk teenagers with behavioural problems proved so successful that they did not want it to end.

Seven young people aged 13-17 recently completed five days of practical drill and scenario-based training run by Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service – this time at Haverhill Fire Station.

Firebreak's challenging activities are designed to improve self-esteem, self-discipline and responsibility among young people, who are referred by schools, Community Safety Officers and Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinators. The course is jointly funded by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, Suffolk County Council, schools and other funding partners.

The students from Clare Middle School, Samuel Ward and Castle Manor Upper Schools demonstrated the skills they had learned at a passing out parade attended by parents, teachers, firefighters, and Police Community Support Officers, plus representatives of the St Edmundsbury Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Suffolk County Council's Community Safety team.

Tyler Page, who won the most improved student award, said having to work as a team had helped him with his behaviour: "I wanted to prove I can do something. I just had to bite my lip and get on with it. I'd rather do this than go back to school. I'd like to become a firefighter when I'm older.

Assistant Divisional Officer for Community Safety, Jon Illingworth, said: "Working with young people is one of the key priorities for Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service. Firebreak is a very challenging course and it is amazing to see what the young people can achieve in just five days. It is a wake-up call for them and our firefighters offer very positive role models."

Further Firebreak courses are planned for 2008 at Stowmarket, Woodbridge and Newmarket.

[Back to top](#)

Keep safe on darker nights

Falling crime figures show Suffolk is getting even safer, but the darker evenings can make us feel more vulnerable, especially those who live alone. During the busy festive season we need to be extra careful to keep ourselves, our households and our neighbours safe and secure so that we can all enjoy the celebrations.

Suffolk County Council, the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs), district, borough and parish councils and Neighbourhood Watch are working together to improve community safety across the county, but to succeed we all need to play our part.

Here are some seasonal safety tips and useful contacts:

Your home

- Don't leave your home in darkness – leave a light on using a timer switch and draw the curtains at night.
- Fit a visible burglar alarm and outside lighting. Keep shrubs and hedges cut back.
- Lock all doors and windows and secure fences, gates and sheds
- Dispose of present boxes carefully – don't advertise what's new in your house
- Check smoke alarms, electric blankets and festive lighting are working properly.

Personal Safety

- Never open your door to unexpected callers without checking they are genuine. Ring a neighbour or the police first if you are unsure.
- Keep your mobile phone battery topped up and put in a taxi contact number. Consider buying an audible attack alarm.
- Make sure you are visible to drivers – wear reflective clothing, use cycle lights or carry a torch
- Limit how much money and valuables you carry. Avoid using cash machines late at night. Have your keys ready when you are approaching your car or home.
- Park in busy, well-lit car parks near CCTV cameras. Keep valuables out of sight. www.saferparking.com lists police approved car parks
- Where possible, don't walk alone after dark. Plan your route. Avoid isolated stops and sit near the driver or other passengers.
- Never accept lifts from strangers.

Contacts

To contact your area Safer Neighbourhood Team visit www.safersuffolk.org.uk or call Suffolk Constabulary on 01473 613500. Neighbourhood Watch news and crime prevention advice is available at www.suffolk.police.uk

For safety advice about bogus callers, electric blankets, festive lighting, smoke alarms contact Suffolk County Council Trading Standards on 01473 264859, or visit the county council website at www.suffolk.gov.uk

[Back to top](#)

Working with parishes to improve community safety

Suffolk County Council is working with district and parish councils and partners to improve community safety and tackle anti-social behaviour problems across the county, and local people are being encouraged to play their part in making Suffolk safer.

To raise awareness, a series of short articles about common issues are being provided for publication in parish magazines and community newsletters, with local examples and contacts where possible.

So far, articles have been supplied on summer 'hotspots' for anti-social behaviour, environmental issues such as litter and graffiti, the laws covering firework misuse and seasonal safety tips for darker nights.

Further articles are planned to cover common issues such as cycle theft, criminal damage, smoke alarms and fire safety, vehicle crime tips and bogus callers.

For copies of the articles or to suggest future themes, please contact Sue Burstall, Suffolk County Council Community Safety Unit on 01473 264288 or email communitysafety@csu.suffolkcc.gov.uk

[Back to top](#)

Keep fireworks fun for new year

Traditionally, November 5th is the time to enjoy fireworks, but increasingly they are used to celebrate the new year.

While most people enjoy fireworks responsibly, in the wrong hands they can cause real misery through anti-social behaviour. Many adults and children suffer fireworks injuries either through accidents or intentional attacks.

Letting off noisy fireworks late at night with no regard for neighbours can cause distress by frightening people and pets, while a dangerous minority deliberately use fireworks to intimidate residents and damage property.

The laws against firework misuse have been strengthened to protect communities and provide more powers to tackle the problem locally. Misuse offences relate to throwing, possession and controlling when fireworks are used, and other laws regulate the supply and sales of fireworks.

Did you know?

- It is an offence to set off fireworks in public places such as parks, streets and school grounds and they should not be sold to young people.
- You cannot set off fireworks between 11pm and 7am, except on 5 November, Diwali, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year, when the curfew is extended to 1am.
- Offences carry fines of up to £5000, or six months imprisonment and a range of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) may be used to prevent fireworks misuse by persistent offenders.

Fireworks offences should be reported to your local Safer Neighbourhood Team by visiting www.safersuffolk.org.uk or telephoning Suffolk Constabulary on 01473 613500.

For safety advice and further information about the laws against fireworks misuse and sales, contact Suffolk County Council Trading Standards on 01473 264859, or visit the county council website at www.suffolk.gov.uk

[Back to top](#)

"Survivor's Stories" DVD

Former victims of domestic violence have helped to produce a much-needed training and awareness-raising tool for people who work with sufferers.

The DVD, called 'Survivors' Stories', features accounts from survivors of domestic violence and is the result of partnership working between Babergh Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum and Babergh District Council.

It was launched on the first day of the White Ribbon Campaign in November and simultaneously online through the Forum's new website at <http://www.domestic-violence-survivors-stories.org.uk/> and social networking sites Facebook and MySpace.

This pioneering training resource has already received positive feedback and messages of support from organisations worldwide.

If you are a practitioner who would be interested in using the DVD as a training tool please contact Babergh's community safety team by emailing: community@babergh.gov.uk, or call Ann Scott, Community Safety Officer on (01473) 826616.

[Back to top](#)

Your future Link On!

If you have something to contribute to the next edition of Link On! please send your ideas to sue.burstall@csu.suffolkcc.gov.uk

[Back to top](#)