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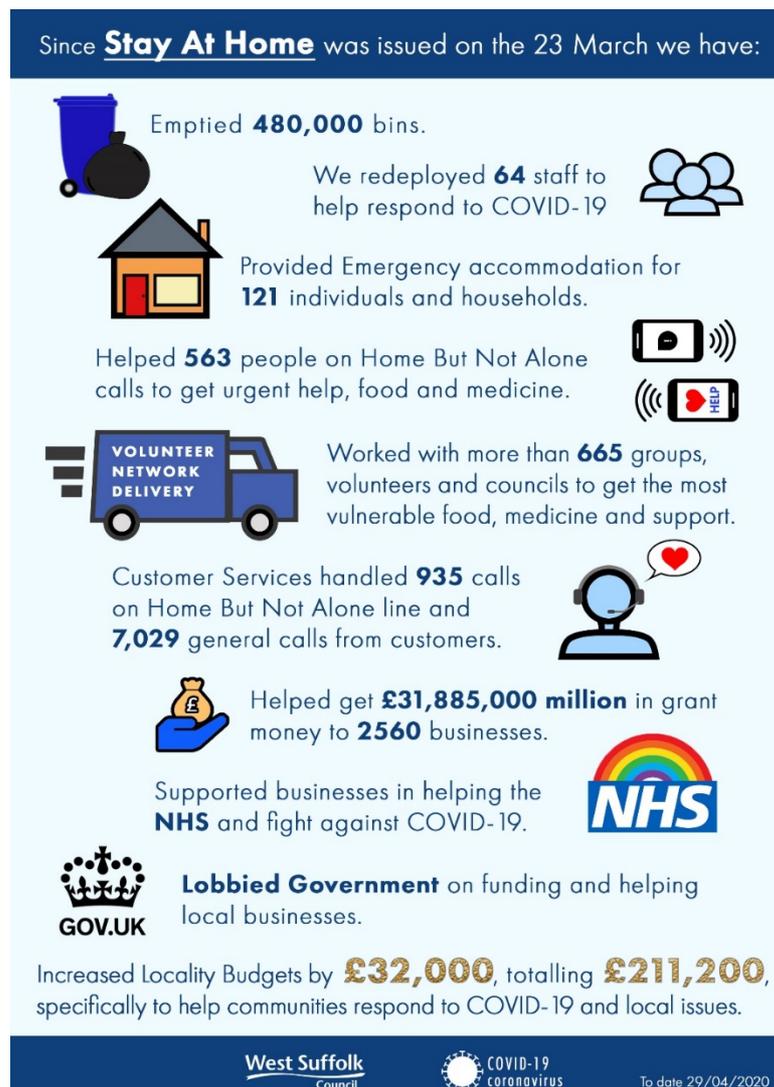
## May 2020 District Councillor report

for

### Ousden Parish Council

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**In normal times**, at the annual meeting of the Parish Council (APM) I would reflect on the work, hopes, aspirations and achievements of West Suffolk District Council (WSDC) in the previous year. But such is the impact of Covid19 on us all as individuals, families and businesses, I feel it best to concentrate on the here and now. WSDC is dealing with the crises, maintaining core services, helping business, the vulnerable and the homeless. The graphic below gives an indication of work in progress.



Since we launched the Home, But Not Alone Emergency Coronavirus phonenumber we have taken more than 5,000 calls and helped thousands of people with essential food and medicine deliveries. We take approximately 1,300 calls each week and help the most vulnerable in our communities. The Home But Not Alone teams also make proactive calls to vulnerable people to ensure that they have the support they need.

Below is just a snapshot of the great work going on as Suffolk comes together to respond to the Covid-19 outbreak:

- **An elderly woman needed help with her medicine collection, and we were able to put her in touch with a volunteer network who were able to make arrangements for someone to collect and deliver her medicine to her home. It also became clear during our phone calls that she was in need of bereavement support following the death of her husband, so we offered her some numbers for bereavement support. The women became tearful when she thanked us for our help and 'kindness'.**
- **A family-of-three where both parents were self-isolating and who are usually independent needed help with essential groceries. We were able to connect with a community group who were able to help with a food delivery and we also helped the father complete an online NHS form to register for Government help. This helped ease the family's immediate anxiety and ensure ongoing support.**

Phone calls are answered, and cases managed by staff at each district, borough or county council depending on the type of enquiry. Wherever possible we link people in need with local groups and businesses, who are doing an amazing job in our communities. This phonenumber is for vulnerable people in our communities, and not for general Coronavirus enquiries.

**Tribe Volunteer App:** This week you may have already received a phone call from the Tribe team asking about the help and support you feel able to give. We continue to match volunteers with local groups in your neighbourhood, but before this happens, we just need a couple of details from you. This means that - in time, and if you agree - these groups may contact you directly and ask for help with their community jobs. Your work as volunteers fits into a giant jigsaw of community help and support that has mobilised across Suffolk since the start of the pandemic. Some of those groups already existed and were doing invaluable work on the ground, but others were created with a very specific aim of helping those in this time of need. By putting your name forward as a volunteer means we have an incredible resource to draw upon within the wider Suffolk system of community help and support. Thank you to those already helping us with this enormous effort.

You may also have spotted a survey we sent round. The response so far has been great, and we would ask that you fill this in if you haven't already done so. From the responses we've

received so far, more than 60% are already helping out your neighbours, and 70% of you would be interested in volunteering for a charity.

**Foodbanks:** We continue to work closely with the 42 foodbanks across Suffolk to ensure they have the help and support they need. This week FareShare continues to ramp up its deliveries, with another 13 100kg loads of food distributed. We also received a donation of Cadbury Easter Eggs from Suffolk Police which will be sent to foodbanks via Fareshare.

**Community Action Suffolk** has adapted many of their usual meetings, courses and events and are running a variety of new online services to be repeated on a weekly/fortnightly basis in response to the needs identified in the recent VCSE survey. These include online networking opportunities, 1:1 funding surgeries in partnership with SCC, safeguarding surgeries & peer support groups, and ProHelp Learning lunches. For full information and booking details (where applicable) please see their Covid-19 weekly newsletters <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/covid-19-newsletters/>

**Update from the Suffolk Association of Local Councils:** Town and Parish Councils are embracing new ways of working with a growing number organising remote meetings in a variety of ways. Adaptations are also being applied to the SALC internal audit service as a result of social distancing requirements. Using Microsoft Teams, SALC are offering a paperless process to more than 100 town and parish councils.

In the meantime, please **keep going** and continue to follow Government guidelines and **stay at home to save lives**.

Finally, a big thank you to the many help groups setup and run by volunteers within the villages of the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward. As your District Councillor I have a small Locality budget available this equates to £475.00 for each of the eight villages I serve, this funding is available now.

Keep Safe

*Mike Chester*

District Councillor the Chedburgh and Chevington Ward

*Serving the Parishes of*

*Rede-Depden-Chedburgh-Chevington-Hargrave-Ousden-Lidgate-Dalham*