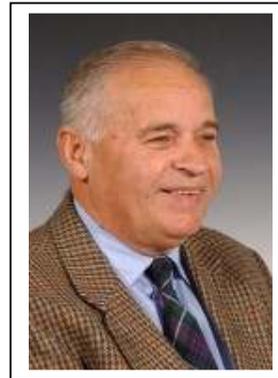


Parish Report April 2015

Councillor

Richard Kemp

Tresco
New Road
Long Melford
Suffolk
CO10 9JY
01787 378149
richard.kemp@suffolk.gov.uk



Mark Bee to quit Council Leadership

Suffolk County Council leader Mark Bee last night insisted he wants to continue playing “an active role” in politics in Suffolk, as he announced he would quit his role next month.

Mr Bee will not stand for re-election as group leader at next week’s meeting of Conservatives at Endeavour House and will cease to be council leader at the annual meeting of the authority on May 21. Mr Bee said he was stepping down as group leader to allow the Conservatives to unite after a difficult year. Last April’s leadership election was tightly-fought between Mr Bee and his challenger Colin Noble.

Cabinet member for finance Jenny Antill is expected to run for the leadership, and Mr Bee said he would be supporting her candidacy by proposing her for the role.

Mr Noble, who was cabinet member for finance before Mrs Antill, is also understood to be considering whether to stand. Last year’s election produced a very close result. Mr Bee is thought to have won by only three votes among the 39-strong Conservative group. The group is now only 37-strong.

Anne Gower has resigned as county councillor for Haverhill after moving away from the council and Brian Riley was thrown out of the Conservative group after announcing plans to emigrate to America while retaining his seat in Hadleigh.

Nominations for the leadership of the group effectively close tomorrow and the election will take place at the group annual general meeting on Tuesday.

Figures reveal number of racist incidents reported in Suffolk schools

Almost three incidents of racism were reported in Suffolk schools every day during the last academic year, shock new figures have revealed. Education bosses in the county last night put the data down to a raft of reasons including children repeating what they see on TV, but they stressed it was also important to tackle intolerance.

According to the figures, released under Freedom of Information laws, there were 494 reported incidents of racism in primary and secondary schools in 2013/14. This includes verbal and physical incidents. That is an increase of 130 compared to 2011/12, when there were 364 incidents, but a slight fall on 2012/13’s figure of 498. It has also been suggested that the number of reports could actually be much higher because in 2010, the Government said it was no longer a statutory requirement for schools to report the number of racist incidents to councils. From 2014, Suffolk County Council will no longer take record of this information.

Graham White, secretary of Suffolk National Union of Teachers, said the time teachers were given in the curriculum to teach these issues had been “squeezed” by other government requirements. He said the

rise in popularity of far right organisations was a concern and could lead to children repeating similar ideas. In 2013/14, more than half of the incidents reported were in primary schools, and the figures include seven physical attacks, and 22 involving a member of staff. Between 2010 and 2014, there were 20 physical incidents, 38 were described as both physical and verbal, while 1,677 were verbal.

Audrey Ludwig, legal director at the Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality, said younger children often inadvertently repeated racist terms without knowing what they meant. Mrs Ludwig said it was promising that schools were reporting racist incidents and hopefully taking action. In the past four years, schools in the south of Suffolk have reported the highest number of racist incidents, amounting to more than 50% of all of the county's numbers in 2013/14, 2012/13 and 2010/11.

Adrian Orr, interim assistant director for learning and improvement at Suffolk County Council, said the council worked proactively with schools to tackle racism, including training and support in schools and, where necessary, the independent investigation of incidents.

Police urge motorists to think bike and ride safe

A police chief is calling on motorists to ride and drive defensively and think "what could go wrong" as officers support a national campaign.

Police in Norfolk and Suffolk will support a national campaign led by ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) this week (30 March until 5 April) raising awareness of road safety as the motorcycling season begins. Police will support the campaign through enforcement, education and engagement; carrying additional patrol while highlighting safety advice and training available locally.

In September last year a hard-hitting video showing footage of a fatal collision in Norfolk was released and has since been viewed by more than 16 million people worldwide.

The video, which features film captured on the headcam of Norwich motorcyclist David Holmes, killed on the A47 at Honingham in June last year, was released with the aim of getting riders and drivers to think about road safety and ultimately save lives.

As more motorcyclists head out on the regions roads, Chief Inspector Chris Spinks, head of roads policing in Norfolk and Suffolk, urged motorists to look out for one another.

He said: "My advice is to drive and ride defensively; expect the unexpected. When approaching hazards, such as junctions or crossings, motorists should adjust their speed, allowing them time to react to any unforeseen situations. There are always other factors to consider including other road users, such as cyclists and pedestrians, levels of traffic and weather conditions."

Ch Insp Spinks said he remained "astonished" by the number of views the video has received but believes drivers and riders could still learn lessons from David's story. Commenting on the success of the video, David's mother Brenda, a retired nurse from North Walsham, said: "It really is amazing how far reaching it's been; only last week I was contacted by someone on the Philippines who had seen the video. "David wasn't blameless and I accept this and I hope the campaign has made people more aware of what can go wrong. It's not always just the life that's lost but it's all the people that are left behind; you never recover from it."

Riders and drivers can improve their skills by taking additional training, with courses offered locally through the Think! Road Safety Partnership and Suffolk Roadsafe. Suffolk Road Safety Manager Mike Motteram said the county Roadsafe motorcycle group, made up of Suffolk Police, Suffolk Fire and Rescue and County Council Road Safety officers, had devised an action plan for 2015 that encompassed education, training, enforcement and raising awareness to prevent collisions and to reduce the severity of injury in crashes. He said: "Last year was the best for numbers attending Safe Rider workshops in Suffolk and Norfolk, and RoSPA (the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) and IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) reported that many riders signed up to training

following attendance on the course.

Suffolk Travel Firm collapse leaves problems for clients

The collapse of a Suffolk-based specialist travel company has left dozens of clients needing help with transportation stranded.

Link Travel, which was based at Ashbocking, near Ipswich, went into receivership on Friday afternoon ceasing trading immediately. Its manager Edwin Rosier contacted clients and the facilities they use, including day centres and schools, over the weekend to tell them it would be unable to provide any further transport.

Five members of staff have lost their jobs as a result of the collapse. The company, which has been running for more than 20 years, provided transport taking those with special requirements to receive the care or education they needed.

It had 14 contracts to carry people on behalf of Suffolk County Council – carrying three school-age children and a total of 34 adults.

A message on its website said: “Link Travel (Contracts) Ltd has now ceased trading. We thank our staff and all of our customers and suppliers for their support over the years and wish you and your loved ones all the very best for the future.”

A spokesman for the county council said officials were looking into alternative transport solutions and all its clients should be told of new arrangements that were being made within the next 48 hours. In the case of the children, schools are now on Easter holidays in any case.

The council spokesman said there had been no changes to the company’s contract as a result of recent spending cuts that the authority had had to make. Mr Rosier said that the company had been folded because it had “run out of money.”

He said: “We have been trading for the last 20 years and have reached the stage where we could not continue. We have managed to keep going longer than maybe we first thought, but eventually we just ran out of money.”

The clients had a very good relationship with the drivers and he appreciated that the news would be disappointment to many.