

November 2019 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Thousands of illegal cigarettes seized in Lowestoft raids

Trading Standards has successfully targeted Lowestoft retailers in illegal tobacco raids, seizing 21,880 cigarettes and 10.9kg of rolling tobacco. The raids, which took place in October, involved officers from Trading Standards and Suffolk Police who targeted four different premises in the town. The cigarettes and tobacco failed a visual inspection as genuine products. Investigations into the seizures will continue and shop owners will face a formal interview.

It is illegal for anyone to supply and possess-for-supply such tobacco, be it smuggled, bootlegged or counterfeit. With these cheap products on the market, it is easier for young people to become hooked on smoking and makes it harder for people to quit and remain smoke free. Another consideration of illegal cigarettes is the fire risk they often pose. When genuine cigarettes are left for a period of time, they are designed to self-extinguish, reducing the risk of fires starting if left unattended. In the last twelve months, our Trading Standards team has led four successful prosecutions against those who have sold illegal tobacco. Sentences passed by the judge have seen total fines running into tens of thousands of pounds, alongside suspended prison sentences. It is an activity we simply will not tolerate; it has a negative impact on public health and honest businesses. We will continue to pursue traders of illegal tobacco. You can anonymously report someone for selling illicit tobacco by calling the national Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 040506.

Suffolk's gritting fleet gets personal

On 14 October, SprEd Sheeran, Benjamin Gritten and Grit Rhys Jones joined the ranks of Suffolk's gritting service as Suffolk Highways announced its newly named gritting fleet. During the summer, Suffolk Highways asked attendees at the Suffolk Show to suggest names for its 41 gritting lorries as part of its first ever Gritter Naming Competition. The service received over 500 suggestions, the names were then judged by a panel including Councillor Mary Evans and BBC Radio Suffolk's Mark Murphy. The people who suggested the winning names were invited to Suffolk Highways' depot at Phoenix House in Ipswich for a certificate presentation and photo with some of the gritting fleet. Suffolk's gritters now have their names proudly displayed on the front and side of their cabs and are ready to grit the roads when the weather gets colder. It has been fantastic to see the enthusiasm from Suffolk's children and adults during Suffolk's first ever naming of the gritters. Residents will be able to follow the gritting activity on Twitter at [@Suff_Highways](https://twitter.com/Suff_Highways) during the season and if they spot one of the newly named gritters in action they can send a picture to us on Twitter at [#WinterReady](https://twitter.com/Suff_Highways)

Braking Point returns to help young adults stay safe on Suffolk's roads

The Suffolk Roadsafe board is working with 16 and 17-year-old students to encourage young people to stay safe on Suffolk's roads. The board is a partnership between Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Suffolk Constabulary, Highways England and the East of England Ambulance Service. The Road Safety Team's Braking Point project relaunched in the week of 7 October and will be visiting 20 schools across Suffolk to deliver the Braking Point play. The play, delivered by Performance in Education, is designed to encourage the safe behaviours of both drivers and passengers. Once the theatre tour ends, just before the autumn half-term, the Road Safety team will provide classroom-based follow-up sessions in schools, which will continue to run into 2020. These sessions are designed to change student behaviour by normalising sensible decision making on the highway. These interactive sessions have been shown to shift students' attitudes to road safety and to provide them with more knowledge which they can take forwards as they become responsible drivers on Suffolk's roads. Find out more www.suffolkroadsafe.com/education/braking-point---passenger-and-driver-education

First time central heating systems for Suffolk residents

A further 200 Suffolk homes without central heating will soon be able to have their first ever system installed.

On 7 October it was reported that Suffolk's local authorities have secured an additional £760,000 of funding from the Warm Homes Fund. This will enable the installation of 204 first time central heating systems in eligible, fuel-poor households across Suffolk over the next three years. Around four million UK households are in fuel poverty, unable to affordably heat their home to the temperature needed to stay warm and healthy. As well as being on low incomes many of these households are also faced with the additional burden of relying on heating systems that are inefficient and expensive to run. I would encourage anyone

who does not have a central heating system and finds it a challenge to afford their energy bills to contact Suffolk Warm Homes Healthy People on 03456 037686 quoting the Warm Homes Fund or visit www.greensuffolk.org/whf to find out more.

Matthew Hicks - County Councillor for the Thredling Division

Tel : 01728 628176 Mob : 07824 474741 E-mail : matthew.hicks@suffolk.gov.uk