

## County Councillor Helen Swiers – January 2021 report

### **COVID 19:**

I can't add much. You have the Chief Executives updates. Significant progress is being made in the roll out of administering the vaccine to as many as possible as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It is very challenging, and it will take some time to complete. People are urged not to contact their GP Practise; the Practise will contact them.

But, in the meantime, figures have increased across the county and continue to do so. There is no room for complacency. People must exercise caution. The situation is very serious.

### **Silver Birches update:**

Mike Rudd and his team have been unable to make significant progress for much of the year due to their roles in responding to the pandemic.

No final decision has been made on the future of the site. Health & Adult Services are compiling an options paper which considers a range of solutions including replacement with Extra Care and continued use for future care needs.

As soon as they are in a position to do so the team would welcome the opportunity to update the Town Council on their future intentions.

Filey Fields Extra Care is due to open in June 2021. COVID permitting the Town Council has an invitation to visit the scheme.

### **Road gritting – Winter service:**

Deep snow and sub- zero temperatures across parts of North Yorkshire in recent days created treacherous conditions for highways teams working round the clock (sometimes starting at 4am.). The week after Christmas was particularly difficult due to black ice; I think we have lost two of the gritters to crashes in the treacherous conditions, fortunately no injuries. North Yorkshire holds good stocks of salt. But it should be remembered that while treating routes several times a day salt has limited effect on black ice therefore extra care is needed. Also, with traffic flow much lower due to lockdown restrictions there are fewer vehicles to drive over the salt on the roads, this is what helps clear snow from the surface therefore it is taking longer for conditions to improve. It has been an even tougher task for our highway's teams, but they worked tirelessly and deserve recognition. The County Council uses the latest weather forecasting technology in planning its gritting operations. This includes ice prediction weather stations, a 24-hour weather forecast and road temperature sensor data. The County Council's gritting crews are on call 24hrs a day from October until April. For more information about our winter service including which roads are gritted as a priority and when treatments take place please visit [www.northyorks.gov.uk/road-gritting](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/road-gritting)

### **Remote learning:**

The County Council is doing all it can to support schools to make sure every child in North Yorkshire can access remote learning.

Schools are currently expected to be closed to the majority of children until the end of the February half-term. Consequently, schools in the county are now switching to remote learning for the majority of pupils and the County Council is in contact with schools to establish if there are any gaps in provision of equipment, including laptops and dongles to access the internet. A scheme which saw laptops distributed to schools took place during the first lockdown, but the County Council is awaiting details from the Government to see if more devices will become available for children and young people who may have missed out on provision last year.

Remote learning is a mixture of online teaching and offline tasks and will continue to follow the national curriculum and exam-based learning.

We owe a particular debt of gratitude to head teachers, staff, governors, and early years providers who have worked tirelessly since March to rise to the many challenges the pandemic has brought with it and continues to do so.

We are also aware of the potential impact on mental health the closure of schools may have. The County Council has been putting extra training and support in schools to support mental health in recent months and all mental health services will remain available to any young person who needs it. They, and their families, as well as being able to speak to their school if concerned about mental health issues can access some of the online support the County Council has available.

#### **Scarborough Pupil Referral Unit:**

NYCC have commenced a non-statutory consultation on the lowering of the age range of Scarborough PRU, Valley Bridge Parade, Scarborough.

Historically Scarborough PRU had an age range of 11 to 16 and it is predominantly pupils within this age range who have required this type of provision. However there have also been a small number of pupils under 11 who have been excluded and have required alternative provision. In these circumstances a number of provisions in primary schools have provided places. In 2019 it was considered by officers that the expertise of the PRU was best suited to provide these places to the younger pupils. For the last year, the PRU has temporally accommodated a number of pupils aged under 11, it is now the view of officers that this should be formalised as a longer-term arrangement until at least such time that the SEND Strategic Plan is fully implemented.

It is essential that the Local Authority maintain options to provide provision for primary aged pupils who are excluded from school. The number of places required is likely to be very low and it is unlikely the Scarborough PRU would support more than five primary age pupils at any one time. The Executive Member for Education & Skills will consider all consultation responses and make a decision on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021. If approved the proposed implementation date will be 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021.

#### **Census:**

Population statistics are vital to our country: nationally, locally and within communities.

Once every ten years the census provides an opportunity to build a detailed and comprehensive picture of the nation. Getting the best possible response rates for the census will make sure decisions are based on accurate, high-quality data.

The census will ask questions about you, your home and the people who live in it. Any personal information you give in the census will be kept safe and confidential by law for 100 years. All systems, staff and suppliers and the way they do things must protect your confidentiality by law. It is a crime for anyone to share it with other Government departments private organisations and individuals will not have access to any personal information.

Ruth Dyble is the Census 2021 link officer for NYCC: [ruth.dyble66@field.census.gov.uk](mailto:ruth.dyble66@field.census.gov.uk)

Colin Bainbridge is the assistant link officer : [colin.bainbridge@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:colin.bainbridge@northyorks.gov.uk)

Further information is available on the Census 2021 website: [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)