



# **12 Months**

# **A Year Like No Other**

**Community Action Suffolk**

**Covid-19 Impact Report**

(October 2020 - March 2021)



**#NeverMoreNeeded**

# Foreword

**"What this crisis has certainly shown is the value of CAS and your links across the community... the exemplary actions of CAS ensured that vital communication & support to vulnerable members of our community could be facilitated quickly & effectively."**

Councillor Peter Byatt - East Suffolk

As we marked the 1-year anniversary of a year like no other, I am pleased to bring you the latest packed edition of our CAS Impact Report. Anniversaries are curious things – the word itself often evokes feelings of celebration and although with this one in particular it feels difficult to celebrate when there has been so much sadness and loss for so many, I am also very happy to celebrate the achievements of CAS and my team, and indeed the services and guidance across our sector that has meant people living in Suffolk are supported every day to deal with whatever may come their way. I never tire of saying how proud I am of Suffolk, our VCSE organisations and our volunteers and for me, that will always be something to celebrate.

Bearing that in mind and to give some context to my thoughts, there have been many highlights in the last 6 months...



- Our second **Suffolk Action week** culminating in our first online **Volunteering Festival** celebrating the phenomenal volunteering response to Covid 19 here in Suffolk.
- Our first **Regional Village Halls Conference**, online of course, enabling us to bring together the whole region with key partner organisations and offering expertise from national speakers and regional organisations to help community buildings navigate the tricky climate they have found themselves in.
- Further development of our training and development offer, leading to a **548% increase in participant numbers** from the same period last year meaning many more individuals have gained new knowledge and learned key skills to take back to their organisations where they volunteer or work.
- Adaptation of even more services and brand new projects like the **New Anglia Social Investment Partnership** working with partners across sectors to bring investment and expertise in to the county.
- Participation in **Eastern Community Homes** offering advice, support and practical resources for local community groups to help them achieve their housing ambitions.
- Leading the refresh of the **Suffolk Volunteer Strategy** working with partners across the system to provide a clear direction for Suffolk volunteering by creation of a clear action plan in 2021.
- And, of course, continuing to ask you what you need and provide appropriate packages of support, advice and guidance according to those needs through our **CAS C19 Impact Surveys**. The information you provide is essential to direct our work and the wider work of the Suffolk system, so I personally thank all those who participate, it really does make a difference.

For myself, work with key partners in Suffolk continues as Deputy Chair of the **Collaborative Communities Board** and Chair of the VCSE workstream, which throughout the pandemic has helped to shape key support and services across the county for local residents and their communities. The **VCS Emergency Partnership** continues and contributes locally to our work with the **Suffolk Resilience Forum**. We responded to and met the need for 3 requests for PPE and also brokered food donations through Business in The Community (BiTC) which have all been distributed to local foodbanks via FareShare.

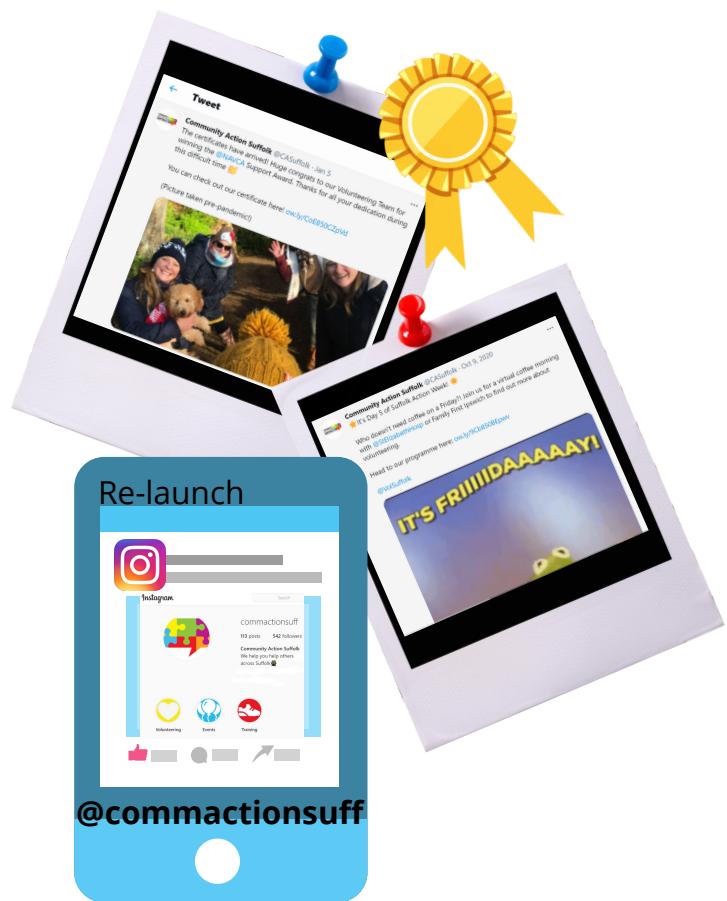
I am also pleased after having been on the steering group for development of a **VCSE Assembly in Norfolk and Waveney** that we have now appointed a chair for the Assembly – Emma Ratzer from Access Community Trust who will be a valuable addition. And finally, it has been our pleasure again to thank the wider community in the Christmas edition of the **#suffolkssaysthanks** campaign and more recently to play an important role sharing, communicating and promoting key information around the **Covid 19 vaccination** alongside partners.

## What next for CAS?

As the national roadmap has now been announced for how we might navigate through recovery and restarting activities, we now look to our own plans for how we return to the office safely, and what our services will look like in 2021/22. New projects are already in the pipeline to support the sector further with restarting community activity; we are exploring new ways of bringing you the information you need via some new digital media; and of course we are planning for Volunteers Week and Small Charities Week in June.

Whatever we do, you are at the heart of it, so please do feel free to contact me personally with any feedback or suggestions. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading the report and look forward to working with you all in 2021/22!

# CAS Communications during Covid 19



CAS Network News delivered  
**25,633** times, opened **24,188**

C19 Community Response Bulletin delivered  
**4,108** times, opened **8,123** 

Volunteer Network News delivered  
**4,277** times, opened **4,465**

 Q3 only

"Wow, just under 2000; I have to say that the number you have reached personally is exceptionally high. I'll certainly let you know how many join the event."

*North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group*

[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

[info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:info@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)



@communityactionsuffolk

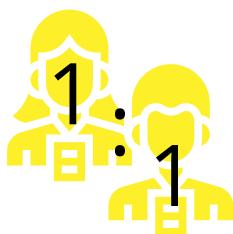


@CASuffolk



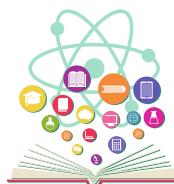
Community Action Suffolk





## 99 Funding Surgeries delivered

Funding4Suffolk visited 4,246 times



### CAS Training

With over 1000 training & development opportunities advertised on our website, and a 99% satisfaction rate, our offer goes from strength to strength...

**885**  
organisations registered  
for virtual training

**548%** *increase in  
participant  
numbers in a  
year*

"It was evident that Jatinder was a great facilitator and communicator but that she also came with a wealth of varied experience in the third sector, which in itself added huge value to the course. Best £10 I think I have ever spent!"

Rae Warner - The Mix, Stowmarket

*Stay  
Safe*

"From conversations with NAVCA colleagues I believe you and your organisation are somewhat experts in this field and I was wondering if you would be interested in supporting this work?"  
National Association for Voluntary & Community Action

**37**

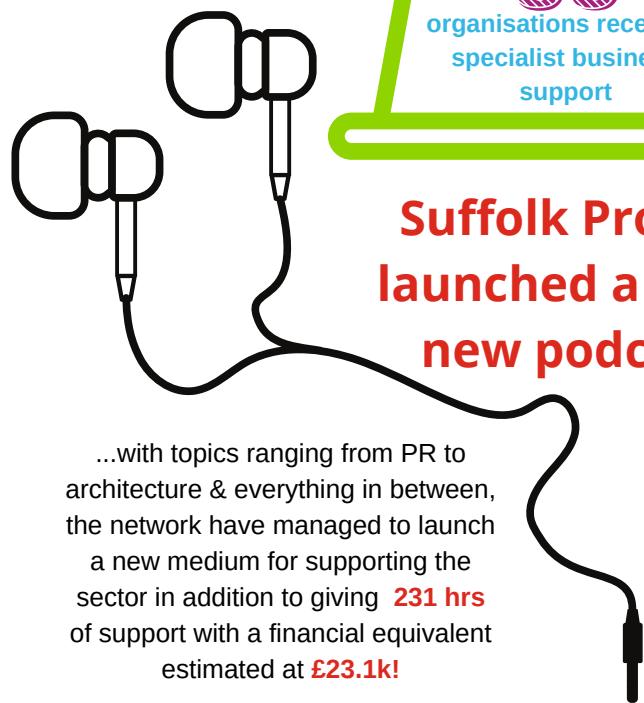
organisations received  
bespoke safeguarding  
policy support &  
development

**16**

safeguarding sessions  
delivered

**35**  
organisations received  
specialist business  
support

**Suffolk ProHelp**  
launched a brand  
new podcast...



...with topics ranging from PR to architecture & everything in between, the network have managed to launch a new medium for supporting the sector in addition to giving **231 hrs** of support with a financial equivalent estimated at **£23.1k!**



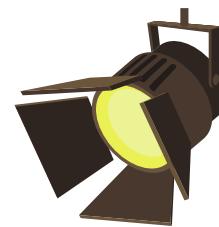
HOUR Community - Framlingham

As if they weren't busy enough already in the local community, during the period, HOUR Community contacted CAS to refresh the business plan we supported them with back in 2016. 4.5 hrs of support with Sabrina later and a revitalised plan emerged allowing the CIO to continue their excellent work in the community and plan for the future post Covid 19. Just in time for new funding applications to be written, support to be sought, and impact to be captured.

The team at HC, like so many groups & organisations, have made an incredible difference during the pandemic and the new plan will ensure steps can be taken to continue their vital work - well done all!

# Spotlight on...

## Village Halls & Community Buildings



Each year, January is a busy time for support to Village Halls and Community Buildings and this year has been no different, except perhaps to be even busier with additional support directly related to

Covid 19. However, the main event at the start of the year is Village Halls Week, a national celebration of these vital buildings in their local communities and this year we teamed up with regional colleagues for the first time to offer our annual conference. Rural Community Councils such as ourselves in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Essex came together to offer

**over 100 delegates** an information filled virtual conference.

Pooling our resources and combined knowledge made for an exciting programme of workshops, speakers, and seminars themed on 'organisation resilience' and equipped delegates with information, skills and tools to take back to their respective committees and halls to implement in their activities to try and become even more resilient in this unsettled time. The event was a huge success with keynote speeches from Lord Gardiner of Kimble and colleagues at national ACRE launching Village Halls week and reflecting on the recent 10 year survey they have conducted.

But of course our work doesn't stop there - business as usual also continues...



<http://> Clicked **25,347** times!

[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/village-halls-and-community-buildings/covid-19-information/](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/village-halls-and-community-buildings/covid-19-information/)

**170** Support requests fulfilled

Online 'Zoom' support sessions **x4**

**71**

Bounceback Applications assessed

"I just wanted to let you know that I've been successful in securing funding from the East Suffolk Bounce Back Fund... £2500 towards some IT equipment we need for our new Community Unit. Thank you very much for telling me about this grant opportunity. The teams are really pleased."

St. Elizabeth Hospice

### Making a Difference



When we put out an article in our newsletter offering support for those groups experiencing difficulties finding a venue to operate from during the pandemic, the Polish Saturday School got in touch. With some village halls now re-opening but hirers having concerns about returning safely to operating activities we are keen to help. In this instance, the school required larger premises to accommodate their growing numbers and Jatinder was able to send across details of various options in the Ipswich area. Securing a venue will mean the school can sustain and grow in the larger space and enable learning for the Polish culture younger generations for many more years.

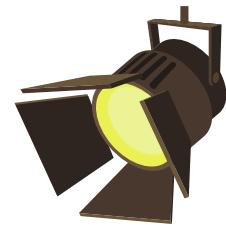
Since this happened, more and more feedback has been received about those requiring support to restart activities - so watch this space for more information on a brand new project specifically to help in future reports and on our website.

# Spotlight on...

# NEW ANGLIA

SOCIAL INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

In this issue, we are delighted to tell you about our new project...



The **New Anglia Social Investment Partnership (NASIP)** is led by Community Action Suffolk with Voluntary Norfolk, Suffolk County Council, Norfolk County Council and Orbit Housing.

The Partnership aims to support voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to grow and thrive by accessing appropriate social finance to increase their social impact for the people of Suffolk and Norfolk.

NASIP was born as a result of the success of the Supporting Social Investment in Suffolk project funded by the Connect Fund and managed by CAS from 2018-2020, and will run until 2022 providing a full package of direct support, measurement platforms, capacity building, upskilling and passing on knowledge about creating outcome matrices and developing social enterprises.

It is a way for us as supporting organisations to pool resources, skills and strengths from across multiple sectors by bringing together commitment, assets and expertise to tackle tough challenges more effectively and increase provision and take up of social investment in Suffolk.



"...the critical thing is getting people to the stage where social finance is an option due to overcoming barriers, capacity & stigma, and then focusing on funding options."

## Next steps include:



Calendar of events



New website



Recruiting Navigators  
to support you



Talking to  
Social Investors



*So keep an  out for more info...*

# Support for Rural Areas during Covid 19



\*Significant support over and above information sharing and resource requests (e.g. 1:1 support with a member of CAS team)

## Rural Proofing East Suffolk Community Partnerships

Having produced a toolkit, this rural proofing approach is intended to enable the Community Partnerships in East Suffolk to look at projects submitted to them for funding to see how they impact on rural communities. The tool is designed to prompt thought on how a project or proposal might be accessed by rural residents, how it might favour urban residents with better access to transport, and how to elicit views from people living in remote rural areas. Part of a broader piece of work that CAS is doing to promote Community Partnership membership to a wider range of VCSE grassroots community organisations., we thank East Suffolk Council for this opportunity to ensure inclusion is at the forefront of this work.



## Rural Housing

- 8 Parishes undertook Housing Needs Surveys (HNS)
- 11 Parishes have utilised CAS Survey Software
- 64 dwellings recommended to be built
- Working with 80 Parishes regarding rural housing & 10 regarding site finding
- 6 Parishes successfully set up Community Land Trusts (CLT)
- Supported Rural Housing Week 2020 through CAS network promotion and social media
- 1 Parish purchased the CAS Survey Software for community consultation re: Neighbourhood Plan progress
- 11 launches of ECH offering support for community led housing with 7 out of 8 local authorities signed up

## Eastern Community Homes - Launch Event 16-18 March 2021

The Eastern Community Homes Hub held its official launch event in March 2021. Various organisations and representatives from housing backgrounds were invited to attend. Several presentations and discussions events were also held around Community Led Housing Projects in the East of England.

In particular, the Hub launched its Communities Offer which outlines how Eastern Community Homes can provide advice, support, and practical resources for local community groups to help them achieve their housing ambitions. The support we can offer includes aiding groups to build networks (including strengthening relationships with local authorities) 1:1 group support, and access to the Eastern Community Homes Small Grants Fund.

The event was a huge success. Through various conversations with Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Local Authority partners, all but one Local Authority have signed up to support the Hub and access the vast wealth of knowledge and experience available. In Suffolk we have also had several parishes, developers, & Housing Associations expressing an interest in the Hub and meetings have been arranged in the next couple of months to progress these and to support Parishes in setting up Community Led Housing Projects and eventually local housing for their communities.



"I have worked with Sunila on 2 projects recently. I have found her very approachable & easy to work with. She responds very promptly to queries both by email & phone. She has given 2 presentations to the parish councils I work for. I have been impressed by the clarity of information & her knowledge. She is always willing to answer questions & if she doesn't have the answer she will find out & get back to me."



# Community & Voluntary Action during Covid 19

In a year such as this, it's no surprise that the CAS Volunteer Services team have continued to be busy over the last 6 months. The team **delivered 4 networking events, 4 Volunteer Management Courses to 27 participants, and 3 Volunteer Passport courses to 29 participants**, as well as hosting the second Suffolk Action Week in October and supporting many more individual organisations and volunteers.

"Just wanted to say thank you for the course last week. It made us all think and most importantly it gave our Community Champions that secure grounding for us to move on."



## Schools Rapid Testing Programme

Following a pilot partnership with Volunteering Matters, Community Action Suffolk have worked alongside Ipswich Academy, Stoke High School and Thomas Gainsborough School to quickly recruit over 30 enthusiastic volunteers to support and deliver the School Rapid Testing Programme.

With very little notice, volunteers with a range of skills and experiences, put themselves forward to help their local school prioritise the safety of young people and their families over the last 2 weeks.

Majority of feedback from schools and volunteers has been glowing and it has been very heartening hearing how Suffolk communities of schools, staff, young people, and volunteers came together to support each other and help children return to school safely.

"We were incredibly grateful for the support we received from Community Action Suffolk because within days they were able to find us the most amazing volunteers. The commitment they have given to our school and our students has been overwhelming and we are incredibly grateful and indebted to them."

#VolunteerSuffolk  
BE AMAZING. BE A VOLUNTEER.

230

Volunteers registered on  
Volunteer Suffolk

*"It's great to be in a space which challenges your thinking. learning from others experiences and developing ideas to progress and keep our volunteering offer current, relevant, inclusive and fun. This seems particularly of the moment as people's attitudes towards volunteering have changed in the past year."*

Volunteer Suffolk  
BE AMAZING. BE A VOLUNTEER

East Suffolk is a beautiful place to live, work, visit and volunteer

Have you considered volunteering?

"My confidence is growing, the skills and practical experiences I'm gaining are priceless!

What roles can opportunities one another, whether you're interested in fundraising, befriending, food, families, young people, mental health, or anything else, there is an opportunity for you.

Today, volunteering has never been so important - people from all walks of life, ages and backgrounds are giving their time to help others.

Volunteers are the very heart of our amazing Suffolk charities and groups. By giving their energy volunteers are helping to build strong sustainable communities.

Want to have an impact on reducing reoffending and preventing homelessness?

Become a Volunteer Mentor for a reduced rate of just £10 per hour. You will be matched with a young person who has a history of offending or reoffending. Your One Place has a programme of training and support to help you become a successful mentor. Various volunteering projects and will support you every step of the way.

Click here to find out more >

Experience the beauty and caring nature of East Suffolk by becoming a volunteer

Citizens Advice is always looking for volunteers to help...

Do you desire to share your enjoyment of nature with a captive audience? Are you interested in working with children?

Volundance Farm welcomes volunteers every weekend to help with feeding, cleaning, washing, school runs, and general farm work. Your One Place has a programme of training and support to help you become a successful volunteer. Various volunteering projects and will support you every step of the way.

Click here to find out more >

Volunteer Suffolk  
BE AMAZING. BE A VOLUNTEER

## Suffolk Volunteer Strategy Refresh

We have been the lead organisation in the refresh of the Volunteer Strategy for Suffolk, pulling together partners from Health, District and County Councils, VCSE sector and Police. The result is a refreshed strategy that is clear and easy to read and has received positive feedback with energy from partners to develop an action plan going forward. The Strategy will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing board in July.



SUFFOLK VOLUNTEERING STRATEGY

2021 - 2024

Volunteers at Riding for the Disabled Woodbridge



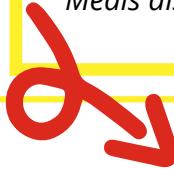
# Community & Voluntary Action during Covid 19

## Lowestoft Community Capacity Project

578  Facebook likes      30 Individuals supported by Feed Waveney Community

300+ People supported EVERY week by Kirkley pantry

150+ Meals distributed to families by FISH during February half term



Covid 19 has had a drastic impact on food poverty and accessibility. The Community Enablers in Lowestoft have been working with local partners on a range of initiatives to help overcome this issue including supporting the launch of the first local Food Pantry in East Anglia at Kirkley, working with the Salvation Army to support FISH to find venues from which to operate, working with Feed Waveney Community who support those most vulnerable in our communities with a hot meal delivery service, working with Outreach on the Streets who provide food parcels to those in need, and supporting the Lowestoft Food Forum which now has more than 50 members. Tackling food poverty is a key priority across our system and we are proud to support these projects in any way we can.

## Local Conversation in Kirkley...

The subject of support for people with poor mental health and signposting for those in crisis or at risk of suicide has often been mentioned to the forum in conversation and consultation with local residents. Instances of poor mental health has increased during the pandemic with feelings of social isolation, depression and anxiety all being cited in the local area as pertinent issues. As such, the forum advertised The Mental Health First Aid (MHFA England) course recognised as providing participants with the skills and knowledge required to give initial information and support to someone who needs it.

All places filled up in a day resulting in 14 people across 2 groups now able to help their friends, families and/or colleagues if needed.



"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for this amazing course, I would not have been able to afford this on my own income. I've learned so much, and have taken away a lot of information, I feel I can now help others to the best of my abilities. Thank you"

Mental Health First Aid course delegate



Started as a response by 'This Community Can' to tackle isolation caused or compounded by Covid 19, Buddy Up is proving to be a lifeline for Suffolk residents.

As restrictions ease, isolated people across Suffolk are understandably anxious about engaging or emerging post-shielding. A supportive buddy provides a link to local community and supports a range of activities from first walks to local shops to more ambitious outings.

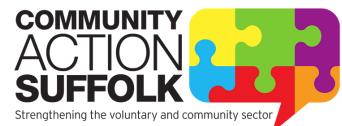
Volunteers have been given a range of training in skills to help them in this very special role. From safeguarding to 'Positive conversations' and 'Make every Contact Count' from One Life Suffolk; they are mindful that their relationship will be crucial in enabling their linked friends to move forward and feel empowered to do so.

## 64 linked buddies



R is a mother of six children who I first met 2 ½ years ago at the first Meet Up Monday session in the Suffolk Punch. R was feeling overwhelmed by her situation but still found the strength to work alongside other residents in supporting her community. From engaging in the project at a basic level, showing up at events, sharing her thoughts and views, to being part of a group building and developing a new asset in the community and taking the lead on social media. You could see R develop more confidence as she facilitated a craft table at one of our events and inputting ideas for future events. With this new confidence R applied for a course to become a play leader at the local primary school which she passed, to become a relief mid-day supervisor at the school and recently to apply for a permanent position. This does not mean R has taken her eye off her community role, she has recently developed a Facebook group for the allotment and is keeping an eye on the play pod at the school to see how it could be used out of school hours for the community. Well done R!

# Community & Voluntary Action during Covid 19



## Good Neighbour Network & Mutual Aid Groups

Across Suffolk, we continue to support many communities and their volunteers leading Covid-19 response/emergency mutual aid support groups to help make their activities safe & sustainable, and in the last 6 months we've **welcomed 4 new groups to the Suffolk Good Neighbour Network** as well as an honorary member in Highnam, Gloucestershire which launched with support from the Suffolk Good Neighbour Network!

- 3** Virtual Coffee Mornings
- 6** Radio Interviews
- 13,545** facebook Reach
- 2** TV Appearances
- 3** Newspaper Articles

In the last quarter, Barton Mills have also joined other schemes across Suffolk with their presentation

of the Lord Lieutenant Of Suffolk Award in recognition of outstanding service to the community in Suffolk during Covid 19 from Clare Countess of Euston, HM Lord Lieutenant, and Bridget McIntyre

MBE, Suffolk's High Sheriff. It is an absolute pleasure to see schemes such as this honoured in this way - well done to you all, you are incredible!



## Networking, Learning & Support Week

As we weren't able to host the annual GNN get together this year with its usual opportunities to chat, share good practice and information sessions, we instead curated a pick and mix week of networking, learning and support sessions from 7th-11th December.

- **15** participants took part in *Moving Safely & Dementia Friends Morning*
- **11** participants took part in *Covid 19 secure Community Volunteering Webinar and Q&A session*
- **6** participants took part in a virtual Coffee Morning for Good Neighbours and Community support volunteers
- and our, *Sharing gifts of the head, heart & hands* video was viewed **128** times.

From these sessions, on-demand learning and support videos and resources were produced to reach a greater number of volunteers, GNS and community support from the new year onwards.



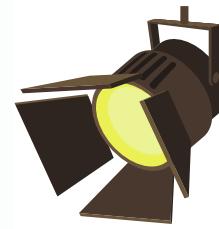
New website launched!

Head over to our sparkly new site to discover more about the GNN here in Suffolk, search for a local scheme and their details and understand more about the fantastic work going on in the county.

**339** hits in **3** months,  
recruiting **6** new volunteers

# Spotlight on...

# SUFFOLK Action Week



Get Inspired. Get Involved. Get Volunteering.

Suffolk Action Week (SAW) returned for its second year from **5th - 11th October**, in very different circumstances to the first, but still with the ambition to promote and celebrate volunteering in Suffolk. **Planned in partnership with 11 groups** and a **further 40 taking part** the week was a great success.

2020 was a year of incredible volunteering and community spirit and we set out to celebrate the volunteering response to Covid 19 as well as celebrate volunteers in other roles making a difference in our communities. In addition, SAW is an opportunity to support groups recruiting volunteers and show the public the many different ways you can volunteer.

With a packed programme of **13** events over **7** days, the highlight was the online 'Volunteering Festival' involving **50** groups promoting and celebrating volunteers. Supported by our friends at BBC Radio Suffolk the general public heard interviews throughout the day from volunteers and organisations and were even treated to a little singsong with Jon Wright!

**SUFFOLK Action Week**

Get Inspired. Get Involved. Get Volunteering.

<b>Mon 5th</b> Trusteeship & Environmental  Is Conservation Becoming a Young Trainer? (With Horatio & Alfie) Virtual Training Webinar (pre-book)	<b>Tues 6th</b> Suffolk Good Neighbours & Community Support Groups  Virtual Coffee Morning with Jane (Community Group Volunteer) (pre-book)	<b>Wed 7th</b> Volunteering Festival 2020 <a href="#">Facebook @volunteersuffolk</a> 10am-3pm	<b>Fri 9th</b> Active Volunteering  Find Out More: Virtual Coffee Morning with St Elizabeth Hospice @StElizabethsHospice (pre-book)
<b>Thurs 8th</b> Emergency Response & Mutual Aid to Good Neighbours Network! Facebook Live with Foye (@volunteersuffolk)	<b>Thurs 8th</b> Emergency Response & Mutual Aid to Good Neighbours Network! Facebook Live with Foye (@volunteersuffolk)	<b>Sat 10th</b> Volunteering Festival Essential Mix Rewind!  Find Out More: Virtual Coffee Afternoon with Family First @FamilyFirstSuffolk (pre-book)	<b>Sun 11th</b> Thank You Suffolk Volunteers! <a href="#">#volunteersuffolk</a>

Find out more, pre-book events and join the fun by following Volunteer Suffolk on Facebook or emailing [jane.perry@communityaction-suffolk.org.uk](mailto:jane.perry@communityaction-suffolk.org.uk)

© 2020 Action Week. Keeping the Community Action Alive.

**FESTIVAL**

**SUFFOLK Action Week**

presents a virtual  
**Volunteering Festival 2020**  
Wednesday 7th October  
10am-3pm

Join us on Volunteer Suffolk's facebook page as charities & groups bring volunteering to life!

Check out our Facebook page for more information about the festival and how to get involved.

Find out about great volunteering opportunities in Suffolk and your local area.

**Community Action Suffolk**

Page views up **391%**  
(**1065 views**)



Videos viewed  
**13,972**  
times

**7.9k**  
Impressions

"The chance to raise the profile of charities & organisations & hopefully gain new volunteers or supporters as a result."

"A chance to show people they are valued."

"Great to showcase volunteering as something fun to, rather than a list of stuff that you could do if you had some free time. It broadened the aspects of volunteering."

"A chance to focus our thinking on how we recruit volunteers."



# Partnership working during Covid 19

Working with key partners across Suffolk and East Anglia remains an integral priority of CAS. We continue to support the **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Growth Programme Board** and supported approval of 4 European Social funded projects through the **ESIF Sub-committee**.



## Voluntary Sector Leader's Group

The **VCSE Sector Leader's group** continues to meet monthly to address issues affecting the VCSE sector in Suffolk. These have included consideration of questions for the CAS Covid 19 Impact Surveys, presentations from Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG, CAS on Facing Our Fears – handling concerns over Covid, Suffolk Growth Group on the Economy and Business sub group of the CCB Group and the ICS on the roll out of the Covid vaccine programme. This group has enabled leaders and CEO's in the VCSE across Suffolk to get together and discuss common issues and find solutions. It has also led to links being made between various sector organisations and the LEP.

## Government Green Paper on 'Transforming Public Procurement'

The proposals in this Green Paper are intended to shape the future of public procurement in this country for many years to come. The government's goal is to speed up and simplify our procurement processes, place value for money at their heart, and unleash opportunities for small businesses, charities and social enterprises to innovate in public service delivery.

The Green Paper identified social value as a key part of the procurement process, along with a desire to 'open up' government procurement to the wider VCSE and SME sectors. CAS worked with the Suffolk VCSE Leaders group to identify issues that we wanted to feed back as a sector - these included:

- The limited scope of social value in the Green Paper – largely limited to environmental issues, Covid 19 and climate change. We asked that this be widened to include employability, creation of opportunities for volunteering
- The use of grant-in-aid instead of contracts – grant aided projects are valuable in providing a degree of certainty – particularly for smaller VCSE organisations. There is also no mention of the possibility of a third route – alternatives such as local partnership based approaches that view the funding as an investment in existing assets, with wider social returns
- Increased use of local specification criteria such as local knowledge and proven local relationships

Overall there is a significant focus on the removal of regulations to allow greater flexibility for negotiation. There is also greater reliance on online systems to make engagement with suppliers easier. We welcomed actions to make the procurement process easier – but we highlighted the need to ensure that the online systems used are user friendly and work with older software packages as well as newer ones to avoid digital exclusion.



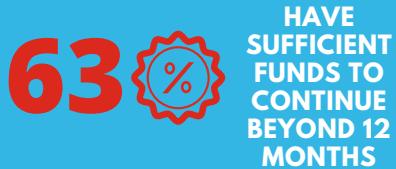
*And of course we continue to seek your views on the impact of Covid 19 & react with support to help...*





# NOVEMBER 2020

Here's what you told us



(April 2020 - 60% reported expected closure in the same period without additional funds)



HAD LITTLE OR NO KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**SOCIAL DISTANCING = MAJOR REASON FOR REDUCED SERVICES**

67%, 68% and 94% IN PREVIOUS SURVEYS



NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS EXPECTING TO FOLD WITHIN 12 MONTHS HAS FALLEN BY A THIRD SINCE OUR FIRST SURVEY - NOW SITTING AT LESS THAN 40%



**52%**  
DELIVERING SERVICES DIGITALLY

**60%**  
HAVE ACCESSED GOVERNMENT GRANTS/LOANS



**41%** SEEKING INVESTMENT BETWEEN £10K AND £25K

**47%** now have a **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

(Up 11% from August 2020)



## VOLUNTEERING



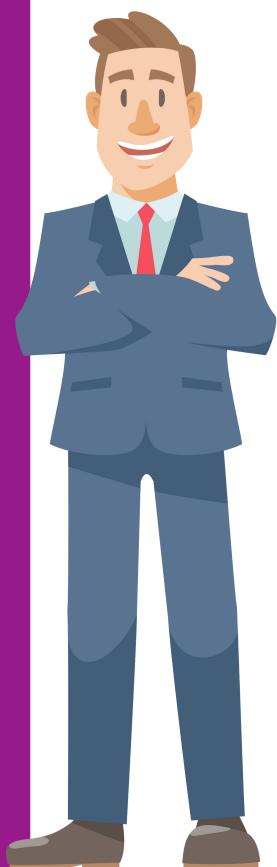
**SUFFOLK'S VOLUNTEERS HAVE BEEN INCREDIBLE**

In August, **12%** of respondents identified a lack of volunteers as impacting on ability to deliver

This number has now fallen to **7%** as Suffolk yet again proves the willingness of people to help

Based on 182 responses received from across Suffolk's VCSE sector

To read the full report visit:  
<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/covid-19-surveys-reports/>



# MARCH 2021



**64%**

HAVE  
SUFFICIENT  
FUNDS TO  
CONTINUE  
BEYOND 12  
MONTHS

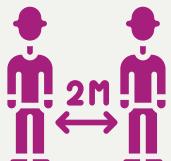
(April 2020 - 60% reported expected closure in  
the same period without additional funds)

**20%**

PLAN TO ACCESS SOCIAL  
INVESTMENT

**SOCIAL DISTANCING = MAJOR  
REASON FOR REDUCED  
SERVICES**

67%, 68%, 94% & 80% IN PREVIOUS SURVEYS



**48%**



**48%**

EXPERIENCED  
REDUCED  
DEMAND FOR  
SERVICES IN THE  
LAST 3-6  
MONTHS

**53% OF RESPONDENTS ARE AWARE OF THE  
COMMUNITY ACTION SUFFOLK  
HEALTHCHECK**

The majority (just over 39%) are interested in support in relation to finance and fundraising, with 35% wanting support to work in partnership with other organisations, and 33% wanting help with local knowledge and networking. Just under 27% want support with policies and procedure, and over 24% want support with governance and leadership.

"we have been in contact with CAS during lockdown and they have helped with Policies and Guidance immensely"

**53%**

DELIVERING SERVICES  
DIGITALLY

**56%**

HAVE ACCESSED  
GOVERNMENT  
GRANTS/LOANS



Down from Nov 2020

**92%**

SEEKING  
INVESTMENT  
OF LESS THAN  
£10K



**13%**

LACK DIGITAL SKILLS TO  
DELIVER ONLINE



**47%**

indicated they were unable to deliver their services  
digitally

*These were primarily (53%) venue managers who have been forced to close during the various lockdowns. Other organisations who indicated that they could not provide their services remotely were services and activities where social distancing and other restrictions precluded the activities from going ahead (for example sporting activities, neighbourly support provisions and practical services that required hands on support, etc.)*

Based on 270 responses received from across  
Suffolk's VCSE sector

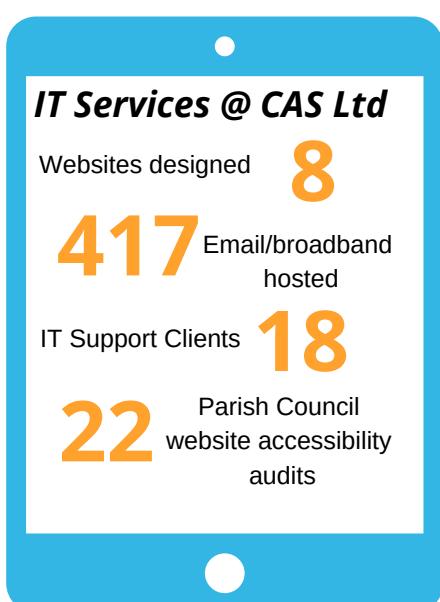
To read the full report visit:  
<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/covid-19-surveys-reports/>



# CAS Subsidiary Companies during Covid 19

Throughout the year, Community Action Suffolk's subsidiary companies have been working hard to continue supporting organisations across Suffolk. Owned by CAS, **Business Services at CAS Ltd**, **DBS at CAS Ltd**, and **IT Services at CAS Ltd**, provide cost effective solutions to business needs for all types of organisation and are an essential part of the support CAS provides.

## In the financial year 2020/21...



## Community Oil & LPG Buying

It may not be Olive Oil, but with our partners at AF Affinity, we continue to provide our Community Oil & LPG Buying scheme across Suffolk and Cambridgeshire to help local communities save on the cost of fuel in rural areas as part of a syndicate. The scheme has supported **54 new residents** during the year.

For more information or to join the scheme, visit our website at [www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/community-oil-buying-bulk-lpg](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/community-oil-buying-bulk-lpg)

"WE ARE SO PLEASED WITH THE

**Discover Suffolk**

NEW WEBSITE. FEEDBACK SO FAR HAS BEEN 100% POSITIVE, SO WE ARE REALLY PLEASED."

ALEXANDRA MAHER - DISCOVER SUFFOLK  
[WWW.DISCOVERSUFFOLK.ORG.UK](http://WWW.DISCOVERSUFFOLK.ORG.UK)

For more information, visit [www.suffolkonline.net](http://www.suffolkonline.net)

Thank you to our friends at BSE Rickshaw - glad to be of service & always happy to help

**“Louise and George have been very helpful to us. Each time I have had a query they have responded quickly and efficiently, with the result that we have policies in place for dealing with people in this challenging situation.”**



# And Finally...

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With special thanks to all our partners, funders, volunteers & VCSE organisations - we couldn't do it without you!

Thank  
you



Join our network, like us, follow us or tweet us on social media, and don't forget to visit our website for up to date information & guidance during Covid 19  
[www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/covid-19](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/covid-19)