

COMMUNITY UPDATE

COVID-19



01/05/2020



I recognise as more time passes with life in lockdown, following the social isolation rules becomes harder for us all. However, it is really important that we don't become complacent or misunderstand the guidelines.

In the last week, some retailers, such as DIY stores and garden centres, have re-opened and this, for many people, seemed to signal a sign of relaxation of the rules. Not so – lockdown is still on and the rules have not changed.

You should only go out of the house for basic necessities such as food or medicine or if you need to make essential repairs to your home. This, however, does not include home decorating. If you require something you can get many things you need by using online delivery. This saves you leaving your house and also helps to keep you and others safe.

It's important to highlight that businesses such as these have, in fact, always been permitted to open throughout this crisis because of the type of products they sell. Closures have actually been the choice of businesses and those that have re-opened are doing so with appropriate

measures in place to protect staff and customers and to maintain social distancing. However, garden centres which sell only plants cannot open because these are not deemed essential items.

I know that people are making many sacrifices at the moment to follow these restrictions and it is important to remember the reasons why – to stop the spread of the virus we must stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

It is clear from your feedback that you want us to police the public health restrictions appropriately and deal with those who are not following the guidelines. Since the introduction of this new legislation we've received 4,677 calls about this specifically and we have assessed every one. This number clearly shows this is something you feel strongly about. Just to update you, in the last two weeks we've issued 117 fixed penalty notices, dealt with 1,881 calls relating to these public health breaches and issued 804 warnings.

I have been overwhelmed by the support our communities have shown for our emergency services sunflower campaign which we launched with the East of England Ambulance Service, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and other partner agencies, almost two weeks ago now.

Beautiful sunflower creations have been appearing in windows across the county as communities display their sunflowers alongside their rainbows, as a symbol of hope for the future – and to show support for all our emergency services and key workers across the county.

Our officers have been delivering packets of sunflower seeds through the letter boxes of homes when they have seen these displays whilst out on patrol, and we are looking forward to seeing the sunflowers grow in gardens across Norfolk. The feedback for the campaign has been so positive that we are now trying to source some more sunflower seeds from local garden centres to distribute locally.

By displaying and growing these sunflowers, we are collectively showing our support to the government's stay at home message, showing solidarity with our blue light services, and protecting the NHS. It also gives us something to look forward to - by growing together as a community, we are sowing the seeds for a brighter future. Don't forget to share your sunflower creations with us on social media – we really love seeing them and we have a gallery of your displays on our website.

Once again thank you for your support and stay safe.

Many thanks - **Temporary Assistant Chief Constable , Julie Wwendth**



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