

School praise for student support work

Forest Hall School has received the Safeguarding Initiative Award in recognition of its exceptional work in supporting vulnerable students.

And one way it is helping anxious pupils is by providing them with an online contact form so that they can discreetly reach out to their pastoral care team or headteacher.

Head of school Hannah Jones said: "The alert goes straight into our designated safeguard lead email accounts, so I can respond as necessary without them having to pick up the phone and make what could be a difficult phone call. We have had a few children reach out in this way."

The school submitted evidence to show how it has been taking care of its community, including making daily phone calls to the most vulnerable students, every student receiving postcards from the school and all students contacted by phone at least every two weeks.

Mrs Jones added: "We've had so many emails and cards coming into school thanking us for what we're doing."

Paul Read, of the Safeguarding Alliance, said: "The pandemic has placed schools under a huge amount of pressure to maintain education stability and well-being for pupils. The award has been designed to publicly recognise and highlight schools who have demonstrated exceptional safeguarding initiative."

Foley is new council chair

A new chairman of Uttlesford District Council has been announced.

Independent Cllr Martin Foley, a member for 25 years who represents Thaxted and the Eastons and who recently left the Liberal Democrats, takes over from Cllr Richard Freeman.

He said: "I am extremely proud to serve Uttlesford, which has shown such tremendous goodwill and community spirit during the coronavirus pandemic."

Cllr Foley has chosen the Stroke Association as his chosen cause during his year in office.

Key plans on the agenda

Stansted Parish Council's first full meeting since lockdown will take place this evening (Wed).

Planning applications for the former police station in Hargrave Close, a proposed 75-bed care home at Almont House and land needed for extra burial space are all on the agenda. Councillors will meet via the Zoom conferencing app.

Frustration as Daisy May's Farm is told to stay closed

Hollie Ryder

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The popular Daisy May's visitor farm in Elsenham has once again been forced to close its doors to the public – just one day after reopening.

A late amendment to the Government's lockdown easing laws means zoos and similar attractions must remain closed, despite non-essential shops and golf courses being allowed to resume business.

Owner Rachel Berry described the news as a "frustrating" blow for the Hall Road farm, which relies heavily on visitor income to fund the care of its farm and rescue animals.

Now it has launched a second crowdfunding appeal to raise £17,000 towards its winter running costs.

"We were open for one day before we were contacted by Uttlesford District Council to say we weren't allowed to open," said Rachel. "It seems ridiculous given that essential shops can open but we can't, being an outdoor space.

"Uttlesford has no say in the matter. They have to uphold the law and they were lovely about it, but said they didn't know when we could reopen and there was nothing they could do.

"It's very frustrating when you think that the golf course and crazy golf course nearby are open. We had put everything in place – the people who had visited for that one day were very happy and we only had a limited amount of times booked. We have new hand sanitiser stations, signs and areas opened up to allow more space. It is very frustrating."

The delay in reopening follows a difficult year for Daisy May's in 2019, when closure of Hall Road for bridge repairs hampered visitor numbers. Then came the wet winter, followed by the coronavirus lockdown during the farm's busy spring season.

"We've barely had any visitors and we earn our money between March



Daisy May's owner Rachel Berry has launched a second crowdfunding appeal after suffering another setback

and September. We're scraping through at the moment, but we haven't got any buffer for winter," said Rachel.

"There's a lot of support for us, but we just need to know when we can open again."

A spokesman for Uttlesford said: "We appreciate this is a very difficult time for local businesses and we are keen to offer support where we can.

This has included the distribution of Government grants to help businesses financially through this pandemic.

"Our officers are also working closely with relevant partners and the business community, and offer support for businesses to be Covid-19 safe and secure as and when they are permitted to open.

"The Government is clear on the types of businesses and venues that

must remain closed to members of the public at this time and has issued detailed guidance across a number of different sectors. Each set of guidance includes ideas for business owners on how to reduce the risks to their staff and their customers when they open."

Visit www.uttlesford.gov.uk/business or email business@uttlesford.gov.uk for more information.

Rare shots of Stansted American airbase fascinate villagers



Old photos of American airmen at Stansted during the Second World War

An extraordinary collection of rare photographs of Stansted Airfield during the Second World War has captivated villagers.

The stunning images, transformed into colour, were given to Jeremy Goldsmith, owner of Mountfitchet Castle, by a fellow war enthusiast who discovered them among his archives.

During the conflict, Stansted was an American airbase and the photos show US airmen relaxing or alongside their bomber aircraft with ammunition piled up on the ground. Jeremy posted them on the Stansted Matters Facebook page and was overwhelmed by the response. "Images of Stansted are really

hard to find – maybe one or two people back then had cameras and the images were either taken back to America or never survived – so to find pictures of this quality is pretty outstanding," he said.

"I've no idea who took them, I imagine it was one of the ground crew there, but they're amazing and I had to share them with the community otherwise they're gone forever. I've been amazed by how many people have liked them – there's something about the Second World War that still invokes that community spirit."

Jeremy urged anyone with images or memorabilia to come forward. "It would be wonderful to catalogue it so that it's saved for the village," he added.