

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT
TO CAMPSEA ASHE, MELTON, PETTISTREE, RENDLESHAM;
UFFORD, AND WICKHAM MARKET PARISH COUNCILS
NOVEMBER 2013

PLUS DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S NOTES
(FOR MELTON; PETTISTREE

This month, I thought that I could touch on some of the routine work done by the trading standards staff, who detect and trading crime and prosecute the offenders. Parish councils can and should report wrong-doing of this sort. I am illustrating the work with four cases.

Case 1.

Last month, a company from Wales pleaded guilty at the Magistrates Court to transporting animal by-products improperly. Sheep skins were transported from a Welsh industrial estate to the Port of Felixstowe in a shipping container which was not leak-proof and so posed risks to public and animal health. The company was ordered to pay a fine and costs totalling £2982. This is the second time Suffolk TS had taken action against this company for the same offence.

Case 2.

After extracting over £23,000 from his victims, a local builder was given an 8-month prison sentence suspended for 18-months. He pleaded guilty to 10 offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations, which included not giving consumers the required cancellation notice, and making false promises.

(Under The Cancellation of Contracts made in a Consumer's Home or Place of Work Regulations 2008, a trader who enters into contracts with customers in their own homes, where the value is over £35, is required to provide cancellation rights to his customers

The trader needs to provide a written notice explaining the customer's right to a seven day cancellation period, and a copy of the cancellation notice itself, before he starts any work.)

Case 3.

A public house had its licence to sell alcohol revoked following a review by Suffolk Coastal District Council's licensing committee following a request from SCC Trading Standards, after twice being caught selling drink to under-age persons. The landlords of the public house had been previously notified that a test purchasing operation would take place. In February 2013, two volunteers aged 16 and 17 were sold alcohol without being asked for acceptable proof of age and, on this occasion, an £80 fixed penalty was issued, and a written warning was given about future procedures. In May 2013, another test purchase resulted in two 17 year old volunteers purchasing bottles of cider without being asked for acceptable proof of age.

A licensing committee spokesman said SCC Trading Standards had not been over-hasty or harsh in their enforcement of the law and had given warnings and advice. He said: "The Home Secretary's guidance makes clear that under-age sales of alcohol are always totally unacceptable. We have concluded that it is essential that we take a step in response to this review which brings home to the licence holders and the wider community the fact that this illegality will not be tolerated."

Case 4.

A Suffolk farmer was ordered to repay £83,000 under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 after a court found that this was the amount he had gained from not registering or recording his cattle movements, births or deaths. He had earlier been tried at the Magistrates Court in November 2011. As a result of the original criminal prosecution he was fined £15,000 and order to pay total costs of £18,000.

Following an inspection in May 2009 by the Rural Payments Agency, Trading Standards officers found 93 cattle on the farm that were not registered with the British Cattle Movement Service. Officers also found that 94 registered cattle could not be traced and were no longer on the farm during a time when the farmer was selling his own beef to farmers markets, restaurants and hotels.

The Government introduced strict requirements to register cattle following the outbreak of BSE in the 1990s, when it was found that the public were at risk of contracting the degenerative brain disease CJD if they consumed infected meat. This includes a legal duty to record the movement, births, deaths and lineage of cattle. Despite numerous requests, the farmer could not provide records to indicate where the animals had gone or to show the movement, births and deaths of all of his stock over a 10 year period.

Michael Bond