

North Walsham Town Council Report

January 26th 2021 Meeting

North Walsham Liberal Democrat County & District Council Members

COVID UPDATE

North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) is supporting the vaccine roll out across the District in many ways including the collection and drop off of the vaccines. The Council's Environmental Health Officers continue to provide support and advice to businesses that have remained open helping them to remain compliant with Covid restrictions. The Council has also engaged 6 Covid Support Officers (funded by Central Government) to provide across the District a visible presence to the public and to assist them in respect of social distancing. The existing traffic restrictions and free parking arrangements in the town centre remain in place.

The District Council continues to administer the payment of Government grants to eligible local business adversely effected by Covid restrictions. North Norfolk has the largest number of businesses in Norfolk eligible for these grants (around 4,500) and has a better performance in paying these grants than other District Councils in Norfolk. Unfortunately, the Council's winter tree planting programme has had to be suspended due to the latest Covid restrictions.

INDUSTRIAL UNITS HORNBEAM RD NORTH WALSHAM

The District Council in late December completed the purchase of three new industrial buildings at Hornbeam Rd. The Council did this as it continues to receive demand for its existing industrial units on the Lyngate industrial estate and needs to add to its existing stock. The Council believes it will help to secure opportunities for businesses to locate in North Walsham and provide local jobs. The rent from these premises will also provide welcome income to the Council.

HOUSING GROWTH & PROPOSED NEW ROADS

In the District Council's draft Local Plan for how land is to be used for the next twenty years a major housing development on the western side of the town (around 1800 houses) has been proposed to meet expected targets set by the Government for new housing in the District. Local Cllrs along with the Town Council have consistently argued that such housing growth must be accompanied by improved infrastructure including new roads.

A joint Norfolk County/District Council study on the need for new roads has been completed and was discussed recently with North Walsham County and District Council members. It found that a new link road was required linking the Norwich and Cromer Roads. More importantly, it found that in order for there to be a real improvement in the flow of traffic with this housing growth the proposed link road needed to be extended along Link Rd to go over the railway line into Bradfield Rd and onto the Lyngate Industrial estate. The report's authors said this was essential if the increased traffic from the new housing development was to be diverted from the town centre as well as take away traffic more generally from residential streets. Further work on what is involved with this extension is to be commissioned by the District Council. It is a major step forward as a persuasive case for funding for this extension can now be made.

NORTH WALSHAM HERITAGE ACTION ZONE (HAZ) PROJECT UPDATE

Planning for the implementation of this ambitious town centre improvement project continues. The latest step forward is that architectural investigators from a major funder of the project, Historic England, are about to conduct a detailed study of the historic buildings in the town centre. The investigators are keen to hear from anyone with historic photos or information. The aim of the study is to help inform the revitalisation of North Walsham and celebrate the town's unique character. A media release has been issued and it has been shared with the Town Council. Organisations/residents with information are invited to contact the District Council's Project Manager Jenni Jordan.

EGS

24/1/21