

North Walsham Town Council

District Councillors Report

Annual Town Meeting - 27 April 2021

The past year has seen a huge focus on supporting our communities across the district through the covid crisis. NNDC Officers have worked with Government bodies to support a number of key initiatives. We now have 8 covid marshals working to support businesses in reopening safely. They offer help and guidance to protect the public at hospitality venues, businesses and in retail. In North Walsham, NNDC offered our car parks to be used to support vaccination centres and covid testing stations. Twenty free places in Bank Loke car park have been temporarily designated as free spaces to offset the necessary changes to the High Street to help make North Walsham a safe place to shop and visit. Residents should be rightly proud that once again and at the time of writing, North Norfolk has very low covid infection rates.

Since the lock downs started in March 2020, North Norfolk District Council has administered grants to the value of almost £120 million to our local businesses. This money went to eligible businesses throughout the District covering 30,000 individual transactions. A remarkable performance over the past 12 months.

The local plan continues to be developed with feasibility studies at an advanced stage to deliver nearly 2000 new homes to North Walsham. Your District Councillors have insisted that a link road between Norwich Rd, through to Cromer Rd and onwards to the Industrial estate is included. The emerging plan will have a high regard to environmental and climate change issues. Councillors have campaigned for the highest build quality in terms of insulation, renewable energy production and non-fossil fuel forms of heating. Open spaces, wildlife corridors and sustainable forms of transport are planned. The (non-binding) regulation 18 consultation took place 2 years ago; our Officers have been working hard to incorporate the views raised by local residents, the TC and local businesses. A second (reg 19) consultation will take place in the summer of 2021 where more detailed plans will be shown and offered for further comment.

The District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. Our policies are being modified to include much more emphasis on providing a sustainable future for our residents. 20000 trees are already in the ground with another 60000 in the planning stages. We are working towards meeting our goal of planting 110000 trees by 2023 – a tree for every resident. Our carbon footprint has been measured and we are now actively working towards achieving a net carbon zero target by 2030.

Over the past year local Councillors have delivered the following initiatives to the town:

- After initiating a £100,000 grant to NW from NNDC under the Market Town Initiative in 2019, the TC were able to resurface St Nicholas Court and offer free WiFi to the town centre among other initiatives.
- New Industrial units were purchased at the Hornbeam Estate to support employment in the town
- Secured £3 Million in grants from the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programme to be spent on improving the town centre; it includes cultural programme to support performing arts.
- Derelict land at Bank Loke has been purchased and it is hoped that this, as part of the HAZ project will improve this entrance to the Market Place.
- Purchased land at Midland Rd from Norfolk County Council to extend the free parking offering to residents and visitors to the town.
- A new bus shelter on Lyngate Rd was installed after requests from residents and with help from the TC and NCC
- 100 trees were donated to the Town Council and are in the ground.
- Supported the Community Fridge initiative in NW and across the District with Fridges now operating in Holt, Fakenham, North Walsham and Sheringham. Tonnes of food that would have gone to landfill are now being recycled.

Work currently in progress include the following :

- Renegotiation of the lease for NWFC to secure its future in the long term. Local Councillors have been engaged with the Football Association and the club to bring a new 3G pitch to North Walsham football club.
- Surveys have been carried out on Cedar House and options are currently being evaluated.
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points. A survey has been carried out at Bank Loke car park and engineering work is currently underway.

Local Councillors are proud to have supported no increase in Council Tax for 2021/22 . We have been able to deliver our agenda by the proactive application of suitable grants.

The Section 106 monies which were intended for the benefit of North Walsham's Memorial Garden have been agreed. North Norfolk District Council is about to pay the money into the Town Council's account. This means that the town will have the memorial gates, the landscaping, the benches, flagpole and other things for which it has asked. This has taken a long time but thanks to Tina Foster, Richard Riggs, Robert Murphy, Mary Seward and many other people this is a happy ending for all of us.