

Liberal Democrat County Councillors Report for North Walsham Town Council

28th of September 2021

What's Going on at the County Council?

On Monday, we met as a full council for the first time since the AGM on the 24th of May, except for the meeting called to decide about the completion of the ring road on the 7th June. The financial reporting has been delayed again, this should be presented at the November meeting. The Council approved the launch of a new £1m Road Safety Community Fund (RSCF), which aims to deliver 100 new safety schemes in local communities over the next four years. These community-focused schemes are of small scale (up to £10,000) and will provide an avenue for local Members to apply for funding to deliver highway improvements such as speed limit changes and other signing and lining additions or alterations, this is in addition to the Local Member Fund, which was recently increased to £10,000 per year, and the successful Parish Partnership scheme. North Norfolk will be in year 2 of the scheme.

County Council is promoting ways for people to improve their mental wellbeing. Using the Five Ways to Wellbeing or making an Every Mind Matters 'mind plan' can help people take constructive steps towards better mental wellbeing. For more tips visit the Norfolk County Council website: www.norfolk.gov.uk/wellbeing. The council is also promoting the nationally recognised Stay Alive app, which is packed full of resources, useful information, and tools to both help people struggling with suicidal thoughts, and people concerned about someone else. To find a list of organisations that can help, go to this page on the Norfolk county council website: www.norfolk.gov.uk/notokay. For children and young people, JustOneNorfolk offers a variety of resources and ways to connect with professionals, helping young people talk through their feelings with someone they can trust. Young people can also text Youngs Minds at any time to reach out to help that is available 24/7.

The winter 'Big Norfolk Holiday Fun' program will run from 20-23 December, providing activities during the first week of the Christmas school holidays. If you are interested in providing activities for young people then you can register your interest at <https://www.activenorfolk.org/organisations/big-norfolk-holiday-fun-providers>. There's a particular need for activities based around swimming and cooking/ food preparation. Families can sign up to find out more about the Festive holiday scheme, and whether they're eligible, at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/campaigns/big-norfolk-holiday-fun>

The Reduce Single-Use Award Scheme aims to cut out single use plastics and will see Norfolk pupils pinpointing waste from single use plastics and products in their school, and setting targets to tackle the issues. As they work their way through the targets, they will earn bronze, silver and gold awards. The scheme is open to all schools and the county council's expert team of waste reduction officers have put together a free downloadable resource

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pack with all the information and support schools need to guide schools through the process of cutting single-use plastic, plus lots of activity ideas and other resources. Forty schools will also be in with the chance of securing £150 grant to help them to replace some of the single-use items that pupils have chosen to target in their school. This grant could perhaps be used for a set of reusable beakers and jugs to replace disposable cups/cartons, refillable sauce dispensers to use instead of individual sachets, reusable cutlery to replace throw away knives and forks or a refillable water bottle for each pupil. For more information, to sign up or apply for a grant visit www.norfolkrecycles.com/reduce-single-use-for-schools

A new campaign has been launched asking members of the public to become school governors and play a role in supporting future generations. School governors play a vital role in the community of a school by supporting school staff and monitoring the school's performance. Governors work alongside senior leadership in schools to help advice and support on strategic decisions. If you'd like to volunteer as a school governor, you can email governor.services@norfolk.gov.uk for more information.

Cllr Lucy Shires – North Walsham East

NHOSC – Norfolk Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

HOSC met on the 2nd of September where we received a report from EEAST. There are significant pressures at our hospitals currently which mean that ambulances are waiting longer at A&E with patients onboard before they are then getting back out on the road. In August it was reported that the Department for Health and Social Care had asked the Ministry of Defence to provide support for four ambulance services in England due to high demand and staffing shortages. EEAST was one of the four. Military personnel were to help with logistical tasks such as restocking ambulances and routine patient transfers.

Written Statement of Action Improvement Board

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/send-policies/send-statement-of-action>

We met on the 17th of September and received a presentation regarding the current improvements made to the support for children with special educational needs and disabilities in Norfolk, and future timescales to further improvement. The biggest challenge for improvement is the lack of Educational Psychologists which means that only 11% of children are seen within the timeframe set.

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North Walsham East

North Walsham Rapid Response Vehicle

After receiving information from a very reliable source, that the ambulance service is set to remove its Rapid Response Vehicle in North Walsham, I have raised this with the Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the County Council. Following a meeting yesterday afternoon, the Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust has confirmed that they will provide a briefing to outline the reasons for this, and this briefing will also go to HOSC.

Speeding on the Brick Kiln Estate

I am continuing to work with the police and highways on how to best tackle the situation. However, we do seem to have come to a standstill on progress as it seems that nobody wants to take responsibility. I will update as this hopefully progresses.

The Town Centre

I am awaiting confirmation of the date that we should expect to the paved area of King Arms Loke to be properly repaired.

Illegal parking continues to be an issue in the town and I have witnessed on many occasions that the town becomes gridlocked with 2-3 drivers stopping in market place and holding up traffic.

Sadlers Wood

Work has continued with NNDC and NWTC to try and prevent the dirt bikes from misusing the woods.

After reporting it, I am happy to see the new footpath fingerpost to the woods has been installed on Plantation Road.

The visitors that we did have in the woods have now been temporarily rehoused and they left the area on Friday.

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Lynfield Estate Drainage

Following a site meeting earlier this month, to discuss the issues with the current solution, I have asked the engineer to write to all affected residents to update and letters will be posted out this week. Please see below.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Market Town Drainage – Hadfield Road/ Lynfield Road.

You may be aware of works to try and relieve pressure on the Anglian Water owned surface water drainage system which were attempted last September, and unfortunately abandoned. This was to compliment the larger outfall pipe installed the previous year under Lyngate Road, which has been successful in reducing the flooding risk in the town.

Works were abandoned due to a high water table making, rendering the design ineffective, so an alternative solution was designed. However there has unfortunately been some issues relating to the land ownership, ground water levels and the adoption process by Anglian Water, that we have been unable to overcome to be able to get this delivered this year, so the scheme is being reassessed.

I am sorry that this will come as a disappointment, that we have been unable to devise a solution to help Anglian Water and the town at this time. In the short term we are in discussions with landowners and the Internal Drainage Board to ensure the ditch network is clear from the by-pass to the Dilham canal, which will prevent the existing system from backing up.

Work will continue to see if we can deliver an engineering solution to help relieve pressure on the Anglian Water system, and your local Councillors will be kept informed of progress.

Yours Sincerely,

Phill Reilly – Programme Engineer

North Walsham Library

Three section 106 monies have been received for North Walsham library in the last 18 months and this totals £15,800. This is to be used to refurbish the library and replace and improve equipment. The library is set to reopen on the 4th of October.

Surveys

I was able to do a brief survey of residents in the Sadlers Way/Chestnut Avenue area of town, sadly I was unable to get around to speak to everyone, I will be returning as soon as possible.

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Pupils awaiting neurology assessments

I have been approached by parents of pupils at Happisburgh Primary regarding the length of time it is taking for children to receive assessments once they have been referred by the school. Having spoken with the SENDCo at the primary school, I have referred this to HOSC as the waiting times are unacceptable and our young people are missing out on the help they need to support their learning.

Vodafone

Residents across my division have been in contact regarding the poor service levels they have experienced with Vodafone. I have escalated a complaint to the CEO and am currently building a case. In order to be added to the complaint I need the following information emailed to me:

- Issue
- Date
- Time
- Postcode
- Phone Number
- Screenshot from speedtest.net

SNAP

I have joined the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel to work with the police on their community policing priorities.

Lucy Shires

County Councillor for North Walsham East

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