

North Walsham Town Council

Meeting - December 14, 2021

Report - District Councillors – West Ward

West Ward matters

The ditch to the rear of Osborn Close which drains the Lynfield residential estate has been de-silted by Serco using excavators. It has taken considerable effort to convince NNDC to take on this task because the land is not owned by NNDC who have no formal responsibility for its maintenance. However, in the absence of cooperation from Anglia water, NNDC have taken on this task for which I am grateful. I am pushing for 6 monthly schedule of maintenance going forward but works will be dependent on favourable ecological surveys. Keeping these drainage ditches flowing freely helps reduce the potential for water inundation of homes on the estate and compliments the other measures already implemented on this system at the behest of your local County Council members.

The **Hopkins Homes** consultation was held in November on land previously allocated for development South of Norwich Road. Local Members have ensured that all trees on the land have been issued with preservation orders to hopefully avoid another outcry over lost mature hornbeams in the town resulting from the previous Hopkins development on Norwich Road. I was encouraged to see proposals for low carbon forms of heating, EVCP's and renewable energy in the designs but of course, we will need to maintain our focus on these proposals as more detailed plans emerge. A reasonable level of affordable dwellings is being proposed which will reduce local waiting lists (currently around 1300). Of considerable concern to me is the incremental growth in town caused by these relatively smaller developments which may not offer significant infrastructure improvements for the town.

The **Paston College** proposal to develop land off Station Road was opposed by local members at Committee. Concerns over the width of Station Rd, traffic surveys, loss of hedgerow, loss of amenity land and drainage concerns were raised. The matter was deferred for further reports on these matters but is expected to come before committee again soon. This application had a large number of objections from local residents and if the Town Council are minded to, it would be helpful for a representative to attend the next hearing.

North Walsham Football Club - A new lease for the club has been presented to them. Despite an increase in the length of the lease several years ago, the club need a longer term to secure funding from the FA and other sporting bodies and help to improve the infrastructure of their facilities. NNDC have been able to offer help with these matters and I am hopeful that a new deal will be in place soon that will secure the future of the club in the long term. They do great work in our community. The possibility of a state of the art 3G pitch at Greens has moved several steps closer. The Norfolk Football Foundation has confirmed that feasibility stages have been met and tenders have gone out. With a fair wind, a new 3G pitch may be handed over in 12 months time. NNDC will fund a significant portion of the overall cost of the project.

New Skate park - NNDC were able to move rapidly to provide temporary free parking to contractors working on the project at the Victory facility. I was approached by Matt Smith of NW Play who explained that there was potential for contractor delays through lack of parking in the proximity. Contractors had been issued with a number of fines after parking on the railway car park – now resolved. Poor weather has been hampering the project but good progress is being made.

General

The EVCP in Bank Loke car park is now live. The project was dogged by delays not of NNDC's making. I am pleased that the current administration were Norfolk leaders in installing these charging points across our district's market towns with other authorities now playing catch up. EVCP are available in NNDC car parks at

Wells, Holt, Fakenham, Sheringham, Cromer and North Walsham. I will be starting a piece of work to see how we can roll out further charging points in our more rural areas.

Our covid rangers continue to work with the public and businesses and are extremely busy at the moment as cases rise. North Norfolk has remained well below national infection levels but unfortunately, North Walsham town is currently seeing an unprecedented spike in infection rates.

The district tree planting project is progressing well with 60,000 trees and hedgerow expected to be in the ground by March 2022. Congratulations to Trunch village whose community came together to plant 11,000 trees in their village in the autumn. We remain on track to plant 110,000 trees by 2023 and are still open to projects from schools, parishes and the general public Details on NNDC web pages.

The NNDC virtual Green Build event was successful with well over 1000 attendees to date. Many events can still be viewed on-line by visiting NNDC's web pages. Preparation of a climate change action plan for NNDC is at its final stages and is hoped will be adopted by the Council in early 2022. This is a ground-breaking document that will set out our road map to carbon neutrality by 2030.

A grant application has been made under the public sector decarbonisation scheme for Cedar House. If successful, the money will go towards replacing fossil fuel heating in the building and better insulation.

The bee colony in the cedars will be relocated elsewhere on 13th and 14th Dec by experts in this field.

Cllrs Nigel Lloyd and Don Birch