

HOLME HALE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00pm on Monday 15th April 2024 in the Tony Evans Centre at the Village Hall.

Present: Mr Andy Scarlett (Chairman of the Parish Council), District Cllr Nigel Wilkin, Rev'd Stephen Thorp, Mr Gerald Tranter (Fuel Allotment Trust), Mr Michael Buttolph (Playing Field Trust) and eight members of the public.

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from C/Cllr Fabian Eagle, Mrs Denise Scarlett (Governor of Necton Primary School) and Cllr Wendy McNeil, who would arrive late.

2. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2023.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th April 2023 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. Reports.

a) Chairman of the Parish Council – Cllr Andy Scarlett.

The Chairman gave a round-up of Council activities over the past year.

A member of the public raised the issue of the Necton sub-station and said that the original plans submitted impacted much less on the surrounding area but have since greatly expanded. The Chairman said that the Parish Council continues to lobby Breckland but the scale of the site is set in stone and cannot be changed.

b) County Councillor – Cllr Fabian Eagle.

A report received from C/Cllr Eagle is attached.

The Chairman thanked C/Cllr Eagle for his help over the past year, particularly in respect of highway matters.

c) District Councillor – Cllr Nigel Wilkin.

A report received from D/Cllr Wilkin is attached. D/Cllr Wilkin highlighted the Market Town Initiative and said that any improvements to the local towns were welcome. He also highlighted the ongoing issues regarding the closure of the Windmill pub at Necton.

In response to a question from a member of the public, D/Cllr Wilkin said there was no update in respect of the Statkraft application at Necton.

The Chairman thanked D/Cllr Wilkin for his help over the past year.

d) Holme Hale Fuel Allotment Trust.

Mr Tranter presented his report and this is attached. In response to a question from a member of the public, Mr Tranter confirmed they had dealt with eleven applications during the past year.

e) St Andrew's Church.

Rev'd Thorpe presented his report and this is attached.

f) Holme Hale Playing Field Trust.

The Chairman presented the report on behalf of Mr Buttolph and this is attached. Mr Buttolph added that the defibrillator had been accessed once although the pads had not been used.

In response to a query from a member of the public, Mr Buttolph confirmed there was no update in respect of parking improvements at the hall although it was hoped works would be completed before the winter.

g) Necton Primary School.

The Chairman presented the report on behalf of Mrs Scarlett and this is attached.

4. Open Forum - this is an opportunity for residents of the parish to express their views on matters of interest or concern relating to the village and to suggest ideas for the future.

In response to a question regarding the Village Gates, the Chairman said they had to be moved from the original position because of the width of the gates, albeit Highways had installed them in the wrong place initially. The signage asking traffic to slow down should be installed on them soon and it was hoped this will reduce speeding in that area.

Other points raised included:

The SAM II sign is currently located in Cook Road but will be moved about to locations approved by Highways.

The Bus Shelter on School Road will be refurbished when the weather permits.

The Chairman said the Parish Council continues to fund the permissive pathways in the village and thanked the landowner. It was possible that Government funding could return for countryside access and replacement signage may be supplied under a new scheme as the original signage is quite faded now.

Finally, the Chairman said that the Parish Council is always open to new ideas and welcomes visitors to meetings.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 7.50pm.

Signed: _____

Date: _____



Holme Hale Fuel Allotment Trust

Report for Village AGM 15 04 24

Important matters.

The trust paid out £2200 towards the end of 2023 to applicants who responded to the advert in Moonraker.

The trust have changed their bank from HSBC to the Co-Operative Bank and therefore making a saving, though very small, on bank charges.

The trusts main deposit account averaged 4.3% over the year and the £20000 with Redwood Bank at the moment is at 4.8% until next February.

At the start of 2024 the trusts money had actually increased by £420 to almost £89000 due to high interest rates.

Enough of money that is not the reason for the trust.

A letter was sent to Holme Hale PC asking them to nominate two representatives to serve on the trust, this resulted to Andrew Scarlett (already on the committee) and Simon Joll making the committee numbers up to the required number of five.

Finally a bit of sales sell, but very important

The trust was set up to alleviate hardship within the village. I would urge anyone, whatever their personal arrangements are that live in the village or even an organisation that supports the village and are finding themselves in need of support to contact the trust, that is what the trust is there for, to give people the support they need and help them over any of life's sticky patches and at the moment there are a few of those about.

All enquires are treated in strict confidence.

Please contact: The Secretary HHFAT Fern View Cook Road Holme Hale IP25 7DJ.



The Necton Benefice

Holme Hale Parish Council
c/o Tony Evans Centre
Holme Hale Village Hall

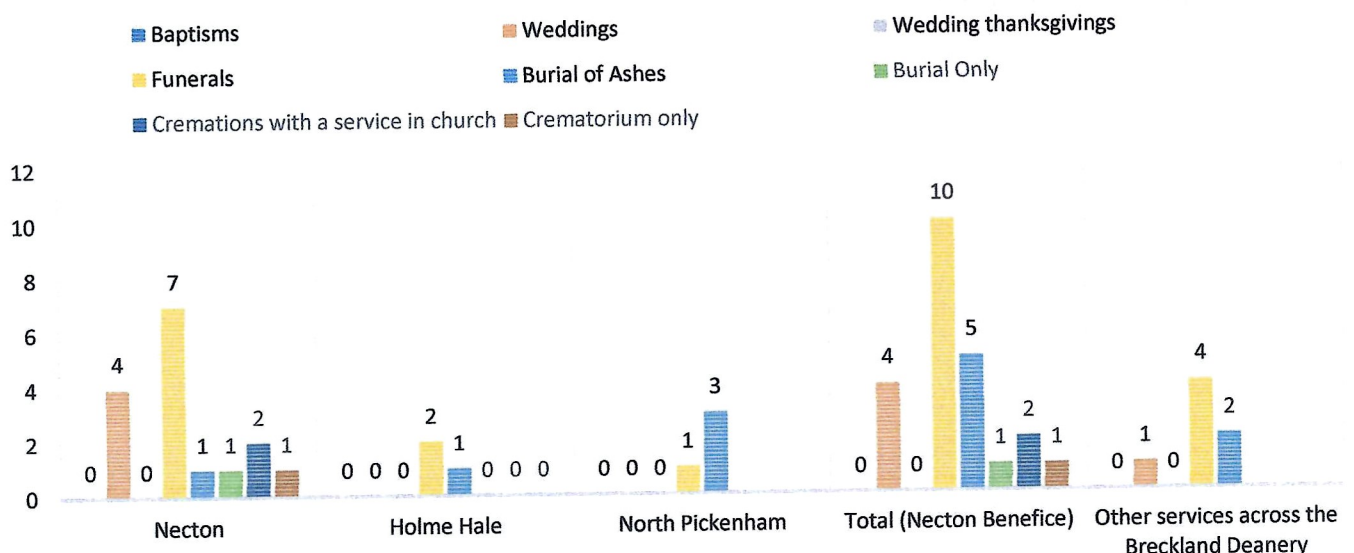
The Revd Stephen Thorp
Rural Dean: Breckland Deanery
The Rectory, 7 School Road
Necton, Swaffham PE37 8HT
01760 722021
slthorp@outlook.com

Report of St Andrew's Parish Church to Holme Hale Parish Council for 2023

15th April 2024

In many ways my report for this year might seem pretty simple and straight forward as a description of a village parish church – you might say that everything's normal - and that's actually the point, for we have recovered from all the strains and the stresses of the pandemic when churches were either closed, or coping with heavy restrictions, and now we have none of that – and it's glorious. We are a small but happy congregation doing it's very best to serve the worshipping, pastoral and spiritual needs of the parish and its regular congregation. And it's at this that I would like to pay tribute to my churchwardens Mr Andy Scarlett & Mr Gary Smith and all the members of Holme Hale PCC for the sterling work that they do in support of me and the ministry, keeping the church open and making it ready for service with the help of others in the congregation, not forgetting our treasurer Mr Geoff Tranter and his wife Lynn who work so hard to keep the church clean. Alongside our normal Sunday services, we have been able to mark and celebrate Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday & Christmas, as well as hosting the united benefice service twice during the year – in terms of the occasional offices we were pretty quiet as we only had two funerals and one burial of ashes last year, but we are there when people need us and as Parish Priest. One of the slight differences we made this year was sadly due to my own personal circumstances it wasn't possible for me to manage, maintain and edit our online services, with the last edition being the one to celebrate the King's Coronation. This was a personal sadness to me, and I know it was missed by others, but we continue to maintain our presence via church and the Moonraker magazine.

STATISTICS FOR MISSION 2023 (NECTON BENEFICE)



During 2023, we managed to do some repair work to floor boards under the some of the pews but in the light of our lasts Quinquennial Inspection Report, issued to us by our Diocesan Architect Ruth Blackman we are trying to get ready for major repair work to our roof, the south nave wall and buttresses which are in need of major attention. These is going to be a major project which will need significant grants and local fundraising.

Unlike our sister church at All Saints Necton, we don't have a formal Friends association attached to St Andrew's but we are very grateful to the many friends that we do have both within the church and the wider community who help raise money for our parish church. Their generosity of time, effort, hard work and good will is very much appreciated and one of the joys of the past year was to hold a special Sunday afternoon tea in church to say 'thank you to all those who have worked so hard to raise money for us, predominately through serving refreshments at Holme Hale Hall. Our church would really struggle if it were not an avenue available to us, but as it is, a few manage an awful lot to help us raise funds and pay the parish share. Thank you one and all.

In just a moment Mr Geoff Tranter is going to say something about our church finances, but there is one aspect that I would like to share and make clear. Last year Holme Hale manged to pay £8754 of the £10,060 allocated to it as Parish Share this amounted to 87% of it's request. This contributed to the £60,728 of the £67,063 that was asked of the Necton Benefice as a whole amounting to 91% paid. This £67,000+ is recognised as the cost of a single clergy person in a group of parishes such as ours - and this is purely for the ministry - the building comes on top. I hasten to add this is not what I get paid. It may be worth bringing to your attention that for this year the parish share has gone up by 5% meaning that St Andrew's has been asked to pay £10,563 of a benefice request amounting £70,420.

It's perhaps worth pointing out that contrary to popular myth and perception Anglican churches are not funded by 'the state' but simply by those who attend. So, please continue to support your parish church, if not in person, in whatever way you can (such as recycling your paper and glass in the village) so that it continues to be there when you and others need it. Every contribution and good will gesture is much appreciated. Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Thorp: Rector of The Necton Benefice
*All Saints Necton, St Andrew's Holme Hale,
St Andrew's North Pickenham, All Saints South Pickenham
with St Mary's Houghton on the Hill*

A.G.M. 2023/2024

As usual it is my duty to report on the years activities and events! Which the majority of you already are aware.

One of things people probably have not noticed is the Blue Plaque on the front of the building, which was awarded to commemorate the communities resilience during the pandemic. We were also presented with a Green Plaque for our help and service during the tragic Ashill Fire. Earlier in the year we had an electrical inspection carried out, upgrading some of the electrics and installing new emergency exit lights, all switch gear and distribution boards and now under lock and key as per requirement. After numerous attempts a smart meter was finally installed and is still an ongoing process.

We also had our Flagpole installed, funded by a bequest from the late Les Pollack.

New curtains have been fitted throughout initially funded by a bequest from the late Janet Bowers.

The Wednesday Coffee mornings are still very successful, as were the regular Quiz Nights up to the end of the year. We are desperate need of people to help organise and run future quiz nights and help provide food if and when required.

Our regular children's Easter Egg Hunt was a great success, with children collecting up over 200 eggs!

The Summer Fete was also a brilliant success, partly due to the fabulous fun dog show, and numerous outside stalls and displays, plus the wonderful weather.

Our children's Christmas Party was again a roaring success with about 35 children tucking into lunch and treats, and enjoying games and receiving a present from Father Christmas.

I should also mention our fabulous Moonraker Magazine which I'm sure is appreciated by all who read it.

All that remains now is for me to say a huge heartfelt thank you to the committee for their continued support, and also to all the friends and acquaintances who help behind the scenes. I haven't mentioned names for fear of leaving someone out, you all know who you are and what you do! I make one exception Wendy our Secretary, who works tirelessly for us and the Parish Council under extreme circumstances.

Again thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Michael Buttolph

Chairman H.H.P.F.T.



Belong, believe, thrive, achieve.
Rooted in Christ, we learn, grow and flourish.

The Governing Board has continued to work collaboratively with the Head teacher and staff, with many exciting, and new projects. Although the pandemic may seem in the distant past the legacies it has left behind for children's education, and their emotional and social wellbeing still remain, especially with the younger children. Mrs Long and her staff have continued to develop and provide learning and educational opportunities to enable them to flourish.

Developing the curriculum to be an Inspirational, Educational, Developmental and fun experience has been a priority. This in turn, aids the development of emotional and social skills that children need as they grow and look to the future. The Forest School has been a resounding success. The children love spending time out there and also around the wildlife area, encouraging and nurturing a love of nature. It also encourages the children to explore, imagine and develop ideas, as they are supported to explore and develop a confidence in themselves.

Work has continued to develop and embed the Vision and Christian ethos within the school and embedding the core values across the curriculum and the school. As the school is a Church of England school, they are subject to an inspection of collective worship and religious education every few years. These are known as SIAM (The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). The school was last inspected in 2017 and received a rating of Good and we are fully expecting to have a SIAMS inspection within the next couple of years.

Following the closure of Little Oaks last year, the School and the Governing Board had the opportunity to look at opening an on-site nursery working within the Early Years framework. The nursery opened last September and has been an enormous success. There were only a few structural changes that needed to be done to make this possible and we have a lovely bright well equipped, Teacher led nursery. It opened taking 3 years old, but is now taking those that are 3 in that term. We are also becoming a Special Resource Base for Speech and language. This will be a purpose-built building and will be run through the school. We are hoping this will open next year.

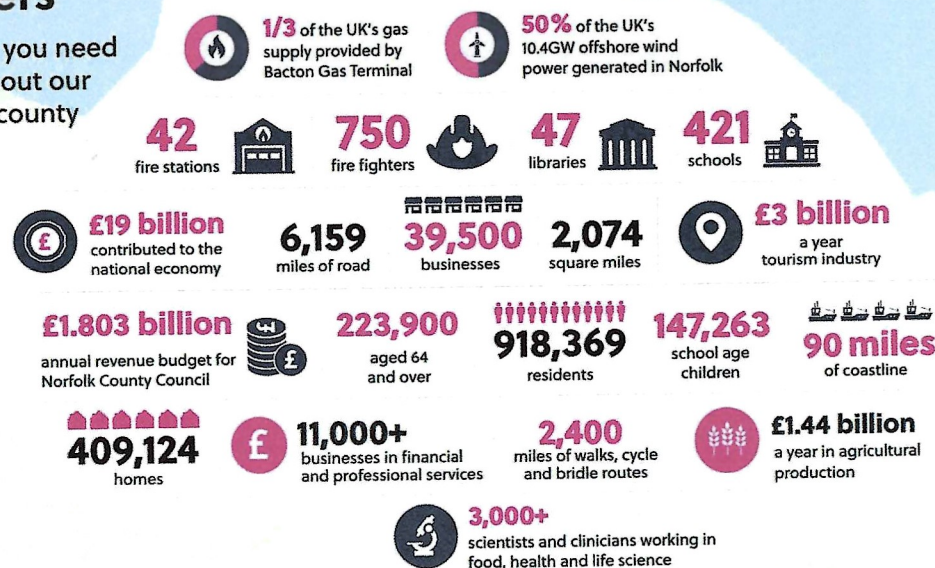
Enjoying school, being part of a family and being happy is an important aspect of the children's education. A positive environment has continued to be at the heart of the school. Improvements throughout the whole school have continued. All the windows have been replaced, helping with the energy efficiency. This is important as managing budgets is very tight. Once again thanks must go to Mrs Long and her very strong and dedicated team of staff for the continued growth and development of the school both spiritually and educationally.

Jane Barley

Chair of Governors

Norfolk in numbers

Everything you need to know about our incredible county



Council agrees £528m budget

Councillors have backed a budget that "delivers for Norfolk", in the face of major challenges facing local government.

Deputy council leader Councillor Andrew Jamieson, cabinet member for finance, told today's full council meeting that the budget would deliver for Norfolk. This is despite major cost and demand pressures facing all councils.

He said: "Our priorities are stable and sustainable finances, well delivered public services, economic growth and protecting and enhancing Norfolk's heritage and environment."

Cllr Jamieson said it was a budget for the future, with an additional £60m for adult social services and £35m extra for children's services, and savings from transforming how the council operates.

Cllr Jamieson pledged to continue to lobby the next Government for multi-year settlements, fair funding and reform of adult social care funding.

County Council leader, Councillor Kay Mason Billig, said the council would continue to be ambitious for Norfolk and had achieved many successes - against a tough economic backdrop.

She said: "We know that our residents will be concerned about the decisions we make and how that may affect them. This year's budget has been one of the toughest to determine but we have a statutory duty to provide a balanced position, and that is what we are presenting to you."

The key headlines from the budget agreed today are:

- £122m of investment to meet demand and cost pressures next year - including £34.6m for inflation, £38m for legislative requirements, £39.7m for demand and demographic issues and £9.6m for policy decisions.
- £41.5m of new savings, including £9.6m from transforming how the council operates.
- A proposed 4.99% increase in the County Council's share of Council Tax, in line with the Government's capping level (2.99% for general Council Tax and 2% for adult social care). This would increase the Council's share of band D bills to £1,672.11. A 4.99% rise would generate £24.9m.
- A small number of the budget proposals have been identified as requiring consultation, as they may relate to a policy or service change. Cabinet will take decisions on these proposals in the summer, after considering the consultation results.

Background:

Norfolk County Council's share of Council Tax bands, 2024-2025:

- A £1,114.74
- B £1,300.53
- C £1,486.32
- D £1,672.11
- E £2,043.69
- F £2,415.27
- G £2,786.85
- H £3,344.22

Proposals that will be consulted on:

- Charging an admin fee for brokering on behalf of people who self-fund their adult social care
- Review of the adult social care non-residential charging policy - including the Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG)
- Recommissioning of social isolation and loneliness contracts
- Norfolk Record Office - pre-booking of visits and new paid services to increase income generation
- Switching off 2% of streetlights
- Recycling centres: Reduction of opening hours at some recycling centres to deliver a more consistent approach, in line with neighbouring authorities

Have your say on Norfolk savings proposals

Norfolk County Council is seeking views on a number of savings proposals within the council's Community and Environmental Services department.

These proposals are part of £41.5m of savings that Norfolk County Council needs to make to balance its budget for 2024/25. The Council faces difficult decisions to deliver on its ambitions for the people of Norfolk against a difficult economic climate and more than a decade of reduced funding.

These proposals fall within the councils' Community and Environmental Services department, which includes Norfolk Highways, Libraries, Museums, Waste Management and the Norfolk Record Office.

The three proposals being launched today are:

- **Street lighting:** To switch off some streetlights across Norfolk in areas where it is considered safe and appropriate to do so.
- **Norfolk Record Office (NRO):** To introduce pre-booking of visits and change opening hours.

- **Recycling centres:** To reduce opening hours at some recycling centres to deliver a more consistent approach, in line with neighbouring authorities.

Between them these proposals could save around £457,000 a year.

The council is consulting the public on these proposals until midnight on 22nd March 2024. The consultation survey is available on the council's Citizen Space platform at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/savingsproposals

Proposals on streetlighting involve switching off 2% of streetlights across the county to save money and reduce carbon emissions. Norfolk County Council has identified 34 locations where the council plans to switch off some street lights. This represents 1.35% of the Council's target of 2%. Further locations will be identified at a later date.

Approximately 1,000 of the 54,000 street lights that the county council manages across the county would be switched off under these plans. It is expected that this could save up to £200,000 per year and cut carbon emissions annually by 76 tonnes, providing an environmental benefit and significantly contributing towards the council's Climate Strategy.

The proposal for introducing pre-booking and changing the opening hours of the Norfolk Record Office would extend the current limited Friday service to a Thursday with the same 10am to 4pm opening hours and maintains a full service on Tuesday and Wednesday from 9.30am until 5pm.

However, compressing the NRO's full searchroom service to two days runs the risk of excessive levels of demand in the searchroom. Therefore, the NRO is proposing to introduce a booking system on those days. People who turn up without booking will still be admitted, providing there is sufficient capacity, but cannot be guaranteed a place. People will be able to book an appointment via email, over the phone or in person at the NRO. These changes could save a total of £57,000 in 2024/25.

Finally, proposals to reduce the opening hours at some recycling centres in Norfolk would see 13 recycling centres close on a Wednesday, in line with the centres in neighbouring Suffolk. The additional six recycling

centres in Norfolk operate part time and are already closed on Wednesdays. This proposal could save around £200,000 a year.

The results of the consultation will be reported to Cabinet in June 2024.

People can share their views in a number of ways:

- Online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/savingsproposals
- By email at haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk
- By post, writing to:
SAVING PROPOSALS CONSULTATION 2024/25
Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK
Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich NR1 2DH

The consultations close at midnight on 22 March 2024.

Norfolk flood protection takes centre stage in Westminster

The threat posed by flooding and coastal erosion in Norfolk has been laid out starkly for MPs as Norfolk County Council has taken their case for change to the heart of Westminster.

The delegation from Norfolk, led by Norfolk County Council Leader Cllr Kay Mason Billig and the Chair of the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA), Henry Cator, met with MPs, on the 71st anniversary of the 1953 North Sea Flood, to explain the risks Norfolk faces and how those risks could be addressed.

As demonstrated over this winter, our county faces regular risks of flooding, with Norfolk ranked tenth most at risk of surface water flooding out of 149 local authority areas. In addition, the county's position on the North Sea exposes it to tidal threats as well as significant coastal erosion: without action, it's estimated that in North Norfolk alone approximately 1,030 residential and commercial properties could be lost to erosion by 2100. That number could be up to 10,000 in all of Norfolk.

These risks threaten both Norfolk residents and the contribution Norfolk makes to the wider country, as home to 54% of the offshore wind generation capacity in the UK and a major producer of food.

In a presentation delivered in Portcullis House, part of the Parliamentary Estate in Westminster, Norfolk's delegation made the case for MPs to:

- Push for legislative permission to build reservoirs designed to capture excess water in times of flood, for use in times of drought
- Advocate for Property Flood Protection measures to be granted directly to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for faster allocation for those who need it
- Reduce bureaucracy by granting greater autonomy in funding allocation for surface water flood mitigation schemes
- Combine enforcement and maintenance powers and responsibilities for LLFA's
- Support the creation of a dedicated Minister for the Coast

Challenges of coastal erosion and flooding discussed by councillors

Norfolk councillors are being invited to renew their call for a dedicated Minister for the Coast, as well as funding from central government for flood defences for Norfolk.

Norfolk County Council's Infrastructure and Development Select Committee considered a report on Coastal Erosion and Flooding in the county at their meeting in February, forming an update to the previous examination of the issue by the council's Scrutiny Committee in November last year.

The report recommends that councillors support the lobbying of central government for more funding for coastal erosion schemes, as well as support the appointment of a Minister for the Coast to give coastal communities a champion sitting within government who can take a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities that such communities face, especially coastal erosion and flooding.

Securing a commitment to such an appointment would give confidence that coastal issues are recognised at the heart of government and that solutions to the threats these communities face will be addressed.

The report spells out the challenge posted by coastal erosion along Norfolk's 90 miles of coastline, including the predictions of possible sea level rises of up to 1.15m by the end of the century. To compound the challenge, Norfolk has part of the fastest eroding coastline in North-West Europe.

Without action, it's estimated that in North Norfolk alone approximately 1,030 residential and commercial properties could be lost to erosion by 2105.

The Infrastructure and Development Select Committee meeting was held just over three weeks after the Leader of Norfolk County Council, Cllr Kay Mason Billig, visited Westminster to lay out the need for a new Minister for the Coast to MPs.

£150k funding secured for Attleborough Flood Management

£150,000 has been awarded to Norfolk County Council to reduce flooding in north Attleborough by using Natural Flood Management to reduce flood risk in the area by holding storm-water upstream.

The funding, provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), will allow the county council to work with local landowners and the wider community as a first step to reducing flood risk in the area.

Natural Flood Management uses sustainable materials and soft engineering techniques to replicate natural processes in river catchments that slow, store and filter excess water during peak flows. This form of water management has grown in popularity in the UK over the last decade due the benefits it brings for the natural environment and its ability to help mitigate flood risk to homes and businesses downstream.

The scheme will focus on the upper headwaters of the Besthorpe Stream, in a 6.2km² watershed south east of Besthorpe.

The funding will be spent over the next three years; firstly on installing flow gauges to monitor the flow of water across the watershed before and after the installation of Natural Flood Management measures. The measures will be delivered in partnership with local landowners who work this catchment on a day to day basis and may include techniques such as field corner bunds, 'leaky' or woody debris dams and others as appropriate. The intention is to allow everyday base-flows to pass through but obstruct higher flows.

The funding is part of £25 million announced by DEFRA to increase the nation's flood resilience, natural flood management processes protect, restore, and mimic the natural functions of catchments, floodplains and the coast to slow and store water. Among the 39 other projects to receive funding is the Diss Natural Flood Management project run by the River Waveney Trust.

The Environment Agency is overseeing the release of new £25 million programme with work taking place from now until March 2027. Norfolk County Council's Floods team will be further engaging with local landowners over the rest of 2024 to agree plans whilst other measures across North Attleborough related to managing and mitigating flood risk are also being investigated with other authorities to complement the project.

24/7 free travel to all disabled bus pass holders in Norfolk

From 1st February 2024 all Norfolk residents who hold a disabled concessionary travel pass will be eligible for free bus travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week when travelling within the county.

The decision, which was published today by Norfolk County Council, means that more than 14,500 people across the county who hold a concessionary bus pass due to disability, and their eligible companions,

will now be able to travel on any bus at any time free of charge across Norfolk.

Previously concessionary pass holders with a disability were only able to travel for free on buses off-peak (all day on Saturdays and Sundays but only from 09:30 Monday to Friday) except for those registered blind or visually impaired.

Offering free travel at all times is over and above the minimum requirement set by government, and is something that a local authority can choose to do but doesn't have to do. The change was recommended following an updated equality impact assessment of the scheme which concluded that it is now unfair to offer a discretionary enhancement to just one group of disabled people (i.e. those who are blind or visually impaired).

The recommendation agreed by the individual cabinet member was to 'extend the concessionary travel discretion of free travel at all times to all eligible disabled passholders and eligible companions, from 1st February 2024.'

The cost of providing this enhancement is estimated at £50,000 which will be funded by the Council's ring-fenced public transport budget provided by the Department for Transport.

Hundreds gather to witness historic moment as Herring Bridge is opened

Hundreds of residents joined local dignitaries and special guests to assist the grand opening of Herring Bridge in Great Yarmouth on Thursday 1st February.

The milestone ceremony began with a blessing of the bridge by Revd Canon Simon Ward, Rector of Great Yarmouth, before MP Brandon Lewis unveiled a commemorative plaque.

A convey of vehicles, including classic cars from East Coast Pirates, emergency services, local hauliers and contractors involved in the

project's delivery, along with residents with winning tickets to ride the famous Great Yarmouth road train, then made the first trip across Herring Bridge.

Following the procession was including motorbikes and members from local scooter and cycling clubs, as well as local running club and pupils from nearby schools.

Printed copies of the souvenir programme are available for free from Great Yarmouth Town Hall.

'Herring Bridge' takes its name from the herring industry which once dominated Great Yarmouth in this area of the port. The name was put forward multiple times by local residents in a competition held in Autumn 2022 which attracted over 300 suggestions. A naming committee consisting of local political and community leaders discussed the suggestions at length and selected five possible options for a public vote in early 2023, with Herring Bridge being voted the favourite.

New Rural Business Awards

Norfolk County Council and the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association have joined forces to launch the new Norfolk Rural Business Awards. The awards were launched on 6th February at the annual Norfolk Farming Conference and are designed to recognise the essential nature and huge importance of Norfolk's rural communities and businesses to the region.

Farmers, young farmers, winemakers, brewers, food producers, agri-tech companies, businesses with close rural connections, and rural community groups are all part of the rural community. With more than 9 different categories from best emerging talent to best farming innovation adopter, it is anticipated these new awards will celebrate exceptional talent and businesses.

Agriculture, forestry and fishing is the fourth largest sector in Norfolk, accounting of 8% of all businesses. And many other businesses across the county are closely linked to the sector including businesses in the

accommodation, food, retail, and food science sectors as well as technology and engineering businesses.

The entry form for nominations to each category can be found online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkruralbusinessawards. The entry deadline is 19 April 2024. Judging will include a visit to all shortlisted businesses, and each finalist will be asked to participate in a short film. Award categories include:

- Best Rural Community Initiative - sponsored by Aviva
- Best Farming Innovation Adopter - sponsored by Lovewell Blake
- Best Food Producer - sponsored by Fountain Fresh Imports
- Norfolk's Unsung Hero - sponsored by Breckland District Council
- Best Drink Maker - sponsored by Woodforde's Brewery
- Best Farming Champion - sponsored by CLG Norfolk Ltd
- Best Emerging Talent - sponsored by Plant Grow
- Best High Growth Business - sponsored by Growth Hub
- Best Sustainable Land Use / Farming Exemplar - sponsored by Birketts LLP

New film office opens Norfolk up to filming possibilities

Norfolk County Council has awarded Norfolk Screen a 2-year contract to represent the county as its official Film Office. The combined spend by film and high-end television production (HETV) in the UK reached £6.27 billion in 2022, the highest ever reported.

The two-year Norfolk Film Office pilot programme will proactively promote Norfolk and its assets as a location for TV and film productions, as well as act as the front door for any location enquiries to ensure Norfolk capitalises on the growth of the sector. Any increase in economic activity for the county via additional filming activity will confirm the viability of a stand-alone Film Office.

Large-scale TV or film productions generate an increase in business for a wide range of companies surrounding a filming location, from cafés to taxi companies, accommodation businesses and retail. They also provide opportunities for local film companies to loan equipment or hire out

studio space, and for local freelance film professionals from make-up artists to camera and sound technicians to have the opportunity to work closer to home. The new film office will support a dynamic and growing screen sector cluster within Norfolk.

Norfolk families set to gain more support thanks to a new volunteer service

Families in Norfolk will benefit from a new practical service launched by Norfolk County Council and Home-Start Norfolk.

The County Council has awarded a one-year contract, starting in April 2024, to deliver a new volunteer peer support service to Home-Start Norfolk, as part of its innovative family hub programme.

The service will be accessible for families in Norfolk who are expecting a baby, or have a child up to the age of two-years-old. It is for those who require practical support to make sure they have the tools and resources they need to give their children the best start in life.

Many families need a little extra support during pregnancy and in the early years of their child's development, including practical support such as with understanding which crib or cot to purchase within their budget. Peer support volunteers can help families feel less isolated and to develop networks in their local communities. Many families have shared that they value the support from family, friends, and others with similar lived experiences, often above, and in addition, to support from professionals.

In recognition of the needs of families, Home-Start Norfolk will recruit, train and support volunteers to connect and build relationships with individual families in the comfort of their own homes or local community venues. The service will also include community-based groups and activities, supporting individuals to access wider social activities within their local area and accessing guided self-help resources.

The support will empower parents to have capacity and confidence to ensure their child's needs are met, including help to discover and

navigate their local community, access professional support and support identified needs.

This peer support offer is being delivered as part of Norfolk's Start for Life and Family Hub approach, which is funded through the national Government Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme.

The Start for Life and Family Hubs approach supports Norfolk's vision for every child and young person to flourish. It helps strengthen Norfolk's prevention and early help offer for families with children up to age of 19, or 25 if they have special educational needs and disabilities.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service forms partnership to help people involved in serious road traffic collisions

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is the first fire service to partner with a charity to help those affected by serious road traffic collisions.

Chief Fire Officer, Ceri Sumner, has signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the Road Victims Trust, so fire fighters at the scene of an accident can signpost people to get ongoing help from the charity.

The Road Victims Trust (RVT) works to help people impacted by grief or trauma following a road death, serious injury or life-changing collision. It offers emotional and practical help, as well as a specialist counselling service to people across the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.

The charity, which started offering its support services in this county last summer after receiving funding from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, provides free and confidential support for as long as it is needed to those affected by serious collisions - including witnesses.

This partnership builds on Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service's continued work with other key agencies to help reduce the number and impact of serious and fatal collisions in the county.

Free electrical fire safety events being held by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Three electrical fire safety events will be held at different locations in the county in early March, delivered by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

Members of the public are invited to bring along their electric blankets and portable heaters to be tested and will also be able to speak to the fire service about fire safety in the home.

The events will also be attended by Trading Standards and Healthwatch Norfolk. This will give people the chance to find out about product safety and advice, and accessing help with health and social care.

The electrical safety days will take place from 10.30am to 4pm each day at:

- North Earlham Fire Station on Tuesday 5 March
- Great Yarmouth Fire Station on Wednesday 6 March
- King's Lynn North Fire Station on Thursday 7 March

There is no need to book - just turn up with your electrical items.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service was successful in bidding for funding from national campaigning charity Electrical Safety First to hold these events, which aim to help people stay safe in their homes.

There are things everyone can be doing in their home to reduce the risk of fire. Some of these are:

- Testing your smoke alarm regularly
- Staying at least one metre from any portable heaters
- Charging devices when you are awake, alert and around
- Keeping tea towels and oven gloves away from gas hobs

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service offer free Home Fire Safety visits for people over 65 or anyone who has a disability which could make it more difficult to react to a fire.

To book a visit for yourself, a friend or family member or to refer someone as part of your work or volunteering role, [visit the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service web pages](#).

£1 million boost for Highway Parish Partnership Schemes

Schemes totalling over £1m will be distributed across Norfolk to deliver the wants and needs of local parishes and residents as part of the Highway Parish Partnership.

The Parish Partnership scheme began in September 2011, when Parish and Town Councils were invited to submit bids for local highway improvements, with the County Council funding up to 50% of bid costs. The key benefits of the scheme are that it:

- Delivers local priorities identified by local people.
- Draws in additional funding for small scale highway improvements, enabling us to collectively deliver more schemes.
- Gives local communities an opportunity to directly influence the improvements in their local area. The programme continues to be well received by Parish/Town Councils, Local Members, and communities. Information about the number of bids received through the scheme over the past twelve years demonstrates there is a good spread across Norfolk.

A County Council contribution £467,884 and a Safety Camera Partnership contribution of £43,760 along with funding from Town and Parish Councils, will enable a programme of local works totalling £1,040,586 to be delivered.

For information on current schemes and if there are Parish Councils who wish to apply for future schemes then contact your County Councillor in the first instance. For further information please see <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships>

Key contacts for families

There's lots of support available for people at any stage of life. Here are some key contacts to help you and your family.

Just One Number

0300 300 0123

For any questions or worries you have about your child

Norfolk County Council

0344 800 8020

To report a safeguarding concern about an adult or child

ChatHealth

07480 635060

Secure text messaging advice service for 11-19-year-olds

Leeway refuge services

0300 561 0077

24-hour helpline for victims of domestic abuse

Age UK's Advice Line

0800 678 1602

Free confidential advice for older people and their families

First Response helpline

111 (option 2)

For people of all ages needing urgent mental health support

Get in touch

Contacting Norfolk County Council

www.norfolk.gov.uk

0344 800 8020

Text Relay: **18001 0344 800 8020**

Post: **Norfolk County Council, County Hall,
Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH**

0344 numbers are charged for just like **01** and **02**.

Information and access to all our customer services is also available at all our libraries.



Do it online

You can find out about our services, report problems or apply for courses, school places and more at www.norfolk.gov.uk – here are just a few examples:

What is 'right up your street'?

Search for local clubs, activities and services at www.communitydirectory.norfolk.gov.uk

Improving your home? Find a trusted trader at www.norfolk.gov.uk/trustedtrader

De-cluttering? Find your local recycling centre at www.norfolk.gov.uk/recycling

Looking for a new school? Find your child's catchment school or apply for a place at www.norfolk.gov.uk/admissions

Want to check for local roadworks?
www.norfolk.gov.uk/roadworks

Has your concessionary bus pass been lost or stolen? Pay for a replacement at www.norfolk.gov.uk/concessionarytravel

Need help getting out and about?
www.norfolk.gov.uk/communitytransport

Need to apply or reapply for a Blue Badge parking permit?
www.norfolk.gov.uk/bluebadge

Renewing a library book?
www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries

Need to report faulty street lighting?
www.norfolk.gov.uk/streetlighting

Found an adult learning course you like?
Apply and pay for it online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/adultlearning

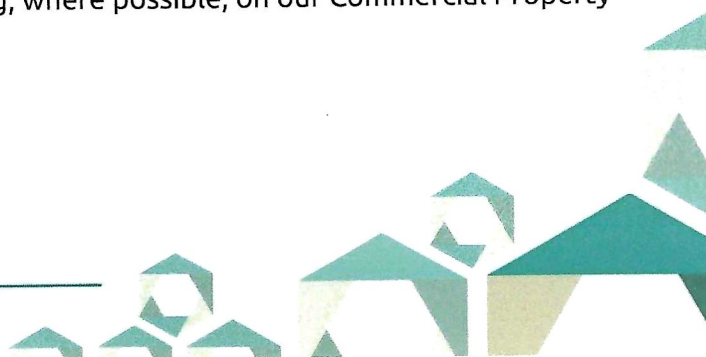
Need to report a pothole?
www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes

Our Corporate Plan Achievements 2023/2024



Breckland Council has recognised that there is a climate emergency that needs our attention.

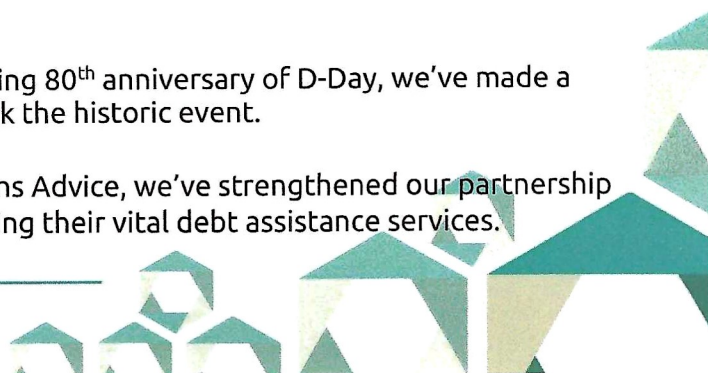
- ❖ To recognise the public sector staff who worked tirelessly during the COVID pandemic, we've funded £25,000 to plant 2,400 trees for a Woodland of Thanks at Oxburgh Hall. The trees will also help with biodiversity and removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.
- ❖ To help reduce CO2 emissions, we have:
 - continued work to roll out electric vehicle charging points in our District.
 - approved the installation of solar panels at Dereham Leisure Centre, saving 47,000 KG of CO2 per year.
 - agreed a New Green Tariff reducing our CO2 emissions for electric to zero.
 - secured £530k in decarbonisation grants to reduce carbon emissions in our leisure facilities.
 - worked with partners to deliver new environmentally friendly eco-bus shelters in Swaffham.
 - Replaced 1673 streetlights with energy efficient LED bulbs.
- ❖ To keep our communities pleasant and clean, we've supported over 30 community litter picks and taken over 160 informal actions against fly tippers.
- ❖ To enable composting, we've grown our garden waste subscribers to over 25,818 residents. This is nearly 40% of our households benefiting from the service, and together composting nearly 10,000 tonnes of garden waste each year.
- ❖ By providing a flexible, reliable, and cost-effective business waste collection and disposal service for Breckland, we've exceeded our customer growth target by 15%, now having more than 305 customers and £220k gross income.
- ❖ To increase our tree canopy cover, we've secured, and have started to distribute, DEFRA funding of £26,400 for the planting of community orchards within our District.
- ❖ To reduce our CO2 emissions and to attract and retain our workforce, we've approved a Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme to allow employees to lease an electric or hybrid car.
- ❖ To support Breckland businesses, we've launched the Low Carbon Regeneration Programme, providing tailored advice and support for their journey to reducing CO2 emissions and becoming Net Zero.
- ❖ We've improved the energy performance rating, where possible, on our Commercial Property portfolio.



- ❖ To keep our communities safe, we've repaired or replaced over 70 streetlights.
- ❖ We've successfully generated over £30,000 in surplus land sales, helping us maintain a balanced budget.
- ❖ To make a more pleasant area for residents, we've completed works on the Thetford underpass improvement scheme.
- ❖ We've decided 90% of major planning applications within their timescale, in order to facilitate economic growth in our District.
- ❖ To bring the community of Thetford together, we've successfully delivered the Stage and Screen festival with Thetford Town Council.
- ❖ To revitalise local market towns, we've launched our Love Your Market Town scheme, awarding £5k grants to support ideas and initiatives which will generate footfall and activity into local town centres in Breckland.
- ❖ We've managed our £45 million commercial property portfolio, allowing the right environment for businesses to flourish and to attract inward investment into the District.
- ❖ Recognising the power of partnership working and the hard work in regenerating the Queen Mother's Garden in Dereham, we were awarded the British Association of Landscape Industries Regeneration Scheme Award.
- ❖ With the aim of creating jobs, supporting local businesses and boosting the towns economy, partnership working between the Wayland Partnership and Breckland Council, with funding from Norfolk County Council we are forming plans to develop a Digital and Creative Media Centre in Watton.
- ❖ We've supported local communities to celebrate the King's Coronation.
- ❖ We've continued our collaborative working to support the delivery of power distribution infrastructure at Snetterton and to build upon the success of the new primary substation.
- ❖ To foster economic growth, community development and improved rural infrastructure, we've launched a new Business Support Scheme for small businesses and community organisations. The funds help businesses diversify or grow, bring more customers to the area or to support social economic and local growth through innovation.
- ❖ To enhance accessibility, we've secured £60,000 in national funding for Banham Zoo to develop new, fully accessible Changing Places Toilets.
- ❖ To promote training and employment opportunities in manufacturing, we've launched the 'Make it in Thetford' initiative with Partners.
- ❖ We've completed the restoration of four of Swaffham's historic buildings with funding from the Heritage Action Zone



- ❖ To provide individuals and families who are homeless with a safe and secure place to stay, we've purchased new temporary accommodation units within our District.
- ❖ Ensuring residents have a say in how the land within Breckland should be used in the future, we've successfully adopted an update to the District's Local Plan.
- ❖ Acknowledging the impactful work in delivering mental health youth projects, we were nominated for a Norfolk Flourish Award, hosted by the Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance (CYPSA).
- ❖ We've helped over 3,000 residents who've contacted us for Housing advice and helped over 150 households access temporary accommodation.
- ❖ In recognition for supporting the health and well-being of residents, we won the Health and Social Care Award at the 2023 Local Government Chronical Awards. The award recognised work by the council, NHS, charities and partners to tackle health inequalities in Breckland.
- ❖ Acknowledging our exceptional care and dog warden services, we received the RSPCA Platinum PawPrints award; the only Council in Norfolk to receive this accolade.
- ❖ To maintain our area's cleanliness and having continued our commitment to reduce environmental crime and increased the maximum penalties, we are now ranked in the top 100 Councils for tackling fly tipping.
- ❖ To support survivors of domestic abuse in the local community we've committed to continue to support and fund the Daisy Programme until 2026.
- ❖ To promote mental well-being within the local community we've continued to grow our Mindful District Programme by adding a third village and a new training partner and trained over 300 mental health champions.
- ❖ Aimed at fostering well-being among young people in the district, we've begun to deliver a new youth mental health programme through the Breckland Mindful District Partnership.
- ❖ Providing access to fresh and affordable food options for our community, we've expanded the Breckland Mobile Food Store to three additional locations.
- ❖ To provide financial assistance to those grappling with the aftermath of the devastating effects of Storm Babet, we've allocated grants and council tax and business rate relief.
- ❖ To enhance leisure facilities, we've been granted planning permission to bring improved recreational opportunities for residents and visitors of Attleborough.
- ❖ To continue to deliver services which support people who have experienced domestic abuse, declining mental health or financial hardship, we've invested £1.1M of council funding over the next 3 years.
- ❖ To help local groups commemorate the upcoming 80th anniversary of D-Day, we've made a total of £25,000 available to celebrate and mark the historic event.
- ❖ In addition to our annual contribution to Citizens Advice, we've strengthened our partnership by funding two Debt Advisors, further supporting their vital debt assistance services.



Working Smarter

We put our residents and businesses at the heart of everything we do.

- ❖ To better manage the Council's business and ensure transparency for our residents, we've delivered a new suite of performance indicators and new performance framework.
- ❖ To help customers track their enquiry and utilise officer time effectively, we've launched a new case management system
- ❖ To ensure everyone can vote in an election, we undertook a successful 2023 annual canvas.
- ❖ We've launched an Amazon Alexa skill to help residents access information about local services more easily.
- ❖ To provide another way for customers to contact us and have their questions answered 24/7, we've developed and launched a telephone chatbot, an extension to our web-based resident service.
- ❖ Recognising our innovative ways to recruit and onboard our new employees, the council was a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Annual Workforce Awards.
- ❖ To help seek new funding opportunities, we've created a new Corporate Strategy Team
- ❖ We've delivered training for our new intake of councillors on their duties and our new code of conduct.
- ❖ To enable our workforce to deliver exceptional services to our residents and businesses, we've delivered over 80 projects designed to enhance learning and development, culture & leadership and health and well-being.
- ❖ We've helped ensure occupancy of 97% of our commercial property portfolio.
- ❖ To develop skills of our own workforce and creating opportunities for local talent, we've supported over 20 apprenticeships across the Council.
- ❖ We've successfully delivered the 2023 local elections and onboarding of new Members.
- ❖ In recognition of how we develop our workforce and support their health and well-being we were finalists in two awards for the PPMA (Public Services People Managers Association) People Management awards.
- ❖ To ensure our top priority projects are delivered on time and on budget, we've created a new Corporate Projects Service.

