

Annual County Council Report for Parish Councils 2016

Changes at Norfolk recycling centres

From 1st April until 30th September, with the exception of Mile Cross in Norwich, all recycling centres across Norfolk will be operating under the new summer opening hours timetable - open from 9am until 5pm (under the previous summer schedule, sites were open until 6pm).

Also from 1st April, the price of disposing of tyres at the eight recycling centres which accept them, will increase to £4 per tyre, to cover the full costs of collection and disposal. The number of tyres which can be accepted at the sites will still be limited to five per household per week. Bicycle tyres are still accepted for free.

From 1 May, Docking recycling centre will re-open. The site will operate part time, being open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Meanwhile, from 1 June, Ashill, Heacham and Morningthorpe recycling centres will revert back to full time hours and therefore operate seven days a week.

To find your nearest recycling centre, full information about opening hours and days and what you can and can't take to the sites, please visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

£9.7m road surface dressing programme starts in Norfolk this month (April 2016)

NCC's annual road surface-dressing programme for 2016 will begin on Wednesday 13 April, with work starting in the Great Yarmouth, Bradwell and east coastal areas. Surface dressing is one of the best ways of extending the life of roads while contributing to safety by improving skid resistance and preventing potholes. The process involves laying a thin layer of bitumen and chippings on to the road, stopping water penetration and reducing the number of potholes caused by frost. This year's planned programme is worth £9.7m, and the aim is to complete busier routes by the end of July.

People living along the affected routes will receive notification a day or two before the crews arrive. They will be asked not to park on the road on the day of the surfacing, or the following day when loose chippings will be swept up.

Councils to Debate Draft Devolution Deal

In March, the Chancellor's budget speech included confirmation that local leaders in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had agreed a deal with the government – to devolve significant powers to local level.

The deal had been produced after months of negotiation with authorities across Norfolk and Suffolk, and latterly, Cambridge and Peterborough. The New Anglia LEP was also a signatory.

The offer includes:

- Over £1 billion of new money to support economic growth over the next 30 years
- £65m per year for the next 5 years – then £30m thereafter, at this stage.
- The region will take control of millions of pounds of multi-year consolidated and devolved transport budget
- New powers over infrastructure, developing skills for employment, and improving our health and social care system
- £175 million of capital grant for the East to deliver an ambitious target of new homes in line with national targets.
- The deal would also include the creation of a combined authority for East Anglia, chaired by a directly elected Mayor supported by a cabinet made up from leaders from the partner authorities.

The draft agreement suggests a combined authority be set up across the four authority areas in East Anglia, but councils would still keep their sovereignty and deliver local services. It would see the transfer of significant resources and powers from central government to the region but at this stage specifically for infrastructure, housing, economic development and jobs and skills.

Before the summer, each council in East Anglia will now take the opportunity to debate the draft agreement.

Vital services saved in council budget (February 2016)

Fire stations and recycling centres were saved from closure in February this year as the county council agreed its budget for 2016/17.

The Labour-led council had proposed partially to fill a projected budget gap of £42million for next year by cutting the fire service and recycling centres, as well as libraries, road maintenance, museums and a raft of front-line services.

Although in opposition, the Conservatives remain, by far, the biggest Group on the council. Ultimately, we believed that enough was enough, and we had a responsibility to put politics to one side for the good of Norfolk, and to protect the front-line services. So, we agreed to participate in the final weeks of budget preparation. We went into negotiation with the Labour leader armed with a series of proposals, aimed at making the budget stronger and more sustainable, and restoring the front line services that had been proposed for closure. The Conservative proposals that went into the final budget were as follows:

- Reverse the closure of fire stations
- Restore Norfolk Arts Service grants
- Reverse Norfolk Museums Service lone-working proposal
- Reverse Museums Service redesign
- Reverse saving on Norfolk Record Office - search room, new archives and conservation work
- Restore Norfolk Record Office - opening hours and specialist archive work
- Restore Libraries materials spend and associated staff
- Historic Environment service
- Highways maintenance standards
- Re-open Docking recycling centre
- Restore bank-holiday opening at recycling centres
- Restore full-time opening at Ashill, Heacham and Morningthorpe recycling centres

And finally:

- Create a new pot-hole and small projects fund £1.5million – this is to ensure not only good quality roads, but, crucially, a good standard of road safety – cyclists and motorcyclists are especially vulnerable to pot holes.

All these proposals were agreed. This means that, next year's net revenue budget for the county council will be 339million. A big proportion of this budget will be derived from council tax: the county council's share of this is being increased by 3.99% (including 2% specifically for adult social care services). This amounts to an increase of £45.72 a year for a Band D household.

Other news

Parish Partnership Scheme (March 2016)

Funding of £380,000 for 122 small scale highway projects across Norfolk was approved by councillors in March.

The money, from the county council's Parish Partnership scheme, will be matched by Parish and town councils who were invited in June 2015 to put in bids for funding for schemes important to their local area. This comes on top of the £1.5million pot-hole and small-projects fund proposed by the Conservatives in the budget and mentioned above.

The most popular bids have been for vehicle activated signs, which has seen 44 applications for signs which in most cases are to remind drivers of their speed. This year the Norfolk Safety Camera Partnership contributed £80,000 towards these bids, boosting the total available Parish Partnership funding to £380,000. Other popular schemes are Trods with 24 bids put in for this simplified, lower-cost alternative to footways. And helping to promote safety at schools will be part-time advisory 20mph speed limit signs with flashing warning lights installed outside 12 schools.

Record turnout in Norfolk's Youth Parliament elections

A record number of Norfolk's young people have voted to elect nine new Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) representing each of the county's political constituencies. A total of 39,938 of Norfolk's 11-18 year-olds cast their vote for free on their mobile phones for their preferred candidate. The figure represents 51% of the county's 11-18 year-olds, the last election in 2014 saw a turnout of 48%.

The successful candidates, out of the 27 who stood in the elections, were:**Broadland:** Harriet Bradnock – 1189 votes; **Great Yarmouth:** Greta Saripova – 1502 votes; **Mid Norfolk:** Thomas Dewin – 747 votes; **North Norfolk:** Jessica Read – 3125 votes; **North West Norfolk:** Harvey Luker – 1595 votes; **Norwich North:** Charlotte Snell – 1141 votes; **Norwich South:** Fleur Curson – 3107 votes; **South West Norfolk:** Cameron Leitch – 2398 votes; **South Norfolk:** Bethayne Webb – 2135 votes.

The MYPs will spend two years in office, meeting monthly at County Hall and attending quarterly meetings with MYPs from across the eastern region. They

will also visit the House of Commons and meet with officers and councillors from Norfolk County Council. Further details of the candidates and winners are available at: www.norfolk.gov.uk/youthparliament

Roads, Transport and Infrastructure News

Government visit to see NDR work progress (March 2016)

In March, Patrick McLoughlin MP, the Secretary of State for Transport, came to see the route of Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and declared himself pleased with the progress made in preparing for the main start of works later this month. He visited the line of the road where it passes through the City of Norwich Aviation Museum on the northern edge of Norwich Airport. He was also briefed on progress in establishing a Norwich Aviation Academy at the airport. He commented that he was: "...pleased to see that work is now underway on this important scheme which will help deliver 10,000 new homes and 12,000 jobs."

The road, when it opens, will be a 20km dual carriageway running from the A47 at Postwick, south-east of Norwich, to the A1067 north-west of the city, and is currently the country's biggest local authority-promoted road building project.

The road is expected to be open to traffic by early 2018.

Meanwhile, 2015 saw the lowest ever number of people killed on Norfolk's roads, but no room for complacency (January 2016)

The road casualties figures for 2015, released by the Norfolk Road Casualty Reduction Partnership, show that fewer people have died on Norfolk's roads over the last year than ever before. The statistics show that the numbers of road users suffering fatal or slight injuries reduced compared with the previous year, although serious injuries increased.

Norfolk road casualty statistics - 2011-2015

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Fatal	43	39	40	39	33
Serious	312	314	352	340	352
Slight	2,136	2,011	1,999	2,199	1,990

Total	2,491	2,364	2,391	2,578	2,375
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Access to high-speed broadband doubles in Norfolk as first Better Broadband contract completes ahead of schedule and under budget (October 2015)

185,885 mainly rural homes and businesses have been given access to fibre-enabled broadband, thanks to the first Better Broadband contract – completed ahead of schedule. Originally due to finish this December, it was announced at the end of October that the first Better Broadband for Norfolk (BBfN) programme contract completed three months early, reached more properties than anticipated and made significant savings.

More than 80% of households and businesses in the county can now buy a superfast broadband service (24 Megabits per second and above), nearly double the number who could receive these speeds three years ago before the BBfN programme got underway.

The money saved as part of the first contract will now be reinvested in the next phase of the BBfN programme, which is due to bring faster broadband speeds to even more remote parts of the county. Planning work is already underway and the first services are due to be available from December 2015.

The first areas set to benefit from the second BBfN contract are parts of Burgh St Peter, Barnham Broom, Barford, Bawdeswell, North Creake, Dereham, Ashwellthorpe, Bradwell, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Shropham, Hanworth, Starston, Harleston, Hickling, Sea Palling, Thuxton, Cawston, Bradenham, Southrepps, Gunthorpe, Ridlington, East Ruston, Weasenham St Peter, Little Fransham, Topcroft, Woodton and Wymondham.

People can check whether their home or business can receive superfast broadband by visiting the [Better Broadband for Norfolk website](#) which is updated as new broadband services become available.

Children's Services – a mixed picture

Council's children's services under the spotlight after new 'inadequate' rating from Ofsted (December 2015)

In December the government announced that a special commissioner would

be coming in to help improve children's services in Norfolk. This comes after the county council was given another 'inadequate' rating by Ofsted. Dave Hill is the executive director of people commissioning (including children's services) at Essex County Council, and has been working with Norfolk's staff for the last few months now with the aim of helping the council develop better ways of working and, most importantly, better outcomes.

In their report, Ofsted highlights under-developed services for children in, and leaving, the council's care.

It is to be hoped that the commissioner will be able to help bring about the much-needed improvements. The ultimate sanction, would be to place the children's services in a self-governing trust, if he felt the leadership was inadequate. There will be more updates on this in the coming months.

However, good news on GCSE results for Norfolk's pupils (October 2016)

Norfolk's schools have narrowed the gap on the national average at GCSE for the second successive year, according to provisional results published last autumn. Early results suggest that Norfolk has climbed 35 places up the national league tables over the last two years, with a 16 place jump since 2014. Today's statistics show that 53.8% of students achieved five A* to C grades, including English and maths - compared with 52% on the same day last year* (an improvement of 1.8 percentage points). Progress in maths in Norfolk is particularly strong – 67.3% of students made expected progress in the county, putting Norfolk above the national average of 66.6%.

The news follows rapid improvements in both assessment results for five-year-olds and phonics results for six-year-olds this year. Reading performance for seven-year-olds has also gone above the national average for the first time.

Rise in number of Norfolk's young people in education or training (February 2016)

Norfolk has seen a big rise in the number of 16-18 year olds now in education, employment or training, it was revealed earlier this year. There are 1,128 more young people in the county participating in further education and training compared to May last year. Since that time, there has been a significant increase in the two areas of greatest challenge: increasing participation at 17 and reducing the number of unknowns. The pace of improvement for participation at 17 has increased at such a rate that it is now in line with the national average. In addition, the participation of 16 year olds

is now well above the national average. The number of unknowns has also reduced from 16.1% in May 2015 to 6.8% in December 2015 (national average is 10.6%). The average percentage of 16-18 year olds classed as NEET (not in education, employment or training) for November 2015-January 2016 was 4.2%, which is now in line with the national figure. Advice for young people on education and training options in Norfolk is available at www.helpyouchoose.org or through the helpline on 0344 800 8022.

Joint venture helps vulnerable families stay together (September 2015)

An innovative project which aims to help Norfolk families stay together by providing vulnerable parents with targeted mental health support has had a successful first six months, with no babies on the scheme coming into care.

The Norfolk Parent Infant Mental Health Attachment Project (NPIMHAP) has seen a team of therapists, psychiatrists, social workers, health professionals and family support workers liaise to provide parents with a specially tailored package of support designed to improve their relationship with their baby.

A joint initiative between Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) and Norfolk County Council, it works specifically with mums at risk of post-natal depression and psychosis, as well as those who have difficulty forming attachments with their children. It was launched in response to the high numbers of children aged under two who are in care in Norfolk, and has been made possible by a £625,000 grant from the government.

New short-breaks service launched to help reduce numbers in care (March 2015)

A new service was launched early last year in Norfolk to help reduce the number of children in care and support families to stay together. Norfolk County Council's new 'short-breaks service' provides access to leisure and educational activities and time away from home for those at risk of coming into care. Building on the short-breaks services already provided for children with disabilities, it gives young people an opportunity to have much needed breaks in a specially designed home in Norwich. The service means children aged from six to 17 get to spend time away from home, with access to a range of support. The service was inspired by a successful scheme in Blackburn, which has helped to reduce the number of children coming into care by giving families respite, particularly when their children have challenging behaviour.

Norfolk County Council and Barnardo's join forces to support children at risk of sexual exploitation (June 2015)

A service to protect and support victims and those at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) was launched in Norfolk last June. Norfolk County Council joined forces with national children's charity Barnardo's to create the initiative, which provides help and advice to 'at risk' vulnerable children and young people. Barnardo's is the leading agency in the UK providing specialist support to sexually exploited children and young people. For more than 20 years the charity has been protecting those at risk of child sexual exploitation, but it is the first time that the charity has worked directly with young people in Norfolk at risk of CSE. The main aim is to identify and protect children deemed at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation and to help those who are victims of CSE. Young people using the service will have keyworkers who can help them to understand risks and keep themselves safe. They will be referred to the service either via the county's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub or via early help services in the county.

Waste news

Norfolk/Suffolk waste deal extended (May 2015)

The inter-county deal, which sees some of Norfolk's waste dealt with at Suffolk County Council's new energy-from-waste (EFW) plant was extended for a further four years, in May last year, to last until 2020. The extension was agreed as part of Norfolk County Council's work to secure four years' worth of waste services, using facilities that are already up and running inside or outside Norfolk, to replace its current arrangements which end this year that deal with the 210,000 tonnes of rubbish left after recycling (residual waste) that Norfolk generates each year.

Social Care

Social media used to dispel myths in social care (February 2016)

Social workers took to Twitter at the start of February to raise the profile of the work they do in Norfolk. The day-long event aimed to give people in the county, and further afield, a true picture of what is involved in the daily life of a social worker. A number of professionals working in social care across Norfolk were featured across the council's main social media platforms, going about a typical day's work – tweeting their activities using the account @NorfolkSW. Those whose lives are touched by social care were also encouraged to record and tweet their own views. One aspect highlighted on the day was the county

council's recently-adopted 'Signs of Safety' approach to social work. Funded by the county council and the government's Innovations Fund, the project trains social workers to work more closely with families developing their strengths and helping them to keep their children safe. Norfolk's current social worker recruitment campaign is running until 31 March 2016. For more information visit www.norfolk.gov.uk