



Latest update on events from your County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Helhoughton Parish Council

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Norfolk County Council updates

Ambitious for Norfolk

The communications team has launched a new social media campaign - Ambitious for Norfolk - to inform residents and key partners about how the county council is working to make Norfolk an even better place to live and work.

The campaign is encouraging people to sign up to our Your Norfolk Extra digital newsletter, so they can become more informed about the council and learn how they can get involved.

- Look out for the campaign on Facebook and LinkedIn, under the hashtag, [#AmbitiousforNorfolk](#).

Week one was an overview of the council, and we will now feature spotlights on specific service areas, starting with highways and transport next week.

Please consider sharing the campaign posts on your own social media channels and encourage residents to follow the campaign.

One Million Trees: Subsidised Trees & Busseys Community Tree Grant:

The 'One Million Trees for Norfolk' subsidised tree scheme is now open for any Norfolk resident to apply for tree packs (and tree protection) at up to 50% off the original price. As well as the usual range of tree packs available, this year, for the first time there are a limited number of single Norfolk Oak trees, grown at Gressenhall Community tree nursery.

- Those interested can apply for subsidised tree packs by visiting www.norfolk.gov.uk/subsidisedtreepacks

The County Council is once again partnering with Busseys (a local family run car dealership), to launch the Busseys Community Tree Grant. This initiative offers £10,000 in funding to support tree planting projects across Norfolk. Schools, charities, Parish Councils, and community groups can apply for grants of up to £2,500 to plant trees that provide tangible benefits to their local area. The grant is open to any organisation in Norfolk with suitable land and the necessary permissions for planting. More information on how to apply, the application process, and deadlines visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/busseyscommunitygrant

We have continued our partnership with the Norfolk Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group to offer [free advice](#) on grant applications to landowners who wish to plant more the 0.5ha of woodland (Woodland creation).

We also continue to encourage residents to '[Tell Us Where You Planted](#)' by letting us know online if they have planted a tree – so they can be part of Norfolk's 1 million Trees story.

Have your say on Norfolk savings proposals

As it seeks to agree a balanced budget for 2025/26, Norfolk County Council is asking for your residents' views on a number of proposals to save money or raise revenue in the next financial year.

As part of the council's work to find £44.722m of savings, public consultations are now open on three of the proposals under consideration:

- Raising Council Tax
- Reducing Street Light usage
- Review of our Housing Related Support Services

Full detail of these proposals, as well as information on how residents can have their say, can be found at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget.

The consultation is now open and will close on Monday 16 December 2024.

National updates

Outlined below are a number of recent policy announcements from Government and Westminster.

MPs launch inquiry into cost of failing to fix social care

The newly formed House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee has [launched an inquiry](#) to look at the continued delay to social care reform and what this inaction is costing individuals, the NHS, and local authorities, along with the wider

economy and Treasury. This inquiry will consider care for both older and working-age adults, and focus not only on financial cost but also on the personal costs and on potential benefits that are being missed.

This inquiry is interested in the cost of this inaction and sets out some specific questions in its [call for evidence](#). Those pertinent to NCC include: how much is inaction on ASC costing local authorities; what service reforms are not happening as a result of ASC pressures; and, where in the system is the cost of inaction being borne the most.

£1.2 million for rural transport projects

[Small businesses have won a share of £1.2 million as part of the Rural Transport Accelerator Fund](#), which supports the development of innovative concepts that will improve rural transport, in partnership with local authorities. The scheme aims to boost the wellbeing of communities, support rural jobs and kickstart local economies.

Winners include a digital tool to predict rural transport demand and deliver on-demand services, as well as a journey mapping tool to support health providers in delivering hospital transport for patients.

The 8 projects, which have won £150,000 each, are spread across the UK's rural areas and will be trialled from Norfolk to Herefordshire and Suffolk to south east Scotland.

The winning projects include Alchera Technologies, which makes use of data insights to create a behavioural travel model to help local authorities with rural mobility decision making, trialled in Norfolk County Council.

Emergency fund launched for rough sleepers this winter

An emergency £10 million [fund has been launched by the Deputy Prime Minister](#) to protect rough sleepers from cold weather this winter.

The Government has said this funding boost will save lives by ensuring rough sleepers have access to a safe and warm bed.

The money will go direct to councils in the highest need and support thousands of the most vulnerable people in society.

Better care for mental health patients under major reforms

[New laws will give patients](#) sectioned under the Mental Health Act more dignity and say over their care in long-awaited updates to be introduced in Parliament today (6 November 2024).

Currently, outdated laws do not meet modern standards and fail to give patients an adequate voice. For example, individuals experiencing severe mental illness can be placed in police cells, and the law automatically gives a patient's nearest relative - rather than the person of their choosing such as a partner - a say in decisions about their care.

The new Mental Health Bill addresses the significant changes in attitudes towards mental illness since the original act was passed, recognising that outdated laws around the treatment of people in a mental health crisis are no longer tolerable.

Tom FitzPatrick

Vice Chairman of Norfolk County Council

County Councillor for Fakenham Division

(Dunton, Fakenham [Lancaster North and South], Helhoughton, Hempton with Pudding Norton & Testerton, Raynham and Tattersett)