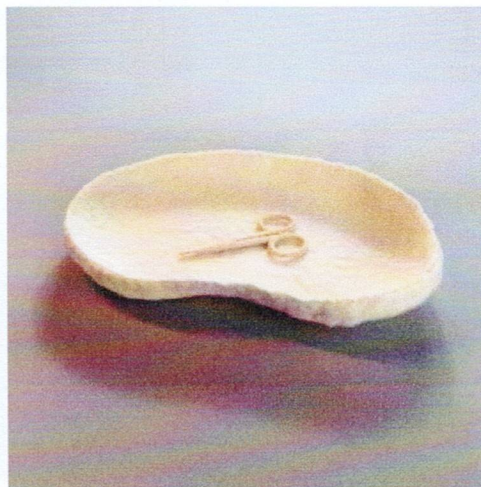


Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse update May 2024



Making the Rounds: Stories of Workhouse Nurses Told in Textiles

The new, temporary exhibition for 2024 has been installed and opened on 9 March 2024. A private view attended by Councillors, volunteer researchers, the artist and other stakeholders took place on Friday 22 March, where the exhibition was well received.

Between 1777 and 1948, Mitford and Launditch Union Workhouse - now Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse - was home to some of the most vulnerable people in rural Norfolk. Its purpose was to provide accommodation, food and work for 'paupers' who did not have enough money provide for themselves. The NHS had not yet been created, and many people turned to the workhouse Nurses at Gressenhall Public Assistance Institution (formerly workhouse), c.1930 because of illness, old age, disability, mental illness, or as a safe place to give birth. The day-to-day care of the sick and vulnerable inmates fell to just a handful of nurses. They were often overworked, undertrained, and isolated.

This exhibition is the result of a year-long collaboration between Norfolk-based artist Connie Flynn and volunteer researchers at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse. Connie Flynn's new textile art pieces are a thoughtful response to the 70 new nurse biographies written by volunteers, covering and 150 years of welfare history. The exhibition interweaves new textile art and the archival sources that inspired them, alongside objects linked to the nurses which were loaned or donated for the exhibition.

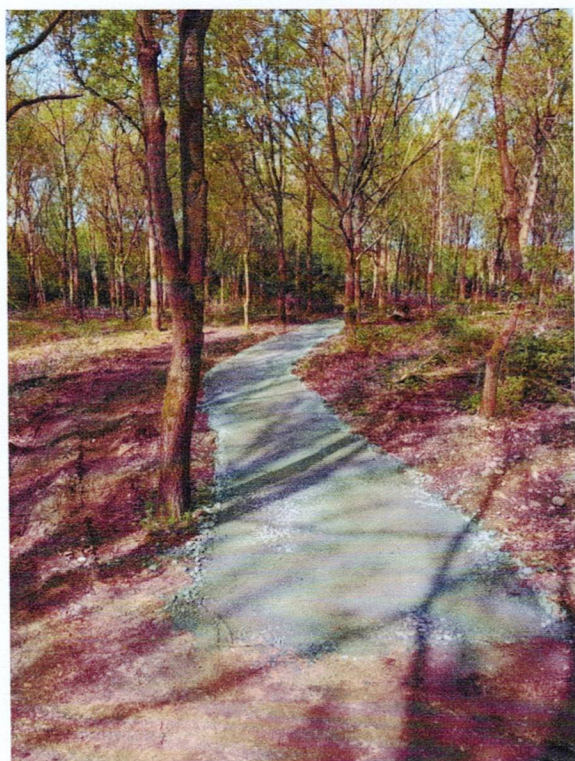
Centenary Wood Sensory Trail

Forestry Commission approved tree felling has been completed in Centenary Wood, in line with the woodland management plan. Thinning these trees is essential for the health of the woodland to open the canopy and create additional glades. It will allow larger trees to flourish while providing better light to encourage the growth of diverse foliage on the woodland floor, supporting greater biodiversity.



Ideas for Sensory Trail in Centenary Wood.

As part of this work, work has begun on the route for a short, accessible woodland trail which will link to the Adventure Playground and Orchard, encouraging families to explore the woodland. As well as being physically accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs, sensory elements will be particularly beneficial to visitors with special educational needs or neurodiversity. Plans to surface the path are underway, which will include 'stops' of low-cost sensory interactive elements and interpretation to encourage people to engage with the natural woodland surroundings. Work on the trail is due for completion by late May, ready for the main summer season.



Union Farm



On the farm, spring has sprung with the arrival of piglets and lambs over recent weeks.

The two young Suffolk Punch horses Jack and Kingsman have both continued to train in pulling objects. When both horses are performing well individually, they will be worked together and driven as a pair before putting them onto a light training vehicle so they can get used to the feel of being either side of a pole. The goal over the next eighteen months is to have the next generation of working horses active on the farm.



GRESSENHALL NEWS AND VIEWS

Annual Report for Gressenhall Parish Council – May 2024

We are pleased that during 2023/24 there have been no changes to the Committee membership. It is disappointing that there has been a decrease in the number of articles submitted to the magazine by parishioners.

Although subscription revenue has decreased after reluctantly increasing the cost of the magazine and advertising rates from January 2023, we have managed to turn round our finances to a much healthier level. At one stage we were concerned that the magazine would have to cease production. We do, of course, hope that previous and new subscribers and advertisers will invest in the magazine going forward. To this end we will have a stall at the village fete this year to entice new subscribers and advertisers.

Listed below is more detailed information on the various functions undertaken by the Committee:

1. Advertising

- The number of pages previously allocated to adverts has been fixed to 22 pages in order to keep an even balance between village news and information and the adverts. However, advertisers have reduced during the past twelve months to 19 pages which has resulted in a loss in revenue. However, this has been offset by the increase in rates.
- As of April 2024 there are currently 78 businesses advertising in the magazine.

2. Subscriptions and distribution

- On average approximately 480 magazines are printed each month. Distribution across the three parishes is: Gressenhall 335, Longham 54, Wendling 70. The Gressenhall shop also receive 20 copies free of charge.
- The Gressenhall shop continues to be an important source for readers wishing to buy a copy and who are not on a distribution list, including residents in Beetley.
- We are very grateful to our network of 18 distributors who deliver them to various households every month – 11 covering Gressenhall, 4 Longham and 1 Wendling.
- Thanks to Molly Crisp for delivering to the distributors and to Pam Chatley for managing subscriptions.

3. Layout

- Every month we produce the front and back pages in colour.
- Twice a year the centre pages are in colour in order to give emphasis to main village events, such as the summer fete and Christmas celebrations on the Green.
- Thanks to Pamela Neile for her creative work in laying out the magazine.

2.

GRESSENHALL FETE COMMITTEE REPORT
FOR THE PARISH COUNCIL AGM – MAY 2024

The 2023 Grand Summer Fete was once again a very successful event with a huge number of people attending and lots of village organisations had stalls to raise money for their own funds.

A successful Barn Dance was held at the Social Club in May to raise funds towards the Play Equipment.

The Switch On of the Christmas Lights took place in early December and once again a fun afternoon was had by all. Father Christmas arrived by tractor and trailer and gave out presents to many small children. There were all the usual stalls and musical entertainment and the Christmas tree then remained a wonderful sight on the Green until early into the New Year.

Father Christmas drove around the village on a tractor and trailer a few days before Christmas handing out mince pies and sweets to old and young folk alike

The Fete Committee have continued to support local causes this year including contributing towards the cost of the Bike Station at the The White Swan, cakes for the weekly coffee hub at the pub, a story mat for Beetley Pre School and paying for musical entertainment at Woodstock Care Home each month.

Molly Crisp

Annual Report to Gressenhall Parish Council

St Mary's Church, Gressenhall

2023/24

Several years hard work culminated in the builders beginning work on the new facilities at the church on 4th March 2024. Much of 2023 was spent working towards finalising the plans and raising the funds to begin the work, which was initially scheduled to begin early in the New Year. The addition of a proper toilet and a kitchen servery will enhance the experience of those attending the church for services and other events.

Services, social and fundraising events followed their usual pattern and attendance remained encouraging with some new people being welcomed into the regular congregation. There was also an increase in numbers at the larger festivals.

We are fortunate in having an active PCC with all the posts filled.

A new Team Vicar moved into the village, funded centrally to work with children, youth and families and to support the 17 parishes in the Benefice. As a result there were some changes to the existing ministry in Gressenhall which were not well received. Parishioners and members of the congregation made strong representations to the Bishop and Archdeacon resulting in discussions and meetings with the PCC. The outcome has been a return to ministry as it was before this situation arose.

The church has continued to play an active role in village events and is well represented at the weekly Coffee Hub in The White Swan. I have continued to visit those in the parish who are housebound or in need of support.

Reverend Julia Houston

April 2024



Gressenhall Community Enterprise - Report for Parish Council Apr-24

Since Gressenhall Community Enterprise's [GCE] last annual report to the parish council in April 2023, The White Swan has consolidated the positive start that it made in the second year since its reopening.

GCE is run by a team of 8 voluntary elected representatives on behalf of its members to ensure that The White Swan operates for the long-term benefit of the community and the society's members. Practically this includes overseeing the financial management, governance, compliance and future strategy for the society and the pub, which also involves working closely with our contracted Management Operator, Snug who are responsible for the day-to-day service and operations. The committee is particularly proud of the 7 day a week service with lunch and evening meals available every day - The White Swan has amongst the highest weekly opening hours of comparable pubs in the local area, and it is pleasing to make this community-owned space available so extensively. The cost of living crisis and food and drink inflation continue to put enormous pressure on the UK Hospitality sector - it is a very challenging environment and GCE looks to guard against complacency and plan for the future to safeguard our pub's longer-term sustainability. GCE has looked to balance financial prudence with suitable investment to enhance The White Swan's potential - the main improvement commissioned in the last 12 months was the locally-sourced oak pergola connecting the main pub to the stables outbuilding.

Expectations of what a rural village pub offers should naturally differ across any community - and the GCE committee carefully looks to leverage new ideas and consider feedback from members of the village whilst trusting and empowering the professional team that has been contracted to manage the business on our behalf. The committee believes that the offering remains closely aligned to the business plan and share offer which funded the project at the outset. GCE deeply values its community and members - and provides a monthly contribution to the news and views to keep the village engaged with and informed of upcoming events and opportunities associated with The White Swan.

A standout success of GCE's community benefit plan continues to be Coffee Hub run by a friendly, welcoming and well-run group of volunteers (currently every Thursday). It is a very well supported initiative with weekly attendee numbers almost always exceeding 40, with a mixture of regulars and newcomers mixing in. It is a wonderful initiative that represents Gressenhall's community spirit and is a collaboration supported by the Fete Committee, St Mary's and others. If any Parish Councillors or parishioners have yet to visit we very much encourage you to go and find out for yourselves. In addition to coffee hub, in the last year GCE has also helped deliver other community events including live music performances, film screenings, knit and natter meet-ups - further ideas are in the pipeline and additional suggestions are welcomed, please email communitypubgressenhall@gmail.com or speak to a member of the committee.

The GCE Annual General Meeting is expected to be held in September-October and society members will be notified nearer the time once a date has been confirmed.

The GCE committee would like to thank the Parish Council, village societies and groups as well as Parishioners for your continued support of The White Swan.

The Gressenhall Singers Report - April 2024

7 years on The Singers have continued rehearsing on Wednesdays and giving regular concerts throughout the year helping to raise money for local churches and charities such as Parkinsons in Toftwood and Meeting Point in Dereham. Numbers are at capacity (60) and ages range from 12-83: we have two 90 minute rehearsals every Wednesday at Dentford Heights Studio at the top of Dunfer Hill and singers chose which session to attend; some even come to both!

Autumn season 2024 was the busiest ever with 10 different engagements within 4 months. These ranged from Concerts in Brisley Church , Old Beetley Church and St Nicholas in Dereham to Christmas services at St Mary's Gressenhall and Great Fransham plus our regular dates of *Switch on of Lights* and *Carol Singing* in the White Swan. Everything is sung from memory except some choral pieces in church services.

The year finished appropriately last weekend with 52 members of the choir singing the Carpenters' *Close to you* and Beatles' *All you need is Love* at the marriage of two of our singers (who incidentally have recently moved to Gressenhall.) The wedding and reception were both held in Beeston church where 200 guests enjoyed the celebrations.

Finally, a very special thank you from me to the choir, for a superb surprise birthday celebration in this room in mid- April. The choir was described beautifully as 'Music and Friendship' in equal measures...which I rather like!

Jane Roberson

(Director of The Gressenhall Singers)

(May 6th 2024)

Gressenhall - Annual Parish Meeting 7th May 2024

Dear Resident,

It is my great privilege to serve as your Breckland District Councillor here in the Lincoln Ward. Here is a brief summary of my work on your behalf during the last year:-

Budget & Council Tax

For the financial year 2024-2025 Breckland Council has increased its share of your council tax bill to £113.58 for a Band D property. This is an increase of £4.95 above last year. It has not been immune to cost of living pressures caused by inflation and this year it has had to utilise some of its financial reserves and implement a programme of efficiency savings. The 2025-2026 financial year is also projected to be difficult. Having spent a lot of time with senior council officers reviewing the budget as well as meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition, I was content to support this year's budget. I continue to challenge the Council where I have concerns about financial matters. Having lobbied very hard on this matter, I was pleased to note that they finally scrapped the planned expenditure of £35,000 on painting murals in Dereham Town Centre. I also continue to ask searching questions about the future of Barnham Broom Golf & Country Club which the Council still owns. It is my long-held belief that the Council should never have bought this in the first place.

Local Development Plan Review

Breckland Council continues to carry out this review at pace and the draft plan will be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting to be held on 13th May 2024. Subject to approval at this meeting there will be a further public consultation anticipated to start on 3rd June 2024. I have been pleased to have the opportunity to work some with some Parish Councils on this very important piece of work.

The Future of Robertson Barracks

I was approached by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation in early January of this year to have an initial meeting with them to discuss their tentative plans for the site. This meeting was very constructive and I was pleased to hear their desire to communicate closely with the local community. This was followed on 30th April with a presentation and extensive inspection of the site with DIO and representatives from Breckland Council, Norfolk County Council, Swanton Morley Parish Council and Hoe & Worthing Meeting. The Breckland Council Draft Local Plan going before its Cabinet on 13th May, in my view, takes a very pragmatic approach to this site. It recognises that a lot of detailed work around transport links, utilities, green infrastructure and good quality design will need to be produced before a realistic assessment of housing and employment use can be determined. I will continue to engage with all relevant stakeholders to try and get the best possible outcome for the current local community and future generations. It must be remembered that any development of this site will likely take many years to complete after the base closes at the end of this decade.

2023 Power Cuts in Beetley & Gressenhall

I am grateful to a number of residents who contacted me following last year's power cuts to voice their frustration at the frequency and duration of these. I wrote to the UK Power Networks Public Affairs Manager in October seeking answers and a resolution to what was obviously an ongoing deficiency with their overhead cable network. I am pleased that they subsequently carried out a programme of tree cutting and replaced some cabling. I later requested that they send management representatives to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting which was held in March. At that meeting they acknowledged that their maintenance regime had not been satisfactory but that they now have a larger budget for maintenance work. Furthermore, I was pleased to receive an undertaking from them that additional engineering work will be carried out in 2024 to make the local electricity network more resilient.

Community Car Schemes

At a recent Beetley Parish Council meeting I was made aware of some complaints made by volunteer drivers and the co-ordinator about what they perceive is the onerous demands placed upon them by Breckland Council. These relate to the frequency of enhanced DBS and medical checks. It is felt that these can be off-putting for prospective new drivers and place an increased administrative burden on the Co-ordinator. I wrote to the relevant manager at Breckland Council (new in post) and having investigated the matter further, he confirmed that the Breckland Council scheme was last reviewed in 2010. He has advised me that his team will now undertake a thorough review taking account of the most up to date guidance. It is my hope that this will result in less administrative work and a sensible level of checks for drivers.

Beetley Pre-school

This long established Pre-school serves Beetley and surrounding villages. It is currently located within the school grounds. The age of the existing building and the need for the school to re-purpose the land it sits on, means that the Pre-school is trying to find land for a new home in the village. Despite obtaining planning permission to build new premises on land owned by Beetley Parish Council adjacent to the school, legal wrangling with some neighbouring properties has meant that this has had to be abandoned as the legal costs are prohibitive. I approached the Trustees of the Village Hall to see if they could help, but they did not respond to any of my correspondence. I was later advised by a third party that they declined to help. I continue to work with representatives of the Pre-school, Breckland Council planning department and a developer with a view to seeing if new premises can be built on land within the village. These discussions are at an early stage and I will continue to do what I can to secure the long term future of this facility for local children and their parents/carers.

Supporting our Military Families

I was troubled to find out in recent months that some of our service personnel and their families based at Robertson Barracks are living in substandard accommodation on the base. Some of these homes are very poorly insulated, have mouldy bathrooms and electric storage heaters which are decades old and very inefficient to run. This makes the cost of energy very expensive and impacts on other aspects of their household budgets such as everyday shopping. Working in conjunction with Breckland Council officers and Swanton Morley Parish Council, I have managed to help struggling families receive some emergency funding and specific help with food. I am grateful to the Leader of the Council, Sam Chapman-Allen for his support with this and to this end we, along with senior managers from the housing team will soon be meeting with representatives from the 1st Queens Dragoon Guards welfare team to develop more targeted support utilising funding from the Council and Armed Forces Covenant.

Casework

In the grip of the cost of living crisis Breckland Council has, with Government support, provided hardship and family support funding for those most in need. As part of my casework I have managed to help a number of local families receive additional financial support and I have signposted them to other professional bodies where they can receive additional help and guidance. I can and often do help with concerns relating to antisocial behaviour, housing, street sweeping, environmental health matters, business support and backing community grant funding applications.

Your Councillor

As well as my day to day duties as your councillor, I am also the leader of the Independent & Green Group at Breckland Council. I am now starting my sixth year as a member of the planning committee and I am also a substitute member of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and Governance & Audit Committee.

Yours Sincerely

Roger Atterwill
Ward member – Lincoln Ward
Email: roger.atterwill@breckland.gov.uk
Tel: 07841 488860

Norfolk County Council Annual Report 2023/24

- 97.4% of highways inspections completed within timescale
- 96.8% of 'Priority A' defects (classified as dangerous/emergency) were fixed within the Transport Asset Management Plan timescales
- 95% Customer satisfaction (with Council Services)
- 96% of Looked after Children with an up-to-date Personal Education Plan
- Completed over 90,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for over 26,000 people

Norfolk in numbers

Everything you need to know about our incredible county



1/3 of the UK's gas supply provided by Bacton Gas Terminal



50% of the UK's 10.4GW offshore wind power generated in Norfolk

42

fire stations



750

fire fighters



47

libraries



421

schools



£19 billion contributed to the national economy

6,159 miles of road



39,500 businesses

2,074 square miles



£3 billion a year tourism industry

£1.803 billion annual revenue budget for Norfolk County Council



223,900 aged 64 and over

918,369 residents



147,263 school age children

90 miles of coastline



409,124 homes



11,000+ businesses in financial and professional services

2,400 miles of walks, cycle and bridle routes



£1.44 billion a year in agricultural production



3,000+ scientists and clinicians working in food, health and life science

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.

Councillors accept £600 million devolution deal.

County councillors have voted to accept a county deal devolution agreement with the Government, to transfer significant funding and powers to Norfolk.

Government funding will start transferring to Norfolk next summer, if councillors vote in July 2024 to stage the first election for a leader in May 2025. The deal will mean that decisions can be taken in Norfolk, for Norfolk.

The full council agreed the following recommendations:

Council:

- Recognises the work carried out during 2023 to consult with the public, inform Members and prepare plans in relation to the 'in-principle' County Deal brought to Council in January this year.
- Commends the work undertaken by the Leader and Officers to secure additional benefits for the Norfolk County Deal and resolves that the Deal should be accepted.
- Agrees that the election for the Directly Elected Leader should be held alongside the county council elections in May 2025 to enable the widest possible engagement with the electorate.
- Agrees that the resolution adopting the new governance arrangements should be brought to the Full Council meeting on 23 July 2024 to facilitate that election date.

For further details go to www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkcountydeal.

Background – what would a county deal mean?

Norfolk faces a major opportunity to gain new powers and funding from the Government, through an agreement called the County Deal. We could make more decisions in Norfolk, for Norfolk and secure investment of more than £600m over 30 years. If councillors agree the in-principal deal, it will enable us to invest in areas such as transport, skills and job opportunities, housing and regeneration, tailored to the needs of local people.

A County Deal would mean:

- Having a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, enabling Norfolk's voice to be heard by the Government.
- Targeting funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities.
- Unlocking housing and employment sites.
- Investing in the skills we need and attracting and retaining key businesses.
- Opening the door to more – further powers and funding in future

Norfolk County Council provided extra support to households this winter.

Earlier this year, Norfolk County Council announced it would receive further funding from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to run the Household Support Fund until 31 March 2024. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Budget that this funding would be extended by a further six months.

The council has received £13.4m from central government and adding an additional £400,000 to make the total programme of support worth £13.8m. It is working closely with district, borough, and city councils, public sector partners to identify and implement a range of support measures to meet the needs of vulnerable households.

Norfolk's roads and footpaths to be fixed as part of £4.51m funding.

Thirty-four roads and 20 footpaths across the County will be repaired by Norfolk County Council during this coming year as part of Government funding. Roads from Great Yarmouth to King's Lynn, from Hunstanton to Thetford and many in between the entire County will receive reclamite spray or resurfacing along with footpath construction to ensure Norfolk's infrastructure can best help people to get to work, travel to services and access Norfolk's natural and cultural assets through effective highways maintenance.

Twenty-seven brand new gritters joined Norfolk's fleet

Twenty-seven brand new gritters took to the roads for the first time later this winter in a £3,238,000 boost to the annual push to help keep Norfolk moving safely during the winter months.

Norfolk's fleet of 58 winter vehicles treat 2,200 miles of roads on each full 3-hour gritting run. All A and B-class roads and some C-class roads are treated with a focus on commuter and major bus routes and as far as is possible one route into all villages. The A11 and A47 are gritted by National Highways.

In addition to the 49 gritting routes, several pedestrian areas and main pavements are treated in the centre of Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn, and more than 2000 grit bins are available around the county for people to use on roads, pavements and cycle paths.

Find more information via www.norfolk.gov.uk/winter

Norfolk flood protection took 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. A 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.

£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>

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

From 1 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 1 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.

Householders can have free DIY waste disposal for small projects.

Norfolk residents have been able to dispose of small amounts of DIY waste at Norfolk's Recycling Centres free of charge from 31st December following changes made by Norfolk County Council.

The change applies to small-scale projects carried out by householders on their own home, allowing them to bring a maximum 100 litres (must fit into 2 x 50l bags) for free or one single item (maximum size of 200cm x 70cm x 75cm). Each household is allowed four free visits with DIY waste every four weeks. Anything beyond this will still be charged at normal rates.

The change in policy follows Government abolishing charges for the disposal of limited amounts and types of DIY waste at recycling centres across the UK.

Prior to 31st December, customers with DIY-type construction and demolition waste will continue to be directed to the 'Pay as you throw service' which is available at all centres.

Traders must continue to pay for DIY waste. For more information visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/DIYwaste

Climate Strategy was launched at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum

Norfolk County Council's Climate Strategy, adopted by Cabinet last May, was launched at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum with special guest Kate Strong, world record holder and endurance cyclist.

The Climate Strategy sets out how the council will work not only to reduce its own carbon emissions, but to drive down emissions across the county, protect the unique environment of Norfolk, and to seize the opportunities the move to a green economy represents, securing investment and growth for Norfolk.

Key proposals include:

- Supporting active and sustainable transport, including further bus improvements and electric vehicle charging
- Providing space for nature and developing a nature recovery strategy.
- Retrofitting council buildings to take out gas and oil heating and improve insulation – and encouraging businesses, residents and other organisations to do the same.
- Reducing emissions from the council's companies, such as Norse.
- Developing the green economy, with support for green skills, sustainable tourism and businesses.
- The development of a nature recovery strategy to protect our natural assets and encourage greater biodiversity.
- Working with the Tyndall Centre for climate change research at the University of East Anglia, to understand climate change impacts and how Norfolk might adapt to them.
- Close collaboration between public sector, business, community and voluntary groups.

Award-winning Adult Learning service rated 'Good' by Ofsted.

Norfolk County Council's Adult Learning has been rated as 'Good' following their latest Ofsted inspection. The inspection report praised the ambition of the service, which provides community-based and online learning for around 6,000 adults a year. The service achieved a 'Good' rating across all six areas that were inspected, alongside the overall 'Good' rating. Inspectors commented that learners are 'highly motivated' and committed to their studies. They praised the number of people who have a 'clear plan' for their future careers and that they want to improve their economic prospects.

Inspectors highlighted the work with residents of retirement homes who have increased their confidence, self-care and resilience after completing courses in basic cookery. They commented how, following the course, learners felt less isolated and 'excited to prepare and eat their own meals'.

It was also recognised that the service has responded effectively to the growing demand for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses.

There was praise for the work with Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service apprentices. The inspectors saw how the course helps them to work safely while learning about the importance of health and nutrition. The report concluded that the 'apprenticeship is well matched to the needs of the fire service.'

This inspection result comes on the back of Norfolk County Council Adult Learning being named 'Further or Higher Education Provider of the Year' at this year's Norfolk Education Awards. This followed national recognition in 2021 where the service was named adult and community learning provider of the year at the Tes Further Education Awards.

Norfolk County Council Adult Learning offers a wide range of courses for adults of all levels and interests. Whether you want to change your career, improve your skills, or pursue your passion.

Find out more about Adult Learning and browse the course catalogue at www.norfolk.gov.uk/adultlearning.

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