

Barry Stone - County Councillor for Clavering

Parish Council News Update

May/June 2023

Dear All

Having been formally elected as the Chairman of Norfolk County Council on the 9th May I am now looking forward to a busy year ahead but one I look forward to very much as does Margaret who was of course Chairman four years ago. It does mean I may not be able to attend your Parish Council as often as I would wish but I will try to send regular updates. Below are some of the more important recent updates from county.



County Council elects new leader

Conservative group leader Councillor Mason Billig was voted in at the full council's annual meeting on 9 May. She succeeds Councillor Andrew Proctor, who stood down from the role due to ill health.

Cllr Mason Billig said it was an honour to be elected. She paid tribute to Cllr Proctor for putting the council in a strong position and wished him a speedy recovery.

The new leader has named her new cabinet:

- Leader and portfolio holder for Strategy and Governance – Kay Mason Billig
- Deputy Leader and Finance – Andrew Jamieson
- Public Health and Wellbeing – Bill Borrett
- Adult Social Care – Alison Thomas
- Children's Services – Penny Carpenter
- Communities and Partnerships – Margaret Dewsbury
- Environment and Waste – Eric Vardy
- Economic Growth – Fabian Eagle
- Highways, Infrastructure and Transport – Graham Plant
- Corporate Services and Innovation – Jane James

The same meeting elected Councillor Barry Stone as chairman of the county council – the authority's civic leader. Councillors paid tribute to Councillor Karen Vincent, who has completed her year as chair of the county council.

Norfolk Climate Strategy Approved

An ambitious climate strategy, to support Norfolk's move to net zero, has been agreed by the cabinet.

Retrofitting insulation in buildings, boosting sustainable transport, supporting green jobs and helping nature recover are among measures in the county council's climate strategy, to support Norfolk's move to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The strategy follows the county council's commitment, made in 2019, to achieve net zero on its own estate. It aims to reduce the county council's 2016/17 carbon emissions of 21,000 tonnes per year, which have already been halved, by 90 per cent by 2030, with the remainder offset.

The strategy emphasises that most of Norfolk's carbon emissions come from heating people's homes, from transport and from land use and agriculture. It also warns that Norfolk is already

seeing the effect of changed weather patterns and needs to adapt to more-frequent flooding, drought and extreme heat, and that residents, businesses and public services will all need to adapt.

Link to the Climate Strategy on the county council website [here](#)

County Deal for Norfolk Consultation update

Our public consultation has now closed and the detailed results have been published.

County council leader, Councillor Kay Mason Billig, thanked those who took part in the consultation.

The public's views on Norfolk's proposed devolution deal with the Government will be considered by the county council's scrutiny committee on 18 May 2023.

The county council's cabinet will meet in the summer to consider the results of the consultation, decide whether to proceed and, if so, submit the consultation results to the Government.

The consultation received over 1,200 responses.

If approved, the Deal would give Norfolk more control over funding and decisions on skills, jobs, housing and transport, which are currently decided in Westminster.

All county councillors will be asked in the December 2023 Full Council Meeting whether they support the move to an elected leader and cabinet system of governance.

In spring 2024, Parliament will decide whether to approve the 'statutory instrument' required to let the Deal proceed.

The county council website has been updated to include an introduction from county council Leader Kay Mason Billig and a link to the full detailed results of the consultation.

Link to our updated County Deal web pages and the consultation results [here](#).

Link to the scrutiny committee report [here](#).

Million trees for Norfolk update

Norfolk could be set for a new country park

An update on the success so far of the 1 Million Trees for Norfolk project, with 250,000 already in the ground will be heard by Norfolk County Council's infrastructure and development committee on 17 May 2023.

To meet the ambitious target members are set to consider proposals that could see a large new woodland area created and opened to the public. Members of the committee are being asked to comment on the proposal before it is considered by Cabinet at a later date.

The update outlines a proposal for the county council to buy land to plant 500,000 trees over the next two planting seasons. It's estimated that 333 hectares would be needed to provide enough space for planting on the scale required, however this may not all be in one single location. Sustainable transport links would be needed, and no locations have been chosen as yet.

Further details and a link to the committee report [here](#).

Further information about the million trees for Norfolk project available on the county council website [here](#).

Investment for Special Educational Needs (SEND) in Norfolk

Norfolk County Council has secured a £70 million funding boost for special needs education for children in Norfolk (SEND).

Known as Local First Inclusion, it will provide significantly more advice, support and funding for mainstream schools and introduce 15 new school and community support teams to give early help and support to both parents and schools.

It also means the council will develop dozens more special education classrooms, known as specialist resource bases (SRBs) and alternative provision at mainstream schools as well as building two more special schools.

Norfolk's Local First Inclusion plan is the next stage of our SEND Improvement Programme covering the period 2023-29.

Further details of the SEND Local First Inclusion Programme [here](#).

Norfolk County Council support for Home-Start Norfolk

A Norfolk charity facing financial difficulties is set to benefit from a £90,000 grant to help it continue its work to support families with young children.

Home-Start Norfolk recruits and trains volunteers, mostly parents, to provide informal, practical and confidential support within the home to families with at least one child aged 0-5. In 2021/22 it supported approximately 330 families with 145 volunteers.

The one-off grant from Norfolk County Council and NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB) aims to support Home-Start Norfolk through the funding challenges which threaten its services.

A total of £60,000 is being provided by Norfolk County Council, via Children's Services and Public Health grants with £30,000 from NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

The grant will be for April 2023 to March 2024 and will be overseen by Children's Services.

More information about Home-Start Norfolk [here](#).

NHS Health checks in Norfolk: update

From May, Norwich's Castle Quarter Wellbeing Hub will offer a free NHS Health Check for Norfolk residents aged 40-74. The check-up will tell you your risk of developing health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, and stroke.

The free Health Checks are also available in a number of other locations across Norfolk.

Reed Wellbeing provides Norfolk NHS Health Checks on behalf of Norfolk County Council. The service is designed to help 36,000 Norfolk residents to have their NHS Health Check.

Book your NHS Health Check today by calling 0808 175 0413 .

Further details and a list of locations across Norfolk available [here](#).

Electoral Commission to analyse impact of voter photo ID

Following the local elections, the Electoral Commission has issued a statement to say that it is collecting data from polling stations about the impact of the new requirement for user identification.

The Commission expects to publish its initial analysis of the implementation of voter ID in June, subject to data being available.

They say that in September 2023 they will publish their full report. This will feature further data, including the reasons people were turned away, as well as turnout, postal voting and rejected ballots. It will also provide analysis of other aspects of the elections, including accessibility support that was provided for voters in polling stations.

Their analysis will inform a final view of how the new requirement has worked in practice and what can be learnt for future elections.

Electoral Commission statement available [here](#).

Best wishes

Barry

As always, I am here to help in any way I can and will always respond to email and telephone requests for assistance.

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