

Progress report

Pylons and panels

The deluge of energy projects all over South Norfolk continues, and once again we are in a round of so-called “consultations” in which the firms trying to cash in on Britain’s super-excessive energy prices will try to insist that they have our interests at heart.

Norwich to Tilbury have submitted their Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate. The deadline for registering as an interested party is 27th November. I’ll be putting in objections based on the fact that the previous consultation has taken no account whatsoever of the key points that have been made by all the communities in East Anglia, and that these consultations have in fact been bogus and misleading.

The Tasway Energy Park company have organised four local events. I attended the one in Ashwellthorpe and subject to some diary constraints I hope also to attend the one in Bunwell on 14th November. I’m also planning to drop in at the community event at the Steam museum in Forncett on Friday 14th November.

This week I shall be submitting my input into the County Council’s response to the consultations on the changes to the East Pye proposals and on the Tasway proposals. A comment from me will be appended to the council’s response in both cases. I need to complete these by 5th November.

Mayors and unitary councils

In September the County Council narrowly passed the Council administration’s proposed business case for having just one large Unitary Council for the whole of Norfolk. Most opposition councillors and some Conservatives voted against, preferring the idea of two or three unitary councils. I was absent on this occasion due to the covid.

In October the County Council voted in favour of the Devolution Deal which is about the funds and powers to be transferred to a metro-mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk. We are expecting the first elections for the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor (to incorporate the job of police and crime commissioner as well as a range of strategic funds for the area) to take place next May. Some candidates for the mayoral position have been announced. County Council elections are also scheduled to happen in May. Rumours are circulating that they might be cancelled again which would be an insult to voters once again.

Highways and paths

I’ve complained about the missing traffic sensors on the Shimpling Byway Open to All Traffic. If vehicles use the byway, residents are asked to report any issues with safety, via the “report a highways issue” portal. Please also collect evidence and photos both of problematic use of the highway and also of local flora and fauna and any precious habitats or wildlife.

A disastrous mix up about the resurfacing of the road from Shelfanger to Winfarthing means that the contractors have done top dressing (without any preparatory work), instead of the full resurfacing had been approved. This is very irritating after all the effort put in by the Highways officer to secure the funding for resurfacing. How to put it right? Unclear.

I’m also supporting the campaign to get lifts at Diss station to make crossing the line better for everyone who struggles with the stairs.

Community Fund

I'm pleased to report that Burston is the first to complete a Community project with a grant from my fund. They will be installing an insect hotel in the orchard section of the recreation ground. I still have £4,000 to award, and leaflets about it, so please ask and spread the word.

Updates from County Council

Norfolk County Council Budget Consultation

The County Council has started its plans for how to balance its budget next year. There is likely to be an increase to the grant from central government, but not enough to keep pace with the rising costs of services and increases in demand for services that we are obliged to deliver—particularly in adult social care and children's services.

The Conservative administration is asking residents for their views about their 2026-27 budget proposals which include raising part of the missing money by way of council tax and suggesting a raft of ways of trying to reduce costs, to help close the budget gap. You can read a brief fact sheet here: <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/budget-proposals-2026-27/>.

Find out more and have your say at www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget. Closes 15 December 2025.

Consultation on fire and rescue priorities

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) has a [consultation](#) on priorities for safety in Norfolk.

Avian flu in Norfolk

From 30 October 2025 Norfolk became one of the high risk areas for bird flu. Additional housing measures now apply in Norfolk. You must now house your birds if you keep either:

- more than 50 birds of any species
- any number of poultry (meaning birds that are kept to give away or sell eggs, poultry products or live birds)

You don't have to house them if you keep fewer than 50 birds and you don't sell the products.

See links [here](#). To report breaches of bird flu rules, email trading.standards@norfolk.gov.uk.

National Information

Financial penalties for water companies—consultation open till 3 December 2025.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water-sector-civil-penalties/strengthening-penalty-powers/>

Defra is consulting on expanding and strengthening the financial penalties available to the Environment Agency in a bid to clamp down on more offences. (My thoughts: financial penalties are worse than pointless since they just increase water bills to pay for it: we need nationalisation, confiscation of assets, and prison for management and profiteers).

Bus Services Act

The Bus Services Bill became law on 27th October. It should protect services and empower local authorities to take greater control of bus services, improve reliability and protect socially necessary routes. Excellent news! See here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-era-of-better-buses-landmark-bus-bill-becomes-law>

Contact me

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3rd November 2025