

District Councillors' Report Ashwellthorpe & Fundenhall Parish Council 24th March 2026

Member Ward Grants

Requests for support with small projects (typically up to £1,000 per project) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors. Member Ward Grants for 2026/27 have been doubled to £2,000 per councillor, meaning that a total of £6,000 is available across Mulbarton & Stoke Holy Cross ward. Grants will be available from April.

Council Tax

The average rate of increase in Council Tax across the district will be 4.9%. The increase is driven by the County Council increase of 5%. The district council element, which accounts for about 7% of the Council Tax bill, increased 2.85% (£5 per month for a Band D property).

South Norfolk Grants for Towns, Parishes and Community Groups in 2026/27

For the forthcoming year, SNC has been able to fund grants of over £1 million to towns, villages and community groups. The key grants include:

- £500,000 for the Communities Action Fund (CAF) grants.
- £500,000 for a new Parish Facilities Grant.
- £100,000 for a Street Cleaners for Parishes grant to help fund new capital equipment that might be required in the larger towns and settlements.

In Bloom Grant

Applications can now be made by Parish Councils and other community organisations for an 'In Bloom' Grant. These are to help fund "projects that enhance the visual appeal of their communities, encourage the growing of produce, and promote wildlife and biodiversity. ". The total amount available per parish is limited to £1 per resident and application must have at least 50% matched funding. Applications can be made until Sunday 19th April 2026.

CAF Grants

For 2026/27 only, grant applications of up to £40,000 will be accepted. Grants of more than £15,000 will require an absolute minimum of 25% matched funding already secured. We understand that the definition of qualifying projects will be tightened this year, with the intention of focusing on genuinely new projects. Applications for the new fund are expected to open in April/May.

We have been told that the Community Facilities Grants will be available for improvements to existing facilities. The terms of this new grant are not yet known.

South Norfolk Play Area Improvement Project.

The Knyvett Green children's play area is included in the scheme and the public consultation is now live on the South Norfolk website, where the public can vote on their preferred design. **This consultation closes on 13th April.** There is a choice of three designs.

To have your say visit: [South Norfolk Play Area Refurbishment Consultation | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

Local Government Reform and Devolution

There have been no new announcements regarding the timetable for LGR and devolution. The Government's decision on the shape of LGR in Norfolk is expected in March (ie 1, 2 or 3 new Unitary Authorities). Elections to the new shadow authorities are expected in May 2027. Following a change of heart from Government, County Council elections are now back on for 7 May this year. If the LGR timetable is achieved, the next council will sit for only 2 years.

Food Waste Collection

There has been a delay in the planned delivery of food waste collections due to delays in the delivery of the new collection trucks. More information will be available nearer the time.

South Norfolk Big Litter Pick

The 2026 big litter pick is now open. All participating organisations will receive a £50 thank you and 5 participating organisations, chosen at random, will receive £500. More information from: [Big South Norfolk Litter Pick | Broadland and South Norfolk](#)

South Norfolk Community Awards

Nominations can be made for these awards until 15 May 2026. Full details of the 9 different categories and the nomination form can be found at: [South Norfolk Community Awards | Broadland and South Norfolk](#) .

East Pye Solar Farm

The developer submitted its application for a Development Consent Order on March 5th. The decision on whether to accept the application for examination must be made by 3rd April. Once accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, interested parties must then register to have their say on the application during the formal inspection phase. Timetables for registration will be published if the application is accepted.

'Norwich to Tilbury' Update

The National Grid's Development Consent Order is now at the examination phase. This is scheduled to close on 10 August 2026, although an earlier close is possible. The initial public hearings have been completed and can be viewed online: [Examination timetable - Norwich to Tilbury - Find a National Infrastructure Project](#). Further hearings may be required in April and June.

PylonsEastAnglia are continuing to campaign against the pylon proposals and are fundraising. For further information visit: <https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions>.

Bob McClenning, Ian Spratt & Jim Webber

	<u>Councillor Contact Details</u>	
Cllr. Jim Webber	jim.webber@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk	07394 323215
Cllr. Ian Spratt	ian.spratt@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk	07554 668337
Cllr. Bob McClenning	bob.mcclenning@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk	07769 030926