

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’ve submitted comments to go in with Norfolk County Council’s submission, including complaints about the failure to respond to the statutory consultations and some detailed stuff about the damage to the nature reserves and woodland in the Bunwell Hill area resulting from rowing back on the improvements made in 2024, and reverting to the more damaging plans despite evidence from the ecologists, and things about the gliding club and aircraft safety at Tibenham.

The Tasway Energy Park company have run four local events. I attended the events in Ashwellthorpe and Bunwell. I also dropped in at the community event at the Steam museum in Fornsett on 14th November. I have submitted some comments to go in with the County Council submission, mainly about cumulative impact and the lack of any strategic land use framework in this government’s crazy energy and planning policy.

I have also put in my contribution to the County Council’s response to the consultation on the changes to the East Pye proposals, especially objecting to the location of the NG substation right by Great Moulton and the increase in the size of it, and the potential damage to the roads and byways.

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. 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. County Council elections are also scheduled to happen in May.

Highways and paths

I am doing my best to secure the promises resurfacing on the B1077 (Shelfanger to Winfarthing) (which had a surface dressing treatment instead of a full resurfacing, due to some confusion).

Many residents have been in touch about the Shimpling Byway Open To All Traffic. We need to understand that the current legal situation is that the road must be open to four wheeled vehicles. There’s nothing we can do about that except seek a change of its legal status in due course.

On the railways, I’m disappointed to see that they failed to include a station and cycle route to the railway at the Thickthorn interchange. What a missed opportunity to provide a station for West Norwich! I’m also keen to see lifts or an underpass at Diss station to make crossing the line better for everyone who struggles with the stairs.

Community Fund

I’m pleased to report that awards from my fund have now been made to Burston for an insect hotel and to Gissing for gardening tools for the church yard gardening group. I’m progressing applications for biodiversity projects in Tivetshall, improvements at the Woodlands club in

Tacolneston, catering equipment for community meals at Gt Moulton and Aslacton, printing costs for the parish newsletter in Aslacton and a shelter for the children's play area at the community nursery in Gissing.

I'm pleased to say that the proposal for bus shelter improvements in Carleton Rode will be funded from the Bus Service Improvement Plan funds, providing we can find the parish contribution funds (20% of the cost) from somewhere else.

Updates from County Council

Norfolk County Council Budget Consultation

The Conservative administration is asking residents for their views about their 2026-27 budget proposals which include raising 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.

Avian flu

All of Great Britain is now in an avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ). This means all bird-keepers in Great Britain (including pet birds and small backyard flocks) are required by law to take biosecurity precautions. See links [here](#). To report breaches of bird flu rules, email trading.standards@norfolk.gov.uk.

Nature Recovery roadmap launched

County councils in Norfolk and Suffolk have launched their respective Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS), aiming to address the region's decline in nature, identify ways to help it recover, and deliver wider benefits such as reducing flood risk. The two County Councils have worked closely together, forming the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership, to identify common themes to address the decline in nature.

The strategies will contribute to a national 'nature network', including actions such as the creation of wetlands, restoration of peatlands, planting of trees and hedgerows, and more sustainable management of existing woodlands and other habitats like grasslands. Info [here](#).

National Information

Climate anxiety

A [new report published by the UK Health Security Agency](#) (UKHSA) notes that climate change is having a considerable impact on mental health, especially among farmers and young people. Mental health is one of the key factors leading to young people being not in work, education or training (one in eight young people in the UK). The government has started an investigation to see what's causing that, but we know what they need to do. So why don't they do it???

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

Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk. See also my Facebook page [here](#).

Catherine Rowett

17th November 2025