

Updates on what I'm doing

Could you benefit from a community energy scheme (and stop the industrialisation of our countryside)?

On 13th March I attended an excellent conference organised by Adrian Ramsay for organisations interested in nature recovery and community energy etc in Waveney Valley area and there were some inspiring examples of the good stuff that's going on.

The government has announced new funding for community energy projects. Some of our parishes and district councils are working with Community Climate Action to devise a scheme to benefit local people and get clean cheap energy: <https://www.communityclimateaction.uk>. If you haven't already, do join up to the *Norfolk Environmental Collaboration* (organised by the NALC).

Road and green spaces improvements

I've now exhausted this year's local member fund and have allocated funds to the following works from it, or contributed to the projects:

Dickleburgh Dove Meadow nature conservation work: £3,000

Carleton Rode: initial safety measures for Upgate Street, including signs, white paint etc. £6,000

Winfarthing: towards the parish's share of the PP bid for SAM3 equipment, £1,000

Carleton Rode: towards the parish's share of the bus shelter improvements, £420

Tibenham/Bunwell: two horse riding signs near the stables on Cargate Common, £1,500

From next year's fund we are planning to undertake a feasibility study towards a reduced speed limit on part of Upgate Street.

Parish Partnership results

99 schemes across Norfolk have won support for their proposals under the parish partnership scheme. Of my parishes, we've won these:

Traffic calming chicanes, £25,000, Ashwellthorpe

Village Gateways: Aslacton £8421; Bressingham, £4548

SAM cameras/equipment: Great Moulton (£3928), Winfarthing (£4685).

Better buses

I'm working on a better bus service for Burston and Shimpling and I'm in discussions about a bus service for villages such as Ashwellthorpe and Tacolneston, to go to Wymondham. The good news is that Norfolk County Council has received a multi-year settlement of money for public transport.

Sewage and fly tipping

We seem to have a problem of commercial fly tipping in the countryside, and an almost permanent outflow of sewage near Dickleburgh Moor. These are keeping me busy trying to get something done about it. I believe Anglian Water has made promises to solve the latter.

Reinstated elections

County Council elections are now on for May 7th this year, as they should always have been. This will be all-out elections for all County Council seats across Norfolk (including my own) and one third of the seats on Norwich City Council. The term of office to which the new councillors are elected is likely to be two years (if unitary councils are ready to take over by 2028). However, the timetable for local government reorganisation may shift again.

Updates from County Council and the Health Board

New Crisis and Resilience Fund

Norfolk County Council has announced a new Crisis and Resilience Fund to provide rapid support while building longer-term financial resilience for residents across the county. It replaces the national Household Support Fund. It includes crisis-help plus wraparound assistance (e.g. support with budgeting, digital access, debt, referrals to other services). Further details [here](#).

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun – Easter holiday activities

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun, funded by the UK Government, provides free holiday activities and nutritious meals for eligible children and young people across Norfolk. The Easter programme runs from 30 March to 13 April 2026. It's open to children aged 4–16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals. There are also 'Awarded Places' for children identified as particularly vulnerable (referral by a professional).

Activities include sport, outdoor adventure, swimming, arts and crafts, and more. See www.norfolk.gov.uk/bignorfolkholidayfun

Support to quit smoking – SmokeFree app in Norfolk campaign launched

Smoking costs the county an estimated £757m per year and has significant impacts on health, household finances and local healthcare systems ([ASH digital resource](#)).

The Smokefreeapp is clinically proven to double people's chances of quitting, and has received multiple accolades and five-star reviews. Full features are available free to Norfolk residents through commissioning by Norfolk County Council. The app includes:

- Peer support via community chat
- Goal setting, guidance and advice
- 24/7 expert support from human advisors
- Finance and health improvement tracking
- Smoking cessation medications and nicotine replacement therapies delivered directly to users by Royal Mail

Find out more at the council's [help to quit smoking](#) webpages.

National Information

Consultation on accelerating electricity network connections

The [Government is consulting](#) on measures that they say will tackle speculative applications, address the oversubscribed queue, and accelerate viable projects that will benefit Britain.

The Government says that due to speculative grid connection applications, the queue for demand connections to the transmission network has grown by 460% in just 6 months. There's a backlog of up to 15 years for viable projects. The proposed reforms would prioritise projects that "deliver growth and jobs". If they can stop the rash of speculative solar parks that will be good but their priorities are by no means the same as ours. They want to prioritise AI data centres and various kinds of industrialisation, rather than local community needs and energy for small businesses and energy security in a time of war. The [consultation](#) closes on 15 April 2026.

Contact me

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