

STIFFKEY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman:- Councillor A. Hooper

Vice-Chairman:- Councillor M. Williams



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF STIFFKEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2026 AT 7.00 PM IN STIFFKEY VILLAGE HALL

Present:-

Chairman – Cllr. A. Hooper, Vice-Chairman – Cllr. M. Williams,
Cllr. P. Claydon, Cllr. P. Harrison and Cllr. R. Husain.

County and District Councillor V. Holliday.

Julie Chance – Clerk.

One member of the public also attended the meeting.

1. CO-OPTION

- 1.1** It was **AGREED** to co-opt Gail Whitworth to Stiffkey Parish Council.
- 1.2** Cllr. Whitworth signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form witnessed by the Clerk. The Clerk advised Cllr. Whitworth to complete the Register of Interests form through North Norfolk District Council.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20TH JULY, 2026

The Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 20th July 2026, having been circulated, were taken as read, **AGREED** and signed by the Chairman.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. J. Sugden.

Clerk:- Julie Chance, Pine Lodge, Gimingham Road, Trimingham, Norfolk, NR11 8HP

Telephone No:- 07305048062

Email:- clerk@stiffkeyparishcouncil.gov.uk

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Declarations of interest were received from Cllr. P. Harrison in connection with any Muckledyke Permissive Footpath matters.

- 4.1** The Chairman reported that North Norfolk District Council are in the process of updating the Register of Interests information held for Stiffkey Parish Council Members. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would email North Norfolk District Council reporting that Cllr. Williams's Register of Interests are out of date. A new one was completed which is not on their data base at present. This matter will be placed on the next agenda for an update.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

6. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- 6.1 County Councillor's Report:-** Cllr. Holliday reported that Central Government will have more control over planning and have increased the new housing quota to 900 per year. The Members enquired what would happen if this quota is not met. Cllr. Holliday said that Central Government will step in and take control. The Local Plan has to show the new quota of 900 new houses. Cllr. Holliday reported that the new Police and Crime Commissioner is willing to meet to discuss issues. The issue of Dentistry will be discussed at the Health Oversight Scrutiny Commission at Norfolk County Council in November. At present there is a lengthy waiting list. The remainder of report attached.
- 6.2 District Councillor's Report:-** Attached.
- 6.3** The Clerk circulated an email from the Leader of North Norfolk District Council with an update on the Local Government Reorganisation. North Norfolk District Council will be holding sessions to keep Parish and Town Councils updated on any changes.

7. PLANNING

- 7.1** PF/26/0290 – The Old Hall, Church Street, Stiffkey:- Withdrawn.
- 7.2** PF/26/1235 – 70 Wells Road, Stiffkey:- Approved.
- 7.3** PF/25/1291 – CD/26/0009 – 14 Wells Road:- It was reported that the parking issue at this location has improved. It was **AGREED** that this matter be removed from the agenda.

- 7.4 North Norfolk Local Plan Review & Call for Sites:- Stiffkey Parish Council submitted the comments.

8. **FINANCE**

- 8.1 The Clerk circulated the cash book for the period to 31st August, 2026. **AGREED.**
- 8.2 All present signed the bank statements against the bank reconciliation for the period to 31st August, 2026.
All present completed a form to be added to the signatories for the bank account. Clerk to action.
- 8.3 The following payments were **AGREED:-**
- | | £ |
|---|--------|
| Clerk's Salary, office allowance, travel and Stationery | 652.81 |
| payslip circulated – August and September, 2026. | |
| HMRC Tax | 129.60 |
- 8.4 The annual salary increase has been published. It was **AGREED** to increase the Clerk's salary from £18.72 per hour to £19.96 per hour. The back pay from 1st April to 31st October amounts to £150.43 which will be paid in November, 2026.
- 8.5 It was **AGREED** to hold a zoom meeting in the first two weeks of November to prepare the draft budget. The draft budget will be placed on the agenda of the November meeting for agreement.

9. **HEALTH ACCESS TRANSPORT SCHEME**

- 9.1 Cllr. Williams reported that the correct Trustees are now in place. The opening of a bank account is in hand. Cards have been printed with the telephone number and information which will be placed in various places locally including the doctor's surgeries, dentists and pharmacists. The Clerk reported that once the new bank account has been opened, the telephone contract will need to be transferred to the Trustees.

10. **HIGHWAYS**

- 10.1 Temporary Road Closures:- Circulated.
- 10.2 Drains Bridge Street to Stiffkey Stores:- The Clerk reported that she has emailed Norfolk County Council stating that the drains are still blocked and have overflowed in the recent rain. To date she has not received a reply and she will chase accordingly.
- 10.3 Rusty Signposts:- County Councillor Holliday reported that the signs have been programmed for replacement.

- 10.4** Parish Partnership Scheme:- The Clerk reported that this funding is available again this financial year. It was **AGREED** that Members will put forward any possible schemes to be discussed at the November meeting. The deadline for applications is 1st December, 2026.

11. MUCKLEDYKE PERMISSIVE FOOTPATH

- 11.1** Cllr. Williams reported that the local public house will be holding a fundraiser event and are looking for ideas. Cllr. Williams is actively liaising with businesses and residents to raise more funding. Cllr. Hooper said that the Parish Council should look at the budget at the end of the financial year in order to make up any shortfall if possible. Cllr. Williams has obtained a new quote for the work in the sum of £1,100 plus VAT. This matter will be placed on the next agenda for an update.

12. REPORTS

- 12.1** SNAP:- Cllr. Hooper reported that she attended the recent meeting. They have removed the beat manager from the SNAP meetings and therefore have taken away the local connection. Cllr. Hooper asked the following questions:-
Are the Police involved in the planning process? – Answer No.
Are the Police increasing patrols and availability to tackle the recent wild fires and to monitor BBQs? – Answer No.
Are the Police still issuing crime statistics? – Answer No.
Cllr. Hooper will prepare a response for the Police and Crime Plan 2026/28 and Police Budget 2027/28 consultation and circulate to Members for agreement.
- 12.2** Dentistry:- This matter was dealt with under County Councillor's Report. Cllr. Hooper will prepare an article for the next newsletter.
- 12.3** Newsletter:- Cllr. Husain reported that she has enough material to produce the next newsletter. The next issue will be in October.
- 12.4** Greenhoe Local Energy Club:- Cllr. Hooper reported that the club is now up and running with some members about to be transferred onto the club's tariffs. The delay has been due to some changes to regulations. The club's administrator is keen to present an update to Stiffkey residents so it was **AGREED** that the Clerk would invite the representative to the November meeting to update the Members. A notice will be prepared to inform the public which will hopefully encourage the residents to attend the meeting.

- 12.5** Anglian Water:- Cllr. Hooper attended the recent meeting and asked the following questions:-
If you know you need to close a road for repairs why do you wait until the day before and then do an emergency road closure?
Anglian Water did not answer the question.
Are Anglian Water a consultee on planning applications? – Answer No.
Unfortunately, they did not allow questions unless they had been submitted in advance.
It was reported that there has been no difference in the water pressure since the new valve was installed. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to the representative and ask for an update.
Cllr. Hooper will prepare a draft letter.

13. CORRESPONDENCE

- 13.1** Norfolk Coast Forum – Field Trip:- Circulated. Noted.
13.2 Norfolk County Council – Deputy Leader letter:- Circulated. Noted.
13.3 People’s Emergency Briefing Film Screening in Sheringham:- Circulated. Noted.
13.4 Improving Rural Bus Services Survey:- This matter was covered under the County Councillor’s Report.
13.5 Overgrown Footpath – Stiffkey to Morston:- The Clerk has liaised with the National Trust who are dealing with this matter. It was **AGREED** to remove this from the agenda.
13.6 Email – Traffic in Village:- Circulated. It was **AGREED** that this matter will be discussed again in the spring 2027 with a view to placing traffic cones in order to ease the parking and congestion on Bridge Street and outside the Stiffkey Stores.

14. POLICY REVIEW

- 14.1** Risk Assessments:- Circulated. No amendments.

15. DEFIBRILLATOR

- 15.1** It has been reported that the wrong code was issued when 999 was called to use the defibrillator recently. An ambulance did attend the incident. Cllr. Claydon will look into exactly what happened with the code and report to the next meeting. It was **AGREED** that the postcode and what three words will be placed in the telephone box with the defibrillator. Cllr. Claydon to action.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 23rd November, 2026 at 7.00 pm in the Stiffkey Village Hall.

There being no other business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm

.....
Chairman

.....
Date

Sept District Cllrs Report

From Cllr. Victoria Holliday <Victoria.Holliday@north-norfolk.gov.uk>
To clerk@morston-pc.gov.uk <clerk@morston-pc.gov.uk>, Stiffkey Parish Council <clerk@stiffkeyparishcouncil.gov.uk>, Tracey Bayfield <clerk@blakeneyparishcouncil.gov.uk>, Cley Parish Council <clerk@cleyparishcouncil.gov.uk>, <wivetonpc@gmail.com>, 'Clerk For Salthouse Parish Council' <clerk@salthouseparishcouncil.gov.uk>, Kelling Parish Council <clerk@kellingparishcouncil.gov.uk>, weybournepc@gmail.com <weybournepc@gmail.com>
Date 2026-09-20 16:43

Dear all

Can I first please remind you of the mobile connectivity survey we're running. We've had lots of responses but the more data we have the better we can prove to Mobile Network Operators that local performance is not as predicted, and we'll have a better argument to ask for improved infrastructure:

<https://forms.north-norfolk.gov.uk/xforms/NewJourneyLanding/Show/MobileConnectivityReportJourney>

Please note everywhere your signal drops, whether it's when you're driving, walking, cycling or boating!
Thank you very much indeed.

Pls find below my September District Cllr's report:

From NNDC

'Strategy and policy

The Government has withdrawn the decision to establish a unitary council in Norfolk. It's unclear as to whether the proposal will return in the future. NNDC is here for the foreseeable future and has stopped all LGR preparatory work. The appointment of a Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk and consequent devolution is a separate process and still progressing.

Coastal

Debris has been removed from Salthouse Beach and coast protection works are taking place at Overstrand and Cromer.

Benefits

Pension credit campaigns run most recently in July have identified many eligible households, so please signpost anyone you think might be in need.

There is still funding available from NNDC for heating oil. Please contact the Financial Inclusion team on financial.inclusion@north-norfolk.gov.uk or Call 01263513811.

There is also fuel and food support available at Norfolk County Council, <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/41970/How-to-get-help-from-the-Client-Hardship-Service> or call 03448008020.

Housing

Housing demand remains high with 47 new applicants to the housing register in August, of which 68% were in the greatest need. 26 homes were let - lettings were down 15% on last year which creates greater pressure. 17 cases were assessed as homeless, many presenting in crisis. 13 households were placed in temporary accommodation in August and 77 households in total by month end. This is a 43% increase from last year. The housing team are working to strengthen early prevention of homelessness, help families move on to sustainable accommodation and focus on those with greatest need.

NNDC owns 32 units of temporary accommodation and is in the process of buying a further 9.

There are 600 affordable homes in various stages of approval and development.

The government funding for housing adaptations for those with disabilities is almost £2 million and applications are encouraged.

Let me know if you have any questions about benefits or housing.

Planning

New planning legislation is coming into effect which means that planning officers have more powers. A new National Planning Policy Framework came out in August so there are various changes, mostly in the direction of support for sustainable development.

The North Norfolk Design Guide is being updated, as is the Landscape Sensitivity Study, which looks at the sensitivity of protected landscapes.

Environmental Protection

NNDC has increased Fixed Penalty Notices for littering, fly tipping and disposing of household waste inappropriately. These may be increased in the future. I hope these work as flytipping on public land increased significantly in August.

Net zero

A guide to planning permission and solar panels is being developed which should make it easier to understand regulation about installing solar panels in, for example, conservation areas. It will be on the NNDC website but I'll keep you posted.

I'd like to also signpost you to a consultation by DEFRA ON Norfolk's new environmental delivery plan designed to support environmental recovery in parts of Norfolk susceptible to excess nutrients (the closest for us is the Wensum Special Area of Conservation

<https://consultations.defra.gov.uk/consultation-on-a-new-environmental-delivery-plan>

Do ask if questions about any of the above.

Very best wishes,

Victoria Holliday
District Councillor
Coastal
07557054629

Councillor Update Sept 19th

Norfolk County Council Updates

Helping to improve Norfolk's recycling service

Norfolk County Council's annual Recycling Centre Survey is now open until 18 October 2026. It seeks views from both users and non-users to inform future improvements to the service.

Feedback from the previous survey led to practical changes, including improved booking arrangements for Blue Badge holders, vape recycling at every site, and the addition of coffee pod recycling and acceptance of UPVC windows and doors at the county's seven main centres.

Responses from people who do not currently use a Recycling Centre are particularly valuable, as they can help the council understand barriers, unmet needs and opportunities to make the service more accessible.

The survey link for you and residents is with residents, parish/town councils and community groups: www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RecyclingCentres2026/

The Big Conversation on Care

The Big Conversation on Care is a national public conversation inviting people across England to share their views and experiences to help shape the future of adult social care.

In Norfolk, this aligns closely with our ongoing transformation of Adult Social Services. We are working to help people live their best life by focusing on strengths, prevention, stronger relationships and joined-up support in communities.

Residents can now vote on their preferred proposals that have been suggested, helping to identify popular suggestions that receive broad support from the population and workforce.

You can find out more and vote at [The Big Conversation on Care](#).

National Updates

Common Ground Award - community grant funding

Community and voluntary organisations can apply for grants to improve local places and help bring people together.

The Common Ground Award 2026 to 2027 will fund buildings, facilities, equipment and other long-term improvements for eligible voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in England.

Individual organisations can apply for between £20,000 and £50,000. In exceptional cases, applications of up to £100,000 may be considered where there is strong evidence of need and likely benefit. Groups of organisations applying together can

Further details and information on how to apply are available in the [Government press release](#).

Grants to support community energy projects

Local authorities and community energy groups across the UK are being given new opportunities to develop their own renewable energy projects, following the [launch of a £30 million funding programme from Great British Energy \(GBE\)](#).

The investment is the first tranche of a wider commitment of up to £1 billion. The initiative is designed to support more than 1,000 community and locally led clean energy schemes, ranging from solar panels on public buildings to village-owned wind farms and hydroelectric projects.

The funding includes the [GBE Community Fund \(£20 million\)](#), which is now open, and a new [GBE Partnerships Grant \(£5 million\)](#).

Councillors Update Sept 13th 2026

Norfolk County Council Updates

I think we're all pleased that the Government will not press ahead for the moment with splitting Norfolk into three unitary councils.

Record-breaking month for fire and rescue incidents in Norfolk

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service attended 1,295 incidents in August 2026, making it the busiest month in the history of the service. The increase was largely driven by hot, dry weather, with this summer declared the hottest on record and five heatwaves affecting Norfolk. The figure for 2026 was nearly 400 more incidents than the service attended last year in August (1,027), an increase of 26%, and close to double five years ago in August 2021 (705).

The unprecedented number of callouts for fire crews in the county was largely down to the hot and dry conditions across Norfolk in August and the preceding months. Conditions led to summer 2026 being declared as the UK's hottest on record, including the declaration of five heatwaves for Norfolk.

During one of those heatwaves, on Thursday 13th August, NFRS declared a major incident for the county, due to the number of large incidents happening across Norfolk at the same time which were putting a strain on emergency resources.

Significant incidents included fires at Mousehold Heath, Kenninghall, Bryant's Heath, Kelling Heath, Plumstead Road East and Thomas Bullock CE Primary Academy.

National Updates

England's mayors to be given power to introduce tourist tax

Government plans to give elected mayors in England the power to introduce an overnight visitor levy, known as a tourist tax, on accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs and holiday lets.

Mayors would be required to set out by March 2028 how any revenue raised would be spent.

Growing pressures in SEND

Schools and councils are reporting a significant surge in applications for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), as families seek to secure support before planned government reforms to the SEND system take effect.

Projections suggest that demand could rise to almost one in ten children by 2029. Currently, one in 20 school-age children in England has an EHCP. School leaders are already reporting an extraordinary increase in assessment requests.

Proposed reforms aim to provide earlier intervention and greater support within mainstream schools, while reserving EHCPs for children with the most complex needs from 2030 onwards.

The sharp rise in EHCP applications nationally reflects the challenges Norfolk is seeking to address through its SEND Inclusion Plans, which aim to strengthen support in mainstream settings and improve inclusive provision.

Chancellor 'Growth Speech'

The Chancellor, John Healey, set out the government's plans ahead of next month's Budget in his 'Growth Speech' this week.

Notably, The Chancellor reaffirmed the commitment to existing fiscal rules and to balancing day-to-day spending with revenue. Also stressed was the need to control government spending and reduce the burden of debt interest payments. It was suggested that economic growth would be key to achieving stronger public finances.

The Chancellor also announced that a roadmap for fiscal devolution would be published at the Budget. Also proposed were greater business rates retention and a share of local income for mayoral authorities from 2028, arguing that local leaders are best placed to unlock regional growth opportunities.

Councillor Update Sept 5th

National Updates

New duty to support children placed in temporary accommodation

From 1 September 2026, councils have a new duty to notify schools, GP practices and health visiting services when a child is placed in temporary accommodation so that children do not lose access to education and health support when their housing circumstances change.

The Government has provided almost £1 million in new burdens funding to support councils with implementation. The change will be particularly relevant to councils managing growing numbers of families in temporary accommodation.

Free school meals expansion comes into effect

New guidance for councils and schools has been published as the expansion of free school meals begins from September 2026. The Government's reforms extend eligibility to children in households receiving Universal Credit, alongside the wider rollout of breakfast clubs.

Rural councils' financial pressures debated in Parliament

A Westminster Hall debate on Government support for rural upper-tier local authorities took place on 2 September. The debate focused on the additional pressures faced by rural county councils, including the cost of providing services across large geographic areas, lower population density and difficulties in achieving economies of scale.

Other areas highlighted include the costs of delivery associated with adult social care, SEND, school transport, highways and public transport. Concerns were also raised around rural areas facing weaker access to services, housing, digital connectivity and economic opportunities, creating additional barriers to growth.

County Councillor Report September 26

Many residents in rural villages have said they really need better bus services. I've been speaking with NCC to see if anything can be done to improve this: NCC's role is plugging the gaps where services are not economic, and there is a small budget for that. To that end, we've created a very simple survey – link below - to see where people need to get to from villages which have no or very limited public transport. The responses will help shape any future changes. [Public Transport Survey – Fill in form](#). There's also a word version for those who aren't digitally enabled (attached). Please let me know if you would like me to drop off paper copies. To get these back, probably the easiest way is for residents (or a friend) to take a photo on their mobile and email to me at victoria.holliday.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk.

Officers at NCC have agreed to host a Teams webinar with parishes to discuss what projects are in place at NCC to improve broadband speed and mobile connectivity. They will also touch on their digital inclusion work as well. This will hopefully be scheduled for October. I'll let you know the date.

The Parish Partnership Scheme is back! The County Council has provisionally allocated £500,000 on a 50/50 basis. The closing date for submissions will be 01 December 2026, decisions will be made in March 2027, and any schemes will need to be delivered on the ground by the end of December 2027. Therefore, we would ask that parishes supply their funding by end of April 2027 to prevent lapse of grant. Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Norfolk County Council is still only accepting unwanted fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances at the county's largest recycling centres, due to a national shortage of processing sites. Hempton is our closest.

If parishioners have any support needs, or need help navigating the care system, the next dates for the social worker at Heritage House, Wells are 5th and 20th October, and at Glaven Caring, Blakeney, 2nd and 13th October, and 6th and 17th November. No appointment is needed.

I'll be holding a surgery at Wells Library 11-noon Friday 9th October and 13th November, where I'll be happy to answer questions or see if I can help at all with Norfolk County Council matters.

The Government has published a revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#), effective immediately. The revised framework introduces a stronger presumption in favour of sustainable development and increases the weight of national policy in planning decisions. For Norfolk, a key issue is to ensure that increases in housing delivery are matched by timely investment in infrastructure and local services.

The Camera Safety Team Manager has been out and about in our division collecting speeding data and non-compliance with speed limits. I sent round the findings. She has found a couple of sites for enforcement and one to liaise with the police. If you would like me to ask her to monitor any sites in your village that haven't been done, please let me know.

Norfolk County Council

Heritage Open Days in Norfolk, 11–20 September

Norfolk Heritage Open Days give residents and visitors the opportunity to explore buildings, historic places and cultural sites across Norfolk, including places that are not usually open to the public. The printed Norfolk listings brochure for 2026 is now available at venues across the county, including The Forum, Norfolk libraries and museums.

All the events are free. Some have limited capacity and must be booked in advance. There are also almost 200 drop-in events that do not require booking. The free open days and activities include several events at Norfolk Museums. Norwich Castle will be taking part on 19 September - this event must be booked in advance.

Further information, brochures and online booking are available on the HOD pages link [Everything you need to know](#).

Flu Vaccinations - NHS Norfolk & Suffolk Integrated Care Board

Eligible residents in Norfolk can book their flu vaccination at a local pharmacy now via the National Booking system, as the NHS begins preparations for winter earlier than usual. Pregnant women and some other eligible groups can receive their vaccination from 1 September, while most eligible adults will be vaccinated from 1 October.

However, residents will likely find it easier to obtain their vaccination from their local GP surgery, and from September local NHS services will contact eligible residents through GP practices, the NHS App or by letter.

Eligible adults do not need to wait for an invitation before booking through the national system. Residents can check eligibility and book via the [NHS flu vaccine webpage](#).

National Updates

Homelessness in county and rural areas - County Councils Network analysis

New [County Councils Network \(CCN\) analysis](#) highlights a sharp rise in homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation in county and rural areas. It finds that more than 23,000 children were living in temporary accommodation in March 2026, while council spending on temporary accommodation more than tripled between 2019/20 and 2024/25.

CCN says rising demand, higher accommodation costs and a shortage of affordable housing are putting growing pressures on councils. It is calling on the Government to

ensure that homelessness funding and affordable housing investment meet the needs of county and rural areas, as well as urban areas.

CCN is thus concerned that almost all the first £10 billion recently allocated through the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (outlined below), will go to England's major cities rather than county and rural areas.

Social and Affordable Homes Programme

The Prime Minister and Secretary of State Angela Rayner have announced nearly £10 billion for the first wave of the Government's Social and Affordable Homes Programme, to support more council, social and affordable homes across England.

More than £2 billion is expected to be invested in mayoral areas outside London, with Homes England administering the programme (outside London).

The funding is expected to help to cut the number of families in temporary accommodation, delivering more than 70,000 homes. The funding will be allocated to 33 Strategic Partners, including councils and housing associations.

This is the first stage of the £39 billion, ten-year programme. At least 60% of homes delivered through the programme are expected to be for Social Rent. More than £16 billion remains to be allocated outside London.

Air pollution warnings – new alert system

The Government has launched a free text message and email alert system to inform people about high levels of air pollution in their local areas.

Users can opt to monitor specific locations, such as their home or workplace, and receive direct alerts when pollution levels are elevated. It aims to help individuals, especially those with health conditions, take practical steps to reduce their exposure to harmful air pollutants.

People can sign up at [Check air quality - GOV.UK](#)

Local Government East – wastewater capacity and housing growth issues

A [new report from Local Government East](#) warns that wastewater infrastructure is becoming a significant barrier to housing delivery across the East of England.

For Norfolk, this matters because wastewater capacity constraints can affect whether planned homes, local infrastructure and economic growth can be delivered in the right places and at the right time.

The report highlights concerns that treatment works and sewerage networks are reaching capacity in parts of the region, creating uncertainty for communities, councils, developers and those preparing or responding to Local Plans.

Local Government East calls on Government to accelerate investment in wastewater infrastructure, prioritise schemes that unlock housing and economic growth, strengthen collaboration between councils, regulators and water companies, and ensure that environmental improvements and housing growth are planned together.

Environment Agency consultation responses to water management issues

The Environment Agency's Significant Water Management Issues consultation ran from November 2025 to May 2026, with responses from environmental groups, water companies, farmers, businesses, councils, partnerships, community groups and residents. The [responses](#) will inform the next river basin management plans, with draft plans due for consultation from December 2026.

The main message was the need for faster progress, stronger collaboration, better evidence, clearer funding and action that tackles the causes of environmental decline, linking water, nature, climate, communities and growth.

Key concerns included wastewater pollution, agricultural and urban runoff, chemicals, plastics, PFAS, road pollution and other emerging contaminants.

Respondents also supported nature-based solutions, including wetlands, river restoration, sustainable drainage, peatland recovery, floodplain reconnection and coastal habitat restoration.

Disabled people to get free 24 hour travel on buses

From April 2027, disabled individuals in England will be able to use their free bus passes at any time, as the Government removes existing weekday restrictions. This change aims to improve access to transport for disabled people, helping them with work, education, and healthcare.

National Planning Policy Framework update

The Government has published a revised [National Planning Policy Framework](#), effective immediately, alongside wider reforms intended to create a clearer, more rules-based planning system, increase housing delivery and support economic growth.

The revised framework introduces a stronger presumption in favour of sustainable development, places greater emphasis on housing growth and development around well-connected railway stations, increases the weight of national policy in planning decisions, and is intended to speed up delivery of homes, infrastructure and economic growth across England

For Norfolk, a key issue is to ensure that increases in housing delivery are matched by timely investment in infrastructure and local services.

Tackling rough sleeping this winter

The Prime Minister has [announced a national drive](#) to offer everyone sleeping rough a route off the streets by Christmas, backed by a £442 million package. The new accommodation and support will be rolled out this winter, with areas facing the greatest pressures receiving the largest share of support.

The government says that research from Crisis suggests preventing 40,000 people from becoming homeless for a year could save taxpayers around £370 million.

Alongside emergency accommodation, the programme will provide practical help with housing, health and other needs. The Government has said the programme will be fully funded within Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government budgets.

In Norfolk, homelessness and rough sleeping are linked to wider pressures including housing supply, health and mental health needs, substance misuse, domestic abuse, care leaver support, financial hardship, and temporary and supported accommodation. The Government's emphasis on joint working reflects Norfolk's existing partnership approach between the County Council, district councils, health partners, police, housing providers and the voluntary sector.

The announcement sits alongside a wider five-year government programme to provide homes and support for people facing the most severe and long-term homelessness.

Support for Care leavers

A government-commissioned review into early deaths among care leavers has found that young people face a sharp reduction in support at age 18, leaving some isolated and without a reliable safety net.

The review, led by Ashley John-Baptiste and Clare Chamberlain, was commissioned after 91 care leaver deaths were notified in 2024/25.

Its central finding is that many young people leaving care are profoundly isolated. While services may respond to a young person's wish for their own place, independence can bring unexpected loneliness, with too few trusted adults close enough to notice when things go wrong.

The report identifies three priorities for change: better preparation for adulthood, reducing the drop in help at 18, and strengthening the skills of the workforce supporting care leavers.

In response, the [Government says it is](#) rolling out connected housing options for care leavers, starting with £25 million this year, to increase access to homes that provide community and connection rather than inappropriate or isolating accommodation.

Cllr update 1st Aug

Norfolk County Council Updates

Recycling rates up

Some of you flagged an article that mentioned that Norfolk recycling rates were down and linked this to the booking system. I'm told this was an incorrect link to make as the recycling rates referenced were county wide and largely related to kerbside collections and more specifically the lack of green garden waste collected last year, due to dry conditions. Apparently, the recycling rates at recycling centres were up 2% on the previous year.

Parish Partnership Scheme

Thanks to your hard work and parish contributions, last year's Parish Partnership Scheme delivered almost £800k of highways improvements. Details of how to bid for the 27/28 scheme will be coming out soon.

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government urged to halt local government reorganisation in Norfolk

Norfolk County Council's deputy leader has written to newly appointed Secretary of State for local government, Angela Rayner, to ask for a halt to local government reorganisation.

Further details and a copy of the letter are available in the county council news release [here](#).

Free bus travel for children in August

Don't forget there is free bus travel for children aged 5 to 15 in August. This could save families lots of money and make it easier to visit Norfolk's attractions, events and destinations during the school holidays.

Five of Norfolk's main bus operators are taking part, so children aged 5 to 15 can travel free throughout August on services operated by First Bus, Sanders, Stagecoach, Border Bus and Central Connect.

Further information about participating operators and Good Journey attractions is available at www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/summersavings.

Reuse shops raise for £32,000 for charity

Nelson's Journey, a local charity which supports children and young people in Norfolk who've experienced the death of a significant person, has recently been presented with a cheque for £32,000 raised through donations from Norfolk County Council's Reuse Shops.

Housed in 14 of Norfolk County Council's recycling centres, Reuse Shops welcome donations of second-hand items and sell these at bargain prices. Last year they stopped 1,394 tonnes of reusable items being thrown away.

To date, the Reuse Shops have raised over £155,000 for local charities.

Further information about reuse shops, including their locations, is available [here](#).

Driver and motorcycle rider safety in Norfolk

The Norfolk Road Safety Partnership has launched *We share the road. We share the responsibility*, a countywide campaign encouraging drivers and motorcyclists to take simple steps to reduce serious and fatal collisions.

The campaign highlights that many collisions happen in good conditions, on dry roads and in daylight, with risk often linked to decisions, observation and responses to hazards. Key messages include: be seen, look twice, slow down and stay focused.

Norfolk residents can book the Huggar motorcycle training course at half price for sessions between August and October 2026.

Further information about the campaign, including safety advice and details of advanced driver and rider courses, is available [here](#).

Further information about Norfolk's road safety partnership is available [here](#).

National Updates

The Big Conversation on Adult Social Care

Baroness Casey of Blackstock has [launched The Big Conversation on Care](#), offering the public a direct role in shaping the future of adult social care in England.

Between now and April 2027, The Big Conversation will give people across England the opportunity to say what they want and expect from a future National Care Service.

Everyone is encouraged to participate and have their say. Further details and a link to take part are available at [The Big Conversation on Care | The Casey Commission](#).

Technical education routes to be offered from age 14

The Government [has announced plans](#) for new technical education routes from age 14, giving Year 10 pupils earlier access to technical skills, work experience and local employer links, while continuing core subjects including English, maths and science.

The pathways are intended to put technical education on an equal footing with academic routes and create clearer routes into skilled jobs in sectors such as engineering, healthcare, digital technology, manufacturing and construction, linked to local labour market needs.

Provision is expected to be shaped locally by schools, colleges, mayors, local leaders and employers around local industries and future growth sectors. Employers are expected to play a larger role through mentoring, workplace visits, projects and high-quality work experience.

The Government says it will work with mayors, local leaders, schools, colleges and employers to develop the pathways, with an ambition to begin rolling them out from September 2028.

Cllrs update August 13th

Students across the country received their A level, T Level and Level 3 VTQ results today. There is a wide range of support available for students considering further study, training, employment or other options. This includes advice on courses, careers and alternative routes for those who do not yet have plans in place for September. Students, parents and carers can go to the county council's advice and support, particularly where unsure about next steps or needs help after receiving results. Further detail about the support available is available in the [county council press release](#).

Support is available for families who may be struggling with back-to-school costs, including essential clothing and school uniform. The County Council's Crisis and Resilience Service (CRS) can provide help where households are experiencing financial hardship. A targeted promotion will run in mid-August when a direct e-mail will be sent to parents and carers of children who receive free school meals, including a link to apply for help with school uniform costs.

Support is for Norfolk residents aged 16 or over who can demonstrate financial hardship and are either claiming benefits or working on a low income with minimal disposable income. They can also signpost residents to wider financial and practical support to help manage immediate pressures and improve resilience.

A £1m budget has been allocated to the school uniform promotion, within the wider £6m CRS budget for 2026/27. Find out more about the range of help available through the Crisis and Resilience Service at www.norfolk.gov.uk/CRS. From 17 August there will be a specific link to [apply for school uniform support](#) (this link will work from 17 August). Residents who are not able to apply online can apply by phone through the NCC Customer Contact Centre on 0344 800 8020.

As fire crews continue to deal with outdoor fires, Norfolk residents are urged to continue to take extra care when out and about this summer to cut the risk of avoidable fires.

Norfolk County Council will trial an innovative pothole repair machine as part of ongoing work to improve road maintenance and keep Norfolk's highways in the best possible condition. The trial will take place during the first week of September on planned repairs in South Norfolk. The machine and operator are being provided at no cost to the Council for this short trial. If this short trial is successful, a longer-term trial will be arranged.

The Camera Safety Team Manager has been out and about in our division collecting speeding data and non-compliance with speed limits. She has found a couple of sites for enforcement and one to liaise with the police. If you would like me to ask her to monitor any sites in your village that haven't been done, please let me know.

The Stroke Association is hosting Stroke Information Live on 22nd September 2026 at the Norfolk Showground. This free event has been designed specifically for stroke survivors, carers, family members and friends, offering practical information, inspiring speakers, local support organisations and the chance to connect with others who understand life after stroke. See attached poster for details.

National Updates

Having a say in the future of personal independence payments (PIP)

Disabled people and people with long-term health conditions are being invited by the Government to take part in workshops to help shape recommendations for the future of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The 15 workshops will be held online and in person across the UK during September and October 2026. They include a specific online session for Norwich and surrounding areas on Tuesday 29 September. Each workshop lasts from 10am to 4pm, with regular breaks, and will have a maximum of 20 participants. Reasonable adjustments will be made for participants.

The workshops will be used to discuss and refine the Timms Review's emerging recommendations.

Councillors may wish to share this opportunity with residents, local disability organisations, carers' groups and advice services who may know people with lived experience of disability or long-term health conditions. Registration opens on Wednesday 12 August 2026 at 10am and closes on Friday 21 August 2026 at 5pm.

Selected participants will be informed by 4 September 2026.

Further information and details on how to register interest are available [here](#).

Crackdown on vaping and betting shops to revitalise high streets

The Government has announced plans to require new vape shops and adult gaming centres to obtain planning permission. It also intends to give councils greater powers to block betting shops and close businesses selling illegal tobacco.

The changes are intended to give local councils and communities a stronger say over whether new betting shops, vape shops and adult gaming centres are appropriate for their area, particularly on high streets.

The Government has also said it will set clearer expectations for the design and appearance of high street shopfronts, supported by practical guidance for councils.

Norfolk County Council Updates

Fire & Rescue Service continuing to respond to high summer demand

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is continuing to raise awareness around the threat of wildfires this summer, with more hot and dry weather in Norfolk.

Demand has been especially high on Norfolk's firefighters this summer, with 1,270 emergencies attended in July. Resources continue to be stretched, and activity levels are commensurate with 2022.

The Service has shared posters with parish councils across the county with advice on how to prevent outdoor fires (let me know if you would like me to resend) and worked with Norfolk Trails and the Norfolk Resilience Forum to produce signage on the county's trail posts on what to do in the event of fire. I have requested these or you can ask directly via norfolkresilienceforum@norfolk.gov.uk

The Fire Service would be very grateful if we would all help get out their message and urge Norfolk residents as far as possible to safely dispose of rubbish and cigarettes, and not to use disposable barbecues.

Teaching children and young people water safety this summer

Far too many children and young people lose their lives in the water. The Norfolk Water Safety Forum is offering life saving water safety advice for the summer holidays to keep our children and young people safe.

Details are available here: [Water Safety Advice](#)

Feeling connected

I know all of you are really active in your communities, but you might like to signpost residents to Norfolk County Council Public Health's 'Feel connected' campaign which encourages us all to connect with our community.

With details of events, groups, courses, transport options and digital skills support, find out more at [Feel connected - Norfolk County Council](#) or pop along to your local library where I'm sure they can help you.

Changes to fridge and freezer collections due to national capacity issues

Just a quick reminder: very unfortunately a national shortage of specialist recycling and treatment capacity is affecting fridge and freezer collections across the UK.

From Thursday 6 August, Norfolk County Council will only accept unwanted fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances at the county's largest recycling centres.

Full details of the affected sites and what is accepted are available on the council's website: [Changes to fridge and freezer collections at Norfolk's recycling centres](#).

Where possible, residents are asked to:

Sue Boden
Strategy & Policy

- Use retailer take-back or recycling services when buying a replacement appliance.
- Keep using appliances that remain safe and in working order.
- Consider reuse, repair or donation options for working appliances.
- Delay disposal, where safe and practical, until national treatment capacity improves.

Residents should only take fridges, freezers and other cooling appliances for disposal if it is absolutely necessary. If safe to do so, they are encouraged to hold on to unwanted appliances temporarily to help ease pressure on the national system.

Stroke Information Day Norfolk Showground Sept 22nd

The Stroke Association is hosting Stroke Information Live on 22 September 2026 at the Norfolk Showground. This free event has been designed specifically for stroke survivors, carers, family members and friends, offering practical information, inspiring speakers, local support organisations and the chance to connect with others who understand life after stroke. See attached poster for details.

Consultation on proposed new crossing in Fakenham

Residents are invited to comment on a proposed new toucan crossing on Greenway Lane, Fakenham, near the busy junction with Holt Road.

The scheme is expected to cost around £300,000 and will be funded through the government's Active Travel Fund.

A [plan showing the proposals is available to download here](#). Hard copies can also be viewed at Fakenham Town Council office during normal opening hours.

Feedback can be emailed to TOSchemefeedback@norfolk.gov.uk or sent to Highways Design Team, Floor 1, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH. Responses should reference Toucan Crossing – Greenway Lane.

All responses must be received by Tuesday 1 September 2026.

National Updates

Mental health hubs to expand across England

The Government has announced [plans to create nearly 200 community mental health centres](#) and specialist mental health A&Es across England by 2029, aiming to improve access to urgent support closer to home. The first new sites are due to open this autumn, with the programme backed by £343 million.

The rollout includes 100 new community mental health centres, offering walk-in support without a referral and without a months-long wait, and 59 dedicated mental health emergency departments giving people in crisis specialist care in a place

designed for them. They will bring together existing teams of nurses, therapists and support workers.

The initiative forms part of the forthcoming Mental Health Strategy, which will look beyond the NHS to the role of schools, employers, local government and the voluntary sector in supporting good mental health.

Rewiring the state – Cabinet Office statement

The Cabinet Office has published a statement setting out the Government's intention to shift more power, funding and accountability from Whitehall to local leaders.

This will mean giving elected mayors, strategic authorities and local authorities more influence over decisions affecting their areas, with the stated aim of supporting economic growth, improving public services and giving communities more say over local priorities.

The statement refers to further devolution of powers, fiscal devolution and closer alignment of public services within strategic authority areas. It also restates the Government's expectation that all areas should move towards a strategic authority model by 2028. Future devolution arrangements may include greater local control over areas such as funding, transport, skills, housing and economic development.

The Government says that this autumn, alongside the Budget and a fiscal devolution roadmap that will set out their approach to revenue assignment and rates retention, they will publish a White Paper detailing plans for the full set of reforms and a clear timetable for their implementation. This is expected to include plans for legislation, the alignment of public service geographies, and the devolution of new powers and functions.

Further details and the implications for Norfolk will be assessed once more is known.

Changes to central government's public procurement spending rules

The Government has announced changes to public procurement rules so that businesses bidding for central government contracts are assessed more strongly on how they support jobs and skills, and more weighting will be given to benefits for local communities.

Suppliers will be expected to show how they will support British jobs, skills and opportunities, including for young people not in education, employment or training, care leavers and people with long-term health conditions.

For central government contracts worth £5 million or more, the weighting given to benefits for the local community will increase from 10% to 20%.

The changes will apply to central government procurement from 1 January 2027, with detailed technical guidance expected this autumn.

The threshold for applying the rules will rise to contracts above £1 million, so they are less likely to apply to smaller contracts typically sought by smaller firms and local social enterprises.