

Docking Parish Council – Annual General Meeting

Date: 6th May 2025

Time: 19:00

Location: Pavilion, Playing Field, Docking

Present: Cllr Melanie Lewis (**Outgoing Chair**), Cllr David Wroth (**Incoming Chair**), Cllr Kevin Crompton, Cllr Kate Kilby, Cllr Nicola Durrant (**Incoming Vice Chair**), Cllr Josie Flower, Cllr Mark Latter, Cllr Angela Archdale, Clerk / RFO Annalisa Dovey (**Minutes**), and approximately 16 members of the public.

1. **Chair Cllr Melanie Lewis** welcomed all present and opened the Annual General Meeting of Docking Parish Council at 19:00, following the conclusion of the Annual Parish Meeting.
2. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**
 - a. Council resolved to elect Cllr David Wroth as Chair for the coming year.
(Proposed: Cllr Nicola Durrant / Seconded: Cllr Angela Archdale – Unanimously agreed)
 - b. Council resolved to elect Cllr Nicola Durrant as Vice Chair.
(Proposed: Cllr Josie Flower / Seconded: Cllr Melanie Lewis – Unanimously agreed)
 - i. Both Cllr David Wroth and Cllr Nicola Durrant signed the Acceptance of Office forms.
3. Cllr David Wroth assumed the role of Chair and continued the meeting.
4. **Apologies for absence** were received and accepted from Cllr S. Howard and Cllr L. Leverett.
5. **Public Session**
 - a. Cllr Michael Chenery congratulated the newly elected Chair and Vice Chair.
6. **Declarations of Interest**
 - a. Cllr Nicola Durrant – ORG
 - b. Cllr David Wroth – Playing Field Committee member; employed by the Hare family
 - c. Cllr Kevin Crompton – Playing Field Committee member
 - d. Cllr Angela Archdale – Speedwatch
7. **Past minutes**
 - a. Council resolved to approve the minutes of the Docking Parish Council meeting held in April 2025 as a true and accurate record.
(Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale / Seconded: Cllr Melanie Lewis – Unanimously agreed)
8. **Borough Council Report**
 - a. A written report from Cllr Sam Sandell (Borough Councillor) was read aloud by the Clerk.
(Full report attached)
9. **County Council Report**
 - a. A written report from Cllr Michael Chenery (County Councillor) was circulated by email and attached.
Key points:
 - i. Members Fund (£1,500) for Highways Projects
 1. Council noted this could support a formal safety report or a new SAM2 post
 2. **Action: Clerk to investigate use of an existing post on Station Road**
 3. Cllr Chenery advised contacting Cllr Jamieson for Highways support
 - ii. Devolution and Unitary Authority
 1. Cllr Chenery provided updates and context; no formal outcome at this time
10. **Clerk's Report**
 - a. AGAR and Internal Audit processes are progressing well
 - b. New mobile phone purchased; switched to cheaper Smarty plan
 - c. RLS declined early termination of IT contract; Council agreed to request immediate handover.
 - d. Laptop screen/keyboard faulty; Council approved new laptop purchase up to £300
(e.g. Dell Latitude 7410 or similar from Back Market)

- e. Council approved external hard drive for backups
(e.g. Seagate 2TB, approx. £55)
 - f. Clerk noted that data backups from RLS will be lost once the contract ends
11. **Delegated Decisions:** Council resolved to ratify delegated decisions under relevant legislation.
Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale / Seconded: Cllr Josie Flower – Unanimously agreed
- a. To purchase a mobile phone
 - b. To end Tesco Mobile contract (£13/month) and commence Smarty plan (£5.60/month)
12. **Councillor Updates**
- a. **Dog Bin relocation:** Cllr Kevin Crompton confirmed the dog bin has been relocated from the allotments to Sandy Lane.
Action: Clerk to note in the newsletter requesting that the public avoid using full dog bins.
Action: Clerk to recommence collection of dog waste from KLWNBC and complete MOU with Highways for the location.
 - b. Clay Pit Right of Way (Cllr Nicola Durrant)
 - i. Noted potential safety concerns with degraded life rings, rotting swim platforms, and a deteriorated bench
 - ii. **Action: Clerk to contact the Angling Club to enquire about responsibility and agree action.**
 - c. **ORG Update** (provided by Cllr Angela Archdale):
 - i. Fencing and gate have been installed and are reported to look smart.
 - ii. A chain is required on the vehicular access gate to ensure pedestrian-only access.
 - iii. New signage is required (estimated at £50) and was approved as part of Phase 1.
 - iv. 420 hedging trees need urgent planting.
 - 1. Council noted difficulty due to dry ground and agreed to wait for rain or monitor conditions.
 - v. Council agreed a second letter should go to residents updating them on progress through Phase 1 and restating the intention to consult on further works outside the approved scope. (*Vote: Show of hands – unanimously agreed.*)
 - vi. Council reconfirmed that Highways had been consulted, and no further safety measures were required unless an event is planned.
 - 1. Council resolved to request a sign from Highways alerting the public to the ORG entrance. (*Vote: Show of hands – unanimously agreed.*)
 - 2. **Action: Clerk to contact Highways requesting an ORG / concealed entrance sign.**
 - d. Cllr S. Howard will attend an upcoming planning training session.
 - e. Cllr S. Howard (via Cllr Archdale) provided an update on the Neighbourhood Plan. More funding is needed, and CCP is investigating further funding from Groundworks.
13. **Finance**
- a. Council received the RFO's End of Month (April 2025) finance report. (available on website)
Council resolved to approve all receipts, expenditures, transfers, upcoming payments, reconciliations, and balances. *Proposed: Cllr Melanie Lewis / Seconded: Cllr Josie Flower – Unanimously agreed.*
 - b. Council received and approved the RFO's End of Year Annual Account (available on website), including: data audit, account start, year reconciliations, balance sheet, cashbook, budgets, reserves carried forward, and budget headings audit. *Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale / Seconded: Cllr Melanie Lewis – Unanimously agreed.*
 - c. Council approved the VAT return for 2024/25. It was noted that the return is less than the predicted £6000 due to lower spending.
Proposed: Cllr David Wroth / Seconded: Cllr Nicola Durrant – Unanimously agreed.
 - d. Council approved the Section 106 return. - *Unanimously agreed.*
 - e. Council approved the Expenditure Transparency Report for publication. Transparency threshold set at £100 as recommended by the auditor last year.
Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale / Seconded: Cllr David Wroth – Unanimously agreed.

- f. Council accepted the Annual Return summary for the AGAR. *Proposed: Cllr Josie Flower | Seconded: Cllr Angela Archdale – Unanimously agreed.*
- g. Council approved the list of regular payments, subscriptions, contracts, and contractors. *Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale | Seconded: Cllr Josie Flower – Unanimously agreed.*

14. Assets and Amenities

- a. Council received, reviewed, and approved **the Asset and Long-Term Investment Register**. *Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale | Seconded: Cllr Nicola Durrant – Unanimously agreed.*
- b. **Asset maintenance:** Council heard that Matt Todd has agreed to undertake the majority of maintenance identified in the asset review. He will advise separately on two items requiring further investigation (bench and eroded wall).
- c. **SAM2 Management and Maintenance:** Council heard that Matt Todd has provisionally agreed to maintain the SAM2s. Council resolved to accept this and to approve up to two alternative options if needed. Delegated authority granted to the Clerk to arrange maintenance. *Vote: Unanimously agreed.*
 - i. Action: Clerk to proceed with SAM2 maintenance arrangements
- d. **SAM2 Location:** Council noted that queries raised by the Hares have been responded to. Time is required for further consideration.
- e. **War Memorial Stand:** Council agreed that quotes should be sourced for a new stand.
 - i. Action: Quotes to be brought to the June meeting.
- f. **Tett Turrets:** Clerk noted some queries have been answered and more responses are awaited. **Full Tett Turrets report to be presented at the June meeting. Action: Clerk.**
- g. **Allotment Vandalism and Thefts:** Council heard the reports with sadness. Noted that without evidence, no formal action can be taken. Council agreed to open communication with allotment holders to explore solutions.
 - i. Action: Clerk to communicate with allotment holders re. vandalism and solutions
- h. **Village Sign Request:** Council agreed in principle to take ownership of village signage and establish a consistent style across the village.
 - i. Possibility of placing a sign at the ORG access noted.
 - ii. Action: Cllr Josie Flower and Clerk to liaise on sign style and pricing for June proposal.
- i. **Overflowing Dog Bin (email):** Issue noted and confirmed as resolved.

15. Governance

- a. **Co-option & Vacancies:** Two applicants have applied. Council resolved to invite them to the June meeting to speak before making a decision.
 - i. Action: Clerk to contact applicants to arrange speaking
 - b. **Review of Policies**
 - i. Council reviewed and resolved to accept the following policies with no changes: Allotments Policy, Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy, Code of Conduct, Communications Policy, Data Privacy Policy, Delegation Policy & Register, Equality & Diversity Policy, Grant Policy & Procedure, Grievance Procedure, Group Membership Policy & Register, Homeworking Policy, IT Usage & Security Policy, Operation Menai Bridge, Pension Policy, Record Management Policy, Standing Orders, Training & Development Policy. *Proposed: Cllr David Wroth | Seconded: Cllr Josie Flower – Unanimously agreed*
 - ii. Council resolved to accept the following policies with proposed changes:
 - 1. Financial Regulations: updated to latest guidance
Proposed: Cllr Josie Flower | Seconded: Cllr Nicola Durrant – Unanimously agreed
 - 2. Biodiversity Policy: clarification of wording
Proposed: Cllr Angela Archdale | Seconded: Cllr Nicola Durrant – Unanimously agreed
 - 3. Risk Management Register: update to actions
Proposed: Cllr David Wroth | Seconded: Cllr Josie Flower – Unanimously agreed
- a. Action: Clerk to update dates on all policies and publish on the website**

- c. Committee / Working Group Review:** Council resolved to accept the following membership of working groups, reiterating their operation as working groups, not committees.

Proposed: Cllr David Wroth | Seconded: Cllr Josie Flower – Unanimously agreed

- i.** Personnel: Cllrs Angela Archdale, David Wroth, Melanie Lewis
- ii.** Finance: Cllrs Nicola Durrant, David Wroth, Angela Archdale
Action: Clerk to update bank mandate to include David Wroth and remove Melanie Lewis
- iii.** ORG: Cllrs Kate Kilby, Angela Archdale, David Wroth, Nicola Durrant
- iv.** Assets & Amenities: Cllrs Nicola Durrant, David Wroth, Kevin Crompton, Josie Flower
- v.** Planning: Cllrs Kate Kilby, Sandra Howard
- vi.** Biodiversity / Planting: Cllrs Melanie Lewis, Nicola Durrant, Josie Flower, Kate Kilby, Kevin Crompton

1. Action: Clerk to update Group Membership Register

- d.** Council noted that contracts were reviewed earlier in the agenda.
- e.** Council noted that there is currently no formal representation on external bodies. If members do represent the Council externally, they must report back at the next meeting.
- f.** Council noted and reconfirmed subscriptions to external bodies (reviewed earlier): NALC, SLCC, ICO, NAS.
- g.** Council resolved to agree meeting dates up to and including the next AGM.

- i.** Meetings will be held on the first Monday of each month, except for August (no meeting), and May (AGM on the second Monday). All meetings at Ripper Hall.

Dates:

- 1.** Monday, 2 June 2025
- 2.** Monday, 7 July 2025
- 3.** Monday, 1 September 2025
- 4.** Monday, 6 October 2025
- 5.** Monday, 3 November 2025
- 6.** Monday, 1 December 2025
- 7.** Monday, 5 January 2026
- 8.** Monday, 2 February 2026
- 9.** Monday, 2 March 2026
- 10.** Monday, 6 April 2026
- 11.** Monday, 11 May 2026 (AGM)
- 12.** Monday, 1 June 2026 *Proposed: Cllr Melanie Lewis | Seconded: Cllr Nicola Durrant – Unanimously agreed*

16. Other Correspondence

- a.** Council noted and approved responses to enquiries regarding verge ownership and licences required for street furniture.

17. Planning

- a. Applications:** Council noted no applications were received for consideration at the meeting.
- b.** No late applications received.
- c. Delegated decisions:** Council resolved to accept the delegated decision of no objection to application 25/00319/F | Weathertop, Station Road *Proposed: Cllr Josie Flower | Seconded: Cllr David Wroth – Unanimously agreed*
- d. Planning decisions noted:**
- i.** 25/00252/LB – Application Permitted
 - ii.** 25/00253/F – Application Permitted
 - iii.** 24/01605/NMA_1 – Application Withdrawn
 - iv.** 25/00372/F – Application Permitted
- e. Vello Homes email:** Council agreed to enquire about the time frame.
- i. Action: Clerk to respond to Vello Homes to enquire about time scales.**
- f.** C.A.N. Village Exception Site email: Council resolved to make enquiries with a provisional intention to proceed.

i. Action: Clerk to contact C.A.N. (Oliver Brice) to enquire about next steps and costs.

18. Items for next agenda

- a.** Woodgate Way noticeboard
- b.** Planting in the village
- c.** SAM2 highways pole

19. Next Meeting

- a.** Confirmed: Monday, 2 June 2025 at Ripper Hall | 6:30 pm – Tea & biscuits | 7:00 pm – Meeting starts

20. Meeting Closed: Time: 20:52

Attachments

- 1. [Borough Councillor Sam Sandell Annual Report](#)
- 2. [County Councillor Michael Chenery weekly reports](#)
- 3. [County Councillor Michael Chenery Annual report](#)

Annual Parish Meeting report from Cllr Sam Sandell- Borough Councillor for Burnham with Docking.

Thank you for inviting me to your AGM. Unfortunately, this evening I have another meeting to attend.

Over the last year I have attended many Borough Council meetings and Parish Council meetings. In my schedule of meetings, I had 53 in my diary purely Borough without Parish Council meetings and outside body meetings I attended over 75% of them. Bearing in mind to be a Cllr you only have to attend one meeting every six months. Some Councillors do this.

I have been the Vice Chair of the Licensing Panel and standards Committee, chaired the Homeless and Housing task group. I am also a member of the Environment and Community Panel, Corporate Performance Panel, Local Plan Task Group- which has finally been adopted. This is many years of hard work by officers, and members. I have also sat on the Appointments board which this year has been very busy. We appointed Kate Blackmore our new CEO who has stepped into a very challenging role with the Devolution Deal and unitary. Kate has experience in Local Government. She is very keen on working with Councillors and residents. You will have seen the Your news this is something Kate was very keen to do. I have also sat on the CIL Spending panel. This has seen some great local projects delivered.

I have also sat on the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Girls School Trust. It is an outside body of the Council, but I sit on it within my role as a Councillor. This is a trust aimed at girls living in the Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. It is there to fund education projects, books, laptops, university fees and afterschool clubs. We have funded girls who have achieved great results in music and dance. We have also funded a girl who goes riding at the West Norfolk riding for the disabled to carry on her learning with horses and carriage driving. If you know anyone who you feel could benefit from this, please contact me.

The Council has seen some changes over the last year. The Independent Partnership is still in control of the Council. There's been some councillors resign from the Labour Group and become an independent Councillor. The Conservative Group has also seen 2 Councillors leave the Group and become the first 2 Reform Councillors at the Borough.

Devolution and Unitary are in the headlines. The Borough is working with all the other Councils, to achieve best outcome for the residents and the services that the Councils provide. There is still time to have your say on the consultation. I always say if you don't vote you can't moan.

The 200% Council tax has been a hot topic of conversation. I have had emails, phone calls and even been stopped when I have been out walking my dog. I can say and many of you know I didn't vote for this.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

With Best Wishes

Sam

Cllr Sam Sandell

Borough Councillor for Burnham with Docking Ward

County Councillor Michael Chenery weekly reports



Norfolk County Council

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates

Updated 17 April 2025

This weekly briefing is intended as a resource to keep you up to date with the latest information and advice.

Service updates: The most up to date information on council services can be found at [Norfolk County Council services disruptions](#).

Norfolk County Council updates

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Wildfire concerns ahead of Easter weekend in Norfolk

Residents and visitors to Norfolk are being asked to help reduce the risk of wildfires in the county, as the county has already seen an increase in spring grassland and forest fires.

With more people heading outdoors over the Easter holidays, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is asking the public to be vigilant and report fires quickly.

Nationally, there have been several large wildfires and the National Fire Chiefs Council say above average temperatures and below average rainfall has heightened the risk.

Further information is available in our press release [here](#).

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service shortlisted for an award

A collaboration between Norfolk's fire and ambulance services has been shortlisted for an industry award.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has been shortlisted for Project of the Year at the Global Search and Rescue Excellence Awards 2025, for its work with the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) which sees trained firefighters respond to the most serious medical emergencies in their area.

There are ten fire stations in Norfolk where firefighters have been trained by EEA paramedics to co-respond to Category 1 calls in the area, such as cardiac arrests. The aim of the partnership is to get help to patients as quickly as possible, in situations where every second counts.

The Global Search and Rescue Excellence Awards 2025 take place on 16 May 2025.

Further details available in our press release [here](#).

Wellness on Wheels - Hop on the WOW bus

Over the coming weeks, the WOW bus will be traveling across Norfolk and Waveney to support those who need extra help with their health and care.

Services that are currently offered on the bus will vary between vaccinations and screening along with health and financial advice.

The WOW bus is supported by partner organisations across the ICS, including NHS Norfolk and Waveney, Norfolk County Council, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector and others.

The WOW bus will be on site from 10am until 4pm at the following locations:

- 22 April: Kings Lynn Market Place, PE30 1JS – Vaccinations
- 23 April: 61 London Road, Lowestoft, NR32 1LT – Vaccinations
- 24 April: Hardwick Tesco Extra, Hardwick Road, King's Lynn, PE30 4NA – Vaccinations
- 25 April: Connaught Hall, Station Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AS – Vaccinations / Working Well Norfolk
- 28 April: Freedom Leisure, Marina Centre, Marine Parade, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR30 2ER – Vaccinations
- 29 April: Kings Lynn Market Place, PE30 1JS – Vaccinations
- 30 April: Hardwick Tesco Extra, Hardwick Road, King's Lynn, PE30 4NA – Vaccinations
- 1 May: Wymondham Leisure Centre, Norwich Rd, Wymondham NR18 0NT – Vaccinations / Healthchecks
- 2 May: Connaught Hall, Station Road, Attleborough, NR17 2AS – Vaccinations

Avian Flu – Norfolk update

No further cases have been identified in Norfolk this week.

Government guidance about bird flu, how to prevent it and stop it spreading is available [here](#).

[Norfolk County Council Trading Standards webpages](#) also include useful links to the latest situation, further information and guidance related to bird flu.

National updates

UK inventory of living heritage

The Government has [published its response to a consultation](#) asking the public for their views on making sure a new inventory of living heritage encompasses the broad spectrum of traditions practised in the UK.

The consultation formed part of implementing [the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage](#), which includes safeguarding, ensuring respect, and raising awareness of the importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The UK ratified the Convention in March 2024 and the Convention officially came into force on 7th June 2024.

The Government says that communities across the UK will soon be able to nominate their favourite traditions to be included within official inventories of our living heritage.

An open call for submissions to the inventories will start later this year. Ahead of that, the Government will be hosting information sessions aimed at public bodies, NGOs and networks to

discuss their plans for the inventory process and outline opportunities for engagement plus answer questions.

Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee update

More detail has [been announced](#) on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee.

The government confirmed that 3,000 additional neighbourhood police officers and police community support officers will be in post within the next 12 months. As part of this, the government says that:

- Every neighbourhood in England will have dedicated teams spending their time on the beat, with guaranteed police patrols in town centres and other hotspot areas at peak times such as Friday and Saturday nights.
- Communities will have named, contactable officers to tackle the issues facing their communities.
- There will be a dedicated antisocial behaviour lead in every force, working with residents and businesses to develop tailored action plans to tackle antisocial behaviour, which is blighting communities.

They say that these measures will be in place from July, in addition to the new neighbourhood officers who are expected to be in their roles by next April.

Plan for GPs to keep people out of hospitals

The Government has [announced the expansion](#) of a scheme in England to help GPs deliver quicker care without sending patients onto long NHS hospital waiting lists.

GPs will work more closely with specialists to access expert advice quickly for patients with conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, menopause symptoms and ear infections.

Backed by £80m of funding, the Government's ambition is to help two million people receive faster and more convenient care in their local community by the end of 2025/26.

Local audit reform

The Government has [responded to their consultation to overhaul local audit in England](#).

The Government announced 16 commitments aimed at "overhauling" local authority audits, including increasing capacity to avoid reliance on a small number of auditors and simplifying financial reporting requirements. Up to £49 million of support has been pledged to help clear council backlogs and "cover the additional cost of restoring audit assurance".

A key outcome of the consultation is the commitment to establish a new Local Audit Office. This new body will coordinate functions currently split across several organisations, including the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd, the National Audit Office, and the Financial Reporting Council.

Review of children's hearing services

The Secretary of State, Wes Streeting, has commissioned an [independent review of children's hearing services](#) and has appointed Dr Camilla Kingdon as its independent chair.

The review will consider:

- The NHS England response to service failures in paediatric audiology.
- How the relevant governance arrangements between NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) could be improved and identify lessons learned.
- How NHS England's handling of any future service failures in similar services could be improved and identify lessons learned.



Norfolk County Council

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates

Updated 24 April 2025

This weekly briefing is intended as a resource to keep you up to date with the latest information and advice.

Service updates: The most up to date information on council services can be found at [Norfolk County Council services disruptions](#).

Norfolk County Council updates

Local Government Reorganisation - shaping the future of Norfolk's council services

People and organisations in Norfolk are being invited to give their views to help shape the future of local government in the county.

Norfolk County Council is posing a series of questions and will use the replies to help it draw up plans for a future council structure.

The county council wants to hear from organisations and individuals about what's working well, what could be improved and what they'd like to see for their local area.

This is an opportunity to rethink how local public services in Norfolk can best meet future needs and aspirations.

Norfolk is currently what's known as a two-tier area, with eight councils:

- A County Council, which is responsible for services such as highways and transport, adult social care and children's services
- Seven district councils, which provide services such as bin collections, leisure and housing

The Government wants to see all eight councils replaced with fewer, unitary councils - which are responsible for all services in their area.

More details are available in our press release [here](#).

[The feedback form](#) is available from 23 April to 20 May. People can answer as many or as few questions as they wish to. Views expressed will help shape the county council's proposals, with further engagement planned when a preferred option is identified.

You can find out more about local government reorganisation in Norfolk County Council's webpages at www.norfolk.gov.uk/LGR and by subscribing to their email bulletin, [Your Norfolk Extra](#).

Nature recovery strategy for Norfolk

Norfolk County Council is inviting residents, landowners, conservation experts, and local communities to take part in the public consultation on Norfolk's draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Running from 16 April to 11 June, this consultation aims to gather feedback on priorities and actions for restoring and enhancing nature across Norfolk.

The LNRS seeks to reverse biodiversity loss, support climate adaptation, and promote sustainable land use to benefit both people and wildlife. It is one of 48 across the country, aimed at addressing the decline in nature and identifying a network of areas to help it recover.

The draft strategy has been created with input from other local authorities alongside nature experts, farmers, land managers and Norfolk residents.

Further details are available in our press release [here](#).

People are encouraged to review the [Local Habitat Map](#), draft LNRS, and FAQs and take part in the consultation [here](#).

Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils are working together via the Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership, in recognition that some of our most important wildlife-rich spaces are shared by both counties. Further information is available on the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership website [here](#).

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service hike for charity

A team of Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) staff are aiming to walk the length of Norfolk in under 24 hours to raise money for charity.

The Hydrant Hike is a challenge being undertaken by all ten members of the service's Hydrant Team, who will walk the 60-mile journey from Diss in South Norfolk to Wells-next-the-Sea on the north Norfolk coast.

Their endeavour will raise money for the Fire Fighters Charity. The Fire Fighters Charity started during the Second World War to support bereaved families. Now it provides invaluable support to the extensive fire service community of fire staff, former staff, and their families, includes respite, rehabilitation, and physical and mental health treatment and support.

The hike will be taking place on the weekend of Saturday 17 - Sunday 18 May, with the team setting off from Diss (outside the Cappadocia Restaurant on the B1077) at 12 noon on Saturday. They'll be walking through the night on the route, passing through Wymondham, Dereham and Fakenham, with the final leg of their journey finishing at Wells RNLI Lifeboat Station.

You can [donate towards the Hydrant Hike via their Just Giving page](#).

National updates

Free breakfast clubs

As children return from the Easter holidays, the first 750 schools in England are taking part in the [Government's free breakfast club programme](#).

The Government says that the breakfast clubs will help ensure pupils start every day ready to learn, and in turn will improve behaviour, attendance and attainment. They also say that parents will be able to save up to 95 additional hours and £450 per year if their child attends free breakfast clubs every day.

Schools selected for the early adopter scheme will contact families directly about how to sign up for the breakfast club.

The clubs are 30-minute sessions before school where children get a free breakfast.

The early adopter schools are based across nine regions and will be funded to provide the service -which is available to all children in each school setting. They are expected to help shape the future of the Government's national breakfast club policy, contributing directly to its implementation.

The Government announced the [list of schools in the early adopter scheme](#) in February 2025 (including 9 in Norfolk).

Referrals to children's social care

[The Local Government Association has said](#) that around 1,700 children are referred to children's social care services every day in England, underlining the need for an adequate long term funding

solution in the Spending Review and a cross-government plan to support children and young people.

Over half of children assessed had abuse or neglect identified as their primary need, with factors around domestic abuse and mental health playing a significant role.

Councils receive referrals from various bodies, but primarily from schools, health, and the police.

The Local Government Association, which represents councils, is calling on the Government to ensure all councils receive sufficient funding in the Spending Review to invest in family help, child protection, and child in care and care leaver services.

County Councillor Michael Chenery Annual report



Norfolk County Council

Latest Information, Advice, Useful Links and Service Updates

Updated 1st May 2025

This weekly briefing is intended as a resource to keep you up to date with the latest information and advice.

Service updates: The most up to date information on council services can be found at [Norfolk County Council services disruptions](#).

Norfolk County Council updates

Public encouraged to learn water safety skills ahead of the summer

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is encouraging people to learn life-saving water safety skills this spring and summer after attending 16 incidents last year where people lost their lives in water.

This initiative is part of the National Fire Chiefs Council's Be Water Aware Week, which aims to raise awareness about the risk of accidental drowning and provide water safety advice ahead of the warmer months.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is part of the Norfolk Water Safety Forum, which is committed to educating the public and improving safety on our waterways and coastal areas. Other partners include Norfolk Constabulary's Broads Beat, the RNLI, HM Coastguard, and the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership.

Also, as part of Be Water Aware Week, on Friday 2nd May, Carrow Green Watch will be joined by Norfolk Constabulary's Broads Beat to delivery throwline training to local businesses and members of the public at Riverside in Norwich from 11am.

For more information about water safety visit [here](#) and follow Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service on social media for key safety information throughout the year.

National updates

More support for school improvement

Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams are [expanding their reach this week](#) from an initial 32 schools to more than 200, potentially reaching over 200,000 children. RISE teams bring funding of £20m with them and are seen by the government as central to their mission to drive up school standards for children across the country. Each school attached to the programme could be eligible for support of up to £100,000 to help turn around the quality of education for children and young people.

The teams are staffed by RISE advisers, often previous academy trust leaders, with track records in improving underperforming schools.

LGA climate change guidance

The Local Government Association (LGA) has released new [guidance](#) for government on how to build collaboration with local councils to deliver on the shared ambition for responding to climate change. It focusses on empowering local councils with the necessary resources, regulatory authority, and financial support to drive climate action across key sectors, including housing, energy, and environmental protection.

The report recognises the importance of local councils' place-based expertise and argues that through collaborative governance, targeted financial mechanisms, and a skilled workforce, the government can achieve its climate commitments while delivering economic and social benefits locally.

Council Delivers Balanced Budget and calls for cost-saving local government reorganisation

Norfolk County Council has approved a balanced budget for the 2025/26 fiscal year, despite facing considerable financial challenges.

Key Details from the Norfolk County Council Budget:

- **Gross Budget:** The council has a gross expenditure budget of £2.2 billion (£1.7 billion excluding schools). This includes:
 - £700 million for Adult Social Care
 - £367 million for Children's Services (non-schools)
 - £283 million for Infrastructure
 - £44 million for Communities and Environment
 - £46 million for Fire Services

Net Budget: The net budget for 2025/26 is £572 million. This represents the amount raised through Council Tax to fund the services provided by the council.

- **Budget Growth:** The 2025/26 budget includes an increase of £121 million, which covers:
 - £31 million for inflationary pressures
 - £35 million for legislative pressures (including the increase in the National Living Wage and higher Employers National Insurance contributions)
 - £15 million for demand and demographic pressures
 - Over £25 million to cover recurrent overspends from Adult and Children's Services in 2024/25.
- **Funding and Savings:** While costs have risen by £121 million, funding has only increased by £32 million. The Government has eliminated the Rural Services Delivery Grant and reallocated funds from rural to metropolitan areas. To balance the budget, savings of £45 million will be implemented.

- **Council Tax:** For 2025/26, Council Tax will increase by 4.99%, which includes a 3% rise for general Council Tax and a 2% increase for the Adult Social Care precept. A Band D household will pay £1,755.63 per year, or around £34 per week, for County Council services in 2025/26.

Norfolk announced as priority area for new powers and funding

Norfolk is set to gain new powers and funding following a significant Government announcement on 5th February 2025. Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner revealed that Norfolk would be a priority area for devolution and local government reform. As part of this, the Government is seeking to create a devolution deal for Norfolk and Suffolk, which would include the introduction of an elected mayor.

In addition, there are plans to reshape local government in Norfolk. The Government intends to replace the current two-tier structure, where services are shared between county and district councils, with unitary authorities. This would centralize decision-making and service delivery into a single authority, streamlining local government processes and potentially increasing efficiency and saving taxpayers money.

These changes will empower local areas with more control over their services and funding. For further details on the progress of devolution and the impact of these reforms, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/devolution, where you can also find answers to frequently asked questions from the Local Government Association. To watch an informative video [go to our video explaining devolution and local government reform](#).

Norfolk signs historic agreement with Ukrainian region of Lviv

A cooperation agreement has been signed between Norfolk County Council and the Ukrainian region of Lviv which is designed to explore knowledge transfer, educational exchange and trade opportunities.

The historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Thursday 2 May at the Ukrainian Embassy in London by Leader of Norfolk County Council Kay Mason Billig and in Lviv via video link by Maksym Kozytskyi, Head of the Lviv Regional Military Administration. It is the first such agreement to be signed with Lviv by any part of the UK.

Cllr Mason Billig was joined at the ceremony by Liz Truss MP, as the MP for South West Norfolk, Cllr Fabian Eagle Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, Cllr Chris Dawson, Rural Champion, Chris Starkie, Director of Growth and Investment, and Roberta Willner, Head of Economic Development. Also there to witness the signing of the agreement was Nataliya Klymko, Programmes Coordinator for Growth and Investment.

Both Norwich and Lviv have links to UNESCO: Norwich is a UNESCO City of Literature, and the historic part of Lviv city (300-acre historic centre) is included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. In 2022, Lviv was granted Freedom of the City of Norwich in solidarity with Ukraine, and the MoU - similar to a twinning arrangement - will further celebrate and build on these links.

Norfolk and Lviv have identified several key opportunities for collaborative working, including the TechBridge programme, a strategic partnership between the UK Government, Ukraine Ministry of Digital Transformation and Ukraine Ministry of Foreign Affairs to forge connections between our tech ecosystems.

This partnership currently runs to 2025 but may be extended, providing businesses in both locations access to expert advice and support in navigating the barriers to UK-Ukraine trade. There are also specialist investment accelerator programmes for Ukraine tech SMEs looking to expand overseas.

The skills and knowledge the local Lviv tech sector offers are recognised on the international level. For example, Lviv IT specialists developed the Skype app and special effects for films such as Harry Potter and Spider-Man. Norfolk also has a strong growing ICT/Digital sector with several individual clusters, and the MoU will encourage collaboration within the sector between our regions by participating in mutual events of interest.

This not only benefits cluster growth in a key sector for Norwich and Norfolk's digital services and would benefit Lviv through the contribution to the recovery efforts.

Other opportunities for collaboration include an incoming visit to the Theatre Royal Norwich in October by the Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine, led by leading conductor, Theodore Kuchar.

Norfolk County Council opposes National Grid pylon scheme

Councillors in Norfolk have objected to a National Grid proposal to construct an electricity transmission line across the county.

National Grid has launched a statutory consultation on plans for an 114 mile overhead power line between Norwich in Norfolk, Bramford in Suffolk and Tilbury in Essex.

In non-statutory consultations, Norfolk County Council has urged National Grid to reconsider the scheme, but the project will be determined by the secretary of state for energy security and net zero as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

Norfolk County Council's planning and highways delegations committee have agreed to object to the proposal, arguing that alternative options, including an offshore or underground scheme, had not been adequately considered.

At a recent full council meeting, councillors backed a motion expressing concerns over the proposals.

That motion called for Kay Mason Billig, leader of the Conservative-controlled council to write to National Grid with several requests, including further consideration of an offshore alternative and of putting more of the power line underground.

Norfolk set to receive highest highways maintenance allocation in the region

Norfolk is set to receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance this year.

Funding for every local authority across England today can be used throughout 2025/6 on the roads are in most need of repair, and to deliver immediate fixes for communities across Norfolk.

This comes just a few weeks after Norfolk took the top spot for the second year in a row in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey on roads and transport. People from across the county gave Norfolk the highest (above average) score in satisfaction with the condition of the highways.

More than 5,300 potholes have been fixed across Norfolk since April this year and of those 99% were repaired by our contractors within the agreed response times. If you see a pothole - don't assume someone else has reported it. Let us know by completing our online form: www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes

Norfolk's highways set for major investment in the year ahead

This month Norfolk County Council Cabinet has reviewed a series of investments and improvements to the county's highways infrastructure.

Documents reveal how 97 parishes, from Antingham to Worstead, will benefit from projects funded through the Council's Parish Partnership scheme. The 2025/26 programme is designed to deliver what local communities have requested, including trods, village gateways, bus shelters, and vehicle-activated signs.

The programme is jointly funded by Norfolk County Council and contributions from Town and Parish Councils. This year, Norfolk County Council plans to contribute £425,476, enabling a total investment of £848,702 for local projects.

The Cabinet has also reviewed the highways capital programme, which highlights successes from the previous year and outlines how highways maintenance funding will be allocated for the coming 12 months. This includes an additional £15 million from the Department for Transport (DfT).

With this extra funding, an additional 100 miles of roads in Norfolk will be resurfaced this year, supporting the Council's proactive approach to highway maintenance that helps prevent potholes. The funding will also provide additional resources for local repairs and patching across the county.

Herring Bridge receives further national awards

The new Herring Bridge in Great Yarmouth, which opened in February, received further national recognition at a Highway Awards ceremony in London last night.

Norfolk County Council's nationally significant infrastructure project won the Major Project of Year award and was also later announced as winner for the Highways Special Merit award across all shortlisted finalists.

This follows the bridge already receiving Major Project of the Year at the New Civil Engineer awards early this summer.

The Highway Awards were held on Tuesday 24th September at Park Plaza, Westminster Bridge in London, with shortlisted entries decided by an expert panel of twelve judges.

Norfolk's entry was a joint submission with consultants WSP who worked with the council and partners to take the project, constructed by BAM Farrans joint venture, from its inception through to delivery.

Norfolk County Council committed over £1m to keep people warm last winter

Proposals to support some of Norfolk's most vulnerable people this winter have been set out today.

Norfolk County Council is looking to use £1.15m of the £6.7m allocated to the county through the Household Support Fund to keep people warm and help them make ends meet.

The county council will use £0.75m to partner with local organisations, including Age UK and Citizens Advice Bureau, to reach some of those most affected by the changes to the Winter Fuel Payments. They will also put £400k into the 'warm spaces' scheme which provides vital respite in community spaces across the county.

The proposals also include £3.6m to continue providing cost-of-living vouchers for families eligible for means tested free school meals. This is in addition to:

- £1.00m to Norfolk Assistance Scheme. Delivered by the Norfolk County Council, the scheme includes direct award of assistance, the provision of household items and emergency help, alongside a range of support and guidance
- £0.70m to local councils across Norfolk to provide proactive and crisis support
- £0.25m to Adult Learning to continue free access to a range of courses to help with cooking at home, budgeting, and digital skills.

New strategy puts Norfolk at the forefront of the UK economy

Ambitious plans for Norfolk's economy have been unveiled in a new strategy to be presented to the county council's cabinet in November.

The strategy seeks to build on Norfolk's influence in key sectors, including clean energy, agri-tech and cutting-edge research.

Norfolk's Economic Strategy, also known as a Local Growth Plan, sets out an overview of the local economy and key priority areas for economic growth.

Norfolk is already at the forefront of some of the UK's most strategically important sectors.

Norfolk is a global leader for offshore wind with £39bn of clean energy investment forecasted over the next 20 years. In Great Yarmouth, the new Operations and Maintenance Campus is expected to create 650 new jobs and new commercial space for the offshore renewable energy sector. This £24.8m partnership project is a collaboration with Great Yarmouth Borough Council, with enabling works well underway.

Work is also underway to examine how to decarbonise the gas supply through the development of a 'Bacton Energy Hub', reusing existing North Sea assets for carbon storage, and blue/green hydrogen production.

The local Agri-Food and Agri-Tech economy puts Norfolk at the epicentre of addressing challenges around food security and climate change. Norwich Research Park is a world-leading research base at the forefront of global food and health research. It is Europe's largest single site hub of research, training, education, and enterprise in food and health.

Norfolk is already well known for a visitor economy which accounts for nearly 20% of all employment. The county was recently successful in bidding to become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership, alongside Visit East of England and Suffolk County Council. This put them on an even footing with the likes of Cornwall, the Peak District, and the Cotswolds who have the same level of Visit England accreditation.

Major infrastructure projects continue to transform how residents and businesses get around. The completion of the Herring Bridge and the start of construction on the long-awaited Long Stratton Bypass will bring a major boost for the local economy. Norfolk has also seen year-on-year growth in bus passenger numbers and the introduction of a major electric bus fleet.

The county council continues to push for improvements along the A47, with an ongoing campaign to improve connectivity and safety through further dualling in key areas.

Norfolk has built an increasingly enterprising culture, supporting residents to start up their own business, and for new start-ups to survive and thrive. Norfolk has a better than UK average for survival of new businesses at 63% after 3 years, compared to the UK average of 56%.

New Anglia Growth Hub acts as the 'front door' for local businesses looking for support. Over the past 10 years, the Growth Hub has supported over 14,000 businesses with free, impartial support and advice.

Norfolk County Council supports Norfolk's Family Farms

Conservative-led Norfolk County Council is taking proactive steps to support the county's hard-working family farms in response to recent budget announcements from the Labour Government. Recognizing the essential role that farming plays in the local economy, the Council is submitting and debating a motion aimed at ensuring that Norfolk's farmers are well-supported as they navigate the challenges brought on by these new policies.

The motion reflects the Council's strong commitment to championing local businesses, with a particular focus on protecting the livelihoods of those who sustain Norfolk's agricultural heritage. Norfolk's family farms are the backbone of rural communities, and the Conservative-led Council is dedicated to ensuring that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

Understanding the issues that local farmers face, ranging from financial pressures to complex regulatory changes, the motion highlights the importance of offering practical support.

Norfolk County Council is committed to creating a future where local farmers can thrive, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector for generations to come.

Norfolk street lighting goes green

Norfolk is leading the way in energy efficiency with the successful completion of its street lighting upgrade project, finishing almost a year ahead of schedule. This major initiative will cut CO2 emissions by over 200 tonnes annually, helping the county make significant strides toward a greener, more sustainable future.

The upgrade, carried out by Amey on behalf of Norfolk County Council, involved replacing 16,800 traditional High-Intensity Discharge (HID) lights with 15,531 state-of-the-art LED lanterns. This transition, which began in August 2023, will ensure that, starting in November 2024, 100% of Norfolk County Council's street lighting will use low-energy LEDs.

The final phase of this project will save approximately 1,099,032 kWh of energy each year, translating to an estimated £380,000 in savings based on current electricity prices.

Since the first LED streetlights were installed in 2008, the county has saved around 71 million kWh of energy, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by over 22,200 tonnes, equivalent to the carbon savings of 6.7 million litres of diesel. This project marks another significant achievement in Norfolk's ongoing commitment to reducing its environmental impact and promoting energy sustainability.

Discover the Best of Norfolk: Explore 1,500 Miles of Scenic Trails for Walking, Cycling, and Horse-Riding

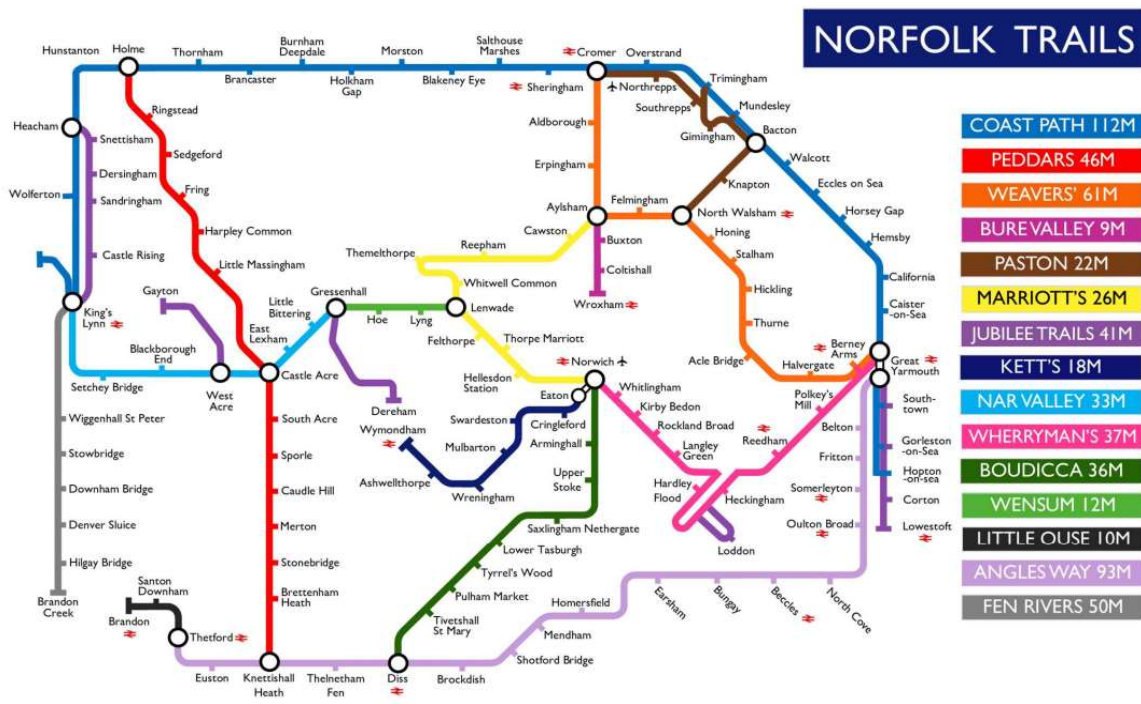
Norfolk offers over 1,500 miles of beautiful walking, cycling, and horse-riding routes, each showcasing the county's unique nature and rich cultural heritage. Whether you're exploring tranquil river valleys, historic landscapes, or scenic coastal paths, Norfolk's trails offer something for every adventurer.

Highlights include the **Angles Way**, a 93-mile walking route through woodlands and heathland, and the **Boudicca Way**, a 36-mile journey through ancient Roman and Iceni heritage sites. For those seeking to explore the Broads, the **Bure Valley Path** offers a 9-mile route along a heritage railway. History buffs will enjoy the **Kett's Country Trail**, which follows the story of Kett's Rebellion, while the **Peddars Way** takes you along an ancient Roman road.

Other stunning routes include the **Norfolk Coast Path** (a 112-mile National Trail), the **Marriott's Way** (26 miles of scenic walking, cycling, and horse-riding), and the **Wherryman's Way**, a 40-mile trek through the beautiful Broads National Park.

Whether you're interested in history, nature, or simply exploring the countryside, Norfolk's extensive network of trails provides the perfect way to experience this beautiful region.

For more information please visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/42852/Norfolk-Trails



Working Well Norfolk helping people with long-term health issues to keep working

A scheme to support people in Norfolk with long-term health issues get back into employment or continue in their jobs has already helped more than 1,100 participants.

The Working Well Norfolk programme, launched in October 2023, supports individuals with long-term health issues to return to or stay in work. It has already helped over 1,100 participants, with 200 moving into work and 150 staying employed despite health challenges. The programme has received 1,600 referrals and will continue for another 18 months, with additional funding to help 730 more people, totalling 1,830 participants by September 2026. The £5.2m project is managed by Norfolk County Council and delivered by Seetec Pluss and Standguide Ltd. For more info or to refer, visit [Working Well Norfolk - Seetec Pluss](#) or call 01603 561054.