

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT 11/7/22 : Judy Oliver

Recycling centre at Sheringham

The proposed large new recycling centre at Sheringham is intended to replace the current site and serve as a new recycling centre for the area. Norfolk County Council is now consulting on the proposed site location and design. The new site would be located opposite the existing recycling centre and accessed from the A148 Holt Road. A new junction with the A148 is proposed to improve visibility in both directions.

£1.65m has been allocated to fund this.

The new recycling centre would have:

- a reuse shop
- plenty of parking spaces
- a one-way system for smooth traffic flow and reduced queues
- separate public and service areas (which means it would not need to close for waste collection lorries, as is the case at the current site)
- a 'pay as you throw' section for DIY waste and a trade service for small businesses

The consultation is open till 31 July 2022. A drop in event, where residents can discuss the plans with officers from the County Council, will be held at the Holway Road Community Centre in Sheringham on Wednesday 13 July between 2.30 and 6.30pm. Information will also be displayed at Sheringham Library from 1 to 12 July.

Following the consultation, Norfolk County Council hopes to submit the planning application in autumn 2022. If approved, construction is expected to start in summer 2023 and the new site could be open in late 2023 to early 2024.

Norfolk Hospitals

Norfolk hospitals have asked families to collect patients and care for them at home, because of extreme pressures on emergency departments. People are being encouraged only to visit emergency departments or call 999 in the cases of genuine life-threatening emergency.

Holiday activities for children

Bookings are now open for the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun scheme, which provides free activities with a healthy lunch for children eligible for means tested free school meals. The scheme is delivered by Norfolk County Council in partnership with Active Norfolk and supports children aged 5 to 16 as part of the government's Holiday Activities and Food programme. Activities will be running from 25 July to 2 September

Those who are eligible for means-tested free school meals can claim free spaces, whilst paid spots for a small charge are available on many activities for those who don't qualify for a free place, more can be found on this at www.norfolk.gov.uk/bignorfolkholidayfun.

Electric charging points

The first of what it is hoped will be many electric vehicle charge points at village halls across Norfolk has been installed in Norfolk and is able to charge three cars at one time.

The new 'Fast' 7.2kW chargers have been installed as part of the County Council's Electric Vehicle Strategy which aims to increase electric vehicle usage in the county to help cut carbon emissions.

The charger will cost 35p per kwh to use. Depending on the vehicle, this will provide around 25 miles of range for £2.50, around half the cost as the same journey using petrol or diesel. It usually takes 6 hours for a full charge or much less time for a quick top up.

This is the first scheme funded by Norfolk County Council, through money allocated by the county councillor's small budget so is something that can be considered for our area?

Norfolk County Council was involved in the project by arranging site meetings between the Parish Council, and installer Anglia Car Charging. Once installed, the charge points are taken on by the parish to run and maintain as a local asset.

Local Transport Plan for Norfolk

The Local Transport Plan for Norfolk will shortly be going to full council. It is intended to encourage walking, cycling, bus and rail use as well as deliver major projects.

As part of the plan, the county council wants to investigate the possibility that the network of abandoned railway lines, many of which were closed in the 1960s, could become 'greenways', for use as walking and cycling routes, or even see the return of trains. Parts of several former Norfolk railway lines have already been converted into footpaths and cycle routes, such as the Marriott's Way, Weavers' Way and Lakenham Way. However, there are other stretches, particularly in rural areas, that the council believes should be protected from development, to allow them to eventually be revived for transport use.

The Plan does not have the power to stop developers building on the routes, but the council hopes that by including the possibility of greenways and even future rail use in the plan, it could help to deter them and keep the options open.

Fire Service

NFRS has been reminding residents that they offer free home fire safety visits to the over 65's and those with disabilities. As well as checking and fitting smoke alarms, the team can discuss escape plans in place in case of emergency and offer advice around behaviours that increase the risk of fire.

More than half of all Norfolk house fires last year started in the kitchen, with more than 200 blazes across the county being linked to cooking. Cooking-related causes included cookers (99), cooking rings/ hotplates (50) and grills/toasters (22) with other sources being microwaves and deep fat fryers. When cooking, the kitchen should not be left unattended and flammable items such as tea towels and trays should be moved away from heat sources

Other risks in the home include heaters and fires, with several recent serious fires being linked to the use of portable heaters in the home. 16 fires in 2021 were linked to portable heaters and fires. There is concern that with the cost of living rises, more people will be tempted to heat only parts of the home using portable heaters in a bid to save money. These should be sited at least 1m from people and flammable items such as furniture, papers, clothing and blankets. Use of common emollient creams for skin conditions can also increase the risk of flammability of skin, clothing, furniture and bedding as it absorbs into surfaces.

Fitting smoke alarms in to homes is the biggest single thing you can do to improve safety in the home. NRFS are also reminding people to test the smoke alarms in their own homes and the homes of those they care for once a week.

Fire crews have also been training to use new underwater camera equipment to assist them in submerged water rescue incidents.. It will allow crews to stay above the surface while they identify casualties under the water and hazards which may not be visible from the river bank etc, making their work safer and more effective. This £12,000 investment will also enable them to record the scene, which may support later investigation or training work.

Smoking

A new independent report '*Making smoking obsolete*' recommends increased investment to stop young people from starting smoking, raising the age of sale, and reducing the appeal of smoking through a mass media campaign to create a Smokefree culture.

Smoking is the biggest contributor to preventable ill health and the main driver of health inequalities. It kills an estimated 1,239 people in Norfolk every year, and accounts for 5,892 years of life lost annually.

In Norfolk 44,935 children live in households with adults who smoke which increases their chances of becoming smokers and two thirds of adult smokers started before they reached the age of 18. The costs are substantial, estimated in Norfolk to be £266.8 million each year, including costs of healthcare, social care, productivity, and fire costs.

The county council currently invests in a range of services including Smoke Free Norfolk, which gives support and aids to quitting such as e-cigarettes, working with trading standards to drive out illicit tobacco, and working with the NHS to develop their inpatient services to support people to quit.

Covid-19

The Government's 'Living with Covid' guidance was published in April and following that move the Norfolk Outbreak Management Centre (OMC) will be closing on Friday 15 July 2022.

All health protection incidents and outbreaks will be managed by the UKHSA Health Protection Teams (HPT) who provide specialist support.

Care providers, businesses and schools have been provided with recommended preventative measures to keep safe and sources of regional and local support.

Latest figures show that the East of England commissioning area was top for the administration of three vaccine doses, having given 43,378 (78.9%) doses to the population.

Over 95% of Norfolk's care homes have had their spring booster vaccinations with the remainder to be visited over the coming weeks.

Census 2021

The first published results of the 2021 Census showed there were around 916,200 people living in Norfolk on Census Day, 21 March 2021.

That's an increase of around 58,300 people, or an increase of 6.8% compared with Census Day 2011. This compares with an 8.3% increase for the East of England and a 6.3% increase for England and Wales. Within Norfolk, South Norfolk had the highest percentage

increase (14.4% increase), with Great Yarmouth having the lowest increase (2.6% increase), compared with the last census.

Further phased results from the census will be released from September onwards. These will include data on ethnicity, religion, the labour market, education and housing. For the first time, it will also include information on armed forces veterans, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Carers Packs

NCC is again providing 3000 wellbeing packs to unpaid carers. The packs, which are provided through Covid funding from government, are designed to support unpaid carers and include Personal Protective Equipment as well as chocolates, toiletries, and other treats.

Details are on the NCC website.