

## **County Councillor Report July 2025**

### **Launch of Norfolk Community Fund**

I'm pleased to advise residents of the newly launched 'Norfolk Community Fund' which is now open for applications from local Groups. This County Council grant scheme is designed to specifically support grassroots organisations at the heart of every community.

Each of Norfolk's 84 county councillors has been allocated £5,000 to distribute within their division. Grants over £500 will need to be match funded.

Local groups who could benefit from a grant should contact myself with details of their project and the funding needed. Claire.bowes.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk. 07789796937

The fund offers grants between £200 and £2,500 to support projects that particularly promote and reflect community engagement and volunteering, such as a creative project, community event or something that supports wellbeing or the environment.

If your project needs £500 or more, you'll need to raise half the amount through match funding. For example, If your project costs £1,000, you'll need to raise £500 yourself and the grant will cover the other £500.

If your project is under £500, you do not need to match fund.

For more details see <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/norfolk-community-fund>

### **Historic collaborative partnership signed with Zhovkva in Ukraine**

At July's Breckland Council meeting the Leader of the Council joined me in congratulating the Wayland Partnership and Chamber on signing an MOU with Zhovkva, in the Lviv area of Ukraine, to promote business, cultural and friendship connections. Watton and Wayland are the first area in Norfolk to sign such an agreement following on from the County Council signing an MOU with the whole of the Lviv area last year.

### **Save our Countryside**

At the same meeting Members voted to support a motion in favour of measures which aim to fight to protect Breckland rural communities and our unique landscape and environment, from vast swathes of solar installations across the countryside. A motion was put forward by ward member for Ashill, Cllr Fabian Eagle, and seconded by Ward member for Shipdham, Cllr Lynda Turner. The motion described the proposal as "the UK's biggest power station by area" It secured cross party support, passing by unanimous vote.

The vote means that Council will oppose large scale solar farm developments in Breckland that lack local support, threaten farmland and wildlife, and fail to provide local benefit. Norfolk County Council have also declared a similar position. The Government has taken the ultimate decision away from local communities and their planning authority (Breckland Council) as it will be made in Whitehall.

### **Local success for flood alleviation**

I'm very pleased at the news that work stated in June to construct two new flood basins upstream of Saham Toney. The basins are part of a wider scheme, jointly funded by the County Council, Anglian Water and central government and are being constructed by the Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board, to reduce the risk of flooding in the village and local area. The area was identified by the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA) in 2021 as a priority site for implementing flood alleviation measures. The flood storage basins work by temporarily holding and slowly releasing high flows in local rivers following prolonged rainfall, thus reducing the risk of flooding

downstream. The basins will provide benefits including an anticipated increase in amphibian populations, as well as better water retention for irrigation in times of drought.

**Fire fighting career opportunity:** Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service is looking to hire 16 new recruits, (eight starting in April 2026 and eight in 2027,) who will be stationed in the five full time stations across the county. The applications open on 28 July and close on 25 August. Norfolk has around 150 full-time firefighters, working in shifts to ensure the Service has cover 24/7 for 365 days a year. The vacancies have come about through retirements and promotions from staff who have, in some cases, given more than 30 years commitment to the job. The full criteria, assessment dates and answers to frequently asked questions can be found [on the NFRS area of the NCC website](#).

**Families - don't forget Norfolk Libraries' School holiday Summer Reading challenge!** It's free to join and this year's theme is 'Story Garden - Adventures in Nature and the Great Outdoors.' Sign up at Watton Library (or any library in Norfolk) and receive a special sticker booklet and collect rewards for reading. You can also sign up online and unlock digital badges. As well as the obvious benefit of learning about the wealth of nature and countryside on our doorsteps, the scheme boosts confidence and helps prepare children to return to school, supporting the move into a new year group.

As the school holidays begin, wishing all families and residents a happy summer season

**Claire**

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