

# **Cllr Christopher Cushing – March 2025**

## **Fakenham Lancaster North Ward – District Council Report**

Contact details: christopher.cushing@north-norfolk.gov.uk and 07921 564763

*Lancaster North ward covers all dwellings in the parish of Fakenham that are east of Wells Road, and north of Highfield Road, Greenway Lane, Pensthorpe Road and the A1067.*

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### **1. FLASH Project - Swimming Pool & 3G Artificial Pitch**

- Development is on track. Two issues have arisen with the planning application. The first affects the new swimming pool. I reported in my last update that the presence of bats had been found in the pavilion building which is scheduled to be knocked down. NNDC has applied for a licence from Natural England for approval to demolish the building. It is not anticipated there will be any issues with this.
- Work is scheduled to begin on the site during the summer so hopefully the licence will be granted by then so it will not delay anything.
- The second is that Sport England have objected to the removal of the cricket pitch, which would affect the building of the 3G artificial pitch. This is ironic as the cricket pitch is unusable and the Fakenham Cricket Club have no objection to its removal. Whereas the new 3G pitch would be heavily used. Sport England have been engaged. I suspect their objection could be ignored its needs must.

### **2. New Roundabout on the Bypass**

- The revised date for the completion of the roundabout is Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May. This has moved back from 5<sup>th</sup> May.
- The road will be closed at night for 5 days leading up to the completion date, as is usual when finishing up.

### **3. Land North of Rudham Stile Lane for Sale**

- Trinity College, Cambridge, who own the land on which the first phase of the urban extension will be built, have instructed Savills to put the area up for sale.
- This is being marketed as 'Grove Gardens'. I have attached a copy of the short brochure to accompany this report.

### **4. Field Lane Path and Streetlights**

- Following a complaint from a resident, I asked Highways to repair the footpath at the bottom of Field near the entrance to Well Road. The bank has eroded to cover much of the path and has mixed with leaves. This makes it treacherous in wet conditions. Highways have responded by saying, "We have inspected the problem. Any repairs or required

action will be prioritised depending on the severity, location and extent of the work necessary. On average, this may take approximately 6 weeks.”

- Also I reported, along with others, that the streetlights along that part of the road were not working. These have now been fixed.

## **5. Black Shuck Distillery**

- I was delighted to attend the opening of the Black Shuck Distillery at their new premises in Hindolveston by kind invitation of Patrick and Sarah Saunders. Patrick and Sarah created their business and have been distilling gin at their house and garage in north Fakenham. They have moved the business to some barns at Hindolveston where they can now offer tours and a tasting room. They produce 24 different gins and rums. I wish them every success with their new venture.

## **6. Morrisons Petrol Filling Station Clipbush Lane**

- A planning application has been received for the demolition of existing sales building and existing car wash at the Morrisons Petrol Filling Station, and the erection of a sales building with green roof, alterations to existing forecourt canopy, new bin store and associated forecourt works

## **7. Devolution and Local Government Reform**

- In my last report I explained that a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) will be created in Norfolk and Suffolk from May 2026. In parallel both counties will undertake Local Government Reform (LGR) to abolish County and District Councils and replace them with Unitary Councils. The new unitary authorities will come into effect from March 2028, with ‘shadow’ elections for this in May 2027.
- The Government asked the County Council and all seven District level authorities to submit their views on LGR by 21<sup>st</sup> March.
- The options are:
  - A single unitary authority for the whole of Norfolk.
  - Two unitaries split east and west. The western one would only have only a third of the county by population, covering the councils of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, Breckland and the North Norfolk County Divisions of Fakenham, Wells and Holt.
  - Three unitaries, same split as above but a Norwich unitary carved out of the middle of the eastern area.
- At last week’s NNDC Full Council, the Liberal Democrat administration voted for the three unitary option. The Conservative group abstained because no work has been done to determine the financial sustainability of any option.
- One by-product of this is that Town and Parish Councils are likely to have to take on more responsibilities. For example I think it unlikely that any new large unitary council will want to look after public conveniences, so these might be handed over to towns and parishes to manage.