



# Latest update on events from your County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Fakenham Town Council

26th February 2025

My contact details are:

Email: [tom.fitzpatrick.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:tom.fitzpatrick.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk)  
Phone: 01603 989809  
Mobile No: 07803 166293

## Devolution

Norfolk (together with Suffolk) is one of the areas which are on the fast-track for the Government's English Devolution programme. The timetable has a number of tight deadlines, and the first election of a directly elected Mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk is expected to be held in May 2026. The County elections due to be held in May 2025 have been postponed and Local Government Reorganisation is being planned to end the current two-tier system. I will update as further details emerge and there are details of the Consultation in my National details.

## Works to pavement at start of Norwich Road

Highways have been liaising with the developer about these overdue works. He has advised that he is going to undertake the works himself and is proposing a new design (ensuring safe passage for pedestrians) and on approval will be implementing the required works in a swift fashion.

## Norfolk County Council updates

### Budget update

Norfolk County Council has agreed a balanced budget for the fiscal year 2025/26, despite facing significant financial pressures.

The budget was agreed at the full council meeting held on 18 February.

Further information, including key facts and figures is available in the news release on the County Council website.

## **Additional hazardous waste days at Norfolk's recycling centres**

The county council's agreed budget includes money to hold an extra series of household hazardous waste events.

The events will take place at seven recycling centres this spring and are in addition to the usual events which take place in the autumn.

Customers must use the [recycling centre booking system](#) to attend the free of charge events, which will be held throughout April and May 2025. Bookings are expected to open a week before each event.

### **The spring hazardous waste events will be held on:**

4 and 5 April at King's Lynn

11 and 12 April at Dereham

25 and 26 April at Thetford

2 and 3 May at Norwich North

9 and 10 May at Hempton

16 and 17 May at Caister

23 and 24 May at Norwich South

A list of what can be disposed of at the hazardous waste days can be found at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste)

## **Boosting Your Norfolk Extra**

Your Norfolk Extra, the council's monthly digital newsletter goes out to almost 6,000 subscribers on the first Monday of each month, bringing them information and service updates from Norfolk County Council.

To help boost readership a promotional campaign has been started which includes advertising on the front page of the council website, social media alerts and editorial in Your Norfolk magazine.

The County Council has also partnered with local businesses to offer regular prize draws for subscribers to win days out in in the county - Norfolk Museums and Wataunga Wildlife Reserve near King's Lynn being the first to offer prizes.

## **Increase in new Apprenticeship starts in Norfolk**

New apprenticeship starts with Norfolk businesses and organisations soared by 11% in the first three months of the academic year 2024/25 - against a national increase of less than 1.5%.

The growth between 1 August to 31 October 2024 compared with the same period in 2023/24 equates to 2,025 new starts in the county. That is 199 more than the previous year and the highest volume in the same period for more than five years.

Apprenticeships Norfolk continued the celebrations on 12 February when its annual awards recognised the exceptional achievements of apprentices, managers and mentors, and businesses.

Further statistics and details of the awards are available in the press release [here](#).

## **Bird Flu (avian influenza) in Norfolk – update**

Cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza (bird flu) are still increasing in both kept poultry and wild birds across multiple areas of Great Britain and several further regional protection zones have recently been announced.

Additionally, influenza of avian origin has been detected in a small number of grey seals on the North Norfolk Coast and has also been detected in wild birds in the area.

Mammals which have had close contact with infected wild birds or contaminated environments can become infected with influenza of avian origin. The numbers involved were not above the usual annual mortality level at this site and this finding is evidence of the effectiveness of the UK's wildlife surveillance system. There is no evidence to suggest an increased risk to non-avian wildlife.

Additionally, highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 has been confirmed in other captive birds at a premises near Snettisham, King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk (AIV 2025/18). A 3km captive bird (monitoring) controlled zone has been declared surrounding the premises. The affected birds on the premises will be humanely culled.

Norfolk and Suffolk remain in a regional avian influenza protection zone (AIPZ) which requires all bird keepers to keep their birds housed to protect them from bird flu. This applies to pet birds, commercial flocks and just a few birds in a backyard flock.

Guidance on how to prevent bird flu and stop it spreading is available [here](#).

## **National updates**

### **Devolution Proposals – government consultations**

[Consultations](#) have been launched in six areas, including Norfolk and Suffolk, on government proposals to establish mayoral combined authorities. These form part of the government's Devolution Priority Programme, which was launched earlier this month.

The Government is seeking views from interested parties such as residents and businesses, as well as public sector organisations, on questions such as the proposed geographies and how the mayoral combined authorities will operate.

The consultation on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority for the local government areas of Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council can be accessed [here](#).

The consultation closes on 13 April 2025.

## Arts funding

The Government has announced that hundreds of arts venues, museums, libraries and heritage buildings will receive a share of more than £270 million as part of an Arts Everywhere Fund, supporting jobs and creating opportunities for young people to learn creative skills while helping to boost people's sense of pride in where they live.

The Government says that the funding will be targeted at organisations in urgent need of financial support to keep them up and running, carry out vital infrastructure work and improve long term financial resilience.

[A package of further arts funding is](#) also due to be confirmed at an event on 20 February. Full details are not yet known; however, the government has confirmed that the Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, and Bressingham Steam Museum, Diss will receive funding from the Museum Estate and Development Fund. This fund is to enable museums to deliver a better experience for visitors and staff, make access and environmental improvements, unlock income-generating opportunities, and continue to protect treasured buildings and collections for future generations.

## 10-year study to shed light on youth vaping

The Government has [announced new research](#) that will investigate the long-term health effects of vaping on children to tackle youth vaping and create a smoke-free generation - an ambition that is also supported by the [Tobacco and Vapes Bill](#), which is currently making its way through parliament.

The £62 million research project into adolescent health, funded by UK Research and Innovation, will track 100,000 young people aged 8 to 18 years over a decade, collecting data on behaviour, biology and health records to understand what affects young people's health and wellbeing, including the impact of vaping. It is intended to give health carers and policymakers the robust evidence they need to protect the next generation from the potential health risks.

## Tom FitzPatrick

### County Councillor for Fakenham Division

### Vice Chairman of Norfolk County Council

(Dunton, Fakenham, Helhoughton, Hempton with Pudding Norton and Testerton, Raynham & Tattersett)