**District Councillor Report – February 2024**

**Nutrient Neutrality:**

A pipe pouring water into a river

Description automatically generatedFinally Norfolk Environmental Credits is up and running and has sold its first credits to Developers!

A Member Committee will be set up with a representative from each Council who are part of the Company to ensure the distribution of credits is shared fairly across all affected Districts.

I will be the SNC representative on this Committee.

**Land charges/searches:**

Last week I spent an hour with the Team Leader of the department that deals with land charges and searches. The reason I mention this is because it's one of the departments of the Council that tends to be forgotten, myself included, and it just shows the varied things that we deal with. Not just collecting the bins!

**Dentistry**:



I attended a Councillor briefing on dentistry presented to us by the NHS Norfolk and Waveney ICB.

I have attached the slides from the presentation above, and there is a link below for a survey that you can complete.

This closes on the 21st February.

[https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/dental-priorities-survey](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/dental-priorities-survey/)

**Newsletter**:



Attached is the latest project update on the Norwich to Tilbury scheme.

**Norfolk Community Safety Partnership (NCSP) Monthly Newsletter:**



**Town and Parish Council Forum:**



We held our last Forum on the 6th February.

I have attached the slides and below is a brief outline of what was covered.

* Helen Mellors, Assistant Director in Planning presented on **Local Plan Update** (*Att. #2*).
* Stuart Guthrie, Electoral Services Manager, introduced himself as new to the role as from November 2023.  Stuart talked through his **Elections Update** presentation (*Att. #3*), emphasising important dates and new guidance on postal votes; coming into effect 2026.
* Ellen Faure, Project Delivery Officer, talked about **World Cafés for Health and Wellbeing** (*Att. #4*) and the two upcoming events in Diss and Reepham already scheduled. Ellen reported that there is currently not a lot of Parish Council involvement, but welcomed their participation and advertising to residents. The anticipated scope of discussion was raised. It was recognised that the World Café will be a good environment to discuss issues the communities can influence and lead on that are causal i.e. isolation, low-level mental well-being issues, healthy eating, activity…   Trevor stated that there are other forums working on systemic issues.
* Andy Sexton gave a brief update around **Pride In Place Grants** and confirmed applications are now closed. We had 40% of Town & Parish councils applying for Clean Up & Bloom grants and he welcomed updates on plans, reports and pictures. Applications for a Pride in Place Community Grant are being reviewed in February/March. Communications about decisions are planned for mid-March.
* Andy invited two Pride in Place recipients to share their projects:

William Mills from **Horstead Centre Partnership** talked about how the Grant fund has helped the Centre reach out to the local community in partnership with the Parish Council. The Centre runs events and learning opportunities for students, with around 3,500 visitors of primary school age per year. The Grant will allow the Centre to run four ‘free to attend’ days in a year. So far, one event was held in late October 2023 which had around 70 people from local areas attending throughout the day. Activities included such subjects as bat conservation, canoeing, arts and crafts both inside and outside in the garden. The next free community day is during the Easter break.

Lua Leggett from **Wortwell** Community Centre talked through the feasibility study paid for by the Grant and the **Project’s** hopes for the future (*Att. #5*).

The next Forum is scheduled for **Thursday 7th March, 11am – 12pm.**

**Cabinet Meeting:**

We had a cabinet meeting last Monday which mainly covered our budget which was agreed by Cabinet it will now go to Scrutiny before a full Council meeting.

One of the major pressures on our budget is the cost of providing a weekly food waste collection, which we have been instructed will have to be provided in April 2026 from all properties in the District.

Although this is two years away, we know that our current waste depot will not be big enough, and we will have to purchase new separate waste trucks from our current ones.

It’s estimated this could cost us up to £10M.

Therefore we are already having to plan for this.

Even so I’m proud that we are proposing a balanced budget and a capital programme of just over £97M to support service delivery and to contribute to the Council’s financial sustainability over the next 5 years.

**Helen Mellors:**

Helen is the Assistant Director of Planning for both South Norfolk and Broadland Council, she has worked for South Norfolk Council for over 20 years, some of you may have worked with Helen at some point, she is retiring next month and her replacement is a gentleman called Ben Burgess.

**May Gurney site:**

Regarding the trees that were cut down last year on the May Gurney site. The Environment Agency and Forestry Commission have been investigating this and the Forestry Commission will be issuing a Re-stocking Notice imminently.

I will let Kate know when this has happened.