



Latest update on events from your County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick



Fakenham Town Council

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Local Matters

Market Towns Conference

Following on from the County Council Norfolk's High Street Matters initiative, which was launched in the town in summer 2025, Fakenham was well represented at the 2nd Norfolk Market Towns Conference held at the Thursford Collection last week. I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak and also to highlight Fakenham. There were a number of useful presentations and a new County initiative to support pubs and hospitality was announced.

Norfolk Community Fund

There is still the opportunity for local groups to apply for funding this year, for amounts from £200 to £2,500. Details can be found on the County Council website at www.norfolk.gov.uk/communityfund

Norfolk County Council updates

County council elections to take place on 7 May 2026

On 16 February, the Government announced that it was withdrawing its decision to postpone the county council elections - which means elections will now take place, as originally planned, for all 84 county council divisions in Norfolk.

The elections had originally been postponed to enable the council to focus on preparations for local government reorganisation and devolution.

The Government's decision is available [here](#).
Norfolk County Council budget approved.

Following the full council meeting on 17 February, Norfolk County Council has approved its budget for 2026-27.

The budget delivers a balanced financial position, with £42.3 million in savings and efficiencies and £76.3 million of targeted investment to support essential services and strengthen Norfolk's economy.

Councillors also agreed a 4.998% increase in council tax, reflecting the Government's funding assumptions for the year and the continuing reliance on local taxation to maintain core services.

You can watch the meeting and read the reports on the council's website.

Independent Living Scheme campaign

Please support the County Council campaign to increase awareness, inform and educate Norfolk residents about the housing options for older people.

The campaign will target people aged 40 plus who may have older parents or relatives, or people already in the target age bracket (60+) to make them aware of the different types of housing available, the benefits of moving to them, and how to apply for them.

The campaign went live on the 20th of February. It includes ITV and Greatest Hits radio coverage, targeted social media messages and library promotion. There is also a communications toolkit which has been shared with key partners.

Key campaign information and messaging includes:

- Live independent safely: Explore housing options for your later life in Norfolk
- Freedom to live, support when you need it – explore housing options for your later life in Norfolk
- Range of interesting, independent apartments and flats available
- Plan: explore housing options for your later life in Norfolk
- Choice - available all over Norfolk, different facilities at each one
- To rent you must have a care or support assessment. Some apartments are available to buy without a current care need.
- Find out more online

How to get involved and support the campaign

- Visit the website and signpost others to find out more at [Housing with Care and Independent Living - Norfolk County Council](#)

- Like and comment on the posts you see on social media sites.
- If you require copies of leaflets or posters about the Independent Living campaign, please email your request to commsrequest@norfolk.gov.uk

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) handled almost 18,000 emergency calls last year, an increase of more than 1,600 calls on the previous 12 months and the highest number on record.

The service attended a record 10,024 incidents across Norfolk- dealing with everything from fires and water rescue to height/confined space rescue, animal rescue and public safety incidents such as dangers on the highway or with dangerous structures in towns and villages.

Prevention and engagement teams, and Norfolk crews, carried out more than 1,200 educational visits to help people better understand fire and rescue related risks, with the aim of reducing emergency incidents in the face of new and emerging risks such as lithium-ion battery fires.

More than 8,700 home fire safety visits were carried out, supporting vulnerable people to stay safe in their homes. During the visits, fire teams are able to fit smoke alarms and thanks to a partnership with Cadent can also fit carbon monoxide alarms.

More facts and figures are available in this news release [here](#).

Further details about services and advice from Norfolk Fire services is available on their webpages [here](#).

National Updates

Government support for cost of living for disabled adults

The Government is increasing the amount that working-age adults who receive social care must be able to keep after paying for home care (known as the minimum income guarantee) by 7% from April 2026. They say this will provide 150,000 working-age adults who receive social care at least £400 more each year to help with daily expenses and ease financial pressures.

The government also confirmed £723 million for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) next year to help older and disabled people adapt their homes so they can live safely and independently. The DFG supported around 60,000 people last year and it helps keep people out of hospital and living comfortably in their own homes. Further information available [here](#).

Environment Agency teams protecting waterways from pollution

The Environment Agency [recently announced](#) that in East Anglia, since 2024, an additional five water industry regulation teams have been put in place to hold Anglian Water to account. They say that they have increased their water enforcement workforce almost fivefold – from 41 roles in 2023 to 195 by March, with a further increase planned later in 2026. Water company environmental performance has continued to decline in recent years, driving the need for stronger, more visible enforcement action.

This approach builds on the government's [recent launch of the Water White Paper](#), a plan to overhaul the water system, delivering tougher oversight and stronger accountability for water companies.

Government campaign 'Lock the door on cyber criminals'

The Government [has launched a campaign](#) encouraging businesses to 'lock the door' on cyber criminals. The campaign supports business owners to protect themselves from cyber threats which the Government says cost UK firms £14.7 billion per year.

New research published alongside the campaign launch also reveals the scale of the cyber threat facing UK businesses more broadly. The [Cyber Security Longitudinal Survey](#) shows 82% of medium and large businesses suffered a cyber incident in the past year.

Campaign messaging will urge small and medium sized businesses to engage with the [Cyber Essentials](#) scheme which outlines actions they can take.

Cyber Essentials focuses on firewalls, secure configuration, software updates, user access control and malware protection.

Tom FitzPatrick

Chairman of Norfolk County Council

County Councillor for Fakenham Division

(Dunton, Fakenham [Lancaster North and South], Helhoughton, Hempton with Pudding Norton & Testerton, Raynham and Tattersett)

 Norfolk County Council

HIGH STREETS
MATTER