

CLlr Christopher Cushing

Town Council Fakenham North District Update – 24th January 2024

1. Flash Project - New Swimming Pool & 3G Artificial Pitch

- I have been invited to be a member of the Flash Project Steering Group in my capacity as the local member. This will be the governing body for the overall development.
- The first meeting has been scheduled for Monday 5th February.
- I anticipate that at this we will agree the Terms of Reference for the Steering Group and agree an indicative delivery timescale and key milestones for building both the swimming pool and 3G artificial pitch. The allocation of the government grant was predicated on both being complete by March 2026.

2. Urban Extension

- Still waiting for confirmation that the County Council will approve the bids to roll over Business Rates and Norfolk Strategic Funding to 2024. This totals £900,000 and to match fund the NNDC contribution of £900,000. This usually can take a few months but no issues are anticipated with this.
- NNDC is waiting to hear the outcome of Devolution Deal funding bid for £1.4m that was submitted to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). A decision is expected around March 2024. Combined with the funding already in place as detailed above, should fully fund the roundabout.

3. Business Visits - Ploeger Oxbo and Kinnerton Confectionery

- I have visited Ploeger Oxbo and Kinnerton Confectionery in the last month. These are two key Fakenham businesses. These were arranged by a member of the Economic Growth Team to gain a greater understanding of the businesses' plans and challenges and to consider how NNDC might better support them.
- Both were fascinating sessions. Ploeger Oxbo are based off Holt Road behind the Grove Veterinary Practice. They build 60 – 70 bean and pea harvesters a year which are exported all over the world. These are some of the largest machines built in the UK. They employ 62 staff, most of whom are qualified engineers.
- Kinnerton produce a multitude of chocolate products including a highly successful new range of vegan chocolate. They are the sole suppliers of Marks & Spencer and make some Nestle products which include brands like Mars.
- They employ 330 direct staff, and 226 agency staff between June and February to ramp up for the Christmas and Easter production.
- Both businesses are buoyant and are terrific assets for the town and area. Going forward all local representatives and key employers in the town need to understand what we can do to help each other.

4. Next FTC Full Council

- Please accept my apologies for the February FTC Full Council because this clashes with the NNDC Full Council meeting. This will be the third meeting during the last four months that District and County representatives have not been able to attend the FTC.
- I have asked whether consideration could be given to changing the meeting dates of the monthly FTC Full Councils in the next council year from May 2024 in order to avoid this issue. It important that Town Councillors and residents have the opportunity to question us at regular public meetings.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

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