Latest update on events from your County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Fakenham Town Council

26th November 2025

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Local Matters

I was pleased to support the successful application by the Town Council for a 'Christmas Photo Board' which will be in the Market Place during the pre-Christmas period. Hopefully, this will act as a good focal point and a bit of a fun attraction for everyone, whether visitors or residents. Pictures shared on social media can help advertise the town.

The award of this Christman Selfie board follows on from the County Council Norfolk's High Street Matters initiative which was launched in the town in summer. A number of local businesses took advantage of the tailored training, plus further support from its Retail Excellence coaching.

Norfolk County Council updates

Consultation on the future of local government in Norfolk

Residents across Norfolk have the opportunity to take part in a landmark Government consultation that will help to decide the future shape of local government in the county. The Government has launched a statutory consultation asking people for their views on proposals for 1, 2 or 3 brand new unitary councils in Norfolk. The plans on the table would see county and district councils replaced by new unitary authorities. That means residents will have just one council that runs all services in their area, instead of two.

Norfolk County Council's proposal outlines a single unitary council for Norfolk - one organisation responsible for all local government services, designed to deliver better outcomes for residents, reduce duplication, and ensure long-term financial sustainability. Councils across the county have also submitted proposals for two and three unitary councils.

The consultation runs from Wednesday 19 November 2025 to Sunday 11 January 2026. People can view all proposals and submit their views online. People can pop into one of Norfolk's 47 libraries for help to complete the consultation online - there's free access to computers, wifi and the internet, and library staff can provide support to access the consultation website.

From kombucha to online ordering platforms - eight Norfolk businesses to benefit from the Jarrold Growth Fund

Eight Norfolk businesses have received support from the latest round of the Jarrold Growth Fund, this year in partnership with Norfolk County Council. From hand-forged metalwork to artisan kombucha and innovative tech platforms, this year's recipients showcase the diversity, talent and entrepreneurial spirit that make Norfolk's business community so special.

The Jarrold Group launched its Growth Fund in February 2024 as part of the company's ongoing commitment to Norwich and Norfolk and the business community. This year's partnership with Norfolk County Council brings together shared values of innovation, sustainability and community, with £100,000 of combined support available through a mix of funding, mentoring and practical help.

The following businesses received a blend of financial and practical support from Jarrold Group and Norfolk County Council:

- **Urban Interiors**
- **L V Bespoke**
- **Oichi Kombucha**
- **Due Trade**
- **One of a Kind Club**

Norfolk County Council also provided funding to the following organisations:

- **Zoological Society of East Anglia**
- **Stepping Stones**
- **Dragonfly Flooring**

More information can be found on the County Council website.

Norfolk's gritting vehicles first run of the season

Norfolk's gritting vehicles headed out in the early hours of the morning of Tuesday 18th November on the first gritting run of the season.

Over the past three years Norfolk's gritters have been kitted out with brand new, state of the art auto-salting technology which makes the grit runs more accurate, saves time and reduces waste. Thanks to Norfolk's school children and members of the public, all 55 vehicles have recently been named so be sure to look out for Edith Gravel, Grit Yarmouth and Gritty Gritty Bang Bang on the roads, to name just a few.

The cold weather also marks the start of the council's annual #NorfolkWinter campaign on social media which shares updates on when the gritters will be out, travel tips and safety advice to keep Norfolk moving throughout the winter season.

Look for the hashtag #NorfolkWinter and follow Norfolk County Council on **Facebook**, **Nextdoor** and **Instagram**.

People can check which roads are on the council's gritting routes for this season using the map at **www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting**.

National Updates

Police and Crime Commissioners to be scrapped

The Home Office has announced that Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) will be abolished by 2028, expecting to save at least £100 million and free funds for frontline policing. Their functions will be absorbed by existing local leaders – mayors where available or elected council leaders in non-mayoral areas. This reform is intended to integrate policing with other local services and improve accountability. The transfer to the new model will happen at the end of the next electoral cycle in 2028.

Renters' Rights Act reforms

The government has confirmed that Section 21 "no-fault" evictions in England will be banned from 1st May 2026 as part of the new Renters' Rights Act. These reforms – expected to benefit c.11 million renters – also cap rent increases to once per year and outlaw practices such as bidding wars and discrimination against tenants on benefits or with children.

Councils will be responsible for enforcing these new rights, backed by tougher fines (up to £40k for repeat offenses) and enhanced powers to make landlords repay rent for serious breaches.

New County Council Network report on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

A CCN/Isos Partnership report argues that, without urgent reform, England's SEND system will become financially unsustainable ('on course for total collapse') by the end of this Parliament. Despite councils investing £30 billion extra in SEND over the last decade, demand for Education, Health and Care Plans has surged to record levels, potentially driving cumulative projected deficits to an 'unimaginable' £17.8 billion by 2029. CCN called on ministers to wipe these deficits clean and implement a 'root-and-branch' overhaul of SEND provision – including stricter national standards and focusing plans on those most in need – to avert bankruptcy in dozens of authorities and improve outcomes for children.

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