Cllr Christopher Cushing – June 2026

Fakenham Lancaster North Ward District Council Report

- **Email: christopher.cushing@north-norfolk.gov.uk**
- **Telephone: 07921 564763**
- **Facebook: Cllr Christopher Cushing – This is new so please find and follow me.**

Lancaster North ward covers all dwellings east of Wells Road, and north of Highfield Road, Greenway Lane, Pensthorpe Road and the A1067.

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1. Fat Cow Planning Application

- Last week I attended the NNDC planning Development Committee to speak in favour of a re-submitted Fat Cow planning application to build a permanent restaurant and farm shop. Cllr Angela Glynn spoke in support on behalf of the Town Council.
- This was refused by a 7 – 3 vote. However, there is hope this can still be approved.
- Last June the application was approved subject to agreeing conditions with the NNDC planning team. One they insisted on was tying the site to the farm so that it could not be sold separately in future.
- The reason is the council is reluctant to set a precedent for future applications elsewhere.
- Though they have no intention of selling the site, the applicant said that the condition would significantly diminish their ability to borrow or obtain investment to fund the construction so it would not make the development viable.
- It was apparent in the debate was that something had got lost in translation between the applicant's solicitor's and the council. NNDC thought the area in question was two fields, though the applicant said they are in fact split into four. The applicant thought NNDC insisted on the whole area being tied to the farm, whereas NNDC said it would be content with just some of it.
- Those that voted against did so reluctantly and said they hoped a compromise can be found. After the vote, the planning team said they will delay issuing the formal 'Refusal Notice' to allow further negotiations which I hope will result in a positive outcome.
- A key point I made is that if NNDC is happy to allow McDonalds and Burger King to build restaurants in the town, then they must find a way to back a local applicant who is selling meat reared on their land which does not have preservatives and additives in it.

2. Speeding in North Fakenham

- I nudged Highways to remove the speed monitoring cables that have been installed on Greenway Lane and Rudham Stile Lane because they had been laid for 6 weeks. They are normally down for only two. I have asked for the results and what further action may result if consistent speeding is proved along both roads.

3. Swimming Pool Development

- I attended site visit last week to see how the development is going. I was impressed as excellent progress is being made. Seeing it up close makes you realise what a complicated undertaking it is.
- The good news is that the swimming pool is on schedule to open early next year, though no date has been confirmed yet.

4. Hedge, Verge and Road Maintenance Issues

- **Broken Rudham Stile Lane Road Sign** – I have reported to NNDC a broken road sign for 'Rudham Stile Lane' near the entrance to Thorpland Road. This has been ordered but it could take 3 months to arrive.
- **Path between Rudham Stile Lane and Whitelands** – This is full of debris so I will see what can be done to clear it.

5. **NNDC Community Fund**

- The new NNDC Community Fund has been agreed. We are waiting for the online application process to be set up before grants can be submitted and approved.
- I will advise when this is available.

6. In other news… the Cromer Pier Theatre Auditorium

- As Leader of the Opposition at NNDC, I clearly spend time on district wide issues which I seldom report here. However, I will highlight a debate we had at last week's NNDC Full Council on a Liberal Democrat proposal to borrow £2.4m to refurbish the auditorium on the Cromer Pier.
- I spoke strongly against this. There was no business case which explained the financial benefit of this investment.
- I argued that Cromer does very well out of the North Norfolk taxpayers. The Cromer pier is a listed structure and as such the council has a legal obligation to maintain it. This has cost £5.5 million since I was first elected in 2019. Currently there are another 10 Cromer capital projects being funded by NNDC too.
- The Leader of the Council responded by trying to compare this with the Fakenham swimming development. I said this is nonsense because most of the funding for the pool is coming from the government. Also, the pool is not being built primarily as a commercial proposition but to deliver health and well-being benefits for residents.
- I said that the Fakenham Town Council had contributed land for the new pool, whereas the Cromer Town Council is never asked to put its hand in its pocket, even though they have £650k in their reserves, a lot higher than Fakenham TC.
- Unfortunately, the Lib Dems used their majority and approved the spending.