

Cllr Christopher Cushing – May 2026

Fakenham Lancaster North Ward District Council Report

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

1. Travellers Site

- I have raised two concerns with the NNDC Environmental Protection team about the Travellers Site.
- This year they have arrived earlier than normal and in much larger numbers. It is meant to be a short-stay site, with a limit of 3 months. The Protection team say there is one family which has been there longer than this.
- The second is that the site looks extremely untidy.
- A Protection team officer has gone on site to try to tackle these issues. They say it is extremely challenging because though the Travellers are usually pleasant to deal with, they are generally uncooperative. There are rules about the use of the site, which Travellers themselves admit often they do not follow.

2. Speeding in North Fakenham

- I wrote to people who initially indicated an interest in creating a resident Speed Camera Watch team for the town. A minimum of six are required and unfortunately not are still available owing to changed circumstances. I will look to advertise further to see if new volunteers can be found.
- I am waiting to hear the results of the speed monitoring cables that have been installed on Greenway Lane and Rudham Stile Lane.

3. Swimming Pool Development

- An order for steel for the substructure was late in arriving. This may mean a slight delay in the development, but the swimming pool should still open around January next year.

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.

5. Local Government Reform – Proposed Electoral Divisions

- The District councils which make up the new East Norfolk Unitary Council have submitted their proposals for the unitary electoral divisions. There will be 65 in total, and most will be based on the current County Council divisions with two members each. Each division will have about 8,500 to 9,000 electors.
- This means that Fakenham and the Raynhams area will see its elected representation reduced from five District/County councillors to two Unitary councillors.
- This will have an adverse impact on the town for several reasons:
 - This may restrict those who will be able to stand in terms of their capacity or desire to make this commitment. This is because being an effective County Councillor is near enough a full-time job. Combine this with the District Councillor responsibilities mean the Unitary councillors will be full-time jobs.
 - A single member division is a far better option as they have a smaller electorate so more manageable, and residents have a direct relationship with one Councillor.
 - Two member wards often do not work well because one Councillor can end up doing all the casework because the other has limited capacity or interest, so rely on the other to make up the shortfall.
 - It can be difficult when the Councillors come from different political groups as it can inhibit cooperation.
- Another impact is that having fewer elected representatives will place a greater burden on Town and Parish councils to fill the vacuum.

6. NNDC Community Fund

- A new NNDC Community Fund has been set up to enable each elected Councillor to support small-scale projects and initiatives within their ward that provide direct benefit to the local community.
- Each Councillor is allocated £4,000 for the financial year. The minimum value of any grant award supported from a Councillor's allocation is £250.
- Funding may be awarded to:
 - Properly constituted voluntary, community, and charitable organisations
 - Not-for-profit community groups
 - Other community-based bodies delivering projects within the Councillor's ward
 - Town or Parish Council projects that are in within keeping with this purpose.
- Eligible project must be
 - Be located within, or primarily benefit, the Councillor's ward
 - Deliver a clear community benefit
 - Be time-limited and capable of delivery within the financial year (unless otherwise agreed)
 - Be compatible with the Council's policies, values, and legal obligations C
- I will advertise this and look for groups/projects to support with small donations.