



Latest update on events from your County Councillor Tom FitzPatrick

Fakenham Town Council

25th October 2023

Fakenham Library

Fakenham Library has now closed for major works, including a new roof, improved heating and glazing. It is due to reopen on Monday 18th December (although this date may be subject to change depending on how work progresses). I appreciate that this closure may cause some inconvenience for regular users, but it should be worth once the work is finished and the library infrastructure is brought up to date.

- A pop up library will operate from the Community Centre
- Wednesday to Friday 10am - 5pm, Saturdays 10am - 4pm (excluding 25/11)

Norfolk County Council updates

Norwich Western Link update

On 13 October 2023 the government approved the Outline Business Case for Norfolk County Council's Norwich Western Link project for a new 3.9 mile dual carriageway road to be built to the west of Norwich.

The proposed Norwich Western Link will connect the Broadland Northway (formerly known as the Northern Distributor Road) between the A1067 and the A47 in the west of Norwich.

It will complete a fully-dualled orbital route around Norwich, together with National Highways' project to dual the A47 between North Tuddenham and Easton. Once built, the new road will reduce journey times, improve road safety, support economic growth, improve air quality in residential areas and support walking, cycling and public transport use by removing traffic from local roads and through the introduction of complementary measures.

- In addition to reducing existing traffic congestion on local roads and in communities to the west of Norwich, the Norwich Western Link will also prevent congestion from worsening due to the planned housing and employment growth in and around the city.

- The new road will also provide a free-flowing, reliable route for traffic seeking to get to and from the north of the city and improve access to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, Norwich Airport and the Food Enterprise Park at Easton.
- Further information about the Western Link available from NCC online.

Working Well Norfolk employment programme launched

Working Well Norfolk, a £2.7M scheme funded by the Department for Work & Pensions to help Norfolk residents with long-term health conditions or physical impairments get into work and to stay in work, was officially launched on 12 October 2023.

The scheme is managed by Norfolk County Council and run by delivery partners Seetec Pluss and Standguide Ltd. It aims to provide free personalised 1:1 support to people who have physical disabilities or who are experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties, and to people who are experiencing other long-term sickness or disabilities that impact their daily activities.

- Participants can be unemployed or currently in work and can self-refer.
- Participants are also likely to be referred to the scheme by a range of stakeholders including GPs and healthcare professionals, community health services, social care, voluntary community and social enterprise organisations, and Job Centre Plus.

Please encourage interested individuals or businesses to contact Seetec Pluss on 07933 818 986 or go to www.seetecpluss/working-well-norfolk to find out more and register an interest.

Grants for community tree projects

Norfolk County Council in partnership with Busseys has launched a grant scheme to help local communities plant new trees and create greener and cleaner areas to live. The scheme is part of the council's one million trees initiative and aims to support tree planting projects across the county and contribute to ambitious net-zero targets. The Busseys Community Tree Grant has made £10,000 (maximum of £2,500 per application) available to community organisations in Norfolk who are passionate about tree planting. Applications must be for planting trees that provide a tangible community benefit.

Anyone in Norfolk can apply providing they can meet the grant criteria. Further details and how to apply for the community tree grant are available on the county council website.

Further information about the 1 million trees for Norfolk initiative and links to ways to get involved can also be found on the county council website.

[Government updates](#)

Flu and COVID update

In their recent [flu and COVID update](#), the UK Health Security Agency say that with early signs of COVID-19 rates increasing and new data showing the 2022 autumn booster prevented over 14,000 hospitalisations, they are urging those eligible to come forward now for their vaccination.

More information about eligibility for COVID-19 vaccinations available on the NHS website.

OFSTED foster care survey findings

Ofsted has published results of a point in time survey asking children, learners, parents, foster carers, social workers and other professionals about their experiences of children's social care.

There were 45,655 responses to their questionnaire including 6,614 from children. Almost all of the children in foster care (99%) who responded said they always feel safe where they live and are more likely to always feel safe compared to children in other types of care. Responses were similarly positive among children living in children's homes, with 95% saying they felt safe where they lived 'always' or 'most of the time'.

- Details about how to become a foster carer in Norfolk available on the Norfolk County Council website.

Consultation on improving alcohol treatment services

The government has launched a consultation on new guidelines for the treatment of harmful drinking and alcohol dependence.

- The government's new UK-wide draft guidelines aim to develop a clear consensus on best practice for treatment for alcohol dependence, ultimately improving outcomes for patients.

The main objectives of the UK clinical guidelines for alcohol treatment are to:

- develop a clear consensus on good practice.
- help services to implement interventions for harmful drinking and alcohol dependence that are recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

The government is inviting views from people working in alcohol treatment, the wider health and care sector, and those with lived experience of alcohol dependence across the UK.

The consultation closes on 8 December 2023.

Dentistry in England

The King's Fund, an independent charitable organisation, has recently published an explainer about dentistry. This was commissioned by NHS England but was independently developed, researched and written by the authors, so all views are from the authors.

It provides information about NHS dentistry services, how they fit with the NHS system and how they work. It also outlines current challenges including the issues around access to services and the wide geographical disparity of availability of dental practices providing NHS services.

- They say that 7 of 42 integrated care boards (ICB's) reported that they had no dental practices taking on new adult NHS patients. (Norfolk and Waveney ICB is one of these).

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(Dunton, Fakenham, Helhoughton, Hempton with Pudding Norton & Testerton, Raynham and Tattersett)

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