DISTRICT COUNCILLOR LIZ VICKERS: FAKENHAM LANCASTER SOUTH WARD (please feel free to contact me on 07537 917699 or liz.vickers@north-norfolk.gov.uk) Follow me on Facebook at Cllr Liz Vickers

REPORT October 2026

Fakenham Goes to Parliament

The petition I launched to appeal for a full banking hub for Fakenham, was laid before Parliament on 20 October by Jerome Mayhew MP. Fakenham's need for a full banking hub is now on the record in Hansard and the strength of feeling in our town has been brought to the attention of the government. We had a very short period to get the petition together, but in little more than ten days we collected nearly 1500 signatures. I am tremendously grateful to Fakenham shopkeepers and retailers, who really pushed the boat out to collect signatures from their customers and to Mayor Angela Glynn who did the hard yards collecting signatures with me. A huge thank you to the administrative staff at Fakenham Town Council who collated all the sheets and saw them safely on their way to Parliament.

A temporary cash access hub has been set up in the community centre. In my view, this does not go far enough, and it is in the wrong place – not particularly accessible and duplicated by the Barclays' provision. I want to see Fakenham get a full banking hub. Other market towns have one – why not Fakenham? I know that Jerome Mayhew has had a further meeting with LINK and we continue to pursue this.

Update on the Nationwide ATM

Residents will no doubt be pleased to know that this is progressing. I have had another meeting with NNDC's conservation team. They are working with representatives from Nationwide on a suitable design. A sticking point is the vehicular right of way across the Market Square, which starts in Tunn Street and comes into the Square by Sew Sweet. Nationwide and NNDC are working to resolve this with County Council Highways. I have asked Cllr Jamieson for his assistance. My view is that a resolution to this right of way is long overdue as it is a broader matter of pedestrian safety.

49 Lancaster Avenue

This abandoned house, in private ownership, had a very overgrown garden. It was attracting fly tippers and was a general eyesore. I have been trying for some time, with persistence, to persuade NNDC to take action. This month they went to work and cleared the garden of rubbish and overgrowth. I hope that eventually the house can be brought back into use as it would make a lovely family home. I am grateful to NNDC's Planning and Enforcement Team for commissioning the work.

Passageway between Lancaster Close and Greenways Lane

I have ensured that full lighting is now restored to this passage. This formerly unlit passageway is used as a short cut by residents, including school children and the elderly who live in the Close and Cranmer Court. I was concerned about resident safety as the winter evenings get darker and I am grateful to Flagship Housing for taking ownership of the lights.

9 Norwich Street

As I reported last month, I met NNDC's CEO Steve Blatch to discuss my concerns about the lack of information on this matter. I wrote to the Monitoring Officer to exercise my "right to know" entitlement under NNDC's Constitution. I received a written "confidential" briefing which unfortunately did not tell me much more than I knew already. I remain deeply concerned about both the lack of transparency and a clear timetable for resolution of this matter.

Planning News

From the end of October, the Government's National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions comes into effect. It significantly curtails the power of elected councillors to decide local planning applications. Instead, unelected planning officers will decide residential applications of fewer than 10 homes, as well as minor commercial applications. My view is that this undermines residents' rights and the democratic process. Until

now, my residents could ask me to “call in” their planning applications for consideration by a Committee of Councillors. Similarly, I could take the initiative and call in any development I thought might need closer examination. As a protest, I called for an amendment of NNDC’s Constitution, along with Cllr FitzPatrick, to state that whilst we are mandated (forced) to accept this change, we do so with great reluctance. The Constitution was amended accordingly. I recognise that planning committee’s do not work in some councils. My view is that the legislation should have been made permissive, not mandatory. To be used only by those Council’s where it was absolutely necessary.