

Progress report

Pylons and panels

The deluge of energy projects all over South Norfolk continues, and once again we are in a round of so-called “consultations” in which the firms trying to cash in on Britain’s super-excessive energy prices will try to insist that they have our interests at heart. Unfortunately the incentives are due to national policy. While you tie electricity prices to gas prices and gas prices on the world market go up and up, there’s a super profit to be made from renewables. Foreign companies are looking to milk the profits from UK grid customers who have to pay for renewables as if they were fossil fuels. The Government has bought into this scam, refusing to decouple electricity prices to give us renewable energy at cost price, which is virtually zero.

This is complicated. So renewable energy and energy security are both desirable. But these solar farms and battery proposals aren’t really strategically focused on delivering energy security. They’re focused on profit. There’s a side benefit for the farmers who need a secure source of income to supplement their precarious harvests as climate change bites. Upgrading the grid is essential because they built windfarms in the wrong place, with insufficient grid capacity and no plans for it. We currently pay the windfarms to turn off the turbines when the wind blows. What we really need is a proper nationalised energy system, installed strategically and not for profit, to deliver cheap energy for actual people and businesses, where it is needed and for the price it costs to generate it. That’s not what we are getting.

Norwich to Tilbury have submitted their Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate. The deadline for registering as an interested party is 27th November. I’ll be putting in objections based on the fact that the previous consultation has taken no account whatsoever of the key points that have been made by all the communities in East Anglia, and that these consultations have in fact been bogus and misleading.

The Tasway Energy Park company have organised four local events. Subject to diary constraints I shall attend the ones in Ashwellthorpe and Bunwell. I’m also hoping to get to attend the community event at the Steam museum in Fornsett on Friday 14th November.

I am feeding into the County Council’s response to the consultations on the changes to the East Pye proposals and on the Tasway proposals. A comment from me will be appended to the council’s response in both cases. I need to complete these by 5th November. If you have any particular points you think I might have missed that would be useful. As expected the East Pye proposal has had to locate their substation in the place we said was completely unsuitable, but they are also proposing to increasing the size and height of the components. I can guarantee that the County Council will be raising serious objections since this flouts the previous concerns.

Mayors and unitary councils

In September the County Council narrowly passed the Council administration’s proposed business case for having just one large Unitary Council for the whole of Norfolk. Most opposition councillors and some Conservatives voted against, preferring the idea of two or three unitary councils. I was absent on this occasion due to the covid.

In October the County Council voted in favour of the Devolution Deal which is about the funds and powers to be transferred to a metro-mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk. We are expecting the first elections for the Norfolk and Suffolk Mayor (to incorporate the job of police and crime commissioner as well as a range of strategic funds for the area) to take place next May. Some parties have announced their candidates for the mayoral position. County Council elections are

also scheduled to happen in May. Rumours are circulating that they might be cancelled again which would be an insult to voters once again.

Highways and paths

I've raised issues about the missing traffic sensors on the Shimpling Byway Open to All Traffic. If vehicles use the byway, residents are asked to report any issues with safety, via the "report a highways issue" portal. Please also collect evidence and photos both of problematic use of the highway and also of local flora and fauna and any precious habitats or wildlife.

A disastrous mix up about the resurfacing of the road from Shelfanger to Winfarthing means that the contractors have done top dressing (without any preparatory work), instead of the full resurfacing had been approved. This is very irritating after all the effort put in by the Highways officer to secure the funding for resurfacing. How to put it right? Unclear.

I'm also supporting the campaign to get lifts at Diss station to make crossing the line better for everyone who struggles with the stairs.

Community Fund

I'm pleased to report that Burston is the first to complete a Community project with a grant from my fund, and will be installing an insect hotel in the orchard section of the recreation ground.

Updates from County Council

Healthy Ageing

The county council's Public Health department has launched a new Healthy Ageing website, www.norfolk.gov.uk/healthyageing which highlights resources, guidance and opportunities to help residents make positive changes to their health and wellbeing. Staying active can help keep your mind and body more youthful and healthier than others of the same age in years.

Norfolk's SEND survey findings

The [results](#) show some progress, but also ongoing challenges.

Consultation on fire and rescue priorities

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) has a [consultation](#) on priorities for safety in Norfolk.

National Information

Financial penalties for water companies – new consultation

You might want to take part in this consultation, open till 3 December 2025.

[Consultation on strengthening penalties for water company offences - Defra - Citizen Space](#)

Defra is consulting on expanding and strengthen the current range of financial penalties available to the Environment Agency in a bid to clamp down on more offences. (My thoughts: financial penalties are worse than pointless since they just increase water bills to pay for it: we need nationalisation, confiscation of assets, and prison for management and profiteers).

Contact me

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24th October 2025