

Dear Readers

Being a county councillor is mostly rewarding and when less than enjoyable events crop up I remind myself that I live in and represent a most beautiful part of Norfolk. (I believe it would be difficult to argue it is not the *most* beautiful division). Which leads me to tell you somewhat belatedly that I have been elected as Vice-Chair of the Norfolk Coast Partnership which encompasses Norfolk's Area of Outstanding Beauty, much of which is in the division of Wells. Now to the Budget!

NCC Budget Consultation closed on 2 January '18: My thanks to everyone who completed the consultation or whichever parts focussed on your particular interest or concern. Hopefully your input will influence the budget which will be finalised in February. Along with everyone I am concerned about the cuts which will be made and how we can continue to protect the many services vital to a rural community - transport being but one of them. I am also concerned about Children's Services and Adults Social Services which provide for and protect the most vulnerable people in our county. Norfolk does not face this problem alone and I was comforted to read of Lord Porter, Chairman of the Local Government Association seeking further financial support from the Government for county councils. He wrote that councils are 'reaching the limit of what is possible in the face of diminishing resources, uncertain about future funding and rising demand for services for children and adults'. I do not have the power of Lord Porter but our Members of Parliament do – and at NCC's full council my request was accepted that Norfolk County Council should write to each of Norfolk's MPs asking them to take to the Government news of the impossible task facing the council. What a 2018 gift it will be if the Government responds with sufficiently increased financial support.

Accidents: The county and this division have recently been the scene of fatal accidents which will have devastated families and close friends. Whilst serious accidents are invariably made known to the police not all accidents are reported but it is important to do so for instance to establish whether safety measures need to be carried out. Whilst comments are often shared as to accidents there needs to be a formal record. The link below provides comprehensive guidance about who to call in the event of an accident. And whilst the website address refers to collisions the site also gives information as to a range of situations when the police should be contacted: <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/contact-us/report-something/report-road-traffic-collision>. In simple terms 999 for an emergency 101 for less urgent matters - but I am told by the police if in doubt ring 999 and you will be advised.

Digital, Innovation & Efficiency Committee: At the January meeting we anticipate having representatives of the major mobile phone companies join us and hope to hear of progress for mobile phone connectivity across our rural areas. Hopefully by then the survey previously reported will be underway. And I will be asking for more news regarding further Government support for broadband – for whilst many of our residents now have more effective provision I am very conscious of those still struggling to achieve a useful standard.

Recycling: For all those writing to me seeking more ways of preventing waste here are three items for you. You probably know that some of the larger recycling centres have 'Re-use Shops' where items taken in can be sold – good news it will soon be possible for electric goods to be sold once tested and given a PAT certificate. Second I am hoping that there will be further Re-use Shops – more specific news later. Thirdly - yes another link but whilst this link starts with composting it goes on to other methods of recycling: <https://www.recyclefornorfolk.com/reduce-my-rubbish/compost/#>

Websites: I keep providing you with websites which if accessed provide detailed information which would not fit into newsletters. However, I am aware that not everyone can access the sites. If you can get to a library the staff will always find the website for you or better still show you how to access a website yourself. How about that for a New Year's resolution? And Wells library and probably other libraries are looking again to so see if they can provide a link between willing students offering to teach basic computer skills. Finally I am sure there are willing and able children and grandchildren who would be proud to share their skills and teach some basic computer skills.

Useful Websites:

Reporting Highways Problems: *Anyone can report Highways problems (not just potholes) direct to NCC. Go to <https://apps.norfolk.gov.uk/HighwaysDefect/>. Report a problem regarding Highways, Public Rights of Way or Norfolk trails. If you give your contact details you can keep updated on progress. This way is far quicker than waiting for a monthly parish council meeting.*

Better Broadband for Norfolk: www.betterbroadbandnorfolk.co.uk and enter your post code. Alternatively - <https://www.btwholesale.com/includes/adsl/adsl.htm> - Search by phone number if you are a BT Internet Service Provider (ISP) customer. Customers of other ISPs should use the Address Checker option. Once a fibre solution is available a "VDSL" option will be shown.

Parking Infringements: *If you have wondered why you rarely see a traffic enforcement officer (traffic warden) I may have the answer. The officers are sent to locations based on their experience, known problem areas and **areas of complaint**. So if you have a complaint here is what to do. Send details such as time/day of week and location of what you take to be an infringement to parking.operations@west-norfolk.gov.uk. (Photographs can help but no more than two. Sending photographs will not lead to a fine for because they are not enforced retrospectively.) And what is an infringement? For more information and a good read try the Norfolk Parking Partnership, Civil Parking Enforcement Guidance Manual on the NCC website: <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/roads-and-transport/roads/civil-parking-enforcement.pdf?la=en>.*

Not too late I hope to wish you all a happy and healthy 2018

Marie

