**Norfolk County Council supports Norfolk’s Family Farms**

Conservative-led Norfolk County Council is taking proactive steps to support the county’s hard-working family farms in response to recent budget announcements from the Labour Government. Recognizing the essential role that farming plays in the local economy, the Council is submitting and debating a motion aimed at ensuring that Norfolk’s farmers are well-supported as they navigate the challenges brought on by these new policies.

The motion reflects the Council’s strong commitment to championing local businesses, with a particular focus on protecting the livelihoods of those who sustain Norfolk's agricultural heritage. Norfolk’s family farms are the backbone of rural communities, and the Conservative-led Council is dedicated to ensuring that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

Understanding the issues that local farmers face, ranging from financial pressures to complex regulatory changes, the motion highlights the importance of offering practical support.

Norfolk County Council is committed to creating a future where local farmers can thrive, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector for generations to come.

**Norfolk takes the top spot in national highways survey for second year in a row**

Norfolk has been ranked number one for the second consecutive year in the National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey, reinforcing the county’s commitment to delivering excellent roads and transport services. With an impressive overall score of 49, Norfolk once again outperformed 29 other UK counties and authorities, surpassing the average score of 44.

This year, Norfolk residents have expressed high levels of satisfaction across several key transport areas, including the condition of highways, local bus services, and traffic levels. The county scored at or above the national average in 24 out of 27 Key Benchmark Indicators, showcasing the continued improvements being made in Norfolk's transport infrastructure.

Notable highlights from this year’s survey include:

* **Public Transport**: Norfolk scored above the national average in nearly all public transport categories, reflecting the positive impact of the county’s Bus Service Improvement Plan.
* **Electric Vehicle Charging Points**: Norfolk saw a remarkable 31.3% improvement in electric vehicle charging provision, highlighting the success of the county’s Electric Vehicle Strategy.
* **Cycle Lanes**: Satisfaction with the provision of cycle lanes has soared, with Norfolk ranking first this year, up from fourth place last year. This reflects the county’s dedication to active travel, including projects like the Heartsease roundabout improvements.
* **Children’s Cycling Safety**: Norfolk now ranks first for the safety of children cycling to school, a significant improvement from seventh place last year.
* **Potholes and Damaged Roads**: Satisfaction with how Norfolk addresses potholes and road repairs has risen, with the county moving up to third place, up from sixth last year.

These outstanding results underscore the County Council’s ongoing commitment to creating a safer, more sustainable, and user-friendly transport network for everyone. For more information, the full survey report is available on [**the NHT website**](https://www.nhtnetwork.co.uk/home).

**NorfolkWinter is here - gritters move out across the county**

Norfolk’s gritting fleet is hitting the roads for the first gritting runs of the season, ensuring the county is ready for the icy conditions forecasted. This year, for the first time ever, all 58 of Norfolk's gritters are equipped with cutting-edge auto-salting technology, which uses satellite navigation to deliver precise, efficient salting. This innovative system reduces manual intervention, ensuring better accuracy, saving time, and cutting down on waste—making the gritting process even more effective.

As winter weather sets in, Norfolk County Council is launching its annual #NorfolkWinter campaign, providing vital information and tips to help people travel safely across the county. Whether you're driving, walking, cycling, or using public transport, the Council's expert highway team will be monitoring weather forecasts and sensors to make sure the right roads are treated at the right time to keep Norfolk moving.

With over 2,200 miles of road treated during each 3-hour gritting run, Norfolk's gritting operation covers all A and B-class roads, key commuter and bus routes, and even one route into every village. Additionally, the County Council ensures around 2,000 grit bins are stocked across the county for public use on pavements, cycle paths, and local roads, helping everyone stay safe.

Stay up-to-date with gritting schedules and winter travel advice by following #NorfolkWinter on Facebook, Nextdoor, and X. You can also check out gritting routes and the location of grit bins on the interactive map at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting). For more details on how to stay safe this winter, visit [www.norfolk.gov.uk/winter](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/winter)

**Norfolk County Council strives to resolve Norwich Western Link issue**

The Leader of Norfolk County Council Cllr Kay Mason Billig has written to government Ministers to tell them their assistance is needed to positively resolve an "impossible position" the council finds itself in on its priority Norwich Western Link project.

This vital 3.9-mile dual carriageway, which will significantly improve transport connections to the west of Norwich, has encountered an unexpected obstacle. In March, just before the planning application for the project was set to be submitted, Natural England issued updated guidance on barbastelle bats, which are found in the area around the proposed route. This new guidance has created a challenge for the council in moving forward with the project as planned.

At a Cabinet meeting on December 2nd, Norfolk County Council reviewed the current status of the project, including ongoing discussions with Natural England. While progress is being made, the council continues to work closely with all parties involved to find a positive resolution.

This collaboration underscores the council’s commitment to delivering the Norwich Western Link, a crucial infrastructure project that will bring long-term benefits to the region.

**Accelerator fund gives boost to rural transport in Norfolk**

A groundbreaking project supporting sustainable travel in rural Norfolk has received a significant boost, with more than £144,000 in funding from the Connected Places Catapult and the Department for Transport (DfT). This funding, secured through Norfolk County Council’s support for Alchera Technologies' application to the Rural Transport Accelerator Programme, will enhance rural transport options, providing more choice and better connections for local communities.

Alchera Technologies will develop a “Rural Travel Behaviour Model,” using data to gain deeper insights into the travel patterns of Norfolk’s rural population. This innovative approach will help the County Council make more informed, strategic transport decisions that align with community needs. The anticipated benefits include increased economic growth for the region, greater adoption of public transport, and strong progress toward Norfolk’s ambitious net-zero goals.

In addition, a second exciting project backed by Norfolk County Council has also been successful. This initiative, led by Norwich-based commuting emissions reduction specialist, Mobilityways, is supported by Transport East and Norfolk County Council. The IVORA (Increasing Vehicle Occupancy in Rural Areas) project aims to tackle the challenge of detecting car-sharing, enabling employers and local transport authorities to incentivize and boost lift-sharing in rural areas.

The trial, which is taking place at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn, will target the 75% of staff who currently drive alone to work. Many of these employees commute from rural areas, with 40% lacking active or public transport options. With 93% of staff open to car-sharing, IVORA will use cutting-edge camera sensor AI technologies and the Mobilityways app to monitor car occupancy. The app’s new incentive tool, CommuteBoost, will reward shared journeys, and innovative VMS signage will raise awareness to encourage more staff to embrace car-sharing.

These forward-thinking projects demonstrate Norfolk County Council’s commitment to sustainable transport, reducing emissions, and improving connectivity across the county, creating a brighter, greener future for rural communities.

**£1.5 million funding agreed for dentistry school**

The Greater Norwich Growth Board has approved moving forward with an exciting new project, recommending the allocation of £1.5 million to help establish a new School of Oral Health at the University of East Anglia (UEA). Pending final approval, this funding, from the Infrastructure Investment Fund, will be used to extend the Edith Cavell Building on the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Campus. Construction is already underway on a ground floor extension that will house UEA's new Anatomy Suite, and this additional funding will enable the creation of a first-floor extension for the School of Oral Health.

The new space will be fully equipped with state-of-the-art dental chairs, clinical-grade fittings, and specialized teaching facilities, including phantom heads, a teaching laboratory, and seminar rooms. Once completed, the school will have the capacity to train 40 undergraduate students each year. With training expected to begin in September 2026, the first cohort of dental students will be fully qualified as dentists by June 2031, with the opportunity to start providing basic treatment much earlier.

UEA’s extensive experience managing a successful medical school will play a key role in retaining graduates in the region. Currently, one-third of UEA Medical School graduates remain in the area long-term after qualification.

This development marks a major milestone in tackling the shortage of NHS dentists in Norfolk and promises to make a lasting impact on healthcare in the region.

**Health and Wellbeing Partnership celebrates achievements**

Leaders from Norfolk's Health and Wellbeing Partnerships came together to celebrate the fantastic progress made so far and to explore exciting new opportunities for the future. The event brought together a diverse group of attendees, including representatives from District Councils, Norfolk County Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Primary Care Networks, and a wide range of voluntary, community, and social enterprises.

One standout initiative is North Norfolk District Council's PositiviTea drop-in events, which offer a warm, welcoming space for people to connect, relax, and receive valuable support on various issues, including financial advice, physical and mental health, care needs, and tackling loneliness and isolation.

Additionally, the Safe and Habitable Homes project is making a real difference in Norwich by providing vital support to people facing self-neglect and hoarding challenges. This initiative helps individuals who may be struggling with self-care, hygiene, health, and safety, while also addressing the impacts of hoarding, where excessive accumulation of items can create unsafe living conditions.

These efforts highlight Norfolk’s commitment to improving the wellbeing of its residents and demonstrate the powerful impact of community collaboration in creating a healthier, happier future for all.

**Norfolk Public health encourages people to think about their drinking habits**

As we head towards the festive season, Norfolk Public Health is encouraging people to reflect on their drinking habits. Understanding what a unit of alcohol looks like and knowing how to avoid harm can help people make healthier and safer choices.

Health professionals recommend a limit of 14 units of alcohol per week. In Norfolk, although there's an overall decrease in the average amount people drink, men over 40 remain more likely to drink above this limit.

For example, a single pint of beer is generally 2 units and a medium glass of standard wine (175ml) is just over 2 units, though these can vary with the strength of the drink.

Regularly drinking more than 14 units a week can seriously affect people's health. Drinking less brings longer-term benefits, such as reducing the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, stroke, liver damage and certain types of cancer.

Information and support to make lifestyle changes to improve health and wellbeing is available at [**www.norfolk.gov.uk/readytochange**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/readytochange).

**Life-saving emergency services partnership in Norfolk shortlisted for award**

A collaboration between Norfolk's ambulance and fire services, designed to provide faster medical assistance, has been nominated for a national award.

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has seven fire stations across the county that respond to medical emergencies. Firefighters, trained by the ambulance service, can be sent to life-threatening medical emergencies in their communities.

This partnership is in the running for the Collaboration of the Year at the Excellence in Fire & Emergency Awards. The winner will be announced on 6 December.

Since January, NFRS co-responders have been sent to 48 cardiac arrest calls, and in 40% of cases fire crews arrived ahead of paramedics. Firefighters arrived on average three minutes before an ambulance in those incidents.

In a life-threatening emergency such as a cardiac arrest, getting medical help on scene as quickly as possible increases the chances of survival.

**Celebrating success and dedication at the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Awards**

There was lots to be proud of at this year's Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service Awards - from thousands raised for charity, volunteers making a difference in the community, to over 700 years of service acknowledged.

The annual awards recognise the efforts of fire fighters, fire staff, Trading Standards staff, their friends and families and community partners and volunteers in Norfolk.

**Have your say on Norfolk savings proposals**

As it seeks to agree a balanced budget for 2025/26, Norfolk County Council is asking for your views on a number of proposals to save money or raise revenue in the next financial year.

As part of the council's work to find £44.722m of savings, public consultations are now open on three of the proposals under consideration:

* Raising Council Tax
* Reducing Street Light usage
* Review of our Housing Related Support Services

Full detail of these proposals, as well as information on how residents can have their say, can be [**found online**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget).

To receive a hard copy of the consultation document, or request it in a different format, residents can call 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020, or email [**haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk**](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk).

The consultation is now open and will close on Monday 16 December 2024.

The full list of 94 proposals currently being considered is [**available online**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/budget).

**Discover the Best of Norfolk: Explore 1,500 Miles of Scenic Trails for Walking, Cycling, and Horse-Riding**

Norfolk offers over 1,500 miles of beautiful walking, cycling, and horse-riding routes, each showcasing the county's unique nature and rich cultural heritage. Whether you’re exploring tranquil river valleys, historic landscapes, or scenic coastal paths, Norfolk’s trails offer something for every adventurer.

Highlights include the **Angles Way**, a 93-mile walking route through woodlands and heathland, and the **Boudicca Way**, a 36-mile journey through ancient Roman and Iceni heritage sites. For those seeking to explore the Broads, the **Bure Valley Path** offers a 9-mile route along a heritage railway. History buffs will enjoy the **Kett’s Country Trail**, which follows the story of Kett’s Rebellion, while the **Peddars Way** takes you along an ancient Roman road.

Other stunning routes include the **Norfolk Coast Path** (a 112-mile National Trail), the **Marriott’s Way** (26 miles of scenic walking, cycling, and horse-riding), and the **Wherryman’s Way**, a 40-mile trek through the beautiful Broads National Park.

Whether you’re interested in history, nature, or simply exploring the countryside, Norfolk’s extensive network of trails provides the perfect way to experience this beautiful region.

For more information please visit [www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/42852/Norfolk-Trails](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/42852/Norfolk-Trails)

