

## COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT FOR JULY 2019

I'd be really grateful if you can circulate this report to your Parish Council members.

### Parish Paths Seminar

I attended a seminar organised by the Norfolk Local Access Forum at the end of May which was also attended by a number of Parish Councillors and Clerks. I can't really summarise a whole afternoon of discussion here but I think the main things I took away from it is that the County Council is keen to update the formal record of Public Rights of Way (so please contact them with details of any paths that you think are not correctly recorded); and that they are keen to encourage Parishes to work together to increase use of footpaths in the county. The best contact is probably [nlaf@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:nlaf@norfolk.gov.uk). I also want to mention the Conservation Volunteers who do some great work in North Norfolk. Their website is [www.tcv.org.uk/norfolk](http://www.tcv.org.uk/norfolk) to find out more.

### Local Highways Budget

We've been reminded of the guidance on what the Local Member Highways Budget can be used for. This is the allocation of £6,000 for small highways projects in each County Council division which I've been able to put to good use for various things over the last couple of years. The guidance says:

#### **What can the money be spent on?**

The funding can be spent on a wide variety of highway related aspects. Typical uses could include:

- Advisory signs i.e. "Unsuitable for HGV's and advisory speed limits i.e. 20mph signs outside schools would be possible.
- Small footway extensions and modifications
- More significant work to public rights of way
- Minor drainage work
- New non-regulatory signs and replacement of existing signs and road markings. Possibly some new road markings such as "SLOW".
- Feasibility work or investigations that cannot be resourced by existing front-line budgets.
- Minor traffic management projects including Traffic Regulation Order related works. However, it should be noted that these works can cost between £3,000 and £5,000 each and may be difficult to deliver within a 12-month timescale.
- Day rates for gangs to carry out additional maintenance to areas of the highways that a local Member would like improved i.e. public footpaths or verges.
- Other highway improvements – improved visibility splays, junction improvements, kerbing, work in conservation areas.
- Capital grants to parish councils for highway maintenance related equipment such as grass cutting or footway gritting equipment.

#### **What is excluded from the fund?**

Illuminated signs, street lighting or reflective bollards are not included in this initiative. This aligns with NCC energy saving objective of 50% by 2020, based on 2007 baseline.

In addition, the budget of £6,000 is not to be exceeded. Any schemes which are likely to exceed this amount will not be taken forward, unless other funding streams are confirmed.

### NNDC Draft Local Plan

I mentioned in my last report that I had made a submission to the consultation on the new Draft Local Plan. The County Council is a consultee on the plan and my comments have been included in their submission. Following a recent public meeting in Trunch held to

discuss the draft plan I have contacted the NNDC councillor with overall responsibility for the plan to ask some further questions (which I will share when I get answers). I've also written to the officer in charge of school place planning to ask for more information about how they will go about providing for the children moving into North Walsham if plans to build 2,000+ new homes in the town go ahead.

#### Services for children

Although the committee system has changed at County Hall so there is no longer a Children's Services committee for me to sit on, I am still taking an active interest in service's for Norfolk's children. I spoke at the Special Educational Needs Crisis March organised recently by SEND families. I've been involved in the redesign of mental health services for children and young people in Norfolk. And I recently attended a seminar to launch Norfolk's involvement in the Early Years Academy which will hopefully bring in best practice in Early Years work into the county. I'm also going to a meeting in Holt in the next few days to talk to staff about the new service that replaces Children's Centres. I'm always happy to answer questions about children's services and to take up issues and concerns.

#### Leadership

As you'll see from my email signature, I've recently taken on the leadership of the Liberal Democrat group at County Hall. It won't have much impact on my role as a local County Councillor - except that I've decided to get a new phone for County Council work (number below). I'll be sitting on the new Scrutiny Committee at County Hall as a result of my new role which means I will be able to raise issues that are of concern about any area of County Council policy: so if there's anything you think I should be raising, just let me know!

Best wishes

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