

Rocklands Parish Council (RPC)
Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held in Rocklands Village Hall
7.00pm on Monday 9 April 2018

Present:	David Howie	Chair
	Nickie Southgate	Vice Chair
	Shirley Colenutt	
	Cath Jones	
	Ian Scholes	
	David Witt	
	Kim Austin	Clerk
	William Smith	District Councillor

Also present: 35 members of the public

The meeting started at 7.00pm

The Chair Cllr. David Howie welcomed everybody to the Annual Parish Meeting.

1. To consider accepting apologies for absence

RESOLVED to accept apologies from District Cllr. Cliff Jordan.

2. To approve the minutes of the last parish meeting (Annual Assembly) on Monday 10 April 2017

RESOLVED to approve the minutes that had been circulated prior to the meeting, as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The minutes were duly signed by the Chair, Cllr. David Howie.

3. To discuss any matters arising from the minutes, not on the agenda

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. To hear the Chairman's report

The chair Cllr. David Howie delivered his report. David said:

As in previous years we seem to be doing well, we have had our problems and ongoing controversy, but this is to be expected.

We have been able to manage our finances well but are conscious that during the next year we may have other calls on our resources.

Planning applications again have been one of our main issues and we have tried to reflect the views of the majority and oppose some applications. So far, we have been successful, but we should not become complacent.

Breckland Local Plan is still not in place, new date for completion is by the end of 2018. And as a consequence, our Neighbourhood Plan has faltered, but we hope this will be completed by the end of summer 2018. While these plans are still incomplete there is always a possibility that we could be the subject of speculative planning applications.

A number of meetings have taken place with the adjacent Parish Councils of Great Ellingham and Little Ellingham over problems of increased housing in Great Ellingham, Highways and Education which will affect us all. The last meeting was Chaired by George Freeman MP. This highlighted the problems and the conflict between developers and councils, and in my view the complete lack of foresight being shown by some authorities. Our school governor, headteacher and myself have had separate meetings with Breckland and the Education Authority and we have been shocked by the stance taken by the authorities. The school, our "Little Gem" has had a recent Ofsted visit and is rated "Good" and is full to bursting point.

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I hope to have the result of our First Time Sewerage application for mains sewerage in St. Peters very soon, but I am not confident of a positive outcome.

The Playing Field has put its application to extend the Pavilion on hold until the application for 7 dwellings on the adjacent field is resolved. In the meantime, much, needed refurbishment is being done.

A group has been formed to raise money to update and refurbish the children's play area which is much needed. They have a lot of enthusiasm and are doing well obtaining grant money.

The Community Shop/Post Office/Tea Room continues to flourish and has won an award presented by Plunket Foundation as the winners as the Community Co-operative of the year in the East of England. Well done.

The Village Hall continues to be well supported.

The White Hart Public House seems to be flourishing under its new ownership.

Neighbourhood Watch continues to operate well, passing information on to its members, although there have been some glitches with the police reformation, but hopefully this is all resolved. New members are always welcome.

I would like to see Community Speed Watch reformed, and to purchase a SAM2, as we still have problems with speeding vehicles.

If the rain stops for long enough the Gateways to the village will be painted and a bench will be placed where the bus shelter was situated.

After a survey and vote a committee has been formed to manage Chapel Green as a wild flower meadow. They have been given a mandate and have the full support of the Parish Council.

Over Christmas and New Year and at Easter there has again been major problems with flooding in The Street and the end of Low Lane. If the residents had not used pumps to clear water, their homes would have been flooded. This is not acceptable, but despite constant communication with Highways nothing is being done. I will continue to get something resolved in respect of the situation and soon.

During my time as Chairman I have always tried to get the community involved, and in some respect, this has been achieved by the number of people that now attend meetings, although I suspect this has in part been due the number of planning application to be discussed. At meetings, I have tried to run them in a democratic manner, letting all have an opportunity to have their say, however I will not tolerate any disruption of meetings by persons for their own ends. They are not welcome.

I have invited our MP George Freeman to visit the Parish, he has accepted and will be attending in the afternoon of Friday 27th April 2018. He will visit the school, playing field, shop and finally The White Hart Public House. I thank him for his support of rural parishes such as ours.

I have to report that David Roberts has resigned as councillor. David has found so many things to do in his retirement that he could not give the time he wanted to be a councillor. He will be missed, and I thank him for his contribution. We will be looking to replace him soon.

Once again, I thank Cliff Jordan County Councillor and Bill Smith District Councillor for attending our meetings, for their help, advice and support which is much appreciated.

And finally, I thank my Vice Chairman Nicki Southgate for all her help in respect of planning matters, and all the other councillors for their input and support. And to thank Kim our Clerk for all her sterling work which has been on the increase. I will be requesting we increase her hours to help her cope. She has been described by another councillor as 'Worth her weight in gold'. I agree I could not do this job without her, thank you. This concludes my report.

5. To receive reports by County & District Councillors

5.1 **County Councillor's Report 2018** (Cllr. Cliff Jordan) Cllr. David Howie read out some of the highlights from Cliff's report in his absence. Cliff's full report will appear in these minutes and on the RPC website.

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Infrastructure

Broadband - Our Better Broadband for Norfolk programme has already transformed broadband speeds for many people in the county, including in some of our most rural areas. We're on course to increase superfast broadband access in Norfolk to 95 per cent by March 2020 but we need to do more to reach the final five per cent. So we're looking to invest an additional £13m into the programme to extend superfast broadband coverage and get us much closer to our goal of eliminating broadband inequality in the county.

Mobile coverage - our new Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee is leaving no stone unturned in the drive to improve the county's mobile coverage (with a target of 98%) - working with the big four mobile providers and identifying opportunities to work together to improve the quality and reach of mobile data and voice coverage in Norfolk. In February we kicked off a campaign to improve coverage, with our survey van scouring the county to identify areas of greatest need. We are also using our county council-owned buildings to help overcome 'not spots', by putting mast on top of them to improve phone signals.

A47 - we continue to actively work with the A47 Alliance, bringing together key stakeholders from Lowestoft to Peterborough to lobby for improvements to this important trunk road. Throughout 2017 we worked with Highways England (HE) to develop proposals for sections of dualling and junction improvements to deliver the already funded projects (over £300m) as soon as possible. In Norfolk, this has seen the preferred scheme solutions announced by HE for dual carriageways between Easton and North Tuddenham, and from Blofield to Burlingham. It has also resulted in proposed junction improvement details being published for the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction, as well as the Vauxhall junction in Great Yarmouth. The County Council is currently delivering improvements to the rail station junction in Great Yarmouth, using funding provided by HE, which has also confirmed its commitment to complete the construction of all these projects between 2020 and 2023. We are also actively engaging - with the A47 Alliance - in securing the next round of funding for further trunk road improvements due to be delivered between 2020 and 2025. Our two priorities in Norfolk remain unchanged: to see dualling of the Acle Straight and the Tilney to East Winch sections. This all builds towards the ultimate aim of seeing the A47 being a dual carriageway from Great Yarmouth through to Peterborough and the A1.

The NDR - construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR - the A1270) made good progress over the summer of 2017, allowing the opening of the first 6 km, from the A1270 Fakenham Road to the A140 Cromer Road, to open in November, more than three months ahead of schedule. This was followed by the next 7.75km to the A1151 Wroxham Road before Christmas. The final phase, 5.25km from the A1151 Wroxham Road to the connecting roundabout on the Postwick Hub, is on course to open to traffic on the 11th April 2018.

Norwich Western Link - we have continued to develop the initial business case appraisal for a Norwich Western Link - to join the NDR to the Norwich southern bypass. The work undertaken during 2017 (and reported to Committee in October) included modelling to provide an indicative assessment of a possible dual or single carriageway solution. This work was based on an assumed alignment (which should not be taken to be a preferred solution). The economic appraisal provided a high value for money (vfm) rating (using Department for Transport guidance). The next steps include further scheme development, technical and environmental work and consultation to be completed throughout 2018.

Great Yarmouth - work is well under way on £9m (from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership) of transport improvements to make it easier to get into and around Great Yarmouth and which will have long-term benefits for local people, visitors and for the borough's economy. Work to sort out some of the town's congestion hot spots, improve the area around the railway station and make it easier to get

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between the station and the town centre began in autumn 2017. Work on the Fuller's Hill roundabout is complete, with landscaping scheduled for spring. We're also improving the railway station right turn at Asda, which will reduce congestion and delays on Vauxhall roundabout, and shorten journey times. And at North Quay, we're providing better walking and cycling links between the rail station and the market place, and a widened route for pedestrians and cyclists.

Third river crossing - our hard work paid off. Last year's Autumn Budget contained some great news for Norfolk as Chancellor Philip Hammond committed £98m of Government funding to create a third river crossing in Great Yarmouth. We made the third river crossing one of our infrastructure priorities, recognising its potential to attract future investment and development to the area, creating skilled jobs, business opportunities and giving local people a better quality of life. The bridge will do this by reducing traffic congestion and improving transport links between the port and energy-related enterprise zone and the A47 and the rest of the trunk road network. We hope to start construction towards the end of 2020 and work is currently under way to appoint a contractor to build the bridge.

Long Stratton bypass - getting a bypass built around Long Stratton is one of the County Council's top infrastructure priorities for Norfolk, and something we have long been pressing for. There was good news in February, as developers submitted a planning application to South Norfolk Council which included plans for a bypass. There's a long way to go before any decisions are reached but this is an important step in the right direction, and the planning consultation is a great opportunity for people to have their say in this important matter.

Attleborough - following an award of £4.5m from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to support planned growth within Attleborough, to help the town grow as smoothly and successfully as possible, we held a public consultation in summer 2017 to seek views on potential schemes and help us shape these significant transport improvements. As a result, we have prioritised work to create more parking spaces in the town centre's Queens Square car park and at the railway station, reduce queueing traffic and congestion by changing junctions and road layouts, encourage cycling and walking by improving and extending current facilities, and create a more attractive and usable space in front of the town hall - with the work due to start in Surrogate Street this year.

Hales roundabout - in January, work started on £1.63m roundabout to replace Norfolk's most dangerous main road junction on the A146 at Hales junction, which currently has the worst accident record for a main road in Norfolk.

And more roundabouts - we've also had £3m from the Government for a new Hemprall roundabout which at the time of publication is out for public consultation. And in 2017, with the help of local funding, we completed a new roundabout at Felbrigg - one of three new roundabouts in north Norfolk, helping reduce congestion and cut journey times.

West Winch Relief Road - together with King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, we're looking into creating a new stretch of route that would reroute the A10 to connect to the A47 east of West Winch, to take traffic out of the village and support planned housing growth. As well as taking the pressure off West Winch, this would allow significant housing growth of up to 3,500 homes to the south of King's Lynn. The relief road would be predominantly developer funded and discussions are under way with Homes England to investigate forward funding mechanisms to deliver the road early. Our hope is to have made enough progress by the end of 2019 to enable a planning application to be submitted.

Market towns - our Environment, Development and Transport Committee agreed in September 2017 to carry out a series of studies looking at short-, medium- and long-term transport impacts of growth in market towns - to help us identify and plan interventions ahead of growth. The first year's studies, in

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Dereham, Thetford, North Walsham, Swaffham and Diss, are already under way, in close cooperation with local stakeholders, including town and district councils.

Transport for Norwich - last summer saw the launch of the flagship Westlegate pedestrianisation scheme. This has created a thriving new public space that is pedestrian and cycle-friendly and has increased trade to local businesses. Other projects included new cycle facilities along key routes to the city centre and university, as well as the start of works to reduce congestion on the Dereham Road/outer ring road junction. Forthcoming projects include improvements to traffic flow and pedestrian/cyclist provision around Prince of Wales Road, completion of the Wymondham to Hethersett cycle link, a new crossing on St Crispin's Road and a new transport interchange in Cringleford.

And finally... recycling Norfolk's disused railways As part of our vision for a cycling and walking network for the county, a feasibility study is looking at bringing disused railways and other underused parts of the transport network back into use as cycling and walking routes which would help make the county a top walking and cycling destination for leisure and tourism. The initial feasibility study focusses on three disused railways, Weaver's Way - which is owned in part by Norfolk County Council - King's Lynn to Fakenham and King's Lynn to Hunstanton.

Economy

Repton Property Developments - Norfolk is growing and we need enough houses for people to live in. Gathering information about the types of housing required will help us support economic regeneration and has the potential for us to make money from our own properties. With this in mind, we have set up our own company, Repton Property Developments Ltd, to do this work. We're scrutinising our own property estate as, if we offer several services from fewer buildings, we can sell surplus property and reduce running costs. And having several services in one place also offers a better service to the public.

Launch of Local Investment in Future Talent programme - our successful bid for funding on behalf of five Local Action Groups (LAGs) resulted in the launch of a new skills and employability programme, Local Investment in Future Talent (LIFT). Funded by the European Social Fund, LIFT seeks applications from community-based organisations in Norfolk and north Suffolk that can deliver targeted employment and skills support in rural areas. The first project was approved in January and will see Moore Networking use the grant to set up TrAC Apprenticeships Norfolk, a pilot for an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA). This will support and enable rural businesses to host apprenticeships for care leavers and other vulnerable young people who are not in education, employment or training. Also approved is a project to support ex-offenders to help grow salad crops for local restaurants. The Horticultural Industry Scheme, based in Thetford, offers training and help finding work to ex-offenders, and their £26,415.29 grant from the LIFT funding programme will enable them to support 15 individuals over the next 12 months.

Launch of new rural strategy - the county's rural economy was boosted in November with the launch of Strong Roots: New Growth - Norfolk Rural Strategy 2017-2020. Since the original Norfolk Rural Development Strategy was published in 2013 there have been significant changes, which will have major impacts on Norfolk's rural economy - these include the UK voting to leave the EU, the introduction of the National Living Wage and rapid advances in technology. To respond to the changes, the Norfolk Rural Strategy Steering Group commissioned a refresh of the 2013 strategy to identify the priority areas on which the Norfolk rural community needs to focus between now and 2020. Effective delivery of the strategy will require close cooperation and action from all partners with a stake in Norfolk's rural economy.

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LEADER project reaches funding milestone - funding allocated to rural businesses in Norfolk and north Suffolk through the LEADER programme, an initiative managed by the county council, passed the £3m mark in December. Since Norfolk and north Suffolk's LEADER programme started, the five Local Action Groups (LAGs) have awarded millions to 69 rural projects, including: **Four Norfolk County Council farms** made available for tenancy - more than 1,000 acres of Norfolk County Council's 16,738-acre County Farms portfolio was launched for tender in January. The four farms available are located at Marshland St James and Welney in the west of the county, North Burlingham to the east, and Binham to the north. We've also expanded our portfolio, with County Farms acquiring Bank House Farm in Marshland St James back in September. The farms present opportunities for people at all stages of their farming career, whether it's a new entrant looking for their first farm, someone looking for the next rung on the ladder or those ready to go to the next level with a commercial-sized farm holding. Offering these tenancies underlines our support for sustaining and creating rural employment throughout the county.

Children and Families

Education

A good education - our role is to champion the very best education for Norfolk's children, so I'm very proud that, in July for the first time, Norfolk reached or exceeded the national average for the proportion of good and outstanding schools, with 90% of Norfolk's school now judged as good or better by Ofsted.

Children in care deserve the same chances as everyone else and, as their corporate parent, the County Council needs to do all it can to support them. Early indications suggest that there were significant improvements in last year's exam and assessment results for looked after children. Although the Department for Education has not yet published official statistics, our provisional data for all the children in our care suggests that:

- The proportion achieving the expected level in English and maths GCSE has increased from 15% to 26% - up 11 percentage points
- The proportion reaching the expected level at Key Stage 2 has increased from 19% to 30% - up 11 percentage points;
- The proportion achieving a good level of development at the age of five has increased by eight percentage points - from 23% to 31%.
- No looked after children were permanently excluded from school last year, compared with six the previous year.

Raising Learners - we launched the Raising Learners campaign in summer 2017 to help raise children's numeracy and literacy levels. The long school summer holiday can mean children forget some of their learning between one school year and the next. To help address this, Raising Learners provided simple and fun activities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills over the summer break. For example, Count on Norfolk made maths a fun part of everyday life. In launch week alone, it had a million Twitter impressions, 80,000 Facebook reach and 1,200 page views on our website. We also held 16 family maths workshops at libraries across Norfolk and ran a stall at the Forum for the Science Festival. Our Write On Norfolk 500-word writing competition for children ran for a second successful year - encouraging 5-13-year-olds to submit a piece of original creative writing which had to feature Norfolk.

Investing in special educational needs places - because we want children to be taught in their local communities wherever possible, we are developing a new strategy to create more school places for children with special educational needs - and are set to receive an additional £2.7m from the Department for Education to ensure there is enough specialist provision for them, subject to Government approval of our plans. But we believe a more ambitious plan, beyond the £2.7m, is needed to ensure children can go to school closer to home, and reducing the high transport and placement costs for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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School buildings - good quality places for school children in growing communities - since May 2017, we have approved £169m of capital investment in school building, to develop new and extended schools, making sure that there are enough school places across the county, responding to both population growth and housing development. The new schools are being developed as the education landscape across the county continues to change, with 43% of Norfolk's schools now academies.

A new £1.1m sixth form college opened at Sidestrand Hall in June and more than £40m of school building programmes are under way across Norfolk, creating new and extended schools for hundreds of the county's children. In addition, the six '30 hours childcare' schemes, separately funded by Government grant, will be complete for delivery by the end of April 2018. Two, at Scarning and Marham, are already complete.

Children's Social Care

Ofsted turnaround - outstanding adoption service and improved support for vulnerable children sees council removed from intervention. Our Ofsted report was published in January, lifting us out of intervention, praising our outstanding adoption service and highlighting significant improvements in support to children in our care and care leavers. Overall, we require improvement but the good judgement we all want to see is now in sight. Inspectors highlighted some strong social work practice, innovation in recruiting staff and 'steady progress' in support for care leavers. And it's clear from the report that children in Norfolk now have a much better experience than they did when we were first judged inadequate back in 2013. The report also acknowledges the strong leadership of the council's new permanent Director of Children's Services and the determination of councillors to provide good quality services.

Investing in children and families - we are investing £12m over the next four years to transform how we work with children and families to help support children to live safely at home. For those who do come into care, we want to ensure they can live with foster families wherever possible, rather than in residential homes. This means investing in intensive support for families whose children are at risk of come into care. It also means we need to recruit more foster carers and develop more early help services to work with families before they come into contact with social care. Without this level of investment, we estimate that demand for our services will continue to rise, costing an extra £5m each year by 2021-22. By reducing demand and investing now, we avoid costs going up in the future.

Our assisted boarding scheme, which places children at risk of coming into care in boarding school places, has received national recognition this year. Norfolk has been described as 'leading the way' in this work and we're now assisting the Department for Education to try to get more local authorities to provide these opportunities for children in need. Investing in these children's education helps to reduce the high costs that we would pay if they came into our care.

Thirty new social workers through grow your own - this year we've welcomed 62 newly qualified social workers to Children's Services, as part of our work to grow our own talented staff. Our Norfolk Institute of Practice Excellence (NIPE), created in 2014, provides dedicated support and training to our new social work staff. During their first year, staff have smaller caseloads, protected time and regular training. They also receive support from a Practice Consultant, who can help them to build their skills in the field. Our scheme has high retention rates and was praised as national best practice in our recent Ofsted report.

Case study: our Marshfields short breaks unit in West Norfolk achieved its magnificent seventh consecutive Outstanding rating from Ofsted. Its excellent team of social workers and learning disability

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nurses provides excellent care 24/7 to five to 18-year-olds with disabilities, and is firmly centred around the child.

App helps vulnerable young people in Norfolk to share their views - we've launched two interactive, secure apps that give vulnerable children and young people in Norfolk a new way to share their views and feelings, and record their thoughts and experiences - day and night.

Adult Social Care

Key highlights include:

In Good Company - our award-winning campaign to tackle loneliness in Norfolk continues to go from strength to strength. The health impact of being lonely can equate to smoking 30 cigarettes a day, so the risks can be substantial. With an estimated 43,700 lonely people in the county, the campaign is vital to ensure no one in Norfolk spends a lonely day if they don't want to. Thirty businesses and groups have now got one of our In Good Company quality marks, which were launched in July 2016 - and which highlight their strong commitment to combating loneliness.

Tackling loneliness at a local level - in February, nearly 100 people came to our first In Good Company Loneliness in Norfolk Summit, organised with the support of key partners, Age UK Norfolk, MIND, Action for Children, Carers Matter Norfolk and Norfolk Community Foundation. Actions pledged included setting up inter-generational groups in Norwich, free get-togethers with refreshments in Great Yarmouth and Waveney, a buddy system to share ideas in north Norfolk, creating a community champion in south Norfolk to work with young people, and individuals in west Norfolk promising to deliver 100 leaflets each to publicise events tackling loneliness. With team work, dedication and support like this, we can all help to end the epidemic of loneliness in Norfolk.

£35m boost for adult social care - this welcome one-off funding from the Government helped address pressures in the health and social care system and followed extensive national lobbying by local authorities, including Norfolk. The money has helped us recruit 50 social workers, as well as contributing to new preventative activities to reduce and delay the need for formal care and support the safe discharge of people from hospital.

Norfolk, Living Well - our campaign to recruit 50 social workers coincided with the introduction of this new approach to social work, promoting people's strengths and independence. Also known as the three conversations model, it is already operating successfully elsewhere and is about looking at what is going well in somebody's life and building on that to make things better for them.

Recruiting for reablement - in November we recruited around 80 new care workers countywide, including posts for our new accommodation-based reablement initiative which sees reablement care workers provide a 'wrap around' service to follow people from hospital and support them back to their home. An active assessment unit at Burgh House near Great Yarmouth opened in September, with three beds available for overnight accommodation-based reablement. This was followed in February by Benjamin Court in Cromer with a provision of 18 beds. These units complement the existing home based reablement service and are for people who are medically fit but unable to return to their home safely. We're also planning a facility for west Norfolk.

Caring for carers - With the five Clinical Commissioning Groups, we've commissioned a new carer-led service, Carers Matter Norfolk, to support the county's 100,000 unpaid carers.

Norwich Escalation Avoidance Team

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Sees health and social care joining forces to support Norwich residents facing non-999 emergency situations. This highly responsive service works to prevent crises escalating and causing unnecessary admissions to hospital or emergency respite care.

Tackling winter pressures, managing the strain on health and social care - to support timely and safe discharges from hospital, we agreed a package of financial measures to help home care and care home providers respond swiftly to requests to take on care packages related to hospital discharges.

Facilitating a speedy discharge for people from hospital, either to their own home or to residential care, is essential to help people stay independent and also to keep our emergency care system running. Our Enhanced Home Support Service, a targeted initiative launched in February, is aimed at reducing delayed discharges from the three acute hospitals, as well as preventing unnecessary admissions. We're piloting it for three years and are delivering it in partnership with three home support framework providers.

Investing in home support

In the next financial year, we will be investing an extra £2.1m to help home support providers. We've developed a new model to improve the coverage and quality of home support countywide. The key to making this work will be a collaborative approach from providers - communicating and working as a collective whole to deliver a stronger and more robust service. The ambition is that providers can respond to the majority of requests quickly and is reliable, providing continuity of well-trained personnel working to agreed professional standards, for people using these services to be able to remain in their own homes for as long as they wish.

Communities

Norfolk Community Learning Services

I'm proud of our Community Learning Services for adults, which have gone from strength to strength this year. You're never too old to learn, so having the right opportunities there for everyone is vital, and something close to my heart. In April, Norfolk Community Learning Services (NCLS) was shortlisted for a national award in recognition of its performance turnaround. NCLS was one of six national finalists in the Most Improved Council category of the Municipal Journal's Local Government Achievement Awards. The judges recognised that, in just fifteen months, the service managed to turn an 'Inadequate' Ofsted rating into a 'Good'. There is enormous pride among NCLS staff that they improved their performance and service to learners in such a short space of time.

Adult learners celebrate excellent GCSE results

August saw students from NCLS celebrating their GCSE results, with 75% of those who sat an English GCSE achieving a grade 9-4 (A*-C) and 63% achieving the same result in maths. As well as being great results for the learners, the pass rates were well above the national pass rates for learners aged 17 and over taking English (40% above) and maths (21% above) GCSE. This was a testament to a combination of the students' hard work and the high standard of teaching at NCLS.

Open Library - we are continuing to extend Open Library to more branches, giving customers access to libraries beyond staffed opening hours, by using their membership cards to access library buildings. This initiative ran successfully as a pilot project and the aim is to offer this service at all libraries.

Norfolk Reading Pathway - following a grant of £98,000 from Arts Council England, we have supported almost 600 Norfolk residents aged 8 and above to learn to read. Using a phonics based reading programme, learners are supported by library volunteer coaches, who are given full training. A large part of this project has involved supporting schools with children who struggle to read. Reading sessions take place at libraries across Norfolk and we are continuing to recruit new learners and volunteers.

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Digital libraries - as well as launching of the Libby app, enabling customers to access books from anywhere, the Library Service has been running a range of digital clubs. This includes everything from helping people learn to log on to the internet or use a tablet computer, through to a number of successful coding clubs. In the Autumn of 2017, Norfolk libraries were given 500 BBC micro:bits which can be borrowed for free. They are tiny codeable computers that help people get to grips with digital devices and learn about coding.

Healthy libraries, Story Walks - in the summer holidays, youngsters from Tuckswold and Lakenham were able to feed their imaginations and get some fresh air and a healthy snack at special themed story walks. The project was funded through a grant from Lakenham and Tuckswold Energise Project through Sport For Change and is a great example of innovative ways of working with partners.

Libraries as community hubs are helping break down social isolation and bringing services to the people - whether it's baby-weighting scales, Knit and Natter or Just a Cuppa drop-in sessions. There are some amazing volunteers doing amazing work at our libraries, making a huge difference to people's lives by fundraising, knitting, cooking, helping people with IT, running craft sessions, literacy sessions and activities for people with dementia.

Outstanding exhibitions at our museums - two home-grown exhibitions at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery pulled in the crowds in the summer and autumn of 2017. Nelson & Norfolk and Rembrandt: Lightening the Darkness shone a spotlight on extraordinary objects in the Castle collections. The exhibition, which also featured major loans from Royal Museums Greenwich and the Royal Collections, attracted 57,527 visitors and received regional, national and international coverage.

Domestic abuse - we continue to tackle domestic abuse in Norfolk head-on, with our programme to train 'champions' - people in professions who deal with the public and who are taught to spot signs of abuse and offer support. Domestic abuse is not always physical and can take many forms, including coercion and control, and our aim is to raise awareness about this and focus on the safety of people at risk. Our domestic abuse change coordinators have exceeded all expectations by training 925 champions so far since 2015, keeping an estimated 1,500 people in the county safer.

Mental health - 2017 saw the launch of our suicide prevention and men's mental health campaign targeting males, and in particular older men. There are around 77 suicides a year in Norfolk - higher than the national average. I am really (not) okay is our multi-agency strategy for suicide prevention in Norfolk, and talks about it being everyone's responsibility, with all of us having a part to play in helping friends or family members who may be at risk. In December, we partnered with Norwich Theatre Royal to launch a month-long series of events focusing on men's mental health to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. There were workshops, screenings, and performances, using art as a platform to communicate the message.

Chathealth, our innovative confidential text messaging service gives 11-19-year-olds an easy way to talk to school nurses. In its first year in 2016 it had more than 3,000 texts on topics like relationships, smoking, bullying and exam stress. The service is particularly useful for young people who wouldn't have the confidence to seek advice in person, it uses a platform that most 11-19 year olds are extremely comfortable using and also offers them support all year round, including outside school hours and school holidays.

Fire and Rescue - councillors from our Communities Committee voted unanimously in January that the Fire and Rescue Service should continue to be governed by the county council. In 2016/17 (latest stats available), our Fire and Rescue Service attended 7,340 incidents and rescued over 700 people. Following the devastating Grenfell Tower blaze in London, our Fire and Rescue Service did a great deal of public

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reassurance work and inspected all domestic Norfolk high-rise flats, mid-rise blocks and many commercial premises to check safety compliance. We've expanded our collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust - to have ambulances based at Great Yarmouth fire station for ease of accessing incidents. We're already doing this at Carrow, Sandringham and Sheringham. Our prevention work continues and included the IMPACT roadshow, seeking to reduce road casualties among young people and run in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary.

Our drive to fill vacancies for on-call firefighters across Norfolk continues. The number of vacancies has decreased over recent months but there is still work to do to fill the remaining gaps in cover. Many of the recruitment difficulties are caused by the rural locations of fire stations and the need for on-call staff to live or work within five minutes of them. The Prince's Trust and Crucial Crew projects saw continued success again and show the great efforts being made by the service with young people in our county.

Norse Group

The Norse Group brings together facilities management specialists Norse Commercial Services, property consultancy NPS Group and care provider Norse Care. The Group has a combined turnover of more than £281m and provides employment for over 10,000 staff. Norfolk remains central to Norse Group's thinking, returning millions of pounds in profits to the County Council every year, providing thousands of local jobs and underpinning the local community. NorseCare is the largest care provider in East Anglia, supporting over 1,400 of Norfolk's most vulnerable people. Which? magazine recently found that for care providers who have more than 12 care homes, NorseCare was ranked in the top 10 in the country for having homes with good or outstanding CQC ratings. The Group was awarded Norfolk County Council's In Good Company Quality Mark Plus in February 2018, in recognition of the positive work being done by staff to tackle loneliness in Norfolk.

Conclusion: This has been a great year for Norfolk County Council and for Norfolk. We have a real sense of direction; we have a plan for the future; and we are focussed on doing the best for Norfolk. We'll keep you updated through our website - www.norfolk.gov.uk - through Twitter and Facebook and through our roadshows. I'm also hoping to take your questions through live sessions on social media and Radio Norfolk.

5.2 District Councillor's Report 2018 (Cllr. William Smith)

1. Breckland Council key achievements - 2017/18

Examples of the key achievements and projects which have contributed to the Council's priorities are below:

- Set a balanced budget for the coming year (2018/19), including the removal of our reliance on Government Rate Support Grant (RSG) and the allocation of £1.7m to support sustainable community projects over the coming financial year;
- Developed our draft Local Plan, which has been through its final round of consultation and is now awaiting inspector feedback. We are currently expecting the Local Plan Examination Hearing sessions to be held in public between April and June;
- Worked with communities to develop a number of Neighbourhood Plans;
- Continued to work closely with Capita to deliver planning and building control functions. Having reviewed performance, we are currently working with our partner to further improve the service for the Council and our customers;
- Procured consultancy to provide evidence for the expansion of the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor to support the delivery of business growth in the district, including at sites in Snetterton and Thetford;

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Date

- Developed a strategic health and wellbeing action plan and, in partnership with Public Health, identified Thetford as a priority area for investigation on health and wellbeing issues;
- Launched our Market Town Initiative, which includes a range of collaborative projects that will ensure each market town is economically vibrant, achieves long-term sustainability, has a clear identity, is a popular destination, has an enhanced environment, and secures third-party investment;
- Implemented new partnership with ShopAppy, which will give local independent businesses a central web presence and enable shoppers to make purchases online 24/7;
- Implemented new Our Breckland Lottery, which will enable players to directly support local community groups through ticket sales. First draw is at the end of March;
- In partnership with Norfolk Community Foundation, allocated £250,000+ of grants to projects in the district, including children's play area and outdoor sport provisions;
- Commenced delivery of the 'Silver Social' project which is delivering workshops across the district to those who are at risk of being socially isolated;
- Launched community fridges in the district's market towns, including the first in Norfolk;
- Committed funding as part of budget setting to replace and/or repair footway lights in the district;
- Introduced Public Space Protection Orders within our towns, to help tackle anti-social behaviour;
- Continued to meet as part of the antisocial behaviour advisory group which brings together multiple agencies to share and support on cases, giving a co-ordinated approach to support and action against ASB;
- Sampled food and water supplies/bathing water to prevent ill health and early intervention;
- Continued to both proactively and reactively deal with dog fouling to ensure public spaces are cleaner for residents' use Won the highly prestigious Municipal Journal (MJ) award for Commercialism in the Property estate;
- £10m Housing Investment Fund (HIF) central government funding to support infrastructure projects and delivery of new homes on the outskirts of Thetford;
- Secured £2.65m from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to upgrade Snetterton Heath's existing electricity supply and support substantial business growth;
- Secured £300,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Land Release Fund, which will support an infrastructure project to provide access onto Council-owned land in Shipdham and enable the development of housing in the future;
- Completed a pilot business rates reduction scheme in Dereham, and announced roll-out of district-wide scheme from April 2018;
- Developed our 'Open for Business' approach, ensuring support and advice is available for businesses of all sizes. Made regular visits to key businesses in the district to provide advice and assistance on the range of support services available from the council and partners;
- At the request of town councils, agreed to implement pilot enforcement periods at some Swaffham and Attleborough car parks;
- Influenced enhancements to digital broadband speeds with around 90% of the district now able to receive high speed broadband.

2. Norfolk Districts Council Tax Charge Band D - 2018 - 2019

Twenty years ago Breckland Council embarked on a strategy to expand and modernise its commercial estate, thereby enabling it to generate greater earned income. While at the same time it commenced a programme of structural reforms, with the introduction of new methods of service delivery e.g. PFI, inter-authority partnerships, outsourcing.

Together those initiatives have enable the Council to maintain its spending on services at levels commensurate to councils' of a similar profile, while maintaining downward pressure on council tax. The result being that Breckland charges the lowest district council tax in the country and certainly the lowest in Norfolk, as shown below. As the country needs to control overall public expenditure, Breckland has balanced its budget for the coming year (2018/19), including the removal of our reliance on Government Rate Support Grant (RSG)

Signed

Date

Norfolk Districts Council Tax: Band D 2018 – 2019

Council	£ - Council Tax 2017-2018	% Change 2018-2019	Weekly Change 2018-2019	£ - Annual Change 2018-2019	£ - District Council Tax 2018-2019
Breckland	78.93	6.27%	10p	4.95	83.88
Broadland	116.15	4.30%	10p	4.99	121.14
Great Yarmouth	151.48	3.30%	10p	5.00	156.48
King's Lynn	116.87	3.85%	9p	4.50	121.37
North Norfolk	138.87	3.56%	10p	4.95	143.82
Norwich	249.01	2.99%	14p	7.45	256.46
South Norfolk	140.00	3.57%	10p	5.00	145.00

6. To receive comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

The meeting closed at 7.24pm.

Signed

Date