

BRISLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at 6.30pm on Wednesday 4th May 2022 in the Village Hall.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Henry Collinge, with four speakers from the organisations listed below, D/Cllr Gordon Bambridge and 13 members of the public (including five parish councillors and the Clerk) present.

1. Welcome and to receive apologies for absence.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from C/Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris, Mrs N Curl, Mrs B Diggins and Mr A Savage.

2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5th May 2021.

The minutes of the meeting were accepted and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. Parish Council Matters:

a) Chairman's Report.

A copy of the report presented by the Chairman is attached.

b) Higher Level Stewardship Scheme Report.

A copy of the report presented by Cllr Peter Dennis is attached.

c) Allotment Report.

A copy of the report presented by Cllr Peter Dennis is attached.

d) Brisley Common Pond Project.

A copy of the report by Mrs Bridget Diggins is attached, as presented by the Chairman.

4. Reports from Local Organisations:

a) Parochial Church Council.

A copy of the report presented by Mr Hugh Fawcett is attached.

b) Village Hall Management Committee.

A copy of the report presented by Mrs Chris Abel is attached.

c) Brisley Primary School.

No report was received.

d) Brisley Cricket Club.

A copy of the report presented by Mr Dave Pearson is attached.

e) Age UK.

No report was received.

5. Councillor Reports:

a) District Councillor.

A copy of the report from D/Cllr Gordon Bambridge is attached.

b) County Councillor.

A copy of the report from C/Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris is attached.

6. Open Forum - this is an opportunity for residents of the parish to express their views on matters of interest or concern relating to the village and to suggest ideas for the future.

A member of the public requested that the Village website be kept updated with events etc which, at the present time, only appeared to be published on Facebook, which not everyone had access to. Mr Pearson agreed there was a problem and reported that a new Brisley Village website was due to be launched soon and this would be kept updated. The current site was not user-friendly. D/Cllr Bambridge suggested the 'Next-door' site as another option.

A member of the public requested that the Upper Wensum Diary be delivered as soon as it was published as it was sometimes received too late to attend some of the events published. The member of the public was advised to contact the Upper Wensum Diary Distribution Team who were responsible for delivery.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, for presenting their reports, and the meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Signed:

Date:

These minutes will be ratified at the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting.

Chairman Annual Report 2022

Before writing this, I cast an eye over last years report, it struck me what a different position we are in now than we were 12 months ago. This time last year I was discussing the two metre rule and the effect of lockdowns on the village. This year I feel we can look forward in a more positive way to a flourishing village with multiple events planned to get together and move away from the period of enforced isolation, we have all been through.

The council has continued to meet throughout he last 12 months but have seen a change in representatives as we said goodbye to Councillor Fairman and welcomed Councillor Colley to take her seat.

Throughout the course of the last year it has been wonderful to have achieved so much as a Council just some of the projects completed are listed below.

The removal of the plastic tree guard last year has allowed the amenity area tree and shrubs to flourish. Growth seams to have accelerated and we have been able to further thin the smaller trees as well as organising tree work on older more established trees that required attention, all of which will ensure a health wood for years to come.

Our play area has continued to be well used, and maintained to a high level.

The parish Christmas tree project has entered it's second year with the children from the village school planting the next batch of small Christmas trees on the allotment area, the first years trees although still small have established themselves well and we are hopefully that this project will provide an income for the parish in years to come.

Ragwort on the amenity area was treated with an environmentally friendly form of control and the prevalence of this weed has greatly diminished, thanks go to Councillor Fairman for taking on the challenge of tackling the weed again this year.

The parishes footpaths and bridleways have also never looked better with a focus from Councillor Fairman. We have seen new fingerposts, repairs to bridges, fields cleared and hedges cut back where necessary to ensure we all can walk freely around the village.

The parish grass cutting has been maintained and we have received no complaints on the current cutting regimes and have received several compliments about the appearance of the village from both parishioners and visitors.

We have continued our program of ditch clearance focusing this year on the green. Despite high levels of rain early in the winter, this work and that of the previous year has ensured only limited flooding in the village as the work to clear ditches, and the renovation work on ponds have been highly successful in increasing the flow of water away from the village when needed.

Potholes in our roads have been reported quickly and we have seen teams coming out and fixing issues on numerous occasions. As well as reporting flytipping, which again we have managed to ensure has been dealt with quickly and efficiently ensuring our village is looking its best.

As always the common is a major focus for the Parish council, as a huge asset to the village but also a source of constant maintenance need. This year we have looked at how we can ensure the common is open to all users, working with grazing rights holders to remove unneeded fencing whilst ensuring that animals are secure and doing their job of maintaining the grass land. In addition we have injected new rigger into the wildlife that we share the area with, supporting bird feeding and habitat creation, as well as supporting several studies that have taken place on the common to tract the wildlife we have.

In addition the parish council has continued to support the pond project clearing ponds on the green, supported the Village Hall by resurfacing the overspill car park, replaced the bench at patch corner and initiated an exciting project to look at taking control of housing for local people, through a project looking to build affordable housing in the village only available to those that have local connections.

There are many more example of both councillor and individuals who have given time, effort, expertise and energy to the village over the last 12 months, there are just too many to mention in this report.

I would however, like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has helped out, from looking after a dog poo bin to litter picking, clearing scrub, writing funding applications, attending meetings, clearing ponds, to sitting on our committees and running events for the village to enjoy.

Thank you, the effort you put in is what makes Brisley the thriving village in which we all get to live.

Henry Collinge

Chairman: Brisley Parish Council

Harpers Green HLS

This year we have continued to carry out selected maintenance work to control the spread of gorse and scrub to both encourage grass regrowth and improve the habitat for the interesting wildlife that makes the area home. This will be ongoing over the coming years and although this year sees the end of funding under the current HLS scheme we have been able to keep the scheme going on a yearly basis until we are able to put it into another long term agreement.

Cattle still graze Harpers from May to November which is an important element of the management of the Green.

Allotments

Despite the challenges of our climate which either wants to flood us, bake us dry or blow everything away, the allotment holders have done remarkably well this last year. We have been delighted to welcome two new plot holders who both took advantage of our contractor ploughing and rotavating their plots to help start their growing campaigns.

We have had to do some work on the entrance gates to prevent rabbits digging under them to access ready meals !

A further 90 Christmas trees were planted this February by pupils from Brisley School to add to the growing Christmas Tree project at the North end of the area.

POND REPORT May 2022

Despite the pandemic we have managed to continue with some pond restoration work on the common. With the additional input from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Upper Wensum Farm Cluster Group, particularly the sterling work of Lizzie Emmett, we are in a strong position now with only one really major restoration job to do on the North side which is scheduled for 2023 under UWFCG.

On the south side we have managed to do two ponds at the top of the track near Panther Farm one of which contains a very rare pond plant, Orange Foxtail wetland grass, and is of great scientific interest (apparently)! We have also had UCL doing two experiments in the last 18 months to understand how healthy ponds absorb carbon whereas unhealthy ponds give off carbon. Sadly, I do not have the results of these tests but as soon as we know we can publish the findings in the parish mag.

Further down this track a wonderful job has been done of the pond by the entrance to Panther Farm fields – thanks as ever to the team of volunteers (and you know who you are) who set the ball rolling last autumn to enable the finishing touches to be done by the digger. The pond looks terrific and the uncovering of a bank of primroses on the far side has been a joy this spring.

There is still an element of concern with the ponds on the track leading down to Pond Farm due to pollution but following a walk last week with members of the Parish Council and a local resident, we believe we are finally getting to grips with where the problems might be coming from. Checks are to be made on the septic tank arrangements at the cottages and Church Farm cottages to make absolutely sure that they comply with current regulations. The larger of these ponds needs a further digging out on a major scale to remove all the build up of rotten matter and suspect effluent so it can continue its recovery. The pond behind this closer to Groom Cottage does need sympathetic bramble reduction to let in light and these jobs are being scheduled into the next round of works, funding permitting.

To sum up and without listing each small niggle with other ponds, we have turned a major corner now and it is fair to say that all the ponds on both sides of the common are now heading towards a much healthier situation than 8 years ago.

Thank you to everyone involved.

Bridget

Churchwarden Report for Brisley PC 4th May 2022

Church of St Bartholomew

This has been a busy year for the church with a full programme of services, albeit with covid restrictions, lead by the Rector and assisted by a number of retired clergy. There were two weddings, one funeral (Vera Russell) but no Christenings.

Because of covid there were no visits from the school and for the same reason the Brisley Christmas Choir was unable to be resurrected for the Carol service. It had been hoped that a handbell team would be formed but unfortunately this did not happen. The service itself was much enjoyed and thanks go to all those who took part. The continued use of the Taverner bible readings adds to the proceedings.

We were unable to carry out all our usual fundraisers but we did have a very successful BBQ, thanks in large part to Iain Salmon and Nick Barnes at Brisley Hall, who kindly allowed us to use their barn and surrounds.

Since the last report we have installed electric under-pew heating in the nave and that has meant we have been able to dispose of the gas heaters, much to our insurer's delight. We were able to do this thanks to a gift from the late Anne Tuck who very kindly left the church a generous sum of money which covered the cost. Additionally, her legacy paid for a loop system installed a little earlier. The works were completed in September 2021 and included the purchase of four freestanding electric heaters.

The quinquennial inspection carried out by our architect highlighted, amongst many other things, continuing concerns with the south aisle roof. Remedial work was carried out but it subsequently turned out the problems were much more serious than anticipated. A part of the roof towards the west end was close to collapse and urgent work was carried out to make it safe. Currently a faculty has been applied for to replace the roof using stainless steel rather than lead or heavy tiles. It will be a long process as the cost will be well in excess of £200,000. The church is in the process of setting up a 'Friends of Brisley Church' group to help in the raising of funds. At the same time we are looking at the practicality of doing other works considered urgent in the report which may be helpful in going for grants. i.e. one big project rather than a number of small ones.

Conservation work was carried out on wall paintings on some of the south aisle pillars and the crucifix on the south aisle wall.

The bat project which came to a halt in 2020 was restarted with two surveys carried out during the bat season. Numbers were down slightly on previous years and we wait to see what happens next. The PCC has made it clear we would like the bats to be removed from the church though how this will be done, whether it will be effective and who will pay for it remains unclear.

Report to Brisley Parish Council

on Village Hall activities

April 2021 – April 2022

In many ways the past two years have been extremely trying with lockdowns, easing of restrictions little by little and, understandably, the reluctance of some people to do much social mixing, especially inside. By late May 2021 we were able to reopen the village hall after carrying out a detailed risk assessment, providing sanitisers, wipes, anti-septic floor wipes so that our regular hirers could return knowing that the environment was as safe as it could be. We are grateful to our usual hirers: Christine, Amy and Dreaming Void as they provide us with regular income to help pay our bills.

One of the big events of the year was held on 17th July. The Brisley Bearstival took place at Brisley Cricket Club ground to raise money for EACH. The weather was glorious and brought out families in their droves to listen to music, buy cakes and plants, spend their money on a raffle with wonderful prizes, to be entertained by Tamion and Tanya, to buy food and drink from the Cricket Club barbecue and bar. Over £1700 was raised for EACH. We would like to thank Sowerbys for the sponsorship of all the advertising boards, to Graham McGrotty, Back Pages and Fakenham Ukes who gave their time for free, likewise to Tamion and Tanya who spent a hot afternoon entertaining the children and the Cricket Club who made a generous donation. In addition our thanks go to the many individuals and companies who donated raffle prizes – too many to be listed here but all were acknowledged in the UWD.

At the same time as the Bearstival the annual Bear Hunt was run in the village. As this was a delayed Olympic year the gardens of our village displayed sweating, muscular furry bears in various athletic poses. The winner, a weightlifter, received the trophy for 2021.

Later in the year we held a Christmas Fayre which was well supported by stall holders and visitors alike. In December the Christmas lights were switched on at the hall in the presence of Santa.

Since the start of 2022 cinema has returned and we have introduced a few additional regular events. The first is a monthly Chat and Chips when people come to the hall at lunch time to enjoy fish and chips from IB Chippy in Elmham and meet other people. We have also had a few food franchises come with their vans to the car park at the village hall. This we intend to continue over coming months for the benefit of the community.

The third regular activity is the showing of major sporting events on our big screen. So far we have shown all the England rugby matches from the 6 Nations competition. Our next one will be the FA Cup Final and with Wimbledon, the Football World Cup and next year's Rugby World Cup this is only a start. Naturally all spectators can purchase drinks from our well-stocked bar, and, if the visit of a food van coincides, their supper too.

The final major event this year was the concert for Ukraine organised by Ian Edwards which raised an astonishing £2500. This was made possible by generous donations and the time given freely by local bands Back Pages, Doghouse and We Be Spies.

Whilst busy on the events front we have also been busy on the maintenance and improvement front. Thanks to funding from the Parish Council, the potholes on the overflow car park were filled and the area re-surfaced.

The big improvement to the hall was made in August when the roof was clad and finally made waterproof. After years of patching, mopping the floor after numerous leaks and dreading heavy rain, we were able to fund the work after years of saving and matched funding from the National Lottery Fund.

Further improvements and checks include: refurbishment of the toilets, the repainting of the barge boards, the installation of a TV aerial, an outside power socket and outside lights to improve safety in the car park on darker evenings. In addition the electrical installation check was carried out to ensure that we are fully compliant with the latest regulations.

We wish to thank all our patrons who attend classes and events at the hall. Without their support we would be unable to make these improvements. Above all I would personally like to thank the Village Hall Committee members who have given time, effort and ideas to arrange all the events that have taken place during this year.

Chris Abel

Chair, Brisley Village Hall Committee

Brisley Village Hall is maintained by the Community for the Community. Please support us moving forward.

Parish Council Update – May 22.

Billy Fordham decided to step down in from Chair and Captain after 10 years, he has been fundamental in the resurrection of the club. Quite rightly he is concentrating on his cricket this year and has been made an Honourable member of the club.

Andrew Savage Interim Chair for 2022.

The past two years have been difficult operationally for the club as Covid struck however the club has planned and played as much as it could throughout and has started the 2022 years stronger in the following areas.

- Financially the club is in a very healthy position and now has reserves of up to 5 years expenses.
- Investment in the club equipment has now given the club an enviable position in local village cricket. Both ground maintenance and cricket equipment
- Membership in the club should top 50 men and ladies in 2022 which starts to give a financial and playing base for the future.
- Volunteer base especially for ground maintenance has grown again over the past year which is now starting to spread the workload required to support the club.
- Playing partnership with North Elmham agreed for 2022 at Brisley with adoption of full incorporation at next AGM. This has bought back Saturday Cricket where already Brisley residents have played in the team. It would have been impossible to do this starting from scratch and improves the offering at the club and the synergy between the league team and social side.
- Ladies start there second season in the Women's County league, with the team gaining interest from players year on year. The NE partnership has also bought more interest from partners of existing men playing team.
- Social and touring side went on the first tour for years to the Isle of Wight and are repeating that this year again.
- The club has 19 home fixtures this year with the 3 teams, and we are hoping for a good season.

Report from Cllr Bill Borrett and Cllr Gordon Bambridge Breckland Council highlights 2021/22

Introduction

Welcome to our report on Breckland's year which has been a very busy one. Breckland's Corporate Plan brings together its strategic priorities for the coming years and outlines what we'll do to make a difference in Breckland to ensure it is a place where people and businesses can thrive. This report outlines some of the projects Breckland has delivered in 2021-22 against our overarching commitments and priorities as Members.

These priorities are grouped across four key themes:

- **Inspiring Communities**

We want Breckland to build on the many strengths of its local communities so that people can lead happy, healthy, fulfilling lives here. Working collaboratively with our partners, as part of a community-led approach, we want to work to address vulnerability in Breckland. Covid-19 has left a lasting effect on our communities, and we are committed to supporting our residents and businesses to recover from the pandemic and support them in adjusting to life with covid in the longer term.

- **Thriving Places**

Each of the five town centres are different. Breckland will enable strategic and focused action within each of them and their hinterlands (which includes the Upper Wensum Ward) working with key stakeholders and partners to drive investment and change that will help the towns thrive now and in the future.

- **Breckland 2035**

We want Breckland to lead by example as an organisation taking action to reduce its own impact and achieving net zero emissions by 2035. We recognise that it cannot achieve this alone. Therefore, we want to use its resources and regulatory powers to create an environment in which our residents and other key stakeholders are enabled to act for themselves in contributing to this agenda.

- **Working Smarter**

As a performance-led organisation, we want it to evolve its approach to delivering services to become a modern organisation which is set up to best meet the changing needs of its residents. Adopting an agile working approach will enable it to break down the barriers of site-specific working and empower officers to work with members to work at the location and time that meets business demand and best supports the delivery of high-quality services.

Finally, we are excited to share the **Breckland Cares** programme for the first time, which is made up of seven campaigns delivered over a rolling 12-month programme. The campaign will shine a light on several passions of ours, including mental health, diversity and inclusion, and climate change.

Please see below a more detailed description of the four areas together with a set of graphics that summarise them at the very end.

Best wishes

Bill and Gordon

Inspiring Communities

Breckland Council will help our residents to live safe and healthy lives by playing an active part in local communities. We will do this by providing and enabling excellent services that understand and support the needs of our residents and local areas, enhancing the quality of life for all.

What we've delivered in 2021/22:

- Invested £1.8m in the creation of a brand-new **temporary accommodation facility in Thetford** (Elm House) to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. And have now begun work in partnership with Broadland Housing to provide five new units of 'move-on' accommodation, with intensive support, for people who have been sleeping rough.
- Commissioned by Mid-Norfolk Primary Care Network to deliver **social prescribing services**, helping over 300 residents through holistic support to improve their health and wellbeing.
- 30 community groups are now able to offer enhanced services to their communities through the **Inspiring Communities match funding scheme**, leveraging in over £250,000 to the district.
- Introduced **Breckland Mobile Food Store**, launching in April 2022, providing subsidised food to those most in need, with additional support mechanisms in place to address wider wellbeing issues such as social isolation and loneliness
- Created the **Early Intervention Fund** to provide financial support to individuals in extreme financial hardship to prevent them reaching crisis point.
- Boosted our **mental health** offer by **training 100 mental health champions** as part of our Mental Health Community Partnership scheme and continue to arrange and deliver mental health training across the district with partners including MIND, YANA and NSFT.
- Worked with partners such as the **Daisy** project to support survivors of **domestic abuse** and sexual violence and to help raise awareness.
- Developed a new and exciting partnership with Creative Arts East to transform the delivery of our popular **Silver Social programme**, extending the offer in local communities
- Established a Grants and Adaptations Team to work with residents who require **adaptations** to enable them to stay in their own homes. So far, they have delivered 24 projects with a further 246 ongoing.
- Continued to offer residents a high level of service from the **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)** team who received praise for their work with one resident who suffers from Motor Neurone Disease. This resulted in the team's work being praised on BBC breakfast.
- Supported **Breckland Youth Advisory Board (YAB)**, to deliver **mental health support** to Breckland families with young people aged 11 to 18 who are awaiting treatment or at risk or not attending school due to their mental health through the Cup-O-T Service.
- Played a key role in **responding to the pandemic**, including recruiting a team of Covid Support Officers to engage with businesses and members of the public to ensure compliance with national guidance and offer advice. Also engaging with partners to set up and operate district **asymptomatic testing** (walk in lateral flow tests), supported vaccination centres, promoted

vaccination availability, engaged with major employers to manage **infection control** risks and **investigated Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)** to ensure that there was no threat to public safety.

- Continued our **crackdown on littering, fly tipping, and abandoned cars**, raising awareness of our no-tolerance approach and resulting in a significant number of fixed penalty notices being issued to deter others from offending in the future

Thriving Places

Breckland Council will play an active role in creating the right conditions for new and existing local businesses to thrive. We will continue to support growth in the local economy, bringing forward and shaping large-scale projects and activities, which will unlock significant employment and housing opportunities.

What we've delivered in 2021/22:

- Began construction work of a new **£3.5m electricity substation in Snetterton**, which will enable businesses to grow at Snetterton Heath, protecting and creating jobs in the district
- Supported Homes England to hold public engagement events on the **Attleborough SUE**, with a design code, structure plan, and strategies now being developed to deliver quality housing
- Transformed old waste ground in Dereham into a beautiful new community space called **Ellenor Fenn Garden**.
- Improved the local area by overseeing the purchase and removal of an unsightly **boat from Thetford river**, a move supported by local businesses and communities.
- Determined 89% of minor or major **planning applications** within our specified timescales.
- Increased the housing stock for local residents with **two new housing developments** in Attleborough and Mileham.
- Engaged with over 20,000 residents as part of the **Future Breckland** project, to identify significant projects that can be delivered for our five market towns to help them bounce back from the challenges of covid-19 and build a strong and sustainable economy for the future.
- Supported over 300 local businesses to achieve **covid Safe Scheme accreditation**. The scheme recognises businesses in the district which have put measures in place to help protect their staff and customers from coronavirus and provide reassurance to local residents and visitors that they can shop safely.
- Supported 45 enterprises through the **Breckland Business Start-up Scheme**, helping them with funding and support to set up and begin a business because of covid.
- Created an innovative **Spring Back Programme** which has supported over 1360 businesses and provided over £4.5m of investment into the most vulnerable and in need areas of the economy.
- Applied for round one of the **Levelling up Fund** - a highly commended bid was made for £17m of investment in Phase 1. No issues were identified by Civil Servants in their analysis, and its strong logic and excellent value for money (Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) were commended.
- Worked with the council's leisure provider to help **leisure centres recover** post-covid lockdowns and enable ongoing services for the wellbeing of local residents.
- Better equipped businesses to reach customers that are declining in numbers on the high streets and across the district by improving their digital platforms through the **Digital Breckland Fund**.

- Launched a new **Commercial Waste Service** and have already launched over 200 bins, providing a flexible, cost-effective service whilst also generating an income.
- Invested in our resources for animal licensing, with Breckland taking a lead role on investigating welfare standards, tackling 'puppy farms' etc.
- Supported our commercial tenants through difficult times during covid with **rent deferrals and lease variations**

Breckland 2035

Breckland Council has recognised that there is a climate emergency that needs our urgent attention. As a result we have created our 'Breckland 2035' Sustainability Strategy, which sets out the direction of how we play an active role in mitigating its impact.

What we've delivered in 2021/22:

- Launched our **Sustainability Strategy** setting out how we will work with residents, businesses and partners to effect positive behavioural change that will lead to Breckland becoming a sustainable rural district in the country.
- Grown our **garden waste service**, which now covers nearly 25,000 residents.
- To keep our streets safe and save energy costs, we have supported the replacement of 133 streetlights within the district with more energy efficient **LED bulbs**.
- Released around £100k through our **Community Green Grants** scheme. The fund was set up to support communities in Breckland to take action for themselves and promote environmental sustainability, create behavioural change in response to climate change, and encourage communities to take positive action. Some of the projects funded include:
 - Croxton Parish Council to install EV charging points at their site
 - Purchase of battery storage for solar power at a village hall
 - Charles Burrell Centre replace lights with LED to reduce impact and cost
 - A water management scheme in Blo Norton, including a pond and reed bed filtration system
 - Several schools to create wildlife gardens and/or allotments
 - A variety of organisations including parish councils, community groups to install bat and bird boxes.
 - The community trust at Elm House (our new temporary accommodation facility) enabled to **create vegetable gardens** to help residents at sites to grow their own food
 - Harris Hardware in Dereham to carry out a **re-use and repair scheme** for residents
 - Kickstart Norfolk to buy **five electric mopeds** to provide young people with transport
- Worked with the leisure centre provider to **install environmentally-friendly measures**, such as LED lighting and pool covers to retain heat. These are due to installation imminently.
- Developed plans to **plant hundreds of trees** in the district as part of our commitment to protect and enhance the Breckland environment, as well as support the national green canopy initiative for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Working Smarter

We put our residents and businesses at the heart of everything we do. Prior to the pandemic, Breckland Council committed to a significant transformation programme to change the way its members and officers undertake their respective roles. The outcome will allow us to continually improve the delivery of services, make better use of space and resources, and future-proof the organisation - enabling us to operate as a modern council. Ultimately, this will make the organisation more efficient and effective while continuing to operate within our established budget.

What we've delivered in 2021/22:

- Worked in partnership with councils in north and west Norfolk to deliver a **new waste and recycling collection service**, along with street cleansing and grounds maintenance.
- Launched an **online chatbot** to allow residents a fully automated and 24-hour way of interacting with the Council and its services. The impact of this is already being seen with 80% of our live chat interactions now being automated allowing us to focus on calls.
- Successfully delivered and implemented the **Agile Working Policy** - fundamentally changing the council's approach to how and where we work.
- Continued to increase **mental health awareness** and support within the organisation through awareness sessions for managers and increasing the number of mental health first aiders within the organisation.
- Made our **website more accessible** than ever and are now ranked 14th out of 406 local authorities and public bodies in terms of accessibility. We are ensuring there are no barriers that prevent interaction with us due to a disability, bandwidth or speed.
- Added more **digital forms** to our website to make it easier and more efficient to contact us. We've received around 35,000 completed forms in the past 12 months.
- **Reviewed our Customer, Housing, Communities, Finance, Human Resources and Environmental Health teams** to ensure that they can offer the best possible service to residents within the district.
- Re-written our **Recruitment Policy** to include the Armed Forces Covenant and to make us a better disability employer. This is so we continue to be a diverse hiring organisation and that can attract all candidates.
- Re-established governance procedures to operate as a single council after **ending our partnership with South Holland District Council**, including establishing practices needed to ensure that the council could continue to operate democratically as a single organisation.
- Expanded our **Contracts and Procurement Team** and now offer expert procurement and contract support to a total of five Councils within Norfolk and Lincolnshire.
- Successfully held the district's **first major election** since the start of the pandemic, which saw the adoption of new health and safety measures whilst also continuing to deliver a fair and transparent election for residents across the district.

TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT WE HAVE...

Breckland
2035

TO WORK SMARTER WE HAVE...

Working
Smarter

Launched our Sustainability Strategy to protect the future of our District



Expanded our garden waste service to over 24,000 households



Created a Contracts & Procurement Team to support five Councils in Norfolk and Lincolnshire and deliver value for money



Launched our online chatbot so customers can interact with us 24/7



Delivered £100k funding through community green grants



We have continued our £800k street light upgrade and have replaced a further 133 further with more efficient bulbs

Held the first major elections since the start of the pandemic, in a COVID safe and transparent way.



Rewritten our recruitment policy to reconfirm our commitment to the armed forces and people with disabilities as an inclusive employer



Led the county in enforcement action to tackle fly tipping and environmental crime



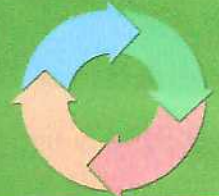
Worked with our providers to install environmentally friendly resources at our leisure centre sites



Successfully launched our new Corporate Plan setting out our priorities for the next 4 years



Fully embraced agile working in a post-covid environment and with a state of the art HQ



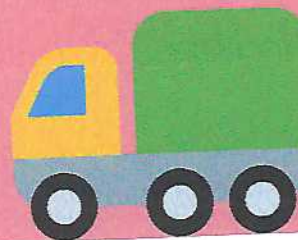
Transformed old waste ground into a new community space at Ellenor Fenn Garden



Flagship heritage action zone project in Swaffham to deal with historic environmental issues



Went live with a tri-district waste & recycling collection service



Ensured a balanced budget and supported frontline services whilst keeping Council Tax low



TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES WE HAVE...

Inspiring communities

TO HELP OUR DISTRICT THRIVE WE HAVE...

Thriving Places

Trained 100 mental health champions as part of our mental health community partnership scheme



Worked with Daisy project to support survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence



Begun construction on a £3.5 million electricity substation to enable growth at Snetterton



Supported over 300 local businesses through our COVID Safe Grant Scheme and our Digital Breckland Schemes



Developed Breckland Mobile Food Store to address food poverty in rural areas



Delivered a new £1.8 million accommodation facility in Thetford for those at risk of homelessness



Supported 1,360 businesses with £4.5 million investment through our Spring Back programme



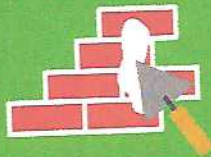
Continued to invest £150,000 per annum to increase vibrancy in our towns



Over 250 residents have benefited from our multi-agency approach to early intervention



Delivered 24 grants and adaptation projects to allow residents to stay in their homes, with 250 more projects ongoing



Engaged with over 20,000 individuals as part of Future Breckland to help shape our District



Launched our new commercial waste service and have issued over 200 bins already



Secured funding and started delivery of 5 new "move on" accommodation units



Successfully ran the first social supermarket in the East of England



Acquired an asset in a strategic location to allow for potential regeneration on Thetfords riverside



Supported 45 enterprises through the Breckland Business start-up programme



County Councillor for Necton and Launditch Division

Report for 2021/2022

Overview 2021/22

- 70% of Norfolk streetlights converted, or work underway to convert to LED
- 96.7% of highways inspections completed within timescale
- 99.6% of dangerous highway defects dealt with within timescales set out in the Transport Asset Management Plan
- 94% of Looked after Children (LAC) with an up-to-date Personal Education Plan
- Completed 51,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for 20,700 people.

Highways: Maintenance of Norfolk's 9000km of roads and associated infrastructure was allocated £42m (revenue and capital) in the budget set in February 2021. The backlog of maintenance has largely been addressed by the team led by the local highway engineer. This has allowed for quicker resolution of defects, especially those which are urgent.

The public examination of the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the dualling of the A47 between Tuddenham and Easton concluded in February. The Planning Inspectorate will submit a report, with recommendations, to the Secretary of State (SoS) within 3 months. The SoS will then determine the DCO. If approved the scheme will relieve the daily congestion between Dereham and Norwich and allow sustainable economic growth and development.

Norfolk County Council has continued to work towards building a new road between the A47 (hopefully dualled) and the A1067 near Taverham at the junction with the Broadland Northway. This will stop the "rat running" through the villages between the 2 roads and reduce the traffic levels (especially HGVs) using the B1145 to access Kings Lynn.

Broadband: Hard to reach premises in Norfolk are to receive between £115m and £195m of funding as part of the Government's Project Gigabit to provide 1GB per second broadband to up to 119,000 premises. Contracts will be awarded from February 2022.

Rural homes and businesses across Norfolk and Suffolk will get next-generation gigabit broadband brought to them under a £5 billion plan to level up internet access across the UK. It means families no longer having to battle over

bandwidth and will give people in rural areas the freedom to live and work more flexibly, with the speed and reliability needed to start and run businesses.

Flooding: A new single point of contact for flooding in Norfolk has been launched, allowing residents to report any sort of flooding quickly and efficiently. In the event of flooding residents can call 0344 800 8013 to report it. Alternatively, residents can continue to report flooding on NCCs website. The new number gives residents a single point of contact and allows reports to be made swiftly.

Different agencies respond to different types of flooding, which has historically made reporting a flood by telephone more complicated when and where it is not possible to ascertain the source of floodwaters. Where there is a potential risk to life from flooding people should still call 999 immediately.

Norfolk's Cabinet considered the allocation of the council's £1.5m Flood Reserve Fund to support urgent works, repairs and to enable recommendations from flood investigation reports. The Reserve Fund was set up in the annual budget for 2021/22 agreed by the County Council in their budget meeting in February.

The Cabinet meeting, held on 6th September, discussed the proposed allocation of the funding, including £695k for additional highway and ditch maintenance and £365k for drainage asset improvements. This funding will be used for work on the 285,864 metres of drainage grips and 31,037 metres of kerb drains on Norfolk's highways, as well as operations to clear some of the county's 145,305 gullies that help drain rainwater.

The Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance (NSFA), under the Chairmanship of General Lord Dannatt, has formally adopted an overall Strategy, designed to enable county wide responses to flooding across all agencies involved. The Strategy, which lays out the NSFA's vision, objectives, approach and structure, is a major milestone in the development of the Alliance, which was founded earlier this year by the Council to bring together all agencies and partners involved in planning for and responding to flooding in Norfolk.

Adult Social Care: Plans to support Adult Social Services with the expected "winter pressures" have been unveiled.

A report was heard by Norfolk County Council's Cabinet in December saying that Adult Social Services across the country are facing unprecedented challenges. However, here in Norfolk practical solutions are being put in place.

The report said: 'Norfolk Adult Social Services face a level of unprecedented challenge in 2021/22 as a result of the pandemic, with national and local workforce shortages, rising demand in hospitals and the community and the continued infection risk posed by COVID-19 as well as other recurring respiratory viruses such as flu. Adult Social Services received 20,279 calls for support between April and October this year – an increase of 9,400 over four years.

Action taken by the Council includes:

- Expanding action to support people at home or, where appropriate, in short term residential settings
- Stepping up the council's care recruitment campaign, to tackle staff shortages
- Providing wrap-around support for care settings
- Providing assistive technology, with 100 video phones sent out to homes
- Improving capacity in the Norfolk First Response service
- Supporting mental health services, with three new services

Norfolk County Council is taking a step closer to establishing a new integrated approach to health and care by agreeing their support for new local Health and Wellbeing Partnerships, putting local communities at the heart of health and care in their area. Under the new Health and Care Bill, Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) are being established in all areas of the country to drive changes that are intended to lead to better, more joined-up care for the population. Much of the activity to deliver integrated health and care and improve the population's health will happen more locally in the places where people live and work, meaning the new Health and Wellbeing Partnerships will play a key role in driving forward this activity.

Schools and Children's Services: More than a dozen new primary schools could be needed in Norfolk in the next decade, to cater for growing pupil numbers in areas of development. A report to Norfolk County Council's Cabinet highlighted the scale of school development that is likely to be needed to support Norfolk's growing communities. It addresses both demographic changes and population growth from new housing. The report, discussed by members on 31st January, provided a snapshot of the council's plans to ensure there are sufficient school places for Norfolk children aged four to 16. Alongside district councils, the County Council expects to secure nearly £100m in developer contributions for the proposed new and extended schools but if all the places are needed, a further £191m would need to be found. Some of this will be met by Community Infrastructure Levy and government grant contributions. Most children in care in Norfolk are well looked after and receive good support for their emotional and mental health and education,

Ofsted inspectors have found. A team of Her Majesty's Inspectors visited Norfolk County Council in October for a two-day focused visit of the council's services for children in its care. In a letter detailing their findings, inspectors said that social workers know their children well, listen to them and help them to understand their experiences. Ofsted's visit follows a similar focused visit in 2019, which looked at how the council responds to child safeguarding calls and referrals. Following that visit, inspectors described the quality of decision making as "consistently strong".

The 2022/23 Budget: Council tax was set at the meeting of Council in February and was increased by 2.99%; 1.99% increase in the general rate and a 1% increase in the adult social care budget.

Adult social services will see an additional £35.4m of investment against savings of £10.5m. Children's services will receive a further £23.2m, with a further £10m this year for the SEND school programme.

Community and Environmental Services will receive an additional £11.2m; there will be a £10m pothole fund, new recycling centres across the county, £5m on library upkeep and extension of services and £12m on the Better Broadband project.

The councilors personal budget of £10k will continue for 22/23.

Your County Councilor: The Necton and Launditch division covers around 80 square miles of rural Norfolk and is the 3rd largest division in the county. It consists of 22 parishes which have between them 19 parish councils, 2 parish meetings and one parish administered by the district councilor.

As well as attending as many parish council meetings in the evening as I am able, I also attend meetings at County Hall and other informal meetings from home using Teams. At County Hall I attend meetings of full Council, and am a member of the Scrutiny Committee, the People and Communities Select Committee and the Audit Committee. Additionally, I am Chair of the Councils Standards Committee and Chair of the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel. I am also a substitute member of the Planning (Regulatory) Committee. Using Teams, I attend the Adult Social Care Performance Review Panel and regularly have conference calls with officers and other members to discuss matters affecting my division.

Mark Kiddle-Morris,

Member for Necton and Launditch Division.
Norfolk County Council.