

Norfolk County Council

County Councillor Report – Cllr Callum Ringer

Serving the parishes of: Alby with Thwaite; Aldborough and Thurgarton; Antingham; Aylmerton; Baconsthorpe; Bessingham; Bodham; Colby with Banningham; Corpusty and Saxthorpe; East Beckham; Erpingham with Calthorpe and Ingworth; Felbrigg; Felmingham; Gimingham; Gresham; Hanworth; Hempstead; Ingworth; Itteringham; Little Barningham; Matlaske; Metton; Plumstead; Roughton; Southrepps; Suffield; Sustead; Thorpe Market; West Beckham; Wickmere

August 2026

The past few months have been exceptionally warm and dry. We now have a hosepipe ban, drought conditions and a fire and rescue service that has been incredibly busy tackling a number of wildfires across the area. I would like to thank all those involved for their service and for the many hours they have worked around the clock.

Please do not light fires in these conditions, and if you see a bonfire or any other fire that may pose a risk, do not hesitate to call 999. Most people are sensible, of course, but it only takes one person acting irresponsibly to cause a serious incident.

Although August is usually a quieter month for council meetings, it has felt anything but quiet as a county councillor. There has been a great deal happening across the villages, including fetes, fayres, leaflets to deliver and a growing amount of casework across the division.

I remain very happy to meet councillors and clerks outside formal meetings to discuss any particular issues. My contact details are at the bottom of this report.

Update: Local Members Fund

At the July Full Council meeting, Liberal Democrats attempted to reinstate the Local Members Fund, but the motion was defeated by the Reform administration, assisted by the Great Yarmouth First/Restore Britain group, whose members abstained. The GYF group appears to increasingly be cozying up to the Reform administration.

I spoke in support of restoring the fund, which has helped deliver many smaller highways schemes in our villages that would otherwise struggle to secure funding. Earlier in the same meeting, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that more children do not walk or cycle to school because some roads are simply too dangerous. However, many of the smaller schemes intended to make those routes safer have previously relied on the Local Members Fund. The consequences of abolishing it do not appear to have been properly thought through.

There was some better news regarding the Parish Partnership Scheme. In response to a question from a Liberal Democrat councillor, the Council Leader committed to retaining it, although he appeared unfamiliar with the schemes existence when making that commitment!

Free bus travel for children in August & the return of the £2 bus fare cap from 2027.

Families across Norfolk can benefit from more affordable days out this summer through a new scheme offering free bus travel for children throughout August.

As part of the Government's Great British Summer Savings initiative, children aged 5 to 15 can travel for free on many bus routes across the county. The scheme is intended to help families reduce travel costs and make it easier to visit Norfolk's attractions, events and destinations during the school holidays.

The scheme also aims to encourage greater use of public transport, supporting sustainable travel and helping families access leisure, cultural and community activities.

Five of Norfolk's main bus operators are taking part, so children aged 5 to 15 can travel free throughout August on services operated by First Bus, Sanders, Stagecoach, Border Bus and Central Connect.

Further information about participating operators and Good Journey attractions is available at www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/summersavings.

Single bus fares in England will be capped at £2 for 2027, replacing the existing £3 cap and backed by £400 million of extra government funding. The cap will benefit longer-distance passengers, including rural and coastal communities where fares can be higher, and it supports access to work, education, services and appointments.

Norfolk Trading Standards - action on illicit cigarettes and tobacco

Norfolk County Council's Trading Standards team, working with Norfolk Police, HMRC and district councils, has continued enforcement against illicit tobacco and vapes, with more than 123,000 illicit cigarettes seized across Norfolk since May 2026.

Recent inspections in Great Yarmouth seized 10,820 illicit cigarettes and 4kg of rolling tobacco. The work protects residents, and supports legitimate businesses. Anyone with information about illegal tobacco sales can help by reporting it through the following channels:

If you are being coerced into preparing, distributing or selling illegal tobacco, you can report it to HMRC online by searching 'report fraud HMRC' on GOV.UK, or by contacting the HMRC Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.

Members of the public wishing to report illegal sales of vapes, cigarettes or tobacco can contact Citizens Advice by calling 0808 223 1133.

Norfolk Museums - summer holiday activities

Norfolk museums are hosting a range of summer holiday programs from mid-July to early September. Highlights include medieval activities at Norwich Castle, celebrating the 100th birthday at the Museum of Norwich at the Bridewell, nature and historical trails at Gressenhall Farm, pirate -themed fun at Time & Tide, and audio-visual trails at Strangers' Hall.

Further details of what's on at Norfolk Museums are available here.

Appointee Service consultation

Norfolk County Council is consulting on a proposal to introduce an administrative charge for its Appointee Service. The service supports some adults who are unable to manage their own benefits and do not have a suitable relative or friend able to do so. In these cases, the Council can receive and manage benefit payments on their behalf, pay essential bills and ensure the money is used in their best interests.

The consultation runs until midnight on Monday 12 October 2026. Further information is available at: https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/7312c5e6

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