Broadland District Councillors Report for Postwick with Witton Parish Council Meeting - 6 February 2025

Yare Valley Churches in Brundall have been awarded a Winter Pressures Grant of £350 towards providing free hot drinks and a Warm Space at their community café and toddler café.

Businesses in Broadland have donated toys, gifts and vouchers to the BDC Help Hub for families who are experiencing hardship.

BDC is undertaking work to address Health Inequalities across the district, particularly in relation to residents' living and working conditions. This ties in with the recent publication of the Health Inequality Framework for Action by the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board https://improvinglivesnw.org.uk/norfolk-and-waveney-5-year-joint-forward-plan/strategic-frameworks/

BDC is planning to make some changes to the Council Tax Assistance Scheme (CTA) for 2025/26 to improve fairness and improve the way CTA is assessed. The CTA is a scheme which reduces Council Tax bills to a more affordable level for low-income households.

The Brundall Short Mat Bowls Club in Brundall has been awarded a £300 BDC Keep it Going Grant, which will go towards the expenses of running the group

At BDC Main Council on 19 December 2024 it was agreed to:

Adopt a tenancy strategy which sets out the council's expectations of registered providers and private landlords in relation to housing tenure and affordability

Adopt the registered provider policies. The council became a registered provider if housing in September 2024. The policies agreed at this meeting include the Void Management policy, Tenancy Fraud policy, Temporary Accommodation Charging and Recovery of Arrears policy and the Antisocial Behaviour policy.

To adopt a matrix approach and revised Environmental Penalties for certain waste related offences

Adopt a new Permanent Pavement Licensing Regime with new fees and charges and revised policy documentation

To adopt a revised Unreasonably Persistent Complainant policy

To adopt the licensing policy entitled Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2025 – 2028

BDC plans to create a Women's Safety Charter to help prioritise the safety of women and girls. This will be based on feedback from residents. A survey is currently open to those of all genders and ages. To take part or join a focus group, click on this link: https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communities/womens-safety-charter

BDC can help residents who are looking for employment, training, or volunteering opportunities in 2025. The Help Hub Employability team can provide free one-to-one support. Find out more at **https://orlo.uk/BLjVh** or contact employability@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk for information.

BDC Cabinet endorsed the revised Planning in Health Protocol on 14 January. This sets out how NHS organisations, public health and local planning authorities will collaborate in preparing local plans and in determining planning applications. There is a new focus on the provision of dentistry services, and a focus on using new data to measure existing services and the demands made by new development.

BDC Cabinet agreed to an increase in the fee per property for the Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS), and to recommend updated governance arrangements for delivering GIRAMS projects. The aim of the strategy is to protect natural habitats in Norfolk from the pressures due to increases in visitor numbers.

A draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Custom and Self-Build Housing has been drawn up and will go out for a 6-week public consultation soon. BDC is required to make provision for custom and self-build housing in the district and the SPD provides further guidance and information.

BDC Cabinet has agreed to implement a Rechargeable Repairs Policy which gives more detail on the charges due when damage is caused to council properties and the management of maintenance and repairs.

A new draft Climate Change, Environment and Biodiversity Delivery Plan for 2025-2028 has been drawn up. BDC adopted an Environment Strategy and Delivery Plan in 2022 and set a Council-wide net-zero emissions target for 2030. The new draft builds on the original plan and sets out targeted actions to tackle climate change, enhance biodiversity, deliver an efficient waste and recycling service and improve overall environmental quality.

At an Extraordinary meeting of Norfolk County Council on Thursday 9th January the County Council voted to submit a request to government to cancel the upcoming May 2025 County elections and to be included on a priority list of counties for local government reorganisation. After the council meeting the NCC Cabinet met and agreed to write to the Minister of State requesting inclusion on the priority list and the cancellation of elections. This is a precursor to local government reorganisation involving the establishment of a Mayoral Strategic Authority and the existing district, city, and borough councils to be merged with the county council to form unitary councils. It is not yet clear what this will mean for Norfolk and Suffolk (Suffolk County Council also voted to submit a similar request to government). Government is scheduled to respond to the request in February as part of the **English Devolution White Paper**, published on the 16th December 2024. Hence, we will not know for certain if the county elections will be cancelled until the Minister has made his decision. Meanwhile, there has been speculation on what form both the Mayoral Strategic Authority and unitary councils might take across Norfolk and Suffolk but no

firm decisions have been made, and cannot be made, until the Minister has given his decision and consultations have taken place.

The Leader of Broadland District Council, Cllr Sue Holland, has made her position clear that she opposes a single county unitary and has made the point that the cancellation of elections should only be for areas where there is a plan in place for local government reorganisation and that is not the situation in Norfolk.

There is minimal comment on parish councils in the White Paper. However, in paragraph *4.2.3 Local government reorganisation* it states:

"We know people value the role of governance at the community scale and that can be a concern when local government is reorganised. We will therefore want to see stronger community arrangements when reorganisation happens in the way councils engage at a neighbourhood or area level. We will also rewire the relationship between town and parish councils and principal Local Authorities, strengthening expectations on engagement and community voice."

BDC is reviewing the Norfolk County Council Norfolk Economic Strategy 2024-29. The Strategy aligns with the Broadland Economic Growth Strategic Plan and supporting growth and investment, quality locations and infrastructure, skills development and innovation.

BDC is reviewing the Member Ward Grant and Community Grant Scheme. In the year 2023/24 at total of £41,396 was spent through Members Ward Grants on 72 projects in the district. Also in 2023/24 a total of £50,000 was allocated to 7 larger projects through the Community Grant Scheme.

Brundall Memorial Hall Committee were awarded £9000 towards the cost of making improvements to the Memorial Hall from the BDC Community Grant Scheme in October 2024. The committee have been successful in making bids for additional funds, including one from the National Lottery for £16,000 which will enable the second phase of their project to go ahead. Congratulations!

The finalists have been announced for the Broadland and South Norfolk Business Awards 2025. The Awards Ceremony will be on 19 March and the awards are sponsored by Birketts LLP. For more information see: https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/business/broadland-and-south-norfolk-business-awards/finalists-2025

The government is consulting on proposals to strengthen the standards and conduct regime for local authorities in England. The link to respond is here https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england and the final date for submissions is 26 February 2025

The Norfolk Net Zero Communities project is continuing. The link for more information and to sign up to the newsletters is here https://www.norfolkclimatechange.co.uk/norfolk-netzero-communities/

Tots2Teens are running activities for school age children during the February half term holiday. For more information and to book the link is https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communities/tots-2-teens

BDC is due for an Electoral Review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to consider the electoral arrangements for the district with the final report due to be published in June 2026. This is currently on hold until more is known about possible plans for local government reorganisation.

The next BDC Town and Parish Council Forum will be held online on 4 March at 1.00 pm.

(Submitted by Cllr Jan Davis and Cllr Eleanor Laming on 4/2/25)