

# Norfolk Matters

The Newsletter of Norfolk County Council



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## Green light for Disability Centre

New opportunities and a better quality of life will be on offer for thousands of people in the Great Yarmouth area thanks to a new Disability Resource Centre being built in Gorleston.

The £1M+ flagship centre, on Beacon Business Park, is being developed through a partnership led by Norfolk County Council and the Red Cross, with the support of Job Centre Plus and Gt Yarmouth Primary Care Trust. The lead partners have secured contributions of £300,000 from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and £100,000 from the East of England Development Agency under the Shaping the Future programme.

The County Council is contributing over £450,000, the Red Cross £68,000 and the Borough Council is donating land valued £75,000. NPS Property Consultants (the county council-owned property services company) is providing its services without charge.

Work is due to start this summer and the aim is to open the centre - the first of its kind in Norfolk - in the Spring of 2006.

Great Yarmouth has a higher proportion of

disabled people in the population than anywhere else in the county. Unemployment is high in the borough, and disability is a significant barrier to work. The new centre aims to remove obstacles to work by signposting training opportunities, building confidence, and dealing with practical life issues in the home and the workplace and general mobility problems. The centre will also offer training opportunities to employers in the area on legislation and making them aware of the support and assistance available to disabled people in the workplace.

The project will provide a centre for displaying equipment for disabled people to assist them with daily living, and at work. Professional advice will be on hand from occupational therapists and from Job Centre Plus staff, who will hold weekly clinics. The NHS wheelchair service and the British Red Cross equipment loan service will also be based at the centre.

The Centre's link workers will engage with prospective employers and work to achieve a long-term change in attitudes.

Although aimed at meeting the needs of people in and around Gt Yarmouth, it is likely to attract disabled people from further afield. The project will engage with a wide variety of disabled people and through its work with Job Centre Plus it will link disabled people to employment opportunities.

## Chairman highlights **unsung heroes**

New Norfolk County Council Chairman John Baskerville will be using his year in office to shine a spotlight on the valuable work done by the county's Local Heroes.

Mr Baskerville, 65, a county councillor for 12 years who has lived in Norfolk for 37 years, wants to use his year in office to celebrate the contribution made by Norfolk's army of unsung heroes – from caretakers and cooks to fire-fighters and foster-carers.

The new Vice-Chairman is Pat Hacon, 56, who represents Caister-on-Sea and was first elected to the County Council in 1985.



# Colour-coded park & ride

Use of Norfolk County Council's Norwich Park & Ride services has gone up by more than 50 per cent in the last year, attracting over 2.8m passengers in 2004/5. The six sites in Norwich, which represent an investment spanning 12 years, now offer almost 5,000 parking spaces.

The park and ride sites and services are now being colour-coded to make them easier to use. Each service – including car parks, buses, publicity material and bus stops – is being branded with a different bright colour to make them instantly recognisable.

Other park & ride improvements include:

- New buses - double-deckers at Harford and Thickthorn – all with low floors, access ramps, wide gangways, space for wheelchairs and pushchairs and the latest equipment to monitor reliability and frequency;
- An earlier start - 6.40am instead of 7am;
- Late night services until 8.30pm every Thursday;

- Bank holiday services from 9.30am to 5.30pm (not Christmas and New Year's Day);
- Flexible season tickets for six days, 25 days or a year.

Other forms of public transport have also been doing well. Use of demand responsive transport, which includes community transport and dial-a-ride services, has increased by 50 per cent and use of bus services in Norfolk has risen 12.5 per cent.

Services like the Wymondham Flexibus and the Diss and District Borderhoppa operate on a dial-a-ride basis, providing vital links between small rural villages and local market towns.



## Opening date for Bus Station

The new Norwich Bus Station will be fully operational from Monday August 8th.

The £4.2 million bus station, which features two giant canopies providing over 2,000 square metres of shelter for passengers, is being provided by the County Council with Government funding.

It will feature a travel centre open seven days a

week operated by County Council staff for travel advice and the sale of tickets. There will also be ticket vending machines for local bus services, as well as toilets, a waiting area and catering facilities.

The new 12-bay bus station - designed by NPS Property Consultants Ltd, the County Council-owned property services company - will be a dramatic improvement on the old site, which gave a dismal first impression of Norwich to many people. The new facility will allow buses to both enter from and leave on to Surrey Street and Queens Road, significantly cutting journey times.

## Bus link to Great Yarmouth saved

Norfolk County Council has pledged £40,000 to continue running an evening and Sunday bus service between Belton, Bradwell and Market Gates in Great Yarmouth.

First had decided to withdraw the evening 6/6a service, which runs from Monday to Saturday, and the Sunday service. The injection of funds by the county council will allow the services to continue unchanged until October.

## Peddars Wayfarer

Norfolk County Council has launched a new bus service that will enable people to explore the Peddars Way National Trail with greater ease. This bus service will also improve travel opportunities for local people between Thetford and Swaffham.

The 'Peddars Wayfarer' bus service runs twice daily between Thetford bus and rail stations and Swaffham market place, calling at villages and major access points along the Peddars Way. The bus tows a trailer which can carry up to eight bicycles. The service links to trains from Norwich and Cambridge at Thetford, and to X1 bus services from King's Lynn and Norwich at Swaffham.

# Why did they do that?

## Budget decisions explained

Readership surveys and consultations have told us that people want to know more about some of the key decisions the Council takes – especially when they appear controversial. The Council said it would explain these decisions more carefully.

### Reduced spending on residential care

In the budget consultation edition of Norfolk Matters, one of the issues that concerned respondents was a proposal to reduce spending on residential care for older people by £500,000 'as community-based services are developed.'

Nearly half the responses were opposed to this, and some people said they needed an assurance that 'community-based services' would adequately meet people's needs.

The County Council accepted the proposal on the basis that the replacement services would not only be adequate, but would in fact meet most people's

preference to stay in their own home and retain as much independence as possible.

To achieve this the Adult Social Services department will:

- Continue to develop Housing with Care services.
- Offer intensive home care, coupled with, as necessary, day care services and meals on wheels.
- Extend the 'direct payments' scheme, so that people can arrange the care that suits them best.
- Provide respite care and more support for carers.
- Look at developing services with lower levels of need to prevent the need for more intensive services later.

Individual assessments will determine the services required, and residential care will still be an option where necessary.

The council's decision to invest £700,000 for future service efficiency will be looked at in the next Norfolk Matters.

## Mobile Library Timetable Information

Information about every mobile library route is now available on the Norfolk County Council Web Site at [www.library.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.library.norfolk.gov.uk). Follow the link to the Mobile Library section. In this you will find information about all our routes plus the dates of the next few visits. This is available at any time.

Editors of parish magazines (which often publish timetable information) are still welcome to contact us by phone on 01603 222267 during office hours if this easier.

## Grants on-line through libraries

An investment by Norfolk County Council's library service has opened the door to potential grant aid totalling millions of pounds for businesses, voluntary organisations and community groups across the county. The county council website now offers everyone in the

county access to Grantnet – a searchable on-line database of information on over 4,000 grants available in the UK and in Europe.

The initiative has been launched in partnership with Norwich and Norfolk Voluntary Services who will also be able to help local groups through the application process.

Grantnet can be accessed via the county council website at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/grantnet](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/grantnet). Free email and internet is available at all Norfolk libraries.

## Disability Awareness Show

Anyone wanting to find out more about the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act can do so at the free East Anglian Disability Awareness Show at Ipswich Town Football Club from 8.30 am to 8.00 pm on Wednesday July 20th. Visitors will

be able to talk to service and equipment providers, ask direct questions to the professionals and obtain the latest DDA information. For more information contact Lucy or Laura at Ipswich Town Football Club on 01473 400 580/523.

# New County Council Cabinet

The Conservative Party remains in control (overall majority 8) of Norfolk County Council after the county elections in May. The state of the parties (old council in brackets): Conservative 46 (47), Labour 22 (26), Liberal Democrat 14 (11), Green 2 (0). The Council has approved a new Cabinet:



**Alison King.**  
Leader of the Council



**Shaun Murphy**  
Deputy Leader and  
member for Finance,  
Property, Personnel and  
Corporate Affairs.



**John Gretton,**  
Member for Cultural Services.



**Rosalie Monbiot**  
Member for Children's  
Services



**Richard Rockcliffe,**  
Member for Economic  
Development.



**Adrian Gunson**  
Member for Planning and  
Transportation



**Ian Monson**  
Member for Waste and the  
Environment.



**Chris Mowle**  
Member for Adult Social  
Services



**Wyndham Northam**  
Member for Commercial Services.



**Harry Humphrey**  
Member for Fire and  
Community Protection

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## Opposition



**Peter Harwood**, is leader  
of the Labour group. Trevor  
Wainwright is Deputy Leader.



**Barbara Hacker**  
is leader of the Liberal  
Democrat group, with Brian  
Hannah as her deputy.

The election of a second member means the Greens can choose to form an opposition group - see next edition



# Forward Plan

Every month the County Council updates its Forward Plan of Key Decisions. This can be seen in full on our website ([www.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk)). Cabinet agenda papers can also be viewed online.

Key decisions coming before Cabinet in the summer include:

## **Local Transport Plan**

The five-year Local Transport Plan (LTP) describes the County Council's transport strategy and broad implementation programme. It helps to secure funding from the Government of around £45m each year for a range of transport improvements. Norfolk is rated as 'excellent' for delivering its first LTP (2001-2006) and must submit a provisional second Local Transport Plan (2006 to 2011) in July, followed in March 2006 by the final version.

Following consultations a draft version is due to be presented to Cabinet on 27 June and full Council in July.

Mark Thompson 01603 223264,  
[mark.r.thompson@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:mark.r.thompson@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Proposed new primary school, Dussindale, Thorpe St Andrew**

There have been no objections to the proposed new primary school at Dussindale. The project needs Cabinet approval and planning approval. The aim is for work to begin in early 2006, opening in September 2007.

Helen Bates 01603 638168  
[helen.bates@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:helen.bates@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Best Value Performance indicator and targets for the next three years.**

Debbie Bartlett, Head of Policy & Performance,  
01603 222475

[debbie.bartlett@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:debbie.bartlett@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Options for a county-wide Concessionary Travel Scheme.**

A feasibility study is due to finish in June. This will be considered by officer and member working groups before a recommendation goes to Cabinet, probably in July. If Cabinet agrees that proposals should be taken forward, public consultation will take place in the autumn.

Tracey Jessop, 01603 224368,  
[tracey.jessop@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.jessop@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Norfolk Schools Capital Project**

Anna Davidson 223050,  
[anna.davidson@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:anna.davidson@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Great Yarmouth residents' parking scheme**

Paul Elliott, 01603 22210  
[paul.elliott@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:paul.elliott@norfolk.gov.uk)

## **Norwich Area PFI approval of preferred bidder**

Linda Boal 01603 228021  
[linda.boal@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:linda.boal@norfolk.gov.uk)

## Centre for **Engineering Excellence**

Bill Williams of Lotus Group has been appointed Chief Executive of Norfolk's planned Centre for Engineering Excellence, funded by Norfolk County Council and other partners.

Based near Hethel close to the Lotus Group premises, the Centre is due to open in early 2006. Its aim is to energize the region's engineering and manufacturing industry by fostering new businesses, and providing high quality training and workforce development for companies across Norfolk and beyond.

The building will contain workshops, office units, training facilities, meeting and consultation rooms, a café and a 40-seat conference room. For further information contact David Dukes, Economic Development Manager, on 01603 223142, email [david.dukes@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:david.dukes@norfolk.gov.uk).

## **Web coverage accolade**

Norfolk County Council's online local election coverage was judged to be "very good" by the Society of IT Managers - one of only four councils in the country to receive such a high rating. Most were classed as poor.

# Junction improvements, **Gt Yarmouth**

Work underway on Acle New Road, Great Yarmouth, will provide better pedestrian and vehicle access to the Asda superstore and the railway station. A new signal-controlled junction will improve access for vehicles and there will be a new pedestrian and cycle crossing.

In response to local residents' concerns, the existing 50mph speed limit will be reduced to 30mph.

The improvement will cost around £525,000 and is being paid for by Asda as part of a highway improvement scheme agreed with the County Council. Work will be finished by the end of June.

## **Hospital access** road open

The Cringleford link road, which provides an important new access to the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital, is now open.

The County Council started work on the £3.4m link road last summer. The scheme includes a new roundabout (under construction in the photograph) on the A11 Cringleford bypass and a new road to the west of the village to link with Colney Lane and then the existing hospital roundabout. The bus gate on Colney Lane has been removed to allow traffic to flow between the A11 and the hospital. Measures have been taken to prevent rat-running through the centre of Cringleford.



## **Supplier Support Scheme**

Norfolk County Council's Supplier Support Scheme project has been highlighted by Environment Secretary Margaret Beckett for leading the way in acting sustainably. The case study was put forward at the launch, by the Prime Minister, of the Government's new Sustainable Development Strategy as a leading example of how it is possible to be both successful and use resources efficiently.

The Scheme provides free, confidential and impartial assistance to suppliers and potential suppliers of Norfolk County Council. A small team of experienced advisors uses a 'healthcheck' site visit format to identify opportunities and risks to participating businesses. Subsequent support is carefully tailored and integrated, where possible, into existing business activity. The focus is upon formal environmental management systems and low-cost and easily-achievable measures, such as improved staff awareness, energy-saving light bulbs and water-saving devices.

### **Links**

Supplier Support Scheme:  
[www.ecotech.org.uk/ss](http://www.ecotech.org.uk/ss)

## **Norfolk pupils** doing well

Figures published by the Department for Education and Skills show some of Norfolk's best ever results in national key stage three tests last year, with all three subject areas - English, maths and science - above the national average.

13 and 14 year olds who sat the tests scored the county's highest percentage scores in both maths and English. In science, Norfolk's results mirror the national trend and remain above the national average.

# Better recycling

## Responding to your views

Norfolk's household waste recycling centres have been receiving a £200,000 facelift and are now easier to find, accept a wider range of materials, are more secure and more customer-friendly.

The improvements were in response to comments from residents and users who wanted a greater range of recycling facilities, better information about what can and cannot be taken to a centre, and better signposting to sites.

Signs have been improved, operators are being trained in customer service and staff have new uniforms and name badges. Security has been boosted through CCTV. Most of the work is complete, but the remainder, including some signs, will be carried out over the summer.

All 21 sites now accept fluorescent tubes and dry batteries

Any Norfolk resident can use the sites to dispose of recyclable household waste from their home.

These sites can be used for:

- Green, brown and clear glass
- Textiles
- Paper and magazines and cardboard
- Green waste
- Motor oil and vehicle batteries
- Dry batteries
- Fluorescent tubes

Businesses (and charities) cannot use these sites. For this reason, only a small quantity of construction and demolition or DIY waste (the equivalent of one rubbish sack or one item such as a door or window) will be accepted once a week. Anyone wanting immediate disposal of larger quantities of DIY waste can take it to one of five sites around the county, or should use a skip.

For further advice on household waste please contact Norfolk County Council's Waste Management Section on: 0844 800 800 4, email: [recycling@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@norfolk.gov.uk) or visit the county councils website: [www.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk)



## Compost Crusaders

A touring theatre group has visited eight primary schools across the county as part of a Schools Waste Action Club (SWAC) initiative to boost composting. Circus Takeway performed their Compost Crusaders show, which promotes the benefits of composting.

The 180 Norfolk schools currently with the SWAC are entitled to a free compost bin for the school grounds.

Other schools have been given lessons on how to look after a wormery. Worms are nature's fastest composters.

The County Council also promoted composting as part of the 'Wild in Your Garden' programme run by BBC Radio Norfolk and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich, in May.

Another SWAC initiative will mean that eye-catching artwork, designed by children from seven Norfolk high schools to drive home the waste reduction and recycling message, will soon be displayed on the back of Norfolk County Council's yellow school buses.



# Early support **for disabled children**

Norfolk has won national funding for a new 'Early Support' programme which will benefit disabled children under three and their families.

The county successfully lobbied to become a pathfinder area for Early Support, a national programme aimed at coordinating services from different agencies, including the County Council's Children's Services, health services and voluntary organisations, and working in partnership with parents.

Norfolk, one of only nine large counties to be involved at this stage, will be providing a training programme for all the professionals involved in working with disabled children and their families.

The Early Support pilot programme is funded by the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health.

Contact: Sara Clark, Interagency Coordinator Norfolk Early Support programme, 01362 694711

## **E-ven better**

### – Norfolk E-Map Explorer

The County Council has made Norfolk E-Map Explorer even better, thanks to comments from users.

Launched just over a year ago with New Opportunities Fund support, the hugely popular internet-based service allows users to compare digital images of historical maps and aerial photographs of Norfolk.

Comments and requests from users led to the a number of improvements allowing users to:

- Have a larger view of a single map or photograph, at any screen resolution.
- Zoom the images out further, to get overviews of larger areas of Norfolk.
- Find out, via a new information page, who to contact for copies of photographs, maps or part maps.

Norfolk E-Map Explorer is available to everyone, without charge, through the internet at [www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.historic-maps.norfolk.gov.uk). Free internet access is available at all Norfolk County Council libraries.

## **Cromer Museum improvement**

A £500,000 improvement programme is underway at Cromer Museum.

The work includes:

- Developing a new accessible entrance through the Henry Blogg Garden and including a lift, shop and reception area.
- Creating an education room.
- Converting some outbuildings into a geology gallery.
- Improving the displays and collection storage.
- New offices and toilets.
- An Education and Access Officer will be employed to help promote the museum.

Museums staff secured Heritage Lottery and European Objective 2 funding, boosting the contributions from the County Council, North Norfolk District Council, and the Friends of Cromer Museum.

The museum is expected to reopen before the end of 2005.

## **Every Child Matters** leaflet

Every Child Matters is a national programme of change with two main aims - to integrate services around the needs of children and young people and to shift the focus from reacting to children's difficulties to preventing things going wrong in the first place.

The leaflet is being distributed with Norfolk Matters on behalf of Norfolk's Every Child Matters Advisory Board and is aimed at everyone who works with children and young people.



If you need 'Norfolk Matters' in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format

or in a different language, please contact the Communications Unit on (01603) 222972 (minicom 223833) and we will do our best to help.