

George Boyd: County Councillor's Report

Waveney Valley Division

September 2026



The Parish Partnership Scheme

Norfolk County Council's Parish Partnership Scheme (PPS) is a long-running community funding programme that enables town and parish councils to work with the county council to deliver local highway and transport improvements. Operating since 2011, the scheme uses a matched-funding model, typically with Norfolk County Council contributing 50% of approved project costs and local councils providing the remaining 50%. The programme has become one of the county's most successful examples of community-led infrastructure investment.

The scheme was established to give communities a direct role in identifying and delivering local transport improvements that matter most to residents. It supports projects that:

- Improve road safety.
- Reduce vehicle speeds.
- Enhance pedestrian accessibility.
- Encourage walking and cycling.
- Improve access to local services and facilities.
- How the Scheme Works

Each year, Norfolk County Council invites town and parish councils to submit bids for highway improvement projects. Successful schemes are generally funded on a 50:50 basis between the county council and the local council. Applications are assessed for:

- Value for money.
- Safety benefits.
- Community outcomes.
- Technical feasibility.
- Compliance with highway standards.

The scheme funds a wide variety of local improvements, including:

- Village gateways.
- Footpath and trod construction.
- Bus shelters.
- Benches and street furniture.
- Signage improvements.
- Access enhancements.
- Surface repairs and minor highway works.
- Speed reduction measures, including Speed Awareness Message (SAM2) signs and Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).

One of the most common applications is for SAM2 speed awareness signs, which display a driver's speed and encourage compliance with speed limits. These have become popular among parishes seeking cost-effective traffic-calming measures.

The main advantage of this scheme is that it means Parish councils can identify issues that matter most to residents, such as speeding traffic, poor pedestrian access, missing footpaths or inadequate signage. The scheme gives local councils a direct route to secure improvements, which may otherwise be unaffordable, based on community priorities rather than waiting for county-wide programmes.

Details of the application process for 2027/8 applications will become available shortly. The previous application deadline was 1st December, so interested Parish Councils should now begin considering potential projects.

Drought

On 29 July, the Environment Agency declared that seven areas of England are now officially in drought:

- East Anglia,
- Hertfordshire and the whole of London,
- Thames Valley,
- Hampshire & the Isle of Wight,
- Devon & Cornwall,
- The West Midlands
- Wessex (covering Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, and south Gloucestershire)

An Anglian Water temporary use hosepipe ban is legally in force across parts of Norfolk. Breaking the rules risks fines up to £1,000. The guidelines restrict mains-fed hosepipes for gardens, vehicle cleaning, and pools, though watering cans, recycled water butts, and specific health and business-related exemptions are permitted – full details can be found here:

<https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/save-water/hosepipe-restrictions/restrictions-and-exceptions>

The ban has had a noticeable effect according to Anglian Water, who have experienced a 9% drop in demand since the ban came in force. However, the water shortage remains severe despite the recent rain. As such, all residents should limit their water usage as much as possible. The ban will remain in place until Anglian Water is confident that water levels in rivers and reservoirs have improved sufficiently.

Appointment of New Chief Executive

Following a recruitment process commenced early last month, Norfolk County Council announced on 5th August that Dennis Bacon is its preferred appointment for chief executive.

Dennis has wide ranging senior executive level experience of leading and delivering transformation in the health and care sector and across a series of commercial ventures.

His previous roles have included Chairman of the Norfolk Independent Care Association for 19 years supporting over 600 organisations with 11,000 staff, and he was an executive member of the Norfolk

and Waveney Sustainability and Transformation Partnership. He was also the first independent sector representative appointed to an NHS System Leadership Board. He has also been a past recipient of Outstanding Leadership in Public Services Award from Norfolk County Council. Dennis and his family live in Norfolk.

County council leader, Cllr David Bick, said: “We were impressed with Dennis’s commercial and public sector experience, and his determination to lead the changes required at Norfolk County Council to ensure value for money and quality services for the residents of Norfolk.”

His appointment was approved by an extraordinary meeting of the full council on 14th August. Kat Hulatt, who has been acting as interim Chief Executive, will return to the post of Head of legal services and monitoring officer.

Look twice, save a life

Norfolk Fire and Rescue (NFRS) colleagues alongside our partners in the Norfolk Road Safety Partnership, launched a motorcycle safety campaign, aimed at reducing the number of serious and fatal collisions on our roads involving riders. The campaign is for motorists and motorcyclists alike and comes with the strapline: 'We share the road. We share the responsibility.' It highlights small changes that both drivers and riders can make to bring about big improvements in the safety of our roads.

As part of this campaign, NCC is offering the Hugger course at half price. This is for Norfolk residents, for sessions booked and delivered between August and October 2026. Norfolk Hugger Training is a one-to-one motorcycle coaching programme run through Norfolk County Council to help qualified riders improve their skills, confidence and road safety. Details can be found here:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/69182/Norfolk-Hugger>

Suffolk Water Recycling Project

The Suffolk Water Recycling, Transfer and Storage (SWRTS) Project is a major new water infrastructure scheme being developed by Essex & Suffolk Water, which intends to improve long-term water security in Suffolk and the wider East Anglian region. It is currently in the pre-application phase.

Link to the document from Essex & Suffolk Water outlining the project:

https://suffolkwaternetwork.co.uk/static/documents/SWRTS_NSC_POA_A05_DIGITAL.5f8f8134f576.pdf

How this proposed project will affect the Waveney Valley Division:

- During the installation of the pipes there will be a temporary impact on local communities: construction traffic, including HGV movements carrying pipes, materials and equipment; noise and vibration from excavation, trenching and reinstatement works; temporary road closures or traffic management, particularly where pipelines cross roads or lanes; impacts on farmland, with strips of land temporarily taken out of production while trenches are excavated and reinstated; effects on public rights of way, footpaths and bridleways where crossings are required. Long term the pipes will be buried underground so should not cause any major issues for residents.
- The preferred route would entail the water being discharged into the River Waveney at an outflow between Geldeston and Ellingham, before being abstracted at a new intake near

Shipmeadow. Key concerns here which will have to be scrutinised in detail: impact on water levels in the Waveney, effect on ecology, and the potential impact on the floodplain, where there has been frequent and sometimes severe winter flooding in recent years.

Apprenticeships

The Norfolk County Council apprenticeships website has now been updated with the new amendments to government policy on apprenticeships which come into effect this October. Take a look at the handy Apprenticeship Financial Support Matrix 2026 <https://www.apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org/article/72448/Government-Incentives> and please pass on if you know an employer who could be interested.

Norfolk Crisis and Resilience Service

The Norfolk Crisis and Resilience Service (CRS) continues to provide support for Norfolk residents experiencing financial hardship, helping people with both immediate crises and longer-term financial resilience.

Residents aged 16 and over who live in Norfolk and are either receiving a means-tested benefit or are on a low income can access the service. Support is available for urgent needs such as food, energy costs and heating oil. Applications can be made online, with requests typically reviewed within 48 to 72 hours of receiving the required bank statement.

In addition to emergency assistance, the service offers a wider resilience assessment to help address the underlying causes of financial difficulties. This can include budgeting and money management support, assistance in reducing household bills, access to grants and other financial aid, referrals to debt advice and community organisations, and help with employment, training and disability-related expense claims.

The service aims to provide joined-up support that not only helps residents through immediate hardship but also reduces the likelihood of future financial crises. Applications can be made online, by telephone, or with support from the CRS team where digital access is limited.

You can apply for support online at www.norfolk.gov.uk/crs or contacting the team on 0344 800 8020.

The service can also assist parents in financial hardship to provide school uniforms for those whose children are in receipt of free school meals. Details can be found here: www.norfolk.gov.uk/uniform

Contact Me

As always, I encourage residents to contact me with any local concerns or initiatives they would like me to assist with:

Email: george.boyd.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk

Phone: 01603 224263

In most cases, the best way to contact me is via email. Please include as much detail as possible so that I can effectively assist you with your enquiry.

I will also be regularly attending Parish Council meetings. However, with there being so many in the Waveney Valley, as would be expected of a large rural division, there are often multiple meetings on the same day. In these situations, I will alternate between them each month.