

George Boyd: County Councillor's Report

Waveney Valley Division

August 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.

Prevention of Accidental Fires

Out of control bonfires, a discarded cigarette and bin fires were among the causes of fire that Norfolk firefighters dealt with recently. Norfolk residents are being urged to continue to take extra care when out and about this summer to cut the risk of avoidable fires. These types of fires are being dealt with by crews across the county, alongside other fire and rescue emergencies.

Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service has no legal powers to ban bonfires, or stop use of sky lanterns or disposable barbecues. However, they are encouraging people not to use them during these prolonged hot and dry conditions as they can easily cause fires that can spread and present a threat to life and property.

Steps the public can take to reduce fire risk in Norfolk this summer are:

- Fully discard cigarettes and other smoking materials.
- Take litter home or put it safely in a bin.
- Don't use disposable barbecues, light campfires or bonfires in hot and dry weather.
- Download the What3Words app to ensure that you can pinpoint a rural location quickly in the event of a fire.

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, with little rain, if any, forecast over the next few weeks. 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>

Full Meeting of Norfolk County Council 21st July 2026

At the last full Meeting of Norfolk County Council held on 21st of July 3 motions were passed by members:

- Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights

A motion seeking a review of the Council's Constitution and Member Code of Conduct to ensure they provide clear guidance on councillors' rights to freedom of expression under Article 10. It aims to protect robust political debate and provide greater clarity for members, officers and the public.

- Review and Modernisation of Norfolk County Council Constitution

A motion proposing the creation of a cross-party working group to undertake a comprehensive review of the Council's Constitution. The review would focus on modernising governance arrangements, improving transparency and accessibility, incorporating new technology and ensuring the Constitution remains legally compliant and fit for purpose.

- Ambition for SEND in Norfolk

A motion supporting Norfolk's SEND Reform Plan by encouraging the recruitment, training and development of additional specialist teachers, therapists and psychologists needed to deliver improved support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across the county.

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.