

WORTWELL PARISH COUNCIL

FEBRUARY MEETING 2026

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Nominations have opened for the **South Norfolk Community Awards 2026**. Do you know someone who goes the extra mile to help others? This is your chance to shine a light on their work by nominating them for an award. Find out more at: <https://orlo.uk/WXEto>

Budget. The council voted unanimously to increase the Council Tax for a Band D property by £5 to £180.00 for 2026/27. Again, keeping the increase below inflation. While most of the budget relates to large items such as waste collection and investment in leisure facilities, there are some small points of potential local interest. There is £150,000 allocated to help communities with local nature conservation and recovery initiatives in line with the 'Our Nature Recovery' concept which has been adopted in Wortwell. There is £500,000 for new community facilities and £2,250,000 for improving existing community facilities and open spaces. There is now £450,000 in the Community Action Fund for local projects, with the maximum given to individual grants now set at £40,000. There is also £350,000 allocated to a Business Builder fund to support businesses grow and develop.

Recycling. The next initiative that is being considered is reverse recycling machines. You may have seen these in countries in Europe. You pay a deposit on cans and bottles and take them to a vending machine to return them. The aim is to improve recycling rates. I learned that people are putting batteries and disposable vapes into the recycling bins. Please don't do this as they can cause fires in the recycling process. Residents can now take advantage of a new bookable kerbside collection service for unwanted small electrical items and household batteries. Find out more and book your collection: <https://orlo.uk/knEMc>

Elections and Democracy. I think that most people are justifiably confused by the chaotic stop-start, on-off nature of the local elections. I have repeatedly said that things may change, and indeed they have. The County Council elections planned for this year are now back on. But whether the change and a potentially new Council composition will have an impact the proposed Unitary Authority elections next year are still to be determined, and we are yet to be told by government whether we will have a one, two, or three unitary structure. At least local people will now have the right to have their say at the ballot box for their County Councillors.

I have allocated £250 from my **Members Ward Fund** to Waveney Volunteers for Nature for materials and equipment. I still have £200 remaining, but time is running out to use it. If you know of any group that would like help, please ask them to get in touch. Next year we will be allowed £2,000 instead of £1,000, so there will be greater funding to help local groups.

I will hold my surgery on 14 March at Harleston Information Plus on Exchange Street in Harleston at 10:00. It would be great to see you there.

Cllr Trevor Graham
Member for Harleston
South Norfolk Council