

WORTWELL PARISH COUNCIL

JULY MEETING 2025

DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT

Environment. As you all know, protecting the environment is one of my key interests. An Expression of Interest to the South Norfolk Council (SNC) Nature Conservation Fund for a project within Harleston was reviewed and the group have been invited to submit a full application. A new community group called Harleston Greenspace CIC has been created to deliver the vision and a planning application together with Biodiversity Net Gain calculations has been submitted. SNC has partially funded the planning application from a 'Go For It' grant. This initiative could provide a template for others to follow.

I attended a meeting of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) partnership at Brockdish where people discussed ways to deliver the plans. The 'Community Nature Recovery' work in Wortwell, Needham, and Harleston may be included as a case study to guide other people.

Planning. To help with future planning applications and to protect the local environment, SNC commissioned The Landscape Partnership to undertake a study to look at different types of energy projects, including solar farms, battery storage, substations, underground cable routes and overhead powerlines. Public consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document will run until 18 August, giving residents and stakeholders the opportunity to share their views and help shape the future of our landscape.

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/supplementary-planning-documents/supplementary-planning-documents-south-norfolk>

Asylum Seekers. You have probably seen that we have recently been in the news. The Home Office told SNC, with little notice, that it will move to housing single male adults in the Park Hotel in Diss. The Park Hotel has recently been used by families, including women and children, seeking asylum. Children are in local schools and many of the mothers are involved with local groups. There is currently lack of clarity on when the change is planned to take place and the onwards location of current residents.

Cllr Graham Minshull "Diss is a proud and welcoming place. The community has supported vulnerable families at the hotel and showed incredible generosity during the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Whatever the circumstances, I know our residents will continue to show kindness and decency, but we must be given the information and support needed to respond appropriately." SNC have written to the Home Office to express concerns and ask for further information.

Neighbourhood Planning.

Town and Parish Councils whose Neighbourhood Plans are several years old and recent changes in planning law and the National Planning Policy Framework have highlighted concerns that they may need updating. SNC has established a grant scheme to support the review of Neighbourhood Plans in the district. The fund is available to help meet project costs.

I will hold my next surgery on 9 August 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