

Progress report

The ups are generally matched by the downs. The petition about safety on Upgate Street in Carleton Rode received the usual “we only care about making cars go fast” response from the head officer in highways. I’ve sent back a very angry response but I’m now working with my Highways team to try to find a solution. I am also very angry about the appalling meeting I had with National Grid where I supposed they would want to listen to my concerns about their change of route in Bunwell, but no.

I am extremely angry about the recent applications for additional energy infrastructure in Great Moulton, Dickleburgh and Rushall. None of these companies had the courtesy to notify or consult the County Councillor, so I’ve only picked up info via others. The companies promoting them are lazy and ill-informed. The rudeness and carelessness of these applications and their ignorance of local conditions and of the nature of Norfolk roads beggars belief. I have put in a detailed submission to the government’s consultation for their land use strategy, and I’ve had a useful discussion with Ben Goldsborough MP, so let’s hope the government can get some strategic thinking brought to bear sooner rather than later. I have prepared a motion to go to Full Council with requests about pressure we can bring to bear to stop the planning Bill from scrapping all the environmental protections, and to use the excellent principles enunciated in the land use strategy to ensure that energy infrastructure is strategically located where it belongs, in brownfield sites and beside motorways and other existing infrastructure, not on unspoilt areas that provide habitats for biodiversity, food crop agriculture or recreational green spaces.

We’ve had a useful meeting with landowners regarding the location and accessibility of one of the footpaths in Winfarthing, and are working to establish the exact route of the existing right of way with a view to identifying a diversion or other mutually beneficial solution to the problems.

I’m awaiting delivery of road safety schemes in Burston and Bressingham. I’m pleased to see the arrival of new chevrons and paint on Station Road in Tivetshall. I now have another tranche of money to spend for this year, and will aim to use some of it for Upgate Street, but probably not before Highways have worked out how to rebuild the road there.

Devolution and local government reorganisation

I have responded in a personal capacity for my home address to the **online survey** to collect views about the best way to organise local authorities in Norfolk to make things accessible and straightforward for local residents. I need to see if I can also do a separate submission in my role as a councillor for the whole of the West Depwade division. Please also do your own submission and help less digitally connected people to get to it too. It’s open till 20th May. You can access the survey here: <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/public-engagement/lgrfeedback/>

Changes at County Council

Although we were not given a chance to elect new County Councillors across the county this year, there were three County Council by-elections on 1st May, in Thetford West, Mancroft Ward in Norwich, and Marshland North in the King’s Lynn area. Thetford West (formerly Labour) and Marshland North (recently Reform but formerly Conservative) elected their Reform candidate, (but in Marshland North this was Julian Kirk, who defected from Conservative to Reform earlier in 2025).

The Mancroft seat was retained by the Green Party, electing Serene Shibli by a substantial majority, so the Green Group is now back up to full strength. I continue as leader of the Green Group and have offered to stand for re-election as leader at our Green Group AGM on Monday 12th May. We are expecting to get 5 committee places again this year. The Conservative, Labour and Lib Dem groups are all depleted by one member each, since an independent member who was working with the Lib Dems has left that alliance now, but there are additionally two new groups who are smaller than the Greens, namely the Progressive Independent Group (3 councillors) and Reform (2 councillors).

Info from County Council

Nature recovery strategy

A **consultation** on Norfolk's draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is open now and closes on 11th June. They want feedback on priorities for restoring and enhancing nature across Norfolk.

The aims are to reverse biodiversity loss, support climate adaptation, and promote sustainable land use to benefit both people and wildlife. The draft strategy has been created with input from other local authorities, nature experts, farmers, land managers and Norfolk residents.

You can review the [Local Habitat Map](#), draft LNRS, FAQs and respond [here](#).

Stay safe near water

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is encouraging people to learn life-saving water safety skills this spring and summer. Last year they attended 16 incidents in which people lost their lives in water.

This initiative is part of the National Fire Chiefs Council's Be Water Aware Week, which aims to raise awareness about the risk of accidental drowning and provide water safety advice ahead of the warmer months. Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service is part of the Norfolk Water Safety Forum, which is committed to educating the public and improving safety on our waterways and coastal areas. Other partners include Norfolk Constabulary's Broads Beat, the RNLI, HM Coastguard, and the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership.

Local Government Association Update

LGA climate change guidance

The Local Government Association (LGA) has released welcome new [guidance](#) for government on how to build collaboration with local councils to deliver on the shared ambition for responding to climate change. It focusses on empowering local councils with the necessary resources, regulatory authority, and financial support to drive climate action across key sectors, including housing, energy, and environmental protection.

The report recognises local councils' place-based expertise and argues that through collaborative governance, targeted financial mechanisms, and a skilled workforce, the government can achieve its climate commitments while delivering economic and social benefits locally. I'm keen to get to work on initiatives that will help people to keep warm in winter, cool in summer, and run their homes comfortably for far lower costs, with enough water, good flood protections and useful transport options.

Contact me

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Catherine Rowett

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