DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR STODY WARD PARISHES – OCTOBER 2026

Briningham, Brinton with Sharrington, Corpusty with Saxthorpe, Edgefield, Melton Constable, Stody with Hunworth, Thornage with Little Thornage

HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

The Council have launched a strategy for 2026-31 for public consultation on 24 September, ending on 22 October via the Council's website. We have to review this every 5 years and will support the Government's national plan to end homelessness. It will focus on prevention, early intervention and partnership working to improve outcomes. It's important to avoid the cost of temporary accommodation for the homeless because of the financial pressure it creates on the Council's budget.

FOOD WASTE

Likely to be introduced in February 2027 but may be limited to our towns initially due to inadequate levels of funding to avoid dramatic increases in council tax. This is a statutory requirement and has to be delivered by all local authorities across the country.

We will be requesting a delay until at least September 2027 because the extra funding from the Government does not cover all the operating costs as well as building a new depot as the current one at North Walsham is already working at full capacity. 14 new vehicles will be needed also. The delay in Local Govt. Reform also introduces uncertainty and we are asking questions of the Government about delaying beyond next February.

ASK ANNIE

The Council has launched a new initiative called "ASK FOR ANNIE" involving a trained team of counsellors in place to cope with the demand from people suffering from domestic violence and abuse. For more information, please go to www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/ask-for-annie. All enquiries will be in strictest confidence.

PHONE SIGNALS

BT has set a deadline of 27 January for the switching landlines over from the analogue signal to the new digital signal and residents who have concerns about how it will impact them should contact their service provider immediately.

FLY-TIPPING PENALTIES

After more than 450 reports of fly-tipping last year, we have increased the fines for fly-tipping, or environmental crime in effect, to £1,000 which is the maximum allowed under legislation. Clearing up illegal waste is the responsibility of the landowner which is challenging in many instances due to the costs incurred. If traders offer to dispose of waste on the fly, always ask to see their licence, check with the Council they are registered and take a photo of the vehicle's number plate otherwise you could find yourself being liable for prosecution. The Council will sort out removing waste on public land.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

DFGs are mandatory grants under legislation to provide people with disabilities to with housing assistance where this supports safe independent living, prevention of accidents, wellbeing and helping avoiding admissions to or discharges from hospital. The Council has discretion to top up funding up to £30,000 for home repairs, safe and secure living grants up to £10,000, minor adaptations up to £1,000, relocation grants up to £10,000 for example. Please note some grants are repayable when a property is sold or transferred within a qualifying period.

For more information contact the Integrated Housing Adaptations Team at the Council.

PLANNING CHANGES

Just a reminder that the new planning appeal referral scheme comes into effect on 31 October. In summary, the opportunities to refer cases to the planning committee will be restricted. The Government is preventing standard residential applications going to committee so they will be decided by officers. The types of cases that qualify for committee referrals include listed buildings, reserved matters for sites of 500 dwellings

or more, advertising consents, tree preservation orders. Requests for referral must be submitted within 21 days and elected members will have a further 7 days.

I will give further information at the meeting on this subject,

2027 ELECTIONS

Following the sudden announcement that Local Government Reform is to be

suspended and the shadow unitary elections planned for next May cancelled, the elections for district councillors will be run instead using the same district boundaries as 2023. North Norfolk District Council will continue potentially until 2031once the elections are held. However, it is expected that the Council will be decommissioned if and when alternative arrangements for re-organisation are announced in future.

NEW NOTICEBOARD CONTRIBUTION

I am delighted to support the Parish Council's proposal to replace the noticeboard casing and I have offered to contribute £750 from my District Council Members' Community Fund. The application submitted by the Clerk will go forward to the Board for consideration and final approval. I am confident that approval will be obtained as I believe it is being used for the clear benefit of the community of Melton Constable.

Thank you for reading this report.

Cllr Andrew Brown

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