

# Ringland Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 13 May 2024 at 7pm in the Village Hall

Present: Parish Council

Nick Adams	(Chairman)
Lindy Cooper	(Vice-Chair)
Jill Baker	
Margaret George	
Keith Stone	
Malcolm Turner	
Laura Trabucco	(Clerk)
Norfolk County Councillor	Greg Peck
Broadland District Councillor	Peter Bulman (in part)

plus 5 members of the public.

## 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Simon Addington – Parish Council, Peter Bulman – District Councillor.

## 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 17 April 2024

These were agreed as a true record of proceedings with no amendments.

## 3. Parish Council Chairman's Report

Nick read his report and thanks were expressed to those attending and explained that the Annual Parish Meeting is an annually meeting that must take place between March and June, and informed that the Annual Parish Meeting followed this meeting.  
See report attached.

## 4. Report from Norfolk County Councillor

Greg read his report and gave a general update.  
See report attached.

## 5. Reports from District Councillor

Peter had sent his report but had to leave early due to other commitments.

## 6. Reports from village groups, charities and other organisations

None received.

## 7. General Parish Issues

Parishioners raise the following issues:

- Concern regarding the speeding in the Village and suggestion were made to place the SAM2 (Speed Indicator Device) on the usual place.
- The 'Weak bridge sign' on the Fakenham Road off the A1270 roundabout just before Lidl will need to be changed as it shows the bridge limit at 7.5 t instead of 3 t.
- Another 'Weak bridge sign' for a limit of 3 t should be added on the Costessey Lane junction between The Street and Ringland Road towards Taverham before the bridge, as its missing.

- Damage on verges due to HGV.
- The road marking (white lines) around Ringland will need to be reported.
- Mud and dust on the roads.
- River Green power cable.
- Metal detectors on the Ringland River Green and Commons

The meeting closed at 7.52pm

Chairman's signature .....

Date .....

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## **Ringland Annual Parish Meeting Chairman's Annual Report: 2023-2024**

Good Evening, and many thanks for taking the time to attend tonight's Annual Parish Meeting. This is not a Parish Council Meeting but a meeting of the parish electors and it must be held between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June to comply with legislation. Ringland parishioners entitled to vote in local elections can contribute to the agenda, the purpose of the meeting being to discuss parish affairs. A simple agenda has already been produced however items for inclusion can be added tonight when we get to agenda item 7.

This meeting will be followed immediately by our Annual Parish Council Meeting and you will see that the members of the parish council are sat amongst you for this annual PARISH meeting. Can I quickly introduce my vice chairman Lindy Cooper and councillors Malcolm Turner, Jill Baker, Keith Stone and Margaret George. The councillors are all attending this meeting as members of the public, but I will of course refer to any of them and maybe ask them to address the meeting if any of the matters discussed are areas in which they specialise as a councillor. As a council we are permitted to have a total of seven members, so we currently have a full house, which is wonderful! That said, we are always more than happy to welcome anyone who cares for the village's future to get involved with the council in a voluntary role either assisting the councillors where necessary or maybe getting involved in some of the essential tasks we have to perform around the parish. If you are interested in helping the council, please let me know at the end of the meeting or phone me sometime and we can discuss what's involved.

While this meeting gives everyone a good opportunity to raise issues and to open discussions, I would like to say that your attendance at the regular Parish Council Meetings is still greatly appreciated and offers the best way to both communicate with the council and keep up to date with progress on the various issues the council is dealing with.

## Chairman's Report

2023 saw life in the UK pretty much back to how it was before Covid so brutally reminded us of the fragility of both our lives and society in general. Similarly, village life here in Ringland returned to its normal quiet pattern, with very little in the way of major changes to report. As a result once again many of the items reported on in this annual report sound very similar to the comments I made last year, so please accept my apologies if you get a strong sense of Deja-vu whilst listening to me. That sentence alone should be enough to give you Deja-vu as it's unchanged from last years report...

2023 once again saw little physical change in Ringland itself with one of the biggest issues remaining the continued closure of the Swan pub. We were hoping that the owners of the pub would be seen to be making some serious attempts to get it re-leased and open once more but so far there have been no signs of any movement. The parish council has registered the pub as an "asset of community value", which means that we should be informed in advance of any plans to change its use and given time to possibly negotiate with the owners. While several villagers have suggested that it may be possible to run it as a community pub no-one has come forward to look into this in more detail and this lack of interest does not bode well for the success of such a venture. The parish council has neither the skills nor the manpower to organise such a venture, but would of course be very willing to offer what assistance it can, should someone wish to move forward with the idea.

The development of 5 holiday lodges on the land behind the pub continues as well, although rather intermittently. The council has previously raised a number of compliance matters relating to this development with Broadland planning and will continue to monitor the development as it progresses.

The three local major infra-structure projects, all of which will impact life in the village, continue to make various degrees of progress. These are of course the conversion of the local A47 to dual carriageway, the Norwich Western Link Road between the NDR and the A47 and the various projects to run underground power cables from the new Wind Farms off the North Norfolk coast to the Transformer Complex near Dunstan Hall.

The project to upgrade the A47 between Easton and North Tuddenham to dual carriageway completed the DCO process in 2022 with the Secretary of State recommending the project should proceed alongside the changes to the Thickthorn junction and the Burlington to Blofield section of the A47. A challenge to those decisions which calls into question the methodology of the Carbon Dioxide emissions calculations was made and a Judicial review was called in May 2023. That review threw out the objections but the plaintiff applied to the court of appeal and a second review was called, preventing the projects from proceeding with any permanent physical work although detailed design and survey work was continued. In March 2024 the Court of Appeal also rejected the objections, describing them as having "no logical basis". The plaintiff has now requested a review of the decision by the Supreme court and this is currently under consideration with a decision of whether or not to hear the appeal being expected by the end of June this year. If the appeal is to be

heard then we should expect a further wait of 6 months or more before the final decision is made. In the event of the challenge being upheld the projects could either be cancelled or be forced to go back several steps, which will of course delay them significantly, potentially by a matter of years. National Highways remain confident that the judicial reviews will conclude that the projects will be allowed to proceed. In the meantime they have continued to work on what they describe as “reversible” elements of the scheme and these are apparent along the length of the A47 between Easton and North Tuddenham.

The main impact this project will have on Ringland will be the changes in traffic flow along the local roads as a consequence of the removal of the roundabout at Easton and the creation of a new grade-separated junction (like the junction at Sainsburys) at the junction with Taverham Road. The temporary closure of Honingham Lane, which runs from the crossroads by Merryhills Country Park to St.Peters Church and which the parish council requested to protect the village from a large increase in traffic remains within the DCO and we can be confident that it will happen if the A47 project goes ahead. The A47 project is now included in the regular Local Liaison Group meetings where both this and the NWL projects are reviewed by representatives of Norfolk County Council, National Highways and local parish councils including Ringland.

The progress of the NWL project has also been slower than originally planned, with issues around the environmental impact of the scheme being a major factor in its delay. The Norfolk County Council led project has now reached the stage where the formal planning application documents are ready to be submitted, once this happens the next stage will be a public review and consultation over these detailed plans. Currently however changes to the favourable conservation status of Barbastelle Bats by Natural England have cast doubt over whether the road can be built without directly contravening the advice of this organisation. Norfolk County Council are seeking clarification on this and we are awaiting further news on how these changes affect the viability of the NWL scheme. It is possible that these changes could force NCC to abandon the current scheme completely.

Should the planned A47 changes go ahead without the NWL and the Easton roundabout is removed then traffic flow across the Wensum valley will be even more restricted than it is currently. In this case our successful campaign for the temporary closure of Honingham Lane to all but farm traffic will at least protect the centre of the village from what would otherwise be a massive increase in traffic. It should however be born in mind that this closure is not supported by Weston Longville Parish Council as it will lead to an increase in traffic through their village and there is a risk that the closure could be rescinded if it was felt this might relieve congestion elsewhere. The consequences of this for the village would be catastrophic. Overall, the position of the Parish Council remains one of reluctant acceptance that, with no viable alternatives having been presented, the NWL is the only option to resolve the issues of traffic volumes crossing the Wensum Valley. As such, engaging with the Norfolk County Council team leading the road project via the LLG provides us with the best chance of mitigating the impact on the village and environment. I will continue to request details of any alternative plans the council are developing in case the NWL project is unable to proceed. Currently NCC claim to have no back up plan, a ludicrous position that is becoming ever harder for them to defend.

We are also continuing to press for the implementation of a 20mph speed limit throughout the village and for a ban on vehicles over 7.5 tonnes through the village as part of the local road changes associated with the introduction of the NWL, although deliveries to the village and agricultural vehicles will of course have to be exempt from this. Obviously these campaigns also stand to be affected by the decisions relating to the NWL project.

The Sheringham and Dudgeon power cable projects have started with significant earthworks appearing all around the boundaries of the parish to the west and south. Although quite startling in terms of their size and apparent permanence they are likely to have only a small impact on the village directly, not least as it has been agreed that all road crossings will be done using a horizontal drilling technique which will minimise the disruption of traffic on the roads. Promises made by the contractors last year to not send any construction traffic through the village have already been broken and it now seems inevitable that we will see a number of large cable transporters coming along Ringland Lane and up Weston Lane to the cable crossing near Black Breck Cottages. I have expressed my extreme disappointment with this situation and will continue to watch closely for any other failures to meet with their original promises. I am in particular trying to get clarification on the timescales for returning the land along to the route to its original appearance.

Over the past year the Parish Council have continued reviewing and improving our procedures and compliance with new and emerging regulations. Whilst this will remain an on-going process it has identified a number of areas where action was needed and this has been taken or is in progress, under the ever watchful eye of our Parish Clerk.

The village hall working group led by Councillor Margaret George has been active in improving the facilities within the Hall with the hope of increasing the income generated by rental. The team are to be congratulated and thanked for their efforts, with the successful and enjoyable Xmas and Easter fairs being great examples of what they can do. Sadly however the hall continues to cost the village much more than it earns and we have to continue to try and reverse this situation if we are to avoid further increases in the precept. In the longer term we are starting to consider further improvements to the parking area of the hall, although budget limitations mean this is unlikely to progress before next year.

The various areas of common land that we administer on behalf of the village continue to require a suprisingly large amount of attention to ensure that we are meeting the demands of DEFRA and the Rural Payments Agency who give us a grant in return for maintaining the commons. Sadly our plans to engage with Easton College failed to bear any fruit but we had a meeting today with a representative of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust regarding the plans for the various commons and will be considering how best to implement his suggestions shortly.

We have established a Graziers committee overseen by Councillor Simon Addington; this provides us with a forum where any villagers who wish to graze livestock on the commons can discuss and agree how this can be implemented. This is necessary to ensure that we meet but do not exceed the grazing densities set by DEFRA. It is early days yet but so far the

committee has proved it's worth by agreeing to delay the introduction of livestock onto Low Common until the ground has had a chance to harden up after this winters heavy rains. Any villagers who wish to graze livestock on the common must join the committee and agree on the scheduling and number of animals involved. Typically this will mean that once a years grazing has commenced any new applicants will have to wait for the following year before they can start. The council has also been asked to consider whether sheep could be grazed on areas of Church Hill Common, particularly when it has been necessary to close Low Common. This will be discussed in the following parish council meeting although I would not expect any immediate decisions being made.

Councillor Malcolm Turner is currently leading the work to improve the facility for car parking on the Church Mound. The work is currently in progress and we expect it to be completed in the next week or so. It will provide a total of ten car parking spaces either side of a central access driveway, with a simple low wooden post and pole fence around the periphery to prevent cars driving up and onto the grass. There will be a simple lift-out section of the fence at the top of the driveway to enable controlled access to the grass for wedding and funeral vehicles. A low visual impact signpost will direct cars to the grass overflow carpark around the corner and the public parking area behind the village hall. Once the car park works are complete we will be doing some repair of the damaged areas of grass and I hope to be able to invite suggestions from the villagers as to how they think we should best plant and utilise the green part of the mound.

We have completed the purchase and installation of two AED defibrillators in the village, one on the wall of this village hall and the other in the old telephone box on the village green. Both AED's are in lit and heated boxes which open without the need for any combination code or key to minimise delay in the AED's being used. While a defibrillator can undoubtedly save the life of someone suffering a heart attack, it can only do so if the victim has received CPR from as soon as possible after the heart attack until the defibrillator is collected and ready to use. To this end it is essential that you know how to perform CPR and how to prioritise what has to be done if you are going to be able to help someone. The parish council has organised CPR and defibrillator training at the village hall on the 12<sup>th</sup> June and I urge you to make the time to come along with as many friends and family as you can muster. After all, it might be a member of your families life that gets saved. So far we have XX people booked in, we can accept a maximum of 30.

Increases in the Annual Precept over the past few years have allowed us to bring the budget much closer to breaking even than on the past, while successful use of local government grant processes have allowed us to reclaim some of the costs associated with the improvements made around the village. As a result we made the decision to not increase the precept this year. The council continues to work to increasing income from other sources as well as looking for further savings on expenditure although it must be noted that with ever less volunteers coming forward from the Parish we are increasingly having to use the services of professional contractors and this adds considerably to the Parishes running costs.

In terms of councillors the parish council has been strengthened with Margaret George

joining our ranks. This means the council currently has a full complement of 7 councillors for the first time in several years.

Finally, I am delighted to introduce those of you who have not attended a parish meeting recently to our new professional parish clerk, Laura Trabucco, who started with us just before Xmas. Laura should be your first point of contact if you have any need to speak to the Parish Council; her contact details are on all Parish Communications, the parish council noticeboards, facebook and the website.

Many Thanks for your attention.

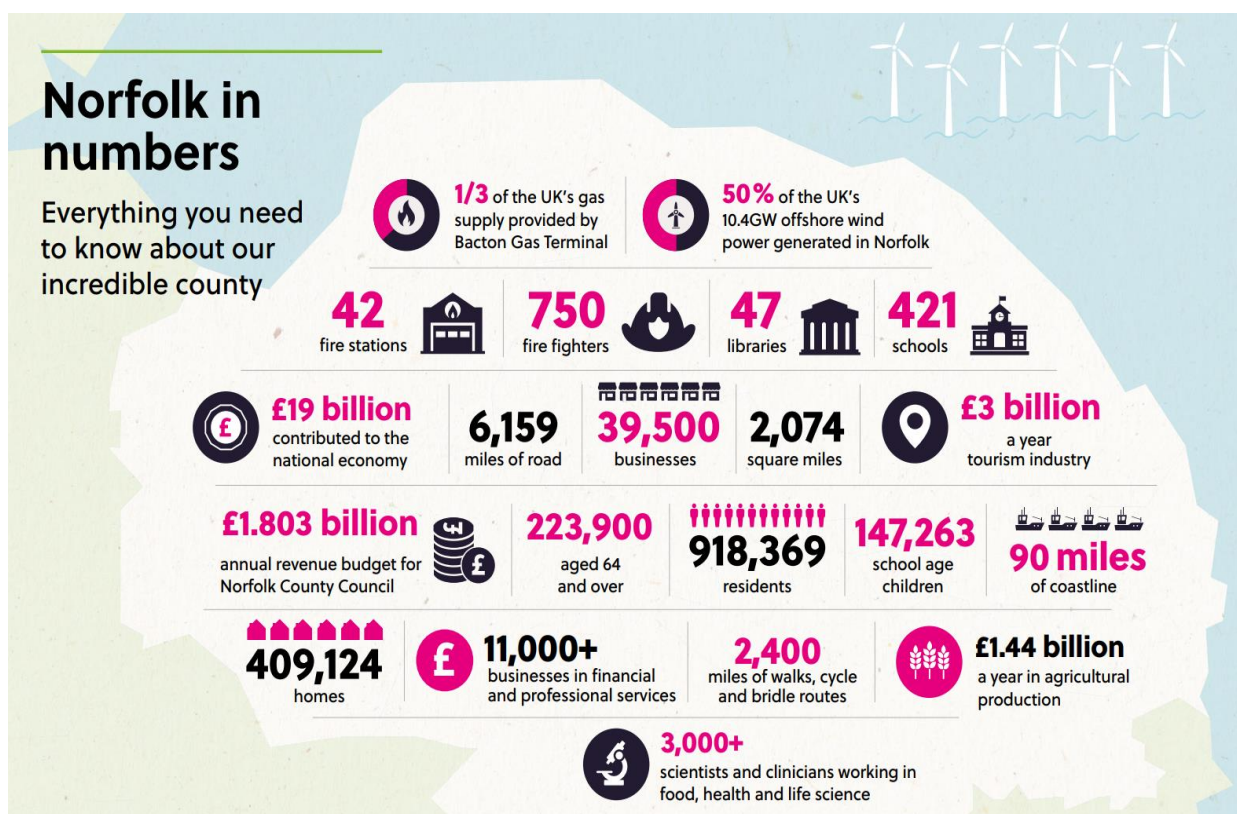
Nick Adams  
May 2024

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## Norfolk County Councillor Annual Report 2023/2024

- 97.4% of highways inspections completed within timescale
- 96.8% of 'Priority A' defects (classified as dangerous/emergency) were fixed within the Transport Asset Management Plan timescales
- 95% Customer satisfaction (with Council Services)
- 96% of Looked after Children with an up-to-date Personal Education Plan
- Completed over 90,000 Adult Social Care Assessments for over 26,000 people



Council agrees £528m budget

County Councillors have voted to accept £600 million devolution deal agreement with the Government, to transfer significant funding and powers to Norfolk. Government funding will start transferring to Norfolk next summer, if councillors vote in July 2024 to stage the first election for a leader in May 2025. The deal will mean that decisions can be taken in Norfolk, for Norfolk. For further details go to [www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkcountydeal](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/norfolkcountydeal).

Norfolk County Council provided extra support to households this winter, the council has received £13.4m from central government and adding an additional £400,000 to make the total programme of support worth £13.8m. It is working closely with district, borough, and

city councils, VCSE and public sector partners to identify and implement a range of support measures to meet the needs of vulnerable households.

Norfolk's roads and footpaths to be fixed as part of £4.51m funding.

Thirty-four roads and 20 footpaths across the County will be repaired by Norfolk County Council during this coming year as part of Government funding.

Twenty-seven brand new gritters joined Norfolk's fleet taking to the roads for the first time later this winter in a £3,238,000 boost to the annual push to help keep Norfolk moving safely during the winter months. Find more information via [www.norfolk.gov.uk/winter](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/winter)

Norfolk flood protection took centre stage in Westminster, in a presentation delivered to:

- Push for legislative permission to build reservoirs designed to capture excess water in times of flood, for use in times of drought
- Advocate for Property Flood Protection measures to be granted directly to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for faster allocation for those who need it
- Reduce bureaucracy by granting greater autonomy in funding allocation for surface water flood mitigation schemes
- Combine enforcement and maintenance powers and responsibilities for LLFA's
- Support the creation of a dedicated Minister for the Coast

Challenges of coastal erosion and flooding discussed by councillors; securing a commitment to such an appointment would give confidence that coastal issues are recognised at the heart of government and that solutions to the threats these communities face will be addressed.

£1 million boost for Highway Parish Partnership Schemes, for more information go to <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/parishpartnerships>

More people 'choose the bus' in Norfolk after first year of bus service improvement plan.

More evening bus services out of Norwich thanks to bus service improvement plan, with a number of bus services operated by First Eastern Counties have been running more often from thanks to money that Norfolk County Council secured from the Department for Transport (DfT) to improve bus services across the County.

24/7 free travel to all disabled bus pass holders in Norfolk, from 1 February 2024 all Norfolk residents who hold a disabled concessionary travel pass will be eligible for free bus travel 24 hours a day, seven days a week when travelling within the county.

Householders can have free DIY waste disposal for small projects.

Climate Strategy was launched at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse Museum. The Climate Strategy sets out how the council will work not only to reduce its own carbon emissions, but to drive down emissions across the county, protect the unique environment of Norfolk, and to seize the opportunities the move to a green economy represents, securing investment and growth for Norfolk.

Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council have been formally appointed by

Government as responsible authorities for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for their respective counties.

Norfolk County Council is doing better than almost every other county council in the country at moving towards net zero, according to an independent assessment. Campaign group Climate Emergency UK produced scorecards marking action by councils on climate change, including areas such as buildings, transport, planning and biodiversity.

Ready to Act new Public Health plan to improve health and wellbeing in Norfolk. Find out how you could get help from the Household Support Fund at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/costofliving)

Working Well Norfolk, a £2.7M scheme funded by the Department for Work & Pensions set to help Norfolk residents with long-term health conditions or physical impairments get into work and to stay in work, was officially launched by Cllr Fabian Eagle at the Work, Skills and Wellbeing Fair. Participants can be unemployed or currently in work. Interested individuals or businesses should contact Seetec Pluss on 07933 818 986 or see [www.seetecpluss/working-well-norfolk](http://www.seetecpluss/working-well-norfolk) to register their interest.

Annual awards recognise dozens of outstanding contributions to Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

Award-winning Adult Learning service rated 'Good' by Ofsted. Norfolk County Council Adult Learning offers a wide range of courses for adults of all levels and interests. Whether you want to change your career, improve your skills, or pursue your passion. Find out more about Adult Learning and browse the course catalogue at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/adultlearning](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/adultlearning).

More than ten thousand Norfolk children benefit from mental health programme in first year. The Rise Up programme gives children and young people valuable knowledge and strategies to support their mental health and is being delivered in secondary and special schools across the county. 93% of young people said that their ability to manage their wellbeing improved after completing the programme.

Greg Peck – Norfolk County Councillor