Cllr update Oct 19th 26

Norfolk County Council Updates

Norfolk's Local SEND Reform Plan approved by Government

The Government has approved Norfolk's Local SEND Reform Plan, a three-year programme to provide earlier help, strengthen inclusion in mainstream education and expand specialist support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Commitments include extending support to early years and further education settings, increasing mental health support, reducing waits for neurodiversity assessments and doubling Specialist Resource Bases in mainstream schools by 2028. Approval also means around 90% of Norfolk's historic Dedicated Schools Grant SEND deficit, approximately £185 million, will be repaid, providing a stronger financial foundation for improvement.

Norfolk County Council will work with families, education settings, health services and voluntary organisations to deliver the plan and provide the right support at the right time, as close to home as possible. Further details and the full plan are available on the County Council's webpages.

Proposed sale of care homes withdrawn

Norfolk County Council has withdrawn a proposed sale of Norse Care and its 20 care homes to Stow Healthcare.

Further information is available in the county council's news release here.

Norfolk County Council Trading Standards – egg recall, salmonella risk

Norfolk County Council Trading Standards is alerting residents and businesses to a recall of shell eggs supplied by Yasensvit Ltd in Ukraine after Salmonella was detected. The affected eggs are stamped 3UA1012066 and must not be sold or eaten.

The eggs were supplied mainly to catering businesses, although some may have been sold by smaller retailers. They may also have been repacked in the UK, so residents and businesses should check the code stamped directly on each egg rather than relying on the outer packaging.

Advice to residents: Do not eat eggs stamped 3UA1012066. Dispose of them safely at home. Eggs sold by major UK supermarkets are British-produced and are not affected by this alert.

Celebrating kinship carers

Norfolk County Council marked Kinship Care Week by celebrating relatives and family friends who care for children when their parents are unable to do so. The activities aimed to raise awareness, reduce isolation and encourage more carers to access local support networks and services. Linked to the National Year of Reading, the County Council's Virtual School worked with local libraries and independent bookshop Bookbugs and Dragon Tales to bring kinship families together through books and stories.

The Virtual School supports children in and leaving care, children in kinship care and those with a social worker. It works with carers, schools and professionals to provide advice, advocacy and guidance, helping children overcome barriers to learning and carers navigate the education system. The County Council's Kinship Local Offer also provides information and support for kinship carers across Norfolk.

National Updates

National campaign to recruit more foster carers

The Government has launched a new national recruitment campaign encouraging more adults to consider fostering and emphasising that people from many different backgrounds can foster. The campaign will focus on adults in their 30s and 40s who have the values and capacity to foster but may not previously have considered it. This supports the Government's ambition to create 10,000 new foster care places by the end of this Parliament. The Department for Education is providing £88 million to reform fostering, including £12.4 million for a fostering innovation fund. This will test more flexible approaches, such as short-term respite and weekend fostering, to make fostering possible for a wider range of people.

The campaign responds to a 12% fall in approved foster carers since 2019, alongside an increase in the number of children needing care. Foster carers are also urgently needed in Norfolk. More information about fostering in Norfolk can be found on the Norfolk County Council webpages.

Environment Agency highlights wetlands boosting wildlife in Norfolk

The Environment Agency has published an update on wetlands created at the 20-acre Keswick Marsh site in Norfolk, which are helping birds, amphibians and plants thrive along a threatened chalk stream. The land was provided pro bono by Lady Dannatt, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk. Funding came from the Norfolk Water Strategy Programme - hosted by Water Resources East in partnership with Norfolk County Council, Anglian Water and The Nature Conservancy—alongside Anglian Water's Get River Positive programme and the Environment Agency.

The River Yare is one of only 210 chalk streams worldwide, including 58 in East Anglia. The Environment Agency, Norfolk Rivers Trust and Water Resources East have reshaped more than seven hectares of riverbank and floodplain, reconnecting the river with the surrounding land. New ponds, shallow pools and reshaped ditches allow water to spread naturally in winter and remain longer in dry periods, restoring the natural water cycle, reducing downstream flood risk and creating varied wetland habitats.