

Giving Tree brings festive joy to children in care 2025

Norfolk County Council welcomes back the Giving Tree appeal for Christmas 2025, a popular initiative that brings the magic of books to children in care across the county.

Hosted at Waterstones, Castle Street, Norwich, the Giving Tree is decorated with tags, each representing a child and the book or genre they'd love to receive. Shoppers can select a tag, purchase the chosen book, and hand it in at the till. Norfolk County Council will then wrap and deliver the gifts in time for Christmas Day.

The Giving Tree is organised by Norfolk Virtual School, which supports the education of all Norfolk children in care. The scheme aims to ensure every child in care receives a book for Christmas that encourages a love of reading.

The tree is now in store. Books need to be purchased by Sunday 7 December, to ensure they reach children in time for Christmas.

Norwich's Millennium Library is set to undergo a £1m transformation in 2026, marking 25 years since it first opened its doors.

The refurbishment has been shaped by extensive feedback from library users and will include a re-designed early years library as well as new homes for both the 8+ and teen library areas, each with their own identity.

Accessibility has been a key part of the design with lower shelving units throughout the library and improved signage and wayfinding.

Visitors can also look forward to improved lighting, new furniture with built-in power points and a new gathering space for events and talks.

The proposed designs will be on display at the entrance to the Millennium Library from 27 October to 3 November, with members of the project team available to talk through the designs and answer questions.

"It is a fantastic way to celebrate 25 years of the Millennium Library. It's a space that means so much to so many, and these improvements will ensure it continues to be welcoming to everyone who walks through its doors."

The Millennium Library opened in 2001 as part of The Forum - a landmark Millennium Commission project built on the site of the former Norwich Central Library which was destroyed in a fire. The Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library has consistently ranked among the busiest public libraries in the UK, welcoming well over a million visitors each year.

Work is scheduled to begin next year. While some disruption to services is expected during the refurbishment, full details will be shared closer to the time.

Budding politicians are being invited to represent their peers and stand as youth parliamentarians in Norfolk.

Norfolk County Council is inviting young people aged 11 to 18 from across the county to apply for a seat in the Norfolk Youth Parliament. This exciting opportunity offers aspiring young leaders the chance to make a real difference in their communities, influence decision-making, and build valuable skills for the future.

Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) represent the views of young people in Norfolk, working closely with local councillors and regional MPs to advocate for key issues such as education, mental health and climate change. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to speak up on behalf of their peers and help shape the future of Norfolk.

The role offers a range of unique experiences, including visits to the UK House of Commons, participation in national residential conferences, and meeting local councillors and MPs.

YPMs are elected every two years. Young people in Norfolk vote for their local YPM through a democratic process. Any 11-18-year-olds can stand or vote in the election. The council's Participation Team will support candidates to build a campaign that:

- Encourages other young people to vote for them
- Helps them think about how they can make a positive difference

Devolution

Norfolk and Suffolk have agreed to the Devolution deal. There will now be a Mayoral Combined Authority.

This has set a Mayoral Election in May 26.

Mayor election May 2026

- Takes on powers immediately after election, in the same way that all other elected officials do
- The powers the Mayor will/can have are not straightforward and there will be some immediate powers, some that transfer later (for example Fire and Police will transfer over in 2027) and some are powers the Mayor could have in the future and so would need to negotiate with Govt about
- 4 year term

County Council elections May 2026

- 4 year term
- But, expecting government to reduce the term to two years as part of the legislation that they will lay to create unitary authorities - and they wouldn't lay that until at least summer 2026

District council elections May 2026

- Norwich City Council has elections in May, for one third of members. Arrangements same as for County Council elections above

District council elections May 2027

- 4 year term
- Government will need to make a decision on whether they want these elections to go ahead or not, once they have made a decision on unitary
- They could extend the current term and essentially cancel these elections, which I think is probably the most likely thing to happen
- Or, they could let them happen and reduce the term to one year in the legislation they lay to create unitary authorities

Shadow authority elections May 2027

- 4 year term

Shadow elections will be for the new unitary authority areas. We will need to wait and see what government decide on the number of councillors any new unitary authority will have.

The Boundary Commission will likely need to carry out a review to determine the division areas of any new councillors, and they can't do a review until the new entity exists which means after vesting day, so in practice it is mostly likely going to be elections using existing divisions as the starting point.

[Norfolk and Suffolk Combined County Authority - Norfolk and Suffolk Combined County Authority](#)

Council reorganisation

The Government's statutory consultation on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) for Norfolk has launched today.

Three proposals are being considered:

- One unitary council for Norfolk, as proposed by Norfolk County Council
- Two unitary councils, as proposed by South Norfolk Council
- Three unitary councils, as proposed by the remaining six district councils

The consultation invites views on which option would best deliver strong and sustainable local government for Norfolk. It asks a series of questions about each proposal to help inform the Government's assessment and decision.

Anyone with an interest in the future of local government in Norfolk — including town and parish councils, local partners, businesses, and members of the public — is encouraged to respond.

The consultation will run for seven weeks until Sunday 11 January 2026 and is available at [GOV.UK - Consultation on local government reorganisation in Norfolk](https://www.gov.uk/consultation-on-local-government-reorganisation-in-norfolk)

Information and stakeholder fact sheets on the One Norfolk, One Council proposal can be found [here](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/onecouncil) - www.norfolk.gov.uk/onecouncil.

Budget

The council's annual budget consultation launched on 27 October and people are being urged to take a look at the proposals and have their say.

Overall spending by the council is expected to increase next year, but this will not be enough to keep pace with inflation (the costs of providing our services) and expected increases in demand for our services - particularly in adult social care and children's services.

The county council is working to set a balanced budget, despite the need to save £41.6m in 2026-27.

The council want to find out what people think about their 2026-27 budget proposals. This year they are consulting on proposals to increase council tax and to seek feedback on saving proposals to help close the budget gap.

The county council have produced a [Budget Factsheet](#), a brief guide to the annual budget - what it means, where the money comes from and where it goes, why council tax is going up, the challenges local authorities face, and our plans to fix the budget gap.

The consultation survey offers residents and local communities the opportunity to share any ideas they may have for saving public money.

The consultation closes on 15 December 2025.

[Local Nature Recovery Strategy - What a Local Nature Recovery Strategy is - Norfolk County Council](#)

1 million trees



Tree planting in Norfolk is set for another boost this season as Norfolk County Council continues its drive towards 1 million trees for the county.

This winter, a new woodland will be created at Wighenham St Germans totalling 15.5 hectares on the council's county farmland. Around 40,000 trees will be planted, transforming the site into a vibrant, wildlife-rich landscape. Work is already underway, with planting continuing through to summer 2026.

The council's subsidised tree scheme is also open again - offering individuals, parish councils, community groups, businesses, schools and landowners the chance to apply for tree packs and protection materials at up to 50% off the original price.

The Wighenham woodland will feature a mix of native and fruiting species, chosen to create a thriving and resilient habitat for wildlife.

The space will be open for public access in late Spring 2026, with paths provided so that local residents can walk, explore, and enjoy the changing woodland as it grows.

The woodland is expected to take time to mature, with some trees reaching maturity within 10 years and others taking several decades.

Tree packs

For those who want to do their bit to boost the number of trees in Norfolk but don't have space for woodland, subsidised tree packs are available to order now.

For the first time this year, a limited number of 'Taller Tree Packs', grown at Gressenhall Community Tree Nursery, are also available. These include larger beech, oak, and birch trees, making it possible for more people to take part and be 1 in a million.

For more information on Norfolk's One Million Trees initiative, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/milliontrees

Hot water bottle checks



But we'd also love it if you could check your hot water bottles at home, which wear out after two years and can cause some really serious burns. To find out how old yours is - the number in the middle of the flower symbol on your bottle is the date it was made and each of the petals are the 12 months of the year. The hot water bottle in the photo is from April 2021 and should have been replaced more than two years ago.

Keep an eye on general wear and tear too, as they are affected by regular use, filling them up using boiling water, being stored near a heat source such as an airing cupboard or radiator, damage from something sharp or storing them full of water - which can degrade the rubber.

More details of our electric blanket testing events are available by following the link in the comments below.

Join the Safe School Run pledge

Norfolk County Council's Public Health Road Safety team are inviting schools, parents, and carers across the county to join the Safe School Run pledge, an initiative that encourages safer, healthier, and more sustainable travel during school drop-off and pick-up times.

Last year nearly sixty schools took part in the pledge. Participating schools report a 10% increase in walking, scooting, or cycling, fewer cars during peak times, and a noticeable improvement in road safety awareness among children and their families.

This year, schools will receive updated resources designed to support safe parking, reduce engine idling, and improve air quality around school gates. These free materials, developed by Norfolk County Council's Public Health Road Safety team with resources from Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, aim to help schools engage their communities in creating safer streets and cleaner air for all.

Schools interested in joining the pledge or accessing the free resources can visit the Norfolk County Council website or contact the Road Safety team directly for support. [Norfolk County Council's website](#).

Emergency alert reminder

- The UK government carried out a national test of the Emergency Alerts system on Sunday 7 September at 3pm. Compatible mobile phones and tablets received an alert, make a loud siren-like sound and vibrate.
- Did you get it?
- More information about emergency alerts is available on the government website [here](#).
- **Already a scam asking if received or not. Ignore a scam**

Rangers

Note sent to Clerks

Parish Partnership

Each year local councils are invited to submit bids for highway improvement schemes. For 2025/26 the fund is £848,702 with Norfolk County Council funding 50% of the cost of successful bids. Town and parish councils contribute the balance.

Deadline for submissions

The new letters of invitation to bid for 2026/27 will be sent out to Parish & Town Clerks in June 2025.

The deadline for submissions for 2026/27 is 1 December 2025.

Further information or advice

We've provided answers to the most frequently asked questions about the schemes we support below.

If you need further information on the bid process, please email ppschemes@norfolk.gov.uk.

For advice on the scheme practicalities or likely costs, contact your local highway engineer.

Link: [Parish Partnership Scheme - Norfolk County Council](#)

Norfolk's fleet of 55 gritters have been given fresh, individual names thanks to the wit and creativity of local residents. Norfolk County Council invited schoolchildren, BBC Radio Norfolk listeners, and readers of the Eastern Daily Press to submit their ideas for naming the county's salt spreaders.

The response was overwhelming, with nearly 600 entries received. The winners ranged from tributes to Norfolk icons—such as *Edith Gravel*, *Grant Salt*, *Alfie Hew-Grit*, and *BoudICEa*—to clever pop culture references like *Paddington Brrrrrrr*, *Snowbi-Gone Kenobi*, *Lando Norice*, *Albert Icestien*, and *MalefICEnt*.

One particularly heartfelt entry came from Andrew Kitt, who proposed the name *Kitt the Grit* in honour of his late father, Terry Kitt. Terry served as Assistant County Surveyor at Norfolk County Council and played a key role in winter maintenance for many years. Andrew shared, "It would be a real honour to name a Norfolk gritter after my Dad, who passed away at the end of 2024. 'Kitt the Grit' was the name given to my Dad back in the day for all his work keeping the roads of Norfolk open during winter. Dad retired in 1987 but always looked back fondly at his time working for the Norfolk County Council Highways Team and

had many stories to tell about working through some tough winter seasons. My mum, sisters and all of our family are absolutely over the moon to hear that there will be a gritter named 'Kitt the Grit' after him."

Musical inspiration also featured prominently. Eight-year-old Clara suggested *K-popsicle*, a nod to her favourite genre, while Hope in Year 5 came up with *Billie Ice-Lish*, and Millie in Year 3 offered *Taylor Drift*—a gritter surely ready to live the *Life of a Snow Girl*. For those who prefer music from older eras, Bruno wrote to the EDP suggesting *Grit Astley (Never Gonna Slip You Up)*.

Local pride was evident in names inspired by Norfolk places, including *Attlebrrrrr*, *Norwich Gritty FC*, *A Fine Gritty*, *Banham Blizzard*, and *Grit Yarmouth*—all ready to hit the roads when temperatures drop.

There will also be two gritters named after local media stars, as the competition was opened to Radio Norfolk listeners and EDP readers, people suggested the names of *Chris Thawham* in honour of the Radio Norfolk Breakfast show host and Norwich City commentator Chris Goreham and EDP readers suggested *Dan Gritter*, after long time journalist Dan Grimmer.

The winning names will be put on the side of the vehicles in the coming weeks, so keep an eye out for them as they begin gritting roads across Norfolk.

Full list of winners, and pictures of our fleet of gritters, below.

A Fine Gritty- Elaine

Albert Icestein- Albert, Age 7

Alfie Hew-Grit- Anonymous

Attlebrrrrr - Timothy

Banham Blizzard- Florence, Age 5

Big Mean Ice Machine- Zane, Age 5

Billie Ice-Lish- Hope, Year 5

Blizzard Of Oz- Mia, Year 3

Boud-Ice-A- Dennis, Age 8

Captain Grit- Kye, Age 7

Chris Thawham- Gail

Control Salt Delete- Melodie, Age 4

Dan Gritter - David

Doris- Jake, Year 5

Edith Gravel- Lisa, Matt

Elsa- Darcey, Age 4

Frostilicity- Felicity, Age 3

Gracie- Cedar Class Bawdeswell Primary School

Grant Salt- Nick From Tacolneston

Grit Astley (Never Gonna Slip You Up)- Bruno, Dre in Aylsham

The Grit Gatsby- Ellie, Age 9

Grit Expectations- Riely, Year 6

Grit Yarmouth - Stanely, Age 9

Gritosaurus - Florence, Age 4

Gritty Gritty Bang Bang- Frankie, Age 7

Gus The Gritter- Erin, Age 6

Harry Gritter & The Chamber Of Salts- Tudor, Year 6

Ice Warrior- The Hive , Horsford C of E VA Primary School

Kitt The Grit- Andrew

K-Popicle- Clara, Age 8

Lando Norice- Chloe, Age 7, Nyle Age 8

Let's Be Gritting You- Rhia, Mandy, Phil

Luke Grittler- Bill From Gorleston

Maleficent - Sorina, Age 6

Margrit- Stanely, Age 8

Norwich Gritty FC - David In Sprowston

On The Ball Gritty - Richard, Janine, Sue, Robin, Les, Sorren

Paddington Brrrrrr- Dougie, Age 5

Polar Patroller- Joseph, Age 8

Salt & Gritter- Bonnie

Salimus Prime - Mable, Age 4

Sandy Snowgo- Martha, Age 9

Sleet Caroline - Ralph, Age 8

Slippy Slayer - Kye, Age 7

Snow Stopper- Archie, Age 6

Snowball 3000- Alexis, Year 5

Snowbi-Gone Kenobi- Mia, Age 9

Sprinkle Sprinkle Little Star - William, Age 11

Taylor Drift- Millie, Courtney, Lion Class Hethersett VC Primary School

Thawa Hird - Richard From Norwich

The Ice Tamer- Lexi, Age 5

True Grit- Linda, Kim, Steve, Jamie, Bev, Kym, Denise, Jule, Jennifer, Alan, Steve, Teddy, Paul, Howard

Usain Salt -Lily-May, Year 3

Wall-Ice And Gromit - William, Year 5

Walter The Salter- Sydney, Age 9

Scams

News Alert - Free electric blanket safety testing events next week

Cold Calling Alert - Doorstep cold callers offering driveway work

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from TV Licensing

Information Alert - Home Repairs or Improvements, make sure you #CHECK

Scam Alert - Fake parcel delivery messages

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from Apple

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep Cold Callers offering tree and garden work

Cold Calling Alert - Doorstep Cold Callers in the Downham Market area

Scam Alert - Fake ParentPay app on Apple App Store

Scam Alert - Text messages claiming to be from Apple Pay

Cold Calling Alert - Telephone cold callers regarding solar panels

Scam Alert - Fake DVLA text messages

Cold Calling Alert - Cold calls regarding spray foam insulation removal

Scam Alert - Telephone cold calls claiming to be 'bank security department'

Scam Alert - Cryptocurrency investment scams

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from Disney

News Alert - Scams Awareness Week 2025: Doorstep Cold Callers

Scam Alert - Employment scams

Scam Alert - Rogue buyers on Facebook Marketplace

News Alert - Scams Awareness Week 2025: Suspicious Calls

Scam Alert - Facebook posts claiming to offer items from well known retailers in exchange for completing a short survey

Scam Alert - Fake antivirus software emails

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep Cold Caller claiming hedges 'must' be trimmed

News Alert - Scams Awareness Week 2025: Dropshipping Scams

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from 'Netflix'

News Alert - Scams Awareness Week 2025

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep Cold Callers offering garden work

News Alert - Scams Awareness Week 2025: Fake Delivery Texts

Information Alert - Avian Influenza: Poultry and captive bird housing measures are in place across parts of England