

## **Stoke Holy Cross District Councillor Report 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

### **Member Ward Grants**

Member Ward Grants for 2024/25 have been fully spent. Requests for future support with small projects (up to £1,000 usually) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors. These will become available from April 2025.

### **Community Action Fund Grants**

Another round of CAF grants is expected to open in April. Applications for grants of up to £20,000 are made by District Councillors on behalf of local organisations. Please contact us if you would like more information. Grants are expected to be heavily oversubscribed once again.

### **Bleed Kits**

Last year SNC agreed to encourage more Bleed Control Kits in public spaces across the District – possibly in or alongside defibrillator units. Your Councillors will be pleased to support applications for funding.

### **Government Consultation on Norfolk & Suffolk Devolution**

Norfolk and Suffolk have been accepted onto the priority programme for devolution. This will mean that elections for a mayor to lead the Mayoral County Combined Authority could be as early as May 2026. Elections for Norfolk County Council have been suspended for at least one year.

The Government has published a consultation paper on its proposals for devolution in Norfolk and Suffolk. The consultation is open until 13 April 2025. All residents are encouraged to respond.

Link to consultation paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation#establishing-a-mayoral-combined-authority-across-norfolk-county-council-and-suffolk-county-council>

Consultation form: <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation/>

### **Local Government Reorganisation**

The Norfolk County, District and City Councils have submitted their initial plans to Government for the reorganisation of local government in Norfolk with the current two-tier approach replaced by a number of unitary authorities.

At the South Norfolk Council meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March members overwhelmingly voted in favour of undertaking further work to develop a two unitary model for Norfolk. One serving Norwich and East Norfolk, including Great Yarmouth and the other encompassing West Norfolk. It was agreed that this proposal meets government population requirements, avoids disrupts boundary changes and allows rapid, cost-effective implementation and minimum disruption to existing communities.

Other district councils favour a three unitary model, while the County Council prefers one or two unitary councils. Final proposals need to be submitted in September 2025. Elections for the “shadow” unitary authorities could take place in May 2027.

### **Town & Parish Summit – 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**

Parish Councils are invited to a special morning meeting at Broadland Business Park on 2<sup>nd</sup> April to discuss proposals for devolution and local government reform.

### **New Nature Conservation Fund**

In April, a pilot scheme for a Nature Conservation Fund will be launched. Five grants of up to £10,000 will be available to Parish Councils and Community Groups. Projects must deliver benefits in one of three areas by April 2026: public accessibility to greenspace, biodiversity benefit, and carbon sequestration.

### **More Funding for Play Parks**

In the 2025/26 South Norfolk budget, £134,000 of additional funding is available to support play park repair and improvement. It is expected that funds will be spent on SNC managed facilities.

### **VE Day Commemorative Events**

South Norfolk Council has agreed to recognise the 80th anniversary of VE Day by awarding up to £300 to each parish for qualifying commemorative events. Funding is initially offered to Parish Councils, but other local organisations can apply if the PC is not making an application.

### **Local Development Scheme – Housing Targets**

It is expected that a review of the local development scheme (the Greater Norwich Local Plan and other documents) will start later this year. This is due to Government changes to encourage more house building which increase the number of new houses required across Greater Norwich by 28%, to 2,590 houses per year.

The Government is planning to accelerate the development of 12 new towns. A recent report in the Guardian suggested that one of these could be at the edge of Norwich.

### **‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update**

The National Grid application for a Development Consent Order is expected later this year.

PylonsEastAnglia are continuing to campaign against the pylon proposals. For further information visit <https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions>

The Government has announced a proposed compensation scheme for those living within 500m of new or upgraded pylon routes. It is not clear at present if this would apply retrospectively, for example to those affected by the recent Great Grid upgrade. Relatively few houses locally are this close to the proposed Norwich Tilbury route.

### **Bob McClenning, Ian Spratt & Jim Webber**

#### **Councillor Contact Details**

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