

Stoke Holy Cross - District Councillors Report 18th September 2025

Member Ward Grants

Member Ward Grants for 2025/26 are now available. Requests for support with small projects (typically up to £1,000 per project) to benefit the local community can be made to your District Councillors.

Devolution & Local Government Reform

LGR proposals are due to be submitted to Westminster on or before 26th September.

The South Norfolk proposal for two unitary authorities, endorsed by Ben Goldsborough MP and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner, is available online.

<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/council/devolution-for-norfolk/south-norfolk-council-local-government-reorganisation-lgr-in-norfolk>

The Future Norfolk proposal for three unitary authorities has also been published.

The Cabinet of Norfolk County Council is pushing ahead with its proposal for a single unitary authority, even though the idea was comprehensively rejected by Councillors at their July meeting. The proposal can be found in the papers for the September 25th Council Meeting.

In Suffolk, there are two proposals. The County Council is proposing one unitary authority, while the 2nd tier authorities are proposing 3 UAs centred on Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft.

After reviewing these submissions, the Government will launch its own consultation - perhaps in late November/December – before a decision in Spring 2026.

Plans for the election of a mayor for Norfolk and Suffolk in May next year are underway, with some political parties already naming their candidate.

The Government is proposing that the Supplementary Voting system be used for future mayoral elections. Under the Supplementary Voting system electors would get a second vote which will be counted if no candidate gets 50% of the vote in the first round, and the electors first choice candidate is eliminated. This is believed to be fairer than 'first past the post'. It is not yet clear if the legislation will be in place in time for the Norfolk and Suffolk election next year.

Solar Together

South Norfolk Council is promoting a solar panel group-buying scheme for local residents. The Solar Together scheme offers solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charge points, as well as retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar. Householders can register online without obligation via <https://solartogether.co.uk/south-norfolk/home> by 17 October 2025.

South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan

The plan has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. Further details will be provided when known. Any questions about the examination process please contact Mrs Annette Feeney, the independent Programme Officer at SNC on 07775 771026 or Annette.feeney@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk.

South Norfolk Litter Pick

Congratulations to Mulbarton Primary School and the Parish Councils of Flordon, Swardeston and Wrenningham who all participated in the South Norfolk Litter Pick and won £200 in the draw for entrants. All entrants received £20. In total 56 organisations took part, and an estimated 4.7 tons of litter were collected across the district.

Lotus Site and Hethel Roundabout.

Following the announcement that Lotus would be cutting 550 jobs (over 40% of the workforce), Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council have announced a comprehensive package of services for those affected at Lotus and in its supply chain.

Your District Cllrs have previously questioned the wisdom of spending large amounts of public money on a new roundabout at Hethel at a time when the future of the Lotus site seems so uncertain. The Leader of South Norfolk Council responded that the planned development would continue, and he expressed confidence that the site had a positive future 'even if the worst thing happens'.

Keswick BESS

A planning application (2025/2275) has been submitted for a 400MW Battery Energy Storage System in Keswick situated next to the A47 on the East side of the B1113. Access would be via Short Road, Keswick.

'Norwich to Tilbury' Update

The National Grid's planning application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 29th August. The Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to decide if all the required information has been provided and is to the right standard. If the application is accepted, it will be published on the Planning Inspectorate website together with the consultation timetable. For further information:

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN020027>

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