

## **MULBARTON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes of the Mulbarton Annual Parish Meeting held on  
on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 7.00pm.

Peter Leigh – Chairman

### **Parish Councillors present:-**

Steve Sewell	Beverley Leek	Adam Banham
Emma Reeve	Derek Aldous	Richard Tucker

**In attendance:** Rector Adrian Miller, Darrin Sore and representative from local clubs and organisations and local residents.

### **1. Chairman of the Parish Council opens the Annual Parish Meeting.**

Councillor Peter Leigh welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish meeting and explained that a parish meeting in England is a meeting to which all electors in a civil parish are entitled to attend. In an area where there is a parish council, the Chairman of the parish council shall chair the parish meeting. A parish meeting has no powers; it acts only as an annual democratic point of communication.

Cllr Leigh introduced Darrin Sore who for 13 years was the parish's PCSO. On behalf of the Parish Council and residents of the village Cllr Leigh thanked Darrin for his past support and wished him well for the future and then presented him with gift as a token of appreciation for all his help .

### **2. Apologies for Absence.**

Cllr Leigh reported that County and District Councillor Foulger and District Councillor Legg had both sent their apologies as they were attending South Norfolk Council's AGM this evening.

### **3. To confirm and sign the minutes of The Annual Parish meeting held 8th May 2017.**

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting and signed accordingly.

### **4. Parish Council Chairman's report – Peter Leigh.**

Cllr Leigh as Chairman of the Parish Council read out his Parish Council Chairman's report:

*I open my report with the main topic being the proposed development at the north end of the Village. We were supposed to be consulted but I understand that a large number of houses did not receive the leaflet, which had the contact details on it. We have written to the proposed developer Lanpro and*

*passed on our view that it was not a representative “consultation”. We also note that SNC planning officers recommended the approval of the development of the 15 houses on Flordon Long Lane. As we mentioned in our comments to the application this will lead to further strains on our already stretched infrastructure.*

*The surrounding villages i.e. Bracon Ash & Hethel, Swardeston and East Carleton are opposing the planned development and asked that we form a task force to actively oppose the proposed development. CPRE are also opposed to the development and wish to get involved at a later date.*

*When you consider Mulbarton has been a building site for the last 15 years is it any wonder the villagers are tired of the continuous development, which is changing the whole character of the village.*

*We continue to press SNC for their exact plans for the north end of The Meadows, which you are aware they have put forward as a potential development site in their latest “call for sites”. We are not sure when they are going to make that decision but will obviously keep everyone informed.*

*We have spruced up the Jubilee Gardens at The Meadows and also rescinded the licence we had for the north end of The Meadows, so as and from 1st July 2018 SNC will assume full responsibility for the management and maintenance of the land, which incidentally is in Bracon Ash. The allotments and play area are unaffected by this decision and remain under the management of Mulbarton Parish Council.*

*We continually ask SNC planning department when they will be handing over the first phase of the allotments at Oakley Park but to date have received nothing definitive. We are keen to get them operational as we have a waiting list for the facility.*

*Once again I have the repetitive task of reporting damage to play equipment on the Common. The “mindless ones” have deliberately broken the main support beam for the swings. People saw it happen but no one will step up to the plate to give us names so that we can progress the matter. The damage has cost several hundreds of pounds to repair - perhaps over £1,000 when you take into account the fact that someone has stolen one of the swings. Don't forget it is your money we are spending - money that could be used for other activities. We also note that someone has damaged the access gate to the newly refurbished Multi-use Game Area (MUGA). We have also suffered some idiot/s setting fire to the doggy bin opposite Birchfield Lane and again we ask WHY?*

*We still continue to have problems with the play area equipment - mainly caused by inconsiderate use by adults using the facilities and other people wantonly damaging equipment - for what reason we can only guess. Don't forget it is your money we are spending putting right damage caused by others. It could be spent on other projects.*

*On a lighter note, thanks to the generosity of one of our residents, Chris Bradley-Watson we have recovered the missing top to the directional fingerboards at the Village Sign. It is shaped like a polo mint with Mulbarton on the outer rim. We have had it shot blasted and powder-coated and replaced into its rightful place at the entrance to the Village. Our thanks to Jill Wright for supplying old photographs, showing its correct position.*

*We have replaced the existing floodlights on the MUGA court with LEDs and also taken the opportunity to replace the floodlights which cover the children's' play area at the rear of the Village Hall. We are pleased that the tennis coaching is up and running and also a number of individuals have booked the court for their own use. The formal tennis night is Monday - this to fit in with the football club and to minimise any clashes with other sporting activities taking place around the Village Hall complex. The*

football club have provisionally booked Tuesday and Wednesday night for winter coaching sessions. More detailed information is available direct from the football club.

We have improved access to the SW corner of the Common. We are looking to improve security of the Common at the area around the Village sign by means of wooden poles to stop people parking on the newly renovated area and also accessing the Common in general. We have added a bench and waste bin at the bus stop at the SE end of the Common.

We are still in talks with SNC re the management of the Common but they have taken the view that they are not responsible for maintenance/improvement but have an "enforcing role" with regard to the "scheme of regulation", which means in reality they will be doing nothing and hope the problems go away. Something we do not accept.

A review of the conservation areas of the Village has been carried out by SNC and the draft proposals show that the existing areas are maintained with one or two small additions to selected areas. The draft is available on our website or you can view it by visiting the Parish Office. We have made our comments known to SNC.

We have refurbished the old phone box outside the World's End. It is an information centre for the Village and our hope is that people will respect it for what it is. We are proposing to call it Charlie's box in recognition of our past Councillor Charlie Yallop, who was actively involved in nearly every aspect of the Village and its organisations.

Further to my request in the spring 2017 newsletter we have been successful in recruiting another lady to our Parish Council and welcome Emma Reeve to our ranks. Emma was involved with the pre-school nursery and brings a whole new prospective to the Parish Council. Something we welcome as it gives a broader outlook on our decision making process.

Despite the Rate Support Grant from SNC falling over the past few years from £3,773 to £604 this year we have still managed not to increase our precept. We continue to monitor our expenditure and frequently visit our main areas of cost to see if any savings can be made.

Because the very long and wet winter grounds maintenance on the Common had to be delayed but hopefully things will get back to normal quickly. We reviewed the grass cutting contract but found that no one was interested because of the poor quality hay and contamination from dogs. The long winter has also badly affected the Park Run activities and we thank the organisers and participants for their understanding and patience on this matter.

In April three Councillors, accompanied by our two District Councillors, met with the new Area Engineer from NCC Highways and spent a lot of time walking round the Village and pointing out 22 areas of concern, these centred on lack of maintenance, road markings and of particular concern was the structural integrity of the support wall at the Village Pond which seems to be compromised. We will continue to monitor the situation with Highways. If you have any particular concern you may wish to contact the Area Engineer (Bob West) or continue to contact our Clerk.

Considerable effort has been expended on getting the reinstatement of Cuckoofield Lane up to the required standard after works by HH and Aw have left it and the surrounding grassed areas in a not acceptable state.

We are looking to add to the play equipment available at the Meadows to the 4-14 age group, with a view to erecting a twin mast climbing activity net arrangement. It will be large structure 23 M x 8M x 6

*M tall. This will be dependent on securing funding from local organisations and also from the SNC Community Action Fund. Our two District Councillors have also offered to chip in from their personal local fund. The probable location will be The Meadows and we hope to commence the work, if successful with our funding, in July this year.*

*We are also installing an outdoor table tennis facility at the Village Hall complex. This will be done in conjunction with SNC and Table Tennis England. Everything will be provided free, including bats and table tennis balls. We are hoping to have this facility opened on 7th July this year and will be running an opening event along with SNC. It will run for a trial period of 12 weeks and if successful will become a permanent feature.*

*We continue to support Marina in her production of the Village website and this year again gave a grant to the Mulbarton Words Week.*

*We continue to maintain the clock in the church tower-which classed as a war memorial and have also helped with the cost of adding a control mechanism which shuts the bell down during the night-time. We also contribute to the cost of maintain the burial ground in the churchyard.*

*We have finally concluded a long-term lease with Mulbarton Wanderers & Belles for the exclusive use of the football pitch at Mulberry Park. This should ensure their long term future and will also mean future generations will have a reference document to refer to.*

*Finally my thanks to the Vice-Chair Beverley and to Adam, Derek, Emma, Richard and Steve, your Councillors, for their collective help. Don't forget they give their time freely and in the case of our younger members have to manage a full-time job, young families and contributing to the community.*

Cllr Leigh introduces **Laura Woollacott, Events co-ordinator at South Norfolk Council** to give the meeting an overview of the **Ping! Festival**: Laura reported that SNC have secured funding from Table Tennis England to run a free outdoor table tennis festival know as Ping! And that Mulbarton is one of four villages that will be hosting an outdoor table tennis table. The South Norfolk Ping festival will run for 12 weeks and Mulbarton's launch event will be on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July. As well as the table SNC will be supplying a hugh number of free bats and balls. The aim of the event is to get people to have a go and play, it's a social activity that doesn't require any great skill and there are proven health benefits for older players.

## **5. County Councillor's Report.**

Cllr Leigh reported that Cllr Foulger had sent in a nine page Norfolk County Council, Parish Council Review 2017-18 report but due to time constraints he would read highlighted sections only but that the full report would be available on the Parish Council's website and is also attached to these minutes.

Cllr Leigh read out the following extracts from report on behalf of: **Cllr Colin Foulger:**

***Mobile coverage*** – *our new Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee is leaving no stone unturned in the drive to improve the county's mobile coverage (with a target of 98%) – working with the big four mobile providers and identifying opportunities to work together to improve the quality and reach of mobile data and voice coverage in Norfolk. In February we kicked off a campaign to improve coverage, with our survey van scouring the county to identify areas of greatest need. We are also using our county*

council-owned buildings to help overcome 'not spots', by putting mast on top of them to improve phone signals.

**The NDR** – construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR – the A1270) made good progress over the summer of 2017, allowing the opening of the first 6 km, from the A1270 Fakenham Road to the A140 Cromer Road, to open in November, more than three months ahead of schedule. This was followed by the next 7.75km to the A1151 Wroxham Road before Christmas. The final phase, 5.25km from the A1151 Wroxham Road to the connecting roundabout on the Postwick Hub, is on course to open to traffic on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**Long Stratton bypass** – getting a bypass built around Long Stratton is one of the County Council's top infrastructure priorities for Norfolk, and something we have long been pressing for. There was good news in February, as developers submitted a planning application to South Norfolk Council which included plans for a bypass. There's a long way to go before any decisions are reached but this is an important step in the right direction, and the planning consultation is a great opportunity for people to have their say in this important matter.

**Transport for Norwich** - last summer saw the launch of the flagship Westlegate pedestrianisation scheme. This has created a thriving new public space that is pedestrian and cycle-friendly and has increased trade to local businesses. Other projects included new cycle facilities along key routes to the city centre and university, as well as the start of works to reduce congestion on the Dereham Road/outer ring road junction. Forthcoming projects include improvements to traffic flow and pedestrian/cyclist provision around Prince of Wales Road, completion of the Wymondham to Hethersett cycle link, a new crossing on St Crispin's Road and a new transport interchange in Cringleford.

**Launch of new rural strategy** – the county's rural economy was boosted in November with the launch of Strong Roots: New Growth - Norfolk Rural Strategy 2017-2020. Since the original Norfolk Rural Development Strategy was published in 2013 there have been significant changes, which will have major impacts on Norfolk's rural economy - these include the UK voting to leave the EU, the introduction of the National Living Wage and rapid advances in technology. To respond to the changes, the Norfolk Rural Strategy Steering Group commissioned a refresh of the 2013 strategy to identify the priority areas on which the Norfolk rural community needs to focus between now and 2020. Effective delivery of the strategy will require close cooperation and action from all partners with a stake in Norfolk's rural economy.

**Thirty new social workers through grow your own** – this year we've welcomed 62 newly qualified social workers to Children's Services, as part of our work to grow our own talented staff. Our Norfolk Institute of Practice Excellence (NIPE), created in 2014, provides dedicated support and training to our new social work staff. During their first year, staff have smaller caseloads, protected time and regular training. They also receive support from a Practice Consultant, who can help them to build their skills in the field. Our scheme has high retention rates and was praised as national best practice in our recent Ofsted report.

**Norwich Escalation Avoidance Team** – sees health and social care joining forces to support Norwich residents facing non-999 emergency situations. This highly responsive service works to prevent crises escalating and causing unnecessary admissions to hospital or emergency respite care

**Investing in home support** – in the next financial year, we will be investing an extra £2.1m to help home support providers. We've developed a new model to improve the coverage and quality of home support

countywide. The key to making this work will be a collaborative approach from providers – communicating and working as a collective whole to deliver a stronger and more robust service. The ambition is that providers can respond to the majority of requests quickly and is reliable, providing continuity of well-trained personnel working to agreed professional standards, for people using these services to be able to remain in their own homes for as long as they wish.

**Digital libraries** – as well as launching of the Libby app, enabling customers to access books from anywhere, the Library Service has been running a range of digital clubs. This includes everything from helping people learn to log on to the internet or use a tablet computer, through to a number of successful coding clubs. In the Autumn of 2017, Norfolk libraries were given 500 BBC micro:bits which can be borrowed for free. They are tiny codeable computers that help people get to grips with digital devices and learn about coding.

**Domestic abuse** – we continue to tackle domestic abuse in Norfolk head-on, with our programme to train ‘champions’ – people in professions who deal with the public and who are taught to spot signs of abuse and offer support. Domestic abuse is not always physical and can take many forms, including coercion and control, and our aim is to raise awareness about this and focus on the safety of people at risk. Our domestic abuse change coordinators have exceeded all expectations by training 925 champions so far since 2015, keeping an estimated 1,500 people in the county safer.

**Fire and Rescue** – councillors from our Communities Committee voted unanimously in January that the Fire and Rescue Service should continue to be governed by the county council. In 2016/17 (latest stats available), our Fire and Rescue Service attended 7,340 incidents and rescued over 700 people. Following the devastating Grenfell Tower blaze in London, our Fire and Rescue Service did a great deal of public reassurance work and inspected all domestic Norfolk high-rise flats, mid-rise blocks and many commercial premises to check safety compliance. We’ve expanded our collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust - to have ambulances based at Great Yarmouth fire station for ease of accessing incidents. We’re already doing this at Carrow, Sandringham and Sheringham. Our prevention work continues and included the IMPACT roadshow, seeking to reduce road casualties among young people and run in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary.

Our drive to fill vacancies for on-call firefighters across Norfolk continues. The number of vacancies has decreased over recent months but there is still work to do to fill the remaining gaps in cover. Many of the recruitment difficulties are caused by the rural locations of fire stations and the need for on-call staff to live or work within five minutes of them.

**Norse Group** - The Norse Group brings together facilities management specialists Norse Commercial Services, property consultancy NPS Group and care provider Norse Care. The Group has a combined turnover of more than £281m and provides employment for over 10,000 staff.

Norfolk remains central to Norse Group’s thinking, returning millions of pounds in profits to the County Council every year, providing thousands of local jobs and underpinning the local community.

NorseCare is the largest care provider in East Anglia, supporting over 1,400 of Norfolk’s most vulnerable people. Which? magazine recently found that for care providers who have more than 12 care homes, NorseCare was ranked in the top 10 in the country for having homes with good or outstanding CQC ratings.

*The Group was awarded Norfolk County Council's In Good Company Quality Mark Plus in February 2018, in recognition of the positive work being done by staff to tackle loneliness in Norfolk*

## **6. District Councillor's Report.**

Cllr Leigh read out the following report on behalf of: **Cllr Nigel Legg:**

*There will be elections for the District Council in May next year. There will be boundary changes to the individual wards but the total number of Councillors will remain the same. There will be an enlarged ward in Mulbarton which will include Stoke Holy Cross. Three Councillors will be elected. The changes reflect the increase in population in the Norwich suburbs due to development.*

*There are ongoing discussions with Broadland District Council at Member and Officer level regarding the combination of some services with a view to making efficiency savings. There is no suggestion that the two Councils should combine but certain Departments such as Planning may do so.*

*Residents will know that there has been considerable house building in South Norfolk of recent years. Some of this has been opportunistic development under the five year land supply rules. A new methodology has been introduced which shows that there is now a five year land supply in the Norwich policy Area. A development plan for the Norwich Policy Area is being developed for the period to 2036. This includes the whole of South Norfolk. The number of extra houses required has been agreed. Their distribution will be determined in due course. It is hoped that there will be limited further building in Mulbarton, perhaps limited to that recommended in the Neighbourhood Plan.*

*South Norfolk Councils finances are broadly in balance. However there is increasing pressure due to the reducing Government support grant. For this reason an increase in Council Tax was considered to be advisable for this year. The Council is seeking to generate income from other sources. It is currently developing housing and industrial units on land that it owns in Poringland and Long Stratton. Nigel Legg.*

## **7. Reports from local groups and organisations.**

Cllr Leek read out the following report from the **Hethersett and Mulbarton Police May 2018 newsletter:**

*Message from Inspector Andrew: following recent crimes in which a number of sports and social clubs and village halls have been targeted, I would like to remind you all that should you notice anything suspicious then please let us know via 101 or if a crime is in progress then to call 999. We have made an arrest in relation to this, following which a male was charged and will be appearing in court. On a separate note, I am looking at ways that we the Police can better engage with the local communities, so if you have any suggestions then please do not hesitate to let either myself know, or contact PC Jim Squires or your local Beat Manager.*

*Date for the next Safer neighbourhood Team Street Surgery: Hethersett Middle School Spring Fair on 9<sup>th</sup> June from 11am onwards.*

*Currently the team are working on speeding and ASB.*

It was noted that the Norfolk Constabulary website will allow residents to view crime statistics at village and street level.

It was noted that all in the village have a responsibility to report crimes to keep the community safer for all.

**MULBARTON CHURCH:** Rector Adrian Miller reported that the Church continues to share life with the community. After the success of last year's open day, the event was repeated this weekend and helped to raise funds for font repairs. Since last year's open day the Church has been open every day.

In the last year the Church was successful in obtaining a grant to have the roof repaired and to install a roof alarm. Funding was also obtained to help with repairs on the tower after stones were found to have fallen off.

Last Christmas saw a record number at Christmas services with attendances at 400 plus. The Community Choir led by Rev. Andrew North has more than 76 on the mail listing and has recently been nominated for a community mental health award; their last performance was at Wymondham Abbey.

The Church continues to work with the Social Club to host the Mulbarton Mardlers on a monthly basis.

Baptisms at the Church are bucking the national trend and have increased considerable. The concern now is that the font is crumbling. Over £2000 has been raised to date for repairs that are estimated to be £7500. The Church continues to seek funding in the form of grants to help pay for repairs.

The Church have been approached by a company that delivers rural broadband to install a wi-fi mast on the tower, please get in touch if you are struggling with poor broadband speeds.

Cllr Leigh as Chairman of the **Rich's Trust** read out following report:

*I am sure that many residents are not aware of a trust that operates in the Village. This is called the Rich's Trust and has been in operation for hundreds of years.*

*It has a very small amount of money, derived from land rental and allotment rental and is available to villagers in real need of support to get them over a particular problem.*

*The Almoner for the Trust is Mrs Pauline Campion (telephone number 570355, who should be the first port of call if you seek help. Our Secretary is Kath Smith who can be contacted on 570479 if Pauline is unavailable.*

*It is stressed that our level of support is small but we will endeavour to help anyone we can to help the out.*

Cllr Leigh read out the following report on behalf of: **Mulbarton Words Week:**



*Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Parish Council, On behalf of the committee of Mulbarton Words Week I would like to thank you for the grant which you gave us to help with the expenses of putting on the festival.*

*These include the printing of publicity leaflets to be distributed to the households in ours and neighbouring villages. We also need to give our author guests fees or expenses. This year, being the centenary of the end of World war 1, among other items that have been planned, is a display of the stories of Mulbarton men who fought in that conflict. The folders in which these stories are stores, which will be kept for the use of the village, have been purchased from our funds.*

*Thank you once again for your support, it is very much appreciated. Yours sincerely, Pauline Campion.*

Cllr Leigh read out the following report on behalf of: **MULBARTON WORDS WEEK:**

*June 2018 will see the fourth annual Words Week festival and once again we will be trying to include something for as many sections of our village community as possible.*

*Over the years Mulbarton Words Week (MWW) has spent nearly £600 funding visiting authors etc. going into Mulbarton's school. We have held afternoon tea events at Hanover Gardens with visiting speakers. Nearly 30 authors (several with international reputations) have appeared at public events in the village. Our music events have included everything from an opera singer to rock bands; folk and country music to choral events.*

*In the process of staging these events we have also been able to help support local groups such as Puddleducks (who raise funds at our events by providing refreshment services). Through our events we have also raised in excess of £700 for a variety of charities from across Norfolk and East Anglia.*

*MWW events include a village history walk which is increasingly popular with 100% take up each year. In 2018 MWW is also supporting a project to record information about the 91 villagers who served in WW1 and the stories of the 17 who did not return. It is hoped these records will become a long-term asset of the village.*

*Mulbarton Words Week is organised by a small group of local people on an entirely voluntary basis and is grateful for the support received from the Parish Council which has been used to help with the hire of facilities such as the Village Hall.*

*The future of MWW is now dependent upon wider support from the community as we are in need of more people volunteering to help with the organising of events.*

Cllr Leigh read out the following report on behalf of: **Mrs Jill Wright, Mulbarton Parish News:**

*This time last year I put to the meeting the possibility that Mulbarton Parish News might cease production as Brian Laws was stepping down as Advertising Manager and as printer after more than a decade. Parish Councillors attended a 'crunch' meeting which resulted in the Rector investigating other production methods and an offer of help with the ads from Sara Broomhead. As a result of hard work by both these new team members a 'new-look' magazine hit doormats at*

*the end of November - full-colour, larger and shinier, with more ads, a more streamlined production method and cheaper than before so the Parish Council no longer needs to subsidise it.*

*I think we should record our thanks to Brian Laws for the many years during which he printed it and managed the ads; to Sara for taking over the ads - and increasing income considerably; to Adrian for his rescue-package (and lessons to the Editor on managing it in a 'cloud!'); to Terry Burchell for the cover photos; to Sue for eagle-eyed proof-reading; and to Pauline Champion and her team of nearly 50 distributors. Jill Wright (Editor)*

Cllr Leigh read out the following report on behalf of: **Mrs Jill Wright, Mulbarton Heritage Group:**

*We have continued to organise meetings around local history themes. We had speakers about a Bishop of Norwich with connections to Bracon Ash, and about the Norwich shoe industry, and our afternoon with artefacts from the '40s and '50s interested many.*

*Since the last Annual Meeting a Mulbarton History website had been created and paid for by the Group, and a similar website for Bracon Ash & Hethel is being developed. A meeting was held at Bracon Ash Village Hall to promote that. Web addresses are in Parish News - PLEASE have a look and encourage contributions (and corrections). A couple of members of the Group have also helped Flordon collect their memories and photos of historic interest with a view to them being on their village website soon.*

*Work has been going on to research all the Mulbarton men recorded as serving in the First World War - Words Week used some of the money it received from the Council to buy folders in which data could be displayed. These were in church for the Open Day and will be at the Words Week World War 1 evening and at future events when we commemorate the 100 years since the Armistice in 1918. Jill Wright*

Cllr Leigh read out the following report on behalf of: **Mrs Marina Carter, Village Website:**

*Sorry I can't be at this meeting to give my report on the Village Website in person. This has been running for almost 18 years now, and I'm grateful to the Parish Council for their support, and would also like to thank Carl Grant and Rev. Adrian Miller for their help.*

*I appreciate the positive comments received about the website, and for the monthly info-mails. I have sent information for recipients to opt-in to my monthly info-mail 'service' and will delete names of those I don't hear back from by 25th May 2018 and am sending consent forms to those with personal information on my website and adding a link to the GDPR Policy to comply with the new data protection regulations in force later this month.*

*Thanks to Carl, I was pleased to be able to add a Village Google calendar link recently at the top of my website Homepage page, which hopefully people will find quick and easy to access!*

*Following the report at last year's APM regarding the future of the free quarterly Parish Magazines, we have 'joined forces' insofar as Banking is concerned, to aid the receipts and payments (for advertisers, printers etc). The great 'new look' Mulbarton Parish News, as most of*

*you will have seen, has taken on a new lease of life thanks to Editor Jill Wright's continued hard work, and everyone else involved in its production and distribution*

*I work regularly on the website to keep it as up to date as I can, but do rely on groups etc. keeping me informed of changes to links / contact personnel etc. for this to be accurate. I'm happy to hear from anyone by e-mail via the 'contact us' button on the website with ideas, updates or amendments. Thank you. Marina*

**MALGA:** Mr Geoff Kitchen reported that the Mulbarton Allotment & Leisure Gardeners Association now has 50 members. MALGA has a real and positive partnership with MPC and the organisation continues to be a great success and whilst Cllr Leigh made reference to children's play area earlier the allotments can be likened to play areas for adults and encourage good social interaction. MALGA would like to thank MPC for helping to make the allotments and organisation a great success.

#### **8. Any other business.**

No other representation was made.

Cllr Leigh thanked those that had attended and invited those that wish to, to stay in the hall for the Parish Council AGM and ordinary meeting.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.50pm

Report submitted by Cllr Colin Foulger in full:

**Norfolk County Council**  
**Parish Council Annual Review 2017-18**

March 2017 – March 2018

### **Infrastructure**

**Broadband** – our Better Broadband for Norfolk programme has already transformed broadband speeds for many people in the county, including in some of our most rural areas. We're on course to increase superfast broadband access in Norfolk to 95 per cent by March 2020 but we need to do more to reach the final five per cent. So we're looking to invest an additional £13m into the programme to extend superfast broadband coverage and get us much closer to our goal of eliminating broadband inequality in the county.

**Mobile coverage** – our new Digital Innovation and Efficiency Committee is leaving no stone unturned in the drive to improve the county's mobile coverage (with a target of 98%) – working with the big four mobile providers and identifying opportunities to work together to improve the quality and reach of mobile data and voice coverage in Norfolk. In February we kicked off a campaign to improve coverage, with our survey van scouring the county to identify areas of greatest need. We are also using our county council-owned buildings to help overcome 'not spots', by putting mast on top of them to improve phone signals.

**A47** – we continue to actively work with the A47 Alliance, bringing together key stakeholders from Lowestoft to Peterborough to lobby for improvements to this important trunk road. Throughout 2017 we worked with Highways England (HE) to develop proposals for sections of dualling and junction improvements to deliver the already funded projects (over £300m) as soon as possible. In Norfolk, this has seen the preferred scheme solutions announced by HE for dual carriageways between Easton and North Tuddenham, and from Blofield to Burlingham. It has also resulted in proposed junction improvements being considered for the A47/A11 Thickthorn junction, as well as the Vauxhall junction in Great Yarmouth. The County Council is currently delivering improvements to the rail station junction in

*Great Yarmouth, using funding provided by HE, which has also confirmed its commitment to complete the construction of all these projects between 2020 and 2023.*

*We are also actively engaging – with the A47 Alliance – in securing the next round of funding for further trunk road improvements due to be delivered between 2020 and 2025. Our two priorities in Norfolk remain unchanged: to see dualling of the Acle Straight and the Tilney to East Winch sections. This all builds towards the ultimate aim of seeing the A47 being a dual carriageway from Great Yarmouth through to Peterborough and the A1.*

**The NDR** – construction of the Norwich Northern Distributor Road (NDR – the A1270) made good progress over the summer of 2017, allowing the opening of the first 6 km, from the A1270 Fakenham Road to the A140 Cromer Road, to open in November, more than three months ahead of schedule. This was followed by the next 7.75km to the A1151 Wroxham Road before Christmas. The final phase, 5.25km from the A1151 Wroxham Road to the connecting roundabout on the Postwick Hub, is on course to open to traffic on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**Norwich Western Link** – we have continued to develop the initial business case appraisal for a Norwich Western Link – to join the NDR to the Norwich southern bypass. The work undertaken during 2017 (and reported to Committee in October) included modelling to provide an indicative assessment of a possible dual or single carriageway solution. This work was based on an assumed alignment (which should not be taken to be a preferred solution). The economic appraisal provided a high value for money (vfm) rating (using Department for Transport guidance). The next steps include further scheme development, technical and environmental work and consultation to be completed throughout 2018.

**Great Yarmouth** – work is well under way on £9m (from New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership) of transport improvements to make it easier to get into and around Great Yarmouth and which will have long-term benefits for local people, visitors and for the borough's economy. Work to sort out some of the town's congestion hot spots, improve the area around the railway station and make it easier to get between the station and the town centre began in autumn 2017.

Work on the Fuller's Hill roundabout is complete, with landscaping scheduled for spring. We're also improving the railway station right turn at Asda, which will reduce congestion and delays on Vauxhall roundabout, and shorten journey times. And at North Quay, we're providing better walking and cycling links between the rail station and the market place, and a widened route for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Third river crossing** – our hard work paid off. Last year's Autumn Budget contained some great news for Norfolk as Chancellor Philip Hammond committed £98m of Government funding to create a third river crossing in Great Yarmouth. We made the third river crossing one of our infrastructure priorities, recognising its potential to attract future investment and development to the area, creating skilled jobs, business opportunities and giving local people a better quality of life. The bridge will do this by reducing traffic congestion and improving transport links between the port and energy-related enterprise zone and the A47 and the rest of the trunk road network. We hope to start construction towards the end of 2020 and work is currently under way to appoint a contractor to build the bridge.

**Long Stratton bypass** – getting a bypass built around Long Stratton is one of the County Council's top infrastructure priorities for Norfolk, and something we have long been pressing for. There was good news in February, as developers submitted a planning application to South Norfolk Council which included plans for a bypass. There's a long way to go before any decisions are reached but this is an

*important step in the right direction, and the planning consultation is a great opportunity for people to have their say in this important matter.*

**Attleborough** – following an award of £4.5m from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to support planned growth within Attleborough, to help the town grow as smoothly and successfully as possible, we held a public consultation in summer 2017 to seek views on potential schemes and help us shape these significant transport improvements. As a result, we have prioritised work to create more parking spaces in the town centre’s Queens Square car park and at the railway station, reduce queuing traffic and congestion by changing junctions and road layouts, encourage cycling and walking by improving and extending current facilities, and create a more attractive and usable space in front of the town hall – with the work due to start in Surrogate Street this year.

**Hales roundabout** – in January, work started on £1.63m roundabout to replace Norfolk’s most dangerous main road junction on the A146 at Hales junction, which currently has the worst accident record for a main road in Norfolk. .

**And more roundabouts** – we’ve also had £3m from the Government for a new Hempnall roundabout which at the time of publication is out for public consultation. And in 2017, with the help of local funding, we completed a new roundabout at Felbrigg – one of three new roundabouts in north Norfolk, helping reduce congestion and cut journey times.

**Market towns** – our Environment, Development and Transport Committee agreed in September 2017 to carry out a series of studies looking at short-, medium- and long-term transport impacts of growth in market towns – to help us identify and plan interventions ahead of growth. The first year’s studies, in Dereham, Thetford, North Walsham, Swaffham and Diss, are already under way, in close cooperation with local stakeholders, including town and district councils.

**Transport for Norwich** - last summer saw the launch of the flagship Westlegate pedestrianisation scheme. This has created a thriving new public space that is pedestrian and cycle-friendly and has increased trade to local businesses. Other projects included new cycle facilities along key routes to the city centre and university, as well as the start of works to reduce congestion on the Dereham Road/outer ring road junction. Forthcoming projects include improvements to traffic flow and pedestrian/cyclist provision around Prince of Wales Road, completion of the Wymondham to Hethersett cycle link, a new crossing on St Crispin’s Road and a new transport interchange in Cringleford.

#### **And finally... recycling Norfolk’s disused railways**

As part of our vision for a cycling and walking network for the county, a feasibility study is looking at bringing disused railways and other underused parts of the transport network back into use as cycling and walking routes which would help make the county a top walking and cycling destination for leisure and tourism. The initial feasibility study focusses on three disused railways, Weaver’s Way – which is owned in part by Norfolk County Council - King’s Lynn to Fakenham and King’s Lynn to Hunstanton.

## **Economy**

**Repton Property Developments** – Norfolk is growing and we need enough houses for people to live in. Gathering information about the types of housing required will help us support economic regeneration and has the potential for us to make money from our own properties. With this in mind, we have set up our own company, Repton Property Developments Ltd, to do this work. We’re scrutinising our own

*property estate as, if we offer several services from fewer buildings, we can sell surplus property and reduce running costs. And having several services in one place also offers a better service to the public.*

**Launch of Local Investment in Future Talent programme** – *our successful bid for funding on behalf of five Local Action Groups (LAGs) resulted in the launch of a new skills and employability programme, Local Investment in Future Talent (LIFT). Funded by the European Social Fund, LIFT seeks applications from community-based organisations in Norfolk and north Suffolk that can deliver targeted employment and skills support in rural areas. The first project was approved in January and will see Moore Networking use the grant to set up TrAC Apprenticeships Norfolk, a pilot for an Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA). This will support and enable rural businesses to host apprenticeships for care leavers and other vulnerable young people who are not in education, employment or training. Also approved is a project to support ex-offenders to help grow salad crops for local restaurants. The Horticultural Industry Scheme, based in Thetford, offers training and help finding work to ex-offenders, and their £26,415.29 grant from the LIFT funding programme will enable them to support 15 individuals over the next 12 months.*

**Launch of new rural strategy** – *the county's rural economy was boosted in November with the launch of Strong Roots: New Growth - Norfolk Rural Strategy 2017-2020. Since the original Norfolk Rural Development Strategy was published in 2013 there have been significant changes, which will have major impacts on Norfolk's rural economy - these include the UK voting to leave the EU, the introduction of the National Living Wage and rapid advances in technology. To respond to the changes, the Norfolk Rural Strategy Steering Group commissioned a refresh of the 2013 strategy to identify the priority areas on which the Norfolk rural community needs to focus between now and 2020. Effective delivery of the strategy will require close cooperation and action from all partners with a stake in Norfolk's rural economy.*

**LEADER project reaches funding milestone** – *funding allocated to rural businesses in Norfolk and north Suffolk through the LEADER programme, an initiative managed by the county council, passed the £3m mark in December. Since Norfolk and north Suffolk's LEADER programme started, the five Local Action Groups (LAGs) have awarded millions to 69 rural projects, including:*

**Four Norfolk County Council farms made available for tenancy** – *more than 1,000 acres of Norfolk County Council's 16,738-acre County Farms portfolio was launched for tender in January. The four farms available are located at Marshland St James and Welney in the west of the county, North Burlingham to the east, and Binham to the north. We've also expanded our portfolio, with County Farms acquiring Bank House Farm in Marshland St James back in September. The farms present opportunities for people at all stages of their farming career, whether it's a new entrant looking for their first farm, someone looking for the next rung on the ladder or those ready to go to the next level with a commercial-sized farm holding. Offering these tenancies underlines our support for sustaining and creating rural employment throughout the county.*

## **Children and Families**

### **Education**

**A good education** – our role is to champion the very best education for Norfolk’s children, so I’m very proud that, in July for the first time, Norfolk reached or exceeded the national average for the proportion of good and outstanding schools, with 90% of Norfolk’s schools now judged as good or better by Ofsted.

**Children in care** deserve the same chances as everyone else and, as their corporate parent, the County Council needs to do all it can to support them. Early indications suggest that there were significant improvements in last year’s exam and assessment results for looked after children. Although the Department for Education has not yet published official statistics, our provisional data for all the children in our care suggests that:

- The proportion achieving the expected level in English and maths GCSE has increased from 15% to 26% - up 11 percentage points
- The proportion reaching the expected level at Key Stage 2 has increased from 19% to 30% – up 11 percentage points;
- The proportion achieving a good level of development at the age of five has increased by eight percentage points – from 23% to 31%.
- No looked after children were permanently excluded from school last year, compared with six the previous year.

**Raising Learners** – we launched the Raising Learners campaign in summer 2017 to help raise children’s numeracy and literacy levels. The long school summer holiday can mean children forget some of their learning between one school year and the next. To help address this, Raising Learners provided simple and fun activities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills over the summer break. For example, Count on Norfolk made maths a fun part of everyday life. In launch week alone it had a million Twitter impressions, 80,000 Facebook reach and 1,200 page views on our website. We also held 16 family maths workshops at libraries across Norfolk and ran a stall at the Forum for the Science Festival. Our Write On Norfolk 500-word writing competition for children ran for a second successful year – encouraging 5-13-year-olds to submit a piece of original creative writing which had to feature Norfolk.

**Investing in special educational needs places** – because we want children to be taught in their local communities wherever possible, we are developing a new strategy to create more school places for children with special educational needs – and are set to receive an additional £2.7m from the Department for Education to ensure there is enough specialist provision for them, subject to Government approval of our plans. But we believe a more ambitious plan, beyond the £2.7m, is needed to ensure children can go to school closer to home, and reducing the high transport and placement costs for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

**School buildings – good quality places for school children in growing communities** – since May 2017, we have approved £169m of capital investment in school building, to develop new and extended schools, making sure that there are enough school places across the county, responding to both population growth and housing development. The new schools are being developed as the education landscape across the county continues to change, with 43% of Norfolk’s schools now academies.

A new £1.1m sixth form college opened at Sidestrand Hall in June and more than £40m of school building programmes are under way across Norfolk, creating new and extended schools for hundreds of the county’s children.

In addition, the six ‘30 hours childcare’ schemes, separately funded by Government grant, will be complete for delivery by the end of April 2018. Two, at Scarning and Marham, are already complete.



## **Children's Social Care**

**Ofsted turnaround – outstanding adoption service and improved support for vulnerable children sees council removed from intervention.** Our Ofsted report was published in January, lifting us out of intervention, praising our outstanding adoption service and highlighting significant improvements in support to children in our care and care leavers. Overall, we require improvement but the good judgement we all want to see is now in sight. Inspectors highlighted some strong social work practice, innovation in recruiting staff and 'steady progress' in support for care leavers. And it's clear from the report that children in Norfolk now have a much better experience than they did when we were first judged inadequate back in 2013. The report also acknowledges the strong leadership of the council's new permanent Director of Children's Services and the determination of councillors to provide good quality services.

**Investing in children and families** – we are investing £12m over the next four years to transform how we work with children and families to help support children to live safely at home. For those who do come into care, we want to ensure they can live with foster families wherever possible, rather than in residential homes. This means investing in intensive support for families whose children are at risk of come into care. It also means we need to recruit more foster carers and develop more early help services to work with families before they come into contact with social care. Without this level of investment, we estimate that demand for our services will continue to rise, costing an extra £5m each year by 2021-22. By reducing demand and investing now, we avoid costs going up in the future.

**Our assisted boarding scheme**, which places children at risk of coming into care in boarding school places, has received national recognition this year. Norfolk has been described as 'leading the way' in this work and we're now assisting the Department for Education to try to get more local authorities to provide these opportunities for children in need. Investing in these children's education helps to reduce the high costs that we would pay if they came into our care.

**Thirty new social workers through grow your own** – this year we've welcomed 62 newly qualified social workers to Children's Services, as part of our work to grow our own talented staff. Our Norfolk Institute of Practice Excellence (NIPE), created in 2014, provides dedicated support and training to our new social work staff. During their first year, staff have smaller caseloads, protected time and regular training. They also receive support from a Practice Consultant, who can help them to build their skills in the field. Our scheme has high retention rates and was praised as national best practice in our recent Ofsted report.

**Case study:** our Marshfields short breaks unit in West Norfolk achieved its magnificent seventh consecutive Outstanding rating from Ofsted. Its excellent team of social workers and learning disability nurses provides excellent care 24/7 to five to 18-year-olds with disabilities, and is firmly centred around the child.

**App helps vulnerable young people in Norfolk to share their views** – we've launched two interactive, secure apps that give vulnerable children and young people in Norfolk a new way to share their views and feelings, and record their thoughts and experiences – day and night.

## **Adult Social Care**

**Key highlights include:**

***In Good Company*** – our award-winning campaign to tackle loneliness in Norfolk continues to go from strength to strength. The health impact of being lonely can equate to smoking 30 cigarettes a day, so the risks can be substantial. With an estimated 43,700 lonely people in the county, the campaign is vital to ensure no one in Norfolk spends a lonely day if they don't want to. Thirty businesses and groups have now got one of our In Good Company quality marks, which were launched in July 2016 – and which highlight their strong commitment to combating loneliness.

***Tackling loneliness at a local level*** – in February, nearly 100 people came to our first In Good Company Loneliness in Norfolk Summit, organised with the support of key partners, Age UK Norfolk, MIND, Action for Children, Carers Matter Norfolk and Norfolk Community Foundation. Actions pledged included setting up inter-generational groups in Norwich, free get-togethers with refreshments in Great Yarmouth and Waveney, a buddy system to share ideas in north Norfolk, creating a community champion in south Norfolk to work with young people, and individuals in west Norfolk promising to deliver 100 leaflets each to publicise events tackling loneliness. With team work, dedication and support like this, we can all help to end the epidemic of loneliness in Norfolk.

***£35m boost for adult social care – this welcome one-off funding from the Government helped address pressures in the health and social care system and followed extensive national lobbying by local authorities, including Norfolk. The money has helped us recruit 50 social workers, as well as contributing to new preventative activities to reduce and delay the need for formal care and support the safe discharge of people from hospital.***

***Norfolk, Living Well – our campaign to recruit 50 social workers coincided with the introduction of this new approach to social work, promoting people's strengths and independence. Also known as the three conversations model, it is already operating successfully elsewhere and is about looking at what is going well in somebody's life and building on that to make things better for them.***

***Recruiting for reablement*** – in November we recruited around 80 new care workers countywide, including posts for our new accommodation-based reablement initiative which sees reablement care workers provide a 'wrap around' service to follow people from hospital and support them back to their home. An active assessment unit at Burgh House near Great Yarmouth opened in September, with three beds available for overnight accommodation-based reablement. This was followed in February by Benjamin Court in Cromer with a provision of 18 beds. These units complement the existing home based reablement service and are for people who are medically fit but unable to return to their home safely. We're also planning a facility for west Norfolk.

***Caring for carers*** – with the five Clinical Commissioning Groups, we've commissioned a new carer-led service, Carers Matter Norfolk, to support the county's 100,000 unpaid carers.

***Norwich Escalation Avoidance Team*** – sees health and social care joining forces to support Norwich residents facing non-999 emergency situations. This highly responsive service works to prevent crises escalating and causing unnecessary admissions to hospital or emergency respite care.

***Tackling winter pressures, managing the strain on health and social care*** – to support timely and safe discharges from hospital, we agreed a package of financial measures to help home care and care home providers respond swiftly to requests to take on care packages related to hospital discharges. Facilitating a speedy discharge for people from hospital, either to their own home or to residential care, is essential to help people stay independent and also to keep our emergency care system running. Our Enhanced Home Support Service, a targeted initiative launched in February, is aimed at reducing delayed

*discharges from the three acute hospitals, as well as preventing unnecessary admissions. We're piloting it for three years and are delivering it in partnership with three home support framework providers.*

**Investing in home support** – *in the next financial year, we will be investing an extra £2.1m to help home support providers. We've developed a new model to improve the coverage and quality of home support countywide. The key to making this work will be a collaborative approach from providers – communicating and working as a collective whole to deliver a stronger and more robust service. The ambition is that providers can respond to the majority of requests quickly and is reliable, providing continuity of well-trained personnel working to agreed professional standards, for people using these services to be able to remain in their own homes for as long as they wish.*

## **Communities**

**Norfolk Community Learning Services** – *I'm proud of our Community Learning Services for adults, which have gone from strength to strength this year. You're never too old to learn, so having the right opportunities there for everyone is vital, and something close to my heart. In April, Norfolk Community Learning Services (NCLS) was shortlisted for a national award in recognition of its performance turnaround. NCLS was one of six national finalists in the Most Improved Council category of the Municipal Journal's Local Government Achievement Awards. The judges recognised that, in just fifteen months, the service managed to turn an 'Inadequate' Ofsted rating into a 'Good'. There is enormous pride among NCLS staff that they improved their performance and service to learners in such a short space of time.*

**Adult learners celebrate excellent GCSE results** – *August saw students from NCLS celebrating their GCSE results, with 75% of those who sat an English GCSE achieving a grade 9-4 (A\*-C) and 63% achieving the same result in maths. As well as being great results for the learners, the pass rates were well above the national pass rates for learners aged 17 and over taking English (40% above) and maths (21% above) GCSE. This was a testament to a combination of the students' hard work and the high standard of teaching at NCLS.*

**Open Library** – *we are continuing to extend Open Library to more branches, giving customers access to libraries beyond staffed opening hours, by using their membership cards to access library buildings. This initiative ran successfully as a pilot project and the aim is to offer this service at all libraries.*

**Norfolk Reading Pathway** – *following a grant of £98,000 from Arts Council England, we have supported almost 600 Norfolk residents aged 8 and above to learn to read. Using a phonics-based reading programme, learners are supported by library volunteer coaches, who are given full training. A large part of this project has involved supporting schools with children who struggle to read. Reading sessions take place at libraries across Norfolk and we are continuing to recruit new learners and volunteers.*

**Digital libraries** – *as well as launching of the Libby app, enabling customers to access books from anywhere, the Library Service has been running a range of digital clubs. This includes everything from helping people learn to log on to the internet or use a tablet computer, through to a number of successful coding clubs. In the Autumn of 2017, Norfolk libraries were given 500 BBC micro:bits which can be borrowed for free. They are tiny codeable computers that help people get to grips with digital devices and learn about coding.*

**Healthy libraries, Story Walks** – in the summer holidays, youngsters from Tuckswood and Lakenham were able to feed their imaginations and get some fresh air and a healthy snack at special themed story walks. The project was funded through a grant from Lakenham and Tuckswood Energise Project through Sport For Change and is a great example of innovative ways of working with partners.

**Libraries as community hubs** are helping break down social isolation and bringing services to the people – whether it's baby-weighing scales, Knit and Natter or Just a Cuppa drop-in sessions. There are some amazing volunteers doing amazing work at our libraries, making a huge difference to people's lives by fundraising, knitting, cooking, helping people with IT, running craft sessions, literacy sessions and activities for people with dementia. .

**Outstanding exhibitions at our museums** – two home-grown exhibitions at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery pulled in the crowds in the summer and autumn of 2017. Nelson & Norfolk and Rembrandt: Lightening the Darkness shone a spotlight on extraordinary objects in the Castle collections. The exhibition, which also featured major loans from Royal Museums Greenwich and the Royal Collections, attracted 57,527 visitors and received regional, national and international coverage.

**Domestic abuse** – we continue to tackle domestic abuse in Norfolk head-on, with our programme to train 'champions' – people in professions who deal with the public and who are taught to spot signs of abuse and offer support. Domestic abuse is not always physical and can take many forms, including coercion and control, and our aim is to raise awareness about this and focus on the safety of people at risk. Our domestic abuse change coordinators have exceeded all expectations by training 925 champions so far since 2015, keeping an estimated 1,500 people in the county safer.

**Mental health** – 2017 saw the launch of our suicide prevention and men's mental health campaign targeting males, and in particular older men. There are around 77 suicides a year in Norfolk - higher than the national average. I am really (not) okay is our multi-agency strategy for suicide prevention in Norfolk, and talks about it being everyone's responsibility, with all of us having a part to play in helping friends or family members who may be at risk. In December, we partnered with Norwich Theatre Royal to launch a month-long series of events focusing on men's mental health to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. There were workshops, screenings, and performances, using art as a platform to communicate the message.

**Chathealth**, our innovative confidential text messaging service gives 11-19-year-olds an easy way to talk to school nurses. In its first year in 2016 it had more than 3,000 texts on topics like relationships, smoking, bullying and exam stress. The service is particularly useful for young people who wouldn't have the confidence to seek advice in person, it uses a platform that most 11-19 year olds are extremely comfortable using and also offers them support all year round, including outside school hours and school holidays.

**Fire and Rescue** – councillors from our Communities Committee voted unanimously in January that the Fire and Rescue Service should continue to be governed by the county council. In 2016/17 (latest stats available), our Fire and Rescue Service attended 7,340 incidents and rescued over 700 people. Following the devastating Grenfell Tower blaze in London, our Fire and Rescue Service did a great deal of public reassurance work and inspected all domestic Norfolk high-rise flats, mid-rise blocks and many commercial premises to check safety compliance. We've expanded our collaboration with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust - to have ambulances based at Great Yarmouth fire station for ease of accessing incidents. We're already doing this at Carrow, Sandringham and Sheringham. Our prevention

*work continues and included the IMPACT roadshow, seeking to reduce road casualties among young people and run in collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary.*

*Our drive to fill vacancies for on-call firefighters across Norfolk continues. The number of vacancies has decreased over recent months but there is still work to do to fill the remaining gaps in cover. Many of the recruitment difficulties are caused by the rural locations of fire stations and the need for on-call staff to live or work within five minutes of them.*

*The Prince's Trust and Crucial Crew projects saw continued success again and show the great efforts being made by the service with young people in our county.*

## **Norse Group**

*The Norse Group brings together facilities management specialists Norse Commercial Services, property consultancy NPS Group and care provider Norse Care. The Group has a combined turnover of more than £281m and provides employment for over 10,000 staff.*

*Norfolk remains central to Norse Group's thinking, returning millions of pounds in profits to the County Council every year, providing thousands of local jobs and underpinning the local community.*

*NorseCare is the largest care provider in East Anglia, supporting over 1,400 of Norfolk's most vulnerable people. Which? magazine recently found that for care providers who have more than 12 care homes, NorseCare was ranked in the top 10 in the country for having homes with good or outstanding CQC ratings.*

*The Group was awarded Norfolk County Council's In Good Company Quality Mark Plus in February 2018, in recognition of the positive work being done by staff to tackle loneliness in Norfolk.*

## **Conclusion:**

*This has been a great year for Norfolk County Council and for Norfolk. We have a real sense of direction; we have a plan for the future; and we are focussed on doing the best for Norfolk.*