

Stoke Holy Cross - District and County Councillors Report 3rd September 2026

Member Ward Grants

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. Please note funding for 2026/27 is largely allocated.

In Bloom Grant

Applications for In Bloom Grants are open to Parish Councils and other community organisations until 15th November 2026. The grant is limited to £1 per resident and must be matched funded.

Nature Conservation Fund

Applications can be made for grants of up to £10,000 for projects which support nature recovery and improve or help connect residents to accessible greenspaces. The scheme is open to Town and Parish Councils, community groups, charities and schools in South Norfolk. Applications close on Friday 16th September. <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/environment/nature-conservation-fund>

Community & Open Spaces Grant

Up to £2.25 million of funding is available to support larger projects valued at over £200,000 which are led by Parish and Town Councils but support South Norfolk Council's strategic ambitions and wider place shaping ambitions.

Safe Recycling of Batteries

The County Council is urging all residents to ensure all batteries are safely recycled to avoid the risk of fires at waste collection and recycling centres. Fires due to batteries have been increasing for a number of years, and 2026 is expected to be the worst on record.

Further information is available at:

<https://www.norfolkrecycles.com/article/75867/Electrical-items-and-battery-recycling>

Local Government Reform and Devolution

Both Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk District Council are submitting applications for a judicial review of the Government's plans for the reorganisation of Norfolk into 3 Unitary Authorities. The County Council has appointed a new Chief Executive with no experience of local government and has cancelled a consultancy contract for support with LGR.

While council officers continue to expect LGR to be implemented, with elections to the new authorities in May 2027, there are suggestions that the timetable for the necessary Parliamentary Structural Change Order is delayed until the end of 2026 or early 2027.

Planning Policy Changes

A new National Planning Policy Framework came into immediate effect in August. It is a complete reorganisation of the previous document, and the full ramifications of the new advice will take some time to be understood. It increases the importance of national policies in decision making and supports development within or next to existing settlements with good services, rather than in hamlets or the countryside. At the margin it is even more supportive of energy infrastructure developments.

It is also worth noting that from end October, a much more limited range of planning decisions can be taken by local Planning Committees. All applications for minor residential developments (less than 10 houses) and minor commercial developments (less than 1ha site or floorspace less than 1,000 sq m) must be determined by a planning officer. A formal framework must be put in place to determine which applications get referred to the planning committee.

East Pye Solar Farm.

This NSIP application is moving into the 6 month examination period. The Planning Inspectorate's review will be largely based on written representations. There will also be public hearings; the first are planned for 15th to 17th September. The deadline for requests to attend and/or participate in these hearings has passed. The events will be recorded and can be watched on Livestream on the day.

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110014?lang=en>

EDF Energy Solar Park

EDF is carrying out a limited consultation on its proposal for a large solar farm between the A140 and the River Tas, running south of Dunston Hall Golf Course. The consultation can be responded to online. The final public consultation meeting will be at Dunston Hall Hotel on Thursday 10th September from 3pm to 8pm. [Stoke Lane Solar Farm - EDF power solutions UK and Ireland](#)

Let's Go – South Norfolk Visitor Economy Website

[Explore South Norfolk and Broadland - Lets go!](#) This website showcases places to visit, things to do, events, walking and cycling routes, attractions, accommodation, food and drink venues, and independent businesses across the two districts. The initiative encourages residents and visitors to discover more of our area, helping to support businesses and communities. The website is live but will be updated with more content. Anyone interested in joining the website should email lets.go@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk.

Apex Data Centre

Proposals continue to be developed for a controversial 150 MW data centre on land between the B1113 and the A140 at Harford Bridge. The developer has indicated that a planning application will be submitted to South Norfolk Council in September, for this already approved planning site.

'Norwich to Tilbury' Update

The Planning Inspectorate's Inspection of the Norwich Tilbury Pylon proposal closed on 10 August 2026. The PI's recommendations to the Secretary of State should be completed within 3 months (ie mid-November). PylonsEastAnglia are continuing to campaign against the pylon proposals and are fundraising. For further information visit: <https://pylonseastanglia.co.uk/actions> .

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