

Stoke Holy Cross - District Councillors Report 22nd October 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

Proposals from all local authorities have now been submitted to Westminster.

A "Structural Change Order" is due to be submitted in the Spring of 2026 as part of the process of shifting powers and funding to the new local government structure.

The timetable for elections to the new positions is expected to be as follows:

May 2026: Mayoral elections for Mayor of Norfolk & Suffolk and County Council elections (postponed from May 2025).

May 2027: Shadow unitary authority elections.

May 2027: Proposed District Council elections to be postponed, pending dissolution of district council in 2028.

Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils are starting to work together to form the new County Combined Authority (CCA) which is expected to come into existence once the necessary legislation is passed in 2026. The new authority will be known as a Mayoral County Combined Authority following the 2026 Mayoral election. Elections for the Mayor are expected to be on a first past the post basis.

South Norfolk Biodiversity Strategy

South Norfolk Council's Biodiversity Strategy, a five-year plan for 2025-2030, is expected to be approved at the council meeting on 27th October 25. One of the priorities is to enhance biodiversity on land managed by the Council, which includes the commons at Dunston, Flordon, Mulbarton and Swardston. Ten of these sites will have specific improvement plans which will aim to increase biodiversity by 10% over the 5 years to 2030. Upon approval, the council will publish the detailed strategy online.

South Norfolk Planning Consultations

Three new supplementary planning documents (SPDs) will soon start their formal consultation periods. These cover: the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure SPD, the Sustainable Community SPD and the Design Code for South Norfolk. A draft of the Design Code was open for public consultation earlier this year.

Norfolk Warm Homes

Local councils are working together to deliver government funded grants for clean energy and improved insulation. Homeowners who meet the scheme's eligibility criteria (receiving benefits and with low income) can receive free solar panels, air source heat pumps and home insulation. Tenants meeting the criteria can benefit from the scheme with landlord agreement (landlords pay 50% of costs after the first property). <https://norfolkwarmhomes.org.uk/>

East Pye Solar

An additional targeted consultation has been announced that runs from 22 October to 26 November. Advice on the consultation states that it covers some small additional areas of land being brought into the scheme for work connected to the substation, connecting to the Grid and for highway visibility splays, etc. Most of the land would be required on a temporary basis during the construction phase. It will also include additional solar panels on Site 7D – West of Broaden Lane between Saxlingham Nethergate and Hempnall.

Tasway Solar

Tasway has announced that its first public consultation runs from 21st October until 5th December. The initial notification suggested an extensive solar farm of approximately 3,600 acres, running from Ashwellthorpe to Wacton. Four public meetings have been announced and also two online webinars on 29th October and 6th November from 5.30pm to 8pm.

Further information can be found on: <https://taswayenergypark.co.uk/>

‘Norwich to Tilbury’ Update

The National Grid’s Development Consent Order has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate. All supporting documentation can now be inspected on the Planning Inspectorate website. Individuals and organisations interested in participating in this process can register with the Planning Inspectorate by November 27, 2025, to have their say.

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

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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