

Report from your County Councillor, Cllr Steffan Aquarone



Winter is Coming

Gritters were out the first time on 3 November. The council's gritting routes for the 2020/21 season are on the map at www.norfolk.gov.uk/gritting

Closure of Holt Hall

The County Council's official position is that the future of Holt Hall - an outdoor learning centre for several decades, and a school before that - is still under review. Despite this, staff have sensed for some time that the decision had already been taken, and at the end of October received written confirmation along with a number of other stakeholders.

That the County Council should wind up such a valued asset, of which many constituents in Melton Constable division have powerful positive memories, is indicative of short-sightedness and a lack of imagination. It is still hoped that another public body may be able to assemble a package to maintain at least part of the site for the purposes of outdoor education - something young and older people alike need more of in this era of ecological consciousness.

Future of Adult Social Care workforce

Consultation on a new 5 year workforce strategy for the Adult Social Care workforce in Norfolk and Waveney has started and will run to 20 November. More details including an online survey is at <https://norfolkandsuffolkcaresupport.co.uk/recruitment-retention/asc-workforce-strategy-consultation>

Norfolk's economic future

Distributing grant funding and coordinating PPE were doubtless important aspects of the council's response to the pandemic. But these feature among the headlines of a recent Council paper on Growing the Economy.

I believe that thriving business and industrial sectors are key drivers of prosperity, and that the role of the council is to take the lead on stimulating a local economy that works for everyone:

- Creating jobs
- Encouraging direct investment
- Increasing the money it receives from business taxes in order to fund services

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- Leading on economic strategy
- Providing training to help businesses scale and grow, and
- Identifying and encouraging opportunities for innovation, environmental improvement, and diversification.

I would welcome your views on this. What do you think Norfolk needs to do in order to make up our nationally lagging position on employment, skills and wages - in particular as the triple-whammy of Covid recovery, Climate Emergency and Brexit are particularly impactful on some of our key sectors including adult care, hospitality and agriculture.

Reminder of address for written correspondence

It appears a couple of Parish Council websites are still listing my old Norwich address - please do ensure any written correspondence is sent to me % the Liberal Democrat Group, County Hall, Martineau Ln, Norwich NR1 2DH.