

# WINFARTHING PARISH COUNCIL

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 11 May 2025 at 7.00 pm at  
Winfarthing Village Hall, Hall Road, Winfarthing IP22 2EJ

**In attendance:** Richard Steel (Chair), Karen Rix (Clerk), 12 members of the public (MOP)

**1. Welcome by the Chairman**

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

**2. To receive and approve the minutes from Annual Parish Meeting held on 6 May 2025**

Minutes from the previous meeting had been published and circulated prior to the meeting. The minutes were signed by the Chair as a true record.

**3. To receive any matters arising from previous minutes**

None received

**4. Annual report on parish council activities**

The Chair read his report, a copy can be found with these minutes.

**5. To Receive an annual report from the County Councillor**

A report was provided to members of the public prior to and during the meeting, a copy can be found with these minutes.

**6. To receive an annual report from the District Councillor**

A report was provided to members of the public prior to and during the meeting, a copy can be found with these minutes.

**7. Questions form the public**

- An MOP advised that they had submitted a report to Norfolk County Council regarding the overgrown hedge bordering the gardens of Diamond Close at the corner of Hall Road. The Hedge is blocking the pathway and obscuring the 30 MPH speed limit sign. Another MOP advised that they had also reported the same issue. The Chair advised all MOP's that the more individual reports received by NCC the sooner the work would be carried out.
- The clerk read an email from an MOP unable to attend the meeting. This reported that the Winfarthing and Waveney Benefice had appointed a new Rector, the Rev Tracey Caswell. Her first service would be in St Mary's Church Winfarthing on Sunday 28 June at 11.00 am.
- An MOP commented on the significant increase of Muntjac deer in the village and the devastation they were causing to gardens and crops. Whilst those present were in agreement, it was recognised this was not something the parish council could address.

**8. Closure of the meeting**

The meeting closed at 19:30

# Annual Parish Meeting 2026

Chairman explained the makeup of the council. 7 councillors, Jim Collins retired and moved away we thanks Jim for his years of service,

Peter Frost left us and we have new councillor Peter Mackay - means we operate with 1 vacancy.

## **Capital projects**

We have been working with Westcotec the manufacturer of choice for NCC for the visual flashing speed indicators you see in Old Buckenham, Shelfanger and beyond.

The SAM3 system is a portable system, we met with the rep from Westcotec and village was surveyed.

5 locations were identified and later approved by the NCC highways Engineer.

2 new posts will be installed,

Funding is in place and we have sought and secured NCC Parish Partnership funding and a grant from County Councillor Dr Catherine Rowetts discretionary project fund to cover a large proportion of the cost: The system installed is approx. £4600, we have secured £3300 funding with the rest £1300 coming from Winfarthing Parish Council.

We have ordered the system, and May/ June should be installed.

We have also been lobbying for an extension to the 30 MPH zone on Hall Road particularly if the new development proceeds; we have outline approval that NCC will move the 30 MPH limit to the other side of village hall to the just the other side of Lodge Drive.

Village hall oversight management: We have enlisted the services of Community Action Norfolk to assist in setting Winfarthing Parish Council as the sole trustee of the village hall; this does not affect at all the village hall committee responsibilities - their role continues as it is but it removes the legal concerns that exist and was causing concern with in the village hall committee. This is positive step; it has taken some time but will shortly be finalised.

Oak Trees. We secured £300 funding from County Councillor Dr Rowett to buy 30 oak trees, sticks, tubes and mats. These were planted on fringe of the Winfarthing Parish Trust land. A team of councillors and volunteers planted the trees on 4th April.

There remains about £50 from the tree grant - we are considering spring bulb planting for all public areas of the village.

**Maintenance:**

We have held 2 litter picks this year, autumn 2025 and April 2026. The usual volunteers took part, but it would be good to see some new faces. We collected 17 large black bags in autumn and 15 in spring. The top collected items were #1 - Plastic bottles #2 Red Bull cans.

Glebe land by the village sign - councillors and village volunteer have kept the grass as well kept as possible.

A discussion for the future would be to remove the 'hedge' on this plot as it is all ivy and re-plant.

Councillor David Rix painted the bench last year - the dog bins continue to be used and emptied by NCC.

For 2 years now we have had a skeleton illuminated Christmas tree on the green; we hope the village welcomed it presence.

Sandbags: A pallet of 25+ sandbags was positioned in the pub car park near the beck and the recycling centre; Thanks to landlord Lee for providing a spot for them. These are there for any resident to grab in case of emergency or forward planning for flood emergency: If you think you need them, they are there for your use - you simply go grab them -

Footpaths: Councillor Jono Smith leads our footpath monitoring and some pruning activity to help keep them usable. He has repaired a stile; reinstated some signs; Winfarthing has a good footpath network.

Anyone can report an issue using NCC website, or by letting us know via the Clerk email address.

The royal wedding tree from 1981 in Hall Road near the water pump was half dead. Saffron Housing who are responsible for that piece of land reviewed it and replaced it; Does this spot look good for a new park bench?

Signage- we have some signage to erect in the village fly tipping hotspot in Heywood Road.

**Planning**

Our powers are limited to comment and local perspective:

We continue to push against the pylon activity however being a national infrastructure our voice is faint.

We put forward fair comment and critique to architects and NCC Planners to the Hall Road development with changes to the way surface water will be handled.

The drawings for Hall Road now include a larger attenuation lake compared to first drawn.

We will be vigilant to any planning creep if the site is sold for development.

We put forward the same comments for the Mill Road development; again, surface water remains the core concern for the village.

**Village Events**

VE day 80 Anniversary event last year was big success - a core of people who were involved in the running of that event - both council members past and present and village hall committee.

The Plough and Fun Day was run by the village hall committee. It was very well turned out by the village and a large group of tractor enthusiasts along with other events in the hall and a barbecue plus archery etc outside.

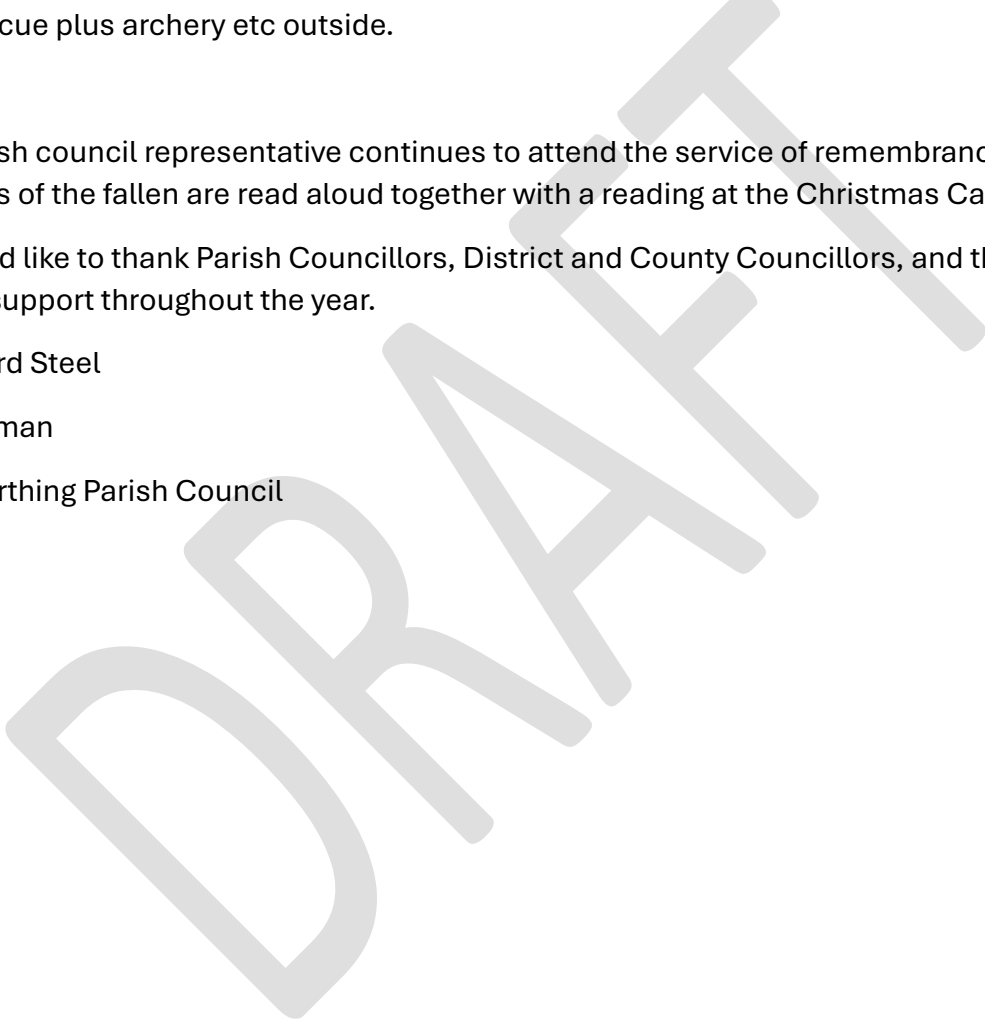
A parish council representative continues to attend the service of remembrance where the names of the fallen are read aloud together with a reading at the Christmas Carol Service.

I would like to thank Parish Councillors, District and County Councillors, and the Clerk for their support throughout the year.

Richard Steel

Chairman

Winfarthing Parish Council



## **250 word summary**

Locally I've been hard at work fighting bad infrastructure and promoting good energy for real people; working to get better bus services that go to the places we need them at the times we need them; helping parishes get schemes to reduce speed or make roads safer; providing funds for community events and activities, supporting local nature recovery and tree-planting schemes; pursuing enforcement where planning rules have been ignored, or ditches are filled in without permission; dealing with issues relating to rights of way and footpaths. I'm also delighted that some nature-based flood solutions and leaky dams are in progress to help the river Tas become more healthy again.

With my Local Member fund I've funded road schemes in Carleton Rode and Tibenham, nature conservation work in Dickleburgh, bus shelter improvements in Carleton Rode, and speed monitoring equipment for Winfarthing. My Community fund has funded activities in Great Moulton, Aslacton, Burston, Forncett, Tivethsall, Shelfanger, Winfarthing and Gissing. And we won parish partnership funds for Ashwellthorpe, Winfarthing, Bressingham, Great Moulton and Aslacton.

I've been honoured to serve these lovely villages for these three years. My ambitions have been to make things better, so that nature can flourish, farmers can thrive, and families have the best support and opportunities close to home. In the Council meetings I've focused on challenging and removing the systems that systematically obstruct change, and calling out the injustices of a system that is set up to make us all feel angry and powerless.

## **What I've been doing this year:**

### **Fighting bad infrastructure and promoting good energy for real people**

I've been kept especially busy this year with supporting residents and working with officers to prevent unsuitable industrial energy schemes to green spaces in South Norfolk. We have been especially blighted with very poor quality and inappropriately located schemes in the area round Great Moulton, with unsuitable roads and infrastructure located much too close to homes and water courses. By contrast I have been encouraging parishes to consider opportunities to develop small local community energy schemes using rooftops, or working with local farmers to get mutually beneficial low cost energy for residents, to help us all get off the costly energy imported from the Middle East.

### **Bus services**

I'm especially pleased with the new hourly bus service up the A140 to Norwich that runs into the evening and enables people to travel to work and for an evening out. We have received another tranche of new funding for buses, and I've been working with the transport officer to get a bus service to pass through Burston and Shimpling and link those villages with Dickleburgh and Pulham as well as Diss. The bus from Dickleburgh to the doctor's surgery in Pulham is also a lifeline for the residents in Dickleburgh and Rushall. We are also looking to get a bus from Ashwellthorpe and Tacolneston areas towards Wymondham. I've secured funds towards improvements to the bus shelter in Carleton Rode, and made up the missing funds from my local member fund.

### **Road schemes**

I'm especially delighted to see approval and funds for the plan for chicanes to calm traffic in the main street at Ashwellthorpe. Further support will be needed from my successor to ensure that a second chicane can be installed in the near future. The stables between Tibenham and Bunwell will benefit from new warning signs on the narrow road where they ride or lead their ponies.

We're still awaiting completion of the long-ago approved speed limits for Bressingham and Fersfield. It is disappointing that the first scheme I started work on, in the summer when I was elected, is still not up and running when I leave office. We do have some new "slow" paint and bend signs to slow traffic on Ugate Street, and the flashing signs at Burston School are up and running. Surfacing on Bunwell Street has finally been redone, to address the shoddy work done last year, but I am awaiting the verdict of residents.

### **Nature recovery and enhancement schemes Schemes**

I've supported include new oak trees on the parish land at Winfarthing, installation of an insect hotel at Burston, conservation work at Dove's Meadow in Dickleburgh, a pond and biodiversity project in Tivetshall and so on. At County I have argued for a reduction in verge cutting (to return it to the two regular cuts per year not three) and a reduction in the use of weedkiller on council pavements, since both were increased at a cost of half a million in money and much damage to our natural environment last year. We're also been benefiting from some plans for leaky dams and other nature-based improvements to the river Tas catchment area, which will restore the precious chalk stream and improve the flow, and the natural environment as well as preventing floods and reducing the effects of drought. I've been trying to get these nature-based flooding solutions a bit higher on the Council's priorities, and will look forward to seeing whether the new administration takes up this idea and ensures that we do more of this. Perhaps we should have beavers?

### **Enforcement issues**

Some parts of the division are blighted by rogue businesses operating without planning permission or ignoring conditions that were required to obtain planning permission. I've been working with officers to get some of this put right, but it is a terrible strain and cost to local residents to fight these things. Although the county is not the planning authority, some of the issues relate to vehicles and narrow roads, and to illegal waste disposal sites, ditches filled in without permission etc. I've been happy to support residents and parishes and pursue enforcement, but there is also a cost to law-abiding businesses who are put at a disadvantage if others are failing to pay business rates or are destroying the roads. I have raised concerns about this with the cabinet, but to no avail so far.

### **Byways and footpaths**

The worst bit here has been the requirement to reopen the byway at Shimpling to motor traffic (for legal reasons). It is now in a terrible state and not the lovely walking and riding place that it used to be. Naturally this has made everyone angry. I'm doing my best to support the parish council with dealing with being in the middle of this very unhappy situation, and trying to ensure that officers are accumulating appropriate evidence and are paying attention to the destructive effects of off-road motor vehicles that use it as a play space.

### **Funding for schemes in the villages**

Road and green spaces improvements from my Local Members Fund I've now allocated funds to the following works from my local members fund, or contributed to the projects:

Dickleburgh Dove Meadow nature conservation work: £3,000

Carleton Rode: initial safety measures for Ugate Street, including signs, white paint etc. £6,000

Winfarthing: towards the parish's share of the PP bid for SAM3 equipment, £1,000

Carleton Rode: towards the parish's share of the bus shelter improvements, £420

Tibham/Bunwell: two horse riding signs near the stables on Cargate Common, £1,500

From next year's fund we are planning to undertake a feasibility study towards a reduced speed limit on part of Ugate Street in Carleton Rode.

### Parish Partnership results

99 schemes across Norfolk have won support for their proposals under the parish partnership scheme. Of my parishes, we've won these:

Traffic calming chicanes, £25,000, Ashwellthorpe

Village Gateways: Aslacton £8421; Bressingham, £4548

SAM cameras/equipment: Great Moulton (£3928), Winfarthing (£4685).

### Norfolk Community fund

I've awarded funding to these schemes this year (and am aiming to get some others to the point of being funded):

Burston and Shimpling	Insect hotel and information board at the rec
Gissing	Gardening tools for the church yard gardening group
Tivetshall	Pond and biodiversity at the playing field
Great Moulton	Pots and pans for community lunches
Aslacton/Great Moulton	Equipment for Badgers group
Gissing	Equipment for Friday café
Winfarthing	Oak trees for the parish land
Aslacton	Coffee morning at the church
Shelfanger	Rotary mower for churchyard gardening group
Forncett	Forncett Festival in August

I'm pleased to say all these schemes will be running again in future and we look forward to supporting lots of nature enhancement and community activities in the villages, as well as making roads safer where we can.

## News and updates from Norfolk County Council for residents

### Heating oil

The price rise for heating oil is seriously affecting a lot of our rural households, some of them very urgently. Adrian Ramsay has done some work at Parliament to ensure that short term help is quickly put in place for those affected. The good news now is that the government is finally considering decoupling electricity prices from gas prices, in line with Green Party policy, which would be transformative, especially because people would see the savings that come from having cheap homegrown renewables by contrast with the expensive high risk fossil fuels.

Recent research from Oxford University has shown that drilling for more oil or gas in the North Sea would yield very small tax benefits (only about £16 to £82 per household to the UK treasury which would nowhere near cover the subsidies needed to make oil affordable) and would deliver no reduction in energy costs, while benefits to householders from shifting instead to renewables would be between £105 and £441 per annum per household (and much more if the renewables were public or community owned instead of taking profits offshore). So we'll be massively much better off from increasing investing in renewables instead (besides the fact that climate breakdown is a serious threat to national security generally and farming in particular).

### Norfolk Heating Oil Crisis Fund



Thanks to funding received from the government, Norfolk County Council has set up a £3 million crisis fund to support residents affected by the rise in heating-oil prices.

Who can access support?

Help is available to those who are on low incomes, typically households with less than £35k coming in each year. Priority will be given to those who are due to run out of oil and are at imminent risk of losing access to heating and hot water. Once eligibility is confirmed, the council will offer grants of around £350 per household. There is also support available around setting up payment plans with oil suppliers.

Residents can apply to the Norfolk Heating Oil Crisis Fund through the council's website at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/HeatingOil](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/HeatingOil)

Longer term we need to be building energy security and resilience by helping households to access the support for household renewable energy schemes (see below).

Those who are in financial hardship can also access a range of support through the council's Crisis and Resilience Fund (Further details [here](#)) which offers crisis payments for unexpected financial shocks and support to build financial resilience, including budgeting advice, grant applications, and debt referrals.

### Could you benefit from a community energy scheme (and stop the industrialisation of our countryside)?

On 13th March I attended an excellent conference organised by Adrian Ramsay for organisations interested in nature recovery and community energy etc in Waveney Valley area and there were some inspiring examples of the good stuff that's going on.

The government has announced new funding for community energy projects. Some of our parishes and district councils are working with Community Climate Action to devise a scheme to benefit local people and get clean cheap energy: <https://www.communityclimateaction.uk> If you haven't already, do join up to the Norfolk Environmental Collaboration (organised by the NALC).

## Updates from County Council and the Health Board

### Local Government reorganisation

We have now had the announcement from the government, saying they have opted for the plan for 3 councils for Norfolk (and three for Suffolk). The effect is that these parts of South Norfolk will be in the East Norfolk council, but parts of South Norfolk and Broadland that are suburbs and commuter belt for Norwich will be incorporated into the Norwich area. It is doubtful that this arrangement will be financially sustainable since the East Norfolk council will include deprived areas with high social needs, coastal erosion areas with high costs from climate issues, and coastal areas with a high proportion of retired people and second homes. As yet, also, there is no provision towards the huge costs of reorganising, with this scheme being the most expensive of the recommended options to implement, since it will involve disaggregating services that are currently run as a single service across the whole of Norfolk.

### Five for a fiver on Norwich Park & Ride

Norfolk County Council has reduced the price of group tickets on all Norwich Park & Ride services from 29th March. Groups of up to five people can now enjoy all-day travel on Park & Ride services for just £5 making it even better value for families and cheaper than parking for more than 3 hours in most city centre car parks. For one person, the price is £3 (for concessions £2); for two people £4.

### Nine new Specialist Resource Bases to open this year

Nine new bases providing 110 specialist places are opening at mainstream primary schools this year as part of Norfolk's Local First Inclusion programme to increase capacity for children who need additional support. This includes one Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice (SHIP) now open at Roydon Primary School near Diss (16 places) and several others.

### Household Hazardous waste disposal events

Booking is now open for Norfolk County Council's free disposal event at Thetford Recycling Centre. There is also a later event in June at Norwich South recycling centre.

Accepted items: aerosols, anti-freeze, drain cleaners, fertilisers, paint, and weed killer.

Booking required – reserve your spot early!

Friday 17th and Saturday 18th April, 8am - 4pm at [Thetford Recycling Centre](#)

Friday 5th and Saturday 6th June, 8am - 4pm at [Norwich South Recycling Centre](#) (Booking will be available online and by phone from 9am on Thursday 28th May)

### Norfolk Rural Business Awards

The closing date for applications for the Norfolk Rural Business Awards is Tuesday 21st April. There are nine category areas aimed at showcasing a wide range of our best businesses, community groups and people. The awards ceremony takes place at the Royal Norfolk Show. You can nominate yourself! Submit nominations here:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/65893/Apply-for-Norfolk-Rural-Business-Awards>.

### National Information

#### County Councils Network (CCN) response to the National Planning Framework

The CCN has [published its consultation response](#) to the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), warning that the reforms would weaken local communities' voice and increase the risk of speculative, unsustainable development in rural areas.

Additionally mandatory housing targets introduced last year mean county areas face, on average, a 56% increase in expected delivery: 64,000 homes a year (around 1,245 a week) which is over seven times the increase for councils in England's major cities. But houses in rural places are not selling, and developers aren't completing the plans that have already been approved. It's no solution to a housing crisis that's about existing housing being unaffordable and stock piled by the wealthy investors in lucrative and high-demand areas.

#### Land use framework

The Government's new [land use framework](#) has now been published. This is guidance on how land is used across England, to balance farmland with valuing nature and pressures such as housing and industry. It has three parts:

- A vision for England's future landscapes, informed by land-use change analysis
- Principles to guide land-use decision-making
- Actions to support land-use change, delivered with partners

The full framework is available [here](#). It commits to maintaining overall food production in England, and to support food security and economic growth. It also sets out how the Government will protect the most productive land and give farmers (owners and tenants) greater rights, data and certainty to invest. This is all excellent but directly conflicts with everything in the two items I listed above (about housing targets in rural areas and the threats in the new planning framework). You couldn't make it up.

Children and parents to pilot social media bans, time limits and digital curfews at home. Social media bans, digital curfews, and time limits on apps will be piloted in the homes of 300 teenagers in a first of its kind trial by the UK government. This runs alongside the digital [wellbeing consultation](#), which is closing on 26 May 2026. The pilot studies will last 6 weeks and test how different restrictions affect young people's day-to-day lives.

Both the children and the parents taking part will be interviewed at the beginning and end of the pilots to understand the impacts on family life, sleep and schoolwork that come from limiting social media.

### County Council Elections on 7th May

Please encourage residents to check that they are registered to vote. More information here: <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

Voters who will be away on holiday, on business, in hospital or looking after a relative may need a proxy vote (if you will be away when the postal vote arrives). See more here <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/voting-by-proxy>

If someone you know has no photo ID they should either apply for a postal vote, or apply for a voter authority certificate (which is free): [https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter authority-certificate](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate)

Students who will be away at University can register at both addresses. Please encourage them to get a postal vote if they want to vote at the home address, or they can vote at their college address providing they have registered there. For local elections it is legal to vote in both places.

### Contact me

[Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:Catherine.rowett.cllr@norfolk.gov.uk) See also my Facebook page [here](#).

Catherine Rowett  
14th April 2026

## District Councillors AGM report 2025/26

This year South Norfolk Council has been embroiled in The Governments plans to inflict Devolution and Local Government Reform on our County of Norfolk. After many months of creating a response to Government as to how Norfolk should be divided it was decided that the best and most economical plan was to split Norfolk into 2, West and East. However Government decided that 3 was the best way forward for Devolution giving Norwich its own Council but taking the better parts of South Norfolk and Broadland i.e. those that generate most income. We are likely to become the poorest Council in the UK and probably bankrupt within 5 years. Instead of saving money the Government will have to support the council with huge injections of cash.

### Diss Improvements

The refurbishment of the swimming pool was completed with solar panels on the roof to provide power to heat the water. I have been for a swim and it is a great improvement.

The John Grosse Ford dealership was purchased and the old building demolished. This month the final plans for the new leisure centre to be built on site were approved by the planning committee. Its hoped that building will start at the end of the year.

It was intended that a new Doctors surgery was to built next to the fire station once the bus terminal had been relocated. However there were no offers from any doctor or the NHS to occupy a new surgery and the plans have been withdrawn, it will probably have a block of flats built there instead!!

The bus terminal was to be relocated to the other side of the fire station but required the purchase of a small piece of land from Morrisons who have now refused to sell it. I am not sure what will happen now.

### The Park Hotel

Asylum seekers were housed in the Park Hotel but after protests and the intervention of South Norfolk Council eventually the Government moved them all out and returned the hotel to its owners.

### Pylons and Solar Farms

Despite 3 consultations, with allegations that they were not conducted properly the Norwich/Tilbury power line is now being heard by the Planning Inspectorate. I understand that whatever the outcome from the hearing the final decision rests with Ed Milliband.

Solar farms are being proposed across the whole of Norfolk, the one in Palgrave is currently being built. The East Pye solar Farm surrounds the villages of Great Moulton and Wacton and the proposal is causing great concern as it seems no one is listening to local complaints.

### Food Waste

The Government declared that all Councils will collect food waste, initially they were to pay for the service but later withdrew the funding and the bill falls onto local residents through

their council tax. South Norfolk Council argued that most people in rural areas composted their food waste and a lot of time, energy and fuel would be wasted checking empty bins. The answer to these questions was that it would be rolled out regardless. New food waste lorries have been ordered, staff employed and household bins have been ordered. The collection service will begin in June this year and as new lorries are delivered the remainder of the area will have the service. It is anticipated that the amount of waste going into landfill will reduce by 23%.

### **Fly Tipping**

It is much quicker and easier if the person who sees the fly tipping reports it via the South Norfolk website rather than wait for the next PC meeting to report it to the District Councillor.

DRAFT