

Your community update

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Clerk: Mrs. C. Crane

February 2025



Welcome to our February Community Update!

January always brings an exciting buzz, and this year was no exception at the Town Council!

We kicked off the first month of the year with a flurry of activities, including the introduction of a new meeting format. This trial, combining Amenities, Leisure Centre, and Finance meetings, aims to enhance collaboration and efficiency, empowering everyone at the Town Council to continue delivering exceptional results. These combined meetings will be held mid-month and will feed into our regular monthly Town Council meeting at the end of the month. We also continue to hold our monthly planning meetings at the beginning of each month. In February, we invite you to join us at our planning meeting on Monday 3rd, our combined meeting on Wednesday 12th, and our Town Council meeting on Wednesday 29th. All meeting details are available on our website at www.harleston-tc.gov.uk.

We are thrilled to introduce Wes, our new Grounds Person. Wes has already immersed himself in various activities around our town, making a positive impact. If you spot him, be sure to give him a warm greeting! We would also like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude to Chris for his incredible contributions. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Radio Interview!

The Chair of Harleston Town Council joins Park Radio monthly providing updates and insights about our town. You can listen to all the interviews via our [website](#).



Stay up to date!

Ensure you're fully informed by subscribing to the Town Council website for emailed updates at www.harleston-tc.gov.uk and stay connected with quick updates on the Redenhall with Harleston Town Council Facebook page.



Town Councillor 'Drop-In' Surgery:

Don't forget our Town Councillor drop-in surgeries, held from 10 am to 12 noon on the 3rd Saturday of each month at Harleston Information Plus. Your questions and concerns, along with our responses, are featured on the Town Councillor 'Drop-In' Surgery page on our website. It's a great way to stay informed and you find out about the Q&A's here: [Q & A from the May Town Councillor Surgery – Harleston Town Council \(harleston-tc.gov.uk\)](#).

Town Council updates

Youth Forum

In January, the Youth Working Party, consisting of Councillors Chenery, Wilkinson and West, launched the Youth Forum, an exciting new initiative aimed at giving young people aged 11 to 18 a voice in our community. This initiative harnesses the ideas and energy of our youth for the benefit of all residents. The first Youth Forum meeting was held on Friday, 17th January, and we hope everyone who attended enjoyed it.

Dates for your calendar!

The next Youth Forum meetings will be held at the Memorial Leisure Centre in the small meeting room (do ask the Gym reception for directions!) on:

- Monday 17th February
- Monday 17th March
- Monday 14th April.

We will keep you updated with all the next steps as the Youth Forum progresses.

Community Building

We are also working on a range of larger projects to benefit all residents. We continue to develop ideas for the Community Building using feedback from our residents within the Chaplin Farrant report. We also have provided a survey for our gym members and this information has been added to the work we have conducted so far. This is still an ongoing project and at a very early stage, with the Working Party continuing its working and consultation with the community.

Market Place Bollards

We continue to work with Highways at Norfolk County Council in relation to the Parish Partnership matched funding we have received for the installation of bollards in the Market Place.

Banking Hub update

As you will have noticed after some key improvements the Banking Hub is open once again for our community to use. The Temporary Hub is open and providing access to cash and everyday banking services to the community whilst we search for a permanent home for the Hub. The search is continuing for a premises that fits their requirements for a permanent Hub for Harleston, any assistance the Town can provide in identifying potential properties, would be very welcome.

Kissing gate update

The Town Council has been in contact with the developer in relation to the preservation and repair of the kissing gate along the Angles Way. With the development well underway we are seeking a timeline for the work and as soon as the Town Council have received this we will provide our residents with an update.

Lidl update

The Town Council have sought information in relation to the development of Lidl. We will keep you up to date via our usual channels as soon as we have received the information.



Town Council updates continued...

Upcoming Neighbourhood Police Street Surgeries and Meetings

Please see below dates for upcoming street surgeries and the next quarterly neighbourhood policing meeting.

15th February – Wortwell (Car park opposite The Bell) – 11:00-12:30

24th February – Harleston Library (Inside) 13:00-14:00

21st March – Harleston Library (inside) 12:00 – 13:00

22nd March – Needham Village Hall – 14:00-15:30



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY

Our Priority is You

The next Quarterly Neighbourhood Policing meeting will be on 13th April 2025 at 16:00. This will be a hybrid online and in person meeting for Diss, Long Stratton and Harleston. The location will be confirmed nearer to the time.

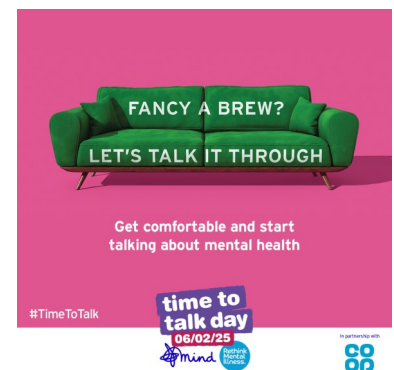
Time to Talk Day 2025

On Thursday 6th February, the annual awareness day called Time to Talk takes place. Time to Talk Day is run by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, in partnership with the Co-op.

You don't have to host a huge event to get the conversation going on Time to Talk Day. Remember, every conversation matters. Here are some ideas from Mind to get you started:

- Check in with a friend.
- Look for activities in the local area.
- Run a lunch and learn in your office.
- Text a friend.

You can find more resources on Mind's website here: www.mind.org.uk/get-involved/time-to-talk-day-2025



Harleston Market

The Town Council would like to extend our thanks to our regular market stall holders—Castle Fruiterers, The Flying Chef, and Bec's Bakes—for their continued presence at our market. Your dedication is truly appreciated.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all the residents who visit the market and support our stall holders, especially during this time of year when the weather doesn't always cooperate. Your support for our local market businesses makes a significant difference.

The Town Council is always actively seeking new market stall holders to join our market community. If you are interested in having a stall, please contact us at enquiries@harleston-tc.gov.uk.



Reminders!

Winter Hedge maintenance

If your garden boundary is against public footpaths and highways please check your boundaries to ensure hedges are not encroaching on a public right of way. You do have a responsibility to cut back the vegetation sufficiently during the Autumn/Winter months to allow for seasonal growth without it reducing the width of the footpath. Many thanks in advance for your help in ensuring our footpaths and highways remain accessible to all.

Autumn Ditch maintenance

As we are in the winter season, it's essential to ensure that all ditches and drainage systems are clear and functioning properly. Regular maintenance helps prevent flooding and protects our homes and roads. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our community safe and well-maintained.

Update from Highways Winter Team

In May the Town Council provided the Winter Team at Norfolk County Council with information on grit bins within our Parish. The Winter Team is responsible for filling the grit bins as per their schedule and the replenishment of the salt /sand mix in grit bins is usually undertaken twice per winter season. Unfortunately, due to funding pressures Norfolk County Council are unable to provide new/ additional grit bins in new locations.

Would you like to become one of our councillors?

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council needs you to help make Harleston an even better place to live. Do you want to...

- Help us support nature recovery
- Develop new skills
- Preserve the historic and natural beauty of the local area
- Help us maintain our recreation ground and amenities
- Support our town events, leisure centre and town initiatives

This is your town, so why not come along and have your say in its future. If you want to talk more about what it involves or how you can balance it with your other commitments speak to one of the councillors or contact Clare Crane the Town Clerk on enquiries@harleston-tc.gov.uk to find out more.



Visit Harleston Update!

2025 Events

This year, we have planned a wide range of exciting events based on the feedback we received from our residents. 2025 is shaping up to be an exciting year for Harleston, with a packed schedule of community events.

During January and into February, we are holding our Bird Trail to coincide with the Big Schools' Bird Watch. Families can participate in a bird-themed scavenger hunt that takes them through local shops aiming to highlight everything Harleston has to offer, boosting foot traffic and engagement, whilst having some fun searching for our colourful friends!

Upcoming events

Do watch out for the Summer Solstice event, our Car Boots, the Summer Beach Day and Halloween event which are all back due to popular demand!

Get involved!

The Town Council, via our Visit Harleston brand, is working hard to engage with our local community, shops, and businesses. If you are interested in finding out more and getting involved in any of our events, please contact us at events@harleston-tc.gov.uk.

Stay tuned for more details about our upcoming activities and initiatives by visiting www.visitharleston.org.uk.



Visit Harleston

BIRD TRAIL
WITH THE BIG
SCHOOLS' BIRD
WATCH

7TH JANUARY -
14TH FEBRUARY

FIND HIDDEN BIRDS IN SHOP
WINDOWS AND INSIDE SELECTED
SHOPS THROUGHOUT THE TOWN
CENTRE TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE
OF WINNING A FAMILY HAMPER
FULL OF GOODIES.

*PICK UP ENTRY FORMS FROM HARLESTON LEISURE CENTRE,
THE LIBRARY AND HIP



January update from our County Councillor Cllr Martin Wilby

Please note this has been edited for length . You will be able to find the full report in the minutes on our website
[Town Council Minutes – Harleston Town Council](#)



County Councillors have backed a bid to secure new powers and funding to benefit Norfolk. At the full county council meeting on January 9th and then the cabinet agreed to apply to be part of the Government's priority programme for devolution. The Government wants to extend devolution of powers and funding, plus local government reform, across England. It invited councils to express an interest in being part of the first phase, by January 10th .

Ministers want to see a devolution deal covering Norfolk and Suffolk, with an elected mayor. They also want "two tier" areas like Norfolk – where responsibility for key services is split between county and district councils – to replace existing councils with unitary authorities. Elections for a Norfolk and Suffolk mayor could take place in 2026 and being on the devolution priority programme could lead to the postponement of county council elections scheduled for May this year, so that devolution and local government reform plans could be developed.



Norfolk is set to receive more than £56 million for highways maintenance next year thanks to recent funding announcements. The Government has announced funding allocations for every local authority across England, which can be used from April 2025 on roads that are in most need of repair. Cabinet member for Highways Graham Plant said "Norfolk's allocation of more than £56 million from the Government is very welcome news and is around £15

million more than we expected thanks to the additional funding being invested. We're ambitious for Norfolk and this money support us in continuing our proactive approach to highways maintenance which aims to prevent potholes from forming across our highways. It also means we have more to spend on resurfacing cycleways and footpaths along with repairing bridges and delivering more drainage improvement schemes to reduce the impact and severity of flooding. If you see a pothole, let us know by completing our online form at www.norfolk.gov.uk/potholes



Four additional tactical response vehicles have rolled into Norfolk as the latest addition as part of a multi-million-pound investment by NCC to modernise the fire and rescue fleet. The four Toyota Hilux 4x4s enable firefighters to quickly attend isolated locations and deal with emergencies in difficult weather conditions. These smaller vehicles are particularly useful in getting emergency workers on scene quickly to fires in isolated locations, such as forests and clifftops and to incidents of flooding and deep snow or ice. The investment in TRVS is the latest move to provide equipment for Norfolk and comes in addition to the recent £7 million investment of 22 new fire engines for Norfolk, which replace an aging fleet that has come of the end of its working life.



A compost demonstration site at County Hall is helping people learn how to recycle food waste. Garden Organic is a national charity that has demonstration across the country, including in Norfolk. The sites show people how to recycle waste by composting. The charity aims to reduce food waste by showing people how to recycle it. The Norfolk Compost Demonstration Site is open to the public every day. For more information about the site, contact dhalkyard@gardenorganic.org.uk.

Cllr Wilby's next surgery is at HIP on Saturday 1st February at 10.00.

January update from our District Councillor— Cllr Trevor Graham

Please note this has been edited for length. You will be able to find the full report in the minutes on our website [Town Council Minutes – Harleston Town Council](#)

The new year has begun with much enthusiasm as groups and people drive forward exciting initiatives. On a personal note, I am working with the Harleston and District Historical Society who are coordinating another community wide programme to take part in the national Heritage Open Days event in September. The 2024 version was a huge success involving many local groups and residents, and interest in being involved this year is even greater.

I would like to highlight and commend two initiatives involving some of the Town Councillors. I give my support and I am glad to be a member of a volunteer group which includes four Town Councillors and members of the community looking to arrange a Harleston Pride event in July. This is a bold step and one which may prove controversial, but that does not mean that we should not try. Harleston now joins a collective of towns across the area to help eliminate prejudice and promote equality for all.

I would like to publicly offer my support to recent actions of the Town Council, and particularly to those Councillors who are driving a Youth Forum. Engagement with the younger people in our community is very important and something that has been on the wish list for some time. I recall a South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board presentation at the District Council last year when comments were made by children along the lines of 'nobody ever listens to me' and 'why should I say anything as no one cares about me'. It is great to see this now progressing to delivery.

Despite widespread local objections, plans for pylons to be erected across our countryside are still currently going ahead. There are always two sides to every argument, and most people would prefer the disturbance to not be in their back yard, but this one will have a major impact on our countryside with unknown impacts on wildlife. Even more reason for us all to support Community Nature Recovery. On this subject, I note a recent delivery of leaflets and stickers to residents, arranged by Harleston's Future which highlights the support of the Town Council. The evolving plans presented at a recent meeting of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Partnership included community involvement in their own gardens as pioneered here in Harleston. Demonstrating that we are at the forefront on this nationally significant topic. Small actions can collectively make a big statement. Progress has been slower than I would have liked but I hope to be able to make more announcements in the coming months as the Strategy document progresses.

South Norfolk Council has a Flooding Prevention Action Plan which identifies higher risk flood areas, this includes Redenhall with Harleston. The Council are working with the Town Council to create a local plan and are developing a toolkit to help all town and parish councils across the district prepare and maintain their own plans.

A recent meeting of the Development Management Committee dispelled any myths that members are bound to follow the recommendations of officers, as one application which was recommended for rejection was unanimously approved by the members. It is important that the town and parish councils register their opinions as these are considered and discussed by the Committee.

You may have heard about plans for devolution, with a regional mayor and combined unitary authorities. This change will impact us all, and Norfolk County Council is engaging with District Councils to shape the future of local government. You'll hear more from your District and County Councillors as the plans evolve.

Cllr Graham will hold his next surgery on 8th February at Harleston Information Plus between 10:00 and 11:00.

January update from our District Councillor— Cllr James Eddy

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This can be a particularly difficult time of year for many people in our community and that makes the need to look out for the vulnerable all the more important. South Norfolk Council's Help Hub offers a wide range of help and support for addressing issues like money worries, loneliness and isolation, health and wellbeing problems, housing issues, bereavement, and general community support. So, if you or anyone you know can make use of this service please contact the Help Hub by calling 01508 533933 or emailing helphub@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk.

On a similar note, I have recently been collaborating on some work that focuses on the damaging and often unacknowledged effects of loneliness and isolation. Unfortunately, this is something that unites people of all ages throughout the country and is likely to have profound consequences for mental health, social cohesion and even democracy itself. What surprised me most was that according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) "young people aged 16-24 consistently report the highest levels of loneliness in the UK." On the surface, this may feel like it makes little sense but unfortunately social media has, over the years, replaced significant amounts of social connection and now increasingly amplifies isolation and disconnection. Given that these young people are the future of our community and our country, I found this deeply troubling. Now, you may be wondering why I would be sharing something so bleak with you all. The reason is that there is actually hope and positivity on this issue on our own doorstep. I'm sure that many of you know about Exchange 2, which is based at the cabin on Harleston's Recreation Ground. However, you might not be aware of what they actually do for local young people aged 12-19. Every Tuesday and Thursday evening, the cabin offers a mix of themed events like music, pizza and movie nights and in general provides a safe and welcoming space for young people to relax, socialise, learn and grow. More than this, Exchange 2 also invites professionals to deliver workshops in areas like sports coaching and bicycle safety, ensuring that young people not only have a place to unwind but also to acquire valuable skills. They also offer free fitness classes at the Harleston Gym thanks to funding from Adnams Community Trust. The classes run every Thursday from 4–5pm and provide a valuable opportunity for young people to stay active, build confidence and improve their overall wellbeing. It seems to me that giving our local young people something they can enjoy and appreciate can only be positive for them on an individual and collective level. Above all, Exchange 2's work seems like an ideal antidote to the loneliness epidemic that causes so many problems for so many young people by creating a sense of belonging and actually empowering the next generation. For more information, visit their website at www.exchange2.co.uk or email them at contact@exchange2.co.uk.

As you are all undoubtedly aware, there is significant upheaval coming to local councils in the coming years, and, as it stands, a great deal of uncertainty about what form any of this will take. On a personal note, I am aware that the current local government system has been in place for over fifty years and that perhaps inevitably times have changed and there is a need to update the structures we have for the 21st century. However, as with anything of this nature, 'the proof of the pudding will be in the eating' and I hope that this will not mean that councillors in the new unitary authorities are not further distanced from parish councils and the people of their communities. The proximity of district councillors to the people they represent is one of the true strengths of the current system and it would be a shame to see that lost. Please get in contact by emailing me at james.eddy@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or pop in to see me at my councillor surgery at Harleston Information Plus on the last Saturday of the month between 10am and 12pm.