

Your community update

Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Clerk: Mrs. C. Crane

December 2025



Welcome to our December community update

As winter settles in and the festive season draws near, we hope you're keeping warm and well. This edition of our newsletter is packed with updates, news, and community highlights to keep you informed and connected. From important council matters to upcoming events, there's plenty to share as we look forward to celebrating the season together.

***Wishing you a joyful Christmas and
extending our best wishes for a prosperous 2026!***

Christmas lights switch-on

What an absolutely fantastic night we had at the Harleston Christmas tree lights switch on, on Friday 28th November! It was amazing to see so many people turn out and fill the town with festive spirit.

Well done to the Oldman family, who won our Elf Trail and had the honour of switching on lights this year.

After the rain our team of volunteers had to put up with when they were putting up the decorations a few weeks ago, we were also very grateful for the calm weather for the switch on itself. It was the perfect backdrop for a truly festive evening!

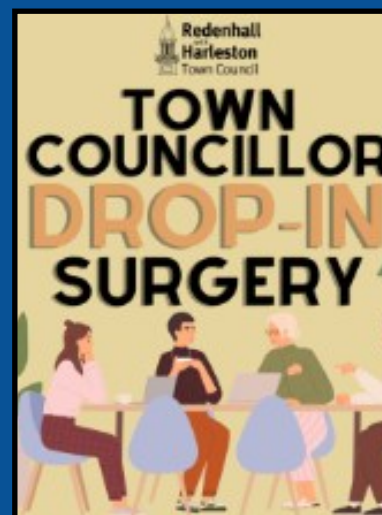
We were treated to wonderful performances from Harleston Sancroft Primary School, My Choir Rocks and the brilliant Diss Panto. Thank you all for bringing such energy and joy to the stage! And of course, a massive thank you to Park Radio for co-hosting the event and keeping the crowd entertained throughout.

Cont.

Stay up to date!

Make sure you're fully informed by subscribing to the Town Council website for emailed updates at www.harleston-tc.gov.uk

You can also stay connected with quick updates on the Redenhall with Harleston Town Council Facebook page.



Next Town Councillor Drop-In Surgery — January 2026

The next Town Councillor Drop-in surgery will be held on **Saturday 17th January, 10am to 12 noon** at Harleston Information Plus on Exchange Street.

Your questions and concerns, along with our responses will be featured on the Town Councillor 'Drop-In' Surgery page on our [website](http://www.harleston-tc.gov.uk). It's a great way to stay informed.

Thank you for coming together, supporting local, and making the night one to remember!

To our teams of dedicated volunteers who put the Christmas tree and lights, we can't thank you enough – Harleston and District Round Table, Harleston's Future and Bush Green Farm.

This year has been challenging for our Christmas lights project. As you know from our previous newsletters, we've faced logistical hurdles amongst other factors. Despite this, we've worked tirelessly with partners including Gawdy Hall, Bush Green Farm, Amey, UK Power Network, electrical suppliers and electrical contractors to ensure the Market Place, the tree, and the War Memorial are lit up for the festive season. Their advice and support have been invaluable. We have also been able to light up Union Street with thanks to the maintenance team and My Sister's Wardrobe.



Join the Advent reveal: Many shops have already signed up to decorate their shop windows with a wonderful festive theme, which will be showcased on Visit Harleston social media.

There's still time to get involved, if you haven't yet, there's still time. Contact our Events Coordinator, Ann-Marie, at events@harleston-tc.gov.uk to take part.

Add festive lights to your shop: Sue Reed Shoes is leading the way with beautiful string lights outside their shop! If you'd like to do something similar, Ugo Build can help you source lights for your shop front (inside or outside).

Just pop into their Ugo Build's Exchange Street shop, and speak to Keith or Alex, who'll be happy to assist.

A special apology from Santa himself

Santa had hoped to join you all on stage for the lights switch-on, but the queue for the grotto at Harleston Information Plus (HIP) was so long that he simply couldn't slip away! He was determined to meet every child who came to see him, and we're delighted to say he welcomed 89 excited children through the grotto doors.

As always, the HIP grotto operates on a not-for-profit basis. Every penny goes straight into making the experience magical, with gifts purchased as close to the ticket price as possible, so families get the best value and a memorable moment with Santa.

Thank you to all the elves and our volunteers for their hard work making the grotto a success!

2026 Christmas lights — grant success!

Yes, we're already thinking about next year's lights! We'll use the contacts and lessons from this year to create a strong plan. This will require funding, so throughout 2026, we'll be fundraising to ensure Harleston's festive lights continue to shine bright.

We're extremely pleased to announce that we've already secured a grant of £2,500 from Norfolk County Council's Love Your Market Town initiative, for a new 3D Christmas light feature designed to attract visitors. Plans are also underway to strengthen future applications with better data and impact tracking.

The wonderful Harleston Tangent has also donated a large sum towards next year's lights. We're really excited to see how lit up the town will be in 2026!

New colleagues at the Town Council

As we step into 2026, the Town Council is delighted to share some important news. Following colleagues leaving the Town Council in 2025, valuable resident feedback and a review of key priorities of the Council, including projects like the flag brackets, clock tower, and feasibility studies, we've taken a fresh look at how we operate to better serve our community.

In October 2025, we launched an open and highly competitive recruitment campaign to strengthen the Town Council which included interviews with our Chair, Mo Mba. We're excited to introduce our new colleagues who are joining us over the coming months:

Paul Johnson – Operations and Finance Manager (Deputy Clerk) (37 hours a week)

Shahnaz Fraser – Communications Officer (20 hours a week)

Donna Oakins – Operations Officer (30 hours a week)

Courtney Carpenter – Office Administrator (12 hours a week)

These roles are central to delivering the Town Council's priorities, excellent customer service, ensuring value for money, and supporting the Councillors as we tackle the challenges ahead, both as a town and local government.

We're also planning new community engagement initiatives, including the bus shelter artwork, Christmas lighting, and exploring better ways to share important information with residents and local businesses. These Town Council projects, and others that matter most to you, such as those in the Neighbourhood Plan, are part of the Town Council's commitment to keeping Harleston vibrant and connected. Thank you for your continued support as we work together to make our town an even better place to live.



New Vice Chair for Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

At the Town Council meeting on 26th November, Cllr Matt Scade was elected as our new Vice Chair, following the departure of Cllr Lucy Chenery.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Lucy for her dedication and valuable contribution to Redenhall with Harleston Town Council. We also thank Cllr Scade for stepping into this important role.

Road safety update

The Town Council has been working closely with residents and Norfolk County Council Highways on key road safety initiatives. Most recently, Highways has completed the double yellow lines scheme for Redenhall Road to Clanders Lane, and on Love Lane.

The Council has received several complimentary messages from residents stating that the double yellow lines really make a difference to the sight line at this difficult junction, and how much safer they feel.

There are many stages involved in getting double yellow lines installed on the highway. This includes:

- Identifying and assessing safety concerns raised by residents
- Site surveys and traffic assessments by Highways officers
- Designing the scheme and preparing legal documentation
- Public consultation and statutory notices
- Formal approval and scheduling works

We would like to thank Norfolk County Council Highways for their work, and our residents for raising their concerns and for their patience while the scheme went through its due process.

Street lighting update – Willow Walk and Pine Close

Thank you to residents who kept us informed about the ongoing street lighting issues on Willow Walk and Pine Close. Your updates have been invaluable in helping us work closely with our lighting contractor, Cozens, to investigate the cause of the outage affecting all lights on these streets.

Following site visits and initial investigations, Cozens has confirmed the main fuse there has blown highlighting a potential problem with the underground cabling, rather than an isolated issue with one lamp.

The next step involves testing the cabling along both streets. In some cases, this may require breaking ground and obtaining the necessary permits from Norfolk County Council before work can proceed.

We understand how frustrating this is, especially during the darker evenings, and we want to assure you that we are actively working with Cozens to resolve the problem. We will continue to provide updates through our social media channels, newsletters, and website as progress is made.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work with the contractors to restore lighting

Brackets update

Thank you to residents and businesses who have given feedback about the brackets recently. We're now several months into this project, and we're pleased to have now entered Stage 2 — Loading and fixing review.

The Council and our external contractor will be checking that the brackets and fixings are strong and safe. This involves:

- Assessing loads
- Checking fixings
- Bracket strength

In the January issue of this newsletter we'll give you a full update on the project so far, and next steps.

Bus shelter improvements continuing

We hope you've been happy with the improvements made to the bus shelter.

November saw the shelter's roof, guttering and fascia improvements take place, and you may have noticed that this week, it was getting a new lick of paint!

During this time:

- The bus stop remains open during this time, so you can still catch your bus here. But the shelter itself will be closed.
- The bus timetable will temporarily only be available via QR code at the stop, while we clean the timetable boards and paint the area where they are attached
- Paper timetables are available to pick one up at Harleston Information Plus, where the team will be happy to help.

The butterflies painted on the shelter have been covered during this refresh. We know how much these mean to the town, so in 2026 we aim to launch a community project to explore new and exciting artwork for the shelter. Watch this space for further information!

Drainage works update – Bullock Fair male urinals and toilets

All toilets at the Bullock Fair Car Park remain fully operational. However, the male urinals have been temporarily sectioned off due to ongoing drainage issues.

The Town Council sincerely apologises for any inconvenience caused and thanks the public for their patience while investigations and remedial planning have been underway.

Following a CCTV drainage survey conducted on 9th October, the Council has now received a detailed quotation outlining the recommended remedial works. These include:

- Multiple CIPP (cured-in-place pipe) repairs to address structural defects and displaced joints
- High-pressure jetting and deposit removal to restore full drainage functionality

The quotation is currently under review in line with the Council's financial regulations. A second quotation is awaited, and the matter will be brought to a forthcoming Town Council meeting for consideration before any decisions are made. We will continue to keep residents informed as the situation progresses.

Update on the small car park at the Memorial Leisure Centre

We've been working closely with Malthouse Court management to address the issue of overhanging branches above the small car park. As many of you will know, some branches have been hanging loose and posed a potential safety risk, putting the car park out of action.

We requested that these branches be removed, and we're pleased to inform you that Malthouse Court management has now appointed a contractor to carry out the work.

We'll keep residents updated with details on when the work will take place.

Clock tower

At the November Town Council meeting, the risk assessment for ascending and descending the Clock Tower was formally approved. This means our maintenance team, key volunteers, and contractors can now safely access the Clock Tower to continue essential tasks such as winding the clock mechanism and carrying out routine maintenance.

We are continuing to work closely with external surveyors to fully understand and meet all safety requirements for the structure. Their expertise helps us maintain the integrity of the tower while protecting those who care for it.

Thank you for your continued support as we preserve this important landmark for our community.

New digital landline support from BT

BT is replacing the UK's old analogue landline network with new digital landlines that work via broadband. This change affects anyone who wants to keep using a landline, especially those with telecare devices, pendant alarms, or additional support needs.

Key points for residents:

- **The switch is free** and most people won't need any installation work.
- **Landlines will connect to your broadband router** instead of the wall socket.
- **Pricing stays the same**, with added benefits like spam call blocking.
- **If you or a loved one uses telecare equipment**, contact your phone provider to ensure compatibility and request support.
- **BT offers free engineer visits** and battery backup units for those who need extra help or have no mobile coverage.
- **No broadband?** BT will offer a dedicated landline service so you can continue using your phone as usual.

BT encourages residents to start conversations with family and neighbours who may need help preparing for the switch. You can find helpful guides and register for support on BT's website: <https://www.bt.com/about/all-ip/connected-together>

Thank You for Joining Us in Remembrance

The Town Council and the Harleston & District Branch of the Royal British Legion would like to extend our thanks to everyone who joined us for the Remembrance Sunday parade and service on Sunday, 9th November and for Remembrance on Tuesday 11th November.

It was a poignant moment of reflection for our community, and a time to honour those who have served and sacrificed, and to stand together in remembrance.

Your presence, whether marching, observing, or attending the service, made this occasion truly meaningful.



Following the War Memorial service, we gathered at London Road Methodist Church for a Service of Remembrance. We are grateful to the Methodist Church for providing a quiet and welcoming space for continued reflection.

Thank you for helping us honour the memory of those who gave so much.

Have your say on Norfolk and Suffolk's future!

The Government is consulting on proposals to reorganise local councils in Norfolk and Suffolk. This could mean replacing the current county and district councils with new unitary authorities, and you're invited to have your say.

You can read more about it on the [Norfolk County Council website](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/).

These changes could affect how local services are delivered and how decisions are made in your area.

Take part online: [gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation-in-norfolk-and-suffolk](https://www.gov.uk/local-government-reorganisation-in-norfolk-and-suffolk)

Or email: LGRconsultationresponse@Communities.gov.uk

Deadline: 11th January 2026.

Your voice counts. Help shape the future of local government in Norfolk and Suffolk!

Council website

Following a technical issue caused by a corrupted plugin, several pages were temporarily removed from the Council's website. So you may notice that some page links are currently broken. Please bear with us whilst we determine next steps. In the meantime if you require any information that cannot be found on our website please contact us at enquiries@harleston-tc.gov.uk.

The Town Council is currently seeking quotes for a new site that meets governance standards and improves accessibility for residents.



Councillor Mba on Park Radio

Did you hear Council Chair Paul Mba (Mo) on Park Radio earlier this week?

If you missed it, not to worry, [click here to listen in.](#)

Cllr Mba spoke to Park Radio's Karina Monahan about the Council's busy November with the Remembrance Day parade, Christmas light switch-on, the appointment of Cllr Matt Scade to the role of Vice Chair and the amazing volunteers who contribute so much to making Harleston a great town.

Pictured Cllr Mba (centre) with Park Radio Producer Katie (left) and Presenter Karina (right).

Interview prep at Harleston Sancroft Academy

In his radio interview Mo also talked of his recent visit with our Town Council Clerk, to a workshop at Harleston Sancroft Academy with the school's year 11 students. The workshop included real-world insights, career guidance and mock interviews to help build confidence and understand how to present themselves.

On the school's Instagram account, they reported that

"The energy in the room, the level of dialogue and focus, coupled with a real commitment to raising aspirations and promoting bright futures for ours students was so evident."

This was a genuinely rewarding experience, which allowed us to support young people of the town and strengthened our connection with the school community.

Town Council audit

During this year, the Town Council has committed to engaging an external auditor to conduct audits of the Council's finances, policies, administration and communication on a six monthly basis, as opposed to annually. This ensures that the Council is working to ensure a robust strategic plan throughout the year.

Following the audit in November, the Council agreed with the Auditor's recommendation to update or create the following items-

- **Strategic plan** The Council is working on a clear Vision and Strategic Plan for 2026
- **Financial safety** The Council is now looking at spreading money across different accounts for better protection under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS)
- **Internal controls** Important documents on risk management and internal controls will be reviewed by Full Council before the end of the financial year to meet legal requirements
- **Quarterly reviews** Independent Councillor will now be taking place to help ensure strong governance and support the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26.

As we move through 2026, we'll keep you updated on our progress with these actions.

Formal public consultation on the draft Design Code Supplementary Planning Document

South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council are pleased to announce the formal public consultation on the draft Design Code Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), along with its supporting documents: the Broadland Character Assessment and the Assessment Framework. This is your opportunity to share your views and help shape the future of residential development across our districts. They invite residents, local organisations, technical consultees, developers, parish and town councils, and all interested stakeholders to take part.

Consultation overview

The consultation will run for six weeks, between 9:00am on Monday 27th October 2025 and 5:00pm on Monday 8th December 2025. During this time, you are encouraged to read the draft documents and provide your feedback using our online consultation webform. Your comments and suggestions will play an important role in finalising the Design Code.

How to take part

- Go to South Norfolk Districts Council's website for details <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/supplementary-planning-documents/broadland-and-south-norfolk-district-wide-design-codes>
- Read the draft Design Code SPD, Broadland Character Assessment, and Assessment Framework (links below)
- Review the supporting information provided, including FAQs, the Equalities Impact Assessment, and environmental assessments.
- Submit your comments using the online feedback form. Please ensure your feedback is sent before the closing date on 8 December 2025.

All responses received will be considered carefully. The consultation outcome and any proposed changes will be reported back to Cabinet and Full Council before the documents are formally adopted.

Further information

If you have any questions regarding the consultation or the documents, please contact the Place Shaping Team at South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils by emailing localplan.snc@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or by calling 01508 533633.

Find out more on their website: <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/future-development/supplementary-planning-documents/broadland-and-south-norfolk-district-wide-design-codes>

Update from Norfolk and Waveney Mind – Harleston Wellbeing Walk

The Town Council received a message from Norfolk and Waveney Mind, which we wanted to share with our residents. *This message has been edited for clarity and flow while keeping the original meaning.*

‘Thank you very much for your support in promoting the Harleston Wellbeing Walk, but sadly Thursday 27th November was our last date in the area, and due to low numbers, the walk won’t be continuing.

While this is disappointing news, there are still excellent options for support available:

NHS Talking Therapies Service

<https://www.nandwtalkingtherapies.org.uk/home>

Norfolk and Waveney Mind

<https://www.norfolkandwaveneymind.org.uk/>

The Town Council would like to thank everyone who supported the Wellbeing Walk. Your involvement has truly made a difference.

Feasibility study — Gym and leisure facilities

The Town Council has agreed to start preparing for a tender process to find a company to manage Harleston Gym and possibly other leisure facilities.

This is because South Norfolk District Council has confirmed they cannot provide funding. So we're exploring options to keep the gym and leisure facilities sustainable. There has also been some companies showing an interest in managing and improving the facilities.

What's Next?

A draft tender will be shared with councillors for review.

We'll keep you updated of this project during 2026.

Interested in becoming a Town Councillor?

If you're passionate about your community and want to help shape its future, we'd love to hear from you. Being a councillor is a rewarding way to get involved, support local initiatives, and represent the voices of residents.

To find out more on our website www.harleston-tc.gov.uk/become-a-councillor/

Or express your interest by emailing: enquiries@harleston-tc.gov.uk

Stay informed with your Town Council

If you'd like to know more about what your Town Council is working on, then you can find all our meeting agendas and minutes on our website. These provide a clear window into the decisions we make and the projects we're pursuing on behalf of Harleston residents.

Whether you're curious about community initiatives, planning updates, or council discussions, it's all just a click away.

Explore the latest updates here: harleston-tc.gov.uk/town-council-minutes.

Town Council Office Christmas Opening Hours

As the festive season approaches, we would like to inform you about the Town Council Office opening hours during Christmas and New Year.

The Town Council Office will be closed from Friday 19th December and will reopen on Monday 5th January.

In case of urgent maintenance issues you can reach us at 07804 125304.

In the new year we'll be reviewing our office opening hours to ensure they meet residents' needs. We'll let you know the new hours as soon as we've confirmed them.

Season's Greetings from Harleston Gym!

As we reach the end of another fantastic year, we want to wish all our members a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. Your support, enthusiasm, and commitment have made 2025 an incredible year for our gym community.

Classes going from strength to strength

Our classes have remained extremely busy, and we're delighted to share that we had around 1,000 class attendances during November alone! It's brilliant to see so many of you getting involved, trying new sessions, and staying active as a community.

New timetable coming in January

Looking ahead, we're excited to announce that our updated class timetable for January will be released later this month. With new sessions planned and improvements based on your feedback, there's plenty to look forward to as we head into the new year.

A huge thank you

We would like to thank every one of you for your continued support throughout the year. Whether you've joined recently or have been with us for years, your energy and positivity help make Harleston Gym the welcoming and motivating place it is.

We're incredibly proud of the community we've built together, and we can't wait to continue growing, training, and achieving more in 2026.

From all of us at Harleston Gym — thank you, enjoy the festive season, and we'll see you in the new year!

Thinking about joining the gym?

Why wait until the new year to start healthy habits? Now's the perfect time to start a new exercise routine. So after the festivities are over, you'll be ready to get back into it.

Visit www.harlestonegym.co.uk for more information about joining and classes.

