County Councillor’s Report for 2021/22

The last year has continued to be dominated by Covid and the success of the vaccination programme. Although Covid is now endemic worldwide in the UK the number of hospitalisations and deaths resulting from Covid have remained very low. Many older and vulnerable people have already had their fourth vaccination and I would urge everyone to have theirs when they are contacted.

Local residents are generously offering their ‘Homes for Ukraine’. Norfolk County Council (NCC) and Broadland District Council (BDC) are supporting families who have been issued a visa and a offered a home. The host family will be offering the Ukrainian family a home for at least six months but this could be much longer, the visas last for three years. Anyone who has seen the terrible damage inflicted upon Ukraine will see that many areas have no homes to return to, or schools and hospitals. BDC Housing Standards and Help Hub have been visiting homes to ensure they are suitable for the Ukrainian family and that the host family understand their responsibilities. NCC will ensure DBS checks are undertaken and will coordinate health care, social care and education for the families.

January 2022 saw the launch of NIDAS – Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service.  A collaboration between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk, NCC, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk and BDC, the first in the County.  NIDAS offers a dedicated support service for people experiencing domestic abuse in Norfolk, including children and young people.  There will be the offer of recovery programmes, co-ordinated multi agency support (from initial contact and through the court process) and training for professionals, enhancing their understanding of domestic abuse.

For more information on how NIDAS can help you, or someone you know, visit [www.nidasnorfolk.co.uk](http://www.nidasnorfolk.co.uk/).

* Call: 0300 561 0555 9am to 6.30pm weekdays and 9am to 3pm weekends
* Text: 07860 063 464
* Out of hours: 0808 2000 247
* Email: referrals@nidasnorfolk.co.uk

If you are in immediate danger always call 999.

NCC now have 111 Roadside Nature Reserve Schemes, with more planned over the coming years. They stretch over 10 miles and promote the growth of once common but now nationally rare plant species. We will only cut them at the end of the summer, after they flower and set seed. Look out for Reserves on your travels.

The Community at Heart Lottery at BDC has raised nearly £50,000 for good causes in its first year. 68 local groups are benefitting every week, raising much needed funds. If you are a not-for-profit group that benefits Broadland residents, you too could sign up. Go to <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/communities/community-heart-lottery> for more information.

At Broadland we also want to encourage residents to take the first steps to set up new groups. We know that this can often be risking money you do not have but help is at hand. A Get it Started Grant could give you up to £300 to get an idea off the ground. No constitution or committee needed, just three or more residents or a voluntary group with a good idea. Walking football, jigsaw, Pokemon, or anything else your community needs but does not have yet. For advice and more information contact the Communities Team on 01508 533914, Communities@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk or go to <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/council/get-started> .

We all know that many people are facing challenging times ahead with food, gas and electric bills increasing dramatically. NCC, through the Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS) and BDC, through the Help Hub are there to help if you are struggling to make ends meet. For support contact NAS on: 0344 800 8020 or <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/norfolk-assistance-scheme> or BDC Help Hub on: 01603 430431 or <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/help-hub-1> .

Cllr Fran Whymark, Housing and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder BDC and County Councillor NCC