

County Councillor's Report March 2026

The Long and Winding Road

As I am sure you know, the Government reversed its decision to postpone the County Council elections at the last moment when legal advice (presumably) told them they would lose in Court over the issue.

That means the County Council elections will go ahead on 7th May.

The elections will be held on new boundaries decided five years ago – so the 12 villages I represent will be split between four different divisions. I will not be standing for re-election.

It has been an enormous privilege, and great fun being your councillor for the past nine years. I will miss it very much. It has been challenging to carry out the role alongside a full-time job – ironically, before the Government changed its mind I had asked my employer about reducing my hours at work so I could spend more time working for you. Perhaps I'll stick with that and spend the time watching Olympic Curling on the TV instead as it seems to be going on for ever...

I must have attended close to 900 Parish Council meetings since I was first elected. I know it is sometimes frustrating to be a Parish Councillor because of the sense that you have no say in the Big Decisions. But you have a huge impact on your community. I have seen Parish Councils make a real difference in their village. You work incredibly hard as volunteers for your community. You all deserve much more credit than you get.

And in the middle of negotiations, you break down...

Following the U-Turn on the elections, we don't know where we are with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Devolution. In a passionate speech at County Hall, the leader of the County Council told the government where it could stick its plans. But no one is very clear whether she has the power to pull the rug on the plans. Hopefully that will become clearer in the next few weeks (how long have I been saying that...?)

Personally I still think both LGR and Devo can make a big difference to how councils support local people and local places. If they get it right. I'm disappointed that I won't have the chance to influence how the new councils are built – but, to quote Boris Johnson, them's the breaks. Make sure you make your voice heard via your new councillors as the plans emerge.

There's one for you, nineteen for me 'cause I'm the taxman

Norfolk County Council has approved its budget for 2026–27 following a meeting of full council in February.

The budget delivers £42.3 million in savings and efficiencies. Councillors also agreed a 4.998% increase in council tax.

Councillor Andrew Jamieson, deputy leader and cabinet member for finance, said:

“Local government has faced nearly two decades of constrained funding alongside rapidly rising demand for services. The scale of savings is unprecedented - and it becomes harder every year. This budget has required difficult decisions and new ways of working across every part of the organisation.”

[You can watch the meeting and read the reports on the council's website.](#)

And in the end...

I will give your new Councillors a summary of the issues I am working on in each village. I hope they will engage actively with Parish Councils throughout their time as your representative.

Chris, the Highways Engineer, knows the projects that we hoped to fund from the Local Member Highways Allowance and he will brief the new councillors on that too (but make sure you push them too).

I've got a few big projects that I was trying to get through. Hopefully I will find someone on the council to pick those up and so one day the Paston Way will be fully accessible to people with pushchairs, wheelchairs and bikes; museums in North Norfolk will get more support; families with children who have ASD or ADHD will be better able to access the Disabled Facilities Grant; more investment will be made in supporting Norfolk's children into college and university; local businesses and small charities will be supported to innovate; and the County Council will realise that a decent mobile signals and a live bus tracking app would be better use of your money than new bus shelters...

Ed Maxfield