**County Councillor’s Report**

November 2024

**Subsidised trees available to order**

The One Million Trees for Norfolk subsidised tree scheme is now open for individuals, parish councils, community groups, businesses, schools, and landowners to apply for tree packs (and tree protection) at up to 50% off the original price.

As well as the usual range of tree packs available, this year, for the first time there are a limited number of single Norfolk Oak trees, grown at Gressenhall Community tree nursery, making it possible for more people to take part and be 'one in a million'.

Those interested can apply for subsidised tree packs by visiting [www.norfolk.gov.uk/subsidisedtreepacks](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/subsidisedtreepacks)

**Latest round of funding open for innovators in agri-tech, agri-biotech, food tech and aquaculture**

*The following programmes have application deadlines of 6th November which is not far away but I am including it in case anyone knows a business that might be working in this area and able to benefit. The following is from the County Council press release:*

Norfolk County Council is working in partnership with Innovate UK and regional partners Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Suffolk County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority on the Launchpad with up to £7.5m to grow innovation in Eastern England’s agri-tech and food technology cluster, which also includes agri-biotech and aquaculture.

Innovate UK has opened two grant funding competitions to offer innovative businesses the opportunity to win a share of up to £2.5 million.

* In the ‘[Minimum Financial Assistance’ (MFA) competition](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fapply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk%2Fcompetition%2F2041%2Foverview%2Fe75bcc99-6aba-40f7-a984-e538a8eb39fe&data=05%7C02%7Cedward.maxfield.cllr%40norfolk.gov.uk%7C2901cd8c0be0485b1cb708dcdbdea04d%7C1419177e57e04f0faff0fd61b549d10e%7C0%7C0%7C638626996449860357%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6IDrbuRXR1s4usANGyNo6TLOPGwb7HPnGmG6grrJCYE%3D&reserved=0), micro, small and medium sized businesses can apply for grant funding between £25,000 and £100,000. The grant is to cover up to 100% of the project costs.
* The [Collaborative Research and Development (CR&D)](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fapply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk%2Fcompetition%2F2038%2Foverview%2F91847399-b14d-4233-acbb-e2b41a5d4896%23summary&data=05%7C02%7Cedward.maxfield.cllr%40norfolk.gov.uk%7C2901cd8c0be0485b1cb708dcdbdea04d%7C1419177e57e04f0faff0fd61b549d10e%7C0%7C0%7C638626996449900336%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=6KYaKmm3JjlO5IIyyDV2N24RTdpHoF8sGqS0pH0Mlf0%3D&reserved=0) competition offers grant funding of £150,000 to £300,000 for business-led collaborative innovation projects lasting between 6 and 18 months. Project consortia must include an SME and be comprised of organisations such as businesses, universities, research institutes, charities and the public sector.

In both competitions, innovative businesses can seek funding for projects developing and applying technologies in themes that include the following:

* enhancing the productivity of primary crops, livestock, aquaculture or ornamental crops
* biotechnologies related to agriculture, aquaculture, food processing and nutrition
* food that promotes safe, lower carbon or more sustainable healthy and nutritious diets
* resource efficient production and processing methods for low emission foods

**Help shape road safety for 2025: Norfolk County Council calls for older drivers to share their experiences**

*The following is from a County Council press release. What wasn’t included was any indication of how people can take part in the survey. So I have written to them to ask.*

Norfolk County Council in collaboration with Road Safety Partners wants to launch a new Road Safety Driving Campaign in 2025 to support older drivers.

In order to do this the council wants to hear directly from Norfolk drivers over 60 and is asking them to take part in a short survey. Via the survey they can share their driving experiences, attitudes and thoughts on staying safe as they age. This feedback will play a crucial part in shaping future safety campaigns and tailoring support to meet the needs of older drivers in Norfolk.

**RAAC Concrete in schools**

Initial safety inspections of ceilings at 60 Norfolk schools have now been completed, with no further school or class closures needed. A small number of schools require follow-up checks where specialist equipment is needed to reach inaccessible areas.

Norfolk County Council commissioned the inspections at the start of the new academic year, following the partial collapse of a lath and plaster ceiling at an academy led by Synergy Education Trust.

Bacton and Ludham are among the 15 schools that will need repair work but will not require closure.

**Scrutiny Committee**

I am a member of the Scrutiny Committee at County Hall which examines issues in depth. I am very frustrated that they have moved this month’s meeting (to allow councillors to attend a conference) to a date I cannot make. Frustrating because the three issues on the agenda are: the council’s budget; the charging regime for waste disposal; and the way the ‘Street Works’ team deals with road closures. These are all issues that matter a lot to local residents. Although I cannot attend, I will watch the meeting online and will email in my questions. I’ll report back on the outcome!

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