

Swaffham Division Report – May & June 2026

Dear Parish Councillors,

This report covers activity undertaken during May and June. Due to the current pre-election (purdah) period, there are restrictions on the information that can be communicated publicly. As a result, this update focuses primarily on operational activity, casework, meetings and community engagement undertaken across the two-month period.

Throughout May and June, I have continued supporting residents and engaging with local organisations across the division.

RESIDENT SUPPORT AND CASEWORK

Throughout May and June I have continued assisting residents with a range of enquiries and requests for support.

These have included providing advice, signposting residents to the appropriate organisations, obtaining updates from relevant authorities and helping residents navigate local government processes.

I remain committed to ensuring residents receive the support they need and that concerns raised within our communities are directed to the appropriate authority for action or consideration.

COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

I am pleased to have recently been appointed Vice-Chair of Norfolk County Council's Adult Social Care Committee.

This is an important role with responsibility for overseeing and scrutinising adult social care services across the county. The position is an impartial one, requiring members to work constructively across political boundaries to ensure that some of our most vulnerable residents receive the support and care they need.

Since my appointment, I have attended a number of meetings with senior officers, including the Chief Executive, and with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, Cllr Scott Hussey. These discussions have focused on the challenges facing adult social care, opportunities for service improvement and ensuring that Norfolk residents continue to receive high-quality support.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

I have also been appointed to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee, a role which is particularly important to me on a personal level. Having spent time within the foster care system myself, I understand first-hand the importance of ensuring children and young people receive the support, stability and opportunities they deserve.

Whilst scrutiny must always remain objective and evidence-based, I hope my own experiences will enable me to bring a valuable perspective to discussions surrounding children's services and outcomes for young people across Norfolk.

Children's Services also gave an impressive presentation following the announcement that the service has been awarded an 'Outstanding' rating by Ofsted. This achievement is particularly noteworthy given that the service was in special measures around ten years ago. The transformation reflects the dedication and hard work of staff, foster carers and everyone involved in supporting children and families across Norfolk. It is encouraging to see the progress that has been made and demonstrates that excellent work is being delivered within parts of the council.



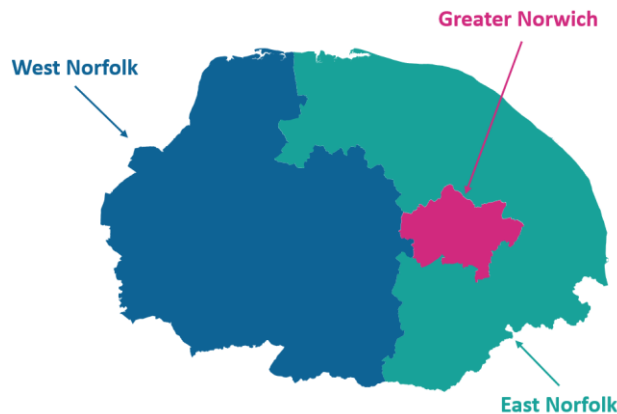
LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) continues to be a significant topic of discussion.

The Reform UK Group remains firmly opposed to the current proposals and we have already begun exploring what options may be available to delay or prevent implementation. Current estimates suggest the cost of reorganisation could exceed £90 million, with those costs ultimately falling on local taxpayers rather than central government.

At present, we remain unconvinced that the proposed changes will deliver meaningful benefits for residents. Should reorganisation ultimately proceed, our view is that a single unitary authority would be the only model likely to achieve any significant savings.

Whilst legal options, including a judicial review, have been discussed, such action carries significant financial risk as legal costs are not automatically recoverable even if successful. For that reason, all options are being carefully considered, but no options have been ruled out at this stage.



HIGHWAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Swaffham – I am continuing discussions with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Tom Dickerson, and our Highways Area Manager, Luke Humphreys with regards to speeding and traffic.

Local Member Fund (LMF) has supported many worthwhile community projects over the years. However, with an estimated £80 million highways maintenance backlog, it is increasingly difficult to justify continuing the fund in its current form.

Redirecting the LMF into highways investment would help improve the overall condition of our roads and tackle the growing backlog of potholes and repairs. Highways officers advise that this

approach could deliver around 25% greater value for money, allowing us to achieve more with the same level of funding.

The priority should be investing in core services that residents rely on every day. At present, the council spends significantly more on taxi transport, around £70 million per year, compared with approximately £40 million on highways. Given the scale of the highways backlog, there is a strong case for directing available resources towards maintaining and improving our road network for the benefit of all residents.

At county level, one of the key priorities of the administration is to invest in road maintenance and tackling potholes. As a result, residents may find that repairs to roads and highways defects are prioritised ahead of requests relating to new speed limits, additional crossings or other highway alterations.

SUPPORTING HEALTH, FITNESS AND WELLBEING

I recently met with SKA Martial Arts, Gym & Fitness as part of my ongoing efforts to engage with local businesses across the division.

Given that Swaffham and the surrounding villages have a higher proportion of older residents than both the Norfolk and national averages, I believe it is important that we explore opportunities to support residents in maintaining active and healthy lifestyles. Fitness providers and community organisations have an important role to play in improving physical health, reducing social isolation and helping residents maintain their independence for longer.

Equally, it is vital that we encourage more young people to become active from an early age. Participation in sport and physical activity can have significant benefits for children's physical health, mental wellbeing, confidence and social development. Local organisations such as SKA Martial Arts, Gym & Fitness provide valuable opportunities for young people to engage in structured activities, develop new skills and build positive habits that can last a lifetime.

SOLAR FARM FACTORIES

On 16 and 17 June, I met with representatives from the Block East Pye Solar Group and the High Grove Opposition Action Group.

Both groups are undertaking significant work on behalf of local residents in response to proposed large-scale solar developments that could have a substantial impact on communities across the wider Swaffham area.

Regarding nearby solar farm factory proposals, I and Reform UK remain firmly opposed to these developments.

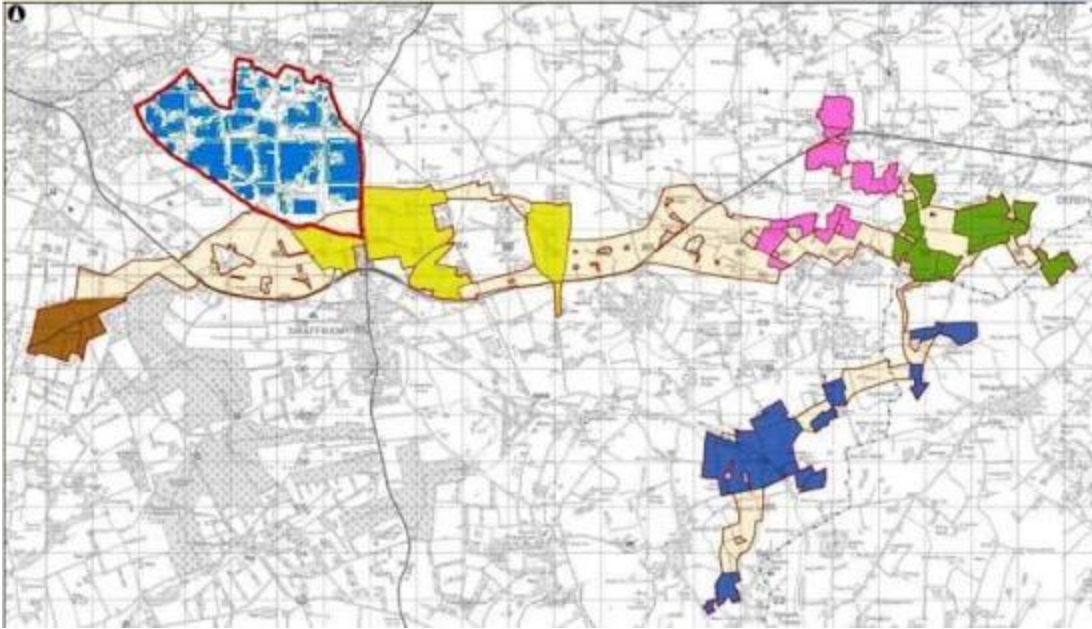
We have concerns regarding the impact these schemes may have on productive agricultural land, food security, the character of the countryside and local communities. We also have concerns about the costs associated with connecting large-scale developments to the national grid and whether alternative energy strategies, including greater investment in nuclear power and domestic energy production, may provide a more reliable long-term solution for the United Kingdom.

It is important, however, to be honest with residents about the powers available at local level. Many of these projects are determined through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects process, meaning that ultimate decisions can be taken by central government.

I also have concerns regarding the current government's proposals to remove the public as statutory consultees within parts of the planning process. Local residents should have a meaningful voice in decisions that directly affect their communities, and any reduction in public participation risks undermining confidence in the planning system and weakening local accountability.

Whilst Norfolk County Council does not have the power to simply block these developments, I will continue to work with community groups, parish councils and fellow elected members to ensure local concerns are properly represented.

Proposed Solar Farms in mid-Norfolk



LOOKING AHEAD

Now that the IT issues I have been experiencing have largely been resolved, I am looking forward to the months ahead.

Serving as your County Councillor has been a phenomenal journey so far. Every week presents new challenges, opportunities and experiences, and I remain committed to learning as much as possible so that I can represent residents effectively and deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities.

I would also like to thank residents for their patience regarding email correspondence over recent weeks. Due to sporadic issues accessing my council email account, there have unfortunately been occasions where responses have been delayed. Thankfully, these issues now appear to have been resolved.

I do receive a significant volume of emails each day and would kindly ask for your continued patience.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Jaden Lister

Swaffham Division

Report to Swaffham Town Council – July 2026

Cllr Judy Anscombe Ward Member Breckland Council

Love Your Market Town

Breckland Council have signed an agreement with Norfolk County Council for delivery of the “Love Your Market Town” programme for 2026/27 financial year, and for Breckland Council to commit £5,000 as a contribution to the programme for the district.

Love Your Market Town is a grant and community development programme supported by Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council to help market towns become more attractive, increase visitor numbers, boost local businesses, and encourage people to spend more.

BOOST programme

In an agreement with Norfolk County Council, £50,000 has been committed by Breckland Council as contribution to the programme for the 2026/2027 financial year.

This is to meet the ongoing need for targeted support that helps young people (aged 16-24) reengage with education, move closer to employment (including jobs with training), and access opportunities that build their confidence and motivation. The focus is on providing the right interventions at the right time to ensure young people feel inspired, supported, and prepared to take their next steps toward training or work. This is in line with Breckland’s “Skills Plan” and is a key contributor to helping Breckland reduce the challenges we face across skills and employment within the district, supporting the needs of our NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) residents.

Support for Cuppa Care” and Hearing Support Service – now called Hear for Norfolk

I’m pleased to support the newly combined “Cuppa Care” and Hearing Support Service, which visits Attleborough, Dereham, Necton, Mattishall, Mundford, Thetford, Swaffham and Watton each month, and who are seeking funding towards the ongoing running costs of this important service.

The Hearing Support Service helps people who use NHS hearing aids with routine maintenance, as well as offering advice on assistive listening devices. Alongside this, Cuppa Care offers a friendly space where people of all ages can access emotional, wellbeing and practical support—over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

A valuable support service for our residents.

Lidl Planning Application

Awaiting reply from planning, will update at the meeting.

Old Hamonds School

Just to report that there is ongoing communication with the developer, with the Planning Team at Breckland.

SHMT

Swaffham Cultural Consortium

The Tourist in Your Town event which started on Jul 1st and runs to September, has been well received. The town now has 6 Town Guides, and who will stake residents on a walking tour of the hidden histories of Swaffham.

I encourage councillors to book themselves on one these free walks as there are many gems from Swaffham's history to find out about.

Cllr Judy Anscombe
Breckland Council Ward Member
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