

Norfolk County Councillor for Necton and Launditch

Report April 2021

Free school meal vouchers made available during Easter holidays.

Children eligible for free school meals were offered them during the Easter holidays thanks to Norfolk County Council.

A child from a family that received benefits was eligible for a £15 voucher per week, a total of £30 for the entire break.

The one-off funding for the scheme comes from the Department of Work and Pensions' winter hardship support. Norfolk County Council has received an additional £952,000 from the fund, much of which was used to provide free school meal vouchers during Easter.

Broadband boost announced for Norfolk.

Norfolk County Council has welcomed the news of a major expansion of the fastest type of broadband, which could benefit up to a third of properties.

The Government announced Norfolk will be involved in a new round of Gigabit broadband procurement. [View more information on the Government's announcement.](#)

Known as Gigabit / Full Fibre / Ultrafast / Fibre to the Premise, it has a speed of 100-1000 mega-bits per second – compared to 24 or 30mbps for superfast broadband.

Community tree nurseries project to boost local stock.

A new project to boost the supply of Norfolk trees will help improve local biodiversity and mitigation of climate change.

Nationally, trees outside woodlands have seen accelerating losses, driven by pressures from pests and diseases, and long-term neglect and decline.

The Boosting Community Tree Nurseries project will find ways to support existing community-led nurseries in Norfolk and establish the best ways to help new set-ups that involve the community. The project will support nurseries to produce trees that are bio secure - stock that is handled responsibly and safely, inspected for pests and diseases regularly and for which records are kept enabling traceability.

Using locally collected seed will help retain regional genetic diversity and provide appropriate species to improve tree stock resilience.

The project, led by Norfolk County Council, could see a training hub created to provide support for communities interested in getting involved. Other counties including Kent, Cornwall and Shropshire will be taking part in pilot projects to support this work.

£3m scheme set to DRIVE up rural employment.

A new cross border grant scheme being launched by Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council is set to provide welcome support to businesses contributing to the rural economy.

The DRIVE scheme (Delivering Rural Investment, Vital Employment) is a two-year project designed to encourage and support sound business investment decisions. The project has received £3million of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund.

Expert mentors will be on hand to help businesses develop strong project and business plans. And to help put those into action, businesses will then be able to apply for grants of between £5k and £30k.

The aim is to help boost jobs as all applicants will need to put forward job creation as a result of their grant application. The scheme is open to existing and new businesses. New businesses looking to apply will have to be aiming to employ 3 new members of staff within the next three years.

[See more information on our DRIVE Programme page.](#)

12 ways to swap2save - new campaign aims to cut single use product waste.

A campaign has been launched which is set to help drive down single-use product and plastic waste by calling on people to swap2save. By making small everyday changes, like swapping a take-away drink in a plastic bottle for a reusable and refillable water bottle, people will be able to save their money and cut waste.

The single-use items targeted by the campaign lead to 30,000 tonnes of waste annually in Norfolk, costing the Council £3.47million to dispose of every year.