

Almost 100 towns and villages are to get new measures to make roads and footpaths safer, including electronic signs urging drivers to slow down. Norfolk County Council has agreed to make money available to help pay for 97 highway schemes, including vehicle-activated speed signs, bus shelters and new footpaths. NCC has agreed funding of £425,000 towards £850,000 worth of improvements through the popular annual parish partnership initiative. First launched in September 2011 the scheme invites communities to bid for cash to make improvements. Town and parish Councils will then match fund the county council money to pay the remaining cost of all the schemes. This year the schemes includes, 22 village gateways, 21 SAM2 cameras, 8 'trod' footpaths, 4 new footpaths and 10 bus shelters.

A brand-new Norwich Park and Ride service has recently been launched with a number of key enhancements for residents and visitors to enjoy, along with free travel for everyone on the first day of operation (Sunday 30th March). Norfolk County Council selected two operators to run the services following the re-tendering process at the end of last year. The process was carried out with the objective of running the services from all five sites with no subsidy from the council. From Sunday 30th March, First Bus will operate services from Airport, Thickthorn and Sprowston while Simonds will provide the service from Harford and Postwick. The new service will offer: earlier journeys in the morning, later journeys in the evening, increased services at most sites, Sunday services at all sites, Airport Thickthorn and Sprowston will have zero emission buses and continued low fares thanks to BSIP funding. For full details of the services including timetables and ticket prices visit www.norwichparkandride.co.uk

As part of the NCC budget for the upcoming year, additional household hazardous waste events will be held across the county. These events will take place at seven recycling centres this spring, supplementing the usual autumn events. The free events will be held throughout April and May 2025, and residents must use the recycling centre booking system to attend. Bookings will be open one week before each event. A list of acceptable items for disposal and the dates for these events can be found at www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste

Your Norfolk Extra, the council's monthly digital newsletter goes out to almost 6,000 subscribers on the first Monday of each month, bringing them information and service updates from NCC. To help boost readership a promotional campaign has been started which includes advertising on the front page of the council website, social media alerts and editorial in Your Norfolk Magazine. NCC has also partnered with local businesses to offer regular prize draws for subscribers to win days out in the county – Norfolk Museums and Watatunga Wildlife Reserve being the first to offer prizes. To sign up visit our website at www.norfolk.gov.uk

The Government wants to see all councils in Norfolk replaced with fewer, unitary councils-that would be responsible for all services in their area. They have invited NCC and the seven district councils to submit interim proposals on 21st March and then developed proposals by 26th September. The county council's initial work suggests that having one council would save the most, followed by smaller savings for two councils. Having three or more would cost more money.

Best Wishes

Martin