

Norfolk County Council has set up a £3 million crisis fund to support residents affected by the rise in heating oil prices. The county has one of the largest numbers of oil heated homes, with around 70,000 households relying on the fuel for heating and hot water. The Norfolk Heating Oil Fund will offer practical and timely support to those who are facing hardship. Residents can apply to this fund through the council's website at www.norfolk.gov.uk/heatingoil or you can call on 0344 800 8020

The Government has decided that there will be three unitary councils in Norfolk as from April 2028 with elections for them to take place in May 2027 which will form shadow authorities. The eight existing councils will be dissolved on the 1st of April 2028. The three councils will be Greater Norwich, West Norfolk and we here in South will be in East Norfolk.

NCC has announced a series of Household Hazardous waste days taking place at recycling centres across the county this spring. The events allow residents to dispose hazardous household waste free of charge, this includes items such as aerosols, anti-freeze, drain cleaners, fertilisers, paint, and weed killer. Booking is required and opens 8 days before each event and can be done online or over the phone. The nearest event to us is Norwich South Recycling Centre on Friday 5th and Saturday 6th June. To check which items are and are not accepted, and to book a slot residents can visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/hazardouswaste

Residents in the East of England will be safer after nearly 9,000 potentially dangerous batteries, chargers and devices were removed from sale and recalled from consumers. The work was carried out by trading standards across the eastern region and follows a similar project last year that resulted in 1,800 unsafe lithium-ion batteries and chargers being removed from the market. Lithium-ion batteries are found in a large number of household devices, including laptops, mobile phones, vacuum cleaners and cordless power tools and can pose a serious fire risk. For more advice on staying safe with lithium batteries, visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/lithiumbatteries If any device catches fire in your home, leave, call 999 and do not go back inside.

NCCs annual spring and summer road surface dressing programme will start on the 21st April and will see Norfolk's roads get a new seal to help prevent potholes forming and extending the life of roads with a new skid-resistant surface to reduce the risk of accidents. The work continues through until September to take advantage of the warmer weather. This year 351 miles of Norfolk roads will be dressed, up from 320 miles last year. The total programme will cost around £12.31m and is a proven pro-active approach to highways maintenance.

Finally, I have decided to stand down as county councillor, I would like to thank everyone for their support and help over the last 20 years.

Best Wishes

Martin