

1 STANDING REPORT Prepared for the Clerk, Rackheath Parish Council

From: Cllr Ed Matthews NCC Member for Wroxham Division, which includes Rackheath, Salhouse, Ranworth, Little & Greater Plumstead.

I am committed to working closely with these parishes and am keen to build a positive and productive working relationship within each of these communities. I have got direct access to the newly elected NNC Cabinet and can bring core issues applicable to the Rackheath Community for discussion and interaction.

2. NCC Funding Available to the Parish

Tomorrow morning, I have a full NCC chamber meeting to attend and shall be asking the question as to whether the two local member grant funds will be available again in 2026/27, as was the case in previous years. I personally have received no confirmation on this as yet.

a Community Fund: up to £5,000 for local community projects

b Highways Fund: up to £10,000 for local highway improvements

I will confirm availability and the application process as soon as I have a response. If the parish has priority projects in either category, I would welcome communication so we can plan applications early.

3. Recent NCC Developments Annual General Meeting

NCC held its first AGM on Thursday the 28th of May, 2026. Among which the decisions taken was the abolition of the political assistant roles. This only affects the Reform UK and Liberal Democrat groups (as they have 10 or more members) and will save £165,000 from 26/27. This reflects the council's commitment to reducing overhead costs and improving efficiency.

4. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

There is a live government process to reorganise local government in Norfolk, which could result in three unitarian authorities replacing the current two-tier structure of county and district and borough councils. Parish and Town councils would be unaffected in their own right – for they sit below both tiers and would continue in the usual manner.

The timeline for LGR in Norfolk is still subject to government decisions. I will keep the parish informed as developments occur. If elections to a new unitary authority proceed as expected in May 2027, Wroxham Division residents will vote for a unitary councillor, who would shadow their current NCC and district councillors this until such roles are abolished in May 2028. I am keen to work with the parish to ensure Wroxham's voice is heard in this process and that local priorities are protected through any transition.

5. Police and Crimes Commissioner

Last week, yet another election was held to elect a new Police and Crimes Commissioner for Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. Having attended the count in person it came as no great surprise that former CID Inspector Colin Sutton is the newly elected Police and Crimes Commissioner for both these regions.

This is not something we as a party would have wished, whereby in seeking to reserve and conserve capital, this vote has cost us somewhere in the order of 2 million pounds across all three regions.

6. Other Issues such as Road Conditions are Manifold

The biggest outcry one comes across is that of potholes, grass verges over growing thoroughfares, I have already had this problem address at NCC level where Ranworth is concerned. There the roads are truly restricted and were made even more so by the over grown grass verges. How people are coping amidst the turmoil caused by present Central Government that and yet another Prime Minister, I honestly do not know. Yet, as previously stated, I am committed to working closely with all parishes, within the Wroxham Division and am keen to build a productive working relationship with all within these communities. PTO

7. Working with Me

I will do my best to attend parish meetings as a matter of course and will provide a regular standing written report between such meetings, whereby the Clerk can contact me directly with matters of importance.

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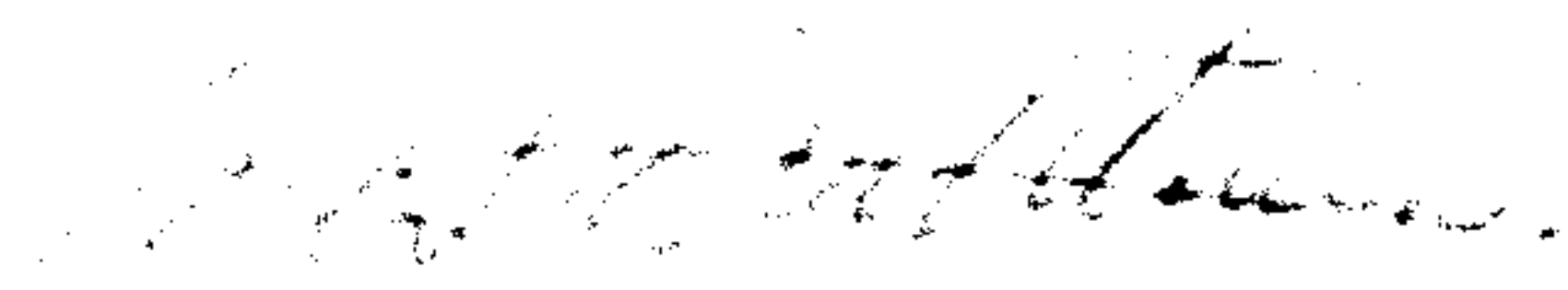
• I aim where possible, intending to respond within two working days. I look forward to attending tonight's meeting and to support both the Council and residents of Rackheath alike.

8. An Apology

From the first day of attending NNC this the 12th of May, we each were presented with a government issued laptop. Here the saga begins, the two-tier login procedure with each is – you use two separate passwords before you begin doing anything. Initial setup everything seemed to work great, that is within the confines of NNC. Thereafter, for the next three weeks each and every day I would visit the IT personnel at county Hall, because the second-tier login procedure failed, whenever I endeavoured using it.

Finally, a software issue was discovered and rectified by IT personnel, that was the first time I had any chance of using the laptop, leaving me with an un-imaginable volume of emails to troll through. This is the reason I now apologise for not being able to get correspondence to you sooner.

I have decided to place this testimony here which relates to Salhouse, whereby I received a rather scathing and cutting second email, accusing me of not being transparent or democratic. All the while thinking, but I did answer that first email, only to discover that with all the earlier problems experience with the laptop, the reply email remained in the Drafts folder on my device, never having ever been sent?



Signed: - Ed Matthews, Councillor for the Wroxham Division.