

COUNTY COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2022/23, ALISON THOMAS.

A sad situation to find myself in having to write an annual report on behalf of my dear friend and colleague Barry Duffin. Out of respect for Barry's family no announcements will be made regarding the by-election until after his funeral. Barry was highly respected and worked hard for his communities and will be missed by many.

We have recently had a change of leadership as Andrew Proctor our Leader had to step away from his role due to ill health.

Cllr Kay Mason Bilig has been elected as Leader and there are consequently some changes in those holding senior roles.

After a challenging budget setting process in February focus is moving swiftly on to next year's finances.

Adult Social Care continues to be the department with the highest spending which amounts to over £1m per day!

Health and social care integration is progressing but is yet to deliver the big changes that will be required to sustain services in the future.

The ICB (integrated care board) replaced the old CCGs and their recent consultation regarding the Norwich Walk In Centre will be carefully scrutinised by Norfolk Health Scrutiny with a desire expressed by many that it should remain open.

Many practices in South Norfolk refer patients to the centre if there are no GP appointments available so it is essential the service remains open and accessible to all.

It is pleasing that the Long Stratton Bypass has secured planning permission and the project is now moving forward to the shortlisting and eventual awarding of a contract for construction.

The scheme is due to commence in April 2024 and complete by the autumn of 2025.

The Council is still in dialogue with the government on a possible devolving of powers and funds to Norfolk known as a County Deal.

The current proposal would require a directly elected Leader (often referred to as a mayor or DEL) for Norfolk. The results of the recent public consultation are yet to be published.

The Council would be required to make a decision later this year to proceed to the new model of governance (or not) allowing a DEL to be elected in May 2024.

It is hoped that there is still opportunity to improve the current offer to Norfolk and negotiations with government continue.

It is a challenging time for Schools with the current series of Teachers strikes. It is most important that if possible at least those students who are taking exams are still able to attend fully.

Our highways department continues to be very busy.

This is the time of year that resurfacing schemes will be carried out causing potential disruption. Local communities will be notified individually if roads near them are impacted.

I'd like to finish by congratulating those of you who have been elected to serve your communities and to thank you for the invaluable work you do.

