

NORWICH

# CITIZEN

WINTER 2023

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5

New eco homes



6-7

The civic year



12-13

How you shape our priorities



**NORWICH**  
City Council

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# CITIZEN

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**“I want to ensure we achieve a fairer, safer, cleaner, prosperous and sustainable Norwich.”**



## Message from the leader, Mike Stonard

It's a huge privilege to have the opportunity to serve the city and its people as the leader of Norwich City Council.

These are exciting times, with fresh leadership, including deputy leader Beth Jones and chief executive Lou Rawsthorne. We're resetting priorities, so the council can respond to the challenges it faces and provide the best services. I want to ensure we achieve a fairer, safer, cleaner, prosperous and sustainable Norwich.

With the cost of living crisis, many people are struggling to make ends meet. I see this on the doorstep, in my council casework, and as chair of local charity Future Projects.

I am proud that, for many years, we have provided a 100% Council Tax Reduction scheme for those on the lowest incomes – and under my leadership, the council will prioritise and adapt frontline services to meet increasing demand.

The housing crisis is affecting many. There's a shortage of decent affordable rental housing. We're introducing a Private Renters' Charter and protecting those in private rentals – recently prosecuting landlords where residents were living in appalling conditions. While a quarter of the

city's population lives in council homes, there are too many people on the waiting list. We're one of the few authorities in the country building council homes – completing 153 in the past five years – including the award-winning development at Goldsmith Street. There are another 81 homes at the advanced design stage we plan to deliver in the next three years, with more under consideration. We also continue upgrading existing stock.

Many residents are concerned about safety in communities, and we're investing in measures to address crime and antisocial behaviour, including CCTV, door-entry systems and alley-gates.

The climate emergency is a priority, and I'm proud this council has reduced its carbon emissions by 66% since 2008. This year, I appointed a cabinet member for climate change to ensure the issue remains a priority; and promise we'll take steps to delivering a more sustainable city.

These are just some examples of how your council can make a positive difference. My commitment is to improving services, ensuring the wellbeing of citizens, and delivering on the priorities you elected us to pursue.



@NorwichCC



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# Connecting communities in Norwich

Since the start of 2022, Norwich City Council's community enabling team and Community Connectors from The Shoebox community hub have been working together to understand what is important to residents across the city and supporting them to do more of what they value.

Conversations with residents in Mile Cross revealed an appetite from the community to work together to improve their local environment, for people and wildlife. Suggestions from residents included shared community gardens, better children's play spaces, and adding more greenery and colour to the area.

Recognising this ambition, the Community Connectors linked

up the local community and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), whose Nextdoor Nature project is helping support biodiversity in the city by creating 'nature corridors' which join up habitats for wildlife.

The Community Connectors worked with NWT to organise a successful pop-up event that was attended by 50 residents. During this event, people shared ideas for improving their communal spaces, created collaborative artwork, and planted sunflower seeds, helping to bring the community together and build excitement around the project.

Since then, the community has gone from strength to strength with support from the city council and NWT. We've seen



## Look after green spaces in your neighbourhood

Residents in Mile Cross took advantage of the opportunity to manage green spaces in their area.

Interested in taking on a green space in your neighbourhood? Find more information and apply here: [www.norwich.gov.uk/CommunitySpaces](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/CommunitySpaces)

the creation of Friends of Sloughbottom Park and MXPEG (Mile Cross Projects and Events Group).

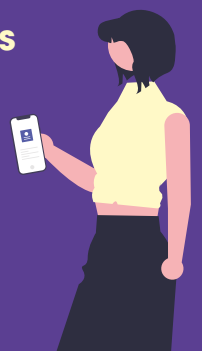
Activities have included litter picking, growing flowers and vegetables on pallets, species mapping sessions, spring walks, bat walks, and more!

The nature corridor that is now being created - linking residential areas, pathways, the Valpy Allotments, Sloughbottom Park, Marriotts Way, Sweet Briar Marshes, and beyond - is set to hugely benefit biodiversity.

Equally important are all the benefits for local residents from working together as a community, spending more time outdoors, and improving the place where they live.

## Let us know how we could improve our customer and digital services

Have your say by taking part in our customer and digital strategy consultation at [GetTalking.norwich.gov.uk](http://GetTalking.norwich.gov.uk)



# New eco-homes will help combat high energy bills

**P**eople will shortly be moving into new homes at Bowthorpe where Norwich City Council's own property development company is delivering eco-friendly properties designed to combat rising energy prices for city residents.

The new properties, west of Saxoncote Avenue and close to Rayne Park, Trinity Gardens and Clover Hill, are phase three of the Three Score housing scheme at Bowthorpe.

The entire site, which can accommodate up to 1,000 properties, also has community facilities, a care home and open spaces on a 32-hectare site. The overall project also includes a play area, footpaths and cycleways to connect it to the wider area.

The latest phase of 76 homes has seen 31 already built, with a further 12 expected to be finished by the end of 2023,

and the remaining 33 to be completed in 2024. Within the next few months, people will start taking up residence in the mixture of 1-bed flats; 2, 3 and 4-bed houses.

The new properties are constructed to high environmental standards, providing future protection against rising energy bills and combating the wider issue of fuel poverty, especially during the current energy crisis.

This is achieved through a 'fabric first' approach, which means the properties are designed from the start with increased levels of insulation and air tightness to retain heat, but also allowing for natural ventilation.

Low carbon and renewable technologies are also used, with all dwellings having air source heat pump systems for space heating and hot

water, mechanical ventilation systems which are very air-tight, and triple glazed windows.

A sustainable drainage system is in place to manage water and prevent flooding both on and off-site, while sustainable travel is encouraged with the provision of cycle storage and electric vehicle charging points.

The scheme also enhances biodiversity through its soft landscaping which includes the planting of native tree and species-rich grass seed mix in gardens, open spaces and verges; as well as provision of integrated bird and bat boxes and hedgehog holes in fences.


This level of attention to detail meets with the council's aim to not only build high quality, eco-efficient houses for its citizens, but to build homes and an environment that creates a sense of community where people love to live.





# Our civics celebrating our city

Since being elected in May, the Lord Mayor and Sheriff of Norwich, Cllr James Wright and Dr Jan Sheldon have been busy representing the city at a range of functions and events, as well as helping raise awareness of their civic charity – Norfolk Community Foundation and its Nourishing Norfolk initiative. Here they share just some of their highlights to date and what they're looking forward to.



Being Lord Mayor provides an amazing opportunity to get out to meet many different citizens of Norwich and it's an absolute pleasure to chat with people and find out about their lives.

Big events, such as the Lord Mayor's Weekend and Norwich Pride, bring thousands of people together in the city, while popping along to a street

party or to the festival at Mile Cross gives us the wonderful experience of seeing people in their own communities.

We remember our armed forces who serve or have served to protect our country – putting their lives on the line. In September, we welcomed personnel from RAF Marham to City Hall to commemorate the heroic efforts of those who took part in the Battle of Britain. Members of the public came along to show their respect, as they will do when the city

comes together for our Act of Remembrance on Sunday 12 November.

A key part of the work that we do is to help raise funds for our civic charity, and it was great fun to be invited along to the Eaton Park Miniature Railway this summer. All the proceeds that day went to the civic charity, raising more than £750.

**Lord Mayor of Norwich,  
Cllr James Wright**



## The civic charity - Norfolk Community Foundation

An independent local charity, which since 2005 has delivered more than £40 million in grant funding to around 4,000 grassroots community groups, charities, voluntary organisations and

social enterprises, to help them thrive and grow.

The Nourishing Norfolk initiative aims to ensure that no-one in Norfolk goes hungry by setting up food hubs in partnership with local charities.

To find out more, see page 23.



To donate, visit [www.NorfolkFoundation.com/civic-charity](http://www.NorfolkFoundation.com/civic-charity)



It's been an incredible year so far; such an honour to be asked to attend so many events – each special in its own way. Having the opportunity to shake the hands of veterans and serving officers is a real privilege: being asked to raise the Indian flag on Indian Independence day is a once-in-a-lifetime moment; and seeing the joy and excitement

on children's faces at the Lord Mayor's procession was just lovely.

One of the things we'd like to do this year is visit schools who wouldn't normally request a civic visit. We're very keen that children develop an understanding of the roles and the history associated with them. We also want to inspire children of all abilities to think that, one day, they too could hold these historic offices.

We are very committed to raising funds for our civic charity. No-one should ever have to choose between heating or feeding themselves. We've a number of fundraising events planned, but if anyone has an 'outside of the box' challenge for us, we'd be pleased to hear from them.

**Sheriff of Norwich,  
Dr Jan Sheldon**







## Norwich festive lights switch-on

It's almost time for one of the most exciting events in the Norwich calendar – the Festive Lights Switch-on! Grab your hats, coats and scarves and prepare to be wowed with a jam-packed schedule of entertainment as festive lights across the city burst into life. From acrobats to a West End star, there's fun for all.

### When?

This year the switch-on will take place on Thursday 16 November. The event will start at 5:30pm and the lights will be switched on at 7pm.



### Where?

All the action will be taking place on a stage in front of City Hall. Head to St Peters Street to make sure you catch all the fun. There will be an accessible viewing area next to the front of the stage, which can be booked in advance by emailing [events@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:events@norwich.gov.uk)



### What's happening?

We have an exciting selection of acts for all to enjoy. The programme of entertainment will include gymnastic displays, musical performances and some surprise special guests.

There'll be plenty of food and drink options available throughout the city to satisfy all your cravings. And, of course, we will be flipping the switch to turn on the lights across the city. It's the perfect event to get you in the festive mood. Come along and start this festive season in style!



# A perfect Christmas starts with Norwich Market

**W**ith Christmas around the corner, your thoughts have no doubt turned to ticking off your present shopping list. Norwich is a dream for shopping, and there's no better place to find everything you could want than at one of the largest open-air markets in the country!

There are so many exciting new stalls to explore, along with long-standing favourites. From jewellery (check out Raw Gemstone Jewellery or Olivia's), to clothes (try Bohemian Closet, No One Famous or Taxi Vintage) – you'll easily find a gift for someone special.

Norwich Kitchenware has you covered for some home-related presents, and The Haberdashery and The Yarn and Craft Store are perfect for your creative friends.

Shopping is hard work, so make sure you stop at one of the many food and drink stalls to recharge your energy. Whether you feel like a New-York style sandwich from award-winning Bodega or some mouthwatering Chilean street food from Cocina Mia, you'll be spoilt for choice.

You can explore all the flavours of the world at Norwich Market, from India to Italy (Indian Feast and Shpendi's anyone?). Or maybe explore Japanese-style street food with Bun Box. There are so many options – you'll be struggling to choose!

No meal is truly finished until you've had dessert, so don't forget to pop by The Chocolate Bar Baker, And Eat It or Dottie's Sweets for a treat.

For your foodie friends and family, a gift from Sir Toby's Beers, Walsingham Farms Shop or The Cheeseman might be right up their street.

Don't forget to treat yourself – Market Nail Bar and Mama B's Brows can have you looking and feeling your best for the festive season.

The market will also be decked out in Christmas lights and will feature some exciting pop-up stalls, so a browse through the fantastic collection of local businesses will no doubt get you in the perfect festive mood.

**Keep up to date with all things Norwich Market by following us on social media!**

 @norwichmarket\_life

 Norwich Market



# Navigating Norwich city centre

A network of 50 wayfinding signs known as 'miniliths' has been placed throughout the city centre, helping everyone make the most of their Norwich experience.

The new miniliths are metal signs, featuring maps, detailing destinations within a three-minute walk, as well as offering a broader perspective of the surrounding area.

The work was led by Norfolk County Council and funded

through the government's Transforming Cities Fund programme. Researching, designing and installing the network of signs was a joint effort from Norfolk County Council, Norwich City Council, and Norwich BID/Visit Norwich.

The project has also included the decluttering of old signs and refurbishing existing miniliths.

Councillor Mike Stonard, leader of Norwich City Council, said:

"Norwich is a wonderful city to explore, whether you live here and know it well, or for those visiting for the first time.

"The wayfinding signs also help to promote different forms of sustainable travel, while providing a glimpse of what our amazing city can offer."



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## Residents' parking permits

**R**esidents who have parking permits should by now be aware of a change in who they will make payments to in future. On 1 November, the council handed over responsibility for issuing on-street parking permits to a service provider called Parking Operations, which operates on behalf of Norfolk County Council.

Parking Operations currently manages parking systems across the rest of Norfolk. The cost of parking permits and parking fines

in the city is not affected at this time by this change.

For residents who have current on-street parking permits, these will continue to be valid until their expiry date and there is no action needed until the permit needs to be renewed.

To ensure continuity of service, the names, contact details, vehicle registration and current permit numbers of permit

holders have been transferred over to Parking Operations so that permits remain valid, with renewal reminders being sent via email only in future – not via post.

More information is available at [www.norwich.gov.uk/permits](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/permits)

## Cutting carbon: council reduces emissions by two-thirds

**O**ur latest figures show that the city council has reduced its annual carbon emissions by two-thirds, cutting seven million kilograms of CO<sub>2</sub> last year compared to 2008 – this is the equivalent emissions of driving a car 32 million miles every year!

How did we do it? Fitting 155 solar panels and an air source heat pump on City Hall, using 100% renewable energy suppliers, switching to more efficient lighting, installing solar

and battery storage at our Hurricane Way site, and more.

Cllr Emma Hampton, cabinet member for climate change said: “The council understands it has a key role to play in tackling the climate crisis, both in reducing our own impact, but also acting as a leader for the city.

“I’m proud of the ambitious actions we have taken as a council to cut carbon emissions and to see a two-thirds reduction is really encouraging.”



**Emma Hampton** – cabinet member for climate change

“I’m proud of the ambitious actions we have taken as a council to cut carbon emissions...”

Find out more about our work to tackle the climate crisis, and see what actions you could take, at [www.norwich.gov.uk/ClimateChange](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/ClimateChange)



# Aspirations for the council and our wonderful city

In recent weeks we have begun having conversations within the council and with a number of key organisations across the city about shaping our priorities over the next few years – so we get things right for our residents.

**T**hose conversations will be opened up to our residents and businesses this autumn. We want meaningful conversations with people who work for the council, councillors elected to represent their wards and people from across all our communities to help us plan for the future.

By doing this we can help to identify what's most important for our city and explore the council's role, along with its priorities, as one of the city's anchor organisations.

All of these conversations will go into creating a brand new five-year strategy for the council (usually called a 'Corporate Plan') which will

set out the council's direction and aspirations for the city from 2024-29.

At the time of going to print, we were finalising the details on those conversations with residents, businesses and our communities – with a plan to launch a public consultation throughout November via our engagement platform Get Talking Norwich.

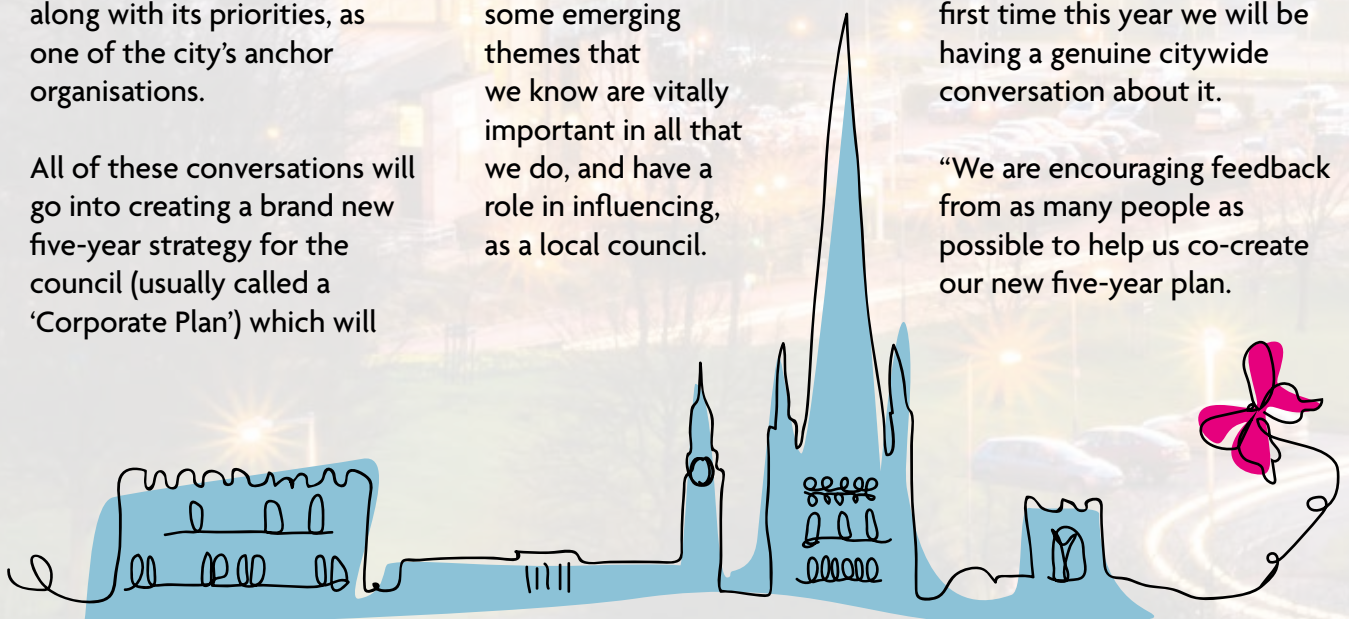
Views on our new strategy will likely encompass some emerging themes that we know are vitally important in all that we do, and have a role in influencing, as a local council.

These include housing, environment and economic development.

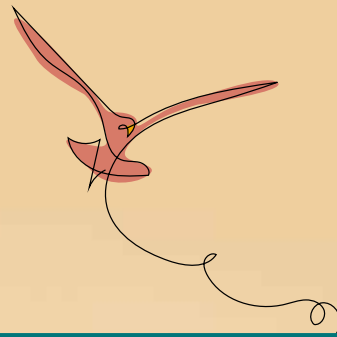
Mike Stonard, leader of the city council, said: "Norwich City Council has always been ambitious and inventive and has always challenged the norm by doing things differently.

"This is why we are completely changing our approach to the development of our new five-year strategy – for the first time this year we will be having a genuine citywide conversation about it.

"We are encouraging feedback from as many people as possible to help us co-create our new five-year plan.







**Mike Stonard** – leader of the council

“We are encouraging feedback from as many people as possible to help us co-create our new five-year plan. This will help us to identify how to target our resources on delivering practical results for people – something we are completely focused on here at the city council.”

“This will help us to identify how to target our resources to deliver practical results for people – something we are completely focused on here at the city council.”



Running more or less in tandem with the work we are doing on our new five-year strategy will be our budget survey.

We usually ask for views on this in December each year ahead of formally agreeing our budget the following February at full council.

Last year, we had a record-breaking number of 2,654 people respond to our budget survey on our proposals to successfully manage our finances.

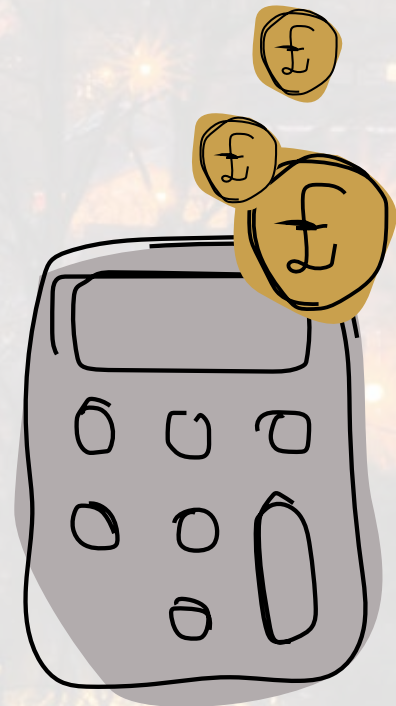
After work is complete on gathering views on our five-year strategy, all that valuable feedback will be used to help shape future

thinking and planning on our agreed commitments and priorities.

This will allow us to work towards our wider aspirations for the city, in collaboration with partners and other key institutions in Norwich, all of who have a part to play in shaping our city of the future so it's the very best it can be.

We are hoping that even more of you will take part in our 2024-25 budget survey so we know we are doing all the right things for our residents, businesses and communities in what are increasingly difficult times for so many.

Visit **Get Talking Norwich**  
**GetTalking.**  
**norwich.gov.uk**  
to find out more  
and to give your views  
on our new five-year  
strategy and budget  
proposals for 2024-25.





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## £3.6m upgrade for historic gem

**T**he Halls venue is one of the gems of our cultural life in Norwich and is set to undergo a £3.6m transformation.

Already a successful receiving house (place for touring theatre productions) and the largest concert venue in the city, the Grade I listed former medieval friary is a unique city centre heritage asset, owned and managed by the city council.

Thanks to funding via the Town Deal, upgrades planned for The Halls include improved audio/visual equipment and lighting, a major redesign to improve flow and accessibility, a revamp of the outside space, and an enhanced café and bar offer – all designed to enable Norwich to capitalise on its rapidly growing cultural economy.

Essential structural work will also be completed alongside

the refurbishment project. This includes work to the roof, stained glass windows and secondary glazing in St Andrew's Hall.

This is designed to create a high quality, multi-use venue as part of the city council's work and collaboration with cultural partners to open up more spaces, attract a greater variety of arts and culture, and increase the overall number of events – appealing to wider audiences and broadening the cultural activities on offer in Norwich.

To carry out the improvements, The Halls will be closed, reopening as early as possible in 2025. This means it is not available to hire as a venue from 1 January 2024, however all bookings up to 31 December 2023 will go ahead as normal. The Halls is also available for any new late bookings up to 31 December 2023, subject to availability.

The Halls, at St Andrews Plain, has been in public ownership since the Reformation in 1538 and the building is the largest most intact medieval friary remaining in England in secular use.

Its spaces include St Andrew's Hall (concerts, exhibitions, fairs, large-scale banquets), Blackfriars Hall (dinners, wedding ceremonies, concerts, meetings), The Crypt and Becket's Chapel (two smaller spaces for more intimate gatherings) and The Garth (a medieval courtyard for outdoor events). The Erpingham and Paston Rooms also provide additional areas for meetings and smaller events.

Further information on the history and use of The Halls, and the refurbishment project, can be found at [www.TheHallsNorwich.com](http://www.TheHallsNorwich.com)

# Cost of living help: 6 steps to take

The rising cost of living continues to affect many of us. Here are some things you could do to cut costs and find support:

## Check if you're eligible for financial support

Make sure you're receiving all the help that is available. You may even be eligible for financial support if you have a job.

Put your details into a calculator like [www.EntitledTo.co.uk](http://www.EntitledTo.co.uk) to quickly check.

## Find food support

Social supermarkets offer discounts on groceries and foodbanks are available for those that have a voucher.

Go to **page 23** of this magazine to find more about what support is on offer.

## Contact your energy supplier

If you are finding it difficult to pay your energy bills, contact your supplier – they have to help you come up with a solution. Many of the big energy firms provide grants to help people who are behind with payments.

You can also be put on your supplier's priority register. This is a free service, which offers customers extra support.

## Save on other bills

If you are claiming certain types of benefits, you may be able to apply for a social tariff for your broadband, landline or mobile which could save you £100s. Contact your provider to find out.

If bills for water are mounting up, call Anglian Water on 0800 232 1963 and they'll see if you could switch to a cheaper tariff or look for other ways to help.

## Get in touch with the city council

Let us know as soon as possible if you are struggling to pay your council tax, rent or any other money paid to the council – we will do everything we can to help.

We aim to ensure residents receive the support that they need to stay in their homes, and we are keen to work with people to help them to pay their debts, offering budgeting support and payment plans.

For free independent debt advice, use the cost of living link below.

## Talk to someone about your worries

Seeking help can be difficult – but there is almost always something that can make a difference. You could reach out to a family member, friend, a professional who supports you, or anyone else you feel able to talk to.

The Wellbeing Service can help with a range of mental health or emotional issues. Call 0300 123 1503 or go to [www.WellBeingNAndS.co.uk](http://www.WellBeingNAndS.co.uk)

The Samaritans are free to call round the clock on 116 123 if you're struggling to cope.

Find more information, advice and links to support at [www.norwich.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)





# The campaign to make Norwich a Living Wage City



**M**ajor local employers are continuing to campaign for fair pay in Norwich, to tackle in-work poverty, and provide workers with security during these challenging times.

Norwich was accredited as a Living Wage City in September 2022, with an ambition to substantially increase the number of jobs in Norwich paying a real Living Wage – this is an hourly rate of pay

calculated by the Living Wage Foundation based on what people need to live on to pay for costs including fuel, energy, rent and food.

The ‘Making Norwich A Living Wage City’ campaign recently celebrated its first anniversary. The campaign’s year one target for an additional 10 local employers to accredit has been achieved, bringing the total locally-headquartered accredited organisations to 79,

covering more than 6,000 members of staff.

Spearheading the campaign to make Norwich a Living Wage City is a broad range of local employers that want to do more to deliver fair pay for all. This includes Norwich City Council, Aviva, Flagship Group, Broadland Housing Association, small and medium-sized businesses, and representatives from the voluntary sector.

## WHY A REAL LIVING WAGE MATTERS

Francesca, apprentice at Norwich City Council, on the difference it has made for her:

“After working in retail for over fifteen years I was looking for a change – but starting over in a new career has always been something that I thought would be difficult financially. With a mortgage to pay and a family to support, going back into education was never an option, and whenever I’d looked into apprenticeships they always seemed to offer low wages.

I’ve really appreciated the security of being paid a real Living Wage while I do my apprenticeship at the city council, and I think it would make such a big difference if more opportunities like this were available to people in Norwich.”

## WHY MORE AND MORE BUSINESSES ARE SIGNING UP

A real Living Wage isn’t just good for employees – here’s what businesses are saying about paying the real Living Wage:

- 93% of businesses paying the real Living Wage say they have benefited
- 72% say it increased employee motivation and retention rates
- 86% say it improved their reputation

Interested in finding out more and becoming a Living Wage employer? Go to [www.LivingWage.org.uk](http://www.LivingWage.org.uk)

# Recycling at home this Christmas



It's not long now until households will be full of Christmas cards, wrapping paper and food packaging. We've put together a super easy guide on what you can and can't recycle this festive season and beyond.

## ✓ Yes please!

Please make sure all items are clean and dry. Items must be placed loose in the bin (no carrier bags!)

- Paper: including newspapers, white and coloured paper, greeting cards (no glitter please), envelopes, junk mail and wrapping paper (make sure you do the scrunch test)
- Cardboard: including boxes, packaging, carrier trays and corrugated cardboard
- Food and drink cartons
- Aluminium foil and trays, aluminium and steel tins, cans and aerosols
- Glass bottles and jar shaped food and drink containers

- Plastic bottles: such as those that contain drink and food, hygiene/beauty products, cleaning products, cooking oil and medication
- Plastic food tubs, pots and trays
- Advent calendars (separate the plastic insert, any foil and the cardboard box)

## ✗ No thanks!

- Nappies (the cardboard box can be recycled)
- Tissues and used kitchen wipes
- Soft plastics: including crisp packets, sweet wrappers, plastic bags, cling film and cellophane
- Hard plastics: toys, broken garden furniture, plant pots and polystyrene
- Sharps items: please dispose of any sharps responsibly
- Glass cookware and ovenware, drinking glasses or ceramics
- Cutlery, crockery, pots and pans

For Christmas and New Year collection dates, and more information on what you can recycle in Norwich, visit [www.norwich.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/recycling)

## Batteries and electrical items



Batteries can cause a fire if placed in your normal recycling or waste bin. Be safe and recycle them properly!

Place your small electrical items and household batteries in separate carrier bags and put them next to your refuse or recycling bin on collection day.

Please don't include light bulbs, fluorescents, car/ industrial batteries, or anything larger than 35x40cm.



Andrew Mitchell, chair of the Friends of Waterloo Park, and Councillor Adam Giles with this year's Green Flag Award.



## Our prize-winning parks

**T**hree of Norwich's most popular parks and open spaces have been recognised once again as some of the best in the UK as they receive national Green Flag Awards.

And this year, not only have Eaton Park, Waterloo Park and Mousehold Heath retained this international quality mark from Keep Britain Tidy, but Eaton and Waterloo Park have also been granted Green Heritage Site Accreditation for the management of their historic features as Grade II\* Listed parks.

Councillor Adam Giles, portfolio holder for parks and open spaces at Norwich City Council, which owns and runs the parks, said: "We are extremely proud of these and all the other great parks and open spaces in Norwich and couldn't be happier to receive these Green Flag Awards and new Green Heritage Site Accreditation.

"It recognises that we have some of the best and historically important green spaces in the country on offer here in Norwich – and we are keen to carry on and achieve this status for other parks in the city.

"This is a testament to all the hard work put in by the council, the Friends of the parks groups, who we work very closely with, and all those who use the city's parks."

The new courts at Heartsease Park



### Smashing news – two newly-refurbished tennis courts open

The tennis courts at Harford Park and Heartsease Park have been renovated thanks to investment from the Lawn Tennis Association and the government.

As well as these upgrades, a range of activities will be delivered, including weekly free tennis sessions for all ages and abilities.

Find more information on where you can play and book courts at [www.norwich.gov.uk/tennis](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/tennis)

# Your vote matters – how to make sure you

Voting is an important way you can have your say on the issues that matter, as you're choosing the people who represent you. To be able to vote in local or general elections, you will need to be registered. You will then be able to vote in the way that suits you best.

Choose which way suits you best:

**By post** – you will need to apply if it's your first time voting this way.

**In person (on polling day)** – Remember: you will need photo ID to do this.

**By proxy** – choosing a trusted person to cast your vote for you. **Remember: they will need their own photo ID.**

## Register to vote

You might already be registered to vote, especially if you've voted before.

To update your details – if your name, address or nationality has changed – or to register for the first time visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

## Annual canvass

Each year we will write to you to invite you to check your electoral registration details. Your letter or email will tell you if you need to respond or not and it's important you do so if it does.

Our electoral registration team visits properties where a reply is asked for and not received and can update household information.

## Photo ID

To vote in person you, or your proxy, will need government approved photo ID.

Don't worry if your ID has expired. You can still use it if the photo looks like you now.



## Applying for free voter ID

If you do not have government approved photo ID – or your name, nationality or appearance has changed – you can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate.

Remember: this is for voting in-person, you do not need photo ID for postal voting.

## Support for trans and non binary voters

Staff will not be checking the gender marker on ID.

If your appearance or name has been legally changed – such as if you have undergone gender confirmation surgery or a change in gender expression – you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (this will not have a gender marker on it).



## Who represents you currently?

Norwich is divided up into 13 areas, known as council wards. Each of these 13 wards has three councillors – a total of 39 councillors for the city.

The political makeup of the city is:

**Labour:** 23 councillors (also referred to as 'holding 23 seats')

**Green Party:** 13

**Liberal Democrats:** 3.

If you visit our website [www.norwich.gov.uk/MyNorwich](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/MyNorwich) and put your postcode into the search bar you can find who your local councillors are and, as democratically elected representatives, they are accountable to people living, and working, in their constituencies.

Councillors collectively make key decisions about council policies – the way services are provided, as well as setting the budget – the money the council has to deliver services.

The meetings that councillors have where they discuss these issues are usually held in public. They are also live-streamed on Norwich City Council's YouTube channel.

To see more about these, including the dates of upcoming meetings, what will be discussed, the reports they will consider and details of past decisions, visit the 'Committees and meetings' section of our website [www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk)



Your vote  
your voice

## Where your polling station is

It's important that for people who prefer to vote in person, our polling stations are easy to access.

We've been reviewing where these are and how easy they are to access, particularly for people who may be disabled.

Our recommendations are available on our website [www.norwich.gov.uk/PollingReview](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/PollingReview) and we welcome any comments by Thursday 16 November by emailing [elections@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:elections@norwich.gov.uk) or writing to:

Elections, Norwich City Council, City Hall, St Peters Street, NR2 1NH.



# Helping vulnerable residents

The housing system can be difficult to navigate and understand – particularly for anyone with complex health issues.

To smooth the way, the city council has joined with a partnership of local authorities, NHS and voluntary sector organisations, to help vulnerable residents improve their home environment. This could include helping them to find a home more suited to their needs.

Called INTERACT, the two-year pilot scheme, which has had 370 referrals since starting in April 2022, has been extended for another two years up to April 2026, with the council funding the additional work.

INTERACT works with colleagues from One Norwich Practices, Norfolk County Council, Voluntary Norfolk, Age UK Norwich and Norfolk Citizens Advice, to give co-ordinated

support to those whose homes – rented or privately-owned – are impacting negatively on their health and wellbeing.

It does this by:

- enabling vulnerable people to get back on top of managing their home or garden by exploring options of support with cleaning, decluttering or adapting their home
- providing wider support to increase people's income, build their social support networks and encourage resilience to future challenges
- reducing risk and demand on NHS services, adult social care and housing providers
- helping identify more suitable properties, with practical support to move house.

Everyone supported by INTERACT has one or more long-term health issues, with over half on long-term sickness



(Left) Rachel Omori, independent living manager, and (right) Amaryllis Macy, integrated projects co-ordinator.



Cate Oliver – cabinet member for wellbeing and culture

“The council is delighted to support the delivery of proactive care and support...”

or disability benefits. Referrals to the service are via professionals only, with contact made via a doctor, social worker, community matron or housing officer.

One service user, who was recently able to move into fresh accommodation with his family, said: “I’d been trying to navigate the housing system for two years. I couldn’t have done it without you – you’ve been such a big help. This has given me and the boys a fresh start and we are already happy here.”

Cllr Cate Oliver, the city council’s cabinet member for wellbeing and culture, said: “The early outcomes from the INTERACT pilot scheme demonstrate the potential of this dedicated team to have a real impact on the lives of people who are struggling with both mental and physical wellbeing due to their home environments not working well for them.

“The council is delighted to support the delivery of proactive care and support in an area where it is so badly needed and can do so much good.”



# Nourishing Norwich – find food support

## Discounted groceries at social supermarkets

Social supermarkets offer a wide range of affordable groceries to help people eat well. The voluntary organisations that run the shops work with local food producers and suppliers to provide products at a lower cost than traditional supermarkets.

Anyone is welcome to become a member and shop at their local social supermarket. You will need to provide your name and address, but there's no means-testing or other assessment.

The need for social supermarkets was first recognised through an action plan developed by the Food Alliance and members of The Norwich Food Network – community groups who are working together to alleviate food insecurity. This network was originally set up by the city council who continue to facilitate its vital work.

Last year, an empty shop unit owned by the city council was

identified as a suitable site for a shop, with The Feed taking it on to open its social supermarket on Hall Road, and The Russell Street Community Centre was leased to Equipping Nurturing Young People (ENYP) through the council's Community Asset Transfer policy. The council has also awarded £30,000 from its Covid-19 relief fund to support the setting up of the Earlham Nursery and Phoenix Centre supermarkets.

Here are the details of all the social supermarkets in Norwich:

- The Feed Social Supermarket – 165 Hall Road
- SOUL Foundation Social Supermarket – 4 Mason Road
- ENYP Social Supermarket – Russell Street Community Centre
- Phoenix Larder – The Phoenix Centre, Mile Cross
- St Giles Trust – St Saviour's Church, Magdalen St (**please note:** you need to be a client of St Giles Trust to use this social supermarket)
- Earlham Nursery School (opening in December)

## Food banks for emergency food

If you cannot afford to buy food and need emergency items, there are a number of food banks in Norwich that may be able to support you.

**Remember** – you will need to have a valid food bank voucher when you visit.

Find food bank locations and more information at [norwich.Foodbank.org.uk](http://norwich.Foodbank.org.uk) or call 0300 365 1123





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