



B I R C H A M T I M E S



In and around the Birchams

news@thebirchams.uk

April 2026 Issue 30

Parish Council Matters

The first item discussed at the March meeting was one that continues to concern many residents – speeding. This is a particular problem from Honey Hills in the north and into Bircham Tofts from the east. Council agreed that the Speed Watch team led by Hugh Kemsley would draw up a Village Highway Plan. This could include options to install SAM2 speed cameras, road markings and additional signs. Once the plan is agreed it will be very helpful with funding applications as the Parish Council's own funds are limited. Please share your concerns and ideas about speeding with the Speed Watch team so they can be incorporated in the plan.

A number of residents have asked for the war memorial in the centre of the village to be renovated. The memorial in the churchyard at Docking has been professionally restored and Council agreed for the same contractor to clean, repaint the letters in enamel, and repoint the stonework.

Finally, in an effort to improve its efficiency, Council agreed to reduce the number of meetings each year from nine to six. This will bring it into line with nearby councils and reduce the amount of time the Clerk spends administering meetings rather than getting things done. This will require the Chair to do a proper job and get matters completed within the allotted two hours – something he just managed this time!

So, the next meeting of the Council is on Wednesday May 20. This will be the Annual Parish Meeting starting at 7 pm and the Annual Parish Council Meeting will follow.

If you wish to discuss a Parish matter, please attend the meeting or write to the Clerk.

Email: clerk@bircham-pc.gov.uk

Post: Hall Farm, Sedgeford Road, Docking, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE31 8LJ

Website: bircham-pc.gov.uk

Newsletter Thoughts

Hope you are all bearing up, what with the constant bad news on a global front and increases in fuel prices at home. Do get in touch with the County Council if you think you qualify for a grant for heating oil (see page 3). Do also be cautious when and if you need to refill your tanks. Criminals are known to follow tankers and work out where deliveries are being made. Sadly, you're never more vulnerable than when you have a full fuel tank.

On to brighter things. We paid a visit to the new King's Lynn library – a resource for all of us and a free one at the point of contact. Do go and visit next time you are in Lynn, even if only to relax in a comfy chair in a sunny window... but there is so much more (see page 2). We also have all our regular features including a Scottish recipe and a report of what the rich dined on aboard Concorde, 50 years after its first commercial flight. On the subject of birds – the feathered variety – we visit the swallow, so summer must be near! And we point you in the direction of a local Victorian industry that involved the grinding of bones...

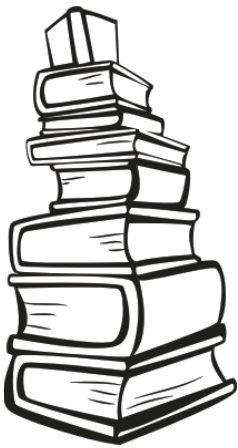
There are obviously many more entertaining events taking place at this time of the year as summer nears and – needs must – we cover the local election essentials and distill what we can anticipate once we become West Norfolk... and King's Lynn & West Norfolk no longer applies.

Do remember that the *Bircham Times* can be delivered to parishioners by email. You can email us at news@thebirchams.uk to request that (or for any other matter). In addition, we publish, in advance of the paper copy, on the 15th of every month on our website: www.thebirchams.uk



An Exploration of the New King's Lynn Library

Shortly after its opening we sent a crack team of investigators to the new King's Lynn library to have a nosey around to see what goes on there. The conclusion is that it is none too shabby! The exterior of the building divides opinion. Where once Argos stood we now have a square building with an irregular roofline. The cladding resembles the scales of an armadillo in grey, silver and Caramac colourways... other wags have described it as the "minecraft library". There are windows galore letting in light and conversely allowing deep thinkers to gaze out upon the town. The wide doorway, with a deco-styled "Library" signage, is welcoming with people passing more than two abreast, plenty of room for buggies and wheelchairs and the forecourt opens out generously.



Inside it's a vast space with three floors connected by some relatively narrow staircases that run through the centre of the building. Of course you don't need to use the stairs if you don't wish, since there is a lift to all floors. And those kiddie buggies we spoke about: well they are all tucked under the staircase on arrival so there is nothing to clutter the very wide open spaces here. The whole interior has adopted the Scandi vibe... it's all "restful" pale wood and pastel colours. The lighting seems excellent and natural lighting comes from those myriad windows, even at roof level. There are wide aisles between the bookshelves, which themselves are quite short in stature. All this airiness gives the impression that there are fewer books in here but the library itself has said there are 25% more books in the new library than in the old. On top of that there are plenty of reference and archival resources... you know the sort you see in the movies where the archivist twiddles the big wheel to move the shelving and the hero finds exactly the evidence they were looking for.

An anathema to those brought up in libraries, where you could be summarily stripped of your library card for speaking in anything but hushed tones, is the children's play area. Yes, you've got that right – near the entrance there is a crenellated castle (a nod to the old library perhaps?) play area with slide, Jeff Koons-style balloon dog seating and plenty of floor space for youngsters to sprawl and read or play or chat. The acoustics in the place manage to quieten the sound of the children and although the area was filled with them (it was half-term) the noise remained a background hum so no one was disturbed. Since it was half-term there were also plenty of students plugged into desks or taking advantage of private seating tucked away from the general to-ing and fro-ing. There's also free access to computers and wi-fi.

And next we have the community/business angle. There are loads of meeting rooms and areas for community groups like knit and natter or bereavement get-togethers and one assumes it won't be long before local businesses start to avail themselves of the facilities. There are lots of loos too!

As to the business of a lending library: the process of taking out a book appears to be automated but while we didn't get around to registering, nor choosing a book to practise the system with, it seems a touch-screen process with plenty of instructions for the nervous. There were also enough smiley-faced librarians around to suggest that you'd be given a helping hand to get going. Open Library access via your library card gives you access when the library is unstaffed (early mornings and on Sundays, for instance). It seems popular, with more than 8,500 visitors in the first week, 2,600 books being issued and 500 new borrowers registered.

It couldn't be more different from the crenellated, castle-like appearance of the old library in London Road and maybe that's the point. That library was fit for the Edwardians and not the modern era... we may all have to rethink a little what the purpose of a library actually is.



Chernobyl's Lasting Effects

Forty years ago on the night of April 25-26 the nuclear power reactor number 4 at Chernobyl near the Ukraine-Belarus border, though of course within the former USSR, entered a meltdown phase that saw two major explosions that destroyed the plant and sent a radioactive cloud of caesium-137 high into the air.

Chernobyl continued to leak radiation more than 17 days after the explosion. It is estimated that the explosion released about four hundred times more radioactive material into the atmosphere than both the 1945 bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined.

Tests carried out on allotments, such as the one in West London reported in the *Daily Mirror*, said that "the vegetables there were contaminated with radiation, which could not be eradicated by washing" [!]. The effects of the radiation were felt most severely in Wales, Scotland, and some northern English counties like Cumbria, which all experienced heavy rain as the radioactive cloud passed over them. Not until 2012 were restrictions finally lifted on sheep-farming in Cumbria and Wales. It is said that the acid rain deposited in Scotland is still in the mix at Loch Ness.

Following the Chernobyl accident in 1986, the UK Government developed a National Response Plan to ensure that any future similar emergency could be effectively managed. Under the plan the DESNZ (Dept of Energy Security & Net Zero) is the government department assigned to domestic and overseas nuclear response. Their RREMS department (Radiological Response and Emergency Management System) analyses radioactive levels around the UK on an hourly basis. Cornwall is generally considered the riskiest place to live since natural radiation leaks from the underlying bedrock which contains radon. Though Cornwall is also considered the safest place to live in the UK if you are trying to avoid a nuclear attack. There's always an upside!

Heating Oil Crisis Fund

There is a £3 million crisis fund to tide households over during this tricky period of rising heating oil prices. Help is available to those who are on low incomes, typically households with less than £35k. Savings and previously unpaid debts will be taken into account. Grants are expected to amount to £350 per household. Contact the County Council at www.norfolk.gov.uk/HeatingOil or on 0344 800 8020 to apply.

Shanty and Social Night

On Saturday June 6, at 7pm, the Castaway Crew, the all-female shanty group, will be singing at St Mary's Church, Great Bircham. Entry is free, all are welcome and a retiring collection will be taken. Audience members can bring their own snacks and drinks.

Dates for the Diary

Bircham Windmill From Mar 28
RAF Bircham Newton From Apr 5, 10-4pm
RAF Sculthorpe From Apr 5 10-4pm (afterwards 1st Sun in month til Nov)
Anmer Social Club Coffee, cake and chat, Mondays 10-12, Contact 07947 580555
Snettisham Park Open daily, 10-4pm
Houghton Hall & Grounds May 2 until Oct 4
 Walled garden from Apr 11
Sandringham house and gardens from Mar 28

Apr 16 Mini Museum Club Under-5s "Shops", King's Lynn Museum, 10-30-11.30am, 50p
Apr 17-19 Burnham Market Intl Horse Trials
Apr 17 Discover Bird Songs, Pensthorpe 10.30-4pm, £25
Apr 18 The Pantaloons' *The (Almost) Complete History of Britain*, West Acre Theatre, 3pm & 7.30pm, £20/£10
Apr 18-19 Norfolk Artisan Spring Fair, Fakenham Racecourse, 9.30-4pm, £6/£5
Apr 19 Norfolk Marathon/ Half-marathon, Cromer. From 9am
Apr 24 Dusk Chorus, Pensthorpe, 7-9.30pm, £16.95
Apr 25 Merchants Market, Tuesday Market Place, King's Lynn, 9-3pm
Apr 30-May 4 Circus Ginnett, The Walks, King's Lynn <https://www.ticketsource.com/circus-ginnett/circus-ginnett-at-kings-lynn/p-dlqja>
May 2 Farmers Market Creake Abbey, 9.30-1pm
May 2-4 Sandringham Food, Craft and Wood Festival, 10-6pm, £20/£7
May 3 Grand East Anglia Run, King's Lynn, from 9.30am. See page 10



Foodie Fare

CULLEN SKINK

This is a thick, smoked haddock stew from Cullen, a small coastal settlement to the east of Inverness in Scotland where fish have traditionally been landed. Thankfully "skink" means soup and doesn't refer to the speedy lizard in this case; instead, the main ingredient is smoked haddock, traditionally a "finnie or finnan haddie", a smoked haddock from Findhorn just along the coast. You don't have to go to all this trouble though, the cullen skink recipe below uses plain old smoked haddock, potato, onion and milk.

INGREDIENTS

250 g (9 oz) diced potatoes
salt and ground black pepper
30 g (1 oz) butter
2 large or 4 small smoked haddock fillets
1 finely chopped onion
300 ml (10 fl oz) full-fat milk

METHOD

1. Simmer the potatoes in salted water until softened, around 15 mins. Drain and set aside.
2. Poach the fish in a sauté pan with 300 ml (10 fl oz) of water and the onion for 8-10 mins. Flake the fish and set aside, reserving the poaching water.
3. Create a stock by using the leftover fish skin and bones, poaching water and onions. Continue to cook it for 15 mins before straining out the skin and bones.
4. Add the milk to the liquid, whisk in the softened potato and heat until a thick, stew-like consistency is achieved. Remove from the heat, add the fish flakes and any extra seasoning before serving with crusty bread, say.

Supersonic Dining Aboard Concorde

Concorde entered commercial service 50 years ago. The first supersonic service, run out of London-Heathrow and Paris Charles de Gaulle airports, commenced on January 21 that year. The UK Concorde's destination was Bahrain; Air France's Concorde set off for Rio de Janeiro, via Senegal. In a feat of precise coordination, befitting the joint Concorde enterprise, both set off at exactly 11.40 and 50 seconds.

"The supersonic menu served up to those on the £676.10 return journey: Champagne and caviar followed by breast of pheasant and, naturally, Concorde soufflé." Another correspondent remembered caviar canapés, smoked salmon, duck, fillet of steak followed by fresh strawberries (from Mexico, this was January after all). French pastry chef Gaston Lenôtre was enlisted to commemorate the occasion with a grand dessert. The chef impressed with his gâteau Concorde, a decadent cake made from chocolate mousse and chocolate meringue. Other luxury food items included lobster, guinea fowl, truffles and foie gras. Bear in mind that when the transatlantic service commenced that Concorde flew over breakfast time... so lobster for breakfast it just had to be! And you didn't have long to wolf down all that food since the most popular route – London to New York – took less than three and a half hours.

In its lifetime more than 2.5 million passengers flew supersonically, guzzling more than a million bottles of Champagne – Bollinger and Dom Pérignon. More than 212,000 pieces of Royal Doulton were used to serve up the fine spreads – a far cry from traditional airline plastic and tin trays.

The final breakfast featured an array of vintage Champagnes and Scottish smoked salmon with caviar. Luxurious mains, including prime fillet of beef, lamb cutlets, lobster fishcakes or a wild mushroom and truffle omelette, followed. The meal ended with Greek yogurt and fresh fruit, gourmet cheeses and a buttermilk pannacotta dessert. Yum!



Words on Birds

SWALLOW

"One swallow does not a summer make" is a well-known proverb that remarkably dates back to ancient Greece. Nonetheless we do tend to associate this beautiful bird and its distinctive twittering song as a sign that summer is finally with us. Their plumage is very striking – deep cobalt blue on the back and brilliant white underneath with long tail streamers giving it that classic "swallow-tail". This is all set off by a dark breast band and deep red throat and face. The barn swallow, to give its correct title, is a familiar sight in rural areas around farm buildings and outhouses, indeed almost anywhere that provides open access and a suitable place where they can build their mud nest, often returning to the exact same place they nested the previous year.

Gilbert White, the renowned 18th-century naturalist, was fascinated by the way swallows disappeared at the end of the summer, only to reappear the following spring. This was long before the marvel of bird migration was understood. White came up with the idea that the birds buried themselves in mud to survive the winter, no doubt prompted by seeing them collecting mud at small ponds to use in their nest. He even went as far as paying local boys to see if they could find swallows during the winter.

In reality these tiny birds perform an amazing feat of migration, travelling around 6,000 miles across vast deserts to winter in sub-Saharan Africa, only to make the return journey several months later, a journey becoming increasingly difficult as the Sahara Desert slowly gets larger. This, and other factors, means that sadly they are not as common as they once were and their numbers have been steadily dropping, down by around 40% in some areas. Reasons for this are varied: apart from that daunting migration, which is thought to currently claim about 67% of the population through sheer exhaustion, the use of insecticides and habitat loss results in fewer insects to feed on. And climate change means that what insects there are often now appear earlier than usual, which in turn means there is not always enough food available at the right time to feed young in the nest, with fatal consequences, a problem faced by many species these days.

In addition, modern buildings have far fewer suitable nesting places and even the loss of many ponds means there are fewer places where they can collect mud for their nests. It is worth mentioning that if you have somewhere suitable you can buy swallow "nest boxes" which might encourage them to breed. So clearly all is not well with this endearing little bird and you cannot help wondering how long it will be before one swallow really does a summer make.

Steve Rooke

Dates for the Diary

- May 3** RAF Bircham Newton
Open day, 10-4pm
- May 3** Fossil Hunting at
Hunstanton, 12-2pm, £15/£10
<https://www.fossilsgalore.com/booking-form/>
- May 4** Norfolk Race Day at
Fakenham Racecourse
- May 6-9, 13-16** *God of Carnage* by Yazmina Reza,
7pm (also **May 9, 16** at
3pm), West Acre Theatre,
£16/£10
- May 9** Hunstanton Fun Dog
Show, Glebe House School,
11am
- May 9-10** Narborough Bone
Mill Open Days, 11-4pm (see
page 7)
- May 16** Syderstone Spring
Fair, Amy Robsart Village
Hall, 10.30-2.30pm
- May 16** Bomber County Pipes
& Drums, Hunstanton
Bandstand, 10-4pm
- May 16** Plant Lovers' Day,
Creake Abbey, 10-4pm
- May 17** Classic Vehicle Day,
Stody Lodge Gardens, Holt
- May 23-Jun 7** Nar Valley Art
Trail, 14 artists open studios
from Blackborough End via
Grimston to Castle Acre
<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1235705991990750&set=pb.100066540818342.-2207520000>
- May 24** Hanse Festival King's
Lynn, 11-4.30pm
- May 24** Sandringham
Pageant of Motoring, 10-5pm,
£25/£18, under-15s free
- May 25-29** HALF TERM
- May 26-31** Rhododendrons
and azaleas at Stody Lodge
Gardens, Holt,
- May 30** Merchants Market,
Tuesday Market Place, King's
Lynn, 9-3pm
- May 30** Hunstanton Craft
Fair, Town Hall, 10-4pm
- May 30-31** Dabbling Duck
Beer Festival, Gt Massingham
- May 31** Ladies Day at
Fakenham Racecourse



What Must the Council Make of Us?

We know it is just a typo but some recent correspondence from the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk was addressed to a resident in Bircham Toffs!

Whether that is a reference to "Turnip Toffs" or merely that they reckon on there being a higher class, snooty set of individuals living there we don't know, but it raised a few chuckles...

St Mary's 100 Club Draw

APRIL RESULTS: Here are the latest results for 2026: 1st prize no. **93**; 2nd prize no. **20**. (1st prize wins £25; 2nd prize £10).

Many congratulations to the winners!

Sally

Bircham Banter

Next Banter session is on Thursday May 7 from 2.30 to 4pm in St Mary's, Great Bircham. Do come along and join with the regulars for chat, tea/coffee and cake, especially if you are new to the village. You'll be made very welcome!!

Pauline

Stanhoe & Barwick WI

Forthcoming events to be held at the Stanhoe Reading Room, Cross Lane, PE31 8PS at 2pm.

May 7 Simon Smith: Owl Rescue

Visitors are always welcome. Our charge is £5, which includes refreshments. Contact stanhoeandbarwickwi@gmail.com for more details.

Sky at Night

While we're engrossed with all the news about the Moon (especially the "dark side") and the exploits of the intrepid astronauts, here back on Earth we have two Full Moons to appreciate this coming month, May's first Full Moon (on the 1st) is the "Flower Moon" (very hippy), which just gives us time to squeeze in another Full Moon. As you all know by now, a second Full Moon in a month is known as a Blue Moon, regardless of when in the year it occurs. This one takes place on the 31st. And for those of us whose maths is up to snuff, you can see that there is no such thing as a February Blue Moon, not even in a leap year. Before the girls feel left out, there is an annual Pink Moon – it's the name given to the Full Moon in April... but that was on the 2nd.

April 22-23 is the best time to see the Lyrids meteor Showers. The Lyrids are named after the constellation Libra. The fireballs in the meteor showers are created by debris from Comet Thatcher (!), which takes about 415 years to orbit the Sun. And if you miss the Lyrids, then the Eta aquariids are close on the proverbial tail as they will be seen on May 5-6. And the origin comet for those meteors, well it's Halley's Comet.

JBB



Curl Up With a Good Book

We've had to hold over this feature for a month because of spacing concerns but we have a shortlist of books we'll be reviewing in the near future, including:



Mythos by Stephen Fry
The CIA Book Club by Charlie English
Scoop by Evelyn Waugh
The Names by Florence Knapp
The Names Heard Long Ago by Jonathan Wilson
Children of Radium by Joe Dunthorne
Good Pop Bad Pop by Jarvis Cocker

Football, Greek legend, music, history, and novels of course from yesterday and today. We aim to ring the changes.

Narborough Bone Mill

Now this is a place we didn't previously know existed! On the River Nar at Narborough there are the disused remains of an industrial mill where bones were once ground. The mill dates from the early 19th century when bones were shipped in to be ground to powder to be used as fertilizer. The mill owners basically took bones from local slaughterhouses and processed the animal remains. A no-doubt smelly and unpleasant business. King's Lynn also supplied "content" in the form of bones from the whaling industry as did Hamburg's "cemeteries". We won't ask!

Since Norfolk, then as now, was an agricultural hotbed the production of good fertilizer was paramount. A newspaper advertisement from October 1847 extolled the virtues of various fertilizers,

In again respectfully soliciting the attention of his Friends and Agriculturalists in general, to the great and acknowledged superiority of his corn manure over every other compost of the kind ever before in use [Where have we heard this kind of hyperbole before?]

ROBERT BROWN

begs to assure them that he intends sparing no pains or expense this autumn, in the preparation of this important article, and from the high celebrity in which it is so justly held by those who have already tested its invaluable nutritive qualities, he feels the utmost confidence in recommending it to the attention of all wheat growers in this district

Prices per ton

Ichaboe Guano as usual, in fine condition, £8 per ton

Peruvian Guano £10

Egyptian Pigeon Dung £9

Nitrate of Soda £16 10s

Bones and bone dust sulphuric acid [no price given]

Seems that the bone dust/sulphuric acid mix outranked even the exotically named Peruvian guano in efficacy. However, the industry at Narborough failed to last a century but the waterwheel, buildings and millstones have been preserved thanks to local efforts from volunteers and a lottery grant.

Visitors are invited to visit the site on the weekend of May 9-10, 11-4pm. The site can be found at PE32 1TE. There are further Heritage Open Days on September 19 & 20.

<https://www.bonemill.org.uk/>



MOBILE POST OFFICE

Scheduled stop at Bircham Social Club, Church Lane is as follows.

| | |
|----------|-------------|
| Monday | 10:45-11:30 |
| Tuesday | 10:45-11:30 |
| Thursday | 10:45-11:30 |
| Friday | 12:10-12:55 |

MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

Fridays Apr 24/May 22/June 19
Stops at:

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Monks Close | 15:15-15:35 |
| Village Shop | 15:45-16:00 |
| Social Club | 16:05-16:15 |
| Windmill Hill | 16:20-16:35 |

RECYCLING CENTRE

For pre-booking your visit at **any** Norfolk centre:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/62632/Norfolk-Recycling-Centre-bookings>

Or phone 0344 800 8020

Bircham Weather

March introduced the promise of spring while still retaining some remnants of winter and, although only eight days failed to reach 10°C, the average maximum temperature of 11.8°C comfortably exceeded February's 8.5°C, but the mean overnight minimum of 4.3°C was actually lower than the 4.9°C recorded in February.

The month began under a belt of high pressure that persisted until the 10th, providing mainly dry conditions but also producing marked temperature swings as light winds alternated between northerly and southerly directions. By way of illustration, the 5th saw a maximum of 16.2°C while the following day brought the coldest daytime conditions of the month with a high of just 7.7°C. One such southerly was responsible for transporting Sahara sand, which washed out during some evening rain on the 6th and deposited a layer of orange dust on anything that had been left outside! This settled spell at least delivered plentiful sunshine before Atlantic systems broke through on the 10th, introducing a more unsettled period. Hence a south-westerly gale picked up during the afternoon of the 12th that was accompanied by heavy rain during the evening, this providing a total of 10.4mm which proved to be the wettest day of the month. A further 9.2 mm then fell during the following night so this single episode accounted for 41% of the month's total rainfall. Pressure then built again from the 17th, bringing with it some further sunny days and producing the warmest day of the month on the 20th, when the temperature reached 17.7°C, before north-westerly winds introduced more seasonal conditions once more from the 24th.

Following a heavy hail shower on the evening of the 25th the sun returned the next day but the air temperature still only managed to reach 8.0°C and thereafter the highest temperature before the final day was just 11.3°C. Showers were never far away, with a clap of thunder added during the evening of the 29th, before calmer conditions were restored for the last day of the month. Overall, there were 17 days without recorded rainfall in a month that produced a total of 48mm, which is close to the long-term March average. Temperatures were around the seasonal norm too, with just one air frost recorded during the night of the 22nd when the temperature fell to -0.6°C.

Bryan

BUS 33/33A

To Hunstanton (from King's Head): Mon-Fri 07:36 10:36 13:36 17:16 (to Heacham); Sat 8:21 10:36 13:36 15:41

Return from Stand A Bus Station

To Lynn (from Bircham Stores): Mon-Fri

07:17 09:23 12:23 15:43; Sat 09:23 12:23 17:08

Return from Stand E Bus Station

GREAT MASSINGHAM AREA COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME

Offering a reliable door-to-door car service, 7 days a week for anyone without personal transport. Book on 01485 520823

Please give at least 2 days' notice



Hazardous Waste Days are Back

Dates have just been published for a new round of Hazardous Waste Days, as follows:

King's Lynn Recycling centre Friday–Saturday April 24-25, 8-4pm

Dereham Friday–Saturday May 15-16, 8-4pm

Hempton (ie Fakenham) Friday–Saturday May 29-30, 8-4pm

Advance booking, opening eight days beforehand, is needed. See page 8 for contact details.

Local Government Reorganisation (Part II)

Back in December's issue we described a little how the local tiers of government work here in Norfolk and what the options were that were under discussion. On March 25 the option favoured by most of the existing borough councils – that of having three new councils to replace the Norfolk County and local borough councils – was accepted by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, Steve Reed.

It means a new West Norfolk unitary council, as well as an East Norfolk council and a Greater Norwich council. Not surprisingly, what once was King's Lynn & West Norfolk will fall into West Norfolk's orbit as well as much of the south of the county as far as Thetford. These divisions are somewhat arbitrary of course but the reasoning is that here the region is based on county/market towns: Lynn, Dereham, Swaffham, Downham Market, Hunstanton etc; while the East Norfolk borough is considered "coastal", running from Wells to Yarmouth and then covering the border land by Suffolk. Greater Norwich is more "urban" in nature. We're expected to have 72 new councillors here in West Norfolk though no doubt there will be some familiar faces.

As ever when land is carved up there are disagreements and many in our neighbouring town of Fakenham are somewhat nonplussed to find themselves in East Norfolk!, with very little to do with the coast. There are always winners and losers. This is certainly going to be true of council tax harmonisation where currently the lowest tax Band D is in the former Breckland (£118), with King's Lynn at mid (£152) and South Norfolk (£175), currently the highest in the entire county. As we said, there will be winners and losers.

The timetable for change sees voting for the existing county council in May (see below). This council will only sit for a year before the changes begin to be implemented. The existing borough and county council will be abolished on April 1, 2028. In the meantime, voting for the new councils is anticipated to take place next spring, also in May.

Local Elections on May 7

They're back on again (!), so you'll be entitled to vote in person at the May 7 County Council election as long as you are on the electoral register and bring along a piece of photo ID: think passport, driving licence, bus pass...

You can of course vote by post instead (not as well as) but you need to apply by April 21 and then you'll receive a pack of instructions. The other way to vote is to appoint a proxy (someone who will vote as you have instructed them). The deadline for applying for this method is April 28. Full instructions are available at: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id>

https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20090/elections_and_voting/456/upcoming_elections is where you can find out who is standing here and which political party (if any) they are standing for. Expect electoral literature to be winging its way to you very shortly.





King's Lynn Speedway Stars

The Stars start the season once more in the Premiership alongside five other teams. Season tickets will cover 12 official Stars home fixtures (10 Premiership, 2 KOC group stage). Prices for 2026 are: Adults £275; Concessions/Students £253; Children (12-15) £50

Racenight admission prices for 2026 are: Adults £25; Concessions/Students (with valid card) £23; Children (12-15) £5/Children (Under 12) free when accompanied by an adult

The programme for the season is as follows:

Apr 20 Northampton
Apr 27 Sheffield
May 11 Belle Vue
May 18 Ipswich
Jun 1 Leicester
Jun 15 Northampton
Jun 22 Leicester
Jul 6 Northampton
July 20 Belle Vue
Aug 3 Sheffield
Aug 24 Ipswich

Crazy Golf

Crazy golf, mini golf, call it what you will... but there are plenty of opportunities to play this summer: in the Walks in King's Lynn, at the seaside at Hunstanton and in the royal parkland at Sandringham to name but three.

In King's Lynn the 12-hole crazy golf course facilities are available at the Café In The Park at 10am on weekdays during local school holidays and from 9am every weekend until the end of October. Adults £1.50/Juniors at £1.

In Hunstanton it's also a 12-hole course that will cost you £4.20 for adults and £3.50 for juniors.

At Sandringham there is an 18-hole mini golf course. Choose a tee slot, every 5 minutes from 10am–4pm. Max 4 people per time slot. Mini golf is available during weekends and school holidays until the autumn, aside from closures between July 22-26, and August 20-23 inclusive.

Grand East Anglia Run

On Sunday May 3 there are expected to be thousands of runners taking part in the Grand East Anglia Run (GEAR) around the roads of King's Lynn, following a route through the town, alongside the Great Ouse and through The Walks. It is 10km distance. You'll need to part with a booking fee to compete and be over 15 years old but upon completion you'll get a winner's medal and a finisher's goody bag. If not running you can still attend and cheer on the brave souls. From 9.30am, starting at Tuesday Market Place.

There's also a Mini Gear race too, of 1.9km in length starting at 11.45am at Tuesday Market Place. A fun family event, the minimum age is 6 years in this instance.

<https://www.runforall.com/events/10k/gear-10k/>