

District Cllrs report June 24 update

Blakeney Surgery

Holt Medical Practice is working with Blakeney Parish Council to find an alternate venue for medicines collection. As you know, we think this is scant mitigation for our loss of face to face appointments. We have written to the Secretary of State for Health to ask for her intervention against the closure but this is obviously delayed by the election.

Poor mobile coverage

I've met with Vodafone in the first instance to talk about mobile coverage in the hope we can reduce mobile 'not spots'. The landscape is very complicated with Virgin media/02 building the majority of masts in this area; with 3 and ee building a few of their own. Sky, Asda, and Vodafone uses 02 network and most of the rest ee...you can see the problem. Providers are required to reach 88% geographic coverage nationally of 4G by June 24, 95% by 2027. Of course, this can be achieved in more urban areas, but it certainly isn't the case here. Vodafone have done some upgrades recently in our area, but it doesn't seem to have improved service, and when this was pointed out I was told there are no further plans for this area which would improve coverage. This may possibly be because a mast costs £250k and has a maximum reach of 5k. I'm trying to get hold of the other operators but so far without success. I think we need an MP to push this further.

Dentistry

An update on dentistry: There are now 450 urgent appointments a week in Norfolk available for patients with dental pain. These are bookable via 111 and I encourage you to spread the word as I don't think it's widely known. The nearest urgent clinic for us is Fakenham. The Integrated Health Board has increased the amount paid to dentists by a small amount in the hope of retaining NHS dental practices and a Dental Bus for remote and rural areas is being co-commissioned with Cambridge, but I understand it's still a work in progress. New out of hours services are supposedly available from December. There is work expanding access for children's dentistry by March 2025.

Second homes council tax

NNDC hopes to retain 50% of the premium on second homes council tax though it is still in discussion. Originally this was to be ring fenced for affordable housing but that hasn't yet been finalised.

Free decarbonisation plans for businesses

NNDC can offer small and medium sized businesses a free decarbonisation plan and support to reduce their carbon footprint. This is funded by the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund. If you're interested, please contact netzeronorfolk@groundwork.org.uk.