

Apprenticeships: I am delighted to offer the following information – delighted because of the many young people who I know have benefitted from apprenticeships. Hopefully many more will have the opportunity in the future so please read below and share with any young people or organisations who could participate.

Details of Apprenticeships in Norfolk, including opportunities now open for applications, can be found on the Apprenticeships Norfolk website at <https://apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org/>
Opportunities for Employers: Employing an Apprentice does not only give apprentices an opportunity to learn new skills but it is also a rewarding option for employers. Government incentives of up to £3,000 are available until 31st March 2021 and Apprenticeships Norfolk are offering additional £1,000 incentives for non-levy businesses in Norfolk to recruit a young apprentice. Further information is available at <https://apprenticeshipsnorfolk.org/recruit-retain-reward>.

Elections: This time the elections are for County Councillors and the Police & Crime Commissioner. Also where applicable there are bi-elections for Town, Parish, District councillors (this is where a position has fallen vacant during the four year term of office).

May 2021 local polls statement and delivery plan – On 8 February, the Minister for the Constitution, Rt Hon Chloe Smith MP, published a [Written Ministerial Statement](https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-02-08/hcws773) (<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-02-08/hcws773>) in Parliament on the Government's plans to proceed with the local elections on 6 May 2021

The Minister also announced the publication of a [delivery plan](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/may-2021-polls-delivery-plan/may-2021-polls-delivery-plan) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/may-2021-polls-delivery-plan/may-2021-polls-delivery-plan>) for the May elections - addressing public health and social distancing, nominations and campaigning, voting, delivery of elections. An estimated £92 million of funding will be provided to councils for the elections – to include £31 million to directly address costs associated with making the elections COVID-secure.

VOTING in the May 2021 elections : Norwich North MP Chloe Smith, whose role as minister of state for the constitution and devolution includes elections, previously, [told the House of Commons a "high bar" would need to be crossed for the government to delay the elections.](#) It would now take an 'extraordinary high bar' but whether or not anything delays the elections best be prepared. So for the sake of your health and that of staff at the polling stations a postal vote seems a very good idea. Apply for a postal vote from NNDC – postalvotes@north-norfolk.gov.uk or 01263 513811 (press 5).

Young People & Mental Health: Norfolk County Council's 'This is how... #wevegotthis' campaign for young people's mental health, promotes improving their mental health and wellbeing. For more details about the campaign go to: <http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/feelgood>

Advice and Support for Bereaved Families: I was undecided as to whether to offer the following information but then recalled the times I would have found it helpful so here goes:

To book a death registration appointment call Norfolk County Council Registration Offices on 0344 800 8020. Further information about this service can be found on this link: [Deaths - Norfolk County Council](#)

Further information about support including links to specialist organisations can be found here: [Bereavement support - Norfolk County Council](#)

COVID-19 Information: Keep these websites for future reference since they are kept up to date:

Information on the national tiers is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

www.norfolk.gov.uk/coronavirus: this site includes local services as well as the latest regulations for Norfolk and reference to many if not all of the government schemes

www.gov.uk/coronavirus: all the government schemes are to be found on this site

www.nhs.uk/coronavirus; separate site if required but linked with the government site.

Light Relief: You may have read of my hope to persuade spouse to keep the Christmas lights on past the deadline - we compromised. The lights in the front of the house were packed away but three of the 'Christmas' trees were moved to the conservatory and remain lit as year round 'decorative lighting'.

Again I would like to express my admiration of those who continue to help others in so many ways and not only regarding Covid-19 but the weather. Many who help do so without anyone knowing about their good works – so thank you.

All good wishes

Marie

County Cllr Dr Marie Strong

Wells Division

Barshams & Houghton St Giles, Binham with Cockthorpe, Blakeney, Brinton with Sharrington, Field Dalling & Saxlingham, Glandford with Letheringsett, Great Snoring, Great & Little Walsingham, Hindringham, Holkham, Langham, Morston, Sculthorpe, Stiffkey, Stody with Hunworth, Thornage & Little Thornage, Warham, Wells-next-the-Sea, Wighton, Wiveton