

News from County Councillor Dr Marie Strong, Wells Division

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Dear Councillors/Friends

Postal Voting: NNDC is taking great safety care at polling stations for the 6 May elections but for extra care of your health and that of polling station staff consider a postal vote go to postalvotes@north-norfolk.gov.uk or 01263 513811. Deadline for postal votes 20 April, for proxy votes 27 April. If COVID illness will interfere with your ability to vote check the website or phone number shown above.

Project Gigabit: For those properties still struggling to obtain satisfactory broadband: For me this is the most exciting news regarding broadband since you supported me in the 'Better Broadband for Norfolk' project. Norfolk is listed amongst the first counties to benefit from this new tranche of funding for gigabit fibre deployment. The project will target properties that are not expected to benefit from suppliers own commercial investment in Gigabit capable infrastructure, thought to be around 35% of Norfolk properties. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-new-5bn-project-gigabit>

Remote meetings: There is a one-day hearing on Wednesday 21 April for the court to determine the Hertfordshire County Council, Lawyers in Local Government, and the Association of Democratic Services Officers application for a declaration in relation to councils already having powers needed to hold remote meetings. This is in response to the Government's announcement that usage of remote council meetings across the local government sector cannot be extended. (I wonder if I have it wrong that the Government, as opposed to local government, is continuing with remote meetings.)

Norfolk Autism Partnership Board's website: For a better understanding of Autism, Norfolk County Council has co-produced, designed, and created an [Autism Awareness e-learning programme](https://www.norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk/autism-awareness/) with the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation and the Norfolk All Age Autism Partnership Board. The eLearning was developed to be shared to spread awareness and understanding around Norfolk and beyond. (<https://www.norfolkautismpartnership.org.uk/autism-awareness/>)

Libraries Re-opening

Holt, Fakenham and Wells libraries are open with a phased reopening starting with a click and collect style service. Safety measures are in place at each location. Returned books quarantined minimum 72 hours. Further details inc opening hours www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries or 01603 774777

COVID-19 Information: With so many changes having taken place best to check the following websites which, as you will know, are reliable and will have been updated:

Information on the government's road map out of lockdown 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.

As always my admiration of those who are helping others, often without acknowledgement – so from me to you - thank you.

And thank you for all the help you have given me in carrying out my role.

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