

**News from Norfolk County Councillor Dr Marie Strong
Wells Division (Glaven, Priory and Walsingham Wards)**
marie.strong@norfolk.gov.uk or 07920 286 597

Devolution for Norfolk and Suffolk: It has been decided to engage all of Norfolk's and Suffolk's residents in a consultation on devolution from 4 July to 19 August. The outcome of the consultation will be submitted to the new Secretary of State in early September to consider whether to proceed with the establishment of a Mayoral Combined Authority for the two counties. If you would like more information on what is on offer in terms of power and money please go to eastangliadevo.co.uk. You can also listen to the debate which took place on Monday 27 June with 74 of Norfolk's 84 councillors. The debate and therefore the recording is lengthy you can 'skip' through sections unrelated to devolution and focus on councillors' support and also concerns. The latter include ministerial changes; a mayor, deputy mayor and 'cabinet' creating a third tier of local government. To listen go to NCC Committees Page on Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/user8603574>

Cutting Rural Grass Verges: A previous decision to reduce the frequency of rural verge cutting on straight roads to every other year has been reversed. This means there will be a full cut of rural grass verges on bends, straight sections of roads and at road junctions rather than just trimming verges at road bends and junctions. The work will take place during the scheduled second annual grass cutting in July and August. At this time of the year the wild flowers have flowered and seeded and it is believed birds will no longer be nesting by the roadside. An evaluation of cutting will take place before the start of the new grass cutting season next year.

Parish Partnership: I am repeating details regarding this very useful partnership because there is a long list of parishes which have not applied in the past. It is the scheme whereby a town or parish council puts forward an application for a project and the county matches the funding. The SAM2 speed warning system has been popular and other ideas include trods (simple footway), small lengths of formal footways, improved crossing facilities, street furniture (cycle racks/benches at bus stops), improvements to Public rights of Way. As well as councils getting their thinking caps on there is no reason why residents could not put ideas to their parish council. The 2016/17 successful schemes are now underway and invitations to make bids for 2017/18 have been issued with a bid deadline of December with approvals next March.

Summer arrived in time for the Queen's birthday celebrations – no need to go to London with all the lovely events around our division (and I am sure elsewhere). Congratulations to everyone for all their efforts in bringing their communities together and a big thank you from those who like me just turned up and had a great time.