

Big boost for sport

Sports enthusiasts in the eastern part of South Norfolk are celebrating some really good news. A major new sports centre is to be built, which the general public will have lots of opportunity to use.

Framingham Earl High School has been successful in a bid for £600,000 of lottery cash from the New Opportunities Fund cash to provide the new sports centre on the school campus. This fits well with the school's recently gained status as a specialist sports college. The money is only enough to build a sports hall big enough for two badminton courts. However, South Norfolk Council have added a further £365,000 to the project, which will let the school build a larger, four-court, hall. In return, the County Council, as the Local Education Authority, will guarantee extensive public use of the centre out of school hours.

The Poringland area has suffered from a lack of adequate sports facilities for many years. This announcement brings to an end the long campaign to correct this shortage. Local residents are delighted. As Liberal Democrat district councillor, Jane Walker, commented, "This is great news. Everybody who has contributed to the campaign is to be congratulated." The school will provide day-to-day management of the sports centre, but a joint steering group will include local community representatives. The centre should be completed next year.



Local councillors Dave Gudgeon and Jane Walker inspect plans for the new hall

Council shake up produces savings

A major shake up of senior management at South Norfolk Council will produce annual savings of £75,000. Cutting the number of chief officers by two will cut bureaucracy and improve performance.

The Council has had the same management structure since the council was formed nearly 30 years ago. Most other councils have recognised that the changing role of local government requires a new approach. The Lib Dems running the council have decided that it is time South Norfolk caught up and a big reorganization is under way.

Two Corporate Directors are replacing the four current Chief Officers with further changes at the next level down. This will save two posts and more than £75,000 per year. The Council has a proud record of efficient quality services but local government is changing. Much more emphasis is now placed on community leadership and managing performance. The changes will mean less



bureaucracy and better joined-up management.

Most of South Norfolk's neighbouring councils, including those currently controlled by the Conservatives, have already switched to this form of management. Surprisingly, at the council meeting where this was decided all the Tory councillors present voted against the change and against the savings. They even called for a recorded vote. Their claim to be the party of good management and lower costs looks a bit out of place.

Parking chaos

An expanding South Norfolk village is facing car-parking chaos as residents try to use their shops and takeaways. The local Lib Dem team is fighting on behalf of worried residents.

There has been a huge increase in car use in Hethersett as the village has grown in size over the last 20 years. Use of the local one-stop shop and takeaways in Great Melton Road, which provide valuable amenities for residents, has also increased but parking near them has become very difficult at peak hours. Most of the limited off-street parking is inside the footway, causing problems for pedestrians.

Local Lib Dems are pressing for action. Last year Councillor Jackie Sutton persuaded the district council to carry out a survey that confirmed the shortage of spaces. Now she is pressing for a proper car park to be built. "The current situation is just not acceptable," she said, "It's very unsafe for pedestrians, particularly at night." She recently organised a meeting of interested parties and will be working with colleagues to find a solution.



Councillor Jackie Sutton (right) and concerned local pensioner Heather Williamson experience the hazards caused by parking in Hethersett

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