**REPORT TO PARISHES AND OTHERS UPPER WENSUM WARD FEB 2025**

January has been extremely busy this year and February is developing in the same way. I have been working with our MP George Freeman and Terry Jermy the new Labour MP for the South of Breckland regarding domestic flooding issues in our area as a whole. Flooding seems to be getting worse and predictions are not good for the future, like many of you I live in a flood prone location, and recently came within an inch or so of water indoors so I do sympathise with those under threat. I have been the Breckland rep on the Norfolk Rivers Inland Drainage Board for over 22 years and have never had so many cases come up They do not make the news as they are mostly just one or two homes at a time, like mine, but they are a tremendous impact on the individual. It is to this end that I have attached my report on the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance meeting last week to this note and as a couple have asked will also send you next week my Breckland report on the Association of Drainage Authorities annual meeting I attended this week (expect that in 2-3 days).

**Flooding** Hotline call 0344 800 8013 to **report flooding** anywhere in **Norfolk**. This is a single 24/7 reporting line.

At Breckland I am dealing with individuals enquiries as usual for a ward member including planning matters and missed bins which always top the list. I normally attend several Breckland meetings each month and have a policy of responding to emails promptly so please feel free to direct queries to my Breckland email.

Matters in process at the moment include the Breckland Budget which will be set next week (along with all your precept demands) That meeting will be live on youtube or can be watched later. The Breckland boundaries review, although with devolution we may not be here after 2027. Devolution itself which seems even closer that before, although we have been faced with this before, being political, which I do try not to be between elections, this is very much a labour part aim and policy to separate the people from the power in government. In Norfolk two tier government does work well, and in my opinion Districts are working better that County. If the proposals we have seen are introduced we will have another type or two tier in my opinion, and considerably more expensive. At the moment Breckland has the lowest council tax, so just balancing will mean we all will have bigger bills without the more costly mayoral//unity system. You will all make up your minds of course, and to help in this at least one session will be held for Parish Councils within the Breckland office.

Parishes struggling with the 'clunky' planning portal please talk to me or use the generic planning email at Breckland. I am told to expect a 'soon' resolution to it.

As an individual I do not support the cancellation of the County Council elections in May. I believe it is a diminution of democracy and whilst some conservatives on County supported it others did not. It is definitely a labour party move to increase their influence in the shires and I have told senior members that is my opinion.

END

**On 31st January** I attended the Norfolk Flood and Drought Conference at County Hall representing the villages of Upper Wensum Ward and Breckland. I am sure some of you tuned into the live broadcast but for those who were not able to the gist of what happened is below and I am happy to seek to answer questions.

For me representing local people at these events enables a direct contact with senior people from different agencies on specific local matters which on this day including problems along the Wensum, protecting the Tud, various causes of flooding across the Ward.

Breckland issues including funding protection actions from many causes, the drainage levy and of course an extension of ward matters.

National issues such as how to react to huge increases in rates in some areas and how we can manage, and how other countries manage these.

**WITHIN THE CONFERENCE THESE MATTERS WERE DISCUSSED**

**DEFRA** spoke about ‘looking at rivers natural flow management’

**WRE**spoke about ‘joint actions on the Yare’

**WMA** spoke about ‘revision of the demaining project’

**NCC** (leader) spoke about ‘diversity of responsibility and sharing work’

**ADA**(CEO) spoke on ‘demaining and described how to keep it simple’

**UEA** spoke about ‘greater global warming and Imagination should be the 5th aim’

**DDC\*** spoke about ‘described Netherlands attitude and priorities - ensuring awareness is the key

**NCC** ‘we need information and must all share

**DEFRA**‘helping people with insurance and living with water’

**ADA** ‘described the Somerset settlement of 1.5% public taxation’

**ADA**‘dealing with silt, thinking globally, soil management, allowing buffer strips’

**NCC** ‘discussion regarding building reservoirs’

**PROPOSED ACTIONS TO FOLLOW AND REPORT ON AT NEXT YEARS MEETING**

‘Under certain circumstances land owners can extract a spot change in flood management with a .[gov.uk](https://apps.talktalk.co.uk/appsuite/?check_cookie=1) link to be sent to all parties’

‘Some thought enforcement of riparian responsibilities is the key’

‘Some thought two way information channels should be opened’

**AW**‘committed a big spend on resilience with Norfolk being The Centre of Excellence’

**George Freeman** MP asked for

‘Circulation of the maps shown’

‘Forecast of when and where housing’

‘List of all Norfolk organisations’

‘List of all local action groups’

‘Draft plan for Norfolk including priorities’

*\*Dutch Delta Commissioner*