**County Councillor Eric Vardy**

**July 2023 Report**

**500 Norfolk locations join the Refill Revolution and offer free water refills, and more**

Norfolk residents and visitors can now top up their reusable water bottles for free at more than 500 locations across the county. Many locations also refill reusable coffee cups, lunch containers and groceries too.

Norfolk County Council has joined the award-winning Refill campaign which connects people to places they can eat, drink and shop without the pointless packaging. By downloading the free Refill app it’s possible to discover the hundreds of locations across Norfolk where they can reuse and refill in their local area.

Packaging from take-away food and drinks is a major threat in the fight against plastic pollution and items like coffee cups and take-away containers are consistently in the top 10 items found on beaches around the world.

By choosing reusable products we can reduce waste and ultimately reduce our carbon footprint and help us take one step closer to building a more sustainable and resilient Norfolk.

Norfolk County Council is on a mission to make living with less plastic easier and we want to see a world where everyone can choose to reuse wherever they shop, eat and drink. We’ve already proven that Refill has the power to create a wave of change needed to keep plastic bottles out of our ocean. But we knew the problem was much bigger than plastic bottles!

For any local businesses wanting to get involved, contact [info@waste.norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:info@waste.norfolk.gov.uk). You can also add your business on the app yourself for free.

**Norfolk County Council Top Priorities for the next year.**

 Norfolk County Council have agreed the council’s top priorities for the next year, known as the corporate delivery plan. The report highlights how the council provides, for a population of 914,039 in an area of 2,079 square miles, including:

• £1.3 million per day on adult social care for 19,000 people

• Support for 1,150 children in care and 13 special schools

• 6,200 miles of road, 2,800 miles of footway and cycleway, and 2,400 miles of trails and footpaths

• 47 libraries and 10 museums

• 42 fire stations

• 20 recycling and waste centres and 15 re-use shops

**So the council’s priorities for the next year are:**

• A vibrant, sustainable economy, including £1.5 million of pilot projects through the Norfolk Investment Framework, completion of the Great Yarmouth operations and maintenance campus and delivering fibre broadband to 8,821 premises by next year.

• Better opportunities for children and young people, including plans for two more special schools, creation of a new learning strategy and working with the NHS on multi-agency, community based support for children, young people and families.

• Healthy, fulfilling and independent lives, including 12 more independent living units for people with complex needs, using digital technology to identify people who could benefit from earlier help and completion of the Great Yarmouth multi-user hub by spring next year.

• Stronger, engaged and inclusive communities, including work with the voluntary sector on a new volunteering strategy, delivering, with partners, the hardship support programme and running public health campaigns through libraries.

• A greener, more resilient future, including starting to implement the council’s climate change strategy, supporting electric buses and electric vehicle charging points and consideration of new recycling centres in the Sheringham, Wymondham, Long Stratton and North Walsham

**New hosts sought for Ukrainian families across Norfolk**

Norfolk County Council are looking for new hosts to join the hundreds of other Norfolk residents who have opened their homes and provided accommodation for a family or individuals from Ukraine.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched in March 2022 to provide support to Ukraine following the Russian invasion in February 2022. The war in Ukraine has now entered its second year, and the need for support and compassion for those displaced by the conflict has not changed. We are still in need of people to host Ukrainian families; especially for guests who have been in Norfolk for a while now and are needing to move for employment, education or other reasons.

A range of ongoing support is on offer for hosts, including a monthly thank you payment of £500. Hosts also get support with all safeguarding and accommodation checks from Norfolk County Council, alongside our district, borough, city councils and voluntary sector partners. Information packs are available to help hosts with the settling-in period and provide information on the practical steps that guests will need help with, like setting up a bank account and finding work.

Throughout the time guests live with hosts, we also conduct welfare visits to support everyone to help make the hosting arrangement successful and rewarding. Once guests are ready to move on, either into their own accommodation or to return to Ukraine, we have a range of practical support and services available to help this

Do you have a spare room or rooms and can offer a safe place to stay to those fleeing the war in Ukraine? Join hundreds of other hosts across the county and register your interest now at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/ukrainehost](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/safety/migrants-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/ukraine/become-a-homes-for-ukraine-sponsor)

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| **Reuse donations scoop £22k for Big C charity** |
| **Norfolk residents and recycling centre staff have been thanked for a significant £22,177 donation to Big C charity.**  Norfolk’s popular chain of reuse shops at 15 recycling centres help stop unwanted goods being thrown away, and sell the good quality items at bargain car boot prices. A cut of the proceeds is donated to a chosen charity, which since April 2022 is Big C.  As the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste, I said: “I’d like to thank everyone who has donated and bought bargains over the past year, more than ever before, and for the dedicated site staff who have made it possible for the reuse shops to go from strength to strength. We’re proud that satisfaction with our sites is up to 85% with people particularly pleased with how clean and easy to use our recycling centres are.  “Reuse is even better than recycling as it gives items a new home, cutting waste and transport impacts by preventing the need for production of new products. We showcased the fantastic work of the reuse shops as part the launch of our climate strategy yesterday. If you’ve not visited one of our reuse shops do drop by as you never know what you may find!  In the 12 months between April 2022 and March 2023 the reuse shops raised £22,177 for the Big C cancer charity, prevented 1333 tonnes from materials of being thrown away and saved an estimated 1270 tonnes of CO2. This is because materials are reused again instead of being transported away for processing or disposal. It also means that fewer new natural materials are required to make new products, as reused products are given a second life.  1333 tonnes from materials of being thrown away and saved an estimated 1270 tonnes |
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