



# REPORTING BACK

## 2023

### GEORGE FREEMAN MP

#### MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR MID NORFOLK



*“Being an active local constituency MP means working to help find solutions to some of the biggest local problems we face here in Mid Norfolk.*

*I think it also means being accountable to YOU - the people I am here to represent and serve. As I have pledged on each of the four election nights on which I've been honoured to be elected, I will always do my best to represent EVERYONE in Mid Norfolk - not just the people who voted for me.*

*Wherever you are, I hope you are able to enjoy some good cheer this Christmas.”*



George



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN MID NORFOLK

*"As a committed constituency MP, I have always relished the chance to try and make a difference locally, as well as to represent our area in Westminster and in Government. Mid Norfolk faces many challenges, which is why I recently stood down as a Minister so that I can redouble my efforts as a Constituency MP trying to solve those issues in collaboration with local community groups, civic leaders and councillors. Making a difference locally continues to be my number one priority as your MP.*

*Here is an update on much of the work I have been doing on your behalf over the past year."*



## TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING

The Cost of Living Crisis, and especially high fuel and energy prices, are real concerns for so many here in Mid Norfolk. I am acutely aware of the pressures constituents, businesses, public services and charities are facing on a daily basis.

That's why I continue to actively speak up for **Mid Norfolk** on these issues, highlighting the additional and unique challenges rural constituencies like our own face in comparison to urban towns and cities. The Government can't solve every problem but we can target help to the most vulnerable - which is why I continue to urge the Chancellor, Treasury Ministers and officials to target further support at those most vulnerable households, services and businesses.

Rest assured, I am committed to doing all I can to help my constituents during these difficult times. To stay up to date with all of my work on such issues, please follow updates on my website [here](#)



## FIGHTING FOR BETTER LOCAL NHS DENTAL ACCESS AND CARE

Lack of access to NHS dental care is the number one issue constituents are raising in my in-tray - which is why I continue to actively campaign for greater resources and provision here in Norfolk.

While the Government has implemented some positive measures (such as handing local NHS dental commissioning to local NHS ICB leaders and committing additional resources), I continue to lobby for more support - including working alongside fellow Norfolk MPs, the ICB and partners to drive forward our case for the establishment of a full undergraduate School of Dentistry at **UEA** so that we can train the next generation of dentists here in our region, improve retention and upskill our existing dental workforce.

See full details on my campaign page [here](#)



# HELPING OUR NHS REDUCE APPOINTMENT WAIT TIMES



As a former Health Minister and someone with a close understanding of the incredible role our NHS plays every single day, I am very aware of how difficult the past few years have been since Covid - especially for those working on the frontline and those of my constituents seeking appointments, operations and care.

That's why I am in regular contact with Mid Norfolk GP surgery staff and managers, regularly visiting and speaking with the likes of **Mattishall Surgery** (see [here](#)) and joining quarterly calls with practice managers and the local NHS Integrated Care Board (see [here](#)) to better understand the challenges they face, while also ensuring my constituents' views are being heard.



People need to be able to access our NHS when they need it - not wait weeks, or even months, for treatment. I'm determined to do everything in my power to ensure they can.

## ENSURING WE HAVE ENOUGH LOCAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROVISION

With significant development coming to Mid Norfolk, it's vital local communities can be confident there is the health and social care provision to sustain both them AND new housing.

That's why I am working with the **ATTCARE** team of volunteers in **Attleborough** to lobby key stakeholders and make sure there is a proper plan for the town - one that we can all work together to deliver on (see [here](#)). It's why I also recently committed to helping **Mattishall Surgery and Pharmacy** secure a new, larger premises (see [here](#)) - and why, in **Watton**, I am working with councillors to ensure there is sufficient pharmacy provision following Boots' announcement that they intend to close their branch and leave just one remaining pharmacy in the town (see [here](#))

Rest assured, I will continue to ensure Mid Norfolk's voice is heard.

## TACKLING LOCAL FLOODING

Flooding has long been a concern for many in our part of Norfolk, but recent flooding caused by Storms Babet and Ciaran has served as a sharp reminder of why we must continue to actively work with local stakeholders, and in Parliament, to try and ensure our region gets the support and resources needed.

That's why I recently reconvened the **Mid Norfolk Flood Partnership** I established after the awful winter 2020/21 flood event, and why I am supporting dozens of affected constituents and communities across Mid Norfolk, while also holding stakeholders to account.

In Westminster, I am lobbying ministers and officials again on the need to place greater emphasis on flooding and drainage in the planning system - and arguing that developers should have much greater liabilities if one of their developments subsequently floods and/or causes flooding in the existing community.

Full details on my Flooding campaign work can be found [here](#)





# KEY WINS DELIVERED FOR MID NORFOLK THIS YEAR



Some of the headline achievements this year include:

- ✓ £500m investment for Ely North Rail Junction to help unlock faster Norwich-Cambridge Rail Links
- ✓ The Government commitment to rebuild Queen Elizabeth II Hospital at King's Lynn
- ✓ A47 Necton/Dunham Junction Safety Improvements, including speed limit reduction
- ✓ Successful campaign to ensure Breckland do not include the North Elmham New Town proposals as a designated site in their ongoing Local Plan Full Update
- ✓ Helped secure a new site in nearby Swaffham for the Fred Nicholson School rebuild and relocation
- ✓ Successful campaign to secure a new Community Banking Hub for Watton High Street
- ✓ Positive progress on the South of the A47 package of anti-rat running measures for communities in the Honingham-Barnham Broom-Kimberley/Carleton Forehoe-Wymondham Corridor
- ✓ Launched the inaugural Norfolk Christmas Enterprise Festival at Banham Zoo
- ✓ Convened with ATTCARE a Taskforce driving forward work to develop a proper strategic Health and Social Care Plan for Attleborough
- ✓ Launched the 'A Dereham Plan for Dereham People' initiative and formed a Partnership to work with Breckland and stakeholders to progress a 'vision' for the town's future prosperity
- ✓ Worked with Wayland Chamber to hold a successful Watton and Wayland Jobs Fair

...and so much more!

Details on all the above, as well as many of my associated and wider campaigns, included next.

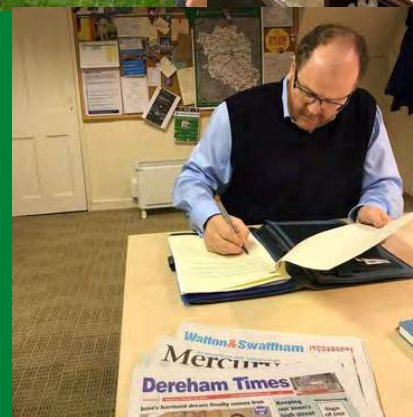


This year I have also:

- Helped c9000 individual constituents with Casework
- Responded to c15000 pieces of correspondence from constituents

Notable Casework Wins:

- Securing visas to reunite families over Christmas
- Recovered £240k refund for victim of bank fraud
- Successfully obtained compensation for armed forces family left without white goods



# REFORMING THE PLANNING SYSTEM

Building enough houses to make sure everyone in our area has the chance for a home of their own, while also making sure we protect our rural landscape and heritage, is often a difficult balance.

That's why, since becoming MP for Mid Norfolk back in 2010, I have worked with local community groups and councillors to promote through my non-profit project [The Norfolk Way](#) a more local and organic model of development based on more vibrant villages and small businesses. I will always speak out to make sure we protect our landscape and heritage - whether that be to continue protecting the Lizard or the Tiffey Valley in **Wymondham**, or to oppose an inappropriate and unsustainable development in **Watton** or **Dereham**, where there is a danger of large-scale overdevelopment.

The planning system should allow for a long-term plan led by local communities. We need to stop aggressive house dumping and insist on proper community planning with infrastructure, green space & infrastructure & facilities. To read about my campaign in depth, click [here](#)



## OPPOSING THE N. ELMHAM NEW TOWN PROPOSALS

The **North Elmham** New Town proposals are an example of aggressive out-of-town developers looking to force industrial scale development on a highly rural, and wholly inappropriate and unsustainable, location without the infrastructure and services to support it.

That's why I am stood shoulder-to-shoulder with local councillors, community groups and residents (supported by neighbouring MP Jerome Mayhew) to make clear we oppose thousands of new houses in this part of Mid Norfolk - and supply **Breckland Council** with the information they need to themselves oppose any likely application.



Large scale development like this should be focused on key strategic sites across the region, not in deeply rural Mid Norfolk. (See full details on the campaign, including our recent positive progress, [here](#))

## DELIVERING BETTER BROADBAND AND MOBILE SIGNAL

Reliable, superfast/full fibre internet and mobile signal are now essential to 21st century life, and that's why one of my central missions throughout my time as our MP has been to campaign for proper digital connectivity across **Mid Norfolk**.

Much great work has happened over the last decade - with c.95% in Norfolk now able to get quality broadband service and innovative schemes improving our mobile coverage in the most rural areas. But there are still large parts of our area which still have poor broadband and mobile coverage - which is why I continue to lobby ministers and key industry and local stakeholders on support for that final 5%. It's vital.

The Government investment announcement in April was very welcome (see [here](#)), but I am determined to do everything I can for **Mid Norfolk** and secure more. To learn more about my wider broadband campaign, please click [here](#)





# SPEAKING UP FOR THE UNSUNG HEROES IN OUR LOCAL CARE SECTOR

For many people, social care is viewed as elderly residential care. The reality is far more complex.



That's why I continue to shine a light on the incredible work done by the almost fifty **Mid Norfolk** care homes, and the associated care sector, each and every day. It's also why I am supporting innovative local companies like White's Training at Watton (see [here](#)) - an incredible example of local leaders pioneering new tech that will improve care for existing and future generations.



Norfolk's carers did a brilliant job in curbing the spread of Covid - and we must not forget their vital, ongoing contribution now. I am committed to doing all I can to speak up on behalf of this crucial sector and look forward to visiting more local homes next year. To find out more about my work, please click [here](#)

# SUPPORTING SEND SCHOOLS AND MAINSTREAM SEND PROVISION

How we take care of our most vulnerable fellow citizens is a measure of who we are as a society. EVERYONE has the right to a good start in life and education.

That's why I continue to be an active supporter of, and vocal voice, for SEND education here in Mid Norfolk - and why I was delighted to help NCC and the wonderful team at **Fred Nicholson School** in **Dereham** secure a site for a new, fit-for-purpose specialist school premises (see [here](#)). It's why I also welcomed the new SEND funding announcement for Norfolk back in May (see [here](#)), why I continue to work with councillors and NCC officials to advocate for a 'Hub and Spoke' model of SEND support for our mainstream schools and why I continue to support **Chapel Green School** in **Old Buckenham** (see [here](#)).

I am determined to continue doing all I can to support our SEND and mainstream schools in 2023. To learn more about my work, please click [here](#)



# SPEAKING UP FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mental health provision has long been an issue very close to my heart - having seen first-hand in my own family, and amongst friends, how mental health issues can destroy lives.

That's why I continue to highlight and support the important work of organisations like MIND (see [here](#)) and why I continue to monitor closely the situation at the NSFT. While the Trust has been made some positive progress (see [here](#)), it isn't enough. More improvement is needed so that patients (and their loved ones) can be confident that they will receive the level of care and support they need and deserve.

Rest assured, I will be meeting the NSFT again soon, and will continue to join meetings with the Minister. To learn more about my mental health campaign, please click [here](#)



# BACKING LOCAL BUSINESS

Having had a fifteen year career running my own small business before coming to Parliament, and having previously served as a Business Minister on three occasions, I passionately believe in the potential of Norfolk's rural economy to play a key role in helping to rebalance the UK economy and create prosperity and opportunities across our area - breathing fresh life into our towns and villages.

That's why I am so active in supporting our business community - through my local **Business Spotlight**, my regular business visits, my annual **Small Business Saturday** promotions, or projects and campaigns like opening the inaugural **Norfolk Christmas Enterprise Festival** at Banham Zoo (see [here](#)) and speaking at **Wayland Chamber's recent 'Business Talks' event** (see [here](#)). I regularly work with Breckland, South Norfolk and NCC as they support local SMEs too.

To stay up to date with my efforts on all of this, please visit [here](#)

SMALL BUSINESS  
**SATURDAY**  
2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER



## SUPPORTING OUR MARKET TOWNS

Our Mid Norfolk market towns are vital hubs of community services and spirit. That's why I continue to do all I can to support them - especially during this difficult cost of living and energy price crisis.

I recently helped convene the '**A Dereham Plan for Dereham People**' event at **St Nicholas' Church** to bring stakeholders together to explore how we attract new investment, businesses and opportunities to the town and its market place (see [here](#)) - and I continue to be a firm advocate of Breckland Council's 'Future Breckland' initiative which aims to keep **Attleborough, Dereham** and **Watton** thriving and vibrant (see [here](#)). I also work closely with **South Norfolk** as they look to deploy 'Shared Prosperity' funding to best effect in **Wymondham**.

I regularly visit our High Streets with local councillors to speak with businesses and stallholders too (see my recent **Attleborough** and **Watton** High Street walks [here](#) and [here](#)) and remain committed to making sure their voices are heard at the very highest levels.

## NORFOLK'S INNOVATION ECONOMY

The Eastern region is fast becoming the home of the most innovative companies in Europe, especially within the fields of food, medicine, energy, technology and engineering. I firmly believe our area is on the cusp of a once-in-a-generation chance to drive a new cycle of exciting small business growth, investment, prosperity and jobs through these key high growth sectors.

That's why I do all I can to promote our local Innovation Economy, shining a light on the pioneering innovation in our area, too often overlooked. It's why I am also actively engaging with the local DWP, our local councils and our local schools so that we can do more to help our local youngsters, and those that wish to retrain, access the new jobs and opportunities already coming to our area.

As more and more companies "spin out" from hubs like the **Norwich Research Park** and the **Hethel Engineering Centre**, we'll see them set up in our local communities, fuelling local shops, pubs and services. To learn more about my work to ensure Mid Norfolk leads the way, including all of my visits this year, please click [here](#)



# LEVELLING UP SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

With our region becoming a centre of some of the most exciting, skilled jobs in UK and Europe, I am determined to do all I can to help local Mid Norfolk people gain access to those incredible opportunities.

That's why I continue to work so closely with the local DWP/Breckland Jobcentre and our local councils, as well as our Mid Norfolk schools and regional colleges, as they look to do all they can to that end. Back in June, I worked with the **Wayland Chamber** to host a **Watton Jobs Fair** in the town (see [here](#)) and, through the **Future Breckland Board** work I am involved with, I am supporting council efforts, alongside partners, to explore what more can be done to ensure local people can access the jobs and opportunities available. I am also regularly speak to local pupils about the vast ranging, exciting careers on offer right here in Mid Norfolk. (To learn more about all my work, please visit my website [here](#))



## IMPROVING OUR ROADS

For too long, successive governments on all sides of the House have failed to properly invest in road infrastructure in the East. That's why I continue to work hard to secure the investment and improvement our region needs.

Having fought hard to help secure the A11 dualling over a decade ago, and worked closely with fellow eastern MPs and the A47 Alliance to secure the £300 million commitment to dual the **North Tuddenham-Easton** stretch of the A47, I have called out recent legal challenges that are holding up the beginning of works and which are not in the interests of Norfolk people (see [here](#)). We need these improvements now.

I also continue to lobby for full A47 dualling from Lowestoft all the way to the A1 in Cambridgeshire and have helped secure improvements at the dangerous **Necton/Dunham A47 junction** (see [here](#)). I'm working with councillors to push for improvements at the **Draytonhall Lane A47 Junction** and up at **Guist** too (see [here](#)). For full details on all of my work on this campaign, please click [here](#)

## TACKLING RAT-RUNNING

Roads investment and infrastructure progress must not come at the expense of the rural communities that are integral to Mid Norfolk, its identity and our way of life however.

That's why I continue to work closely with the South of the A47 Rat-Running Taskforce I helped communities establish back in 2019 to hold key stakeholders to account and ensure that the **North Tuddenham-Easton** A47 dualling and Norwich Western Link do not exacerbate already terrible rat-running on country lanes in the **Honingham-Barnham Broom-Kimberly/Carleton Forehoe-Wymondham** Corridor.

Together, we have been working on package of measures aimed at tackling current and potential future rat-running and, while there is still work to do, the communities are making positive progress on the detail of the schemes that will make up that package. (Further information can be found [here](#))





# UPGRADING OUR EAST-WESTRAIL LINKS

To develop our local economy, we also need upgraded rail links (with our local stations as hubs) that can be accessed by everyone.

That's why I push on with my campaign to have the **Norwich-Cambridge line** upgraded to 100mph and half-hourly services, and why I welcome recent Government announcements regarding funding for improvements at **Ely North**, which are crucial if we are to finally link into the **East-West Rail** project I led when a Transport Minister.

Our stations at **Wymondham** and **Attleborough** can play a key role as better connected transport hubs for tourism and local travel, as well as 5G community and business meeting places, that serve as proper gateways to their respective town centres and amenities, including to all those disabled passengers in Wymondham who cannot cross the line at the moment. That's why I continue to campaign to deliver **Platform 2 access improvements at Wymondham Station**, and am working with both South Norfolk Council and Breckland Council, alongside partners, to explore what we can do to transform these local rail stations as part of their wider local Plans. To learn more, please click [here](#) and [here](#)



## BACKING OUR LOCAL PUBS

Pubs are so often at the centre of community life and real bastions of our rural heritage, playing a key part in keeping our villages and towns vibrant.

That's why I have again kept up with my work to support them - visiting dozens over the course of the year, including **The Green Dragon in Wymondham, The Fox at Lyng, The White Hart at Ashill, The Railway Tavern in Dereham, The Swan at Gressenhall**, and more!

While the Government has provided some helpful support to the sector, over the past year I have lobbied ministers hard for further support - aware of just how much of an impact the cost of living and energy price crisis has had.

I will continue to do all I can to promote and support these wonderful local assets - but it's vital that we all rally around and do what we can to help. If we don't use them, we'll lose them! (For more information on my work, please visit my website [here](#))

## ACCESS TO CASH AND LOCAL BANKS

Local bank branches are a lifeline to so many in our area - especially the elderly, the vulnerable and those running small businesses. Having grown up and lived in East Anglia for most of my life and been the MP for a largely rural constituency for over thirteen years, I know the importance of adequate access to cash and banking provision.

That's why I welcomed the Government announcement enshrining the need for "reasonable provision" of withdrawal and deposit facilities back in the summer - and why I have been working with LINK, Cash Access UK and local communities to ensure our market towns have the level of access they require (see [here](#) and [here](#)). I am delighted to have helped local councillors secure a new **Community Banking Hub** for **Watton** (see [here](#)). While the permanent location on the High Street is set to open in the new year, a temporary branch is now open at **Wayland House**.

I also visited **Dereham** Nationwide to recognise Nationwide's ongoing commitment to local branches for the next few years - and am supporting their Bill in Parliament to expand the services they, and other building societies, can provide. (See [here](#))



# BACKING MID NORFOLK FARMERS

Farming is such an important part of our rural way of life - with Mid Norfolk one of the leading poultry and pork producers in the UK, and arable farming also a major industry.

That's why I continue to do all I can to support our local farmers, meeting regularly with local NFU members to better understand the challenges and opportunities they face, and offer what support I can.

Having set up the **UK's Agri-Tech Strategy** (an exciting sector our region is leading the way in enabling farmers to produce more with less), I welcomed the chance to visit both **Tittleshall Manor Farm** (see [here](#)) and **JE Spratt Farm in Necton** (see [here](#)) to discuss how we empower farmers to pioneer more sustainable farming practices and boost habitats and diversity. I also regularly visit and speak with local NFU members about matters ranging from Bird Flu vaccinations and Farm Diversification to Renewable Energy Production (most recently at my visit to **Peels Farm, Rocklands** - see [here](#)). To learn more on all my work backing Mid Norfolk Farming, click [here](#)



## PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR RURAL LANDSCAPES AND HABITATS

One of the reasons Norfolk is such a popular place to live, work and visit is the fact that it is home to some of the most beautiful landscapes and precious habitats.

That's why, as someone deeply passionate about the environment and our local countryside, I always look to support great projects and initiatives aimed at boosting local biodiversity, growing habitats and enhancing our environmental offer.

Our area leads the way in so much environmental best practice and I continue to support the likes of the **Wendling Beck Exemplar Project** (see more [here](#)) - a project led by local landowners that champions innovative 21st century farming that works for the environment - and so many of our local farmers.

I also welcomed the opportunity to speak at the **Climate Hope Action In Norfolk** cross-panel event in **Wymondham** (see [here](#)), making the case for the 'Green Revolution'.

## FIGHTING FOR NORFOLK'S URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM

Based at **Dereham**, the Norfolk USAR has become one a highly effective and much respected local asset - providing vital additional expertise and capacity to local emergency services as they respond to specialist issues such as chemical leaks, flooding, water rescues, traffic accidents, coastal erosion, building collapses, body recoveries and more.

The news that its funding could cease next year was a major concern for me therefore - which is why I joined Cllr Margaret Dewsbury and NCC in lobbying for its extension, which has since been confirmed for another year (see [here](#)). I was delighted to visit them at their HQ too (see [here](#)).

With flooding and wildfires increasing issues, and local emergency services facing unprecedented demand, I will continue to do all I can with local partners to ensure the USAR's funding is secured for many more years.



# SUPPORTING OUR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Our children are the future of our great county, and that's why I regularly visit Mid Norfolk schools to speak to staff, parents and most importantly pupils.

This year, I have had the pleasure to visit **Wymondham College, Scarning Primary School, Northgate High School and Litcham School**, amongst others. I also had the pleasure to welcome **Attleborough Academy** to Parliament, and have been working with a number of others on issues of importance to them - such as **Fred Nicholson's** relocation and the **Weasenham Primary** closure.

I am acutely aware of the particular challenges faced by local schools like ours and continue to speak up on their behalf for greater funding and resources, especially on SEND provision (as highlighted on page 5), and OFSTED reform.

To learn more about my work supporting local schools, please click [here](#)



## SPEAKING UP FOR OUR GREAT LOCAL CHARITIES



A key part of being a local MP is to speak up for important causes - not just in Norfolk, but also those nationally and internationally.

Over the years, I have actively supported the likes of **Break** in East Anglia (see more [here](#)), who provide support for young people transitioning out of care. And in 2023, I've had the pleasure of supporting many other local groups, including **Dereham Cancer Care** (see [here](#)), the **East Anglian Air Ambulance** (see [here](#)), **Norfolk and Waveney MIND** (see [here](#)) and the **Mid Norfolk Railway** (see [here](#)), and more.



It's why I also support **Brain Tumour Research UK** as they campaign for greater research funding and provide vital support to sufferers. Having lost a close childhood friend to the disease, I know how awful it truly is (see more [here](#)) I have been very vocal in my support for **Motor Neurone Disease** and **Dementia** campaigners too, and continue to back **Action for Stammering Children** and **Nacoa**.

Rest assured, I will continue on with this vital work.

## EMPOWERING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Helping local communities make their voices heard on the issues that matter to them is a key responsibility for all MPs - and one that I continue to take particularly seriously.

Amongst my work this year, I have worked with **Watton Town Council**, district and county councillors and local residents to raise odour concerns originating from the nearby **Cranswick Foods** site. Following meetings with the Cranswick leadership team, improvements are now taking place and a new, permanent **Community Liaison Group** has been established - with me chairing the inaugural Group meeting last month. (See more [here](#) and [here](#))

I've also supported councillors and residents concerned about a range of issues from persistent and prolonged power cuts in **Beetley** (see [here](#)) and anti-social behaviour in **Watton** (see [here](#)) to the **Apostle Accounting** scandal (see [here](#)).

I look forward to continuing with these efforts in 2024.



# FIGHTING ON BEHALF OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE

Everyone in society needs, and deserves, a voice - especially those that are vulnerable - which is why I continue to work with local councillors to support vulnerable constituents.

One such example is in **Weasenham** (see [here](#)), where I have been assisting the residents of **Lamberts Close**, many of whom are elderly and have been impacted by the poor installation of air source heat pumps by Flagship Housing contractors, as well as associated energy price increases. Having brought the Flagship MD to meet residents on three occasions, remedial and additional goodwill works are being undertaken - and I'm set to bring him to **Weasenham** again next year to compare energy costs for affected residents pre and post-installation to ensure they don't lose out.

Rest assured, I will continue to do all I can to speak up for our vulnerable.



## SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SPORTS CLUBS

Mid Norfolk is rightly known for the sense of community that binds us all together. A big part of that local spirit is our many wonderful community groups and sports clubs - doing vital work in our local towns and villages.

That's why, throughout my time as the local MP, I have done my utmost to support them - trying to visit at least one or two each constituency day to shine a light on the great work they are doing, as well as find out what I can do to help their efforts.

This year, I have visited dozens of such groups and sports clubs - supporting the likes of **the aboutDereham Partnership** in Dereham, **Watton Sports Centre**, **Ketts Bookshop** in Wymondham and the **Campaign Against the New Town** group in the villages to the north of Dereham. To find out more on all my visits, please click [here](#)

## TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

Two women every week are killed by a current or former partner. 1 in every 3 women will experience domestic abuse in their life. Norfolk saw a 40% increase in domestic violence in the pandemic.

These are truly shocking statistics that really do need addressing urgently.

That's why I continue to lobby hard on these issues, raising awareness and highlighting the important work done by local campaign groups and charities like the **Daisy Programme** at **Watton**. I am determined to bring the key ministers to Norfolk to see the work being done on the frontline - and to hear from victims and their families.

To see more on this work, please visit my website [here](#)



# WORKING CLOSELY WITH LOCAL DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Here in Mid Norfolk, we are lucky to have an abundance of dedicated local County, District, Town and Parish councillors who care passionately about their local area and do so much good work to help so many.

That's why I greatly value the conversations I have with them each and every week, and the chance to work with them on a plethora of local campaigns, projects and pieces of casework.

Together, we have held Community and Supermarket Surgeries (across all of our major market towns), attended visits, walked the local High Streets, amongst so much more.

To find out more about my work with our local councillor teams, please click [here](#)



## BEING ACCESSIBLE TO YOU!

Being an active local Constituency MP in Mid Norfolk means working to help find solutions to some of our biggest local problems, helping 000's of constituents get the help they need, supporting great local causes and voicing the concerns of our area in Parliament and Government.

That also means being accessible. To YOU.

Which is why I have a regular programme of Community and Supermarket Surgeries that I move around the constituency - and why I hold regular telephone surgeries with constituents that have the most sensitive and complex cases too.

If YOU would like to come and meet me in the coming months, please do contact my office who will be able to tell you when my next surgery in your area will be - via [george.freeman.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:george.freeman.mp@parliament.uk)



## RIGHT HERE IN MID NORFOLK!

Although the job as MP means I have to be in Westminster from Monday to Thursday afternoon, being in our home in the constituency from Thursday night to Monday is an important part of being a local constituency MP.

Not just being able to do my #ConstituencyFriday visits & #SupermarketSurgeries but also just being part of the local community and experiencing the joys and challenges (from floods to potholes to gales and power cuts!) of remote rural living.

In midwinter and midsummer, weekends here at home in Norfolk with my wife Fiona and our fox red lab Jassy are the highlight of every week.

For all the extra costs & challenges of rural life, we are all lucky to live in this special place called Norfolk. Let's keep it that way.



# SPEAKING UP FOR MID NORFOLK IN WESTMINSTER THIS YEAR

As an MP and, until recently, in my former role as Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, I work hard each week in Westminster on the issues of most importance to us here in Mid Norfolk.

Having now stepped down from my ministerial position so that I can focus even more on speaking up on behalf of Mid Norfolk, I look forward to continuing my determined efforts to make a difference for my constituents in 2024.



Amongst my work this year, I have:

- ✓ Helped secure £500m investment for Ely North Rail Junction to help unlock faster Norwich-Cambridge Rail Links (see [here](#))
- ✓ Secured £317.7million for the Norwich Research Park (see [here](#))
- ✓ Backed the High Street Banking Bill to give providers like Nationwide, who have committed to keeping local branches open, greater scope to provide services to businesses and customers (see [here](#))
- ✓ Lobbied for greater NHS dental service investment and provision in Norfolk - calling for a School of Dentistry to be set up at UEA (see [here](#))
- ✓ Campaigned for reform of our planning system to give more power to local communities and elected councillors to decide what development is appropriate and where, and ensure the necessary infrastructure joins it
- ✓ Lobbied for greater targeted support and investment for High Street businesses, local SMEs and the self-employed (see [here](#))
- ✓ Called on Government to back great local councils like Breckland by giving them more support to deliver vital projects like Disabilities Grant Funding, which make a real difference to our most vulnerable
- ✓ Worked with fellow Norfolk MPs and ministers to hold the NSFT to account and drive forward the improved services we need (see [here](#))
- ✓ Spoken up on behalf of NHS and care workers, as well as teachers and other vital frontline public service staff, on a range of issues to ensure their realities are being heard and to call for more targeted rural support
- ✓ Lobbied hard for a proper plan for connecting vital offshore wind infrastructure (see [here](#))



More information on all of my work and campaigns in Westminster can be found on my website [here](#)

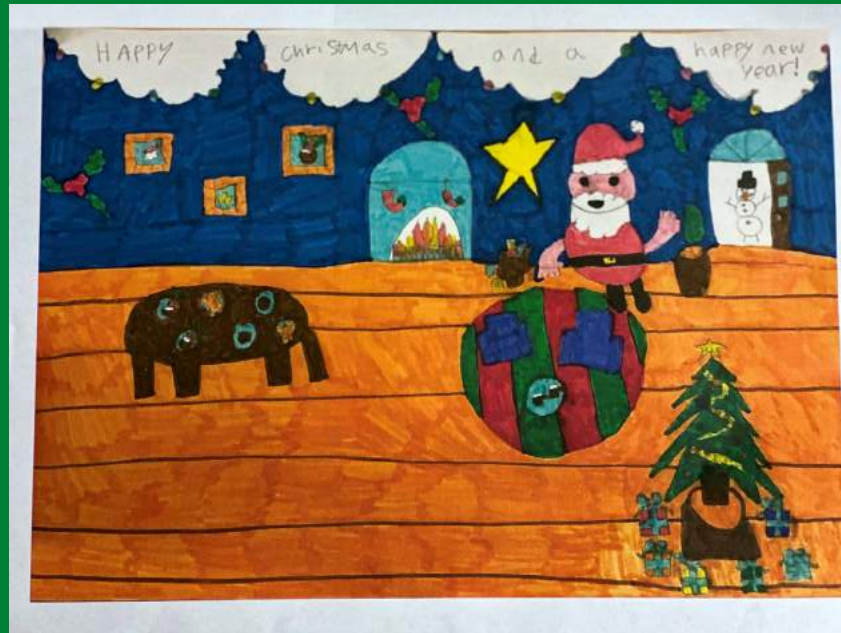
# THIS YEAR'S MID NORFOLK PRIMARY SCHOOL'S CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION WINNERS

Each year I invite all of the primary school children in Mid Norfolk, including those at Chapel Green and Fred Nicholson SEND schools, to submit Christmas Card Designs.

The wonderful array of pictures sent is always a joy for my wife Fiona and I to look through.

Thanks and congratulations go to this year's winner - Teigan-Jo Hawkes, Age 13, from Fred Nicholson School.

Congratulations go to three 'Highly Commended' entries too - Dakota Walker, Age 7, Great Dunham Primary School; Lucy ... , Year 4, Necton C of E Primary School and Elena Voicu, Age 6, Great Ellingham Primary School



**WINNER**

**Teigan-Jo Hawkes  
Age 13  
Fred Nicholson School**



**HIGHLY COMMENDED**

**Dakota Walker  
Age 7  
Great Dunham Primary School**



**HIGHLY COMMENDED**

**Lizzy Lovett  
Age 8  
Necton C of E Primary School**



**HIGHLY COMMENDED**

**Elena Voicu  
Age 6  
Great Ellingham Primary School**

# BEING ACCESSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE



*"I remain committed to trying to make my work accessible with my #Digital Democracy programme, so people who are busy and want to stay in touch easily online can do so at the press of a button.*

*I believe its very important for MP's to be seen and accessible locally, I do this through a number of ways: my social media channels, my website, through email, and through calls to my office here in Norfolk and also in Westminster.*

*Toward the end of the week when I return from Westminster, I also visit as many towns and villages as I can, and a range of outreach programmes such as my **Supermarket Surgeries** and **Politics in the Pub** events."*



*"With **5 towns & 114 villages** across a constituency with a 90 mile boundary, it's impossible to visit every village, pub or community centre regularly.*

*That's why, each Friday and Saturday, I pack in as many visits as I can, and move my surgery around to make it easy for people to meet me. It's why I also work hard on digital outreach - through my Website, Facebook, Instagram, Linked-In and regular targeted Bulletins to key interest groups.*

*Each week we receive 1000+ pieces of correspondence from constituents, which Fiona, Shellie, Tom and I sort, prioritise and respond to. (Due to the high volumes I receive, I do not reply to the most hostile and abusive pieces of correspondence. Instead, with my team, I prioritise constituents who most need help from their MP or who have genuine policy concerns).*

*This year I have:*

- ✓ Helped **c6000 individual constituents** with new Casework
- ✓ Dealt with another **c3000 existing/open casework cases**
- ✓ Progressed over **30 important local projects/campaigns**

*As a rural area, we are home to much silent suffering of people isolated and lonely. But we are also a famously strong local community. Let's all do all we can to keep an eye out to help our vulnerable neighbours this Christmas.*

*Thank you to all those of you who do so much as volunteers, carers & hidden heroes behind the scenes. With best wishes for what I hope will be a Happy Christmas!"*



George

 [georgefreeman.co.uk](http://georgefreeman.co.uk)