

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**21 June 2023**

**COUNCILLOR LIZ WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR  
COMMUNITY, LEISURE & OUTREACH**

For the period May to June 2023

### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

#### **Customer Services**

As expected the first quarter of the year has seen a significant increase in the volume of customer contacting the council. In the last update we reported that in January we received the second highest volume of customer contact per month for 2022/23 with over 7,800 customer contacts across all contact channels.

This was beaten in February and March which saw us receive over 8,000 contacts in February, and over 10,000 contacts in March.

The significant increase in contact was a result of many of the Council's annual processes that take place this time of year such as Revenues annual billing and Housing Benefits notification letters going out. In addition to this we were fielding customer contacts in regards to the then approaching Local Election.

Despite the increase we have managed to keep the average telephony wait time to just over 6 minutes. The same as what was achieved in January.

#### **Leisure**

##### **Leisure Centres**

Phase one of the Reef Solar Car Port has now been completed with phase two set to begin on June 19<sup>th</sup> to install the panels. This is set to take approx. 4 weeks. It would appear that this work has not caused any disruption to Leisure Centre users. Performance remains strong across the 6 facilities with the latest figures (Apr) reaching 46631 visits, including over 18000 at The Reef.

A super sprint triathlon has been arranged for the 25<sup>th</sup> of June at The Victory Leisure Centre, North Walsham. The aim of this event is to offer both an opportunity for experienced triathletes but also encourage new starters to try out the activity.

##### **Countryside**

The community nursery fencing at Pretty Corner Woods (PCW) is now complete ready for planting in the autumn/winter.

Whitsun events included a self-led trail at Holt Country Park and Knights of the Round Table trail at PCW, both were reasonably well attended. Events for the summer are now being finalised.

Training has taken place on the new Worky Quad and all of the team passed. This

will support the team's practical management work greatly, improve sustainable work practices and wellbeing for staff.

Three applications for green flags have been submitted and the results are due imminently. Unlike the Blue flags which have to meet a set of criteria the Green flag status requires ongoing improvements to the Green flag spaces in addition to meeting the set criteria

### **Beaches/RNLI**

The Blue Flag and Seaside awards were publicly announced at 6 beaches within North Norfolk. Linked to this the summer coverage of beach lifeguards has now started at these locations.

Lifeguard recruitment has gone well this year meaning we should not see any reduction in service throughout the season.

The scheduled coastal works in Cromer and Mundesley may now commence slightly later than planned, towards the end of the summer holidays and not the beginning.

Foreshore officers will be patrolling during to the summer season to support the increase in beach users.

### **Markets**

Some concerns have been raised externally regarding the future of the markets and NNDC's commitment to them. We have written to all traders to assure them we are committed to the market and that we will be putting an action plan for improvement together. This will be shared with stakeholders once complete. It is intended to support those officers leading on Markets with Market management training

### **Health and Wellbeing/Sports Development**

#### *Wonky Wheels – Together Fund funding to provide bikes to Ukrainian families*

We have now received the first batch of bikes, helmets, lights, drinks bottles, locks and puncture repair kits. We need to look at diaries and vehicle availability to enable us to get them out to the families. The team will work with Comms to spread the message about this campaign. Initial press releases have already gone out.

With the current emphasis on encouraging activity for all the following activity sessions are being developed.

#### *All to Play For – Men's mental health project.*

Combining Football with topics on men's health and wellbeing these sessions will be held at Sheringham Sports Association with a planned start of Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July.

#### *Cromer seated library exercise sessions*

Sessions have started at Cromer Library and have numbers already reached capacity. There is an ambition that these will be rolled out more widely across the district.

#### *Big Norfolk Holiday Fun- BNHF*

The team continue to look for opportunities and delivery partners for this scheme, with the focus now shifting to the summer holidays. Different physical activity fields such as dance, and drama are being explored.

#### *Opening school fund*

Year two applications are open with the panel meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> June to decide on who has been selected. This round will be more competitive but the leisure and localities officer has been working hard to support schools within the district to apply.

### **Pier Pavilion Theatre**

The 'Conscientious Crabbing' literature is now complete and going to print. This is designed to help people to continue to enjoy this activity in a more sustainable manner.

The theatre has been used for the Cromer and Sheringham Operatic Society production of Evita during the May half term week.

Opening night of the summer show is July 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. As of 09/06/2023 figures for the summer show are ahead of the same period last year by around 900. Overall, nearly 2000 extra tickets have been sold in comparison to last year at the same time – this covers all shows and concerts.

### Arts, Culture and Tourism

**Deep history Coast (DHC)** – the DHC app forms part of the offering alongside the discovery points. App is currently being updated so that it will continue to perform on the latest generation of smartphones. The update will be finalised in the coming weeks, following which user statistics will again be monitored.

**Orchestras Live (OL)** – Our Partnership (NNDC) 2022-23 continues to add breadth to the Cultural Programme in North Walsham (being delivered alongside the High Street Heritage Action Zone). The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment worked with North Walsham High School on a composition that was performed live at the celebration of the Market Place improvement scheme in North Walsham, followed by a concert in St Nicholas's Church. Both were well attended and well received. The arrangements for next year are being considered.

**North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone Cultural Programme (CP)** – The program continues to offer and deliver a broad range of activities. Most recently have been a series of craft workshops (5 separate workshops each month) alongside pop-up shops, a 'DIY cultural walk' linked to heritage and Paston family history.

**Visit North Norfolk (VNN)** – the Council continues to maintain a close relationship with VNN. The latest marketing campaign video has gone live: **Make a Break for the Coast**. You can see the video on VNN's [home page](#) and accompanying blog [here](#). The video will also be available to VNN members to download and use in their own marketing. The video forms part of an overarching marketing campaign, Make a Break for North Norfolk and the video will be promoted through digital media ads, driving viewers directly back to the VNN site.

The Year of the Coast 2023 celebrates the very best of England's coastline, including the north Norfolk coast, and marks the creation of the 2,700-mile King Charles III England Coast Path, the longest marked walking route in the world.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Automated Customer Satisfaction Surveys went live from the 1 June. This process means all customers who have their enquiry resolved by the Customer Services team, will receive either an email or text message (if we hold those details) inviting them to complete our survey. They can opt of all surveys if not. The survey has 4 questions and in addition, invites the customer to provide feedback on their experience of dealing with NNDC.

Obtaining customer feedback will enable us to understand the customer perspective on subjective areas such as the correlation between wait times and satisfaction levels.

The question asked are:

How easy did you find it to contact the council?

How helpful did you find the customer services advisor who dealt with your enquiry today?

How pleased were you with the advice you were given?

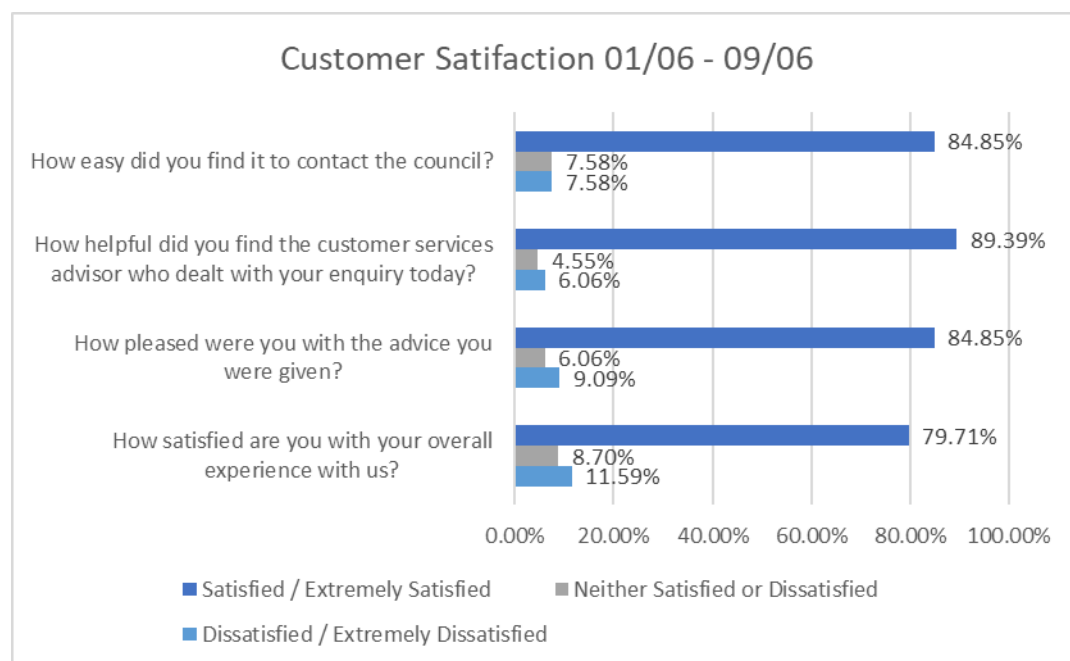
How satisfied are you with your overall experience with us?

Each question is rated out of 5 stars. 1 star meaning extremely dissatisfied, 5 stars meaning extremely satisfied.

From the 1 – 9 June we can report on the following customer satisfaction rates.

Issued 780 surveys

Received 66 completed survey (8.46%)



Some of the feedback already captured

“The advisor I spoke to today was very patient and understanding. She gave me plenty of time to process the information she gave me, as I have sensory difficulties and get stressed under pressure. The advisor reassured me, with the questions I had around using a Food Bank, which I was struggling with at the time”

“Very knowledgeable advisor ultra-helpful and polite”

“Very helpful and friendly and a quick service”

“The person I spoke to was knowledgeable and helpful my questions were answered and explained to my satisfaction. Overall very helpful”

“Excellent work, just a few minutes to get through”

“When I came in both ladies I meet were absolutely amazing with supporting me”

“Customer services were very helpful and sorted out my request efficiently and virtuously. Many thanks”

“Lady who answered my phone call was extremely helpful in dealing with my query today, most refreshing these days”

In addition to this we are exploring a separate survey focused on gaining customer insight on their experience for the enquiries that Customer Services escalate to the back office departments.

#### Customer Service performance reporting – Escalated enquiries

Workbench is a Council wide system used to manage the escalation of customer enquiries between service areas. Workbench provides officers guidance on the councils expected customer response times and allows end-to-end visibility, to ensure enquiries are not overlooked.

With workbench used across all service areas of the council (excluding the Financial Inclusion team), performance dashboards have been created and shared with all service managers. The dashboards provide data on volumes and performance figures on response times by department. Additionally, they highlight outstanding customer enquiries, including those that are awaiting a response that has exceeded the response times of the Customer Charter and Standards.

The dashboards provide service managers with an insight into their customer demand with the ability to monitor workload. This assists with decision making when managing their service areas.

Dashboards have also been created for the formal complaints and feedback processes, and work has started on dashboards to identify the impact on customer contact due to outbound correspondence and understanding why our customers are contacting us.

#### Chatbot

A chatbot system has been procured and is currently being trained up. The objective of our chatbot is to increase our capacity, and provide residents with a quick and convenient way to access NNDC services, information, and support. Channel shifting customers to a chatbot is to provide an alternative, more convenient, and faster way for them to access NNDC.

The key objectives are:

1. Reduce wait times: By offering a 24/7 chat bot service, customers can get

immediate answers to their questions and resolve issues without having to wait on hold or queue.

2. Improve efficiency: By automating routine tasks, such as answering frequently asked questions, chat bots can free up human resources to focus on more complex tasks.
3. Increase customer satisfaction: By providing quick, convenient, and personalised experiences, chatbots can improve customer satisfaction.
4. Save costs long term: By reducing the need for human support, chat bots can save costs and provide a more cost-effective solution for customers.
5. Provide data and insights: Chat bots can collect data and insights on customer interactions, preferences, and feedback, which can inform business decisions and improve customer experiences.

We are aiming for this to go live on our website in July/August. Further consideration will be given in the future to expand this solution as it has the potential to be utilised on other platforms such as Telephony, SMS, What's app, Facebook Messenger and Instagram, to name a few.

#### Leisure:

Safer Seals continuation of the campaign.

#### Arts & Culture:

The following activities under the North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone Cultural Programme are planned, details of which will be publicised shortly:

- mosaic fabrication workshops for local residents, tourists and visitors – details of which will soon be publicised
- Men's Shed workshops (in Aug/Sep)
- Foolhardy Circus are performing and delivering four workshops, a day performance and community picnic
- Craft workshops – (needlefelting, silversmithing scrapbooking, crochet, candle rolling and cyanotype) throughout June and July
- New Stages - summer play and community engagement opportunity