

NORTH WALSHAM HIGH STREET HERITAGE ACTION ZONE: PROJECT UPDATE OCTOBER 2021

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LIST OF ADDITIONAL PAPERS SUBMITTED

<https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/news/2021/september/proposed-improvements-to-north-walsham-town-centre-the-district-council-wants-your-input/>

<https://northnorfolkdistrictcouncil.mysocialpinpoint.co.uk/placemaking/placemaking-home/>

The North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone is an integrated programme of activities packaged into the following four key projects:

1. The Cedars: restoration of the Council owned Listed building and its curtilage and bringing it back into beneficial use
2. Place making: improvements to the accessibility and attractiveness of town centre streetscape and key public areas
3. Building improvements: provision of grants to facilitate building repairs, restoration and improvement
4. Cultural programme: establishing a programme of events that celebrate the town's culture and history

The Programme is led by North Norfolk District Council and funding is provided by The Council, Historic England, New Anglia LEP (Government Building Back Better Fund) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund (for the Cultural Programming).

The following summary illustrates the current status of the various elements of the programme.

The Cedars
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A marketing board has been erected outside the Cedars and discussions are taking place with potential interested parties• Active promotion and community engagement will take place once repair and restoration works underway• Remedial and preparatory works are being undertaken (i.e. asbestos removal, drain clearance)• Technical specialists appointed and work commenced on - structural survey, building energy assessment and mechanical & electrical survey/feasibility• Kings & Dunne to continue to act as lead professionals and undertake RIBA Stage 5&6

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NNDC procurement process agreed with Historic England: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Specification for works (mid-October) ➤ Tender invitation issued (submission deadline 21 days) ➤ Appointment of contractors within six weeks of tender invitation ➤ Works to commence on site prior to Christmas/early January subject to availability and capacity of contractors and availability of materials
Town centre place making
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback and comments from previous community engagement activities reviewed • Topographical and other technical surveys completed • Draft highways and public realm design proposals developed for Market Place, the Shambles, Bank Loke, Black Swan Loke and Gardens and Churchyard north-south axis • Potential for bus interchange being explored in partnership with Norfolk County Council and North Walsham Town Council to mitigate potential impacts of removal of buses from Market Place • Black Swan Loke land site preparation (including asbestos survey/removal, structural survey of boundary walls, investigation of underground services/ former cellar on site, overhanging plant and equipment and queries over access and ownership of outbuilding on land) • Extensive public consultation process on proposed draft designs • Initial cost planning being carried out NCC and contractors based on draft design proposals to try and mitigate materials shortages and cost inflation • Decisions on final designs and scale, locations and materials to be used in place making improvement works to be taken November.
Building Improvement Grant (BIG) Scheme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAZ historic building and shopfront improvement grant scheme launched • Information, Guidance and EoI form available Social Pinpoint • Several potential BIG scheme projects identified, meetings held with property owners and site visits undertaken including possible large scale building improvement projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ repair and restoration, refurbishment and bringing vacant floorspace into use (Grade II listed) ➤ conversion of vacant floorspace for youth and community hub ➤ building repair and restoration of façade (Grade II listed) ➤ a shopfront reinstatement ➤ conversion of a vacant upper floor to office use (Grade II listed) ➤ restoration and conversion of vacant upper floor to residential use and building façade improvements (Grade II listed) ➤ repair and possible conversion works to bring vacant floorspace into community or commercial use ➤ repair to architectural feature window and other repairs <p>Ongoing contact with several other local businesses and property owners considering undertaking building improvement works.</p>
Community Engagement

- Meeting with Historic England to review and discuss Community Engagement plans - very positive feedback received
- Stakeholder group meeting regularly
- Communications and Community Engagement Assistant recruited to support the North Walsham HSHAZ scheme and Cultural Consortium on an initial 12 month contract, part-time 2 days per week
- Extensive community engagement and consultation planned for Town Centre placemaking project 20 Sept – 15 Oct:
- Letter to 1,500 residents outlining plans, inviting feedback
- Letter to 194 businesses inviting to focus group evening event which was held on 29 September at The Atrium
- Accessibility focus group event 29 September at the Black Swan function room
- Exhibition staffed by design team & NNDC held on 30th September at a Market Stall; 7th October at Café Kitale and Paston College; 14th October at NW Library and Sainsbury's
- Posters and information packs including highways and public realm surveys available at locations throughout NW
- Press coverage including: Just North Walsham and NW Times and social media channels
- Social Pinpoint engagement platform with placemaking design proposals, highways and public realm surveys and opportunities to provide feedback

Cultural Programming

- Cultural programme activities have been taking place over the summer including Norfolk Dumpling storytelling and poetry events at Market Cross
- Paston and North Walsham exhibition is being held in St Nicolas Church from 11 – 18 September
- What's On cultural programme activities are available on the HAZ engagement platform: [Social Pinpoint | Cultural Programme - What's on \(mysocialpinpoint.co.uk\)](https://mysocialpinpoint.co.uk)

Historic England Historic Area Assessment

- Update meeting held with the Historic England HAA research team on 14 July including local representatives Chair of NW Heritage Centre and Cllr Virginia Gay
- Ongoing desk research and archive materials accessed by team now the County Archive has reopened
- Research into the Cedars being undertaken
- Meeting held with HE Research team during recent site visit to North Walsham
- Dendrochronologists carried out survey of Shambles roof timbers
- Further sites being planned including 26 and 27 Market Street
- Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey of Market Place cellars and tunnels planned – November (TBC)

Heritage Research and Skills

- The Historic England in-depth architectural research for the Historic Area Assessment will generate opportunities to increase awareness and appreciation of the history of North Walsham. The HAA and local historic research will be used for events such as talks, heritage trails, publications and leaflets and contribute to the Cultural Programme being delivered through the Cultural Consortium
- Learning opportunities are being explored with local partners

Budget, issues and risks

- Year 2 Q2 Historic England project update and funding claim due October 2021
- HE require expenditure budgeted in 2021-22 to be spent within the financial year forecast and indicated there is no opportunity to roll forward any budget underspend to Year 3
- A review of the NW HSHAZ scheme is planned with Historic England at the end of Q2, October
- Well publicised issues affecting the construction sector pose a risk, including materials shortages, long lead times, high and still increasing costs, high demand for professionals and specialists including conservation accredited architects and project backlogs from 2020 and labour shortages put the North Walsham HSHAZ projects at risk, in particular the construction projects including the Cedars restoration, North Walsham Town Centre Placemaking and Building Improvement Grants scheme
- New Anglia LEP have indicated all funding awarded to the NW Placemaking project must be spent by end of February 2022. The challenges being experienced in relation to the delivery of the placemaking works have been explained in the previous Y2 Q1 report and are recognised. A review of the updated situation regarding the issues identified and programme and cost plan will take place with the LEP shortly.
- Mitigation measures are being implemented and planned where possible including working in partnership with NCC to appoint contractors through NCC Contractor Framework to reduce procurement timescales, investigating opportunity to order non specialist materials to address long lead times, working closely with property owners to identify potential BIG scheme projects, carrying out site preparation works