



**Council**  
**Thursday, 31st July, 2025 at 5.00 pm**  
**in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market**  
**Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

**Reports marked to follow on the Agenda and/or Supplementary Documents**

**1. CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS (Pages 2 - 6)**

Councillor Squire's report to Council

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**CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**31<sup>st</sup> July 2025 Meeting**

**COUNCILLOR SANDRA SQUIRE - CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & COASTAL**

For the period 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025

**1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

**Food Safety:**

The latest Food & Safety Newsletter has been published. It is worth having a look as they contain information that will be useful to everyone. This month focuses on barbequing safely, the advice will be relevant to homes as well as commercial premises.

You can find all the issues here: [Food and safety newsletters | Food and safety newsletters | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

**Cockle bed closure:**

You may have seen the notice on the Borough website regarding the temporary closure of the Stubborn Sands Inner cockle bed. This is following tests showing higher than permitted bacteria levels.

The public are also advised not to gather shellfish from the beach for their own consumption as there may be a risk to human health.

Once the test results were known, our team reacted very quickly to inform affected fishermen, issue a notice and put signs out advising of the risk. Investigations into the reasons for the high results will continue, however the cockle bed will remain closed until September. This bed is usually subject to a seasonal closure during August due to high summer bacteria levels in previous years. We will advise council when the bed is reopened and the results of investigations.

**Commercial Food Waste:**

After new rules came into effect at the end of March requiring businesses with more than 10 FTE staff members to separate dry recycling and food waste we have been offering commercial food waste collections.

Schools, charities and council facilities have been the first to adopt the new service. We have a dedicated trade waste officer available to help and advise businesses on what services we can offer.

Recycling and food waste bins should shortly also be appearing at the Town Hall for council meetings.

### **Water Summit:**

The Coastal Water Quality Summit was held online on the 19<sup>th</sup> June. It was organised by this council in conjunction with the LGA Coastal SIG, specifically the LGA Coastal SIG's Water Quality Working Group, which I chair.

It was postponed twice and was not easy to organise bringing many different groups with different viewpoints together. I have the officers of the LGA Coastal SIG and our own Martin Chisholm to thank for their persistence and patience in making it happen at all.

On the day we welcomed representatives from councils all around the coast, government agencies, charities, campaign groups and more.

Alongside myself and the Chair of the LGA Coastal SIG, speakers included Alison Hume MP and representatives from Defra, the Environment Agency, Ofwat, Cardiff University, Anglian Water, Paddle UK, Surfers Against Sewage, Marine Conservation Society, Association of IFCA's, Durham University and The Turning Tides Partnership,

Special mention and thanks must go to our very own Mayor, Cllr Andy Bullen for stepping in to chair two sessions at short notice. He did an amazing job of making sure everyone had a chance to speak and all the questions were asked and answered within the time, including the tough one directed at me! Thanks Mr Mayor!

The LGA Coastal SIG will publish a full report on the summit, as the day included surveys and an opportunity for individuals and organisations to pledge to do one thing to make a difference to coastal water quality. Once the full report is published, I will share it with council.

I found the presentation from the Marine Conservation Society about PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances – also known as “forever chemicals”) in coastal waters very interesting as this was not something I had previously considered, it has given myself and the Environmental Health team something to look at going forwards.

It was a very successful and informative day, discussions are ongoing around making it an annual event. Which I take to be a good indicator of success!

### **Heacham Water Quality:**

This is beginning to feel like Groundhog Day.

The water summit prompted many interesting discussions. One of which was whether some areas should be for nature and wildlife and those places may not necessarily be the same places where people should be swimming.

If a bathing area such as Heacham were to be de-designated as a bathing beach, it wouldn't mean it is unsuitable for swimming, as that would be down to choice. It doesn't mean anyone would be prevented from swimming, it doesn't mean the beach would be closed, it certainly doesn't mean that the water is toxic. It would simply mean that bathing is not the priority.

Given the importance of our wildlife in the wash, that is a debate that may be worth having in the future, on how our coast is promoted and how we can make space for nature.

However, if you look at our recent test results (further down the report), the most recent of these being published on 25<sup>th</sup> July, you will see that this years results have been very good to date and sit within what would be considered "good".

As I previously explained, the classifications are worked out from a rolling 4 year data set. Our 2021 and 2022 tests were not good, but they have improved in the last 2 years, yet those poor years are still reflected in our classification.

So far from being the most toxic beach, that is unsafe to swim in, things are improving. We know from the DNA test results that we are unlikely to ever be able to gain a "Good" classification due to the seabirds. Test results vary from year to year, depending on many factors that we can't predict.

Real time testing and results could be transformative, if we could know what the water quality was like the day we were going, rather than relying on predictions. This is something campaigners are calling for. Also, as previously stated we need whole catchment testing.

Full information on Heacham beach on the issues affecting it can be found here: [Bathing water profile](#)

You will find a full description of the catchment, what investigations have occurred, what treatment works are in the area and a lot more besides. Including the statement *"Current data indicates that the UV treated effluent is present in some bathing water samples but is not contributing viable bacteria."*

So you can see, clickbait headlines that advertise the water at our beaches as toxic and not safe are highly unjust and do not reflect the work many agencies have put in to improve matters. But why let the facts get in the way of a good story?

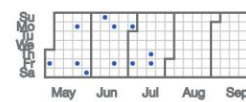
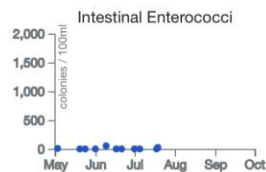
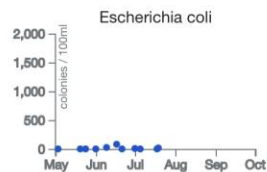
If our local press would like to speak to me directly about water quality, they can be invited to our next stakeholder meeting, or better yet, they can come swimming with me...



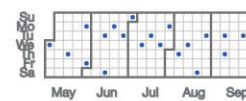
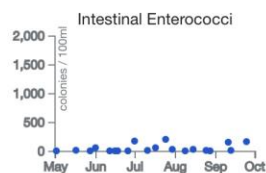
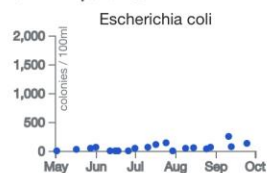
For info:

## Heacham

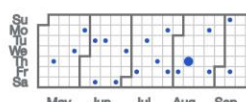
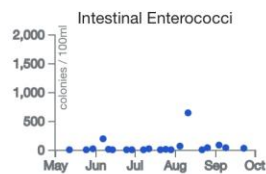
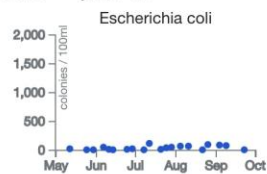
2025



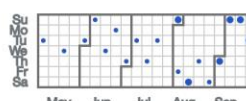
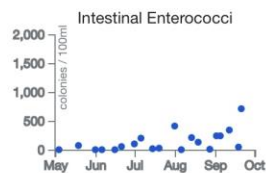
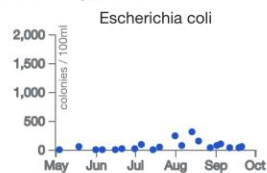
2024 = poor ?



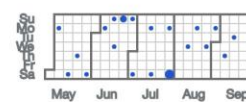
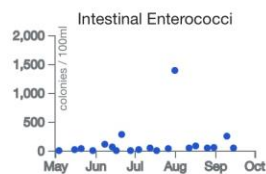
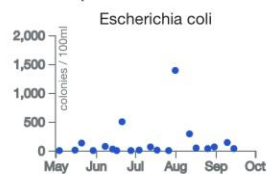
2023 = poor ?



2022 = poor ?



2021 = poor ?



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

### **Hunstanton Prom:**

The prom is regularly surveyed, with repairs and maintenance being based on the results. However recent surveys have concluded that works over and above the normal repair routine, will be required going forward.

A project team has been established to fully assess the report and plan the required work. The project will also involve a high level of planning and involve multi-agency collaboration.

Briefings are currently being arranged for all stakeholders and ward members in early August, before plans are circulated more widely.

The prom itself is not just the sea defence for Hunstanton, many thousands of people walk along it each year, it is the focus of our seafront. It is important that we have a joined up vision and create a prom for the future that Hunstanton can be proud of.

## **3      Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled**

Various portfolio briefings  
Cabinet briefing  
Cabinet Sifting  
Environment & Community Panel  
Water Quality Summit  
East Anglian Coastal Group Meeting  
Norfolk Coastal Forum  
RFCC Meeting  
Special Council  
Cabinet