

MONTHLY NEWS REPORT MARCH 2022



E Newsletter Issue 3/2022

WNC

In solidarity

With Ukraine

28 February 2022

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NEWS REPORT MARCH 2022

Monthly Highlights

WNC raised Ukrainian flags at our civic buildings in Daventry, Northampton and Towcester from 28 February 2022 in solidarity with the country's people. Everyone will have watched as the horrific scenes unfolded in the world's news, as the Russian military invaded. We continue to send a message of support to the people of Ukraine, for the horrific situation they find themselves in. They have our sympathy and our support, but they also have our huge admiration for the brave way they are pulling together in the face of adversity.

Give your views and ideas on how we shape services and support communities to help West Northants thrive. We are holding a big conversation for everyone who lives and works across our area to make sure we are working on the things that really make a difference for our communities. The Big Conversation will be open for three weeks and we encourage everyone living and working in West Northants to join in. The conversation will be open 24/7 and is completely anonymous. We want to work together to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. The conversation will be open until Tuesday 22 March 2022.

I have received a request from Denton Parish Council to investigate a reduction in the speed limit on the A428. Over several years there have been a few incidents on this road and several requests for NCC Highways to look at how best to improve matters. I have escalated the matter to Highways, and they have agreed to put Denton Parish Council's Proposal to the Chair of the Road Safety Panel. I will keep you informed regarding progress. In the meantime, if anyone wishes to add any comments or photographs about this or any other road safety issues then please contact me.

As you know there is a Councillor COVID Support Fund to allocate money within our wards in order to make a positive impact on the areas we represent and to empower residents to be active in their communities' recovery from the impact of COVID. I have received 11 expressions of interest and six completed applications with three awards issued already. Three projects are for Cogenhoe, three for Denton, one for Brafield and one for Quinton. I look forward to giving you more information in due course. The time limit for all applications is 31 March 2022. If the Community Grants team approves all of my applications then I will have allocated all of my funds. Councillors Andrew Grant and Fiona Cole may have some funding available.

Work has continued to refine and develop budgets to ensure that they are as accurate and up to date as possible. The overall net impact is zero and the Council continues to have a balanced budget in 2022-23. The following 2022-23 Budget for West Northamptonshire as recommended by Cabinet at the meeting held on 15 February 2022 was approved on 24 February at Full Council.

- An estimated net revenue budget of £753.490m (£342.318m excluding Dedicated Schools Grant)
- An average Band D Council tax of £1,613.23 for West Northamptonshire Council, which represents an increase of 2.99%. (1.99% increase in 'core' Council Tax and 1% Adult Social Care Precept).

You can now sign up to pay and receive garden waste collections for the forthcoming year. From April 2022, the service will be an optional, chargeable collection service for all households in West Northamptonshire.

We are providing financial support to households struggling with the cost of living over the winter period, including vulnerable households with or without children. Support includes Household Support Vouchers, Winter Fuel Bank and School Holiday Food Vouchers. Applications will be accepted until 31 March 2022.

West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet will reconsider a land deal at Sixfields on 8 March and further details will be published in the coming days. Full Council on 21 February was an opportunity for Cabinet to listen to and understand members concerns, most of which were overcome before the special Cabinet meeting on 28 February. One or two issues remained, and Cabinet members felt it would be prudent to take the time to consider the bids received since the release of the council report. The outstanding issues have also now been resolved and the latest bids are being considered. Full details will be published in a report, which will go to next Tuesday's Cabinet meeting on 8 March.

WNC has issued two £400 fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping at the site near Sixfields Reservoir recently. In addition, Neighbourhood Wardens from West Northamptonshire Council issued another two individuals with £150 fixed penalty notices for littering offences, which took place in April last year. When they failed to pay or make any kind of contact with the Council they were summonsed to court. And at Wellingborough Magistrates' Court last week (Tuesday 15 February) both were found guilty in their absence and each fined £400 and ordered to pay £1,275 in legal costs, plus a £40 victim surcharge. Litter and fly-tipping are a blight on the environment of West Northamptonshire. It is something that residents regularly complain about, and we spend thousands of pounds a year collecting the litter and waste dropped and dumped on our streets, roadsides and open spaces.

Applications for SEGRO funding are made using a proforma, which is reviewed by the WNC S106 team to confirm it is in accordance with the terms of the agreement and it is then circulated to the Community Liaison Group for comments. The proforma and comments will then be forwarded with a recommendation for consideration by WNC. If authorised, the funds are then paid out. The applicant and the Community Liaison Group will be advised of the outcome of the application for funding.

I have received details of a planning application that falls within the Hackleton and Grange Park ward at Hawthorn Close, Hartwell, NN7 2FA. Plans and relevant documents can be viewed on the Council's on-line planning register.

Councillor Fiona Cole has called in the Planning Application WNS/2022/0154/FUL, the Runway West of Forest Road, Piddington for consideration. It relates to a change of use from Agricultural to grass runway with associated facilities for use as a microlight airfield (retrospective).

All three Hackleton and Grange Park Councillors supported the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction at Land off Horton Road, Hackleton in accordance with the General Development Order and the Council's scheme of delegation. The Direction was initially made for six months as an emergency measure.

WNC received an EIA Scoping Opinion submission on 8 February from the applicant Manor Oak Homes for 900 dwellings on land south and east of Grange Park and they will need to issue their Scoping Opinion by 15 March.

Bookings are now open for our Virtual School Easter Holiday activity programme. From arts & crafts and drama workshops to canoeing and exploring the great outdoors, the Virtual School Participation Programme offers a wide range of activities across Northamptonshire to help promote achievement and boost confidence in children and young people growing up in care.

Social Enterprise National Lottery Support Fund Round 2, which opened on 28 February closes on 24 March 2022. Magic Little Grants 2022 (Postcode Lottery) will be open from 16 March and applications should take just ten minutes to complete. The Garfield Weston Foundation supports UK registered charities working within the UK in the areas of Welfare, Youth, Community, Arts, Faith, Environment, Education, Health and Museums & Heritage. There are no deadlines for applications under £100,000. Grants above this level are reviewed at one of 8 board meetings a year. The Football Foundation provides grants for building or refurbishing grassroots facilities, such as changing rooms, 3G pitches, fencing, portable floodlights, pitch improvements and clubhouse refurbishment. Grants are available for between £10,000 and £500,000. The Fund is available to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations. Please read about these grants in my Monthly Report.

Last month's walkabout in Brafield was most beneficial as it helped me to discuss with the community and councillors the work that needs to be done to ensure that we have a safe and pleasant environment for those who live there. West Northamptonshire has a rich legacy of rural villages with communities that need our support and encouragement to continue to thrive and be socially and economically viable. I intend to complete a similar exercise in the other parishes. Please let me know when you would like to organise a session in your area.

All the Best, Steve

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

Request for A428 Speed Restriction, Denton

I have received a request from Denton Parish Council to investigate a reduction in the speed limit on the A428. Over several years there have been a number of incidents on this road and several requests for NCC Highways to look at how best to improve matters. I have escalated the matter to Highways and they have agreed to put Denton Parish Council's Proposal to the Chair of the Road Safety Panel.



All requests for a change of speed limit are referred to the Highways Speed Limit Review Panel for consideration – this includes various officers from our Road Safety, Community Liaison and Traffic Engineering Teams, and a representative from the Police's Safer Roads Team who has delegated authority from the Chief Constable with regard to agreeing changes to speed limits. The group taking into account the comments raised, the general characteristics of the area, in addition to speed and collision data, will consider the request. I will keep you informed with regard to progress. In the meantime, if anyone wishes to add any comments or photographs then please contact me.

Brafield Walkabout

Last month, I met with Gill Morgan and Dawn Allingham for our Brafield Walkabout. It was a very good opportunity for me to gain a better understanding of the village, its environment and the issues facing the residents of Brafield. Although, I have walked around the village several times in the past, this visit enabled me to capture in the 2-3 hours spent on our walk around the village and its environs, the knowledge I needed. Our walk encompassed some of the hidden footpaths and bridle paths as well as the various village streets. We talked about the issues stemming from the A428 Highway with its staggered junction including highway safety and the impact of traffic on the village. We also covered the Grove Road parking



issues and discussed the tremendous much-loved view of the whole of the Nene Valley from the highest point up by the church and the ability for residents

to be able to walk up the plateau to the intersection of the footpaths and then along Church Lane, surveying the important sites in the Conservation area around the Green. We looked at the significant Potholes along the Bridle Path, considered the future of the empty Chapel and the damaged Grid, which is now being addressed. In doing so, I gained more casework but experienced a real enjoyment of the place and the sense of local history, pride and love from someone who has lived in the village of Brafield their entire life. West Northamptonshire has a rich legacy of rural villages with communities that need our support and encouragement to continue to thrive and be socially and economically viable.

Friday Coffee Mornings, Denton

I enjoyed the catch up at the Coffee Morning in Denton on 11 February. It gave me the opportunity to chat about their Expression of Interest in the Councillor Covid Support Fund. This fund has been established to allocate money within our wards in order to make a positive impact on the areas we represent and to empower residents to be active in their communities' recovery from the impact of COVID. I have received 11 expressions of interest and six completed applications with three awards already. Three of these projects are for Denton. I look forward to giving you more information in due course. The time limit for all applications is 31 March 2022.

Cogenhoe Community Lunch, Coffee Mornings and other events



I attended the Community Coffee Mornings with the Parish Help desk this month. It has allowed me to follow up on three expressions of interest for the Councillor COVID Support Fund. Two of the applications have been awarded in Cogenhoe already. Once the projects have been delivered, I will provide further details.

Cogenhoe Farmers Market

I enjoyed meeting a number of small businesses at the Cogenhoe Farmers Market on 13 February 2022. The Little Smokehouse, Mear's Ashby Micro-bakery, Tropic, Gardening Supplies and Peachey's Treats to name but a few. It was a good turn out. A special thank you to the Mud Kitchen Cafe for organising the monthly Farmers Market. I look forward to catching up with you next month. You can now collect your order for Mears Ashby's Micro –bakery every Friday from the Mud Kitchen Café.



Grange Park Parish Council and SEGRO S106 Funding

Applications for funding are made using a proforma, which is reviewed by the WNC S106 team to confirm it is in accordance with the terms of the agreement and it is then circulated to the Community Liaison Group for comments. The proforma and comments will then be forwarded with a recommendation for consideration by WNC. If authorised, the funds are then paid out. The applicant and the Community Liaison Group will be advised of the outcome of the application for funding.

Afternoon Tea, Little Houghton



It was great to meet with several members of the local community at the Afternoon Tea, which was held at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton on 27 February. It was meant to run from 2.30 until 5.00pm, but we were still chatting at 6.00pm! Well done to Jenny Monk for making



the Coffee and Walnut Cake and serving us with

tea and crumpets or toasted tea-cakes. It seemed a popular venue with walkers and those who had just returned from a Saints rugby match. I won't mention the result. It was good to meet Revd Eddie, Jenny, John, Jeff, Alice and others and I look forward to catching up with you all again soon.



EVENTS IN UKRAINE

Showing Solidarity with our friends in Ukraine



This week commencing 28 February, we are raising Ukrainian flags at our civic buildings in Daventry, Northampton and Towcester in solidarity with the country's people. Everyone will have watched as the horrific scenes unfolded in the world's news during the past few days, as the Russian military invaded. "We continue to send a message of support to the people of Ukraine, for the horrific situation they

FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

Changes from the Draft to the Final Budget 2022/23

Work has continued to refine and develop budgets to ensure that they are as accurate and up to date as possible. The overall net impact is zero and the Council continues to have a balanced budget in 2022-23. These changes stem from a number of different activities that have been undertaken since the draft budget was published:

Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement

This was published by Government on 16th December 2022 and confirms the Council's central funding and grant allocations for 2022-23. In summary, the provisional settlement outlined that we could expect £3.8m more than we had assumed in the draft budget proposals. In the days that followed the provisional settlement there was further information that one of the grants had been calculated on an incorrect basis (CPI was used to calculate the increase in the grant rather than RPI). As a result we estimated that a further £900,000 could be received in addition to the £3.8m.

Final Local Government Financial Settlement

The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP laid the final settlement in Parliament on 7 February 2022. This confirms the final settlement funding allocated to the Council and included confirmation on the change in grant indexation from CPI to RPI, resulting in an increase of £105,000 funding on top of the originally estimated £900,000. Additionally a further increase in grant funding of £10,000 was applied to the Lower Tier Support Grant, which resulted in a total increase in funding from the provisional settlement assumptions of £115,000 compared to what was included in the final budget published for Cabinet's consideration. This further additional funding was highlighted at Cabinet and has been incorporated into the final budget proposals for full council.

Budget robustness review

In addition to the Star Chambers process, which took place before Christmas and were a fundamental part of the draft budget proposals officers then went through another round of budget robustness sessions after the publication of the draft budget. The review sessions took place with the Service Directors, Assistant Directors, S151 officer, deputy S151 officer and Finance staff to specifically review each of the savings proposals that had been included in the draft budget in order to confirm their achievability in the view of the service. Each savings proposal was RAG rated and any proposals identified as high risk have been removed.

In-year monitoring

Since the publication of the draft budget the Council has undertaken period 9 of its monthly budget monitoring process for 2021-22. Some emerging pressures have been identified in-year, which are expected to continue into 2022-23, and these have been incorporated into the medium-term position. Budget assumptions such as inflation have also been reviewed and refreshed to ensure that they are as up to date as possible and/or reflect changing national conditions.

Emerging Pressures

A final round of discussions took place during the start of 2022 between finance and the service areas to ensure that all pressures had been adequately budgeted for and that services could be confident that their budget was robust and able to deliver the services they are responsible for. These discussions also made use of the latest information available on demand led services and the latest volumetrics to help us predict future services costs. Budget processes should always be dynamic processes that can flex and change to incorporate the latest financial information and intelligence. The outcome of this work was summarised early in the New Year and highlighted pressures such as:

- Utilities inflationary pressures in excess of what had already been assumed in the budget
- Home to school transport pressures largely as a result of above inflation increases in some critical parts of the service area
- Waste disposal tonnages estimated to be greater than in the draft budget based on the latest volumetric information that became available after the publication of the draft budget
- Historic income and staffing budget pressures within Corporate Services, particularly IT.
- Additional adult social care pressures as a result of increased hospital discharges and
- Reliance on longer term or more costly care packages
- Pressures identified on the Insurance budget

It is crucial that these pressures are flagged and recognised as they increase the risk associated with the budget. Whilst the services are seeking to identify mitigations to reduce these pressures it is imperative that the additional funding received in the settlement is primarily used to set aside and build up a contingency which can be employed to fund these budget pressures should they be realised and mitigating actions are not able to address all of the additional costs.

The additional funds will therefore be added to the base budget contingency to be employed if required to fund the pressures that have emerged between draft and final budget if they cannot be managed away.

The movements between draft and final budget is as follows:

	£m
Provisional settlement funding changes	(3.8)
Final settlement assumed funding changes	(1.0)
Increase to general contingency	4.8
Changes to budget proposals (pressures, efficiencies and inflation)	0.4
Additional one-off pressures funded by reserves	0.7
Use of reserves to fund one-off pressures	(0.7)
Movement on use of covid funding from reserves	(0.4)
Overall net effect of changes on 2022-23 budget	0.0

The most material change between draft and final budget is in relation to the Council's funding. Following the provisional local government finance settlement announcement in December the Council had an additional £3.8m confirmed in funding for 2022-23. We also anticipated a further £900,000 on one of the grants following further information that came from the Government after the provisional settlement information was originally sent out. The final settlement confirmed that this additional



amount would be £1,005,000. The final settlement also confirmed a further additional grant of £10,000 and therefore the final Government settlement, which was issued after the final budget reports for Cabinet were published, was £115,000 more than we anticipated in the budget report to Cabinet. Further details on this additional funding are set out later within this report.

As detailed above, since the publication of the draft budget in December further on-going budget pressures have also emerged, particularly in relation to inflation, the cost of utilities, service demand, and the on-going effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given the risk and volatility around these items it is proposed to use the additional funding to increase the Council's general budget contingency. A contingency of £5m had already been included in the draft budget (funded through general reserves), so this increase takes the general contingency up to £9.8m. The Executive Director of Finance in conjunction with the Finance Portfolio Holder will manage the contingency, with budget transferred to services in 2022-23 only if one-off or on-going pressures are confirmed through the Council's monthly budget monitoring process that cannot be mitigated against.

Additional one-off pressures totalling £0.7m have been identified since the draft budget to mainly drive change and productivity improvements throughout the Council. These will be funded through one-off use of reserves in 2022-23. The budget proposals have moved by a further £0.4m since the draft budget.

In addition to the above, the Cabinet added a further recommendation to the budget proposals to move to a minimum hourly rate of £10.00 per hour for Council employees, which is above the foundation living wage level recommended by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This is expected to cost around £250,000 and will be funded from the base budget contingency.

The following 2022-23 Budget for West Northamptonshire as recommended by Cabinet at the meeting held on 15 February 2022 was approved on 24 February at Full Council.

- An estimated net revenue budget of £753.490m (£342.318m excluding Dedicated Schools Grant)
- An average Band D Council tax of £1,613.23 for West Northamptonshire Council, which represents an increase of 2.99%. (1.99% increase in 'core' Council Tax and 1% Adult Social Care Precept).

Household Support Fund

We are providing financial support to households struggling with the cost of living over the winter period, including vulnerable households with or without children. Support includes:



Household hardship vouchers

Vouchers to buy food, essentials, and support household budgets to pay essential bills. If your application is successful, you will receive a voucher based on the size of your household. The vouchers may be exchanged for use in a variety of supermarkets

Winter fuel bank

You can apply for Emergency £40 top-up vouchers, for pre-payment energy meters. You can also contact your energy supplier for additional support in the event of severe hardship. We can grant a maximum of three vouchers, per household over the winter period

School holiday food vouchers

Food vouchers during the school holidays for parents or guardians of children living in low-income households. These have been issued for the school holidays. We will decide whether to offer these

vouchers again in February and April.

Emergencies

Remember, this is not emergency funding; you can access emergency food sources via food banks, your community partners and social services.

How to Apply for Household Hardship Voucher and Winter Fuel Bank Vouchers

You will need to provide evidence of hardship with your application form and our team will assess your circumstances against our eligibility criteria. We can take up to 3 weeks to assess applications and then 5 days to issue vouchers. Fuel vouchers will be prioritised where possible.

Applications will be accepted until 31 March 2022.

Apply for vouchers
School Holiday Meal Vouchers

If you already receive means-tested free school's meals you do not need to do anything, you will automatically receive school holiday food vouchers.

Parents of eligible electively home-educated children, or those without a school place should call 0300 126 7000 to request a school holiday food voucher. Vouchers will be available until 31 March 2022.

Winter Fuel Bank

Are you struggling with rising energy costs?
Our Winter Fuel Bank can provide emergency £40 top-up vouchers for pre-payment energy meters.
Find out more and apply online at <http://ow.ly/Nkr250HUnFZ>



REGULATORY SERVICES

Boundary Commission's review of Parliamentary Constituencies across England

A series of public hearings are due to get underway this month as part of the Boundary Commission's review of Parliamentary constituencies across England. The Commission's secondary consultation on the proposed new map of constituencies will take place from Tuesday 22 February to Monday 4 April 2022.



During this consultation, people will be able to provide feedback on the proposed new constituencies via the consultation website at bcereviews.org.uk, by email or letter, or in person during a public hearing.

A total of 32 public hearings will be held across the country, and the Boundary Commission is allowing people to book 10 minute speaking slots, offering a chance to share their views. More information about the hearings can be found on the Boundary Commission website. Separately, preliminary work is also underway on the Local Government Boundary Commission review for West Northamptonshire. The initial stage of the review, taking place between now and August will help decide how many

councillors the Council should have in future. A member task group has been established to work on this project and they met for the first time last month.

Scrap Metal Licence Renewal



Are you a scrap metal dealer? You'll need to complete a quick tax check when you renew your licence from April 2022. Find out how to prepare: <http://ow.ly/cl9Y50HI9hw>



Taxi or Private Hire Licence Renewal

If you're a taxi driver, a private hire vehicle driver or operator you'll need to complete a quick tax check when you renew your licence from April 2022. Find out how to prepare: <http://ow.ly/tXHB50HGhnl>

PLANNING MATTERS

Planning Appeals

Since my appointment, I have kept you informed as to the progress of the major Appeals in South Northamptonshire. The update for this month is as follows:

- Hartwell, land North of Ashton Road-Dismissed
- Blisworth, land South of Station Road-Dismissed
- Blakesley Hill, Greens Norton- Awaiting decision
- Greens Norton, land off Mill Lane-Withdrawn
- Milton Malsor, land East of Lower Lane-Dismissed
- Blisworth, land off Northampton Road -Dismissed.
- Yardley Gobion, land at Asana Lodge Appeal-Inquiry 8 February 2022 for 3 days-Cancelled
- Yardley Gobion, land East of Northampton Road Hearing Date Offered of 27/07/22 TBC

Planning Application Hawthorne Close, Hartwell, NN7 2FA

I have received details of an application that falls within the Hackleton and Grange Park ward at Hawthorne Close, Hartwell, NN7 2FA. Plans and relevant documents can be viewed on the Council's on-line planning

register at:

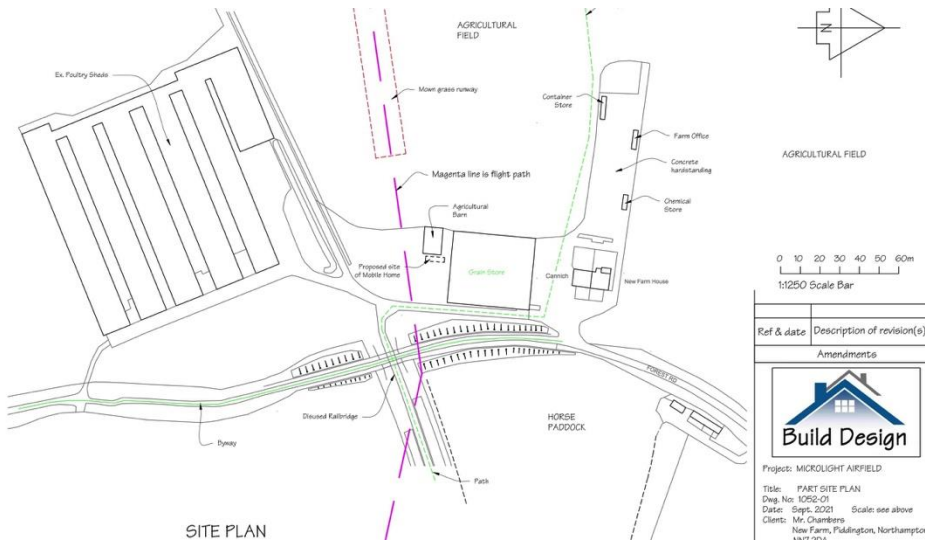
<http://snc.planning-register.co.uk/plandisp.aspx...>

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Please contact WNC, Development Management (contact details at the top of the letter) saying that you wish to be kept informed of progress by quoting the application number. If you wish the application to be



decided by way of a delegated decision then you would need to request that the application be heard at the Planning Committee, by asking one of your Councillors to request a call in. The request should be made within 25 days of the date of the enclosed letter - 18 March 2022.



Planning Application Runway West of Forest Road, Piddington

South Northamptonshire Local Area Planning Committee has called in the Planning Application WNS/2022/0154/FUL, the Runway West of Forest Road, Piddington for consideration. It relates to a change of use from Agricultural to grass

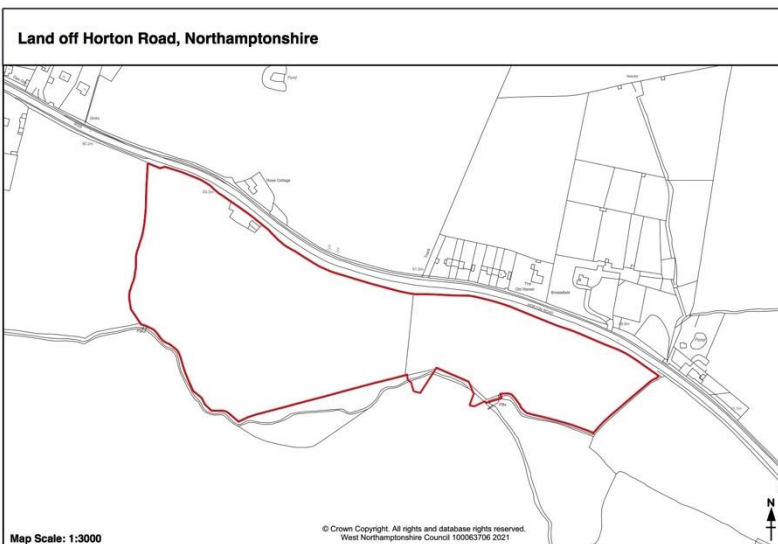
runway with associated facilities for use as a micro light airfield (retrospective).

West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan, Spatial Options Consultation

West Northamptonshire Council is preparing a new strategic plan, which will guide development for the area up to 2050. The West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP) sets out a vision for West Northamptonshire in 2050 and the objectives to realise the ambitions for our economy, our communities and our environment. The activity closed on 24 December and feedback is currently being analysed. There is also an additional opportunity to put forward ideas for potential development sites through a further 'call for sites' exercise. If you have any suggestions for potential locations for new development, then please submit these using the online form. The next Planning Policy Meeting is on 16 March 2022.

Article 4 Direction, Land off Horton Road, Hackleton

All three Hackleton and Grange Park Councillors supported the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction in accordance with the General Development Order and the Council's scheme of delegation. The Direction was initially made for six months as an emergency measure and removed permitted development rights for the erection of any means of enclosure within Schedule 2 of the Order, Part 2, Minor operations Class A –



gates, fences, walls etc. There have been no objections to the Direction as a result of the Council's consultation process, but there were messages of support from Councillors and one a local resident.

The land has been marketed for sale and twenty-nine separate plots were indicated on the sales particulars, together with two access points off the Horton Road and an internal road

layout servicing the various plots. The land is currently in agricultural use and no planning permission exists for any change of use, or operational development on the land. In addition, it is considered that the land has very limited development potential given its location in the open countryside and distanced from the development boundary for Horton.

Whilst it is unclear how the new owner(s) intend to use the land it is considered expedient to Confirm the Article 4 Direction as served, because if the land is sold and split into numerous plots then the physical boundary treatments that may have been erected as permitted development under the General Permitted Development Order would affect the open character of the countryside in this area and would result in the unacceptable loss of undeveloped land and locally important views from the Horton Road to the north and from the public footpath, reference KM42 that crosses the land to the east. It would also be likely that such boundary treatments would be inconstant in form, design, and materials and would not demonstrate compatibility and integration with their surroundings, creating a cluttered and incongruous appearance all contrary to Policy SS2 a & b of the Local Plan.

If the Direction is confirmed then planning permission would then be required for the erection of any means of enclosure i.e. fences, walls and gates and the Council could ensure that any harmful effects are prevented or minimised. The confirmation of the said Direction is therefore considered a proportionate and reasonable as a proactive way of preventing the harm to the character and appearance of the open countryside.

Manor Oak Scoping Opinion

We have received an EIA Scoping Opinion submission from the applicant Manor Oak Homes (WNS/2022/0256/SCO) for 900 dwellings on land south and east of Grange Park, on 8th February.

The purpose of the scoping opinion is not to consider the merits of the scheme, but to advise the applicant, were they to submit a subsequent formal planning application, what the main effects of the development may be and, therefore, which specific topics (if any) the Environmental Statement they would submit with their application should cover. The LPA engages in this process 'without prejudice' and the provision of an opinion does not mean in any way that a subsequent planning application will be either approved or refused.

With regards to the site's current planning status, it was included within the recent 'Options' consultation for the new West Northants Strategic Plan. The site comprises part of 'Spatial Option 1e – Northampton South-East'. More information can be found here:

<https://westnorthantsplan.inconsult.uk/WNSPOptions/consultationHome>

It should be noted that inclusion in the initial options is by no means a guarantee that the site will be formally allocated for development. Colleagues are reviewing the feedback from the recent public consultation and a more refined 'plan' for the required future growth for West Northants will come forward in the next stage of the plan-making process. At this present time, the site is considered to be 'open countryside' and has no designation for development.

Whilst the dismissal at appeal of the previous scheme for 300 dwellings on part of this site (S/2019/0856/MAO) is a material consideration, each application must be assessed on its own merits. Were the scheme for 900 dwellings to be formally submitted, it should be noted that this is a materially different proposal (not least in size), which will naturally result in a different mix of harms and benefits to the previous appeal proposal. Those harms and benefits would be weighed in the planning balance on their own merits, along with any other material considerations, which may (or may not) have also changed in the interim (e.g. planning policy and guidance, other local committed developments, etc.).

ENVIRONMENT

Fly Tipping near Sixfields Reservoir



WNC has issued two £400 fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping at the site near Sixfields Reservoir recently.

The private landowner has cleared the site of fly-tipping, and we've issued a Community Protection Notice Written Warning urging them to replace the fencing to make the site more secure. Hateful, obscene graffiti has been now removed since this photo was taken, and our Neighbourhood Wardens will continue to carry out regular patrols of the site. If you witness fly-tipping, please report it to us at <http://ow.ly/WJU150HSVws>

Subscribe for Green Waste Collections 2022/2023

You can now sign up to pay and receive garden waste collections for the forthcoming year. From April 2022, the service will be an optional, chargeable collection service for all households in West Northamptonshire. The subscription service is already in place for homes in the Daventry and



Northampton areas, but will be introduced in the former South Northants area from 4 April 2022. Until then your current collection arrangements will continue. The annual subscription charge for the fortnightly service from April 2022 to April 2023 is £42 per bin and can be paid online via debit or credit card via the link below. If you are currently subscribed in Northampton or Daventry areas and wish to continue receiving garden waste collections for the

next year then you will need to renew. www.westnorthants.gov.uk/gardenwaste Residents unable to access the Internet can subscribe to the service by phoning the council on 0300 126 7000. People who do not wish to sign up to the service also have the option of purchasing a discounted home compost bin for £10 – to find out more, visit www.getcomposting.com and type in your postcode.

Paying the price for Ignoring Fixed Penalty Notices



Two Northampton men who ignored fixed penalty notices for littering will have to pay more than £1,700 each in fines and court costs, magistrates have ruled. Tyler Howard (41), of Bouverie Walk, was spotted dropping a refuse sack on a verge near his home before his waste collection day. He then refused to pick it up when asked to do so by a Neighbourhood Warden.

Richard Travis (40), of Broadmead Avenue, dumped a large cardboard box in Northampton's Eastfield Park. Neighbourhood Wardens from West Northamptonshire Council issued both with £150 fixed penalty notices for the littering offences, which took place in April last year. When they failed to pay or make any kind of contact with the Council they were summonsed to court. And at Wellingborough Magistrates' Court last week (Tuesday 15 February) both were found guilty in their absence and each fined £400 and ordered to pay £1,275 in legal costs, plus a £40 victim surcharge. Litter and fly-tipping are a blight on the environment of West Northamptonshire. It is something that residents regularly complain about and we spend thousands of pounds a year collecting the litter and waste dropped and dumped on our streets, roadsides and open spaces.

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

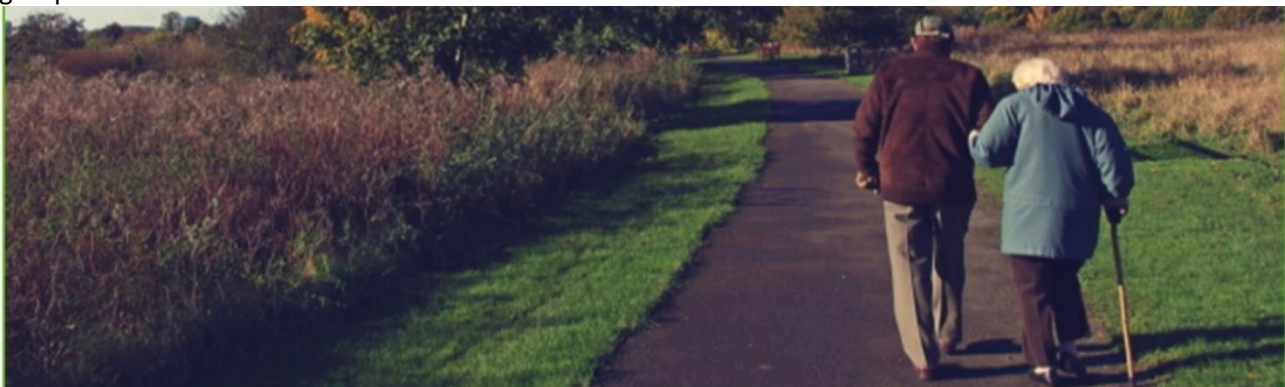
RSN Meetings and Seminars in February

I attended the following meetings, which took place recently:

- 26 January Older People in Rural Areas
- 2 March Young People in Rural Areas

Older People in Rural Areas

On the 26 January I attended the RSN Seminar - **Older People in Rural Areas**. It provided us with a good overview of the current issues facing older people living in Rural Areas. Rural communities should be places where people of all ages live together and experience a good quality of life, with fair access to a range of opportunities and services. That includes people from older age groups, who typically form a large cohort within rural communities. As people grow older there is an increasing risk that they become isolated and vulnerable as their day- to-day needs are not met. For many avoiding this risk means having access to some alternative means of transport, should they no longer be able to drive. An ageing population also has implications for service providers, who must address their needs. If it is not fully factored and costed in, there is a high risk that demand will overwhelm statutory services, in particular health and social care systems. People's housing requirements change as they age, especially if they develop long-term conditions, which impede their mobility. Giving older people the option of moving locally to more suitable accommodation will benefit them and free up housing stock for younger age groups.



Many older people remain fit and active, contributing significantly to their communities. This much is clear from their involvement in volunteering and local activities or societies. Indeed, growing numbers continue to participate in the labour market beyond traditional retirement ages.

The national policy context

Key elements of national policy include:

- Health and care – the Government published a Prevention Green Paper in 2019, the main goal of which is to extend, by five years, how long people live healthy and independent lives (by 2035). It seeks to achieve this with various initiatives, some which could be seen as applying more to older age groups, such as health checks and screenings, and some which apply across all age groups, such as encouraging healthier lifestyles. Major reform of the adult social care system (and not least its funding) has been promised for some time, with Government proposals awaited. This can be expected to have implications both for care provided to clients in their own home, and for that provided at care homes.
- Loneliness Strategy – the Government published a loneliness strategy in 2018. Whilst this potentially applies to people of all ages, it is recognised that loneliness and isolation affects many older people, especially those living alone. The strategy identifies the link with poor health, and it announced that, by 2023, GPs would be able to refer anyone experiencing loneliness to take part in community activities or voluntary services.
- Housing and planning – a Lifetime Homes Standard was drawn up by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, given concerns that so many homes are unsuitable for, and hard to adapt to the needs of those with limited mobility or worsening health. It set 16 design principles covering issues such as parking, doorways, and service controls. National Planning Policy Framework expects local planning authorities to account for the housing needs of older people in their Local Plans. However, authorities must provide strong evidence should they want new build housing to exceed existing regulations (and so approach the Lifetime Homes Standard).
- Concessionary travel scheme – when people reach the state retirement age for women, they are entitled to apply for a pass which allows them to travel free on local buses, except at peak travel times. This England-wide scheme is nationally funded through a reimbursement paid to bus operators that carry concessionary passengers. The national scheme is topped up in some areas by the local authority, extending it to cover peak travel times.

The rural dimension

Older people form a significantly larger proportion of the population in rural than in urban areas. Just under a quarter of England's rural population (or 2,415,000 people) is aged 65 or over. Indeed, 3% of the rural population falls into the very elderly, or age 85 plus, category. Over time, older age groups are forming an increasing proportion of England's population. However, this demographic trend is most pronounced in predominantly rural areas. Over the period 2001 to 2015 the number of people aged 90 or over increased by 57% in predominantly rural areas. Indeed, official population projections show that the share of the population in predominantly rural areas which is aged 65 or over is expected to rise to just under 30% by the year 2035.

Local authority expenditure on adult social services is 6% higher in predominantly rural areas than in predominantly urban areas (as measured on a per resident basis). Those predominantly rural local authorities also face paying relatively high hourly charges where they commission home care for clients in need. Older people living in rural areas are more likely to be caring informally (on an unpaid basis) for someone else than their urban counterparts. Statistics show that:

- 24% of older people who live in rural areas provide unpaid care; whereas
- 18% of older people who live in urban areas provide unpaid care.

Almost 4,400 sheltered housing developments are in rural areas or a fifth of the England total. They hold 16% of dwellings on such developments, indicating that rural sheltered housing developments tend to be smaller than average. Developments in rural areas are less likely to have a warden than those elsewhere, although having a resident warden is still the most common set-up.

Some 75,000 residents are living in care homes in rural areas of England. They comprise just over a fifth (21%) of all residents living in care homes in England. The largest group are those that live in care homes which are run outside the public sector and which have no provision for nursing care.

The take-up rate of passes giving concessionary travel on local buses is relatively low in rural areas. Among residents who are eligible for a pass (of whom nine in ten are eligible due to older age), 58% of those living in smaller rural settlements have acquired one. This low figure undoubtedly reflects the lack of availability and frequency of bus services in many rural areas. Moreover, evidence shows that those who do take-up a concessionary bus pass make less use of it if they live in a non-metropolitan or shire area. The average pass holder in a non-metropolitan area used their pass for 62 journeys over the course of a year (compared with 228 journeys by Greater London pass holders and 110 journeys by those in other metropolitan areas). Although there are no rural-specific figures, survey findings show that the age group, which is most likely to volunteer, is the 65 to 74 age group. Some 67% of them said they had volunteered within the last year and 46% had volunteered within the last month. Older people need local services, transport options, accessible health and care provision, appropriate housing and access to leisure or social activities, to name just a few.

Specific Policy Asks

The session identified some specific policy asks of Government.

- **Build suitable housing:** Government should ensure new housing suits the needs of an ageing population by strengthening national planning guidance or allowing local planning authorities more leeway to set standards. This should take proper account of the Lifetime Homes Standard - including through Building Regulations. Better planning should also deliver sheltered and supported housing to meet rural needs. Co-housing schemes should be promoted as places where older residents could benefit through mutual support, with scope to be service hubs for the wider community.
- **Adapt existing homes:** funding for Disability Facilities Grant and other reablement measures should be increased, so that more people (most, though not all of them, older people) have a chance to benefit from home adaptations that help them to continue living safely in their own homes.
- **Offer travel options:** Government should amend, with funding, the statutory concessionary travel scheme, so it fits the rural context. This would permit concessionary travel before 9.30 a.m., since rural bus routes run less frequently and waiting for a following service can be impractical. It would also extend concessionary travel to community transport schemes since many villages have no traditional bus route.
- **Refocus on loneliness:** Government should recommit to its Loneliness Strategy, announcing continued funding for it beyond 2021. This should include a further funding round for local initiatives, which can address loneliness in rural and other areas, such as good neighbour or befriending schemes. The role of face-to-face local shopping, banking etc. should not be overlooked.
- **Improve health and care visits:** travel downtime for community health and care staff visiting patients in outlying rural areas should be taken fully into account and should not mean shorter visits. Emergency service call outs could be more efficiently handled in rural areas if services were more integrated. For example, creating specialist community paramedic roles or, for non-acute cases, allowing ambulance services to dispatch other health professionals.

HOUSING

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

West Northants Council (WNC) has published its 2022-23 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan in advance of it being considered at Full Council on 24 February. Local housing authorities are required to keep an HRA. The HRA is WNC's landlord services function and reflects a statutory obligation to account separately for local authority housing provision. The HRA budget proposes £56 million expenditure for 2022-23 and sets out the future years' projections to 2026-27. The proposals include a rent increase of 4.1 per cent, which is in line with the maximum limit set by government and will



increase the average rent from £93.66 to £97.50 per week. The rent increase will contribute approximately £2.2 million per annum which, whilst incorporating the decarbonisation agenda, will be invested in existing housing stock and contribute to funding a significant new build programme to increase the local housing supply for new council houses. This will ensure the council can maintain and protect levels of service provision and ensure the future sustainability of the HRA. Within the budget, the HRA Capital Programme

accounts for all capital expenditure on council housing, estate shops and garage sites. The key features of the proposed final budget include: A balanced revenue budget achieved in challenging circumstances
Investment of £28 million within the Capital Programme to maintain and improve existing housing stock and conduct further decarbonisation works

Investment within the Capital Programme of £42 million to build up to 200 new homes each year

Unavoidable growth of £1.78 million to protect existing service levels and ensure no reductions in services

Implementation of an average rent increase of £3.84 per week from 4th April 2022 and increases of 3.1 per cent from service charges to enable continued reinvestment of housing provision

An increase of 3.1 per cent in average garage rent in line with the September Consumer Price Index (CPI)

An average maximum rent increase of 4.1 per cent per dwelling, in line with the legislation and the government's national rent standard, which will take effect from 4th April 2022.

To view the budget and medium-term financial plans please visit the Cabinet Agenda for Tuesday, 15 February 2022

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

NGH continues its Visitors Ban

A graphic for an NHS update. It features the NHS logo in the top right corner, which includes the text 'NHS University Hospitals of Northamptonshire NHS Group'. The main text is 'Visiting restrictions update from Saturday 19 February' in bold black font. Below the text is a stylized illustration of a hospital building with a white cross on top, set against a light blue background with green hills at the bottom.

From Saturday 19 February 2022 both Northampton General and Kettering General Hospital's will be partially lifting visiting restrictions for adult inpatients that do not have COVID-19. Visits must be pre-booked with the ward and only one visitor will be permitted for one hour per day. Visiting in maternity and paediatrics remains the same.

Visiting update- 19 February 2022

- One visitor will be allowed to visit for one hour per day on open adult inpatient wards. Visits must be pre-booked with the ward in advance, and visitors will need to have evidence of a negative lateral flow test
- Anyone visiting the hospital must wear a face covering at all times unless they are exempt and must regularly wash or gel their hands
- Visiting on wards closed due to COVID-19 and visits to patients with COVID-19 are not permitted, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Visiting will be at the discretion of the nurse in charge for wards with more vulnerable patients. This includes Talbot Butler and Finedon wards at NGH and Lilford ward at KGH.
- Visiting in outpatient areas, Emergency Departments, urgent care and diagnostic appointments will be at the discretion of the nurse in charge
- Maternity and paediatric visiting remains open in line with national guidance
- Paediatric visiting remains as, one resident parent at a time. Parents are required to take a lateral flow test before they arrive. Parents can swap once during their stay.
- For maternity visiting women can have one birth partner attend during their stay whilst in labour subject to a lateral flow test. The post natal wards have set visiting times and partners are required to provide a negative lateral flow test result before visiting. Birth partners can attend all appointments relating to pregnancy including scans and throughout labour. Your birth partner can also attend the ward by appointment only.

Testing requirements for visitors

Do not come to the hospital if you have [any symptoms of COVID-19](#) or if you feel unwell in any other way. By not attending you can help to keep our vulnerable patients safe.

- **Lateral flow testing will be required for all adult inpatient ward visitors.** Any permitted visitors will be required to show evidence of a negative lateral flow test result before you will be able to enter the ward. You will need to be able to show the evidence of a negative result via the Government issued text message, email, or if this is not possible you can bring the test in a plastic bag.
- **Disney and Paddington wards:** Any additional visitors who are not resident parents or guardians will need to show evidence of a negative lateral flow test.
- If you are a support partner attending a maternity appointment you will need to be able to show a negative lateral flow test when arriving for your appointment. You will need to do this for all planned appointments including those in radiology and the community. Please read the maternity information for details around induction, labour and postnatal visiting.

If you do visit the hospital please make sure you make sure you wear a face covering or mask.

The below guidance may change at any time depending on our local COVID-19 situation and hospital response.

Changes to COVID Rules on Self Isolation

From 24 February in England, if you test positive for Covid, you are advised to stay at home, but no longer be required to self-isolate. Read more at <http://ow.ly/nOfi50I125Q>

Care Worker Bonus

Are you a care worker at a CQC regulated setting? If you continue work until the end of March 2022, you will get a £600 bonus! Find out more at <http://ow.ly/njUn50HibQY>



to

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

School Admissions Arrangements

The school's admission authority determines school admission arrangements annually, even if they have not changed from the previous year. We are the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the area. Other types of schools have their own admission authority:



- The **governing body** is the admission authority for foundation and voluntary aided schools
- The **academy trust** is the admission authority for academies, free school and UTCs

Admission authorities of schools wishing to make changes to their admission arrangements must publicly consult on the changes before determination. Further information can be found on <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions/school-admission-arrangements>

Half Term Lunch Vouchers

The most vulnerable children in West Northamptonshire will once again receive lunch vouchers during the next two school holidays. The scheme will support 9,500 families during the February half term and the Easter break by providing them with a £15 meal voucher per child per week, to pay for lunch during the three weeks of school holidays. Schools are currently being asked to provide lists of eligible families from



which WNC will generate individual pupil vouchers that will be returned to schools for distribution. The initial period of voucher distribution will cover the February half-term period only. Schools with the largest number of eligible pupils will receive the vouchers first and the rest in descending order in time for the start of the school holidays this month.

Help address the Digital Divide

Despite the pandemic having brought the stark realities of the digital divide to the nation's attention, and the roll-out of free laptops, the problem persists and risks getting worse.



Research suggests four out of five schools with pupils from low-income families do not have enough devices and internet access and according to recent data published by Ofcom, it is estimated that between 1.14m and 1.78m children in total in the UK have no home access to a laptop, desktop or tablet. This equates to around 13,500 children in West Northants who will experience digital poverty. When it comes to schoolwork a

smartphone is not sufficient – but the hard truth is that some families simply cannot afford the most appropriate IT equipment. During the recent pandemic when schools across the UK were forced to close, families in need were desperate for access to technology to support their children to continue their education from home. TowFood Community Larders in Towcester and Roade were asked by schools for help and managed to get sufficient grant funding to recondition 46 laptops and Chrome books for primary and secondary school pupils in villages in West Northants. Working with the Technology industries within County the charity has been able to recondition computers and get them to the schools to set up for the children to be able to continue their schoolwork at home, but this is only the tip of the iceberg.

They now find themselves once again in a situation when schools are reporting a lack of devices at home which, continues to form a divide in the classroom therefore the charity are applying their energy and asking local contacts to donate unwanted laptops, desktops or tablets so that they can get these to the children in greatest need and help to level up our communities where everyone can get the best education. Please donate equipment to your local TowFood or SNVB Volunteer or to Towcester Town Football Supporters Club, 19 Islington Road, Towcester NN12 6AU – Please place in shed in the car park during hours when the club is closed. Team@towfood.org.uk or 01327 636982 ;
Donations to <https://local.giving.org/charity/SNVB/>

Cricket Sessions for juniors



Would your child be interested in joining cricket sessions in Daventry?

WNC are working with Northamptonshire County Cricket Club to gauge the appetite for putting on fun sessions for juniors this summer.

Complete their survey at <http://ow.ly/x4iL50HBrze> to share your views and be in with the chance of winning a £100 Amazon voucher. Northamptonshire Sport.

Virtual School Easter Holiday Programme

Bookings are now open for our Virtual School Easter Holiday activity programme!

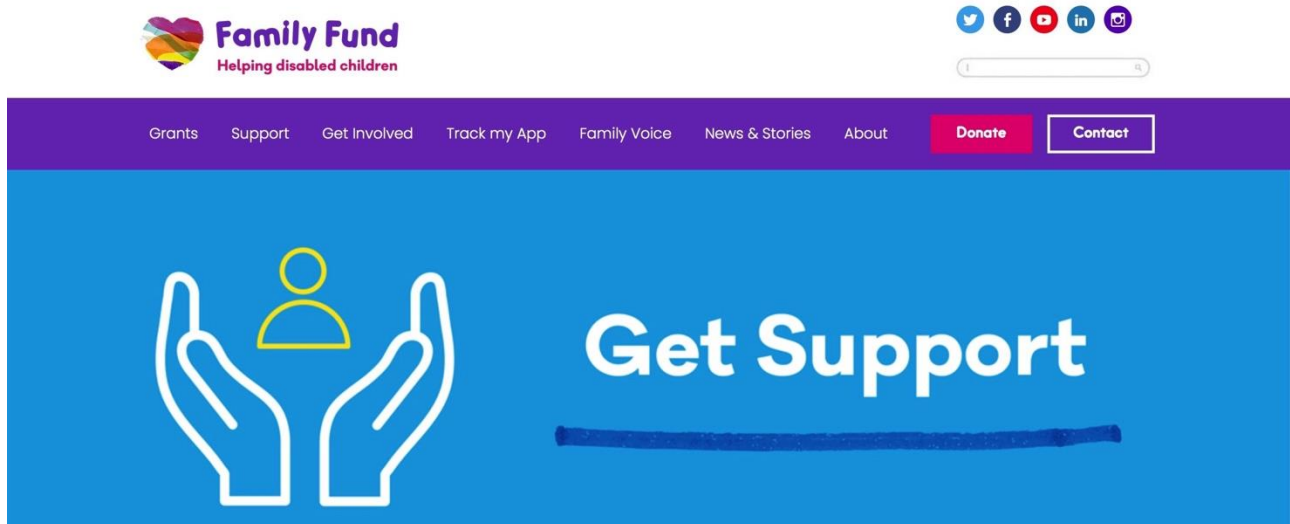
From arts & crafts and drama workshops to canoeing and exploring the great outdoors, the Virtual School Participation Programme offers a wide range of activities across Northamptonshire to help promote achievement and boost confidence in children and young people growing up in care.

To find out more or sign a young person up for a programme, click here: <http://ow.ly/5SwT50HYzVM>.



Family Fund – The Family Fund Trust for families with severely disabled children

The Family Fund helps families across the UK who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under.



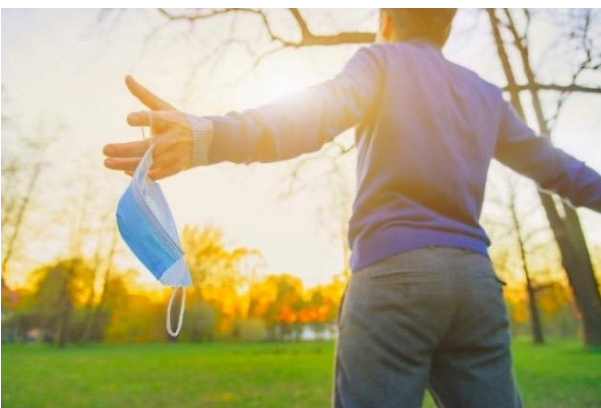
You can apply to Family Fund subject to a number of criteria which include that you are the parent or carer of a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under and that you have evidence of entitlement to one of the following: Universal Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and Pension Credit.

See the website for more details.

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

Councillor COVID Support Fund 2021-22



The new fund, which was agreed on 12 October Cabinet meeting, will enable Councillors to efficiently and effectively allocate money within their wards to make a positive impact on the areas they represent, helping them to empower residents to be active in their communities' recovery from COVID-19.

The Covid pandemic has had a huge impact on local community and voluntary organisations that rely on small grant awards to remain sustainable. The Councillor Covid Support Fund exists to support our local communities to recover from the impact of Covid during the remainder of the 2021-22 financial year. These

grants are available to voluntary and community groups (not individuals or Town and Parish Councils). Each Councillor has been allocated £2,500 to make local decisions on grant funding awards for the benefit of the communities' they represent. The grant must be used within the electoral ward of the Councillor and needs to be used to empower local residents to be active in their communities' recovery from the impact of Covid. The minimum grant award is £200.

A Councillor may co-operate with other Councillors within an electoral ward to pool their fund allocations for the purpose of this grant.

I have received 11 expressions of interest and six completed applications with three awards issued already. Three projects are for Cogenhoe, three for Denton, one for Brafield and one for Quinton. I look forward to giving you more information in due course. The time limit for all applications is 31 March 2022. If the Community Grants team approves all of my applications then I will have allocated all of my funds.

Councillors Andrew Grant and Fiona Cole may have some funding available.

Social Enterprise Support Fund – National Lottery Community Fund



This fund is open for applications now. It provides grants to help social enterprises rebuild from COVID-19. The National Lottery Community Fund and five social enterprise support agencies established it in partnership. Grants between £10,000 and £100,000 are available to social enterprises in England. They want to reach the most marginalised communities and to promote inclusion. They want to support social enterprises that are helping communities affected by COVID-19 to recover, and to help social enterprises themselves to recover and rebuild their trading.

The deadline for applications in Round 1 is 21 December 2021. Round 2 will open on 28 February and close on 24 March 2022.

<https://socialenterprisesupportfund.org.uk>

Magic Little Grants – Localgiving

After successfully distributing 2,000 grants to Localgiving members in 2021, the 2022 programme has been announced, supported by the People's Postcode Lottery. They will be awarding £500 grants to 2,650 charitable organisations on Localgiving. Applications for Magic Little Grants 2022 will be open from 16 March and applications should take just ten minutes to complete. <https://localgiving.org/magic-little-grants/>



Sale of Land at Sixfields

At 6pm on the 28th February 2022, Cabinet considered a recommendation to Dispose Land at Sixfields, Northampton as follows:

- a) The Council should trigger the process under Chapter 3 of Part 5 of the Localism Act 2011 relating to the disposal of an asset of community value (the Running Track site).
- b) Once the applicable moratorium period has expired enter an agreement with County Developments (Northampton) Limited and Northampton Town Football Club Limited for the disposal of the site for £890,000 as outlined in Appendix A and seek the necessary agreement from Homes England for this purpose. Please use the enclosed link for access to the Cabinet Papers.

However it was resolved that:

- a) A new decision making timetable is set to consider the disposal of land at Sixfields by the Leader in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Finance with a view to achieving a capital receipt before the end of 2022.
- b) The Council should trigger the process under Chapter 3 Part 5 Localism Act 2011 relating to a disposal of an asset of Community Value (the Running Track Site).
- c) The Assistant Director Assets & Environment conduct a best consideration assessment of the latest offers from Cillarda and CDNL and report to a future meeting of Cabinet. This was to meet the Council's obligations to seek best consideration in relation to land disposals, as set out in the report.



However it has now been reported that West Northamptonshire Council's Cabinet will consider a land deal at Sixfields on 8 March and further details will be published in the coming days. Full Council on 21 February was an opportunity for Cabinet to listen to and understand members concerns, most of which were overcome before the special Cabinet meeting on 28 February. One or two issues remained, and Cabinet members felt it would be prudent to take the time to consider the bids received since the release of the council report. The outstanding issues have also now been resolved and the latest bids are

being considered. Full details will be published in a report, which will go to next Tuesday's Cabinet meeting on 8 March.

Garfield Weston Foundation



The Foundation supports UK registered charities working within the UK in the areas of Welfare, Youth, Community, Arts, Faith, Environment, Education, Health and Museums & Heritage.

The Foundation awards grants for Capital, Project and Revenue costs. Where they already have a funding history with you, the Trustees may consider a multi-year request for up to three years, provided you can demonstrate that a longer-term commitment will add value to your organisation's objectives. There are no

deadlines for applications under £100,000. Grants above this level are reviewed at one of 8 board meetings a year.

<https://garfieldweston.org/apply-to-us/grant-guidelines/>

LEADER, Farm Investment Fund

As the WNC Councillor for the LEADER programme, which enters its final year, I would like to make you aware of the 'Farm Investment Fund'. The application window for the Farm Transformation Fund's Improving Farm Productivity theme opened on 19th January 2022. Grants from £35,000 up to £500,000 are available to invest in productivity-boosting equipment such as driverless tractors, robots that harvest, spray crops and weed, and automated milking systems. The first of the 2-stage application process closes on 16th March 2022, with full applications required by 14th September 2022. If this is of interest, please contact William Dallimore, Programme



Manager, Leader, Ngage Solutions Ltd, Claydon House, 1 Edison Road, Rabans Lane Industrial Area, Aylesbury, HP19 8TE. Telephone: 01494 927167

Land-based Skills - Help and Evidence needed

Leader is exploring an opportunity for a skills funding programme specifically covering the land-based sector and are working with Vale Training to evidence base the need. We would be very grateful if you could spare 2-3 minutes to complete the Employer Survey. All information will be treated as confidential, and no personal data will be collected.



If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to get in contact with William Dallimore | Leader Programme Manager, Ngage Solutions

T: 01494 927167

E: william.dallimore@ngagesolutions.co.uk

W: www.leader-programme.org.uk

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

Reporting Highway Problems

Report and track highway problems via Street Doctor

Before you start

Some problems cannot be reported through Street Doctor because they are the responsibility of other organisations. Please check first whether the problem you wish to report is listed below:

- Abandoned vehicles
- Flooding
- Speeding
- Trunk roads (e.g. M1, A5, A14, A43, A45)
- Street lighting
- E-Scooters



Report or track a problem using Street Doctor

Any highway related issues or defects should be reported via Street Doctor, the Local Authorities public reporting system. By using Street Doctor, your report will be logged appropriately, go to the right team and you will, receive updates of what we are going to do and why. Issues reported will be looked at initially within 5 working days to determine what further action may be required. Please do not try to report issues and defects via Twitter or on any other social media channels. Some lesser-known issues you can report using Street Doctor are:

Rights of way e.g. gates, livestock, stile

Winter maintenance e.g. grit bins, gritting, snow

You can tell us about most problems on the roads or highways (apart from those listed above) - or you can track a problem you have already logged.

<http://ow.ly/bOUQ50FjHuI>

Disabled Parking Permits



A disabled parking permit (Blue Badge) allows people with severe mobility issues or non-visible (hidden) conditions, causing them to severely struggle with the journeys between a vehicle and their destination, easier access to public facilities by allowing them to park close to where they need to go.

Check if you qualify, apply, renew or replace a Blue Badge online at <http://bit.ly/WNbluebadge>

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Working to keep women and girls safe

Several initiatives are underway to help improve the safety of women and girls across the county, particularly in the night-time economy. Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold is working alongside West Northamptonshire Council and Northamptonshire Police among others, on projects that are together supported by more than £800,000 from the Home Office Safety of Women at Night Fund and the Safer Streets 3 fund. Schemes underway will see West Northamptonshire Council

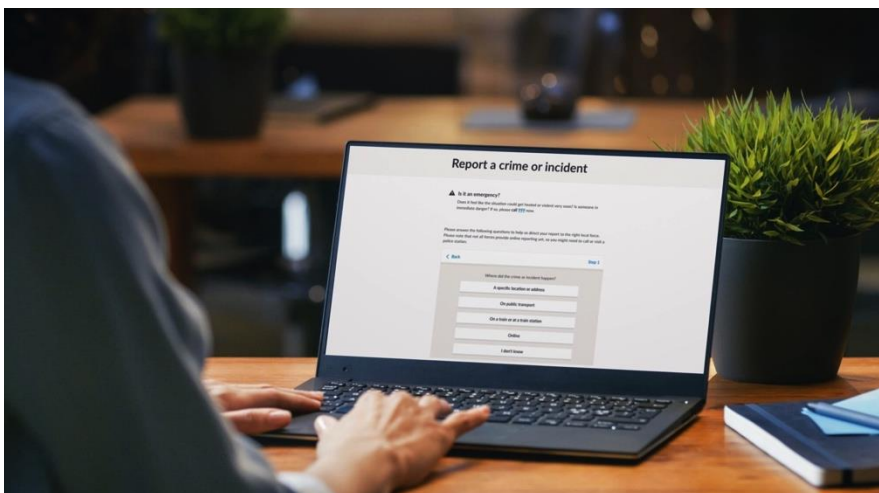
improving lighting and CCTV on the Racecourse and Becket's Park. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner will improve taxi rank security; provide training for staff in licensed premises to help them recognise and offer support if someone is being harassed and run campaigns to encourage people to think about



respect and acceptable behaviour. Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Stephen Mold, said: "We're very grateful for the Home Office funding that gives us collectively more than £800,000 to support these important improvements in Northampton. As well as physical crime prevention measures, we'll be working to raise awareness of the kind of behaviours that make women uncomfortable, and the Police will be targeting offenders who prey on women out at night. "I know that people across the county feel less safe and more reluctant to go out at night and we want to make sure that women can feel confident and help create a safer environment for everyone."

StreetSafe Map, on-line Mapping tool

Hundreds of people have already used a new online mapping tool, which allows the public to flag areas in their communities where they feel unsafe. The Home Office launched the StreetSafe map in September, and the National Police Chiefs' Council collects data allowing police forces to understand the specific



concerns raised and use the information to make informed decisions on safety. Although open to everyone, the tool is being used as part of efforts both locally and nationally to tackle violence against women and girls. Reporting is anonymous and the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's Office will use the data gathered for Northamptonshire. Validated trends will be taken to the Community Safety Partnerships

in Northamptonshire where Police and Local Authorities will jointly work towards finding solutions. Commissioner Stephen Mold said: “The first trial phase since September has proved very useful for us, and we’re glad to see StreetSafe continuing for the next financial year. This will really help us reveal any patterns and build solutions for specific local problems. “And it will form a really important part of the work we are doing in Northamptonshire to target violence against women and girls.” You can use the StreetSafe map by visiting www.police.uk/pu/notices/streetsafe/street-safe/

CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

Armed Forces Community Hub



New Armed Forces Community Hubs have launched across West Northants, offering serving personnel, veterans and their families a warm and welcoming place to go. Please see this link for more information: [About Us \(vcn.org.uk\)](http://AboutUs(vcn.org.uk)) or [Veteran Community Network \(VCN\) Beds, MK, Northants | Facebook](#) – Please follow ‘n’ share. The meetings are organised at Daventry Volunteer Centre - New Street, Daventry NN11 4BT on Thursday 24th March 14.00 – 16.00hrs, Thursday 28th April 14.00 – 16.00hrs, Thursday 26th May 14.00 – 16.00hrs

The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee- Historic Milestone 6 February 2022

The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee has officially kicked off, as she becomes the first British monarch to mark 70 years on the throne. Today marks the historic milestone – the date when Her Majesty first acceded to the throne seven decades ago, following the death of King George VI. But thousands across the UK will come together to continue celebrations for months to come.

The monarch has a number of special treats planned for the nation – including a four-day bank holiday and a huge concert with some of the world’s biggest stars. Crowds will be drawn in by a show with more than 500 horses and 1,000 performers and a display at The Royal Collection Trust. Other big events to look out for include a history-making dessert competition and a Big Jubilee Lunch.

Enter now Platinum Pudding Competition

Everyone is invited to enter to create a dish to dedicate to the Queen’s reign. Dame Mary Berry will lead a judging panel to decide on a dish that will hopefully serve as a long-lasting reminder of Her Majesty’s 70 years.

May 12-15 Platinum Jubilee Celebration

More than 500 horses and 1,000 performers will take part in a 90-minute show taking the Windsor Castle audience through history right from Elizabeth I to the present day.

June 2 Extended Bank Holiday Begins

Trooping the Colour has been cancelled in its full form for two years due to Covid – but the Queen’s Birthday Parade is set to be back in full force, with the 1st Battalion, Irish Guards and over 1,200 officers and soldiers from the Household Division putting on a display. Sandringham and Balmoral will also be open for residents and visitors to enjoy the celebrations across the Bank Holiday. The UK will join the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories to light a beacon to mark the Jubilee.

June 3 Bank Holiday Day Two

The Service of Thanksgiving for the Queen's reign will be held at St Paul's Cathedral.



June 4 Bank Holiday Day Three

Some of the world's biggest entertainers will draw in audiences at Platinum Party at the Palace. Buckingham Palace will host the concert, which will celebrate the most significant moments from the Queen's reign.

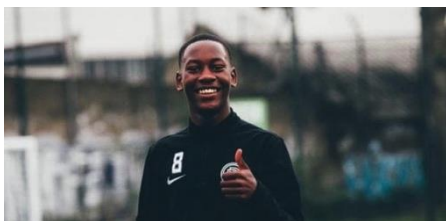
June 5 Bank Holiday Day Four

Street parties are being planned across the UK and neighbours are expected to come together for food and fun to celebrate. Dancers, musicians, military personnel will also come together in London to tell the story of Her Majesty's reign through a pageant.

July the Royal Collection Trust

Three displays marking the Queen's accession to the throne, the Coronation and Jubilees will be put on at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse

Football Foundation grants



The Football Foundation provides grants for building or refurbishing grassroots facilities, such as changing rooms, 3G pitches, fencing, portable floodlights, pitch improvements and clubhouse refurbishment. Grants are available for between £10,000 and £500,000. The Fund is available to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations and gives grants for projects that:

- 1) Improve facilities for football and other sport in local communities.
- 2) Sustain or increase participation amongst children and adults, regardless of background age, or ability.
- 3) Help children and adults to develop their physical, mental, social and moral capacities through regular participation in sport. <https://footballfoundation.org.uk/looking-for-funding>