

MONTHLY NEWS REPORT OCTOBER 2022



E-Newsletter Issue 11/2022
With Members of the Caring Sharing Team
At Cotton's Farmhouse, Cogenhoe
Thursday, 29 September 2022

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NEWS REPORT OCTOBER 2022

Monthly Highlights

From the notification of her death to her funeral, we were honoured to have commemorated Her Majesty the Queen over the ten days of mourning. The Queen stood strong throughout her 70 years of service. Right to the end, she never wavered in her relentless dedication to duty. Rest in Peace, Ma'am.

We are still seeking sponsors to support families and individuals fleeing the war in Ukraine.

I am receiving a significant number of emails together with messages and postings on Facebook regarding the 41 Bus Route, which affects our villages along the A428 between Bedford and Northampton. I have asked WNC to reconsider the impact of the proposed service revision with a view to resolving the problem being caused by these changes. It will be a difficult problem to solve as Stagecoach has already announced the scrapping of certain bus routes despite local government securing an extension to the Bus Recovery Grant earlier this month. I am committed to try to obtain a satisfactory resolution as Service 41 with its single departure from Northampton to Bedford in the morning and one in the evening cannot be described as a bus service. To go to Northampton, you would need to leave Denton at 6.54 am and return at 7.35 pm.

Last month, I was alerted to rubble being dumped on a bridleway from Hartwell to Roade. I raised the matter with WNC, and the Street Cleansing team attended on site and established that the location of this rubble was on private land. We can only remove fly tipping from the public highway and cannot encroach on private land. Therefore, it would be the responsibility of the landowner to arrange removal. Since then, I have asked WNC to consider whether it is a planning enforcement issue as it is on a bridleway and whether we can ascertain the land ownership to take this matter forward. As soon as I have a further update, I will let you know.

I have received emails from a resident in Hartwell regarding ongoing flooding and blocked drains in Blacksmiths Way, Hartwell. Despite reporting the matter on numerous occasions via Street Doctor, the issue remains unresolved. I have been advised that 13 reports have been raised and they have called the emergency line on 3 occasions. Yet our engineers respond the day after the flooding and then close off the incident. Clearly rainwater is not soaking away adequately, and we need to investigate a more permanent solution. I have asked WNC to investigate and explain why the matter remains unresolved and consider whether there might be a long-term resolution to this problem and to update me accordingly.

I have attended several community events this month, which has given me lots of opportunities to catch up with so many of you.

I took part in the Northamptonshire Historic Churches Trust 'Ride and Stride' this month and I have now visited all the historic churches in Hackleton & Grange Park.

My other community activities have included, the Quinton and Preston Deanery Home Produce Show and their Macmillan Coffee Morning, Little Houghton Harvest Supper, the Cogenhoe Farmers Market, their MacMillan Coffee event and Harvest Supper, the Service of Commemoration for Queen Elizabeth II at St Mary the Virgin, Little Houghton Church, and my visit to the Caring and Sharing Trust, Cogenhoe. Please read all about these events in my monthly report.

Earlier this month, WNC set out the precautionary steps we are taking to manage the financial pressures that are affecting many local authorities across the country because of the continuing cost of living crisis, rising inflation rates and the lasting impacts of the pandemic. The Cabinet report highlights in-year pressures of £7.6 million and predicts further pressures which the Council may experience over the rest of the year. Included within the report are the actions that are being taken to manage these pressures and help to improve the position.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is carrying out a review of the ward boundaries in West Northamptonshire and your input is essential to help ensure the best outcomes for West Northamptonshire residents. The review has identified that from 2025 there will be 77 members, down from the current 93 in West Northamptonshire. LGBCE is now looking at the pattern of wards the 77 members will represent from the next election in 2025. To draw up the new wards, the Boundary Commission has specific criteria so, for example they look at evidence of community identity and balance that against the need to ensure that the number of electors per member is broadly similar. Each member in West Northants will represent an average of 4,227 electors each. This number is now fixed, and we must work out a pattern of boundaries that meets their criteria.

The ward of Hackleton and Grange Park comprises Brafield, Castle Ashby, Cogenhoe, Whiston, Denton, Hackleton, Piddington, Hartwell, Little Houghton, Quinton, Yardley Hastings, and Grange Park. It has 10,323 electors and is currently represented by three Councillors. If it were to remain as a three-member ward it would need to add 2,508 electors to become compliant with 12,831 members as per the guidance. If it were to become a two-member ward it would need to lose 1,704 electors to become compliant with 8,554 members as per the guidance.

All the WNC ward councillors are being asked to consider this matter including wards bordering Hackleton and Grange Park such as Riverside Park, Nene Valley, Bugbrooke, Towcester & Roade and Deanshanger are looking at their boundaries too.

WNC is gathering evidence of communities, and your input will be important. The existing wards will change and therefore we need to evidence every single proposed boundary with strong community evidence to support our proposals. To help us do this, we need to complete a form by the deadline of Thursday 13 October. Your ward members are being asked to state what boundaries there should be in our area and to provide a map of wards proposed, however we need evidence to support the boundaries, so we are asking those who know the area best to provide us with that evidence for the form. This does not prevent you being part of another submission on behalf of your parish and there is merit in submitting your evidence to everyone who is making a submission to ensure they understand your community. Please complete any form that is emailed to you. The email also provides examples of strong and weak evidence, and you are encouraged to read this to help make sure you are presenting evidence that will carry weight. Try to provide evidence of where people in a community go to get services, leisure etc which evidences community e.g., access to the Doctors Surgery, Schools etc.

Some time ago, I advised you about the WNC Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. The Resilience and Innovation Northants (RAIN) project, led by West Northamptonshire Council in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council, is funded by the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation fund and is one of 25 projects nationwide learning and developing new approaches to improve flood resilience and manage flood risk over the next 5 years. The project will be working with communities within the boundaries of two river catchments: Harpers Brook in North Northamptonshire, and Wootton Brook in West Northamptonshire.

Local Area Partnerships (LAP) will play a key part in the Integrated Health & Care agenda. DSN4 LAP will be one of the first two that will become active during the next few weeks, and it covers the Deanshanger, Towcester & Roade, Bugbrooke and Hackleton & Grange Park LAP.

I have been appointed to represent the Hackleton and Grange Park ward. We will be exploring how we might work in a collaborative way to improve outcomes for our patients and constituents within our local area and we are currently engaging with GPs in the area who have registered patients in the LAP footprint. The first meeting will take place on 4 October.

WNC aims to create one tariff across West Northamptonshire Council for Hackney Carriage Fares. People are now being asked their views on proposals, as we launch a 14-day consultation. A public notice has been issued on 22 September which asks people to have their say on the new proposed table of fares. To review the proposals and provide your views by Thursday 6 October visit WNC's consultation hub at [hackney carriage fares increase](#).

North and West Northamptonshire Event Safety Partnership, which offers advice for local event organisers, has launched a new event notification process that has been developed to help ensure a supportive and consistent approach to event safety management in Northamptonshire.

Parents and carers can now apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a year 3 place in a junior school, or a Year 7 place in a secondary school for the September 2023 intake. They can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years of age on or before 31 August 2023. The closing date for applications for places in reception and year 3 (junior school) is 15 January 2023 at midnight. The closing date for applications for Year 7 places is 31 October 2022 at midnight. There is a separate application process for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan, details of which can be found on the [SEND admissions page](#).

As the WNC Member Representative on the RSN, I took part in their National Rural Conference, from 20th September-23rd September online. We covered several topics, which are very relevant to the rural area. I have provided a lengthy summary in my Monthly Report. I draw your attention to the session on Rural Net Zero as Simon Green, CEO from the Rural Design Centre, Northumberland talked about Rural Community Energy and how they met the challenges of energy supply to community buildings.

They now have an agreed approach to the creation of a community energy company, raising funding for, installing and operating renewable energy generation and storage. They developed detailed surveys of 19 community buildings, demonstrating financial return and providing plans for installing solar panels and battery storage and secured funding for first installs and discussions are advanced for the remainder. They have plans developed to create a cooperative for delivery and a combined financial model is in development, including opportunities for grid balancing revenues. They have a planned second phase of 20 further buildings identified and engaged. The expected impact is a minimum of 30% energy cost savings for community buildings, after cost of capital and operating costs paid for (likely higher). They will avoid 3000 tonnes plus of CO2 emissions and have a more reliable supply of energy. Overall, they will achieve reduced infrastructure costs and improved resilience for vital community assets in times of emergency. For those Parish Councils looking at the cost of energy then the experience gained by the Rural Design Centre may be valuable.

All the Best, Steve

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Our Long Goodbye

From the notification of her death to her funeral, we were honoured to have commemorated Her Majesty the Queen over the ten days of mourning. Soldiers and officers of all ranks have fired gun salutes, formed guards of honour, and carried Her Majesty's coffin with dedication and pride. More than 250,000 people went through Westminster Hall to see the Queen lying in state in days leading up to the state funeral. Indeed, the queue to allow mourners to pay their last respects to our late monarch was closed several times after the crowds exceeded the planned 10 miles.



On 19 September 2022, we all said thank you to Her Majesty for the final time. Most of us have never known life in Britain without our Queen at its head and so much has changed since she made her promise to the nation over 70 years ago that her 'whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to [our] service' – and that it has. The Queen has stood strong through it all: countless political upheavals, royal scandals, national

tragedies and, most recently, a global pandemic. She has been a constant through the chaos of our national and personal lives. Right to the end, she never wavered in her relentless dedication to duty.

Rest in Peace, Ma'am.

Period of Mourning

Following on from the sad news of Queen Elizabeth II's death and the announcement of a bank holiday for the day of the funeral, WNC's had considered service arrangements in line with Government guidance. These were based on the usual Bank Holiday service arrangements for our Council, with the closure of offices and emergency and out-of-hours duty cover being put in place. Some sites, including Household Waste and Recycling Centres, were closed for the day, as will schools and further education settings, however activities such as weddings and booked events, continued to go ahead. Regularly updated information about the impact on our services could be found on our website.



Waste and recycling collections

Household waste and recycling collections continued to take place as scheduled, however, garden and some food waste collections did not take place in the Daventry area due to facility closures. Affected residents were asked to leave any uncollected bins out and crews returned to collect them at the earliest opportunity.

Household Waste Recycling Centres

All recycling centres in West Northamptonshire were closed on Monday 19 September.

Customer services

Our customer services teams were not available. Our out-of-hours emergency lines was operating.

Housing

Our out-of-hours emergency lines was operating for reports of anyone homeless.

Libraries

Our libraries were closed on the day of the funeral.

Leisure Centres

A number of leisure centres across West Northamptonshire were operating restricted hours.

Books of condolence

Books of condolence remained available at locations across West Northamptonshire, including a number of locations in our towns and parishes.

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

Update on Highways A428, Denton and Billing Road, Brafield



I have received more enquiries from Denton residents seeking confirmation as to when the overgrown trees and shrubs which are covering the road signs on the A428 will be cut back.

When I last met Highways, they were unable to give us a timeframe for this work to be done. I have chased them yet again asking them to investigate the current position and provide me with an update as quickly as possible.

As you know I have secured a reduction in the speed limit on the A428, and I am awaiting details of the project plan. On 30 September, Highways informed me

that they have not yet heard back from Milton Keynes Council concerning our proposal about the new reduced limit and have therefore taken the decision to progress with the new limit up to the county boundary.

I understand that Gerald Coul Drake, Chairman, Brafield Parish Council had a very useful meeting with Matthew Clarke from WNC Highways. Several residents joined them, and they discussed a number of issues as they walked along Billing Road. The Brafield residents raised concerns primarily with the Billing Road in terms of speeding traffic and HGVs. A number of specific issues were raised, and the Parish Council agreed to discuss this further as a council and then send Matt a list detailing their priorities. Matt will then provide them with a formal response outlining the WNC position in terms of a way forward.

Stagecoach 41 Bus Route

I am receiving a significant number of emails together with messages and postings on Facebook regarding the 41 Bus Route, which affects our villages along the A428 between Bedford and Northampton. I have asked WNC to reconsider the impact of the proposed service revision with a view to resolving the problem being caused by these changes. It will be a difficult problem to solve as Stagecoach has already announced the scrapping of certain bus routes despite local government securing an extension to the Bus Recovery Grant earlier this month. The grant had intended to plug the gap in revenue losses of the bus companies and ensure the current network of bus services be maintained. However, despite receiving a six-month grant, Stagecoach has decided to make service cuts. I have since heard from Nick Henstock, Assistant Director for Highways and Transport, Place and Economy Directorate who informs me that WNC are considering how the Council can best support bus services within the Council area as part of the bus service improvement plan, and as part of this work we will consider the connectivity of rural communities and the possibility of alternative models to provide sustainable and cost-effective services.

Unfortunately, the service is run by Stagecoach on a commercial basis and therefore we are able to make decisions about any changes to services. The Council does provide support to some bus services, however the amount of money available for this is finite and we cannot continue to support services at any cost if they are not viable.

WNC have a cross party members working group helping shape the bus services improvement plan and we will keep you informed as this work progresses.

I am committed to try to obtain a satisfactory resolution as Service 41 with a single departure from Northampton to Bedford in the morning and one in the evening cannot be described as a bus service. You would need to leave Denton at 6.54 am and return at 7.35 pm.

Bridleway from Hartwell to Roade

This month, I was alerted to rubble being dumped on a bridleway from Hartwell to Roade. I raised the matter with WNC, and the Street Cleansing team attended on site and established that the location of this rubble was on private land. We can only remove fly tipping from the public highway and cannot encroach on private land. Therefore, it would be the responsibility of the landowner to arrange removal. We did not observe any asbestos type of waste, as was originally suggested, but we have said that we would be happy to arrange a meeting at the site at a mutually convenient time. Since then, I have asked WNC to consider whether it is a planning enforcement issue as it is on a bridleway and whether we can ascertain the land ownership to take this matter forward. As soon as I have a further update, I will let you know.

Hartwell Flooding and Blocked Drains

I have received emails from a resident in Hartwell regarding ongoing flooding and blocked drains in Blacksmiths Way. Despite reporting the matter on numerous occasions via Street Doctor, the issue remains unresolved. WNC now have multiple images regarding the ongoing flooding issue. The resident has reported that these photos show the bad camber that has been introduced on Ashton Road entering Amberly Road causing all flood water to now pour down Amberly Road instead. They also show the extent of the flooding the residents have had to endure since issues have been introduced. I have been advised that 13 reports have been raised and they have called the emergency line on 3 occasions. Yet our engineers respond the day after the flooding and then close off the incident. Clearly rainwater is not soaking away adequately, and we need to investigate a more permanent solution. I have asked WNC to investigate and explain why the matter remains unresolved and consider whether there might be a long-term resolution to this problem and to update me accordingly.

Proposed changes to Northampton Rail Freight Order

The screenshot shows a planning application notice from SEGRO (Junction 15) Limited. The notice is dated 10 August 2022 and is titled 'The Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Order 2019 (S.I. 2019 No. 1338) (The DCO)'. It details a proposed non-material change to the order, specifically regarding the addition of a new rail infrastructure plan (NIP) to the order. The notice includes contact information for SEGRO and a deadline for representations by 11.59pm on 28 September 2022.

On 11th August 2022, SEGRO issued a letter regarding the Northampton Gateway development. The letter serves as a notification of the consultation period for the proposed changes to the Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Order, which may allow the developers to begin using the warehousing units ahead of the completion of the rail/freight interchange. This is a significant change to their original order. Rt Hon. Dame Andrea Leadsom DBE MP has issued a copy of her response to the non-material change to Northampton Gateway, Rail freight Interchange project consultation. It can

be found on her website. We are still awaiting the outcome of the consultation.

Mud Kitchen Café Farmers' Market and Craft Fair

On Sunday 11 September 2022, I attended the Mud Kitchen Café, Farmers' Market and Craft Fair at Cogenhoe and Whiston Village Hall, York Avenue, Cogenhoe, NN7 1NB. It was lovely to meet so many of you including Sean, Paula, and Alice Gadney, as I made my purchases.

Don't forget to support the next one on Sunday 16 October 2022 from 10.00am-3.00pm. The homemade, and traders.

The Mud Kitchen Café is visitors into the Cogenhoe the local economy and businesses.



market offers the best in fresh, local, handmade produce from a variety of local

committed to encouraging residents and and Whiston Village Hall to help support showcase some amazing local independent

Little Houghton Harvest Supper

A special thank you to all who were involved in organising the Little Houghton Harvest Supper on Friday 23 September 2022. Around 60 residents of the village enjoyed a tasty home cooked meal of a sausage plait with lovely fresh vegetables followed by a tasty pudding in celebration of the fruits of a combined harvest. Holding a Harvest Supper has long been a part of Little Houghton's celebration of the Harvest Festival. The idea of a meal shared by the whole community to say thank you for a successful harvest is a very old and deep-seated tradition and it was evidently very much alive in Little Houghton last Friday. Using a bit of imagination means that the villagers have turned this event into a unique and successful fundraiser for the Church of St Mary the Virgin, whilst generating a lot of fun for the village.

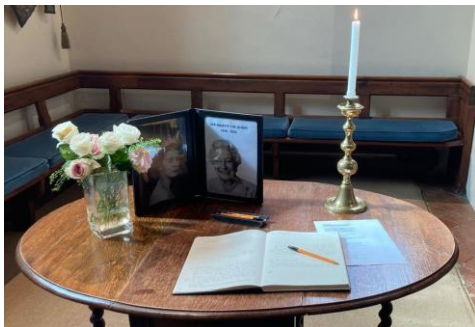
Andrew Langley helped to raise cash at the Harvest Supper Auction by being a witty and persuasive auctioneer. Andrew was able to pull off the tricky task of creating a fun experience while raising as much money as possible for the church. We had a super selection of 14 Lots:

1. A lift or ride to a local event. It could be a school prom a wedding or a party in one of Luke's weird and whacky vehicles
2. 2 hours gardening from an experienced and knowledgeable horticulturist, Kaye Howard.
3. A relaxing Aromatherapy session from Kaye Napier.
4. "Guess" Gents Watch from Alan Stonewigg.



5. "Guess" Ladies Watch from Alan Stonewigg.
6. A tennis lesson for 2 from county player Jonny Searle.
7. Delicious Easy Meals, provide Alice Gadney with your ingredients and she will whizz or some wholesome meal for you.
8. Enjoy an evening of Traditional Polish Specialities. 5 course Polish taster supper for 6. Sample some of Dick's Mum's secret recipes. Cooked by Dick and Alex at their home.
9. Make your own notebooks. Design, make and monogram your own notebooks during a factory visit with Andrew and Susanne to their factory, Juniper in Wellingborough, for up to 4 people, with refreshments provided.
10. A meal for 4 at the King's Head Spratton provided by John and Annabelle. A full 3 course meal for 4 people (please book in advance and not does not include drinks).
11. 2-day tickets from Richard and Sarah to the Billing Off Road Show 2023, plus a hair-raising passenger ride in a winch challenge vehicle, across bumps, sharp bends, jumps and even a lorry.
12. A master class in Indian cooking for 2, from Lalit and Neetu, who will guide and demonstrate their traditional methods before dining with them after.
13. Golf at Woburn. 3 guests to join Ian Edwards at the magnificent Championship course, to be arranged in 2023.
14. 2 tickets for the Northampton Saints vs Leicester Tigers on Saturday, September 24, 2022.

Once again, a special thank you to all who made the evening so special.



Queen Elizabeth II Service of Commemoration St Mary the Virgin, Little Houghton

On the 18 September 2022, I attended the service to commemorate the life of Queen Elizabeth II at St Mary the Virgin Church, Little Houghton.

They also had their Harvest Service together with their Harvest Market, which took place outside the church at 12 noon, straight after the service. Together with others from the village,

I was able to sign and leave a thought in the Little Houghton village Book of Remembrance for Her Majesty.

Quinton and Preston Deanery Home Produce Show

On Sunday 4 September 2022, I attended the Quinton and Preston Deanery Home Produce Show at the Manor House, Quinton. Entries were staged between 10.30am and 12.30pm. The Show started at 12.30pm and refreshments were served until 2.00pm.



Pippa introduced me to Josie Milicevic from Josie's Cake Company who was the judge of all the baked entries. She explained that she had needed to taste a small piece of each cake entry, which must have been tasty but challenging, as there were a significant number of entries! Josie is a highly talented young Northamptonshire Chef. She studied catering for three years at Northampton College and in her final year she was awarded 'Chef of the Year'. Through that award

she was able to work with Raymond Blanc at Le Manoir, Oxfordshire (a two Michelin-starred restaurant).

She has her own cake business and has built her own commercial kitchen near Salcey Forest where she makes her creative, mouth-watering bakes for local businesses and personal celebrations. She showed us photographs of her work and I have to say that I was very impressed. She is busy designing her Halloween boxes which will be on sale soon.

The prize giving started at 3.15pm and it was followed by an auction of produce. I participated in the auction and came home with chillies, green beans and two cakes. I did bid for the choc ices, which I won and then distributed to others before leaving as they were already melting. I enjoyed meeting many of my Quinton friends and I look forward to catching up with you all again soon.



My Visit to the Caring and Sharing Trust

On 29 September, I spent a most enjoyable few hours at Cotton's Farmhouse with members of the Caring and Sharing Trust, which is a National Charity that has been working with people with learning disabilities, their families, carers, and care professionals for over 35 years. They provide fun, friendship and a wide range of activities at their base in the village of Cogenhoe.

Michael Clarke BEM kindly introduced me to Caroline Scattergood, Lena Davis, and the team. I then met with everyone who attends the Centre each day and they gave me a great welcome. I was given a tour of the facilities and saw the theatre, which takes place in the ArtStudio-in-a-Barn and the library, which was the perfect place to explore the world of books. I have promised to return very soon!

If you would like to find out more about this wonderful organization you can visit: www.cottonsfarmhouse.org.

Cogenhoe Macmillan Coffee Morning

Here in Cogenhoe, the Macmillan Coffee Morning event was hosted on Saturday 24 September 2022 at the Cogenhoe and Whiston Village Hall in the afternoon. I joined them as they were settling their 'Green Coloured Tombola' and the pre-loved sale and raffle. Try and find donations for a green tombola!



All the money raised helps fund Macmillan services to make sure people with cancer can get the physical, emotional, and financial support needed. Macmillan, alongside their partners in the NHS, work tirelessly to support and assist those living with cancer.

More than 98 per cent of Macmillan's funding comes directly from donations, and without it, thousands of people could miss out on vital care and support.

A special thank you to Maddie, Tessa, and everyone else who worked hard to make the event a success. The Coffee and

Walnut cake was delicious!

Little Houghton Afternoon Tea

We really enjoyed meeting up with friends at the Little Houghton Afternoon Tea at St Mary's Church, Little



Houghton on 25 September 2022. The afternoon was made even more special as we were able to hear some parishioners practising their music for a wedding, which was to take place the following week. It was such a lovely atmosphere as the sun streamed through the 'window of light' and created an unusual multi coloured hue in that corner of the church. We sat and chatted during the afternoon, and it was great to meet with Alice, Ralph, John, Tessa, Jon, Eddie and Jenny and others. A special thank you to Jenny Monk for all she does to prepare and serve the afternoon tea.

St Peters Church, Harvest Supper, Cogenhoe

On 30 September, I attended the St Peters Church, Harvest Supper at the newly refurbished Cogenhoe Sports and Social Club. Despite the heavy rain outside, we found everyone inside the hall in high spirits.

Harvest Festival normally falls towards the end of September, or early October, and the whole community comes together to celebrate the event. On Friday, 30 September 2022 tradition was truly alive in Cogenhoe.



We had a lovely three-course meal and Tony Carr entertained us whilst we ate our supper. Tony is a Northampton vocalist with great sets of Rat Pack standards and modern classics from 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and beyond.

Towards the end of the evening, many were singing along to 'Rat Pack' and Elvis Presley numbers. As I left, I was reminded of: "Oh what a Night. December 1963." No prizes for knowing who sang it!

A big thank you to everyone who made the Harvest Supper, in Cogenhoe, a night to remember.

Quinton Macmillan Coffee Morning

I joined many residents at the Quinton Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Quinton & Preston Deanery Village Hall, School Lane on 1 October 2022. Upon arrival, we were surprised to find not just the hall but the terrace and garden busy with people and more tables being set up to accommodate the increasing numbers. It was good to meet so many folks, including Councillor Peter Collyer, Chair of the Parish Council as we were able to catch up. This annual coffee morning has been very well attended over the last few years and it raises vital funds for people living with cancer.

Here in Quinton, the Coffee Morning event was hosted on Saturday 1 October 2022, and they certainly seemed to 'pull out all the stops' to make it a success. Well done to all who were involved in arranging everything. The cake, coffee and friendly chatter was excellent.



REFUGEES IN NORTHANTS

More Sponsors needed to offer Homes for Ukraine



We are seeking more sponsors to support families and individuals fleeing the war in Ukraine. West Northamptonshire is an incredibly welcoming place, with many wonderful people who are willing to support those in need. We're extremely grateful for all the help so far,

yet we could do with some additional help. The £350 per month thank-you payment is still on offer for sponsors who are successfully matched to Ukrainian guests.

We need some basic information to begin the process including:

- Name, address, and contact details
- Who they would be able to accommodate (a family with children/couple/single female/single male)
- What accommodation they have available (including size and number of bedrooms)
- An indication of whether you have already registered your interest in becoming a sponsor on the government website.

Anyone who has space in their home, or an empty property that might be suitable can contact us at resettlement@westnorthants.gov.uk and we will provide full details of the scheme.

WNC are developing schemes with our local Transport Providers to provide support to our families living across West Northants, including our most rural areas. If you know of a Ukrainian Family looking for support with travel, then contact Resettlement@westnorthants.gov.uk and a member of the team will be in touch directly.

CONSULTATIONS

Upper Nene Valley



This is a survey undertaken in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council, Bedford Borough Council, and the Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust. We are currently undertaking a project to understand how people use the Nene Valley for recreation, so we can understand the impact on the important wildlife habitats in the area. As part of this an online survey has been developed. If you go out into the valley to walk,

run, cycle, fish, birdwatch, row, or indeed undertake any other activity it would help us for you to be involved in the survey. You should only complete the survey once and can do so at any time. The survey will be open until December 2022 and it should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

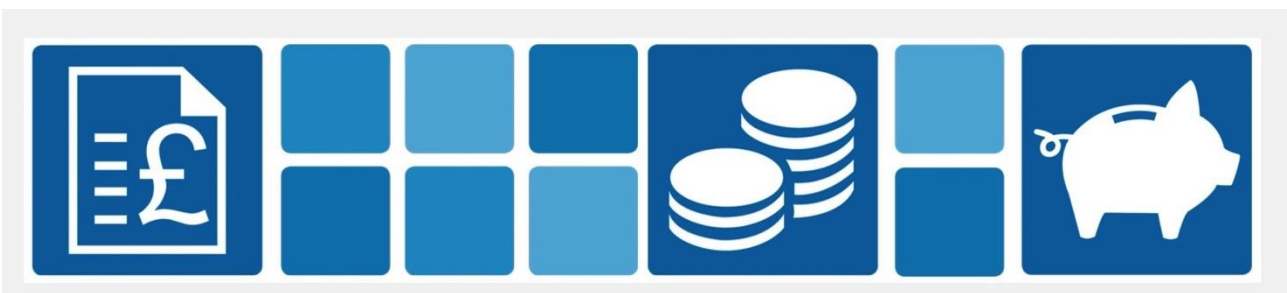
<https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=164399705185>

Dormant Assets Scheme

The Government has launched a public consultation on what social and environmental causes should benefit from more than £700 million of dormant assets funding in England.

Currently, dormant assets funding in England is required to be spent on three causes: youth, financial inclusion, and social investment. As the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic continues, as well as cost of living pressures, the Government believes that now is the right time to review whether these remain the right causes for where funding from dormant assets can be allocated.

It comes as the Dormant Assets Scheme was recently expanded from bank accounts to include the insurance and pensions, investment and wealth management, and securities sectors, estimated to unlock



around £880 million for good causes across the UK, £738 million of which will be made available for England over time.

The Dormant Assets Scheme is led by the financial services industry and backed by the government with the aim of reuniting people with these financial assets. Where this is not possible, the Scheme unlocks this money for social and environmental initiatives across the UK.

In England, the scheme has already channelled £110 million to breaking down barriers to employment for disadvantaged young people and £100 million to increasing access to fair and affordable financial products and services for vulnerable individuals. This is on top of £485 million of much-needed funding for both charities and social enterprises since the scheme's inception.

Now, individuals, communities, and industry participants can have their say on what causes matter most to them. One option under consideration for views is a community wealth fund proposal that would see pots of money distributed over long periods of time in local communities in England, with decisions made by residents to make a difference where it is most needed.

The consultation is now open for responses

<https://www.gov.uk/.../consultation-on-the-english...>

It will close on Sunday 09 October

FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

In Year Finances

Earlier this month, WNC set out the precautionary steps it was taking to manage the financial pressures that are affecting many local authorities across the country because of the continuing cost of living crisis, rising inflation rates and the lasting impacts of the pandemic.



The Cabinet report highlights in-year pressures of £7.6 million and flags predicted further pressures which the Council may experience over the rest of the year. Included within the report are the actions that are being taken to manage these pressures and help to improve the position. Work to manage the financial picture is ongoing across the Council, with senior managers and Cabinet members continually

monitoring the budget and spend for the authority. Staff across the Council are supporting this work by following stricter spending controls, delivering transformation of services, and identifying where further savings and efficiencies can be made.

<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/.../Revenue...>

Cutting energy bills for households and businesses

Support for Households: Energy Price Guarantee

On 8 September, the Prime Minister announced the Energy Price Guarantee. The Energy Price Guarantee will ensure that a typical household in Great Britain pays an average £2,500 a year on their energy bill, for the next 2 years, from 1 October 2022, with an equivalent scheme in Northern Ireland from November. The consumer saving will be based on usage, but a typical household is expected to save at



least £1,000 a year (based on current prices from October). Energy suppliers will be fully compensated for the cost of the Energy Price Guarantee. Based on 2019 median consumption, houses will save around £1,000 a year, and flats will save £700 a year. £150 of this saving will be delivered by temporarily transferring the cost of environmental and social costs, including green levies, to the Exchequer for 2 years. This will mean customers don't bear the costs, but benefit from the low-carbon electricity generation.

This support is in addition to the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme available to all households. This will be paid in 6 instalments from October. An additional payment of £100 will be provided to compensate for the rising costs of alternative heating fuels for those UK households who are not able to receive support for heating costs through the Energy Price Guarantee. The most vulnerable UK households will continue to receive £1,200 of support (including £400 from the Energy Bills Support Scheme) provided in instalments over the year.

Support for businesses and non-domestic properties

Through the new Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS), the government will provide support with energy bills for all non-domestic consumers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland (including charities and public sector organisations). This 6-month scheme will protect them from soaring energy costs by providing a discount on wholesale gas and electricity prices. It will apply to energy usage for all non-domestic energy users from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. Equivalent support will be provided for non-domestic consumers who use heating oil or alternative fuels instead of gas (further detail on this will be announced shortly).

In Northern Ireland, the scheme will be established on the same criteria and offering comparable support, but recognising the different market fundamentals

Government will publish a review into the operation of the EBRS in 3 months to inform decisions on continued support after March 2023.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/beis-in-the-growth-plan>

41 Different Government Schemes to help with Cost of Living

The Cabinet Office has recently launched the 'Help for Households' campaign which explains the 41 different government schemes available to help people with the cost of living, including new one-off payments as well as existing benefits and schemes. These schemes have now been brought onto one Cost of Living Support website. A tool kit has also been produced. Campaign website:

<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk>

School Vouchers during October half term break

West Northamptonshire's most vulnerable families will receive school vouchers during the October half term break to help them cope with the cost-of-living crisis. The move, announced at a meeting of West Northamptonshire Council on Thursday, 29 September, is the first stage of plans to share out the latest



round of money from the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) this autumn.

In this third tranche of HSF funding launching next month, the Council will be distributing around £2.6million from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to struggling households across

West Northants, having already supported thousands of people since the scheme's launch in September last year.

Schools will soon be contacted about the plans to issue the £15 per week vouchers ahead of the half-term break and work is also under way to shape arrangements for other elements of the scheme to ensure all the funding is distributed within the community to those people who need it most and within the guidelines provided by DWP. These future arrangements will be considered by the Council's Cabinet on 11 October to determine how to best use the remaining fund within the scope set out by government ministers.

Previous tranches of the funding have supported households and pensioners with food, energy, and water costs. £20 per week Food Vouchers were issued to 11,296 children during the six-week summer holiday period, while 6,251 residents who receive Pension Credit claimed a one-off £100 payment.

Details of how to access the available funds will be publicised in the coming weeks. Residents can also visit the Cost-of-Living Support webpage for information on how to access other support available.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/comm.../cost-living-support>

REGULATORY SERVICES

Changes to Elections Act

An update on the timetable for putting in place changes to the Elections Act has been released by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities recently. The new Act brings in several changes to the way we vote, as well as to campaigning and the rules on campaign spending and funding. WNC elections team is working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ensure these changes are put in place in West Northamptonshire, and was recently advised of several updates to the implementation plan, which are summarised below:



- 1) The introduction of voter identification has been moved from December 2022 to January 2023. This requires voters to present some form of photo ID at polling stations to receive their ballot paper. Voter Card application service is expected to go live in January 2023 and will be first used in any elections from May 2023.
- 2) Postal Vote Handling and Secrecy measures will now be put in place after May 2023. These rules, which will place added restrictions on who can hand in completed postal votes, will most likely come into force in Autumn 2023.
- 3) A new Voter Card, or Electoral identification Document, could include added security features. This will be based on market testing and input from government experts, balanced with the need for a secure document that can be quickly produced and dispatched in potentially high volumes. More information will be available in due course.
- 4) The Voter Card application deadline will be six working days ahead of a poll. This will enable central production and delivery management, removing pressure on local authorities in the immediate lead-up to a poll.

More information about the changes being brought in as part of the new Election Act can be found on the Electoral Commission website

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/.../elections-act>

Number of Unitary Councillors set to change from 93-77 in 2025

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is carrying out a review of the ward boundaries in West Northamptonshire and your input is essential to help ensure the best outcomes for West Northamptonshire residents. The review has identified that from 2025 there will be 77 members in West Northamptonshire. LGBCE is now looking at the pattern of wards the 77 members will represent from the next election in 2025. To draw up the new wards, the Boundary Commission has specific criteria so, for example they look at evidence of community identity and balance that against the need to ensure that the number of electors per member is broadly similar. Each member in West Northants will represent an average of 4,227 electors each.

This number is now fixed, and we must work out a pattern of boundaries that meets their criteria. Hackleton and Grange Park comprises Brafield, Castle Ashby, Cogenhoe, Whiston, Denton, Hackleton, Piddington, Hartwell, Little Houghton, Quinton, Yardley Hastings, and Grange Park. It has 10,323 electors and is represented by three Councillors. If it were to remain as a three-member ward it would need to add 2,508 electors to become compliant with 12,831 members. If it were to become a two-member ward it would need to lose 1,704 electors to become compliant with 8,554 members. All the WNC ward councillors are being asked to consider this matter including wards bordering Hackleton and Grange Park such as Riverside Park, Nene Valley and Towcester and Roade etc are looking at their boundaries too.



WNC is gathering evidence of communities, and your support will be important. The existing wards will change and therefore we need to evidence every single proposed boundary with strong community evidence to support our proposals. To help us do this, we need to complete a form by the deadline of Thursday 13 October. We are being asked to state what boundaries there should be in our area and to

provide a map of wards we propose, however we need evidence to support the boundaries, so we are asking those who know the area best to provide us with that evidence for the form. This does not prevent us being part of another submission on behalf of your parish and there is merit in submitting your evidence to everyone who is making a submission to ensure they understand your community. Please complete any form that is emailed to you. The email also provides examples of strong and weak evidence, and you are encouraged to read this to help make sure you are presenting evidence that will carry weight.

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/36573>



Hackney Carriage fares to be aligned across West Northamptonshire

Under new proposals, Hackney carriage fares could be aligned ahead of schedule across West Northamptonshire after the council answered drivers' calls for an increase. West Northants Council (WNC) had been considering an

alignment of fares for the former Daventry, Northampton, and South Northants areas as part of a review of taxi policies.

At their meeting on Tuesday, 13 September, Cabinet members supported proposals for a single table of fares to cover West Northants, which also accounted for rising fuel and energy costs.

As part of a pre-consultation on the proposed alignment, the WNC Licensing Department wrote to all Hackney licence holders to canvas their views regarding a potential fare increase. 34 per cent of drivers in Daventry and Northampton responded and called for a fare increase. There are currently no Hackney carriage licence holders in the South Northants area.

The new proposals aim to create one tariff across West Northamptonshire Council. People are now being asked their views on proposals, as WNC launches a 14-day consultation. A public notice has been issued on 22 September which asks people to have their say on the new proposed table of fares. To review the proposals and provide your views by Thursday 6 October visit WNC's consultation hub at [hackney carriage fares increase](#).

Following the 14-day notice period, if no objections have been received, the proposed tariff will have come into effect immediately. Should there be objections, WNC will consider and decide if changes are required. Following this, a date for when the new fares come into operation can then be set and will come into effect no later than two months after the notice period has ended.

The tariff sets the maximum that licensed taxis can charge, however, each driver can determine if they would like to charge less. Private Hire Operator Companies set their own tariffs according to market forces.

Scam Alert

People are being warned to look out for scam emails and texts claiming to offer discounts on energy bills. Several different false messages are circulating now, including some that appear to be from the energy regulator Ofgem. If you wish to report a scam or seek advice, contact WNC Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.



Chinese Takeaway Breaches Food Safety Standards

A Northampton takeaway has been fined £22,000 for deplorable hygiene breaches following the prosecution by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). At Wellingborough Magistrates Court yesterday, Tuesday, 27 September 2022, the food business operator of Honey Moon Chinese takeaway, Harborough Road, Kingsthorpe, pleaded guilty to four charges of breaching food safety and hygiene regulations.



The prosecution follows a routine inspection carried out on 30 September 2021 when WNC Officers found that the kitchen was not kept clean, equipment in contact with food was in a filthy condition, food was not being stored safely, and some food appeared to have been gnawed by pests. The Food Business Operator, Apple Tree Leisure Limited, was charged with four counts of breaching the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations 2013. The company received a total fine of £22,000 and was ordered to pay full costs of £2,400 and a victim surcharge of £190. Food business operators have a legal responsibility to provide safe food and

maintain hygiene standards; those who do not must be held accountable for their actions. The food

hygiene rating reflects the standards of food hygiene found on the date of the inspection by the local authority. To check the rating for any food business, visit the Food Standards Agency website. <https://ratings.food.gov.uk>

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-Dismissed
- 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-Allowed.

Special Focus Week on Planning Applications

Colleagues in the WNC planning team came together week commencing 22 August 2022 for a special focus week, which saw the service deliver the first phase of its customer enhancement plan. As part of the strategy to implement several positive changes to the planning service, for five days the planning teams worked closely together to process an exceptional number of applications.

Throughout the week decisions on 273 cases were determined, nearly four times the average decisions made in one week. New planning applications waiting to be processed have reduced by an average of one third across West Northamptonshire, with older applications waiting a decision continuing to be prioritised in the forthcoming weeks.

The planning service will continue to organise regular planning focus weeks to prioritise processing new planning applications to reduce the overall response time and come to decisions on existing applications to improve resident's experience in the forthcoming months.

West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan, Spatial Options Consultation

The council is preparing a new local plan, known as the West Northamptonshire Strategic Plan (WNSP), to review and replace the strategic policies in the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS) (Local Plan Part 1), which was adopted in December 2014. A consultation on potential spatial options was undertaken between October and December 2021 and at the Planning Policy Committee 28 June 2022, when the Committee considered a report which provided a summary of the responses received to the consultation.

The spatial options consultation envisaged a plan period extending up to 2050 to reflect the time covered by the anticipated spatial framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. In response to representations received and in the light of increased uncertainty regarding the production of a spatial framework for the Arc, the committee agreed to reduce the plan period for the WNSP to 2041. In addition, the timetable for the preparation of the WNSP was updated and this was addressed by a revised Local Development Scheme. It envisages the approval of a draft plan for public consultation by the end of the calendar year to enable completion of further technical work and further member engagement. The Plan is expected to be adopted by March 2024.

HOUSING

Affordable Apartments-Riverside House, Northampton

Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH), which runs the council's housing stock, is converting part of Riverside House in Bedford Road into flats. Work is well underway to convert most of this former office building into 60 affordable apartments. We expect completion of the main development in autumn this year. NPH has this month submitted another planning application for the ground floor of the same building, which has recently become available. The ground floor of the building was not included in the original plans. WNC are reviewing options for the ground floor accommodation. The recently submitted planning application is intended to establish a feasibility option, which in turn will help to inform a full options appraisal of the ground floor use. No decision on the future use of the ground floor has been made as the option appraisals are at an early stage.

DLUHC seeking views on Social Housing rent increases

The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is seeking views on a draft Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing. The Direction would require the Regulator to set a regulatory standard on rents that will apply to Registered Providers of social housing. This encompasses: Private Registered Providers (including housing associations) Local authority Registered Providers (i.e., local authorities with retained housing stock) Section 197 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 gives the Secretary of State the power to direct the Regulator of Social Housing to set a standard on rent, and about the content of that standard. Once issued, a Direction is binding on the Regulator. They propose to use this power to issue a new Direction to the Regulator on rent. The proposed Direction has been published alongside this consultation. This consultation will last for six weeks from 31 August to 12 October. You may respond by completing an online survey.

<https://consult.levellingup.gov.uk/social-housing/consultation-on-social-housing-rents/>

The UK government already limits how much social landlords in England can increase social rent each year.



The formula is set at the consumer price index (CPI) inflation plus 1%. With CPI inflation currently at 10.1%, that would mean an 11.1% increase in social rents under the current rules. In April this year rents rose by 4.1%, the highest in a decade. Angry and worried families told ITV News they would struggle to afford the extra payments. Energy price cap rises 80% to £3,549 sending winter bills soaring. MPs inquiry finds 'homes unfit for humans' following ITV News investigation. Although landlords don't have to

increase rent at all if they don't want to, research by ITV News found 89% of councils and most housing associations increased it by the maximum amount permitted under the government's formula. The same will probably happen in April next year, in line with whatever ministers decide the cap should be. A capped increase of 5% or 7% in April 2023 would still constitute the biggest rent increase in many years and would see social housing tenants paying hundreds of pounds more a year just as their energy bills go up again. Please complete the online survey.

West Northamptonshire Housing Strategy

West Northamptonshire Council has approved a fresh strategy for improving housing for residents across West Northants while tackling issues including homelessness and the cost-of-living crisis. At the Cabinet

meeting on Friday, 23 September, members agreed to progress proposals for the new Housing Strategy, which focuses on four key objectives:

- Deliver homes people need and can afford
- Improve the quality, standard and safety of homes and housing services
- Support residents to live healthy, safe, independent, and active lives
- Support thriving and sustainable communities.

Housing is a crucial component of wellbeing - good quality housing provides a sound platform to build a good quality of life. It is vital that we have ambitious plans to create homes people need alongside a thriving economy to ensure we meet the housing needs and demands of existing and future residents and achieve the best outcomes for our area.



We recognise that there are challenging times ahead and the current energy crisis and the cost-of-living increases are causing severe financial difficulties to many households. This strategy sets out to tackle big issues like affordability, health, the supply of new homes and the environment - these are not easy things to solve, but we can make a real contribution to improve outcomes for many people by taking the right steps now.

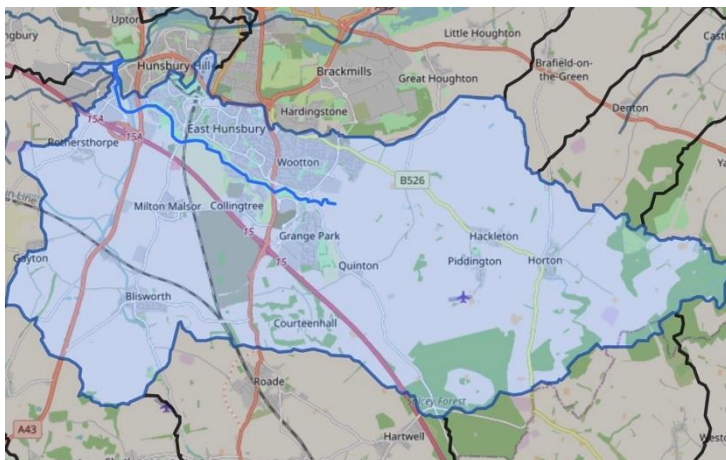
Find out more information about our Housing Strategies and Policies.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../housing-strategies...>

ENVIRONMENT

Resilience And Innovation Northants (RAIN) Project

Some time ago, I advised you about the WNC Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme. The Resilience and Innovation Northants (RAIN) project, led by West Northamptonshire Council in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council, is funded by the Government's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation fund and is one of 25 projects nationwide learning and developing new approaches to improve flood resilience and manage flood risk over the next 5 years. The project will be working with communities within the boundaries of two river catchments: Harpers Brook in North Northamptonshire, and Wootton Brook in West Northamptonshire.



Of 358 reports of flooding across Northamptonshire since detailed records started in 2012, 237 were for the Wootton Brook area, which includes Collingtree, Wootton, East and West Hunsbury, Hunsbury Meadows and Hackleton. WNC will be working with these communities to trial flood resilience measures at three different scales: across the catchment, within the community, and at individual property level. At catchment level we will look for areas to slow the flow/hold the water back higher up the catchment,

reducing the flood risk lower down using natural flood measures. At community level we will work to help them build resilient communities who are prepared for all types of emergencies, and at property level we

will work with owners to help them understand their risk and what they can do to minimise disruption and costs of flooding.

Over the last year we have been formally engaging and building partnerships for the project and preparing our business case, which is required by funders to secure the grant. Now we are awaiting approval of this so that we can move into the delivery stage of the project.

Currently, we are undertaking procurement exercises to secure partners/providers for delivery of specialist areas of the project (such as Property Flood Resilience measures) and the necessary support for evaluation of the project's innovation. This procurement process can take up to 6 months for a project of this size and complexity, but it is necessary and essential to ensure public money is spent appropriately.

WNC are reaching out to Parish Councils who have communities that lie within our catchments to gauge interest and help us identify the various stakeholders, organisations and community groups who can help us reach as many people as possible in each community. We want to ensure we can reach and support those in the catchment who have been previously devastated by flooding or are at risk. We appreciate that many residents in the catchments have been badly flooded and want to see swift action on all aspects of flood risk management, including this project. However, this is a five- year project, and we are bound to specific conditions of the fund to undergo due process and we hope you understand the time scales involved.

The boundaries we can work in for this project are river catchments, not ward boundaries so please have a look at the maps to see what extent of Hackleton and Grange Park is included. If you would like to learn more about the exciting RAIN project taking place in your area, please email RAIN@westnorthants.gov.uk and we can ensure you are kept up to date as we begin delivery and reach milestones.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

ICAN named finalist for HSJ Award

A major new programme of transformation work driven by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and its Northamptonshire health and care partners has been shortlisted for a prestigious award at this year's Health Services Journal (HSJ) Awards. Integrated Care Across Northamptonshire (ICAN), which is about supporting more people to live well and stay well at home and brings together the support they need across the NHS, local councils, voluntary and community organisations, has been named as a finalist for Provider Collaboration of the Year.

The ICAN Programme's purpose is to deliver a person focused set of services that help people manage long term health conditions and risks associated with becoming frail or elderly. We are doing this by working with residents and their GPs to help people age well and improve the quality of care in the community as well as ensuring more people return home in a timely way after a stay in hospital. We believe working together we can help people achieve the best possible health and wellbeing outcomes and help them to maintain their independence and resilience for as long as possible.

More than 1,000 entries were received for the HSJ Awards 2022, with 219 projects and individuals making it to the final shortlist (from across 162 organisations).

Further to this, a key partner organisation of ICAN, Northamptonshire Carers, has been shortlisted for the System Led Support for Carers Award. The full list of nominees for the 2022 HSJ awards can be found at <https://awards.hsj.co.uk/> alongside details of the Awards partners; <https://awards.hsj.co.uk/partners>



The selected winners will be announced during the awards ceremony at the Battersea Evolution Centre, London on 17 November 2022.

My Appointment to Daventry and South Northants LAP (DSN4)

Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) will play a key part in the Integrated Health agenda, and I have been appointed to represent Hackleton and Grange Park on the pioneer LAP in Daventry and South Northants (DSN4). The Pioneer LAP covers the areas of Towcester, Deanshanger, Bugbrooke, Hackleton and Grange Park. WNC are testing its emerging LAP model with two Pioneer sites, DSN4 and another site in Northampton. We will be exploring how we might work in a collaborative way to improve outcomes for our patients and constituents within our local area.

Finding your way around this Local Insight profile		
<small>*Introduction: Page 2 for an overview of the report</small>		
Population There are 54,818 people living in DSN4 <small>See pages 4-8 for more information on population by age and gender, ethnicity, country of birth, language, migration, household composition and religion.</small>	Education & skills 18% of people have no qualifications in DSN4 compared with 22% across England <small>See pages 46-48 for more information on qualifications, post attainment and early years educational progress.</small>	
Vulnerable groups 8% of children aged 0-18 are in relative low income families in DSN4 compared with 19% across England <small>See pages 10-23 for more information on children in poverty, people out of work, people in receipt of benefits, disability, pensioners and other vulnerable groups.</small>	Economy 43% of people aged 16-74 are in full-time employment in DSN4 compared with 35% across England <small>See pages 49-55 for more information on people's jobs, job opportunities, income and local businesses.</small>	
Housing 2% of households lack central heating in DSN4 compared with 3% across England <small>See pages 26-27 for more information on dwelling types, housing tenure, affordability, overcrowding, age of building and environmental issues.</small>	Access & transport 9% of households have no car in DSN4 compared with 26% across England <small>See pages 56-58 for more information on transport, distance services and digital services.</small>	
Crime & safety The overall crime rate is lower than the average across England <small>See pages 34-38 for more information on recorded crime and crime rates.</small>	Communities & environment The % of people 'satisfied with their neighbourhood' (89.4%) is higher than the average across England (79.3%) <small>See pages 60-65 for more information on neighbourhood satisfaction, the types of neighbourhoods locally, local participation and the environment, air quality.</small>	
Health & wellbeing 14% of people have a limiting long-term illness in DSN4 compared with 15% across England <small>See pages 40-45 for more information on limiting long-term illness, life expectancy and mental, general health and health inequalities.</small>	Appendix A Page 67 for information on the geographic areas used in the report, publication dates for new releases and acknowledgements.	

We are currently engaging with GPs in the area who have registered patients in the LAP footprint. Our first meeting is arranged for the 4th of October 2022 where we will be considering the newly formed Local Area Partnership and its Local Area Profile. This will be a good opportunity to actively engage with local GPs, and LAP meetings are likely to be every 4-6 weeks, at least initially, with the possibility of the main meetings moving to quarterly but with member Task & Finish groups taking on specific work streams.

COVID Vaccination Community Survey

Our Council is supporting colleagues in Public Health with their next COVID-19 vaccination drive and are looking for community feedback on how they can improve communications to access harder-to-reach groups. We are being asked to share the following survey with community groups in our ward area, to help with this work: For more information, please use the following link:



COVID Vaccination Community Survey
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R8XR59G>

COVID 19 Autumn Boosters now available

Autumn booster vaccinations are now available. Those eligible include people aged 65 and over, those who are at higher risk or are pregnant, frontline health and social care workers, carers, and those living with someone with a weakened immune system.



On 30 September 2022, I was just returning from Wootton Fields when I saw that they were providing Booster vaccinations at the Wootton Community Centre. So, I managed to get my COVID Booster injection at the drop-in clinic.

You can book vaccinations online via the National Booking System, by calling 119 or by visiting a local drop-in clinic.

All West Northamptonshire clinics are open for walk ins.
<https://www.nhs.uk/.../coro.../book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Falls Awareness Week 25 September 2022

Falls Prevention Awareness Week ran until 25 September with the aim of reassuring residents that falls are not an inevitable part of growing older, and that there are lots of things that can be done to reduce the risk of falling.



WNC has been working with a range of partners to promote the campaign to residents across Northamptonshire, and sign-post people to sources of advice, such as the free Steady on Your Feet website which is full of ideas to help reduce the risk of falls and increase people's confidence. Hundreds of people across Northamptonshire are already taking part in Get Up & Go strength and balance exercise classes, co-ordinated by our partner NSport. And the campaign is also promoting Active

Chats, which offers a similar service but over the telephone through local befrienders, to help those who may struggle to get to classes. For those people who require specialist advice and assessment, we also have a Falls Management Service, which is open to anyone who lives in Northamptonshire and has either a high degree of concern about falling, or a recent history of falling. Residents in West Northants are encouraged to visit Steady on Your Feet then, if they need further assistance, to call 0300 126 7000.

<https://www.steadyonyourfeet.org/northamptonshire/assessment>

New Residential Rehabilitation Centre in Turn Furlong, Northampton

As part of the integration and delivery of health and social care services for people in our county,



Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and our Council are launching a new residential rehabilitation centre in Turn Furlong, Northampton later this year. This site will be opened as a pilot and will be operational from winter 2022 until the end of March 2023. During the pilot, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board will assess how it is working to determine whether there is a longer-term need.

The launch of the unit is a great showcase of collaboration between health and social care organisations in Northamptonshire to provide

dedicated support for those who require short-term care following a hospital stay before they can return home. To read the full article, please visit the Integrated

Care Northamptonshire website. <https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk/.../new-recovering...>

September 2022 Edition of ICN Today

The September 2022 edition of ICN Today, your new monthly newsletter for our county's new integrated care system – Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN) – has been published.

Inside this month's edition, it's Naomi Eisenstadt's turn to take up the Three in 60 Challenge as the NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board Chair attempts to answer three questions about what integrated care means to her in just 60 seconds.



The newsletter also brings updates on the launch of the COVID-19 autumn booster vaccination programme, the latest progress on the shared digital care record project, the publication of the new Northamptonshire Health Inequalities Plan, a new Interim Chair for the local Healthwatch Advisory Board... and much more.

Read the September 2022 edition of ICNToday If you'd like future editions emailed directly to your inbox, you can subscribe to ICN Today here

<https://sway.office.com/Z8EByoY2UW4GmKR2>

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

School Admissions

Parents and carers can now apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a year 3 place in a junior school, or a Year 7 place in a secondary school for the September 2023 intake.

They can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years of age on or before 31 August 2023. The closing date for applications for places in reception and year 3 (junior school) is 15 January 2023 at midnight. The closing date for applications for Year 7 places is 31 October 2022 at midnight.

We hope the new midnight deadlines mean that it will be easier for families to submit their application before the deadline, giving them the best chance of getting a place at their preferred school and avoiding any disappointment. All applications, whether postal or online, must be received by the closing date to be considered as on time. Late applications will not be processed until after the National Offer Day and will be processed in monthly rounds. All on time applicants will receive an offer of a school place on the National Offer Days – 1 March 2023 for secondary places and 17 April 2023 for reception places.

Applicants will then be provided with information on the next stage of the process. There is a separate application process for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan, details of which can be found on the SEND admissions page.

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/.../Pages/default.aspx>

An independent admission appeals process is available for families who wish to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. More information can be found on the school admissions page.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions>



Improving Adult Numeracy



An update on our Multiply Funding Investment Plan following confirmation that West Northamptonshire will receive almost £575k in the 2022-23 financial year to help improve adult numeracy.

This is the first tranche of funding approved from a £1.9m bid submitted by our Council to the Government's Multiply Fund and could benefit more than 3,000 people over a three-year period - improving life chances,

providing access to better career options, and offering people greater personal wellbeing.
<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/.../WNC%20Multiply...>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund

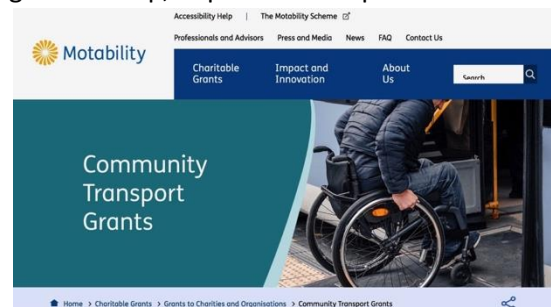
A new £3 million fund to upgrade and renovate England's village halls has been announced by the Government to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Over a three-year period, the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Improvement Grant Fund will provide money for projects such as installing Wi-Fi, extending buildings, and modernising facilities. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) said village halls are at the heart of rural life, hosting fitness classes, community groups and post office services, and the grant will allow them to attract more people by creating more contemporary spaces. A total of 125 village halls will receive money from the fund, which Defra said will be a "lasting legacy" from the Jubilee for rural communities. Rural affairs minister Lord Beynon said: "Village halls are the centrepiece of rural life and funding their renovation to mark the Jubilee is a fitting tribute to The Queen's Service. "In a changing world, they are important facilities for community groups, social clubs and local services." "This funding will ensure they are central to the fabric of our villages for many more years to come." Defra said the grant will build on the success of schemes to commemorate both Queen Victoria and King George and "demonstrate that almost 200 years on, we continue to build on the legacy of the monarchy, both past and present". Details on how the funding will be administered will be announced later.



Community Transport Grants – Motability

Through this new grant programme Motability aim to help charities and organisations to make an immediate impact for disabled people, by awarding funding to develop, expand and improve community transport options. The programme is focussed on:

- Funding support for staff or volunteer training and costs.
- Funding to increase the number of vehicles available in the community to help organisations support disabled people.
- Funding local, regional, or national initiatives to increase awareness of community transport and influence its inclusion in transport strategy and policy.
- Funding to schemes, programmes and initiatives that already exist, and who provide best practice solutions, but need further support to remain operational or scale up the service they can provide to help more disabled people.



Charities and organisations working in the community transport sector can apply for grants from £100,000 to £4 million at any point over the next three years until March 2025.

WNC exchanged contracts on the former BHS & Clinton Units in Northampton

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is pleased to announce that on 30 September 2022 it exchanged contracts on the former BHS and Clinton units in Northampton Town Centre, marking the next jigsaw piece in the town's regeneration. Work will now begin on the transformation of the former M&S unit at 41 to 45

Abington Street and the adjacent property, the former BHS and Clinton buildings at 35 to 39 Abington Street.



WNC will work with a development partner to deliver the project, which will involve the demolition of the existing buildings and the creation of new mixed-use building consisting of residential on the upper floor with modern retail and leisure units on the ground floor. Through the provision of additional residential, the scheme will bring increased footfall into the Town centre to support the existing retail offer within the wider

town centre.

The first phase of the project on the former BHS property will see the large central building, measuring approximately 57,087 sq. ft / 5,303 sq. m undergo a full internal strip out and the removal of any asbestos containing materials. This will ensure that the building is safe and secure and enable the council to bring forward the exciting regeneration project at the earliest opportunity.

These works form part of the Northampton Town Centre Masterplan (2019). The wider regeneration of Northampton Town Centre includes the Market Square redevelopment which will see this area become a cultural hub for the town centre, and public realm works in Abington Street and Fish Street which will see the area transformed with new paving, improved seating, lighting, and landscaping, and public art installations.

The acquisition of this building has been supported by the £9.7 million from the High Street Fund which WNC secured from Central Government towards the wider regeneration of Northampton town centre.

To find out more about the regeneration of Northampton town centre on our website, visit: www.westnorthants.gov.uk/business-and-licensing/regeneration

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) £63.5m submitted

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has submitted funding bids worth a total of £63.5 million to the government's LUF. The first bid features the £45.1 million regeneration of the centre of Weston Favell. WNC has agreed to fund the project with £25.1 million if successful in its bid to the LUF for £20 million.

While a second package of bids totals £18.4 million with matching funding and includes:

1. Close to one of the most deprived areas in the country the restoration of 19th century stables at Delapré Abbey will create a wellbeing hub that increases access, awareness, education, empowerment, knowledge, and control over decisions about health - both physical and psychological - and will be matched funded by the Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust (DAPT) with £1.1 million.



2. The establishment of cancer care centre at Northampton General Hospital, match funded with £1.1 million from the charity Maggie's, will provide third sector support to the Integrated Care System with an evidence-based programme of psychological, social, and practical support to patients and their families which has proven to improve mental health, well-being, and practical outcomes.

3. And a £8.6 million bid to build a new animal welfare unit at Moulton College will allow new courses and greater capacity to

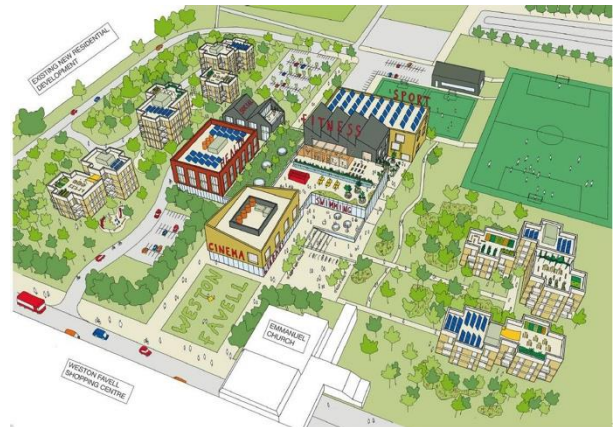
support the growth of the workforce in key sectors whilst creating more pathways to employment for students of all backgrounds.

Revealed in July, plans for Weston Favell include: a new swimming pool, cinema, library, and a new home for health and social services. This includes the consolidation of several outdated community buildings: Lings Forum leisure centre, Weston Favell health centre, Olympus House (adult services), the Forum (children's services) and Weston Favell Library.



The Moulton College project will see the replacement of the existing, outdated facilities with a new animal welfare training centre, allowing the college to deliver high quality education whilst increasing capacity and expanding training opportunities in both animal welfare and construction.

A new, purpose-built Maggie's centre at NGH will support cancer patients and their friends/families to



deal with the psychological and practical impacts of a cancer diagnosis and treatment.

The impact of cancer on the local population, and its 'knock on' implications for the economy, are significant. In Northamptonshire, over 4,000 people receive a cancer diagnosis every year, and 50 per cent of the 880,000 residents expect to be diagnosed in their lifetime.

Restoration of the 19th century stables at Delapré Abbey will build upon pilot activity within the community to include a variety of accessible, complementary wellbeing services that supports self, community, and GP referrals. This includes a walking/cycling hub, creative arts, social prescribing, physiotherapists, and an innovative kitchen classroom space.

A decision from the Government on successful LUF bids is expected to be announced before the end of 2022.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

A £5.4million allocation from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) will help significantly boost the area's economy. WNC has submitted its investment plan for the allocated funds, and these include aspirations to reduce the cost of living, provide funding to support businesses, address local skill needs and boost employment. The investment plan was developed following comprehensive consultation with local organisations from the public, private and third sectors, including MPs and councillors.



The funding has been split across three priority areas: Communities and place, supporting local business and people and skills.

Expected outcomes from the programme include:

- New and improved cycleways to boost active travel
- Increased engagement in volunteering

- Greater take-up of energy efficiency measures
- New start-up businesses, creating new jobs
- Improved skills

<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/.../UK%20Shared...>

24 Guildhall Road Redevelopment Project

Councillors at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) reviewed proposals for the next phase of works at the 24 Guildhall Road redevelopment project at the cabinet meeting on Friday, 23 September. Forming part of Northampton's Cultural Quarter, 24 Guildhall Road is set to combine innovation, contemporary arts, and enterprise under one roof.

The ambitious project, led by a partnership between WNC and NN Contemporary Art, has reached a new milestone in its timeline as the next phase plans were unveiled to Cabinet members at WNC on 23 September 2022. Once complete, 24 Guildhall Road will offer a new mixed occupancy cultural centre for Northampton, with the aim of encouraging an ethos of cultural and civic engagement in the town.

As the anchor tenant, NN Contemporary Art will occupy the lower three floors, with the upper two floors to be made available to lease to cultural organisations and creative businesses on completion. The project is identified as a key element of the town's regeneration. It is supported by the Government's Towns Fund and part of the Northampton Town Centre Masterplan and, was awarded £1.15 million of Getting Building Fund investment managed by the Southeast Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership to complete phase one development works to enable to project to go ahead.



The initial intentions are to find creative industries occupants to develop a sustainable creative community for the Town Centre, to increase footfall and renewed town centre interest.

The report, which was presented at the Cabinet meeting on 3 September 2022, provided Councillors with a detailed project update, identified funding for phase 2 works from Northampton's Town Fund and capital borrowing and an outline of the works proposed for further improvements to the building which will aid the strategic ambition for the town centre master plan.

Works to redevelop 24 Guildhall Road are ongoing, and it is anticipated that phase 2 works will begin spring 2023 with completion winter 2023/2

The Prince's Countryside Fund (PCF)

Supporting Rural Communities is their flagship grant programme, awarding £500,000 each year to support projects that enhance the viability and sustainability of rural communities. The Prince's Countryside Fund remains one of very few funders focused on rural communities across the UK. The PCF is inviting applications for



grants of up to £25,000 over two years, for projects that will create a long-term difference in rural communities across the UK. Applicants must be from properly constituted, not for profit organisations with an income of less than £500,000. They particularly welcome applications from groups and organisations with projects in hamlets, villages, and small market towns. Autumn 2022 grants timetable:

- 1st September Applications open
- Midday, 11th October Applications close
- Beginning of December Applicants informed of decision
- January 2023 First payment

How to apply:

Once you have thoroughly read the Guidance Document and FAQ's, you can apply via their online portal.

https://www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk/how-we-help/rural-communities/supporting-rural-communities/?fbclid=IwAR1L_DnVibdxGqJBpQhPwy2Ob2HUF7rtH1Obx-cyjalglyhYI4-hF0Ix-BM

New ExploreWN App

Have you downloaded the ExploreWN App? You can shop online, view exclusive deals from 120+ local businesses and find out about amazing events that are happening in your area. Get it on App Store and Google Play

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/culture-and-tourism/explore-west-northants-app>



TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

Kier to deliver new Highways Service

West Northants Council (WNC) is working together with Kier to deliver a new highways service with increased investment for residents across West Northants. Work has been underway since our announcement in June to prepare for the start of the new service which will focus on increased activity in our communities across West Northamptonshire, including maintaining local roads, footpaths, signage, and drainage, repairing potholes and winter gritting.

Working together, WNC and Kier have outlined fresh priorities and requirements specifically tailored towards the needs of West Northants residents. Under the new contract with Kier, the Council is increasing investment to the service by more than £1million per year and will also have greater control, increasing its own resource to manage and monitor performance, which will include clear, strong goals for improving customer focus and providing value for money.



Kier has set its commitment to working with the council on its sustainability goals to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, as well as increasing social value to the service to benefit the wider West Northants community and economy, such as supporting local disadvantaged groups and working with local sub-contractors.

West Northants Council is also working with Kier to manage its highways services, which will lead to some cost advantages for the two authorities, as Kier will utilise some back-office roles and systems across both areas.

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Rural Crime Claims 40% higher than in urban areas



The BBC have reported how the theft of farmers' livestock, vehicles and fuel is on the rise due to the UK's cost-of-living crisis, according to a new countryside crime report. Rural crime claims payouts between January and March were over 40% higher than in 2021, insurer NFU Mutual says.

It warned rising food prices could see livestock thefts increase further and contaminated meat enter the food chain. David Exwood, the NFU's vice-president, said:

"Taking a joined-up approach and establishing a

cross-governmental task force - including Defra, the Home Office, the Ministry of Justice, the National Police Chiefs Council and the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners - will be crucial if we are to prevent further impacts from crime on farm businesses, both financially and emotionally."

The NFU Mutual report warns that an increase in rustling - which saw an estimated £2.4m worth of farm animals stolen in 2021 - could see animals slaughtered in unhygienic conditions and sold on, threatening food security, animal welfare and people's health. Meanwhile, it said its claims data from the first half of this year indicate that fuel theft has more than doubled compared to the same period in 2021. Its survey found 49% of respondents felt fuel theft was now their greatest crime concern.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

Huge Mural to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Reign

A Northampton village community has come together to create a huge mural to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Community groups in Hardington first came up with the idea for a mural at the recreation ground at the beginning of 2022. Originally it was to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and celebrate 70 years on the throne. The wall at the recreation ground - described as "ugly and grey" - measures 70 metres. Each decade of the reign equates to 10 metres of art.



However, after the Queen's death earlier this month, the mural became even more significant. Each decade of her reign is still marked, but the end of the mural now pays tribute to the late monarch with quotes from her Jubilee speech. The groups were able to secure funding from Northamptonshire Community Foundation to pay for the muralist, who did the work at a "charitable price".

The village also crowd-funded to pay for "eco-friendly, ethical" paint and brushes. Collaborative muralist, Nicki Blanchard, asked residents for their memories of each decade and ideas of what to include. From there, Nicki designed the mural - which she calls a 'murALL' due to the "participative muralism" - and drew

the design on the wall, before members of the community helped to “paint by numbers”, including groups from Northampton High School and Hardingstone Academy.
After months of hard work, the murALL was unveiled at a ceremony on Sunday 25 September 2022.

New Event Notification Process

North and West Northamptonshire Event Safety Partnership, which offers advice for local event organisers, is delighted to launch a new event notification process that has been developed to help ensure a supportive and consistent approach to event safety management in Northamptonshire.

Businesses and residents across the county are now able to notify their local Council of an upcoming event via the respective local authority website by completing a short online form.



Once this form has been completed, services across the Councils and partner organisations including Northants Police, will be able to access this and support event organisers to fully understand what they need to do to deliver a safe and secure event.

Anyone in Northamptonshire who is delivering an event can notify the Council of their upcoming event by completing the online form. Once the form has been

completed, if necessary, members of the Event Safety Partnership will work with you to ensure that you have access to the tools you need to deliver a successful and safe event.

Notification should be given as soon as possible once it has been decided that the event will take place.

To find out more, visit:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../west-and-north...>

New Bike Park

Mountain bike enthusiasts of all ages and abilities have been enjoying Northampton's brand-new bike park, which opened on Monday 26 September. The new Bike Park was created on a former golf course, which was being used as part of Delapré Golf Centre until around six years ago and relates to other parts of the town by the Norbital cycle route.

Northamptonshire Sport has been appointed to manage the day-to-day operations of the park, and two new members of their team will oversee its development and maintenance. They will also continue to collaborate with partners to ensure the free-to-use park is inclusive, benefitting as many people in the local community as possible - from children to experienced mountain bikers.



Maintenance of the park and the habitat surrounding the trails will be funded by income generated from car park revenues and donations.

Find out more about the project on our website and follow Northampton Bike Park on Facebook or visit the Northampton Bike Park website for more information.

<https://northamptonbikepark.org>

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

RSN National Rural Conference 20-23 September

As the WNC Member Representative on the RSN, I attended the National Rural Conference, which was to take place over the week of 19th September-23rd September online. The conference is free for members of the Rural Services Network.

As a result of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and her funeral being held on 19 September, the start of the conference was delayed until 20 September 2022.

The agenda for the week was as follows:

- Tuesday 20th September (AM) - Rural Regeneration
- Tuesday 20th September (PM) - An Audience with Lord Benyon
- Wednesday 21st September (AM) - Rural Health, Care and Wellbeing
- Wednesday 21st September (PM) - Reducing rural inequalities and improving opportunities with RSN
- Thursday 22nd September (AM) - Rural Affordable Housing
- Thursday 22nd September (PM) - Rural Cost of Living Crisis
- Friday 23rd September (AM) - Rural Net Zero
- Friday 23rd September (PM) - Rural Transport



Tuesday 20th September (AM) - Rural Regeneration

Introduction

On 20 September 2022, I attended the first session of this year's Annual Rural Services Network (RSN) Conference, which was entitled Rural Regeneration. Graham Biggs, CEO, RSN told us that there are over half a million businesses registered in rural areas with 85% from sectors other than land based. Greater digital adoption could add £26bn to the UK economy. But wages earned in rural areas are less than in urban. However, research shows that Government's urban centric targets miss the rural struggles that exist:

- Employment Rate-doesn't account for seasonal employment, quality, and dependency on multiple jobs
- Travel to work time-doesn't capture type, frequency and availability or cost of transport
- Gross Disposable Income-doesn't account for higher cost of living, higher fuel costs and the need for car ownership



We heard about how we need to influence the final Government Levelling up missions and metrics to consider rural areas. RSN wants Government to establish a process and timetable to develop a forward thinking, properly funded, cross Government strategy for Rural England.

The State of the Rural Enterprise

The National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise NICRE offered some key insights for Rural Regeneration. Using their recent research data shown in their three reports they were able to confirm: There are strong differences between rural and urban enterprises' perceptions of the quality of their local infrastructure and services.

- Broadband
- Public Transport
- Affordable Housing
- Local Services

Rural Powerhouse, CLA

The Country Landowners Association (CLA) spoke about Levelling up the rural economy and the changes Government needs to make in planning, tax, digital infrastructure, agriculture, farming as well as training and skills.

We also discussed the Rural England Prosperity Fund announced on 3 September 2022. The government has allocated £110m to the new fund to support businesses such as farms, wedding venues and pubs. The fund will be jointly rolled out by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. £110m is to be available over 2 years for rural development and provides ring fenced capital grants for rural business and communities. It will be administered and delivered by local authorities under the UKSPF.

Norfolk's Experience of the Community Renewal Fund

We then heard about Norfolk County Council's progress with the Community Renewal Fund. They spoke about a Feasibility study addressing current and future energy constraints. Sustainable rural growth is constrained by electricity grid capacity (Norfolk Rural Economic Strategy) and so they have a project, which enables expansion of key employment sites – including Lotus Cars and Hethel Engineering Centre – supporting the growth of 30 businesses. Another case study was Net Zero Norfolk: Sustainable Transport Network (STN) around Norfolk. This is about the creation of an unbroken STN through: King's Lynn, Hunstanton, Great Yarmouth, Norwich, Gressenhall and back. The project elements: route development, transport hubs, low carbon vehicle development; feasibility study and demonstrators for EV and micro-mobility together with improved cycle paths and walking routes to:

- Help local people access services
- Support the growth of green tourism
- Benefit physical and mental health

(Norfolk Rural Economic Strategy)

I have made a note to ask WNC to look at whether we can learn anything from Norfolk County Council and what they are achieving through their rural economic regeneration and their unbroken sustainable transport network.

Useful Links on Rural Regeneration

Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

Rural Economies and the RSN asks of Government, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/rural-economies.pdf>

Rural Lens Review of the Levelling Up White Paper, please follow the link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/overarching-rural-lens-review-of-levelling-up-white-paper-published>

Pragmatix Advisory research - Rural as a region: the hidden challenge for Levelling Up, makes for compelling reading, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/rural-as-a-region-the-hidden-challenge-for-levelling-up.pdf>

Cultivating Rural Growth by Pragmatix Advisory is also a useful resource, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/cultivating-rural-growth.pdf>

To find out more about NICRE, please follow this link:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/nicre/>

NICRE first State of Rural Enterprise Report on the effects of Covid on rural businesses:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/nicre/news/item/covid-effects/>

NICRE Growing Contribution that Creative Industry Businesses make to the Rural Economy Report:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/nicre/news/item/rural-creative-microclusters/>

This is an area that Rural Media is particularly interested in and offering support to young talent and rural creative businesses, to find out more contact nicm@ruralmedia.co.uk

NICRE Farm Business Performance Report can be accessed here:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/nicre/news/item/farm-business-performance/>

To input on the focus of NICRE's second rural business survey next year, please email

nicre@newcastle.ac.uk

To find out more about the Country, Land and Business Association, please follow this link:

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

To read the All-Party Parliamentary Group Report into the Rural Powerhouse, please follow this link:

https://www.cla.org.uk/documents/502/Levelling_up_the_rural_economy_-_APPG_report_2022_ONLINE_pdf.pdf

To find out more about Norfolk County Council, please follow this link:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/>



Tuesday 20th September (PM) - An Audience with Lord Benyon

On the afternoon of 20 September 2022, at the RSN National Rural Conference, we had an Audience with the Rt Hon Lord Benyon, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. He spoke about the changes in Government including the appointment of a new Secretary of State to Defra, Ranil Jayawardena, who

was a local councillor before entering Parliament and understood our issues as she represents a rural constituency in Northeast Hampshire.

"We have seen the publication of a Levelling Up White Paper which sets out 12 missions, and then the Defra rural proofing report "delivering for Rural England". Lord Benyon said: "The government understands that people across the UK are worried about the rising cost of living and are seeing their disposable incomes decrease as they spend more on the essentials. Higher fuel prices are hitting rural areas hard, given the longer journeys people often must make. Increases in the price of heating oil are adding to the

burdens of those who live off the gas grid. The price of heating oil in the quarter from April to June this year was 250% higher than the price in the same quarter last year."

"The Prime Minister has announced an 'Energy Price Guarantee' which limits the price suppliers can charge customers for units of gas and electricity, alongside introducing tax cuts and an equivalent guarantee for businesses."

In addition, we have been told that those who live off the gas grid will not be overlooked. But for those of us off the gas grid we do not yet know what this will mean for us. Although these steps will help mitigate pressures in the short term, in the longer term we need to address the underlying issues in the UK's energy sector, and we need to drive forward the acceleration of new sources of energy supply.



Lord Beynon spoke about the need to promote economic growth in all parts of the country. He said that we have many successful businesses in rural areas, but we know that productivity is lower. Indeed, it has fallen from 90% of the English average in 2001 to 81% in 2020. There are many reasons for this. In part

because the economy in other areas of the country, particularly London, has grown more quickly and because of long standing problems of poor connectivity, whether transport or digital. "That is why it remains important that rural areas are a focus of the government's levelling up agenda" he said. Indeed, some may have already heard Lord Beynon talk of the need not just for levelling up but also levelling out. "Out of the town to the village and beyond, up the valley to the remotest farming communities."

"He spoke about the need to improve digital connectivity as IT and digital connectivity is an important driver of productivity. It is also a matter of social justice. As more and more services, both public and private, are delivered electronically, those who live in rural areas should not be denied access to them simply because their broadband is not good enough or there is no mobile signal. Through Project Gigabit, the government is investing £5 billion so hard- to-reach areas can access ultra-reliable, gigabit-capable internet speeds. "Our target is to reach at least 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025, and we will seek to accelerate roll-out further to get as close to 100% as soon as possible" he said.

He reminded us that Government are providing vouchers worth up to £1,500 for residential homes, and up to £3,500 for commercial premises, which can be claimed by anyone in an eligible area to cover the costs of a supplier extending their network to their premises. And that Government is setting up gigabit hubs to connect vital local public services in hard-to-reach areas, typically schools, libraries, and GP surgeries.

Through the £1 billion Shared Rural Network programme, we will deliver 4G coverage to 95% of the UK's landmass by the end of 2025, working with the four mobile network operators and supporting their plans to increase geographical coverage.

In the recent report 'Delivering for Rural England' Government sets out what levelling up might look like in rural areas. He said that he was pleased to say that this second report on rural proofing across government demonstrates that real progress is being made on key issues, including improvements to digital connectivity and action to tackle rural crime with measures in the Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act to crack down on illegal hare coursing.

There is plenty more to do and so the report also looks ahead. It sets out how rural interests will be systematically integrated across the government's approach to levelling up and reaffirms Government's commitment to rural proofing government policies across the board.

To support levelling up and to help address the rural productivity gap, Government has also launched the Rural England Prosperity Fund. This will succeed funding previously delivered through the LEADER scheme and the Growth Programme elements of the Rural Development Programme for England. It will be a top up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in eligible local authorities, providing up to £110 million of capital funding to invest in rural businesses and communities.

He said “We want the funding to support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams. We also want it to support new and improved community infrastructure. We will be holding webinars with eligible local authorities later this week to provide further details and answer questions.”

Finally, he said “If I can leave you with one thought, it would be that we remain steadfast in our determination to tackle the rural productivity gap, improve connectivity, and look after the rural areas and countryside that so many of us are proud to call home. As we said at the beginning of our rural proofing report, we are on a mission to level up and as the minister responsible for rural affairs in England, I want to ensure that rural areas – and the people living within them – are given the opportunity to flourish.”

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/.../Delivering...>

Wednesday 21st September (AM) - Rural Health, Care and Wellbeing

Introduction

At the RSN National Conference, on 21 September 2022, Graham Biggs, CEO, RSN introduced us to the session on Rural Health Care and Well-being.

“Rural residents make up almost a 5th of the population of England and sparsely populated areas have over 30% over the age of 65+ versus 18.5% nationally” he said.

Alongside funding, workforce capacity is perhaps the greatest impediment to the delivery of Health and Social Care in Rural areas.

Graham shared with us some interesting statistics:

- Alcohol specific conditions in under 18s
- Looked after children 5-16 yr. olds
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Self-Harm Hospital Admissions for 10-24 yr. olds
- Informal Care Provision
- Stroke mortality rates

Rural v Urban

- 30% higher
- 15% higher
- 18% higher
- 8% higher
- 6% higher
- 4% higher

Hourly rate for personal social care home external 2020/21:

- Rural £19.67 versus Urban £17.59
- Public Health allocations to local authorities: Rural £44.50 versus Urban £69.87

RSN wants Government to ensure that the proposals for Adult Social Care, including the distribution of government funds are fully Rural Proofed.

Healthy Communities

We then heard from Community Catalysts who talked about Helping Communities to unlock their capacity to care by focusing on what communities and people have rather than what they are lack & helping them use their “gifts.” They have created Community Micro Enterprises where local people are helping local people. This new innovative approach seemed to be making quite a difference in rural areas not served by large agencies.





Pip Cannons, CEO Community Catalysts finished with this quote:

"If you always do what you have always done then you will always get what you always got."

Exeter Nightingale

Mark Cooke, Director of Strategy and Transformation NHS England Southwest spoke about their Transformation in Rural Health in the context of the Southwest of England.

The most interesting aspect of this presentation was the use of one of the Nightingale Centres. Of the Seven Nightingale Centres, six had closed. However, the Exeter Nightingale had become the Southwest Ambulatory Orthopaedic Centre. The vision had been to make use of this centre as a regional asset through the Devon ICS Collaboration to provide Ambulatory arthroplasty surgery – for all and aiming for day or short stay surgery with the potential to expand to Hip and Knee Replacement surgery.

The outcomes achieved were:

- 100% home day 1 (NB Current GIRFT Targets LOS=3 days!)
- 60% home as DAY CASE
- Afternoon patients' home as day cases
- Some lists all 4 joints went home
- Training cases home as day cases 234 case as at mid-June
- Outstanding patient feedback

We had more presentations from Mobile UK about Technology in Health and from Arquiva about the Value of Broadcast.

As we continue to roll out Integrated Care across Northamptonshire, we may be able to learn from other areas such as how the Southwest, Integrated care is giving people the support they need, which is joined up across the NHS, local councils, voluntary and community organisations and other partners. We were told that you will need to be innovative if you are to meet this overall aim.

Useful Links to Rural Health and Care Session

To find out more about Philip Dunne MP, please follow this link:

<https://www.philipdunne.com/>

Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

To read the specific chapter on Rural Health and Care Services and asks of Government, please follow this link:

<https://rsonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/access-to-health-and-care.pdf>

You might also be interested in our Rural Lens Review of the Adult Social Care Reform White Paper, please follow the link:

<https://rsonline.org.uk/images/rural-lens/adult-social-care-rural-lens-review.pdf>

The Rural Proofing for Health Toolkit is a helpful resource, please follow the link:

<https://ruralengland.org/rural-proofing-for-health-toolkit/>

The State of Care in County and Rural Areas makes for interesting reading, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/the-state-of-care-in-counties-full-report.pdf>

The APPG Rural Health & Care launched a compelling inquiry report earlier this year, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/major-inquiry-highlights-the-urban-rural-divide-in-accessing-health-and-care>

To find out more about Community Catalysts, please follow this link:

<https://www.communitycatalysts.co.uk/>

To find out more about NHS England and NHS Improvement, please follow this link:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/improvement-hub/>

Wednesday 21st September (PM) - Reducing rural inequalities and improving opportunities with RSN

Introduction

Kerry Booth, CEO Designate, RSN introduced the topic. She spoke about the unfair funding in Public Services, the rural inequality in Health, Housing, Transport, Economy and Connectivity and the lack of Government investment in infrastructure. A fifth of the population of England are rural residents. There are 30% over 65+ living in rural areas compared with 18.5% nationally and a gap of £105 per head in settlement funding.

Rural Areas get 37% less government funding than in urban areas. Rural residents pay £104 more in Council Tax than their rural counterparts. Therefore, there is much less to spend on essential but discretionary services. The scarcity of rural transport strikes at the heart of rural disadvantage impacting people's access to employment, education, training, health, and vital services.

The GVA per rural work force job is £45,400 compared with £51,700 for the urban areas.

In terms of the 'Cost of Living' crisis then the average fuel poverty gap for households that were fuel poor in 2020 was £223. Households in urban areas had an average fuel poverty gap of £193 versus £388 in rural areas. In rural villages and hamlets, it is £501.

Revitalising Rural Campaign

The RSN is fighting for a fairer deal for all rural communities in Public Sector Funding.

Graham Biggs then spoke about the RSN Revitalising Rural Campaign. They want Rural to be treated as a region in the Government's Levelling Up campaign. The current white paper metrics are predominately urban and do not capture the inequalities of the rural sector. They are asking for additional metrics to be included.

Useful Links for this Session

Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

Rural Lens Review of the Levelling Up White Paper, please follow the link:

<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/overarching-rural-lens-review-of-levelling-up-white-paper-published>

Pragmatix Advisory research - Rural as a region: the hidden challenge for Levelling Up, please follow this link:

<https://rsonline.org.uk/images/publications/rural-as-a-region-the-hidden-challenge-for-levelling-up.pdf>

Pragmatix Advisory research - Towards a greener Green Book Process, please follow this link:

<https://rsonline.org.uk/images/publications/towards-a-greener-green-book.pdf>

An interview with Lord Foster of Bath and Graham talking about rural proofing and levelling up rural areas, please view this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu024kf_sXY

Thursday 22nd September (AM) - Rural Affordable Housing

Introduction

Graham Biggs, CEO, RSN introduced the topic of Rural Affordable Housing

Rural Communities should be diverse and inclusive places where people of all ages and backgrounds can live together. A supply of affordable housing helps to ensure that to be the case.

A supply of affordable housing helps to keep families and support networks intact, which helps address loneliness and isolation. It also benefits the rural economy with employers able to recruit and retain staff across a range of jobs.

The challenges facing rural affordable housing are:

- Rural Migration
- AirBNB/Second Home Market
- Right to Buy
- Growing Aging Population 85+

Affordable Housing on local wages is hard to find in rural areas.

The Government has announced that 2.5 million tenants will be given the right to buy. DLUHC will be working with Housing Associations to determine where rural and other exemptions might apply.

91.1% of urban households have a gas connection compared with only 40% in rural areas.

The Government says in relation to Levelling Up Housing: By 2030 renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas. The Government ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50% with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.

RSN wants the Government to introduce and fund an ambitious annual target for the number of new genuinely affordable on work-based incomes-homes built in rural areas, delivered through a dedicated rural affordable housing programme.

Affordable Housing for local people

Ursula Bennion, CEO of Trent, and Dove Housing talked about Affordable Housing for Local People.

They have 7,000 homes in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire with a mix of urban and rural. They are a delivery partner in the Orbit Strategic Partnership and a member of the Rural Housing Alliance.

She spoke about the Rural Mapping Project-identifying gaps in rural housing delivery. 63 Local Authorities (LAs) responded and there is a complex picture across England. There is a decline in appetite for rural developments. There are a higher number of Housing Associations (HAs) active in S106 sites than Rural Exception Sites (RES) with low levels of activity in NW and SE both for S106s and RES.

5 LAs are responsible for 47% RES in the period 2018/19- 2020/21. Delivery is dominated in villages of 3,000 population or less by market led S106 sites. However, RES delivered in a small number of HAs and a small number of LAs.

But the appetite of HAs is not the sole cause, key challenges include lack of site supply linked to hope value. How can RHA members reduce the current imbalances in HA activity in rural development particularly on RES.

To level up in the rural context, investment is needed to deliver truly affordable housing and HAs and LAs have a critical role.

Rural Inequalities, The Role of Affordable Housing

Martin Collett, CEO English Rural Housing spoke about “Rural Inequalities” The role of Affordable Housing.

Rural Housing in Shropshire-by-Shropshire Council

We then had a presentation on Rural Housing in Shropshire by Jane Trethaway, Shropshire Council. She spoke about the indicators of physical and financial accessibility of housing and key local services:

- Geographical Barriers - Road distance to a post office, to a primary school, to a general store or supermarket to a GP surgery.
- Wider Barriers - Household overcrowding, Homelessness, Housing affordability.
 - Shropshire has an average score of 25.4
- Ranked 68th most deprived local authority in England out of a total of 317 lower tier authorities.
- 47 Shropshire LSOA's are within the 10% most deprived nationally
- 35 LSOAs in Shropshire are ranked within the 5% most deprived for the Barriers to Housing and Services Domain nationally

The majority of rural households in Shropshire are not connected to the gas network.

Fuel poor households are affected by three key factors:

- Energy efficiency – housing stock in Shropshire is older, especially in the south of the county. Older housing stock is likely to be less energy efficient.
- Energy prices – Shropshire has a number of off grid areas which are reliant on more expensive fuel options
- Incomes – workplace pay rates in Shropshire are lower than the regional and national average. Increases to minimum pay rates have helped to decrease rates of fuel poverty.

The percentage of households without a car in Shropshire is lower in all place plan areas than for England and the West Midlands. Place plan areas in rural areas show a greater reliance on car ownership than those with larger urban centres.

For those who rely on public transport in rural areas the logistics of travel can be difficult and time consuming. She demonstrated this by running through the Newcastle on Clun to visit the bank in Bishops Castle which would require – Taxi – Bus – Train – Bus – Walk.

The first stage of the journey requires a taxi journey. The reality is that a taxi would be used for the whole journey. So, for this example – Newcastle on Clun to Bishops Castle the Journey time 3hrs 58 mins – but only every other Tuesday.

They have a significant number of Housing challenges:

- Remoteness
- Services and Support
- Transport and Infrastructure
- Diminishing number of affordable rural homes of all tenures
- Right to Buy and Affordable stock disposals
- Rental and purchase house price increases – post pandemic
- Newbuild development constraints
- Planning constraints and local opposition
- Phosphate and nutrient water pollution
- Mismatch of homes to need
- Insufficient housing for older people
- Lack of one and two bed homes for smaller households and keyworkers

They have a major keyworker housing need:

- Reliance on overseas recruitment – 54% of SATH nurses are international. 425 vacancies in the last 3 years, 400 international nurses recruited in last 2 years
- High staff turnover – at 10%.
- 32% of SATH workforce aged over 55 – indicating further pressure in the system
- Care workers on lower wages, with high transport costs
- Non-public sector workers critical to local economies
- Work in hand with ICS colleagues to scope need and collaborate on a strategy to address

They are looking at the following solutions:

- Stronger links to Parish and Town Councils – Right Home, Right Place
- Gathering better data on housing need – Housing Needs Survey
- Strengthen links-Homes England, Combined Authority, DLUHC
- New affordable homes through local Registered Providers and ALMO
- Community led housing schemes
- • Entry level homes through their company Cornovii Developments Ltd
- • Development of new PRS homes

They have a major problem with Nutrient neutrality in the SSSI catchment. The Council is now developing a mitigation delivery plan, including whether development demonstrating nutrient neutrality can proceed without a restoration plan. The scope for this work is under review with DEFRA and DLUHC.

Useful Links-Rural Housing

Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

To read the specific chapter on Rural Affordable Housing and asks of Government, please follow this link:

<https://rsonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/availability-rural-housing.pdf>

You might also be interested in our Rural Lens Review of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, please follow the link:

<https://rsonline.org.uk/images/rural-lens/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-rural-lens-review.pdf>

Pragmatix Advisory research on the economic and fiscal case for investing in affordable housing makes for interesting reading, please follow this link:

https://rsonline.org.uk/images/campaigns/pragmatix/2020_10_08_Report_to_CPPE_Engli.pdf

Cost of Living Crisis Report, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/new-report-shows-devastating-triple-blow-pushes-rural-communities-in-a-cost-of-living-emergency>

RABI provide support to the farming community and can provide grants for household goods and moving costs, please follow this link:

<https://rabi.org.uk/>

Rural Homelessness study, please follow this link:

<https://englishrural.org.uk/rural-homelessness-focus-of-new-study/>

To find out more about the Rural Housing Alliance, please follow this link:

<https://ruralhousingalliance.net/>

Thursday 22nd September (PM) - Rural Cost of Living Crisis

Kovia Consulting

Kovia Consulting introduced the Rural cost of living report, 2022 which uses 2011 rural-urban classification (RUC) for Local Authority Districts in England. (See report for detailed references).

- Cost of living is a significant issue for people and businesses across the UK.
- Impact of increasing cost is not experienced to the same extent and the differential impacts on rural people and businesses are the subject of this report.
- No attempt to explain, it is a review of existing data to present evidence and establish 'facts' confirming the cost difference across key aspects including wages, house prices, rent, food prices, heating, council tax and transportation.
- Excludes recent and ongoing changes, which are likely to confirm or extend the differential impact.

They were seeking to engage and gain answers to the following questions in the panel discussion.

- Do the findings reflect and validate your experience of current situation?
- What will be the greatest disparities and challenges going forward?
- Do we understand the reasons for the differences?
- What is our priority and what can we reasonably expect to affect?

The cost of living is higher in rural areas in the respects studied.

Their research has found that rural residents working in rural economies earn much less than their urban counterparts and face significantly higher costs in respects studied:

Council Tax

in 2022/23, rural residents will pay, on average, £104 more per head in Council Tax than their urban counterparts.

House prices

House prices are on average 39% higher than in urban areas (exc. London). The rural premium is even more significant in rural villages and hamlets where the average house sale price was £416,200 in Q1 2020, which is 55% higher than in urban areas excluding London. This results in young people and those on lower income being priced out of rural areas.

Transport

Rural households spend on average £113.90 per week on transport compared to £76.20 for urban households. For rural households, transport costs represent a higher proportion of their disposable income (12.3% vs. 9.9%).

Rent

increased demand from renters to live further away from cities since Covid has led to asking rents in suburban and rural areas jumping by 11%. This is particularly affecting rural households on low income who now spend 47% of their earnings on rent compared to 43% for low-income households in urban areas. The 61% drop in the availability of rural locations since the pandemic is a clear indication that the rural housing supply is disappearing.

Heating

Rural households have a much larger fuel poverty gap than their urban counterpart. In rural areas, the reduction in fuel bills needed to take a household out of full poverty would be £501, compared to £223 in urban areas. This is because rural properties tend to be less energy efficient and have a higher incidence of being off the gas grid. This results in the average estimated energy cost of dwellings in predominantly rural areas being 10% higher than in predominantly urban areas, at £808 per year (before the 2022 price increases).

Food Prices

Rural households spent £65.60 a week on food and non- alcoholic beverages, which is 2% more than urban areas. These differences are also likely to be higher for rural households where physical access to food shops or digital access to online shopping is an issue.

Domestic energy poverty and transport energy poverty overlap geographically. This double energy vulnerability tends to concentrate in isolated, rural areas and increase the likelihood of negative impacts upon well-being, highlighting the need to overcome policy silos and calling for an integrated approach recognizing the geographical accumulation of multiple forms of disadvantage.

Useful Links for Rural Cost of Living

To read the Kovia Report on the Rural Cost of Living, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/new-report-shows-devastating-triple-blow-pushes-rural-communities-in-a-cost-of-living-emergency>

This research featured on the BBC, please share the link widely on social media if you can help give more prominence to the issue: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-62983030>

To find out more about Kovia Consulting, please follow this link:

<https://www.kovia.co.uk/>

To find out more about Citizens Advice, please follow this link:

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

Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group report on Poverty in Rural Areas, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/meetings/RSP-Vulnerability-Group/25.04.22/citizens-advice-summary-report.pdf>

To find out more about Hastoe Housing Association, please follow this link:

<https://www.hastoe.com/>

The Plunkett Foundation on 10 October 2022 will be releasing reports on community business, please follow this link:

<https://plunkett.co.uk/reports/>

RABI provide grants to the farming community to assist with increased cost of living costs, please follow this link:

<https://rabi.org.uk/>

To find out more about our Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

You might also be interested in our Rural Lens Review of the Levelling Up White Paper, please follow the link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/overarching-rural-lens-review-of-levelling-up-white-paper-published>

Friday 23rd September (AM) – Net Zero

Introduction

On Friday 23 September Graham Biggs, CEO RSN introduced us to the Net Zero Session of the National Conference. He said: “The proposed rural first approach with a replacement boiler ban proposed from 2026 for off grid homes and 2024 for some off grid businesses will mean some higher heating replacement costs for rural homes and businesses compared to urban where a boiler ban will not occur until 2025.” Then he went on to say “The Government has a very rosy ambition for the £12k cost of heat pumps to parity with the cost of a gas boiler at the end of this decade. But by going first with rural homes they will not benefit from any cost reductions in heat pumps. He said electrification is not the single answer and that the government should follow a mixed technology approach including biofuels such as BioLPG and bioliquids and that to achieve conversion in 30 years requires financial support.

Rural residents travel further than urban residents and there is a need for a range of solutions to reduce the reliance on private vehicles. RSN are asking that all homes and businesses not connected to the gas grid be supported to improve their standard of insulation and served by a future proofed electrical distribution network before any transition to heat pumps is enforced.

Rural Community Energy

Simon Green, CEO, Rural Design Centre then talked to us about Rural Community Energy. They work with communities to co-create solutions to challenges in:

- Transport
- Health and Care
- Social inclusion
- Housing
- Rural crime
- Connectivity
- Employment; and
- Energy

They have a design thinking approach and give us an interesting quote:

“If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and 5 minutes thinking about solutions.”

— Albert Einstein

Simon said that their initial work had been with a single village hall in Northumberland that wanted to decarbonise and save energy. It was a small village, reliant on a committee of volunteers to run the building with limited expertise around energy and limited resources, but just not big enough to justify external involvement. They worked through the options for the first village, which was difficult to solve efficiently and effectively. They explored requirements and impact around decarbonisation, cost savings, revenue generation and resilience. It then came down to one question:

“How can we bring together multiple community buildings in Northumberland to justify the resources and expertise required to decarbonise effectively and efficiently?”

The Issues they faced were common to other community buildings.

So, they worked with Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to identify a cohort of relevant buildings, village halls, WI, church buildings, sports facilities, education etc. They collaborated with community groups to understand their needs and what would be required to make a scheme work; financials, prioritisation, scale, level of expertise and they brought in expertise from Northern Powergrid, university, private sector, and public authorities.

The outcome was an agreed approach to create a community energy company, raising funding for, installing and operating renewable energy generation and storage. They developed detailed surveys of 19 community buildings, demonstrating financial return and providing plans for installing solar panels and battery storage and secured funding for first installs and discussions are advanced for the remainder. They have plans developed to create a cooperative for delivery and a combined financial model is in development, including opportunities for grid balancing revenues. They have a planned second phase of 20 further buildings identified and engaged.

The expected impact is a minimum of 30% energy cost savings for community buildings, after cost of capital and operating costs paid for (likely higher). They will avoid 3000 tonnes plus of CO2 emissions and have a more reliable supply of energy. Overall, they will achieve reduced infrastructure costs and improved resilience for vital community assets in times of emergency.

So, where are they now?

The development work is nearly complete and a Community Energy Cooperative to be formed in the coming weeks. The first installs are funded and planned for early 2023 and they are aiming to scale to 50+ community buildings over next two years.

All of this has been achieved thanks to their partners and funders:

- Partnership between Rural Design Centre, NICRE and Community Action Northumberland
- RCEF funding from BEIS and DEFRA through the Northeast, Yorkshire, and Humber Energy Hub
- Rural Design Centre Innovation Project part-funded by European Regional Development Fund and North of Tyne Combined Authority

Passivhaus Buildings

We then heard from Exeter City Council about their Energy Ready Homes. They spoke about them all being Passivhaus buildings and indeed all their housing development since 2009 have been Passivhaus.

Passivhaus was developed in Germany in the 1990s and it is a quality assured standard and methodology for low energy building, which can help create buildings which use around 75% less energy than standard practice for a UK newbuild.

Key Passivhaus features are:

- Super insulation
- Stringent levels of airtightness
- Minimal thermal bridging
- Optimisation of passive solar gain
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery
- Simple compact shape

Rural Heating and Achieving a Fair and Affordable Transition

The next session was from Gemserv about Rural Retrofit, Challenges and Opportunities. This was followed by Oftec talking about Decarbonising rural heating and achieving a fair and affordable transition.

There were two parts to their presentation:

- Part, one looked at the challenge of decarbonising rural heating, the government's current proposals and their implications for households and businesses.
- Part two looked at renewable liquid fuels, the role they could play, and what needs to happen to make them a viable option.

So, what are the challenges?

- UK Target is to achieve 'net zero' by 2050.
- 78% reduction in emissions by 2035.
- Heating accounts for 23% of emissions -
- UK Heat and Buildings Strategy published in 2021.

What is the government proposing for rural homes and businesses?

The government plans to phase out the installation of high carbon fossil fuel heating off the gas grid and take a heat pump first approach where 'reasonably practical' supported by regulation, incentives and a 'market mechanism'.

Timetable:

- 2024 - Large non-domestic off-gas grid buildings.
- 2025 - Newbuild.
- 2026 - Domestic and small non-domestic off-gas grid buildings.

Target: 600,000 heat pump installations per year by 2028. Purpose of the policy: develop the heat pump supply chain.

The government says this is fair because: 80% of off-grid homes are technically suitable for a heat pump with only radiators resized, and the price is expected to fall by 50% by 2025.

Are the government's proposals fair?

- The government's evidence base and assumptions were developed pre-covid and Ukraine crisis.
- Homes and businesses on the gas grid won't be affected until 2035.
- Rural homes tend to be older, larger, less energy efficient and more varied in design and construction.
- Rural households will face the greatest risk of high capital costs, disruption, and poor outcomes.
- The average installation cost of an air source heat pump under the government's Boiler Upgrade Scheme is £12,938 (£28,293 for ground source).

- Government offers Boiler Upgrade Scheme grants of £5,000 towards the installation cost of a heat pump (£6,000 for ground source) but not clear whether this funding will be available in 2026.
- It isn't yet clear what alternatives the government may support if a heat pump isn't suitable.

What would a fair decarbonisation policy look like?

- The government already supports solid biomass in limited cases where a heat pump isn't suitable, but the average cost of these systems is also high (£14,700).
- The government should abandon its one size fits all approach for off-gas grid homes.
- Support for energy efficiency improvements is also desperately needed.
- The government should adopt a technology neutral approach with support for all viable low carbon solutions. This provides more options for households and encourages competition, which is good for innovation and lower prices.
- OFTEC has worked closely with industry partners to test a renewable liquid fuel called Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) as a direct replacement for heating oil – it needs to be part of the mix.

What are the benefits of HVO?

- HVO is produced from 100% waste oils and other biogenic wastes and is certified as sustainable by the ISCC.
- HVO offers a net GHG CO₂ reduction of 88% vs Kerosene.
- It's a direct replacement for heating oil and is effectively a 'drop in' solution.
- Conversion can be done in just a couple of hours and typically costs less than £500.
- It is likely to work in all existing oil heating systems.

But there's a problem...

- HVO is currently more expensive than heating oil and is also taxed differently, making it more costly than it should be.
- The government has yet to decide about whether renewable liquid fuels should be used in heating or reserved purely for transport.
- HVO is currently only incentivised for use in transport, through a scheme called the RTFO.
- Supplies of HVO into the UK are being limited by a rule that prevents imports of HVO and other low carbon fuels from outside the EU.

There's also a solution...

- The government should accept the principle of a technology neutral approach and actively support renewable liquid fuels alongside other low carbon heating options such as heat pumps and solid biomass.
- The government must redesign and extend the existing RTFO scheme to create a consistent incentive support framework for HVO irrespective of use.
- The government should also remove the duty currently paid on HVO and align it with heating oil or, better still, also make it VAT zero to encourage its use.
- The government should remove the trade barrier that prevents HVO being imported from the US – this would boost supply and help to reduce prices by increasing competition.
- ... we need your help to make this happen!

Future Ready Fuel campaign hub: www.futurereadyfuel.info

Useful Links for Net Zero

Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

To read the specific chapter on Rural Decarbonisation and asks of Government, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/decarbonising-rural-communities.pdf>

You might also be interested in our Rural Lens Review of the Net Zero Strategy – Build Back Greener, please follow the link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/rural-lens/net-zero-strategy-rural-lens-review.pdf>

As well as our Rural Lens Review of the Heat and Buildings Strategy please follow the link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/rural-lens/heat-and-buildings-strategy-rural-lens-review.pdf>

To find out more about the Rural Design Centre, please follow this link:

<https://www.ruraldesigncentre.com/about>

To book a place the Rural Catalyst Conference, please follow this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rural-catalyst-conference-2022-hybrid-event-tickets-361797826037>

To find out more about Exeter City Living, please follow this link:

<https://exetercityliving.co.uk/>

Passivhaus Trust UK has its annual conference in Exeter next month, please follow this link:

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

Enerphit is the Retrofit standard for Passivhaus, please follow this link:

<https://passipedia.org/certification/enerphit>

To find out more about Gemserv, please follow this link:

<https://gemserv.com/>

Energy Efficiency Investment, please follow this link:

Households save £200 on bills with energy efficiency investment - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

To find out more about OFTEC, please follow this link:

<https://www.oftec.co.uk/>

Future Ready Fuel campaign hub, please follow this link: www.futurereadyfuel.info

Hastoe New Build Standard for new rural developments, please follow this link:

<https://www.hastoe.com/about-us/building-homes/our-new-build-standard/>

Rural Cost of Living, including fuel poverty analysis, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/new-report-shows-devastating-triple-blow-pushes-rural-communities-in-a-cost-of-living-emergency>

Friday 23rd September (PM) - Rural Transport

Introduction

On 23 September 2022, I attended the Rural Transport session of the National Rural Services Conference and Graham Biggs, CEO, RSN gave us some unpalatable facts about the state of Rural Transport.

“Rural Areas get 37% less per head in Government Funding and the Discretionary spend in urban areas is three times that of rural” he said.

“Mission3 in the Levelling up agenda states: By 2030 local public transport connectivity across the country will be closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.” So just how is that going to be achieved?

RSN wants Government to “Develop the future of Transport-Rural Strategy” and include a pathway for an equitable transition to readily available and clean rural public transport.

The Future of Rural Buses-First Bus

Then, John Birtwistle, Head of Policy, First Bus gave us a presentation on the future of Rural Buses. He cited the challenges and opportunities as:

- Impact of COVID
- Government support – Bus Recovery Grant,
- £2 fares
- Labour market
- Bus Service Improvement Partnerships and Enhanced Partnerships
- Local authority funding
- Concessionary reimbursement
- Bus Service Operator Grant
- Investment
- Decarbonisation
- Partnership, openness, and communication



And then spoke about the link that buses can play by:

- Linking communities
- Providing essential links
- Decreasing isolation
- Improving health
- Decelerating climate change
- Improving air quality
- Decongestion
- Reduced severance and noise
- Improved economic prosperity
- Good value for money!

But he didn't offer any silver bullets for the Rural Transport problem.

Cornwall Council Bus Fares Pilot

Cornwall Council gave us an update on the progress of the Bus Fares Pilot. Cornwall Council had declared a Climate Emergency in January 2019 and they had then set a target to become carbon neutral by 2030 by:

- Encouraging the switch to public transport - which will actively reduce emissions
- Helping contribute towards the Government's decarbonisation agenda; and
- Forming new travel behaviour in Cornwall

They have introduced a 'One Public Transport System for Cornwall' (OPTSfC)

In 2015, Cornwall Council agreed a Devolution Deal with the Government that included the ability to utilise powers from the Bus Services Act (2017) to introduce franchising for bus services. Following this; Cornwall Council was awarded £9.5m from the Local Growth Fund, Cornwall Council contributed £2.9m and the Bus Operators contributed £35m.



So far, they have delivered 194 new low-emission buses—purchased by operators with new livery and some with Wi-Fi and USB chargers. Cornwall now has one of the youngest fleet of buses in the Country. They also have new electronic ticket machines - accepting contactless payments.

They have completed bus station upgrades at:

- Newquay
- Penzance
- Truro

And introduced Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) capability at rail stations and upgrades to roadside waiting facilities including:

- Bus shelters
- Timetable cases
- RTPI displays

They developed an Enhanced Partnership and a Business Improvement Plan. They have new prices for the whole of Cornwall no matter which bus is taken, and they have introduced a 'tap and cap' system like those you see in Continental Europe.

Midlands Connect-Future of Mobility Study

Finally, we had a presentation about Improving Rural Transport Options from Midlands Connect. Through their 'Future of Mobility Study' they have produced a toolkit/menu of options for rural hubs. They ran a rural mobility competition, which delivered solutions for an electric vehicle charging and car sharing platform, a demand responsive transport app and a digital platform for integrated journeys.

Useful Links for Rural Transport

Revitalising Rural: Realising the Vision campaign, please follow this link:

<https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

To read the specific chapter on Rural Transport and asks of Government, please follow this link:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/rural-transport.pdf>

You might also be interested in our Rural Lens Review of Bus Back Better, please follow the link:

<https://www.rsonline.org.uk/bus-back-better-rural-lens>

Cost of Living crisis hitting people living in Rural Areas harder

The BBC has reported that the cost-of-living crisis is hitting people living in rural areas harder than those living in towns and cities, according to a new report. The study, by the Rural Services Network, says those in



the countryside are spending much more on essentials like heating, transport, and housing.

Facing "significantly higher" costs, they earn "much less" than their urban counterparts, the report found. Since the pandemic, house prices have also soared in comparison to towns. The study found that rural house prices are almost 40% higher than in urban areas across England (excluding London), with rural villages and hamlets increasing to 55% higher.

Meanwhile, rural households on a low

income now spend about half of their earnings on rent - almost 5% more than low-income households in urban areas.

Graham Biggs, chief executive of the Rural Services Network, which represents rural councils and other service providers, said:

"Outdated infrastructure and a legacy of other factors, such as poor transport and broadband connectivity, employment opportunities and housing demand, means that many rural areas are more isolated than maps suggest and are all contributing to a higher overall cost of living."

Importance of Terrestrial TV and Radio Campaign

Provision of TV through an aerial

Broadcast TV and radio – content delivered through an aerial into people's homes – is part of the fabric of our national life. Watching and listening to our favourite shows together is something that binds us as families, as communities, and as a country. For all the new ways of watching content like streaming, broadcast services remain the backbone for many.

Currently, there is only certainty of provision for TV and radio through an aerial until the early 2030s. There are a series of upcoming decisions on the long-term future of broadcast services. The first of these will be taking place at the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC) next year, where countries will decide how much spectrum – radio frequencies used for broadcasting – should be allocated to TV and radio, and how much should be given to other technologies like mobile services. Decisions at previous WRCs have already led to a reduction in the amount of spectrum allocated to digital terrestrial TV, with more and more services squeezed into fewer and fewer frequency bands.

New data from Ipsos shows that 9 in 10 people want to see continued support for Digital Terrestrial TV and broadcast radio.

More than 8 in 10 believe Government or local MPs should actively support the continued provision of these services. A similar proportion believe the BBC should be doing so



Older people, lonely, less well-off and those in rural areas are most reliant on Freeview and radio services – which are universally accessible

For millions of people across the UK, universally available broadcast TV and radio services play a crucial role in their daily lives. Freeview is watched on around 35 million TV sets in the UK. Recent Ipsos research shows that over half of adults in Great Britain have watched Freeview in the past year (56%), with 43% watching it at home every week. Around 40 million people aged 15 and over tune into radio each week, with the majority listening through DAB or AM/FM.

Ipsos research highlights that services received through an aerial are particularly important for vulnerable groups, including older people who may lack the digital skills and confidence to use streaming apps, and people living in rural areas where the lack of, or aged, network infrastructure means they are less likely to have a superfast broadband connection. People struggling with the cost of living also depend on Freeview. Rising prices have led households to cut back on TV streaming services as people look for ways to save money, with more than half a million subscriptions cancelled for this reason in the first three months of 2022. Research also shows the significant negative impact of the potential loss of broadcast TV and radio, particularly for those who are vulnerable. A quarter of people (25%) said that they would be “very lonely” if they lost their Freeview services, rising to more than 2 in 5 (44%) of those who are 65 and older and living alone.

Campaign Partners

The Broadcast 2040+ campaign is being led by Arqiva the national infrastructure provider which operates at the heart of the UK’s broadcast industry; helping transmit Digital Terrestrial Television (Freeview) and radio into people’s homes. Campaign partners include Age UK, Silver Voices, the Rural Services Network, and the Voice of the Listener & Viewer.

Campaign Aim

The campaign aims to secure a commitment from Government that DTT and broadcast radio will be safeguarded to 2040 and beyond.

Progress

The campaign is already reaching the people who can make a difference. There have been meetings with several influential MPs, advisors, and peers to discuss the campaign, and they have been made aware of how vital broadcast content is for viewers and listeners. The campaign secured national coverage in the Daily Express (‘Don’t let streaming services force out ‘free’ TV and radio’), and the Sun (‘Public Back TV Support’) and in the Times (‘Millions still rely on traditional TV and radio — we can’t ignore them’).

It’s also making a splash throughout the TV and radio industry. Radio World, Radio Today, Advanced Television and Informativ have covered the campaign. Laurie Patten, Director of Strategy and Regulation at Arqiva, also spoke about launch of the campaign at the Westminster Media Forum.

For more information on Broadcast 2040+, the press release and the new Ipsos research showing how much the public values digital terrestrial TV and radio see the link below.

How you can help

Email wrc-23.respond@ofcom.org.uk stating your name/organisation and why terrestrial TV and radio is important to you and why it should be protected beyond 2040. Please feel free to use the data in this document to illustrate your case.

If you have any questions or are interested in joining the campaign, then please get in touch at fmarking@strandpartners.com

Further Reading

www.arqiva.com/Importance_of_Broadcast.pdf

“Protect traditional TV & radio” say the British people as Broadcast 2040+ campaign launches ([arqiva.com](http://www.arqiva.com))