

## MONTHLY NEWS REPORT MARCH 2023



**E-Newsletter Issue 3/2023**  
Thank you, John Ford, and Anne Henman,  
For Editing the Little Houghton and Brafield Magazine for 55 years  
St Marys Church, Little Houghton  
Saturday, 18 February 2023

Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>NEWS REPORT MARCH 2023</b> .....  | 5  |
| Monthly Highlights .....   | 5  |
| <b>PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK</b> .....                                      | 9  |
| Reduction of Speed Limit on the A428.....  | 9  |
| Update on 41 Bus Service.....  | 10 |
| New route Northampton - Olney - Bedford.....   | 10 |
| Cogenhoe Village Hopper .....  | 10 |
| Long term outlook for community transport in rural West Northamptonshire .....         | 10 |
| Concessionary Travel Reimbursement.....  | 10 |
| 33/33A Bus Service Hartwell .....  | 11 |
| Hartwell Flooding and Blocked Drains .....   | 11 |
| Status of Northampton Rail Freight Order Changes .....                                 | 11 |
| Damaged Grit Bin Bramley Close/Orchard Way, Cogenhoe .....                             | 12 |
| Denton Food Larder .....   | 12 |
| Cogenhoe Primary School .....  | 12 |
| My Meeting with Aileen Evans, CEO, Grand Union Housing Group (GUHG) .....              | 12 |
| Poor response to residents .....   | 12 |
| Lodge Road/Close, Little Houghton .....  | 13 |
| Quinton Church Coffee Morning.....   | 13 |
| St Mary's Church, Little Houghton, Coffee Morning.....                                 | 13 |
| Coffee@Carey, Hackleton .....  | 13 |
| Thank you to John Ford & Anne Henman .....   | 14 |
| Hartwell Youth Club Fair Trade Tea Party .....   | 14 |
| <b>HOMES FOR UKRAINE</b> .....   | 16 |
| Are you interested in becoming a host for Ukraine Scheme? .....                        | 16 |
| <b>2023 LGA AWARDS</b> .....   | 16 |
| The shortlist .....  | 16 |
| <b>CONSULTATIONS</b> .....   | 16 |
| Proposed Active Travel Improvements around Abington Park, Northampton .....            | 16 |
| New Deadline for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licencing Policy Consultation ..... | 17 |
| West Northamptonshire Parks Visitors Feedback Survey .....                             | 18 |
| Heritage Park Consultation .....   | 18 |
| <b>FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION</b> .....  | 19 |
| 2023/24 Balanced Budget Agreed .....   | 19 |
| Cost of Living Online Support Hub .....  | 20 |
| <b>REGULATORY SERVICES</b> .....   | 20 |
| WNC Bird Flu Prevention Measures .....   | 20 |
| Road Closures over Coronation Weekend.....   | 20 |
| Electoral Boundary Commission Review.....  | 20 |
| Changes to Elections Act-Voter ID legislation update.....                              | 21 |
| Food Crime.....  | 21 |
| Freedom of Information Requests.....   | 22 |
| <b>RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)</b> .....  | 23 |
| Rural Cost of Living Survey .....  | 23 |
| Kovia Consulting Rural Cost of Living Report.....                                      | 23 |
| NCF to hold a series of Community Conversations .....                                  | 24 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>PLANNING MATTERS</b> .....   | 24 |
| Planning Appeals.....   | 24 |
| Determined or Cancelled:.....   | 24 |
| Outstanding: .....  | 24 |
| WNC Response to Government Consultation on reforms to NPPF .....                    | 25 |
| Building Control Services Back in House .....                                       | 25 |
| DLUHC Proposes an Increase in Planning Fees .....                                   | 25 |
| <b>HOUSING</b> .....  | 26 |
| West Northamptonshire Housing Strategy .....  | 26 |
| <b>ENVIRONMENT</b> .....  | 27 |
| Reduce Unwanted Contamination in Recycling Bins .....                               | 27 |
| Garden Waste Collections 2023/24 .....  | 28 |
| <b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE</b> .....   | 28 |
| My Appointment to Daventry and South Northants LAP (DSN4) .....                     | 28 |
| Integrated Care Northamptonshire 10 Year Strategy .....                             | 29 |
| Northants Support After Suicide (NSAS) Webinars.....                                | 29 |
| High Tech Virtual Wards .....   | 30 |
| Action for Asperger's AGM & Annual Conference 2023 .....                            | 30 |
| Winter Wellbeing .....  | 30 |
| Stop smoking service .....  | 30 |
| Weight management service.....  | 31 |
| Wellbeing in the Workplace.....   | 31 |
| <b>EDUCATION &amp; CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b> .....                                    | 32 |
| New SEND facilities .....   | 32 |
| Are you thinking about Holiday Dates in 2023?.....                                  | 32 |
| Spring term 2023.....   | 32 |
| Summer term 2023.....   | 32 |
| Autumn term 2023.....   | 32 |
| Cost of living boost for students .....   | 32 |
| New Children's Social Care Implementation Strategy .....                            | 33 |
| Secondary School Places Allocated on 1 March 2023 .....                             | 33 |
| <b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &amp; GRANT FUNDING</b> .....                               | 34 |
| NNBN expands into West Northamptonshire .....                                       | 34 |
| The Foyle Foundation Small Grants Scheme .....                                      | 34 |
| Apprenticeship Scheme West Northamptonshire Council.....                            | 35 |
| Community Transport Grants – Motability .....                                       | 35 |
| The Animal Paradise Trail .....   | 35 |
| New ExploreWN App .....   | 36 |
| Defra Support for Farmers .....   | 36 |
| Oxford Cambridge Arc .....  | 37 |
| Small Grant Programme (older people) – Charles Hayward Foundation .....             | 37 |
| Specialist Grant Programme – Lloyds Bank Foundation .....                           | 38 |
| A New Energy Discount Scheme for Businesses, Charities, and the Public Sector ..... | 38 |
| Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund .....   | 38 |
| <b>TRANSPORT &amp; HIGHWAYS</b> .....   | 39 |
| Review of West Northamptonshire Bus Services .....                                  | 39 |
| Department of Transport £2 Single Fare extended for three months .....              | 39 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>POLICE FIRE &amp; CRIME COMMISSIONER</b> .....                          | 40 |
| Flare Report.....  | 40 |
| Mature Drivers Roadshow .....  | 40 |
| PFCC Northamptonshire funding for Advanced Driving Tests.....              | 40 |
| <b>CULTURE, HERITAGE &amp; SPORT</b> .....                                 | 41 |
| International Women’s Day 2023 to honour the late Queen Elizabeth II ..... | 41 |
| Coronation weekend website now live.....                                   | 41 |
| Coronation Event Funding.....  | 42 |
| Sporting Champions.....  | 42 |

## NEWS REPORT MARCH 2023

### Monthly Highlights

Due to more visa applications being approved, further hosts are needed as new arrivals from Ukraine are looking to make West Northamptonshire their temporary home.

Many of you have written to me expressing your concerns about the numbers of accidents, some fatal that have taken place over the years on the A428 through Northamptonshire. Over the last two years, I have worked on the need to reduce the speed limit on the A428 from Brackmills to Yardley Hastings. The first hurdle was to provide evidence and then convince members of the Road Safety Panel of the need for a change to the speed limit on this stretch of road. Agreement was reached last year, and I was advised of the Council's intention to reduce the speed limit between The Lakes Roundabout, Northampton & the West Northamptonshire Boundary. On 2 March 2023, WNC finally wrote to several interested parties informing them of proposals to introduce a 40mph speed limit Order on Bedford Road, Northampton and a 50mph speed limit on A428 Northampton Road, through Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Brafield on the Green, Denton, Castle Ashby, and Yardley Hastings. The existing 30 mph stretches through Brafield on the Green and Yardley Hastings remain unchanged. The proposals have been put forward for maintaining safety and have been agreed through the Speed Limit Review Panel. If there are no objections by 23 March 2023 then the Highway Authority will proceed to the next stage of advertising the public notice.

Thank you to all those residents who provided evidence of the need to make these changes and supported me with this campaign from the outset.

On the 15 February I meet with Councillor Phil Larratt to seek further clarity from West Northamptonshire Council regarding Concessionary Fare reimbursement. Britannia intends to run a service on the Yardley Hastings, Denton, Brafield on the Green, Little Houghton, and Great Houghton route along the A428 affected by the 41-bus service. I have asked whether WNC as a TCA has at any time offered a discretionary concessionary travel schemes, i.e., schemes which go beyond the statutory minimum in one or more respects under the provisions of the Transport Act 1985 for this route. I have also asked about the reimbursement figures for this route from the former Northamptonshire County Council and now West Northamptonshire Council as a Unitary over the past two-three years and how it was calculated?

I had a further meeting on 7 March to take this conversation further. My concern is that if this route is unviable, then how do we build a plan to overcome this problem? To make this route viable for a rural community transport provider then the villages affected together with WNC must have a better understanding of what needs to be done to make the route sustainable and how best to encourage take up. This is still work in progress and we plan to continue this conversation with another Concessionary Travel Reimbursement expert. I will provide you with a further update in due course.

Following an enquiry from Hartwell Parish Council, I met with Councillor Phil Larratt on 15 February 2023 to discuss the ongoing provision of the 33/33A Bus service. Whilst it is impossible to guarantee the future of the service on more than a year-to-year basis, Phil said in response to my question about the 23/24 service provision: "Yes it will continue until we decide otherwise, depending on the SCP report into the provision of Rural Transport." "This report is looking into how much to invest into Community Transport, Demand Responsive Transport and other Operators." I will keep you appraised of any future developments.

Kier have been working exceptionally hard on the Hartwell Flooding and blocked drains and the matter is almost resolved. WNC identified a blockage in the main drain on Ashton Road near to the Oak Leaf Group

building. The drains were overgrown with tree roots, which they believed to be the main cause of the drainage issues in the area. They have removed the tree roots with specialist equipment. But WNC is aware that there are some further tree roots which require removal, and these are being programmed. The residents are still concerned about the drains on the corner of Amberley Way and higher up Blacksmith's Way, and I have passed this information over to Kier for further action. I will keep the residents informed.

SEGRO sought a change to the Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order 2019. The Application was published on 10 August 2022 and the Secretary of State initiated a consultation on the Application on the same day. The deadline for representations on the Application was 26 September 2022. The 1,094 representations submitted in response to the consultation were published on 11 November 2022. The Secretary of State then invited comments from any Interested Party on the representations received. The Secretary of State published a submission from the Applicant dated January 2023 which set out their response to the representations on the Application. The Secretary of State also invited any Interested Party to respond to any of the points raised in this submission. The new deadline was 15 February 2023. All responses were published on 24 February 2023. The outcome is still awaited.

I met with Aileen Evans, CEO and Phil Hardy, Executive Director Operations, Grand Union Housing Group on 2 February 2023 to discuss my GUHG case work and agree a number of actions. I was able to resolve most of the issues which were outstanding but there is still further work needed on answering residents' queries and the long-term solution for Lodge Road/Close, Little Houghton.

On 7 March 2023, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) launched a public consultation on the proposed map and councillor numbers, following the first stage consultation which took place in autumn 2022 where residents gave their views. The consultation on the outline areas will run until 15 May and people can get involved by giving their views on the LGBCE's website where they will also find useful guidance and maps of the current wards.

I have attended several community events this month, which has given me lots of opportunities to catch up with so many of you. Please read about them all in my Monthly Report.

On Wednesday, 22 February, members approved the final budget proposals, Housing Revenue Account and setting of the Council Tax for 2023/24. In common with local authorities across the country, the Council is facing severe financial pressures due to factors including the current economic climate, high inflation rates driving up running costs and an increase in demand for services, particularly around supporting children in care and vulnerable adults.

Despite these pressures, the Council has worked hard to balance the books and has set a balanced revenue budget for 2023/24 of £383.5m (excluding grant funded schools spending of £443.7m).

The budget includes a Council Tax increase of 4.99%, well below current inflation rates and in line with the Government's allowance, crucially generating extra funding of around £12m – with 2% of the increase going towards funding adult social care. This represents an average increase on a Band D property of £80.50 a year, the equivalent of £1.55 a week.

WNC is consulting on Proposed Active Travel Improvements around Abington Park, Northampton.

There is a new deadline for the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licencing Policy Consultation.

The 26 March deadline for this consultation is extended to Sunday 23 April to allow people more time to fully review it and consider their views



West Northants Council manages over 190 parks and open spaces, the majority being situated within Northampton Town. There is a feedback survey about twenty-two of these parks. We would like to hear about the park you visit the most. The information you provide will help us to improve our parks and open spaces and to prioritise work plans. Your responses are completely anonymous. The Consultation runs until 31 March 2023.

West Northamptonshire Council is looking for feedback on proposals to transform Chalk Lane Car Park in Marefair, Northampton into a Heritage Park. This will offer open green space for families and the local community to enjoy while celebrating the heritage of the area. People are invited to review the plans and have their say on the online consultation, which runs until Friday, 7 April.

WNC Trading Standards Team is encouraging everyone to register all appliances in their home - whether they are new, old, or second-hand. That way, you never miss a safety notice & recall. It is a free and easy way to improve safety in your home.

If you would like to organise a street party with friends and neighbours over the Coronation weekend, you will need to apply to hold a street party and apply for a temporary road closure. Applications should be made by Monday 27 March 2023. There is no charge for Coronation commemoration road closures from 6 to 8 May 2023.

WNC has a new Cost-of-Living Online Support Hub. This together with our customer services team is there to help our residents access information and advice about the rising cost of living and find the support that is available to them. Please access advice and information, including a directory of warm spaces, on our Cost-of-Living Online Support Hub. All the various links are in my Monthly Report. For those who cannot access the Internet then please call WNC's customer services team and speak to somebody directly about the support available between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Please call us on 0300 126 7000.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) proposed an increase in planning application fees in a new consultation, which opened on 28 February 2023. The consultation said the government has received "consistent feedback from all sectors" that due to an "absence of adequate resources and capability" the planning application service is not "consistently performing at the level it should."

At the Planning Policy Meeting on 28 February, the WNC response to the Government's consultation document on proposed reforms to national planning policy was agreed.

DLUHC is therefore proposing to raise planning application fees by 35% for major applications and 25% for all other applications. This means that for non-major developments the fee will go up from £462 to £578 and for major developments it will go up from £462 to £624. The proposed rise in fees would apply to all applicants unless they are eligible for existing exemptions. The consultation opened on 28 February and will run for eight weeks until 25 April.

People living in rural areas are being urged to complete a survey on the cost of living. The Rural Services Network (RSN), in partnership with the Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group, has launched the Rural Cost of Living Household Survey to understand more about rural household budgets during what is a very difficult time for many. The survey closes on 31 March 2023.

Check out the school term dates and holiday dates for 2023 in my Monthly Report.

People are being encouraged to make sure they put the right stuff in their recycling bins in a bid to reduce contamination and significant disposal costs. If recycling is not handled correctly then it can lead to whole loads being rejected and set for disposal, costing on average more than £30,000 each month.

Residents across West Northamptonshire can now sign up to receive optional, chargeable garden waste collections from April 2023. The annual subscription charge for the fortnightly service from April 2023 to the end of March 2024 is £55 per bin and people can subscribe via the link on our website.

A total of 4,784 secondary school places were allocated to pupils across West Northamptonshire on 1 March 2023. The next round of secondary school place allocations (for late applicants) will take place in April / May. Primary school allocations will be announced on 17 April.

I thought you might like to hear about a small grants scheme available through the Foyle Foundation. I get requests from community interest groups and Parish Councils for grant funding, and I was pleased to hear last week that one of the suggestions that I had made had resulted in a Community Group acquiring £5k grant funding from a little-known company-The Foyle Foundation.

A new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector was confirmed, ahead of the current scheme ending in March. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024. This will help businesses locked into contracts signed before recent substantial falls in the wholesale price manage their costs and provide others with reassurance against the risk of prices rising again.

The £2 cap on bus fares in England has been extended for three months following warnings that hundreds of services could be cut if it ended. It had been due to expire on 31 March but has been extended until the end of June.

Are you a mature driver (aged 60+)? living in Northamptonshire? Do you rely on being able to drive? There is a free roadshow for you being run by Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance on Tuesday, 2 May 2023, 09:30 – 11:30am

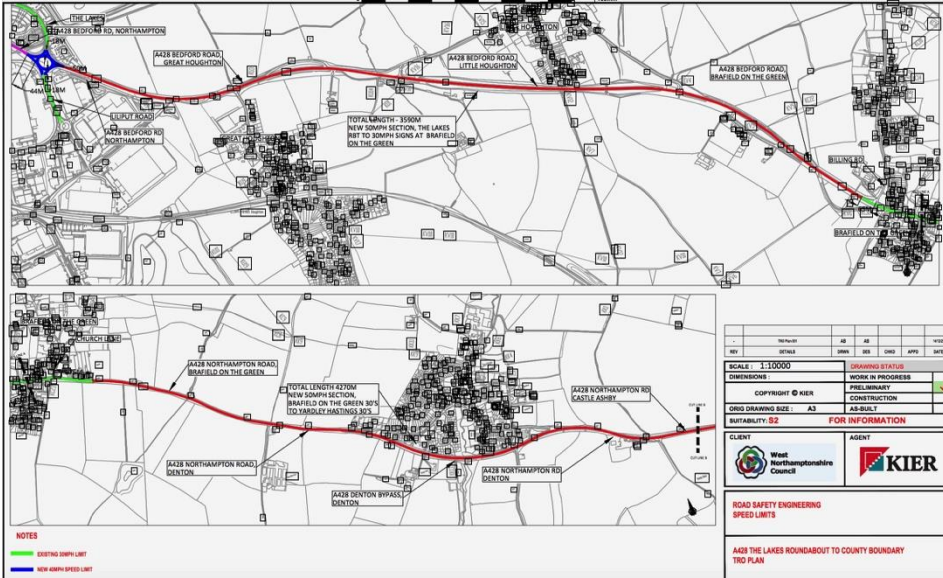
The Coronation website which provides information about the weekend of special events from 6–8 May to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen Consort is now live. The site includes information about the ceremony on Saturday 6 May, how individuals and organisations can get involved through street parties, Coronation Big Lunches, and the volunteering drive on Monday 8 May known as The Big Help Out. Please share details about events on the interactive map on the Coronation website, and to use the weekend as an opportunity to highlight the positive benefits of volunteering.

*All the Best, Steve*



# PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

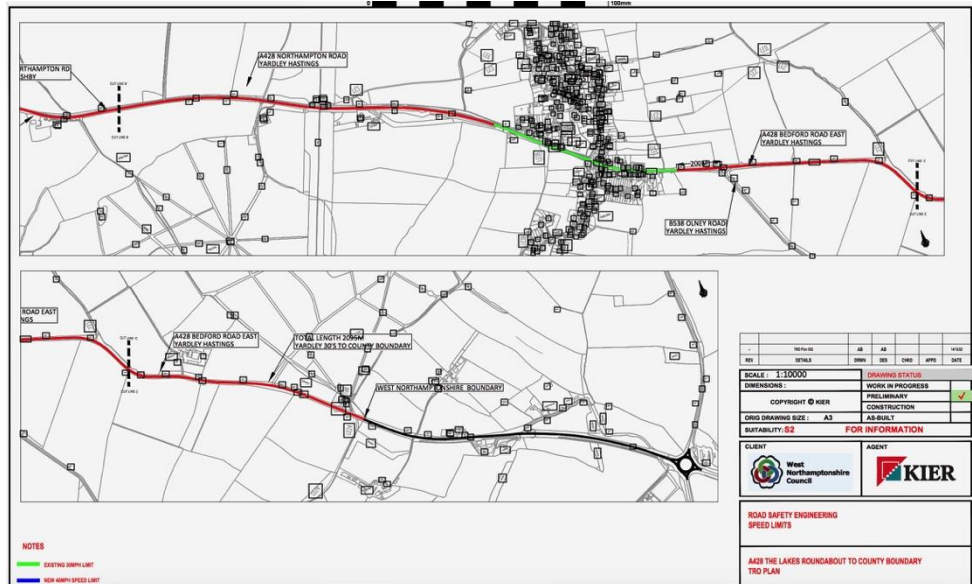
## Reduction of Speed Limit on the A428



Many of you have written to me expressing your concerns about the numbers of accidents, some fatal that have taken place over the years on the A428 through Northamptonshire. Over the last two years, I have worked on the need to reduce the speed limit on the A428 from Brackmills to Yardley Hastings. The first hurdle was to provide evidence and then convince members

of the Road Safety Panel of the need for a change to the speed limit on this stretch of road. Agreement was reached last year, and I was advised of the Council's intention to reduce the speed limit between The Lakes

Roundabout, Northampton & the West Northamptonshire Boundary. On 2 March 2023, WNC finally wrote to several interested parties informing them of proposals to introduce a 40mph speed limit Order on Bedford Road, Northampton and a 50mph speed limit on A428 Northampton Road, through Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Brafield on



the Green, Denton, Castle Ashby, and Yardley Hastings. The existing 30 mph stretches through Brafield on the Green and Yardley Hastings remain unchanged. The proposals have been put forward for maintaining safety and have been agreed through the Speed Limit Review Panel. If there are no objections by 23 March 2023 then the Highway Authority will proceed to the next stage of advertising the public notice.

Thank you to all those residents who provided evidence of the need to make these changes and supported me with this campaign from the outset.

## **Update on 41 Bus Service**

### **New route Northampton - Olney - Bedford**

Britannia announced the operation of a new service between Northampton and Bedford, via Olney and Lavendon on 16 January 2023 and has applied to the Traffic Commissioners for approval for the route. The 350 Northampton to Olney/Milton Keynes Bus Route is referred to on their website. Britannia is consulting local resident groups, elected officials, and others with a view to offering a partial replacement for the newly defunct forty-one service operated by Stagecoach.

Britannia said, "If the consultation and regulatory application are successful, then we envisage starting early March due to the 10-week delay between application for registration and commencement."

The route will cover Northampton, Booth Lane, Brafield on the Green, Denton, Yardley Hastings, Olney and Lavendon.

### **Cogenhoe Village Hopper**

The Cogenhoe Village Hopper covers Wollaston, Bozeat, Easton Maudit, Grendon, Whiston, Cogenhoe, Brafield on the Green, Little Houghton, Great Houghton, Northampton on Mondays to Fridays and Wellingborough on Saturday.

The Cogenhoe Village Hopper considered adding a shoppers' service to and from Denton. However, I understand from Deborah Rush, Clerk to Cogenhoe & Whiston Parish Council, that they have not gone any further with changing the Village Hopper route as it seemed pointless if a new operator is setting up.

## **Long term outlook for community transport in rural West Northamptonshire**

WNC has appointed specialist consultants, SCP, to carry out a review of the way that bus services are currently provided across West Northamptonshire. As part of this process, SCP will bring forward alternative models that would serve our communities better. In doing this work SCP contacted several key stakeholder groups, including bus operators and parish councils. It is anticipated that SCP will present their findings and report to WNC shortly. A report will then be presented to Cabinet. This report will inform our West Northants Transport Strategy that will be developed over the coming period in full consultation with Members and residents. To further support this work, an internal project to review how best community transport can be supported by WNC is underway. This team has yet to report its findings.

### **Concessionary Travel Reimbursement**

On the 15 February I meet with Councillor Phil Larratt to seek further clarity from West Northamptonshire Council regarding Concessionary Fare reimbursement. Britannia intends to run a service on the Yardley Hastings, Denton, Brafield on the Green, Little Houghton, and Great Houghton route along the A428 affected by the 41-bus service. I have asked whether WNC as a TCA has at any time offered a discretionary concessionary travel schemes, i.e., schemes which go beyond the statutory minimum in one or more respects under the provisions of the Transport Act 1985 for this route.



I have also asked about the reimbursement figures for this route from the former Northamptonshire County Council and now West Northamptonshire Council as a Unitary over the past two-three years and how it was calculated?

I had a further meeting on 7 March to take this conversation further. My concern is that if this route is unviable, then how do we build a plan to overcome this problem? To make this route viable for a rural community transport provider then the villages affected together with WNC must have a better understanding of what needs to be done to make the route sustainable and how best to encourage take up. This is still work in progress and we plan to continue this conversation with another Concessionary Travel Reimbursement expert. I will provide you with a further update in due course.

### 33/33A Bus Service Hartwell

Following an enquiry from Hartwell Parish Council, I met with Councillor Phil Larratt on 15 February 2023 to discuss the ongoing provision of the 33/33A Bus service. Whilst it is impossible to guarantee the future of the service on more than a year-to-year basis, Phil said in response to my question about the 23/24 service provision: "Yes it will continue until we decide otherwise, depending on the SCP report into the provision of Rural Transport." "This report is looking into how much to invest into Community Transport, Demand Responsive Transport and other Operators." I will keep you appraised of any future developments.

### Hartwell Flooding and Blocked Drains

Kier have been working exceptionally hard on the Hartwell Flooding and blocked drains and the matter is almost resolved. WNC identified a blockage in the main drain on Ashton Road near to the Oak Leaf Group building. The drains were overgrown with tree roots, which they believed to be the main cause of the drainage issues in the area. They have removed the tree roots with specialist equipment. But WNC is aware that there are some further tree roots which require removal, and these are being programmed.

The residents are still concerned about the drains on the corner of Amberley Way and higher up Blacksmith's Way, and I have passed this information over to Kier for further action. I will keep the residents informed.

**In an emergency residents have been advised to call 0300 126 7000 between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday and outside of these hours to call 01604 651074.**

### Status of Northampton Rail Freight Order Changes

SEGRO sought a change to the Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange Development Consent Order 2019. The Application was published on 10 August 2022 and the Secretary of State initiated a consultation on the Application on the same day. The deadline for representations on the Application was 26 September 2022. The 1,094 representations submitted in response to the consultation were published on 11 November 2022. The Secretary of State then invited comments from any Interested Party on the representations received. The Secretary of State published a submission from the Applicant dated January 2023 which set out their response to the representations on the Application. The Secretary of State also invited any Interested Party to respond to any of the points raised in this submission. The new deadline was 15 February 2023. All responses were published on 24 February 2023. The outcome is still awaited.

The screenshot shows the National Infrastructure Planning website. At the top, there are links for 'Cymraeg', 'FAQs', 'Contact', and 'Sitemap', along with the phone number 'Enquiries: 0303 444 5000'. Below this is a search bar. The main navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Projects', 'Application process', 'Legislation and advice', and 'Help'. The current page is titled 'Rail Freight Interchanges: Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange' by Roxhill Developments Limited. A progress bar shows the status as 'Decided'. A notification box at the bottom states: 'The consultation responses on the application for a non-material change to the Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange have been published. 24 February 2023'. A link 'Find out more about the process >' is also visible.

. <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/...>





have a route to escalate all future complaints to Lucy Evans, EA and Phil Hardy, Executive Director of Operations.

### **Lodge Road/Close, Little Houghton**

I was seeking answers to GUHG in the short and long term. I had already managed to get the leak fixed so that residents in Lodge Road/Lodge Close could use their toilets and take showers, which they had been without for several days. But the longer-term solution still needed to be addressed. GUHG agreed to assist with the overall resolution to the problem. But there is still more work needed to gain a better understanding of GUHG's intentions for their tenants, so that this information can be built into an overall permanent resolution which would include the private owners.

### **Quinton Church Coffee Morning**

I went to the Quinton Church Coffee Morning on Saturday 4 February. Open to all, the monthly first Saturday 10.30-12.00 coffee mornings provide an opportunity to relax and catch up with others from the local community.



Everyone is always pleased to see a new face and offer a warm welcome to newcomers! Some of the regulars were not there this week due to illness. I hope that those with Covid get well soon.



It was great to catch up with Julia and Barbara and others. The coffee and homemade cakes were most enjoyable especially the sugar free cake. Everyone who turns up always enjoys a warm welcome, friendship, and conversation! Well done to those who make it happen.

### **St Mary's Church, Little Houghton, Coffee Morning**

On 11 February 2023, I joined others at a Coffee Morning at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton. These gatherings begin at 10:30am and usually finish around 12:00noon, with a raffle drawn just before the end. It is always a fine opportunity to meet many of the residents and appreciate their company. As this was the first Coffee Morning since Christmas, it was extremely well attended. There is always a welcoming atmosphere and the opportunity to meet friends on an informal basis whilst raising funds for the church. Thank you to all who arrange these events.



Last Saturday, we heard a local resident playing Morris music on his accordion. Morris dancing is a celebration, a display of dance and music performed at seasonal festivals and holidays to banish the dark of winter, celebrate the warmth of summer, and bring in autumn's golden harvest. On that occasion, it brought warmth to a winter's day.



### **Coffee@Carey, Hackleton**

On 15 February I visited the Coffee@Carey, Hackleton. Coffee@Carey is the village coffee shop set up in the Carey Chapel Hackleton. I frequently visit there on a Wednesday when out and



about in Hackleton. It is always great to catch up with Rev Jenny and others.

I was pleased to meet Alan with his mum Mary. Our conversation was very much about his favourite team Liverpool. Alan and I know each other from the Caring and Sharing Trust, Cotton's Farmhouse, Cogenhoe and its always great to meet him. Do join them next Monday when they will be serving Soup and a roll from 12.00 pm. Make sure that you place your order beforehand.

### Thank you to John Ford & Anne Henman

Have you ever edited a Parish Newsletter? Well today, we celebrated the time that John Ford and Anne Henman had spent jointly editing the Little Houghton and Brafield on the Green Parish Magazine and we gained a good understanding of just how they had worked together over many years. Indeed, anyone who edits a manuscript before the due date will know what is involved in thoroughly analysing the document and assisting with improving the monthly copy.

On arrival at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton, everyone took the opportunity to sign the beautiful cards for John and Anne. Then Gill Bailey introduced the event and thanked John and Anne on our behalf.

John told us Parson Phillips first issued the Parish Magazine 68 years ago and that he passed the responsibility on to John in 1967. Anne Henman edited the Brafield content for much of that time and ably supported John. Villagers are fortunate that John and Anne have edited the Parish Magazine each month for the past 55 years. At the end of 2022, they both decided it was time to hand over the baton to younger members of the Parish.



Gill Bailey, Little Houghton, and Liz Banyard, Brafield agreed to join forces and produce the Parish Magazine, which they distributed for the first time in January 2023. Gill had arranged an Afternoon Tea to thank John and Anne for all the work that they had done over many years. Neither of them knew why this event had been organised. They were just told to come along to celebrate Gill's Big Birthday, which was the following week. So, it was a surprise and a treat for them both.

It was an excellent turnout, which just demonstrated the importance of the role they had both played over the years. It was a great celebration, the refreshments were splendid, and everyone enthusiastically received the themed cake, which included a small version of the Parish Magazine on the top with the words "Thank you John and Anne" End of an Era. Of

course, John led those present in a rousing version of 'Happy Birthday' after he announced exactly how old Gill would be next week!

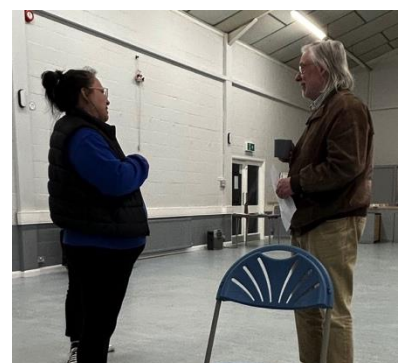
### Hartwell Youth Club Fair Trade Tea Party

Hartwell Youth Club meet every Monday evening from 4.30pm-6.00pm at the Community Centre, Hartwell.



On Monday 27 February they held a Fairtrade tea party to raise money for Cystic Fibrosis. They were providing tea and a biscuit or a cake for a £1. The Fair-Trade tea had been kindly donated for this event.

Last night, I enjoyed meeting Lizzie the Youth Leader for the Hartwell Youth Club and some





of the members. Emily made an excellent cup of tea for me whilst, I caught up with Lizzie and heard about the work she was doing in Hartwell and elsewhere in Northamptonshire.

Lizzie is a representative from Clubs for Young People Northamptonshire (CYPC) a charity that works closely with the community to ensure that there are a variety of safe but enjoyable activities for children from the ages of 8 to 19 years.

Youth Inspired Projects aim to engage young people and provide fun, informal learning opportunities for young people in their leisure time. Young people work alongside staff to plan their own programme of activities based upon their interests and needs. The frequency with which CYPC deliver in any given area is determined by local needs and priorities as agreed in Service Level Agreements with parish councils.

Current agreements are in place with: Duston, Hartwell, Kilsby, Litchborough and Spratton Parish Councils. If you are interested in finding out more about Hartwell Youth Club then please contact CYPN: Telephone: 07760 891181, Email: [office@cypn.org](mailto:office@cypn.org)

## HOMES FOR UKRAINE

### Are you interested in becoming a host for Ukraine Scheme?

Due to more visa applications being approved, further hosts are needed as new arrivals are looking to make West Northamptonshire their temporary home. Please complete the online questionnaire to tell us whether you are interested in becoming a host; the type of accommodation being offered, and some further information about you. WNC will use the information gathered to help us continue to support Homes for Ukraine programme in West Northamptonshire.

If you need any further information, please contact WNC on [resettlement@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:resettlement@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Before you complete this questionnaire, please read the Homes for Ukraine privacy policy, which will tell you how the information you give us, will be managed. <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/service-privacy-notices/homes-ukraine-scheme-privacy-notice>



## 2023 LGA AWARDS

### The shortlist

| COUNCIL  | CATEGORIES   |
|--|--|
| DERBY CITY COUNCIL   | CHILDREN'S SERVICES  |
| WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUCNIL                                  | CLIMATE RESPONSE<br>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE<br>LARGE TEAM OF THE YEAR<br>RISING STAR—TIFFANY DIAZ-DELGADO |
| WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL                                  | COUNCIL OF THE YEAR  |
| NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL AND NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL | DIGITAL IMPACT   |
| DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL                                      | ECONOMIC SUPPORT   |
| NORTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL                                | HOUSING  |
| MELTON BOROUGH COUNCIL   | MOST IMPROVED  |
| SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL                                | MOST IMPROVED  |
| NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL  | PUBLIC HEALTH  |
| NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL                                 | PUBLIC/ PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP  |

The shortlist for the 2023 LGC Awards has been unveiled.

Drawn together by judges from more than seven hundred entries across twenty-two categories, the shortlist celebrates the successes in local government throughout the past year. A huge congratulations to all our colleagues in the region

who have been nominated and especially West Northamptonshire Council who have been shortlisted in four categories.

## CONSULTATIONS

### Proposed Active Travel Improvements around Abington Park, Northampton

In 2022, Local Authorities were invited to bid for further funds for permanent measures, which promote active travel as part of Tranche 2. The Abington Area Active Travel Scheme, using the design guidance for walking and cycling schemes (Local Transport Note 1/20), seeks to make the following improvements in the Abington area:



- **Abington Park Crescent**– a new segregated two-way cycleway and new upgraded crossing at the junction with Park Avenue South
- **Bridgewater Drive**- a new two-way cycleway towards the school and new road crossings
- **Park Avenue South**- new cycleways that merge into existing cycling facilities
- **Billing Road / Rushmere Road junction**– Significant pedestrian crossing facilities, enabling ‘all direction crossing,’ along with improved traffic signal technology to better manage all movements.

The scheme will support the development of the Northampton Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan. You are now being invited to have your say. All details about proposals, including a virtual engagement room, is available at: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/transport/active-travel-fund>.

You can give your views by completing:

- **An online survey**, can be completed by visiting [virtual engagement room](#)
- Emailing or sending your comments in by post using the contact details below.
- Attending the consultation drop-in event at Abington Park Museum on 16 February 2023 from 2pm to 8pm, where you can view the proposals and provide feedback to officers from the Council.

If you need assistance to enable you to respond to the consultation, including receiving information in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format, or in a different language, please contact us by:

**Email:** [activetravelconsult@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:activetravelconsult@westnorthants.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 126 7000

**Postal address:**

FAO: Abington Area - Active Travel Scheme Consultation  
West Northamptonshire Council  
The Guildhall  
St Giles' Square  
Northampton  
NN1 1DE

### **New Deadline for Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licencing Policy Consultation**

Residents, businesses, and professional drivers have been given more time to comment on West Northamptonshire Council’s draft Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licencing Policy. The draft policy sets out the driver, vehicle and operator standards for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles for current licence holders and all new licence applicants.

A consultation launched last month gave people an opportunity to comment on the draft policy. The 26 March



deadline for this consultation has now been extended to Sunday 23 April to allow people more time to fully review it and consider their views. The draft policy focuses on improving standards and public safety and has been shaped by pre- engagement work with local licenced drivers and operators as well as the police. If adopted, it will replace the current policies for the former local authority areas of Daventry, Northampton, and South Northants.

People can have their say by visiting our Consultation Hub by the new deadline of Sunday 23 April.

<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../draft-taxi...>

Once the consultation closes, all responses will be evaluated and considered. The evaluation will then be presented along with the policy to WNC’s Licensing Committee for consideration before the policy is adopted and comes into force.

### West Northamptonshire Parks Visitors Feedback Survey

West Northants Council manages over 190 parks and open spaces, the majority being situated within Northampton Town. This feedback survey is about twenty-two of these parks. Parks and open spaces provide vital opportunities for recreation, contributing to the physical and mental health of the people of West Northamptonshire as well as being important for habitats, supporting local wildlife and biodiversity.

We would like to hear about the park you visit the most. The information you provide will help us to improve our parks and open spaces and to prioritise work plans. The survey should only take 5 minutes, and your responses are completely anonymous. Please complete one questionnaire for the park you visit the most but if you would like to comment on more than one park, please answer separately for each one.

Have your say

Please tell us your views by completing the online feedback survey using the link below.

<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/place/wnc-parks-visitors-survey/consultation/subpage.2022-02-25.8637773784/>

If you need assistance to complete the online questionnaire or would like a copy of it in another format (including paper, easy read, or large print) you can contact us by email, post, or telephone. Our contact details are as follows:

Our email address: [parcs.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:parcs.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Our postal address:

Environment, Countryside and Parks Team  
West Northamptonshire Council

Lodge Road

Daventry

NN11 4FP

Our telephone: 0300 126 7000

The consultation runs until 31 March 2023.

### Heritage Park Consultation

WNC is looking for feedback on proposals to transform Chalk Lane Car Park in Marefair, Northampton into a Heritage Park. This will offer open green space for families and the local community to enjoy while celebrating the heritage of the area.



There will be public engagement sessions where members of the public can quickly visit anytime to view the plans and discuss with the officers and architects working on the project. These will be held on:

- Saturday 4 March from 10am – 4pm at the Grosvenor Centre outside the Primark unit on the ground floor
- Wednesday 15 March between 4:30pm – 7:30pm at Springs Family Centre, 9 Tower Street, NN1 2SN.

Please have your say at <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/news/have-your-say-plans-new-heritage-park>

People are invited to review the plans and have their say on the online consultation, which runs until Friday, 7 April.



## FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION

### 2023/24 Balanced Budget Agreed

West Northamptonshire Council has set a balanced budget for the year ahead that will protect essential frontline services whilst addressing significant financial challenges.

At their Full Council meeting in Northampton's Guildhall on Wednesday, 22 February, members approved the final budget proposals, Housing Revenue Account and setting of the Council Tax for 2023/24.

In common with local authorities across the country, the Council is facing severe financial pressures due to factors including the current economic climate, high inflation rates driving up running costs and an increase in demand for services, particularly around supporting children in care and vulnerable adults.

Despite these pressures, the Council has worked hard to balance the books and has set a balanced revenue budget for 2023/24 of £383.5m (excluding grant funded schools spending of £443.7m).

The budget includes a Council Tax increase of 4.99%, well below current inflation rates and in line with the Government's allowance, crucially generating extra funding of around £12m – with 2% of the increase going towards funding adult social care. This represents an average increase on a Band D property of £80.50 a year, the equivalent of £1.55 a week.



The approved budget follows a strong commitment to making services as efficient as possible and reviewing income streams to maintain and protect services, with £32.0m of savings proposals put forward.

It also incorporates a range of additional measures to address people's feedback in the recent budget public consultation, which attracted over 3,000 comments from residents, businesses, partners, and other stakeholders. It has also been subject to continuous review and scrutiny, including consideration by the cross-party group of members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The additional plans include investing an extra £1m in the year ahead towards repairing local roads and changes to car parking proposals include putting in place two hours' free parking on Saturdays and Sundays in Northampton's town centre off street car parks and a set weekend all-day charge of £2.20 for off street car parks, introducing free parking up to 10.30am on Saturdays at Daventry and Brixworth country parks and reducing the proposed maximum daily charge at the two sites by a third to £8.

In addition to this, the Council will be investing up to £215,000 in the year ahead towards bus services. This continues the funding allocated for the current year, while the Council shapes a new bus strategy and considers the most viable options for supporting and delivering the services in the future.

Next year's budget will see our Council invest an additional £30m in capital funding – money earmarked to improve local infrastructure and assets such as land, buildings, and equipment – on a range of projects, some of which will help reduce costs and generate income to support services in future years. Schemes set to move forward in the year ahead will help tackle speeding in rural areas, create new cycleways and footpaths for healthier travel, and improve local roads.

## Cost of Living Online Support Hub

WNC has a new Cost-of-Living Online Support Hub: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost-living-support>  
This together with our customer services team is there to help our residents access information and advice about the rising cost of living and find the support that is available to them.



Please access advice and information, including a directory of warm spaces, on our Cost-of-Living Online Support Hub

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

For those who cannot access the Internet, residents can also call WNC's customer services team and speak to somebody directly about the support available between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Please call us on 0300 126 7000.

## REGULATORY SERVICES

### WNC Bird Flu Prevention Measures

From Tuesday 13 December you can now report dead wild birds by using an online service. It is quick & easy to do. See GOV.UK to access this service <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds>



Trading Standards will respond to complaints in relation to poultry keepers who may not be complying with the requirements.

Please email [tradingstandards@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@westnorthants.gov.uk)

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has said the risk to public health from the virus is very low.

The Food Standards Agency said avian influenza pose a very low food safety risk for customers and advised that properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

### Road Closures over Coronation Weekend

If you would like to organise a street party with friends and neighbours over the Coronation weekend, you will need to apply to hold a street party and apply for a temporary road closure.

Applications should be made by Monday 27 March 2023 at <http://ow.ly/M3O450MY59k>. There is no charge for Coronation commemoration road closures from 6 to 8 May 2023.



**Apply for a road closure**



### Electoral Boundary Commission Review

The number of West Northamptonshire councillors and voter areas are set to change at the next local elections in 2025 under The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) proposals. The proposals include reviewing the number of councillor and new boundary areas for West Northamptonshire council wards. Residents are now being encouraged to review the plans and provide their views on recommended voter wards.



On 7 March 2023, the LGBCE launched a public consultation on the proposed map and councillor numbers, following the first stage consultation which took place in autumn 2022 where residents gave their views.



The consultation on the outline areas will run until 15 May and people can get involved by giving their views on the LGBCE's website where they will also find useful guidance and maps of the current wards, via email at [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk) or by post, by writing to the West Northamptonshire Review Officer at: LGBCE, PO Box 133, Blyth, NE24 9FE.

The Commission is the independent body that draws these boundaries. It is reviewing West Northamptonshire to make sure councillors will represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements will help the council work effectively.

The last electoral review in Northamptonshire took place in 2013 and WNC's current electoral arrangements are based on those of the previous county council, with ninety-three councillors serving across thirty-one wards. The Commission has published proposals for changes to West Northamptonshire. It is proposing that there should be thirty-five wards, an increase of four from the current arrangements. There will be seven one-councillor, fifteen two-councillor and thirteen three councillor wards across the council area. The boundaries of all wards should change. Based on the evidence received, the Commission is recommending a council size of seventy-six and not seventy-seven as it originally proposed.

The review is expected to end in late 2023, once the LGBCE has made its recommendations to government and an Order is laid in Parliament to change the legislation and make the new electoral arrangements. You can access the consultation and see more information and timescales about the review on the LGBCE website. <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/36573>

### **Changes to Elections Act-Voter ID legislation update**

During December, Legislation mandating voter ID for elections in Great Britain passed through the House of Lords. The voter ID provisions are due to be in place for local elections in England May 2023 and at any UK Parliamentary election held after that date. This week, DLUHC published guidance, which outlines the methodology taken to calculate the value of new burdens funding to be paid to councils to implement the introduction of voter identification and accessibility. The guidance sets out the modelling approach undertaken to estimate these costs and allocate funding to councils to support the delivery of elections and electoral registration activities. Read more about Voter ID legislation and DLUHC new burdens guidance.



### **Food Crime**

When you think of illegal activity, food crime might not be the first thing that comes to mind, but it is something that it is happening in West Northamptonshire



and across the country. Food crime is where food and drink are sold illegally and is often unsafe or is not what it claims to be. It can range from isolated acts of dishonesty by an individual to organised illegal activities planned by criminal networks and is estimated to cost £1.17 billion a year in the UK.

There are many types of food crime, which the most common being:

- Theft - dishonestly obtaining food, drink, or feed products to profit from their use or sale
- Illegal processing - slaughtering or preparing meat and related products in unapproved premises or using unauthorised techniques
- Waste diversion - illegally diverting food, drink or feed meant for disposal, back into the supply chain
- Adulteration - including a foreign substance which is not on the product's label to lower costs or fake a higher quality
- Substitution - replacing a food or ingredient with another substance that is similar but inferior
- Misrepresentation - marketing or labelling a product to wrongly portray its quality, safety, origin, or freshness
- Fraud - making, using, or possessing false documents with the intent to sell or market a fraudulent or substandard product.

Unfortunately, there are individuals and businesses that continue to exploit consumers by illegally selling and distributing counterfeit items which can be seriously harmful to consumers, food businesses and the wider food industry.

What to look out for:

- Food or drink, which is significantly cheaper than you would expect it to be.
- Concerns at a food business where they could be extending durability date, using poorer quality products, or making false claims.
- You see food being delivered to a business in a non-business vehicle.

If you have concerns about food crime, please contact West Northamptonshire Council Environmental Health Team: [environmentalhealth@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@westnorthants.gov.uk)

To find out more information visit the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) webpage, which is part of the Food Standards Agency: <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/food-crime>

### **Freedom of Information Requests**

I have been asked to provide details on how to make a request for any recorded information held by the Council. You should do so by using the online form:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../make-freedom...>

Alternatively, you can put your request in writing via email to [datarequests@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:datarequests@westnorthants.gov.uk) or by post.

For an information request to be valid it must:

- be made in writing (typically letter, email or online form)
- include contact details (full name and contact address or email)
- describe the information being requested in enough detail to allow it to be located
- be specific enough to allow the response to be made within the Appropriate Limit



and Fees Regulations (18 hours of officer time to collate, prepare and respond)

However, you do not have to mention the Act or direct your request to a designated member of staff.

West Northamptonshire Council is a newly established organisation combining the former district and borough councils of Daventry, Northampton, and South Northamptonshire along with Northamptonshire County Council. If your request relates to a prior district/borough council service, please indicate which geographic area your request relates to help us respond promptly with the relevant information. If you do not state either the geographic area or West Northamptonshire as a whole, we reserve the right to clarify this before proceeding with your enquiry.

You should then expect to receive a response within twenty working days. Only in exceptional circumstances will a request be extended and then only because of complex exemption considerations or deliberations.

## RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

### Rural Cost of Living Survey

People living in rural areas are being urged to complete a survey on the cost of living. The Rural Services Network (RSN), in partnership with the Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group, has launched the Rural Cost of Living Household Survey to understand more about rural household budgets during what is a very difficult time for many.

Independent research commissioned by the RSN, in the summer last year showed rural areas are suffering more acutely from the cost-of-living crisis compared to urban areas. To lend more weight to the argument for more funding for rural areas the RSN is calling on as many rural residents as possible to complete a Rural Cost of Living Household Survey. Research has shown that those living in rural areas face extra costs and the RSN wants to explore the impacts for households. People are encouraged to help by completing the survey by the closing date of 31 March.



The results will help the RSN engage more effectively with Government Departments, MPs, and other policy makers. Please help spread the word by forwarding the survey link to contacts, networks, family, and friends living in rural areas.

Rural Households Survey on the Cost of Living

[https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/.../Rural\\_Households\\_Cost...](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/.../Rural_Households_Cost...)

### Kovia Consulting Rural Cost of Living Report

You may like to read the report, Rural cost of living, by Kovia Consulting for the Rural Services Network (RSN), which discovered people living in rural areas are facing 'dual energy vulnerability' with costs of energy, house prices and transport higher than in other areas. RSN also discovered that rural households spend 50% more on transport a week due to a reliance on a car. Bus routes in these areas are continuing to be cut, with a 27% decrease in bus services across England in the past 10 years. In summary, RSN concluded that rural areas are facing a triple burden of higher heating and transport costs, while also earning a lower income. <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/rural-cost-of-living.pdf>

RSN are asking Government to overcome policy silos and develop an integrated approach that recognises the multiple forms of disadvantage rural areas face.



### **NCF to hold a series of Community Conversations**

Northamptonshire Community Foundation (NCF) have launched a campaign to help shine a spotlight on rural community needs. A third of the county live within rural communities and a recent report from the Rural Services Network reveals how the cost-of-living crisis is hitting people living in rural areas harder than those in towns and cities, with people living in the countryside having to pay far more on essentials such as heating, housing, and transport.

The Shining a Spotlight on Rural Community Needs campaign aims to develop a focus on rural philanthropy to ensure these communities get their fair share of funding, helping tackle urgent needs such as poverty and access to services.

Throughout 2023, NCF will be holding a series of Community Conversations to look at local need and community solutions. Members are invited to get involved and help to tackle food and fuel poverty during the current energy crisis in rural communities.

If you would like to support this work, please contact Rachel McGrath: [rachel@ncf.uk.com](mailto:rachel@ncf.uk.com) or Dean Jones: [dean@ncf.uk.com](mailto:dean@ncf.uk.com) Find out more information on the Northamptonshire Community Foundation website



## **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:

#### **Determined or Cancelled:**

- 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.

#### **Outstanding:**

- WNS/2021/0450/MAF Barwood Homes, fifty-two new dwellings with associated open spaces, roads, and drainage infrastructure. Land South of The Wharf, Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire-Hearing
- S/2021/0448/PIP Development of 4 - 6 custom/self-build dwellings, Land East of Main Road Middleton Cheney- written Representations
- WNS/2021/1858/E Solar Farm, Milton Road, Gayton Inquiry
- WNS/2022/0557/EIA Construction of a solar farm and battery stations together with all associated works, equipment, and necessary infrastructure Land at Halse Road, south of Greatworth, Northamptonshire Inquiry
- WNS/2022/0904/MAO Manor Oak Homes, Outline application for sixty-seven homes, Land at Stratford Road Deanshanger-Hearing



## **WNC Response to Government Consultation on reforms to NPPF**

At the Planning Policy Meeting on 28 February, the WNC response to the Government's consultation document on proposed reforms to national planning policy except for the response to question 5, was agreed as set out in Appendix A of the report (link below). Regarding the response to question 5, this was amended to reflect the Council's view that Neighbourhood Plans and Local plans should have equal weight. <https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s10648/NPPF%20Response.pdf>

## **Building Control Services Back in House**

Plans are progressing to bring Building Control services back in-house to West Northants Council from the



beginning of April 2023. Back in 2015 the Building Control function for the former Daventry District Council was transferred to a shared service with Warwick and Rugby Councils.

Following the establishment of West Northants Council, work has been ongoing with partners, officers, and stakeholders to bring this service back in house to enable a single consistent service to be provided across the whole of West Northants. These plans are well underway and are now nearing completion, as part of this work we are in the process of recruiting for new colleagues to join the new structure.

WNC will continue to keep you updated on the progress of this work and I anticipate that contact details and more information about the service will be shared during February.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../building-control...>

## **DLUHC Proposes an Increase in Planning Fees**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) proposed an increase in planning application fees in a new consultation, which opened on 28 February 2023. The consultation said the government has received "consistent feedback from all sectors" that due to an "absence of adequate resources and capability" the planning application service is not "consistently performing at the level it should." According to the consultation, the "funding shortfall for the planning application service is estimated to be in the region of £225m annually".



DLUHC is therefore proposing to raise planning application fees by 35% for major applications and 25% for all other applications. This means that for non-major developments the fee will go up from £462 to £578 and for major developments it will go up from £462 to £624. The proposed rise in fees would apply to all applicants unless they are eligible for existing exemptions.

DLUHC said that the new fees will "provide additional income for local planning authorities" whilst not "unfairly introducing disproportionately high fee increases" for households and small businesses. However,

DLUHC's consultation points out that "money is not enough" and has proposed to "provide local planning authorities with additional resources to deliver an effective planning service."

The consultation highlights how DLUHC plans to work with representatives of the planning sector "to design and deliver a programme of support for building planning capacity and capability within local planning authorities" to seek how capacity and capability within the system might be increased.

DLUHC said it is "only prepared to introduce fee increases if planning performance also improves." The consultation therefore proposes "a new approach to how the performance of local planning authorities is measured across a broader set of quantitative and qualitative measures." The department hopes this will "provide greater transparency" for users of the planning system and "earlier and more targeted support to local planning authorities where needed."

The consultation opened on 28 February and will run for eight weeks until 25 April.

## HOUSING

### West Northamptonshire Housing Strategy

Councillors have approved a fresh strategy for improving housing for residents across West Northamptonshire whilst tackling issues including homelessness and the cost-of-living crisis.

At a meeting on Friday, 23 September members of the Council's Cabinet agreed to progress proposals for the new strategy which sets out plans for the next three years and supports the Council's vision.

The strategy focuses on four themes which plan to tackle several key issues including a need for more affordable housing, reducing homelessness, addressing cost of living increases and recognising a need for more housing to meet the needs of our growing aging population.

The themes set out in the strategy are:

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

The strategy was developed following a public consultation earlier this year involving local community members, voluntary and charitable organisations, and wider stakeholders, with overall feedback presenting strong support for the themes and priorities.

West Northamptonshire is a growing area, with a population of 425,700 (2021 Census) residents, it is anticipated that the population will grow by 7% up to 2030, and the number of households is set to grow by 12% by 2030.

Within that, the population aged 65 year and over is expected to grow by 9%, which represents 76% of total population growth.

The full Housing Strategy can be viewed on the WNC website.

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





## ENVIRONMENT

### Reduce Unwanted Contamination in Recycling Bins

People are being encouraged to make sure they put the right stuff in their recycling bins in a bid to reduce contamination and significant disposal costs.

The overwhelming majority of residents do a fantastic job sorting their recycling and putting it in the correct bin for collection by our waste and recycling crews.

However not everyone gets it right, and the addition of plastic bags, hard plastics such as children's toys and washing up bowls, duvets, cushions, and even car tyres in some recycling bins risks contaminating entire lorry loads of recycling. This can lead to whole loads being rejected and set for disposal, costing on average more than £30,000 each month.

Waste and recycling crews have been carrying out work to reduce unwanted contamination in some parts of Northampton recently, placing advisory stickers on recycling bins that contain the wrong items.

The stickers feature a list of what can and cannot be recycled, so that residents can remove any non-recyclable items ahead of their next scheduled collection day.

Future exercises to tackle recycling contamination in partnership with our contractors will be supported in advance by planned communications activities, to ensure wider awareness.

Bin hangers reminding people of what to put in their recycling bin will be distributed to all households in Northampton in the coming weeks, and social media messaging will remind people of the dos and don'ts of recycling.



There are several typical contaminants that people tend to put in their bins in the mistaken belief that they can be recycled, and our messaging will aim to clarify and bust some of the myths around those.

These include:

- Soft plastics such as carrier bags, packets, and wrappers – these should be put in your general waste bin. Shopping bags can be recycled at some supermarkets
- Nappies – these must be put in your general waste bin
- Kitchen roll and tissues – these should be placed in your general waste bin
- Drinking glasses and glass cookware such as Pyrex dishes – these cannot go into your recycling bin, but could be recycled at your local Household Waste Recycling Centre
- Hard plastics such as toys and washing up bowls - these cannot go into your recycling bin, but could be recycled at your local Household Waste Recycling Centre
- Batteries and electrical items – these can cause bin fires so should never be disposed of in general rubbish. Instead, leave them on top of the waste bin (in Daventry) or on top of the recycling bin (Northampton and South Northants) for recycling.
- Disposable vapes – cannot be recycled or disposed of at home but can be taken to a Household Waste Recycling Centre or the shop where you bought them.



We are also reminding people of good practice around recycling, such as rinsing out food/drink containers before recycling, and placing items loose in recycling bins, rather than in bags.

More information about what to put in each bin can be found on the waste and recycling pages of our website. For more information on what to put in each bin, please visit: <http://ow.ly/pqxo50N3F2N>

**Garden Waste Collections 2023/24**

Residents across West Northamptonshire can now sign up to receive optional, chargeable garden waste collections from April 2023. The annual subscription charge for the fortnightly service from April 2023 to the end of March 2024 is £55 per bin and people can subscribe via the link on our website:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/bin.../garden-waste>

Residents also now have the option to sign up for an annual Direct Debit to save having to remember to renew every year. Residents who are unable to access the internet can subscribe to the service by phoning the council on 0300 126 7000. Once households are signed up to the service, they will receive their new 2023/24 garden waste permit which should be put on their garden waste bin.



Any bins that have not subscribed will not be emptied after 4 April. The communications plan to promote the service will begin in earnest next week, with a press release, articles in council newsletters, and a social media campaign set to get underway on Tuesday. Existing subscribers will be sent emails inviting them to re-subscribe and those not on emails will receive a letter.

Many people value the garden waste service, however there are others who do not need these collections. By ensuring that it is an optional service, only those who wish to receive the service must pay for it, making it as fair for residents as possible. People who do not wish to sign up to the service have the option of composting their garden waste at home, either in a traditional compost heap or by purchasing a compost bin by visiting [www.getcomposting.com](http://www.getcomposting.com) and typing in their postcode to see offers available. People can also recycle garden waste for free at any of our household waste recycling centres. A comprehensive list of FAQs is available on our website and more information can be found on our Garden Waste page

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**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.

We met with the Private Housing Sector Team on Tuesday 7 February 2 – 3 pm at the Forum. We discussed the priorities for The Hub and how best to tackle social isolation. James Gillespie-Allan, Head of Public

| Finding your way around this Local Insight profile      |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| Introduction: page 3 for an introduction to this report |  |  |   |
|   | There are 54,818 people living in DSN4<br><small>See pages 6-8 for more information on population by age and gender, ethnicity, country of birth, language, migration, household composition and religion.</small>   |  | 18% of people have no qualifications in DSN4 compared with 22% across England<br><small>See pages 48-49 for more information on qualifications, post attainment and early years educational progress.</small>   |
|   | 9% of children aged 0-15 are in relative low-income families in DSN4 compared with 19% across England<br><small>See pages 10-23 for more information on children in poverty, people out of work, people in isolated areas, disability, pensioners and other vulnerable groups.</small> |  | 44% people aged 16-74 are in full-time employment in DSN4 compared with 35% across England<br><small>See pages 45-46 for more information on people's jobs, job opportunities, income and local businesses.</small>   |
|   | 2% of households lack central heating in DSN4 compared with 3% across England<br><small>See pages 24-25 for more information on heating type, housing tenure, affordability, energy rating, age of building and tenemental characteristics.</small>                                    |  | 0% of households have no car in DSN4 compared with 26% across England<br><small>See pages 66-68 for more information on transport, distance services and digital services.</small>  |
|   | The overall crime rate is lower than the average across England<br><small>See pages 34-35 for more information on recorded crime and crime rates.</small>  |  | The % of people 'satisfied with their neighbourhood' (88.4%) is higher than the average across England (79.2%)<br><small>See pages 69-71 for more information on neighbourhood satisfaction, the level of neighbourhood needs, local participation and the environment, or public life.</small> |
|   | 14% of people have a limiting long-term illness in DSN4 compared with 16% across England<br><small>See pages 36-45 for more information on limited long-term illness, life expectancy and mental, general health and healthy lifestyles.</small>                                       |  | Page 87 for information on the geographic areas used in this report, publication dates for new releases and acknowledgments.  |

© West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) 2023. All rights reserved. This report is a work of art, may be reproduced only for personal or internal use, provided that appropriate accuracy and not used in a misleading context. The names must be identified and the title of the publication specified with the copyright notice acknowledged.

Engagement for the ICS attended the DSN Health & Wellbeing Forum on 7th February. He is setting up a central (countywide) repository to collect all the public engagement feedback from all partners (e.g., statutory and VCSE) into one place and then start to run reports on the data which will be useful for us to use.

### **Integrated Care Northamptonshire 10 Year Strategy**

This week, WNC launched its Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN) 10-year strategy to support people in Northamptonshire. This strategy has been developed by NHS providers, local councils, voluntary and community organisations and other partners, with a focus on enabling residents to benefit from equitable opportunities to live their best life, whoever they are and wherever they live in the county.



ICN's work to develop this strategy shows the commitment from organisations to improve outcomes for residents in Northamptonshire and deliver change through shared working and community involvement. As we move forward, plans are under way to engage and involve our local communities with the delivery of the strategy, to ensure the voice of our people remains at the centre of all we do.

Our new Local Area Partnerships (LAPS), representing neighbourhoods and localities of between 30,000 and 50,000 people across the county, will give a voice to residents, involving them in new services and solutions for their local area. This will be guided by a Community Engagement Framework (CEF), which sets a blueprint for how we will engage with the public. The launch of this strategy is an exciting time for the people of Northamptonshire. It is truly collaborative and showcases the commitment from health, local authorities, VCSE and community organisations to improve health and wellbeing outcomes at all stages of a person's life. We know the strategy is ambitious, however by working together in this way we believe we can make a positive difference and bring needed change to help people live their best lives. The steps we take next are important to help us meet our shared ambitions and aims, and community feedback will be essential.

You can view the Strategy in full here

<https://www.icnorthamptonshire.org.uk/icp#IntegratedCareNorthamptonshireStrategy2023-IntegratedCareNorthamptonshireStrategy2023>

### **Northants Support After Suicide (NSAS) Webinars**

There are a series of bitesize webinars on Eventbrite to provide an overview of the current Northants Support After Suicide (NSAS) Project. (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/nsasbitesize>)

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/.../n-sas-bitesize-webinars...>

If you know anyone who has been bereaved by suicide, you may be supporting someone, (regardless of when their bereavement was), then you may not be fully aware of all the support and expert services available. There are bitesize sessions of 30minutes that will provide information on who the service is



Join the We Mind & Kelly Matters team on Thursday 9th March 2023, from 10am-3pm at the Learning Hub, Northampton University.

We will be on hand to answer any questions you may have around suicide/mental health and provide you with support.



for (anyone), how they can access the support (<https://n-sas.org.uk/self-refer/>), NSAS current capacity (no waiting times for immediate support including counselling), plus loads more and no doubt she will also squeeze in time for any Q & A's.

Please share amongst your network, we have listened to everyone who has accessed support with We Mind & Kelly matters and hear too often, if only we had known you were here sooner, so please do not leave anyone in need of support.

### High Tech Virtual Wards

Tens of thousands of elderly and vulnerable people will receive tailored support at home as part of a new NHS plan to improve waiting times for emergency care.

It comes as the government and the NHS publish a new urgent and emergency care plan, following increasing demand on NHS services. Under the plans, community services including falls and frailty teams will be scaled up, with up to 50,000 people a month supported by clinicians at home in high-tech 'virtual wards'. Urgent community response teams will also be scaled up to provide more patients with support at home within 2 hours, in recognition of the pressures facing A&E.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nhs-to-expand-services-to-keep-vulnerable-out-of-hospital>



### Action for Asperger's AGM & Annual Conference 2023

Action for Asperger's AGM & Annual Conference 2023 will be held on Saturday, 22nd April 2023.

Venue: Priors Hall Park Community Centre 1st Floor, Corby, NN17 5EB

Time: 11:00am - 14:30pm

Details: No booking necessary – simply turn up – all welcome – seats allocated (80-100) on a first come basis. Free lunch provided.

### Winter Wellbeing

As we enter 2023, it is a time to reflect on the year we have had with many of us, making goals or setting achievements for the New Year – whether it be to stop smoking, achieving your healthy weight, moving



more, or improving your mental wellbeing. These are all important factors for you to live a healthier you in 2023. If you are motivated to achieve one of the above or more, but are not sure where to start, then West Northamptonshire Council Public Health Team have several services that are on hand to help you.

### Stop smoking service

With support, you are three times more likely to quit smoking for good and the West Northamptonshire Stop Smoking Service is here to help you achieve just that. The service offers a 12-week programme of telephone support, as well as e-cigarettes, 12-week supply of e-liquid and nicotine replacement therapy sent straight to your door at no cost to you. The health benefits to quitting smoking are well known, however an often-overlooked benefit, is the positive impact it can have financially. The average cost of a

pack of premium cigarettes now totals £12.71 and smokers in Northamptonshire spend on average £1,945 per year on the habit. The increase in the cost-of-living has made many of us reflect on what we spend our money on, and try to determine what we can, or cannot, live without. For smokers, starting the New Year with a goal to stop smoking could ease some of the financial pressure too.

So, start your New Year smoke free with the help of our stop smoking service and get in touch today to find the right tools and support for you.

If you live in West Northamptonshire, call us on 0300 126 5700 or visit us at:

[www.westnorthants.gov.uk/stopsmoking](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/stopsmoking)

### **Weight management service**

The West Northamptonshire Council Public Health Weight Management Service offers a free 12-week course to help you meet your goal with in-person and online options for you to choose from, such as Slimming World, Northampton Town Football Club, Trilogy Active, Northampton Saints (Shred7) or ShapeUp4Life Digital programmes available. To be eligible for the service you must be 18 years old or over, live in Northamptonshire, have a Body Mass Index (BMI) of twenty-eight or above, not be pregnant and not have been a paying member of a weight management service in the last 3 months. For more information about the weight management service or to find out if you are eligible, please visit:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/keepin.../weight-management>



There is support and advice on hand to help you if you are feeling low in mood, struggling with your mental health or need some friendly advice.

West Northamptonshire Council has created a 'Winter Wellbeing Webpage' which brings together local advice, top tips, and guidance so you have all the information you need, in one place, to stay safe and healthy over this winter period:

[www.westnorthants.gov.uk/winter-wellbeing](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/winter-wellbeing)

### **Wellbeing in the Workplace**

Industry leaders from warehouse, transport and logistic businesses across West Northants joined West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) to learn more about wellbeing in the workplace.

WNC's health protection, public health and regulatory service colleagues held the forum for businesses on Friday, 10 February at the Ford Motor Company, Daventry. Representatives from Ford Motor Company Ltd, DHL and Pristine International attended to encourage and share best practice with businesses.

The forum provided businesses with information on future health and safety priorities and initiatives, to encourage change and reduce accidents that result from occupational behaviour.

Key topics including staff training, focus on wellbeing and how this can reduce accidents in the workplace, as well as how to manage workplace hazards.

To find out more about workplace wellbeing and health protection in West Northants visit

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/health-protection> or [www.westnorthants.gov.uk/healthandsafety](http://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/healthandsafety)



## EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

### New SEND facilities

More children in Northamptonshire with special educational needs will be able to access specialist support with the official opening of a new SEND department. The new provision, called Caterpillar Pod, is based at Castle Academy in Northampton, and offers ten places for pupils in Key Stage 1 with social and communication difficulties. It was officially opened on 24 February 2023. It follows the recent opening of a SEND department at Hardingstone Academy, called Butterfly Meadow, for Key Stage 2 learners. Both schools are part of East Midlands Academy Trust. The additional provision of the Caterpillar Pod brings to children with special educational needs and disabilities a new, high-quality education department that is best suited to their needs. These additional places further contribute to WNC's commitment to increasing SEND provision, helping to ensure every child and young person has access to the best available education and learning.



### Are you thinking about Holiday Dates in 2023?

According to West Northamptonshire Council, these are the term dates and holiday dates for 2023:

#### Spring term 2023

Tuesday 3 January to Friday 31 March

Bank holiday: Monday 2 January

- Half term holiday: Monday 13 February to Friday 17 February

Easter holiday: Monday 3 April to Friday 14 April

#### Summer term 2023

Monday 17 April to Friday 21 July

- Bank holiday: Monday 1 May

- Half term holiday: Monday 29 May to Friday 2 June

- Summer holiday: Monday 24 July to Thursday 31 August



#### Autumn term 2023

Monday 4 September to Wednesday 20 December

- Half term holiday: Monday 23 October to Friday 27 October

- Christmas holiday: Thursday 21 December to Wednesday 3 January 2024

### Cost of living boost for students



Students in need are to benefit from additional financial support designed to ease cost of living pressures and help them to meet everyday costs whilst they are completing their studies. In recognition of the challenges some students have faced due to the global rise in inflation, the government has announced that it will provide an



additional £15 million in hardship funding this financial year so that universities can provide extra support to students that need it most.

It builds on the £261 million that the government has already provided to the Office for Students (OfS) for the 2022/23 academic year which universities can draw upon to boost their own hardship funds. Universities are responsible for ensuring students who need help get the support they need, including through their own hardship funds, or through bursaries and scholarships.

### **New Children's Social Care Implementation Strategy**

The Government has announced plans to transform children's social care, putting families at the heart of reform.



Backed by £200 million over the next two years, a new, ambitious, and wide-ranging Children's Social Care Implementation Strategy will transform the current care system to focus on more early support for families, reducing the need for crisis response at a later stage.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/long-term-strategy-launched-to-fix-childrens-social-care>

### **Secondary School Places Allocated on 1 March 2023**

A total of 4,784 secondary school places were allocated to pupils across West Northamptonshire on 1 March 2023. 94.2 per cent (4,506) of applications were allocated a place at one of their preferred schools, with 77 per cent of applicants (3,686 children) receiving a place at their first preference. A further 13.1 per cent (626) of pupils received a place at their second preference school, and 4.1 per cent (194) of pupils at their third preference school.

The opening of the new Northampton School in September 2023 will provide an additional 210 places for Year 7 students. The permanent site for the new school will be in Thorpeville, Moulton.



As it is the first year of opening for Northampton School, the school will issue separate offers for its 210 available places to successful applicants – this is not included in the preference data above.

Families who applied for their secondary school place online and within the deadline received an e-mail offer on 1 March 2023 and were able to check their offer on the council's online Admissions Portal.

Any parent has the right to appeal (through the independent appeals process) against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied.

The next round of secondary school place allocations (for late applicants) will take place in April / May.

Primary school allocations will be announced on 17 April.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

### NNBN expands into West Northamptonshire

One year after its official launch, a thriving business membership organisation is expanding into the west of Northamptonshire – with a launch event planned for Delapré Abbey in March.

NNBN with more than 120 members in the north of Northamptonshire, is now expanding county-wide and to mark the occasion is inviting businesses, charities, and local organisations to a launch event on Thursday, 16 March 2023 from 7.00pm to 8.30pm.

Having launched NNBN as an exciting new membership organisation last March at Chester House Estate in Irchester, they are delighted to be holding their first meeting in Northampton at the 900-year-old Abbey. To celebrate its expansion into the west of the county this is a free of charge event, so please come and celebrate with them.



### The Foyle Foundation Small Grants Scheme

I thought you might like to hear about a small grants scheme available through the Foyle Foundation. I get requests from community interest groups and Parish Councils for grant funding, and I was pleased to hear last week that one of the suggestions that I had made had resulted in a Community Group acquiring £5k grant funding from a little-known company-The Foyle Foundation.



The Foyle Foundation was formed to implement the terms of the will of the late Christina Foyle. She was the daughter of William Foyle who, with his brother, founded the family-owned bookshop Foyles in Charing Cross Road, London, which she continued to manage after her father's death.

This Small Grants Scheme is designed to support charities registered and operating in the United Kingdom, especially those working at grass roots and local community level, in any field, across a wide range of activities.

Online applications can be accepted from charities that have an annual turnover of less than £150,000 per annum. Larger or national charities will normally not be considered under this scheme.

The focus will be to make one-year grants only to cover core costs or essential equipment, to enable ongoing service provision, homeworking, or delivery of online digital services to charities that can show financial stability.

The priority will be to support local charities still active in their communities which are currently delivering services to the young, vulnerable, elderly, disadvantaged or the general community either directly or through online support if possible.

Grants are available between £2000 and £10,000.

<http://www.foylefoundation.org.uk/small-grants-scheme/>

### **Apprenticeship Scheme West Northamptonshire Council**

An apprenticeship scheme at West Northamptonshire Council is going from strength to strength with eighty active learners now employed by the authority. This week the UK is celebrating National Apprenticeship Week, offering a chance for businesses and apprentices across the country to shine a light on the positive impact that apprenticeships make to individuals, businesses, and the wider economy. The theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2023 is 'skills for life'; reflecting on how apprenticeships can help individuals to develop the skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career, and businesses to develop a talented workforce that is equipped with future-ready skills.

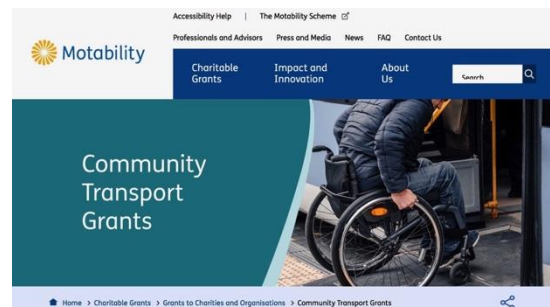
With no upper age limit to becoming an apprentice, an increasing number of people aged over sixteen are favouring apprenticeships as a way of studying towards a formal qualification while working.

The council offers a range of apprenticeship support for individuals, managers, and businesses. To learn more or speak to one of the council's specialist advisors please complete our Apprenticeship Enquiry Form <https://northamptonshire-self.achieveservice.com/.../Appr...>

### **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.

### **The Animal Paradise Trail**



Endangered animals will be on show in Northampton this Easter as the town centre hosts an amazing trail of sculptures made entirely from toy bricks. The Animal Paradise trail, presented and built by BRICKLIVE, has been commissioned by Northampton Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) and will feature fifteen models of creatures including snow leopards, tigers, penguins, and orangutans.

Families can get involved in the trail, which runs from April 1-16, by downloading the LoyalFree app onto



their smartphone and scanning QR codes at each host venue to find out more about the model creature on display in the window. All those who complete the trail via the app will be entered into a prize draw to win one of two £100 vouchers. Model builders are busy preparing the displays, with the animals ranging in length from 50cm to a 252cm tall Bengal tiger made from 118,160 bricks.

WNC is also encouraging visitors and residents to download the Explore West Northants App to find out about events and discounts throughout the year (see below).

### **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>

### **Defra Support for Farmers**

Defra is increasing money available for farmers and land managers. On the 5th of January, Minister Mark Spencer gave a speech at the Oxford Farming Conference, in which he announced more support for farmers through these difficult times of rising costs.

<https://www.gov.uk/.../government-to-pay-more-to-farmers...>

They are updating payment rates for both Countryside Stewardship revenue options and capital items from the start of this year. They are also introducing a new Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) 'management payment.' In addition to the money already available through the SFI, Defra will pay up to £1,000 for the first fifty hectares to cover the costs farmers incur when entering the scheme.



The payment will benefit all farmers in SFI, but it will particularly benefit smaller farms (up to fifty hectares).

Defra state this is one of a series of actions announced to help farmers face challenges in the current economic climate, including increasing the frequency of Basic Payment Scheme payments to help with cashflow and introducing measures to help limit fertiliser costs this year.

Defra suggests there is something available for everyone in their package of environmental land management schemes and one-off grants. They would encourage all farmers to look closely at what is on offer so they can find what works best for their business. The Farmers' union, NFU, welcomed the rise but warned it could be "too little too late" in the economic climate.

The announcement comes amid rises in the cost of food production, with farmers hit particularly hard by increases in the cost of animal feed, fertilizers and fuel. The increased rates under ELMS will come from existing money, reallocated from the previous direct payment subsidies given to farmers under the EU scheme. NFU vice president David Exwood said it was still unclear what work farmers - who will be losing direct payments - would be paid for under ELMS.

<https://www.gov.uk/.../government-to-pay-more-to-farmers...>



## Oxford Cambridge Arc

Proposals for a locally led partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge Arc have been given the green light by



the government. The partnership, which includes Northamptonshire, will champion the region as a world leader of innovation and business, acting to achieve environmentally sustainable and inclusive growth. It will strengthen the cross-boundary collaboration among its partners to focus on tackling the issues that matter to the people who live and work in the region.

The partnership's initial programme is to:

- Develop a set of propositions to attract international investment and profile the region on a global stage
- Continue the work underway to embed shared environment principles

West Northants is right at the heart of the arc and WNC wants to make sure it plays a key role in helping shape its future, to the benefit of its residents.

Following the official commitment from government, the Partnership will begin active recruitment of an independent Chair. In the interim, a Shadow Board has been set up to oversee the Partnership's programme and agree governance and funding.

## Small Grant Programme (older people) – Charles Hayward Foundation

Grants are available up to £7,000 for charities with an annual income of less than £350,000.

This programme wishes to fund preventative and early intervention programmes being delivered at the community level, which allow older people to stay in their own homes and remain independent. They are particularly interested in seeking out programmes, which show some creativity in improving the quality of life of older people.

- Programmes aiming to alleviate isolation and depression in older people, including informal day care or social, physical, and recreational activities.
- Programmes, which give practical help, assistance and support for older people living in their own homes.
- Programmes addressing the emotional and practical needs of older carers.



- Programmes designed to meet the specific needs of people with dementia.

Applications will be considered every three months (March, June, September, and December).

<http://www.charleshaywardfoundation.org.uk/older-people/>

### Specialist Grant Programme – Lloyds Bank Foundation

The focus of this programme is to support small, local, specialist charities with an income of £25,000–£500,000 where the Foundation’s three-year unrestricted £75,000 grant and support to develop, can make the greatest impact. They will support charities that understand the complexity of the issues people face and are best placed to make a genuine difference to people’s lives. Grants are available up to £75,000 and three years. The deadline for applications is 3 March 2023.



### A New Energy Discount Scheme for Businesses, Charities, and the Public Sector

A new energy scheme for businesses, charities, and the public sector has been confirmed, ahead of the current scheme ending in March. The new scheme will mean all eligible UK businesses and other non-domestic energy users will receive a discount on high energy bills until 31 March 2024. This will help businesses locked into contracts signed before recent substantial falls in the wholesale price manage their costs and provide others with reassurance against the risk of prices rising again.



The new scheme therefore strikes a balance between supporting businesses over the next 12 months and limiting taxpayer’s exposure to volatile energy markets, with a cap set at £5.5 billion. This provides long term certainty for businesses and reflects how the scale of the challenge has changed since September last year.

### Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund

Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund – Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

The aim of the Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund is to support the modernisation and improvement of village halls, so that they are fit for purpose and can provide activities which seek to achieve one or more of



About ACRE ▾

What we do ▾

Who we work with ▾

Our vision for rural communities ▾

In your area

News ▾

Find ACRE in your county

Donate





the following outcomes for their communities:

- 1) Improved health and/or wellbeing and/or reduction in rural loneliness,
- 2) Positive impact on the local environment, contributes towards net zero,
- 3) Support for the local rural economy,
- 4) Promotion of community cohesion.

Grants are for capital improvements only, where projects aim to either upgrade, extend or improve facilities, or where capital items need to be purchased. They cannot be used for maintenance, repair, or renewal work.

The initial deadline for Stage 1 applications was 20 January 2023. The fund will re-open for Stage 1 applications in mid-February 2023. Demand on the fund will then dictate how long ACRE is able to accept Stage 1 applications.

## TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

### Review of West Northamptonshire Bus Services

WNC has appointed specialist consultants, SCP, to carry out a review of the way that bus services are currently provided across West Northamptonshire. As part of this process, SCP will bring forward



alternative models that would serve our communities better. In doing this work SCP will be contacting several key stakeholder groups, including bus operators and parish councils. It is



anticipated that SCP will present their findings and report to WNC in January 2023. A report will then be presented to Cabinet. This report will inform our West Northants Transport Strategy that will be developed over the coming period in full consultation with Members and residents. To further support this work, an internal project has begun by officers to review how best community transport can be supported by WNC in the future with the current financial pressures. The project team will be engaging with stakeholders to discuss the current situation and potential solutions.

### Department of Transport £2 Single Fare extended for three months

The BBC report the £2 cap on bus fares in England has been extended for three months following warnings that hundreds of services could be cut if it ended. The cap applies to more than 130 bus operators outside London. It had been due to expire on 31 March but has been extended until the end of June.



Bus operators have been struggling to maintain service levels in the face of rising costs and passenger numbers not recovering to pre-pandemic levels. The cap was introduced partly as a cost-of-living measure but is also meant to encourage people back on to buses.

Up to 15% of services could have been scrapped without further funding, the Confederation of Passenger Transport, which represents bus and coach firms, said earlier this month.

See the full article:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-64678990>

## POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

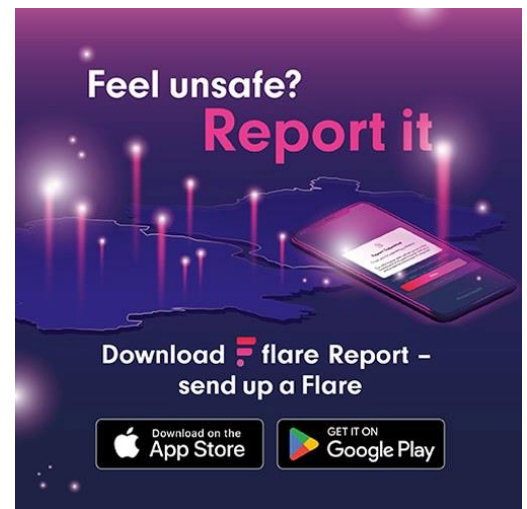
### Flare Report

A new, free smartphone app – Flare Report – has been launched to help women and girls feel and be safer on the streets of Northamptonshire. Women and girls can use it to report incidents and behaviour that are inappropriate and make them feel unsafe, such as catcalling, comments or touching, street harassment or other threatening behaviour.

Flare is not for reporting crimes in progress that need an immediate response, but Police will check reports every day to make sure that nothing that needs an urgent response has been submitted. Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold has brought the app to the county and hopes that reports made on Flare will help to build a clearer picture of where incidents are happening and give women the confidence to report things that might otherwise go unreported.

The app can be installed onto your phone clicking the link below or by searching for 'Flare Report' on Google Play or Apple Store.

<https://onelink.to/arwvpg>



### Mature Drivers Roadshow



Are you a mature driver (aged 60+) living in Northamptonshire? Do you rely on being able to drive? This FREE roadshow is for you.

By Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance

On Tuesday, 2 May 2023, 09:30 – 11:30 BST  
At Police HQ, Wootton Hall

Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 0JQ

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/.../mature-drivers-roadshow...>

### PFCC Northamptonshire funding for Advanced Driving Tests

Two brothers have passed their Advanced Driving Tests on the same day – thanks to a scheme which is funded by a grant from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.





Young drivers Tommy Gardner (19) and Scott Gardner (18) from Wellingborough, have been undergoing drives with Northampton Advanced Motorists observer and Chair, Steve Groves.

As well as drives with Steve, the two have taken advantage of the monthly ‘checkdrive’ sessions and the classroom session.

Both were deemed to be at advanced level and their Advanced Tests were requested. Not only did the two tests come through for the same day, but also, they were also back-to-back with the same examiner.

Scott went first and passed – the pressure was then on for Tommy! Tommy took it in his stride and passed! The brothers commented:

“We are brothers we do everything together, including improving our driving skills!”

Steve Groves, their mentor said: “It was a pleasure to be Tommy and Scott’s observer and be able to get them ready for their Advanced driving test. I had a lot of fun using sibling rivalry to encourage them to advance standard. “It’s great to see two young drivers taking these steps to learn new skills to make them safer drivers and improve road safety for themselves and other road users.”

A massive **congratulations** to Scott and Tommy on this excellent achievement, a first for Northampton Advanced Motorists. Both Scott and Tommy are young drivers (under 26) so have now received a £100 refund each on their IAM RoadSmart Driving Course, as part of the Young Drivers Scheme.

The Young Driver Scheme is funded by a grant from Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold, which provides drivers under 26 years old passing the advanced test with Northampton Advanced Motorists a refund of £100 of the £175 Advanced Driving Course fee.

If you are interested in the young driver scheme, please book a free taster drive <https://northampton-iam.org.uk/book-free-taster/> or email: [nam\\_secretary@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nam_secretary@yahoo.co.uk)

## CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

### International Women’s Day 2023 to honour the late Queen Elizabeth II

To celebrate International Women’s Day 2023, we will be creating an exhibition to honour the late Queen Elizabeth II. We are looking for local stories, photographs and videos from people describing how the Queen was an inspirational woman and what she meant to you. You will have a chance to view the display at the Guildhall on Saturday, 4 March 2023. Please send submissions to [forums.nbc@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:forums.nbc@westnorthants.gov.uk) by 1 February 2023.



### Coronation weekend website now live

The Coronation website which provides information about the weekend of special events from 6–8 May to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen Consort is now live.

<https://coronation.gov.uk>



The site includes information about the ceremony on Saturday 6 May, how individuals and organisations can get involved through street parties, Coronation Big Lunches, and the volunteering drive on Monday 8 May known as The Big Help Out.

Organisers are keen for councils, as well as charities, community, and faith groups in your local area, to share details about events on the interactive map on the Coronation website, and to use the weekend as an opportunity to highlight the positive benefits of volunteering.

### **Coronation Event Funding**

From cultural festivals that connect communities, to improving access to nature - find out how you can commemorate His Majesty the King's #Coronation.

Read our blog to find out how you can get involved.

<http://ow.ly/fa0K50MIPa8n> b

To give yourself the best chance of securing grant funding, your application should show us how your plans will have a lasting community impact beyond the Coronation weekend.



### **Sporting Champions**

Up-and-coming athletes in West Northamptonshire are being given the chance to become 'Sporting Champions' and gain much needed support as part of a sports talent development scheme.

Everyone Active's Sporting Champions programme, now heading into its seventh year, has helped thousands of athletes to achieve their sporting potential by providing free access to Everyone Active's 200+ leisure facilities across the country, including Daventry Leisure Centre and Moulton Leisure Centre.



The scheme's impressive line-up of decorated Olympians and Paralympians includes Lutalo Muhammad, Jennifer and Jessica Gadirova, Richard Kilty, Lauren Steadman, Kadeena Cox and local athlete Maisie Summers-Newton, who will continue to provide their expertise, mentoring and support to athletes accepted

on the scheme this year. Maisie is a double Paralympic champion who swims at Moulton Leisure Centre.

Applicants should visit Everyone's Active Sporting Champions website to fill out the online application form, which will be available until Monday, March 13.

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