

MONTHLY NEWS REPORT FEBRUARY 2024



E-Newsletter Issue 02/2024
Steve with Councillor Wendy Blake, Hackleton Parish Council
at
Coffee@Carey
Hackleton
31 January 2024

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NEWS REPORT FEBRUARY 2024

Monthly Highlights

My update for this month is as follows:

There is to be new signage on the A428 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. Highways has rescheduled the works to start on 26 February 2024.

WNC was unable to start the works on the drainage issues in Hartwell in December owing to the unprecedented issues with the recent bad weather. However, WNC advise that works will be starting today, 5 February 2024 near to Sunnyside, this will be root clearance from the pipe and ditch clearance works. This may take around three days. WNC will then be moving to the area near to the Church where works to divert and replace the existing pipe across the road will be completed. These works may take around 5 days. These works will need to be completed under 2-way traffic.

On 25 January 2024, I wrote to Toby France, Head of Commercial East and South Midlands, Arriva Bus UK in connection with several complaints I had received from residents of Hartwell and Quinton regarding the 33/33A Bus Service. In recent weeks I have received lots of comments about the service missing stops, not stopping when people are at the bus stops, drivers missing the bell being rung and then stopping erratically and there being no services at times when there should be. I also told him that I had heard about how the residents were concerned that Arriva were not recording concessionary pass holders appropriately. This has resulted in the residents being concerned that it is Arriva's intention to cancel this route despite there being a real need for this service. I sought an apology for the poor service being provided to the residents using the service and an explanation as to how Arriva intended to improve matters. At the same time, I asked for an update on Arriva's plans for the 33/33A service.

I received a response from Toby the same day, which I have circulated in my Monthly Report, and whilst I continue to progress specific customer service issues, I thought that his comments regarding Arriva's plans may go some way towards alleviating concerns regarding the bus service. He says: "I am happy to confirm that there are no plans to withdraw this service, which we operate under contract to a neighbouring Local Transport Authority. Indeed, we are currently working with them to extend our contract, as well as working with WNC to explore how additional journeys might be provided in future.

The consultation on the proposed changes to the Post 16 Transport Policy from September 2024 runs until midnight on Monday 1 April, with residents encouraged to take part via the council's consultation hub.

We are seeking your comments and views on the draft Brackley, Towcester and Daventry Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. The consultation closes on 25 February 2024.

Please note that the WNC Customer Service team will be at Hackleton Baptist Church, Chapel Lane, NN7 2AH on 10 February and 27 March 2024 from 10.00am to 2.00pm. Do come along on either of these dates when WNC Service Advisors will be able to answer your various queries.

Struggling households in West Northamptonshire can seek help from the Household Support Fund. See my monthly report. However due to recent publicity of this support payment, we are seeing an increase in applications. This may increase the processing time from 3 weeks to 5 weeks. To avoid further delays in processing and making payments, please be patient and wait for WNC to contact you.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) will be introducing enforcement to prevent 'double parking' and parking in front of dropped kerbs. See my Monthly Report.

I have included a flowchart that explains how the Five-Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) now operates in my Monthly Report and you should note that this applies immediately and will do so until December 2025.

Join WNC and our employment support partner, Key Business Skills, on 14th February where we'll be looking at how to improve your CV and interview skills. See my Monthly Report.

West Northamptonshire has been designated as one of the beacon sites for a national programme to build a model of co-designed youth services. We are one of only three areas in England selected as a partner for the National Youth Agency (NYA)'s Routes to Community Success programme.

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations can apply for grants of up to £1,500 for projects which address a local community need while supporting the Council's vision. See my Monthly Report.

WNC has launched a Rural Business Grants programme to support businesses in the most rural parts of West Northants. All projects and expenditure must be complete by 31 March 2025. See my Monthly Report.

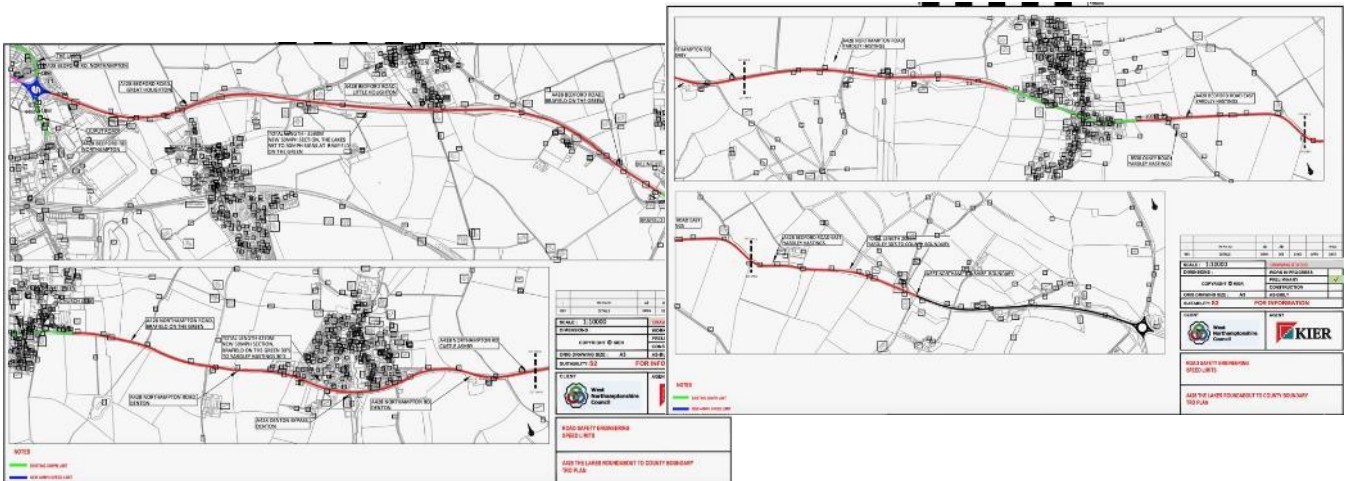
New regulations from the Department for Transport came into effect in May 2022 that enable local authorities to apply for powers to enforce against moving traffic contraventions. Following a positive response to a public consultation around five proposed sites, three of them will be coming forward for enforcement in February.

I attended lots of events across the ward this month. Please read about my activities in my Monthly Report.

I hope that you enjoy this edition of my Monthly Report. Don't forget you can follow me on <https://www.facebook.com/stephen.clarke.31924>

All the Best, Steve

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK



New Signage on A428

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Update on Drainage Issues in Hartwell

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where works to divert and replace the existing pipe across the road will be completed. These works may take around 5 days. These works will need to be completed under 2-way traffic.



Hedge Cutting Hartwell

On 11 January 2024 I visited Blacksmiths Way, Hartwell to investigate the hedge cutting work carried out by WNC the previous day. The residents had informed me that it had not been completed in line with expectations set by Kier at our last site visit.

It was expected that the hedge in the turning circle would be cut back to show the curb and that the height of the hedge would be reduced to the same height as the bus stop. Whilst the hedge has been cut back to show the kerb it has not been reduced to the height of the bus stop. Once I have further news I shall be in touch.

Arriva Bus Service 33/33A Hartwell & Quinton

On 25 January 2024, I wrote to Toby France, Head of Commercial East and South Midlands, Arriva Bus UK in connection with several complaints I had received from residents of Hartwell and Quinton regarding the 33/33A Bus Service. In recent weeks I have received lots of comments about the service missing stops, not stopping when people are at the bus stops, drivers missing the bell being rung and then stopping erratically and there being no services at times when there

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your email, I am sorry to hear you have received complaints regarding our 33/33A bus service.

There was significant disruption to this service throughout 2023 as a result of road works, road closures, and traffic displacement due to the construction of the rail freight interchange adjacent Grange Park. With the works to upgrade the A508 now complete I am hopeful this disruption is at an end, along with the inconvenience caused to our customers and the significant challenges presented to our Operations team.

If you are able to advise the case reference provided to [REDACTED] by our Customer Services team I will be able to confirm why the service was diverted on the date in question and how this was communicated to customers.

Usage of concessionary bus passes is generally recorded by tapping the holder's smartcard onto the ticket machine, but may also be recorded by button press. We tend to see an increase in this manual recording where there is disruption to a service and our driver is conscious of trying to get back on time, as tapping the button in quick succession reduces the dwell time compared to each individual customer stopping to touch their pass onto the reader on the ticket machine.

Very few of our customers on route 33/33A pay in cash, the nature of the service meaning there is a disproportionately high number of concessionary pass holders compared to fare paying customers; of those who are fare payers the majority travel with a day, week, or longer period season ticket purchased through the Arriva Bus App. This may perhaps explain why your correspondents are not seeing cash being exchanged onboard.

There may, of course, be isolated instances where there is a genuine fault with the ticket machine and no customers are recorded. During 2019/2020 we invested in replacing all of our ticket machines on every one of our buses right across the UK with brand new, state of the art equipment to support our roll-out of contactless payment. Like most modern electronic devices they do glitch from time-to-time and require a technician to undertake the bus equivalent of pressing CTRL ALT DEL; if this happens in service our drivers are instructed to carry on until we can swap out the faulty machine back in CMK rather than leave customers waiting at the roadside. This isn't unique to the 33/33A, or to Arriva – our ticket machine supplier is the industry leader, used by over 70% of bus operators in the UK as well as being a technology partner of the Department for Transport.

I am happy to confirm that there are no plans to withdraw this service, which we operate under contract to a neighbouring Local Transport Authority. Indeed we are currently working with them to extend our contract, as well as working with WNC to explore how additional journeys might be provided in future.

Kind regards

Toby J France CMILT, CMgr MCM1
Head of Commercial – East & South Midlands
Arriva UK Bus

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should be. As the 33/33A is used by those living in rural communities with very little in the way of facilities in the villages, the residents rely on this bus service to and from Northampton and Milton Keynes. I also told him that I had heard about how the residents were concerned that Arriva were not recording concessionary pass holders appropriately. Apparently, this has been going on for some 3 months and sometimes at least 15 people including those from Roade are not being recorded. Indeed, I have been told that the driver is not taking cash from fee paying passengers, just assuming that they are concessionary pass holders. This has resulted in the residents being

concerned that it is Arriva's intention to cancel this route despite there being a real need for this service. I sought an apology for the poor service being provided to the residents using the service and an explanation as to how Arriva intended to improve matters. At the same time, I asked for an update on Arriva's plans for the 33/33A service.

I received a response from Toby the same day, which I have posted below, and whilst I continue to progress specific customer service issues, I thought that his comments regarding Arriva's plans may go some way towards alleviating your concerns regarding the bus service. He says: "I am happy to confirm that there are no plans to withdraw this service, which we operate under contract to a neighbouring Local Transport Authority. Indeed, we are currently working with them to extend our contract, as well as working with WNC to explore how additional journeys might be provided in future."

Cogenhoe Parish Help Desk 4 January 2024

On 4 January 2024, I met with Deborah Rush, Clerk to Cogenhoe Parish Council at the Tea Rom, Cogenhoe where she was delivering the weekly Denton Surgery prescriptions and providing support from the Parish Help Desk. I enjoyed meeting Sue Pearson and hearing more about Northampton and District Scouts and many others who were out and about in Cogenhoe this morning.

It was my first visit to Cogenhoe in 2024. There were still signs of flooding in Station Road/Grendon Road and Clifford Mill where the water levels are very high. Although I didn't manage to visit Cogenhoe Mill, I understand that the site is still closed with the river level at 6.2 and no vans yet affected. It is unlikely that residents will return to the site for a bit as we are about to enter the closed season. Nevertheless, there is still lots of evidence of flooding throughout Northamptonshire which must be very worrying for those affected.



Whilst there, I was reminded about several events in January including the Forget-Me-Not group on 8 January from 1.00pm-2.45pm, York Room. Social group for anyone living with dementia (or similar condition). Christmas Lunch. Wednesday 10 January they have the Chatty Cafe 11am -3.30pm. All drinks £1 £4 Fixed price lunch 11am - 3.30pm. Then of course there is the Community Lunch Club on Monday 15 January at 12.30pm York Room £6 in advance with Northants Acre Well-Being service talk and a new Youth Club starting on 17 January 2024. Do try to support some of these initiatives.

Quinton Coffee Morning 6 January 2024

On Saturday 6 January 2024, I attended the Quinton Coffee morning at St John the Baptist Church, Quinton and caught up with Barbara, Julia, Rev Mark, Barbara, Andy, Pippa and others. Open to all, the monthly first Saturday 10.30-12.00 coffee mornings provide an opportunity to relax and catch up with folks from the local community. The coffee and homemade cakes were most enjoyable especially the coffee and walnut cake.



As always, everyone is always pleased to see you and offer a warm welcome, friendship and conversation to regulars and newcomers alike. It was a very busy session and a great start to 2024. Well done to those who make it happen.

Cogenhoe Parish Council Help Desk 11 January 2024

On 11 January 2024, I met with Deborah Rush, Clerk to Cogenhoe Parish Council at the Tea Room, Cogenhoe where she was delivering the weekly Denton Surgery Prescriptions and providing support from the Parish Help Desk. She gave me the sad news that Lorna Robjohns had suddenly died last week. Lorna touched the lives of countless people through her kindness and generosity and her death, which was unexpected brings great sadness to the community that she has helped over the years. We will miss her so much. I thanked Deborah for meeting with Rev Jenny from Hackleton yesterday. I had suggested to Rev Jenny previously that



Cogenhoe Parish Council would be able to help them explore the various well-being initiatives that are underway in Cogenhoe with a view to considering whether to introduce similar services at Coffee@Carey in Hackleton. Rachael Byrne, Leader, Rural East LAP had already met with representatives of Cogenhoe and Hackleton Parish Councils to discuss Health and Well-Being services which are being introduced across West Northamptonshire. Deborah thanked me for the UK Grant Funding document that I had sent yesterday which sets out potential funding for small projects and is investigating their eligibility for any of these grants.

Community Lunch Club is on Monday 15 January at 12.30pm York Room and a new Youth Club will take place 17 January 2024. Please try to support some of these initiatives at Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall.

Lorna Robjohns Cogenhoe

I have just heard the sad news about Lorna Robjohns who died on 5 January 2024. I first met Lorna Robjohns at the Community Lunch Group in Cogenhoe on 17 August 2022. She told me all about her journey from South Wales to finally settle in Cogenhoe over the past 56 years. Since then, we have chatted often in the Mud Kitchen Café, the Tea Room as well as during Community lunches and Forget me not Group activities. Lorna and her late husband Les were driving forces behind the Cogenhoe Cricket Club from the late sixties, and she told me all about the great cricket teas that she and others provided for the Cricket Club on a regular basis and the funds that both Les and Lorna raised for the club.



She will not only be remembered by family but also many friends as she used to teach at the old Infants School in the village. Lorna was a unique person with an infectious sense of humour, who touched the lives of countless people through her kindness and generosity. Her death, which was unexpected and sudden last Friday not long after we all wished her a Happy Birthday on 17 December 2023 at the Christmas Community Lunch brings a great sadness to those that she has helped over the years. We will miss her so much. My thoughts are with David and her family at this difficult time. A private cremation will be held before a Service of Thanksgiving on Tuesday 13th February at 12 noon, St Peter's Church, Cogenhoe, NN7 1LS followed by a drink and nibbles at Northampton Old Scouts Rugby Club, Rushmere Rd, Northampton, NN1 5RY. No mourning clothes please and family flowers only. The new landlady of the Royal Oak has kindly offered the use of the pub car park in Short Lane, Cogenhoe. Please feel free to park there and walk down.

Denton Coffee Morning 12 January 2024

On Friday 12 January I visited the Denton Coffee Morning at St Margaret's Church, Denton. It has been a couple of weeks since we were able to make it. There were lots of folks there today. It was good to catch up with Sheila, Alison, Carole, Diane, Mary, Pat, Doug, Russel, Jo, John and others. They always provide great coffee and croissants, toast or homemade cakes. There was a hive of activity as some were winding yarn from cones into balls of wool. All to support the 'Crafty Sew & Sews' group knit up a storm in the coming weeks! Although there were two small children there yesterday, one slept through the entire session despite the noise from folks moving around tables and chairs in preparation for the Quiz on Saturday. Well done to everyone that makes the warm space possible.



Hartwell Warm Space 12 January 2024

On Friday 12 January 2024, I went to the Hartwell Warm Space which is held in the Lounge at the Hartwell Community Centre. It was buzzing with lots of nattering and some crocheting. They even have toys, books & jigsaws if you have kids too. I received a warm welcome and it was good to meet up with Cherry, Sam, David and others. I spent a great afternoon hearing more about the plans for Hartwell Community Centre (HCC) and I promised to send the Secretary of HCC a copy of the UK Grant Funding document that I had just sent Cogenhoe Parish Council. Sam and I had an interesting discussion about my involvement in the Rural East LAP which is seeking to roll out some Integrated Care projects. She has a great deal of useful information on this topic, and I have suggested that Rachael Byrne, Leader, WNC Rural East Local Area Partnership (LAP) meets her to run through the Health and Well-Being services which are being introduced across West Northamptonshire with a view to considering whether there are any services relevant to Hartwell.



Hartwell's Warm Space is open every Friday from 1.30 - 4.30pm and you can enjoy free tea/coffee and a slice of cake and access to WIFI. Well done to everyone who has worked so hard to bring this project to fruition. It was great to see just how the number of those attending has increased significantly over the past few weeks.

Little Houghton Sunday Lunch 14 January 2024

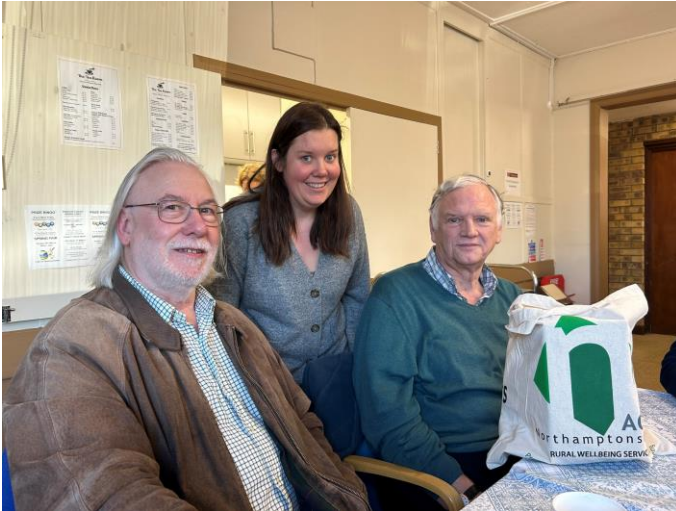


On 14 January 2024, I enjoyed a very relaxed Sunday lunch with friends in the Little Houghton village hall. There was a selection of roasted meats, plus a vegetarian option, homemade puddings and a licenced bar plus soft drinks. We had the Ham with roast potatoes, parsnip mash, carrots, spiced red cabbage and gravy followed by trifle. We enjoyed the delicious food and great company in a warm welcoming friendly, relaxed atmosphere. The lunch was marvellous and all the helpers were so kind and helpful. A special thank you to Fiona, Sophie and her team for organising such a special lunch.

It was a very bright start to 2024.

Cogenhoe Community Lunch 15 January 2024

On 15 January 2024, I attended the Cogenhoe Community Lunch at the Village Hall, Cogenhoe. Well done to Deborah Rush and her team who were managing the event and to Jenni Hedges, Rural Officer, Northamptonshire ACRE who joined us afterwards. Jenni came with some gifts from National Grid designed to help keep us all warm.



As we started our Community Lunch today, Deborah said a few kind and comforting words about Lorna Robjohns, which helped us come to terms with the loss of our dear friend.

We had a very good lunch of Pork stew with roasted root vegetables and potatoes followed by Sultana Sponge and custard. Thank you to everyone who came along and supported our community lunch today. A big thank you to Deborah, and everyone else involved in making it such a great fortnightly event. All your efforts are appreciated.

The next Community Lunch event is on 5 February 2024, York Room, Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall, so please book your place

by emailing Deborah at clerk@cogenhoeandwhiston-pc.gov.uk or phone 07512 045418.

Brafield on the Green Coffee Morning 20 January 2024

On 20 January 2024, I attended the Brafield Coffee Morning at St Laurence Church, Brafield. When we arrived, it was very cold, and the wind was swirling around the church. However, it was warm and inviting inside and good to join friends from both Little Houghton and Brafield whilst enjoying coffee, cake and sparkling conversation.



The Little Houghton Coffee Morning had moved to Brafield this month. However, the next Little Houghton Coffee Morning is on 10 February 2024 at St Marys 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 reasonably 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.

Afternoon Tea Party Little Houghton 21 January 2024

On 21 January 2024, we attended an Afternoon Tea Party hosted by John Ford at Little Houghton Church. John had organised two events to thank everyone who had supported him over the past year. It was a very kind gesture, and it was a privilege to have been invited. We enjoyed meeting him and friends at St Mary's Church, which was warm and welcoming on an otherwise damp cold windy day in January. It really should have been us thanking John for the many kindnesses he has shown to the village. Thank you, John, for generously giving your time and energy to Little Houghton and its church. Your dedication is truly admirable and greatly appreciated and an inspiration to us all.



Peter Collyer Chairman, Quinton Parish Council

I have just heard the sad news about Pete Collyer who died recently. I first met him as Chairman of Quinton Parish Council where he was a driving force behind the protection of Quinton as a village and the development of its facilities. He will be sadly missed by the Council and the village. Pete was a unique person who touched the lives of countless people through his many acts of public service. Pete will be remembered for all that he has done for the village of Quinton including his impressive fundraising for MacMillan at the Quinton & Preston Deanery Village Hall in memory of his wife. His death, which was unexpected over the weekend of 20 January 2024 brings a great sadness to those that he has helped over the years. My thoughts are with Lydia, Maya and his family at this difficult time. Pete Collyer's funeral will take place on Thursday 22nd February, 11am at Brixworth Church and Doddington crematorium at 1pm.



Coffee@Carey Hackleton 29 January 2024

On 29 January 2024, I visited Coffee@Carey, which is the village coffee shop set up in the Carey Chapel Hackleton. I frequently visit it when out and about in Hackleton. There were a fair number of folks in attendance collecting prescriptions and enjoying coffee and cake whilst chatting to friends. Coffee@Carey now delivers a Social Prescribing and a Prescriptions Service from Denton Surgery.

Please note that the WNC Customer Service team will be at Hackleton Baptist Church, Chapel Lane, NN7 2AH on 10 February and 27 March 2024 from 10.00am to 2.00pm. Do come along on either of these dates when WNC Service Advisors will be able to answer your various queries.

Meet WNC Customer Service Team

Our Customer Service Team, will be at Hackleton Baptist Church, Chapel Lane, Northampton, NN7 2AH on
Monday 22nd January, Tuesday 20th February and Wednesday 27th March at 10am – 12pm

Below are just some of the queries we can help with!

- Registrations – Birth, Marriages & Deaths
 - School Admissions
 - Free school meals
 - Hardship fund
 - Highways
 - Blue Badge
- Occupational Therapy & Assistive Technology
- Adult Social Care, Falls & Supporting Independence
 - Children's Social Care
 - Waste & Recycling
 - Rent (NPH)
- Reporting tenancy issues
- Reporting environmental health issues
 - Election enquiries
- Assisting setting up online portals
 - Revenue & Benefits
 - Community Law Advice Service

We look forward to meeting you!



Coffee@Carey Hackleton 31 January 2024



On 31 January 2024, I went to Coffee@Carey, Hackleton. I intended to catch up with Matt Taylor PCSO regarding some casework that I raised with him earlier this week. He had a good turnout, and we were able to make progress. It was great to meet Councillor Wendy Blake, Hackleton Parish Council and I was also able to let her know

about the next Rural East LAP meeting on 27 February 2024. I was pleased to accept her invitation to join Hackleton Parish Council at their Health & Wellbeing Launch event on Wednesday 28 February 2024 from 2-4pm at Coffee@Carey.

The Health and Wellbeing Launch Event is open to all residents, and it will provide an opportunity for you to find out more Neighbours scheme works, talk to the Falls hear more about the Ability Community forward to seeing you all there.

about how the Good Prevention Team and Transport Scheme. I look

Interested in an allotment plot?

Then please come to a meeting to discuss the Parish Council's plans for a new allotment garden (& to put your name down for a plot).

Wednesday 7th February @ 7pm

In the York Room,
Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall



Cogenhoe Plans for Allotments

On 1 February 2024, I popped into Cogenhoe and Whiston Village Hall on my way to meeting some residents in Hartwell. I had a brief conversation with Deborah and John before heading out to check up on some case work in Cogenhoe and then off to Hartwell.

Whilst in Cogenhoe, I was reminded about the progress that is being made towards the development of the allotments and the meeting that is scheduled for 7 February 2024 at 7.00pm in the York Room, Cogenhoe and Whiston Village Hall. Come along to hear about the Parish Council's plans and put your name down for a plot.

Hartwell Soup Lunch 1 February 2024

Earlier today, I met several friends at the Hartwell Soup Lunch which takes place fortnightly at St John the Baptist Church, Hartwell. It replaces the weekly coffee morning during the winter months. It was good to catch up with Denise and Fiona and many others who I hadn't seen since before Christmas. I enjoyed delicious soup and great company in a welcoming environment. A special thank you to all who make the lunch possible.



I was able to let Denise know about the ACRE offer of Friendship Visits and Warm Packs. Details below. Please share with your networks and anyone you feel this would benefit:

Friendship visits- ACRE still have 3 friendship visits available between January and March. Friendship visits are designed to bring communities with poor transport links together. They have funding for room hire and refreshments. Anyone in the community can book a friendship visit, and ACRE can incorporate warm packs and wellbeing advice into the visit on request. Please contact the rural officer Jenni for more information. Jennifer.hedges@northantsacre.org.uk

Warm Packs - ACRE have 150 warm packs to give to vulnerable people in rural communities, each pack contains a blanket, hot water bottle, radiator bleeding key, draught excluders, and radiator foils, they also have a number of energy saving advice leaflets. Please contact the Rural Officer, Jenni, if you are interested in warm packs for your community or would like to hold a warm space event: Jennifer.hedges@northantsacre.org.uk

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Quinton Coffee Morning 3 February 2024

On 3 February 2024, I met several friends at the Coffee Morning which takes place monthly at St John the Baptist Church, Quinton. It is open to all on the first Saturday 10.30-12.00 and provides 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. It was good to catch up with Graham, Diane, Rev Mark, Barbara, Julia, Barbara, Andy and many others. The coffee and homemade cakes were most enjoyable. Well done to those who make it happen.

I was able to let Barbara know about the ACRE offer of Friendship Visits and Warm Packs. Details below. Please share



with your networks and anyone you feel this would benefit:

Friendship visits- ACRE still have 3 friendship visits available between January and March.

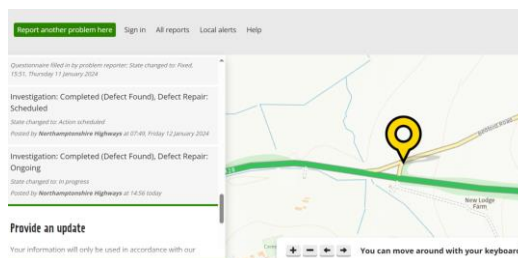
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Jennifer.hedges@northantsacre.org.uk

Little Houghton Fix My Street 5320304

Today, I received notification that the repair is in progress. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.



Climate Action Hackleton



The next meeting of the Hackleton Wildlife Environment and Biodiversity (WEB) Group will be held on Tuesday 5 March 2024 at Carey Baptist Church, Hackleton. There will be a presentation from CA-WN West Northants. For more information contact royhawkesford@g.mail.com

Licensing Service for Rev Kris Seward

There is to be a Licensing Service for Rev Kris Seward previously Curate at Crick, Lilbourne & Yelvertoft as Rector of the Wymersley Benefice on



Wednesday 27 March at St Laurence's Church, Brafield on the Green, starting at 7pm. Kris will have responsibility for Cogenhoe, Great Houghton, Little Houghton and Brafield on the Green.

Predisposition, predetermination or bias

As Chairman of the South Planning Committee, West Northamptonshire Council, I may be involved in the decision making for any subsequent planning application. Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that a decision maker is not to be taken to have had, or appeared to have had, a closed mind when making the decision just because:

- (a) the decision maker had previously done anything that directly or indirectly indicated what view the decision maker took, or would or might take, in relation to a matter; and
- (b) the matter was relevant to the decision.

This provision does not change the law on bias and pre-determination which means that Committee Members must still take planning decisions with an open mind and having considered all relevant material planning considerations. The safest course is for Committee Members to avoid making public statements (including expressing views in emails) as to their support for or opposition to any application which would indicate they had made up their minds before the formal consideration of the application at the meeting. If a Committee Member has made such a statement, they must be satisfied that they can still consider the application with an open mind and are prepared to consider any new matters or any new arguments in

favour of or against the proposed development until the decision is made otherwise, they should not take part in any decision on the application in question.

On the grounds of the above, it would not be appropriate for me to attend Parish Council or Community events which seek to take a decision regarding the outcome of a planning application as I must keep an open mind on this matter so as not to preclude me from participating in any future planning decisions.

CONSULTATIONS

A range of consultation and engagement activities are currently taking place across West Northants. I have summarised the main consultations below, but please remember you can check new consultations, have your say, and sign up to receive alerts and updates via our Consultation Hub.

Environmental Policy Consultation extended

Businesses and residents are invited to give their views on plans to introduce a new Environmental Policy for Northampton Town Centre.



West Northamptonshire Council is asking people for their thoughts on the introduction of a new policy which will seek to improve commercial waste and environmental issues in the central Northampton area.

The consultation period has been extended and will now close on Sunday, 18 February. The policy will initially be trialled in Northampton before being considered for roll-out across the wider West Northamptonshire area.

People are being asked to help shape parts of the policy around waste from businesses in the town centre and help

the Council to understand if there are any obstacles that businesses face in respect of their waste collections. This will form part of a wider project of engagement with Northampton town centre businesses.

People can view the plans and give their views at:

<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../northampton.../>

Feedback from the consultation will be collated and analysed and will help the council to prepare and shape the Northampton Town Centre Environmental Policy which will be considered by Cabinet in May 2024.

All organisations have a responsibility for ensuring that any waste arising from their activities is handled, stored and disposed of in a responsible manner as defined by the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (section 34) and the Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991. After consultation, a waste policy shall apply to the town centre of Northampton for the management of all commercial waste generated by businesses. Prior to coming into effect, the Council will be working with businesses within the town centre to do a soft launch of the policy, in doing so we will be able to advise and signpost businesses for any assistance they may need to be able to work within the policy.

West Northamptonshire Parks Visitors Feedback Survey

The WNC Parks Visitors Feedback Survey opened 1 October 2023 and closes 31 March 2024. West Northants Council manages over 160 parks and open spaces. 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 know your thoughts on certain major parks that exist in West Northamptonshire. If you would like to comment on more than one park, please complete a separate survey for each park. The parks we are gathering feedback on are:

- Abington Park, Northampton
- Becketts Park, Northampton
- Borough Hill, Daventry
- Brackmills Country Park, Northampton
- Bradlaugh Fields, Northampton

- Brampton Valley Way Linear Park (Northampton to Market Harborough)
- Brixworth Country Park
- Cracks Hill, Crick
- Dallington Park, Northampton
- Daventry Country Park
- Delapre Park, Northampton
- Hunsbury Hill Park, Northampton
- Lings Wood & Billing Arbours Wood, Northampton
- The Racecourse, Northampton
- Upton Country Park, Northampton
- Midsummer Meadow, Northampton
- Watermeadow, Towcester

The feedback you provide will be used to help us to identify improvements and understand what is working well. Contact parks.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk

Views of Eastern and Central Europeans needed

Are you Eastern/Central European and live in Northamptonshire?

If you were born in or originate from - Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, or Ukraine - please help us by completing this survey about you and your community. West Northamptonshire Council, along with North



Northamptonshire Council are working with the University of Northampton and the Clinical Research Network to understand how Eastern/Central European residents wish to access services, which health and wellbeing needs are most important to you and which you need more support with.

We want to build strong, sustainable links with our Eastern/Central European communities. We want to hear about what is important to you, which services you use, what problems you face, and what improvements will help you live your best life.

You can take the online survey by following the link:

<https://app.onlinesurveys.jisc.ac.uk/.../eastern-central...>

If you would like a paper copy or translation of the survey or require further information, please contact your local project officer detailed below.

West Northamptonshire area please contact Mikolaj on 07917 041106 or email CRN@westnorthants.gov.uk
North Northamptonshire area please contact Viktorija on 07867 351109 crn@northnorthants.gov.uk

The closing date is 12 February 2024.

Post 16 School Travel in West Northants

Have your say on Post 16 school travel in West Northants. People are being encouraged to share their views on proposed changes to the council's Home to School Transport services for Post 16 students across West Northamptonshire.

By law, students are required to continue in education or training until the age of 18 years. While local authorities have no statutory duty to provide transport for students over the age of 16 years, they must publish an annual transport policy statement setting out how they will support young adults to access education and training.



West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has reviewed the current Post 16 Transport Policy Statement and proposed changes which apply to young people of sixth form age and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans up to age 25.

On 1 February 2024, a 9-week consultation was launched inviting residents to share their views on the proposed changes to this service, with any changes coming into effect from September 2024. The consultation runs until midnight on Monday 1 April, with residents encouraged to take part via the council's consultation hub.

The changes are the first proposed in a decade and aim to address the high demand and operating costs of the service while providing greater flexibility for parents and carers, supporting young people's independence and helping to promote sustainable travel.

Key proposals to the policy include greater support for young adults undertaking apprenticeships, increased use of Personal Transport Budgets (PTB), providing transport provision only at standard school and college start and finish times, and increasing the parent and carer contribution towards the cost of Post 16 transport.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../aff071d2-42d0-42ad...>

The consultation will last nine weeks and residents can take part in the following ways:

- Complete the online survey here: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../post-16.../>
- Email: schooltransportpolicy@westnorthants.gov.uk
- Write to: Home to School Transport Consultation 2023, West Northamptonshire Council, The Guildhall, St Giles' Square, Northampton NN1 1DE

For more information on Home to School Transport please visit the School travel assistance webpage.

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

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans



We are seeking your comments and views on the draft Brackley, Towcester and Daventry Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans. West Northamptonshire Council have worked with transport consultants PJA, who are involved in writing the Department for Transport Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) technical guidance, and we are now consulting on our own Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans which detail proposed schemes to make it safer and easier for people to walk, wheel, or cycle. This will help residents and visitors to think

about making more journeys actively where they can. The consultation closes on 25 February 2024.

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Cost of Living Support

Are you feeling the strain on your finances this winter? There is support available to many residents living in West Northants. Have a look to see if you are eligible for support.

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

Government Cost of Living Hub

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

The website will be updated with details, to ensure funds are made available throughout the year up until 31 March 2024. Due to recent publicity of this support payment, we are seeing an increase in applications. This may increase the processing time from 3 weeks to 5 weeks. To avoid further delays in processing and making payments, please be patient and wait for us to contact you.



WNC Office Optimisation

Plans to bring various council teams and services together into a central office in Northampton received the go-ahead this month. Proposals were approved to move most back-office workers to One Angel Square, with key sites in Daventry and Towcester continuing as local hubs where customers can access support and help. Under the proposals, staff currently based in the modern part of the Guildhall will relocate to OAS except for the Coroner's service, which will relocate to the historic part of the Guildhall. The historic Guildhall building will continue to be the democratic heart of West Northamptonshire and host civic and ceremonial events and activities, including continuing as the home to the Mayor of Northampton.

WNC agreed a licence for Northampton Town Council to use part of the historic Guildhall for three years from April 2021. WNC have now agreed to extend this license by 12 months while the town council



identifies suitable alternative accommodation, and we are working to support them in this, so that they can move out of the Guildhall in early 2025. This will allow the Northamptonshire Coroner's service to be based in the building where it holds Coroner's Courts. Some WNC teams currently working from The Forum in Towcester will relocate to OAS in stages during 2024 and early 2025 and Northampton's One Stop Shop will also move from the Guildhall to the lower ground

floor of OAS, resulting in a more modern and accessible service for residents. The proposals are expected to save taxpayers at least £350,000 a year initially, increasing as the rationalisation of property and new ways of working bed in. It follows a thorough review which identified that we have significantly more office space than we require, and that we need to change how we use buildings to better support residents.

Alongside these changes, we are reshaping and improving our service provision for residents in local communities across West Northants, working with partner public services in hubs at places our residents

already access in their neighbourhoods such as libraries. We also have outreach teams from various departments who visit communities, taking our services out to residents. The expansion and development of locality hubs in Towcester and Daventry reflect our commitment to adapting to the needs of our community.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Parking Enforcement to be Introduced

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) will be introducing enforcement to prevent and reduce people from 'double parking' and from parking in front of dropped kerbs.



Double parking means leaving your car next to a row of cars that have already been parked which can be dangerous and poses a danger to pedestrians and other road users including impeding emergency services vehicles.

Similarly, parking alongside a dropped kerb can cause considerable inconvenience and put vulnerable road users at severe risk and impacts drivers trying to enter or leave premises.

As a result of numerous complaints, WNC has made the decision to commence enforcement and will issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) to any vehicle observed contravening these restrictions. The Government deem this a higher-level contravention which is £70, discounted to £35 in the first 14 days only.

To find out more about parking across West Northamptonshire visit:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport>

Bird Flu Detected in Wild Swan in Long Buckby

Bird keepers and members of the public are urged to be vigilant after a case of Avian (or bird) flu was detected in a wild swan in Long Buckby.

The Swan was tested as part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Wild Bird Surveillance programme.

While the risk to the public is very low, avian flu is lethal to bird life, and bird keepers (whether you have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) must always keep a close watch on them for signs of disease and maintain good biosecurity.

Anyone who suspects any type of bird flu in poultry or captive birds is urged to report it immediately.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds>

SPOTTED A DEAD WILD BIRD?

Help us monitor the risk of bird flu to wild birds, poultry and other captive birds in GB

Use the online service to report it
or call the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77

Animal & Plant Health Agency

Search 'report dead wild birds' on gov.uk

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

RSN Launches Political Asks in Parliament

The Rural Services Network was in Parliament on 30 January 2024 launching its manifesto asks of the political parties. The report will be launched with several MPs in a session hosted by Derek Thomas MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Rural Services. It will feature a panel session including the Chair of the Rural Services Network, Cllr Roger Phillips.

Ahead of the general election due to take place later this year, the RSN embarked on a wide-ranging consultation with its member organisations during 2023 to produce a clear set of asks of the political parties to adopt in their manifestos. We are at a moment in time where rural public services are underfunded, and expensive to provide, houses are unaffordable for local people, public transport provision is patchy and the rural economy is not getting the support it needs to grow and prosper, as digital and mobile connectivity lags that of the rest of the country.

It doesn't have to be this way. 40% of constituencies are rural, and these votes will be tightly contested at the next election. The rural roadmap, 'Winning the Rural Vote' provides the answers for political parties and policy makers and the benefit of these policies would be felt not only by rural communities, but by the nation. The challenges rural communities face cannot be tackled in isolation, our communities need homes they can afford, with good jobs, connectivity to enable businesses to grow, and access to public services that are funded.

RSN 2024 seminar programme

The online seminar programme is as follows:

- Rural net zero – 31st January
- Rural connectivity – 28th February
- Rural fair funding – 27th March
- Rural economy – 24th April
- Rural transport – 22nd May
- Rural affordable housing – 26th June
- Rural planning – 23rd October
- Rural health and care – 27th November

RSN Rural Net Zero 31 January 2024

During the Rural Net Zero Seminar we had presentations from:

- Kerry Booth, Chief Executive, Rural Services Network entitled: **“Welcome & Introduction to the topic of Rural Net Zero/**
- Nick Hayden, Carbon Neutral Council Programme Manager, Cornwall Council entitled: **“Striving towards becoming a Carbon Neutral Cornwall”**
- Prof. Damian Maye and Dr. Aimee Morse, Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI), entitled: **“Co-designing climate action in rural communities using the Climathon methodology”**
- Helen Ball, Senior Sustainability Manager, Broadacres Housing Association entitled: **“Decarbonising rural homes – moving on from pilot projects”**

We heard how Rural Household Emissions are 18% higher than Urban. Yet Rural Areas have the resources to contribute to Net Zero and 25% of Rural Homes are not connected to the Gas Network.

Key issues for Rural Net Zero are:

- Energy Inefficiency of rural properties
- Decarbonising the transport network

- Electricity network resilience
- Green skills agenda
- Government policy needs to be rural proofed

Government has delayed off grid homes moving to non-fossil fuel boilers, but what next? How do we get ready for it?

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/31-01-24-rsn-seminar-rural-net-zero>

Provisional Settlement Response Committed

On 15 January 2024, the Rural Services Network submitted its response to the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement consultation. This followed a meeting of local authority Leaders, Senior Councillors and Senior Finance Officers in the SPARSE membership of the Rural Services Network, those that RSN represent to campaign on their behalf for fair funding. The RSN response highlighted the injustice in the current settlement for 2024/2025 which will see that Urban Councils will receive 37% (£142.09) MORE in Government funded spending power per head compared to rural councils.

As a result of years of underfunding, rural councils have had to increase council tax to balance the books and rural residents will now pay 20% (£112.57) MORE in council tax per head than urban residents.



The Government last year produced a report entitled “Unleashing Rural Opportunity.” However, this Provisional Settlement will mean less rural opportunity with fewer rural services, Council Tax increases per head of population is higher for rural than in urban areas and there is less support for Social Care. It will curtail rural opportunity, is diametrically opposed to the Levelling Up agenda, and will have a detrimental effect on well-being.

In times of reducing public expenditure, it is more, rather than less, important to distribute the available resources between different areas fairly. It costs significantly more to deliver services across large rural areas. The cost of living is higher in rural areas and Incomes earned in rural economies are significantly lower than the national average. This is the backdrop to the issues we raise but the inherent unfairness of the distribution methodology remains the major concern.

How can the Government justify a policy which in practice expects rural residents – who earn less when they work in rural economies and face higher costs of living – to fund more (64%) of their local government services through Council Tax than their urban counterparts (52%)? RSN provided its draft response to their member authorities so that they could use it as a basis for their own responses and contacted all of the rural MPs representing Sparse constituencies setting out their local figures and the impact on their

constituents encouraging them to take action. The Rural Services Network will continue to encourage MPs to contact the Minister with their concerns about the unfairness of the settlement for rural areas.

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.
- WNS/2022/0904/MAO Manor Oak Homes, Outline application for sixty-seven homes, Land at Stratford Road Deanshanger-Withdrawn
- 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-Dismissed
- WNS/2022/0071/MAO Outline for 32 dwellings on Land off Blenheim Rise, Kings Sutton Hearing - Dismissed
- WNN/2021/0466 Land North Of, Bedford Road, Great Houghton - Dismissed

Appeals to be determined

- WNS/2022/1525/FUL Full Planning Permission Land North of Whiston Road, Cogenhoe, Northamptonshire Cogenhoe. Outline planning permission sought for up to two self-custom build dwellings, with access for consideration. Full planning permission sought for restoration works to existing brick lean-to structure.

5 Year Land Supply

The Government has finally published much anticipated changes to the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and related changes to the operation of 'Five Year Land Supply' ('5YHLS') and the 'Housing Delivery Test' ('HDT'). See here to look at the changes yourself:

Revised NPPF (2023) <https://www.gov.uk/.../national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Consultation Response

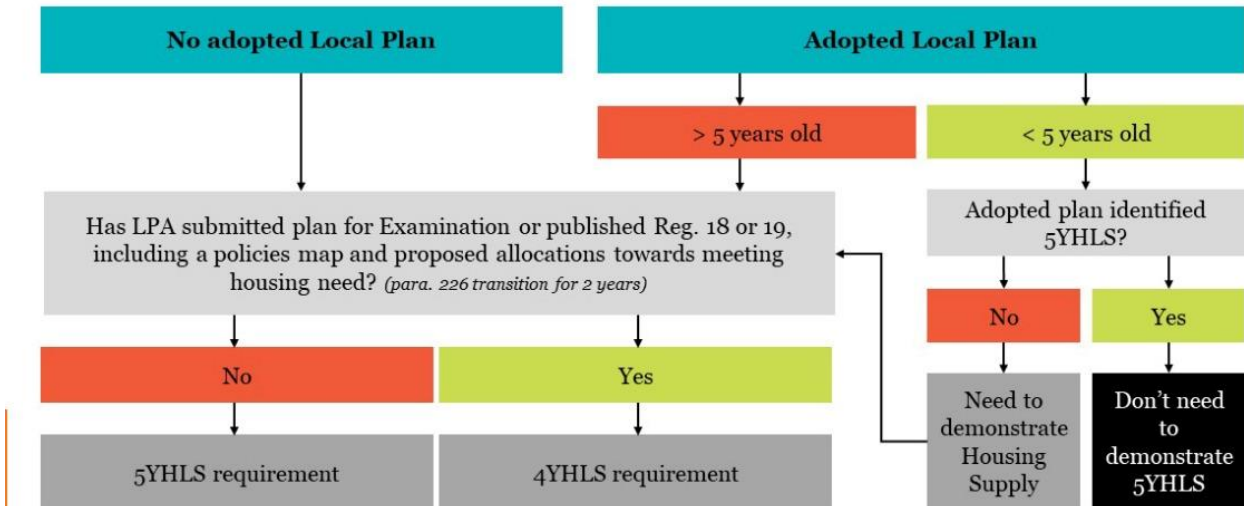
<https://www.gov.uk/.../government-response-to-the...>

Reviewing the changes now adopted, the Government has not implemented its previous proposals in full. They have listened to concerns regarding the impacts of the proposals on housing supply however and, in doing so, have tried to strike a new balance between the push for plan-making while retaining some release valve for where plan-making fails. In summary, the changes are:

- LPAs with a plan adopted in past 5 years don't need to demonstrate a 5YHLS (some caveats apply to the determination of existing applications).
- LPAs at the Reg.18 or Reg.19 stage (with caveats out the contents of relevant material) or with plans submitted for examination only need to demonstrate a 4-year supply.

- 5% and 10% buffers are gone but 20% buffers remain.
- Oversupply will count towards 5YHLS in the future but how this works in to be determined.
- The eligibility criteria for Annual Position Statements is now wider; and Paragraph 14 has been beefed up to protect areas with made neighbourhood plans.

The flowchart above sets out how 5YHLS now operates and the above applies immediately and will do so until December 2025.



HOUSING

Proposed Adjustments to Housing Budget

West Northamptonshire Council’s (WNC) Cabinet met to discuss plans to consult over housing budgets for 2024/25.

Funding from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is spent on maintaining and improving social housing, including building new homes. Within the HRA there are plans to invest £54m in social housing during the next financial year, which forms part of a total five-year capital programme amounting to £279m. Also built into the plans is investment in decarbonisation which is estimated to impact on 500 homes.

The investment in 2024-25 includes:

- £7m on external improvements
- £11m on internal works improvements
- £2.3m on disabled adaptations
- £24m on new build programmes and major projects; and
- £10m on buying back social housing and for spot purchases of suitable properties.



The Council has submitted a draft budget proposal for 2024-25 proposing an increase of 7.7% in accordance with the Government’s amended Rent Standard, with effect from 1 April 2024.

This is expected to see the average rent increase from £103.79 to £111.79 per week. The proposals continue to provide support to tenants facing difficulties with the increase in rent, through a hardship fund. In addition to this, most tenants also receive financial support from the

Government towards rent payments.

At the WNC meeting on Tuesday, 12 December, Cabinet members agreed the draft proposals, with a six-week public consultation launching the following day (13 December) enabling residents to have their say ahead of the final budget going to Full Council in February.

The full 2024/25 draft budget reports are available on the Agenda for Cabinet, Tuesday 12 December 2023.

SWEP Activated

In response to the Met Office's forecast of low overnight temperatures, Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was activated on Sunday 14 January 2024 and was in place until 9am on Friday 19 January 2024. On Wednesday morning, the Met Office weather forecast was reviewed, and the SWEP provision was extended until 19 January 2024.

WNC worked with Northampton Hope Centre and other partners to ensure that all people who were sleeping rough were provided with somewhere safe, warm and dry to stay overnight and had access to warm clothing, hot drinks and snacks. WNC also partnered with Hope to open a temporary night shelter operating 7 days a week at Queens Grove Methodist Church in Northampton.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../help-people-sleeping...>



ENVIRONMENT

Campaign to Reduce the Amount of Food Thrown Away

Our public health and waste and recycling services are working in partnership to launch a pilot campaign to help people reduce the amount of food they throw away.

The first stage of the campaign will focus on Northampton town, following research which shows that area has a lower uptake in the use of our food waste collection service than other areas in West Northants, and greater instances of people putting food waste in their general waste bin. In a bid to help prevent this, a

new booklet offering practical tips is set to be sent to homes across Northampton from this Monday, 15 January.



The Love Food, Hate Waste booklet is packed with good advice, including how to best store food to increase its longevity, top tips for making the most of leftovers and other guidance to help people reduce the amount of food they throw away. It also provides information about our Council's food waste collection service and how to recycle food.

The campaign to be shared across social media will include a series of videos on how people can ensure they recycle food correctly and avoid contamination. A series of news articles will also include top tips and practical advice to help people

love food and reduce the amount of waste food they produce.

Multi Agency Support for Flooding

We worked closely with partners to support communities as water levels remained high across West Northants following Storm Henk. As part of the multi-agency response with a range of partners, including the police and fire and rescue service, the council provided ongoing support at Billing Aquadrome, making emergency accommodation and welfare support available to those who need it. Social care colleagues liaised with all vulnerable residents to ensure they were safe and well.

Our highways partner Kier attended over 145



incidents across our area relating to roads and trees during the recent storm conditions and continued to advise residents to report any issues they see to them.

We would like to thank all our partners within the LRF who have worked together during the severe weather, including coordinating the evacuation of 1,300 people at Billing Aquadrome over the previous days.

You can visit the Government website for more information on strong streams. Information on

flood warnings can also be found on the Government website, and we have published a range of advice on our website: <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/alerts-and...>

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/news/advice-event-flooding>

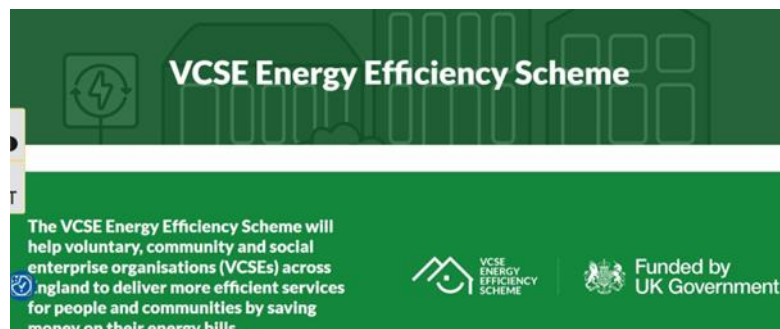
People can report emergency highway flooding incidents on 0300 126 7000 between 9am and 5pm or 01604 651074 outside these hours.

Non-emergency flooding incidents can be reported via the Street Doctor Service <https://fixmystreet.northamptonshire.gov.uk/>

DCMS Launch £25m Energy Efficiency Scheme for Voluntary & Community Sector

The £25.5m VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme is now open to help voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations in England improve their energy efficiency. It is part of the package of over £100 million of support announced by the Government at the Spring Budget to help frontline delivery organisations with the increased cost of living. The scheme will be delivered by a consortium of partners, led by Groundwork UK and supported by Energy Saving Trust, Centre for Sustainable Energy, Locality and Social Investment Business. The VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme will have two elements:

- Eligible organisations can apply for the cost and delivery of an independent energy assessment. This will help identify how to reduce bills through measures such as improving or installing new



energy features in the building, or changing how energy is used. These assessments will be useful to organisations whether they apply for the second element. This part of the scheme is now open for applications, and will remain open until August 2024

- organisations with an energy assessment may then be eligible to apply for a capital grant to install the recommended energy efficiency measures in their premises. This part of the scheme will open to applications in January 2024 and grant rounds will also run until August 2024.

An eligibility checker is available at www.groundwork.org.uk/vcseenergyefficiency. To apply for an independent energy assessment, organisations must:

- be based and operating in England.
- be a VCSE organisation, with charitable, benevolent or philanthropic purposes.
- be delivering frontline services or operating a hub (a building) that delivers multiple frontline services.
- be able to evidence the need for energy efficiency support.
- be able to evidence that they are financially sustainable.
- not be suitable for blended finance or loan support through other energy focused schemes.

Additional eligibility criteria will apply to the capital grants. These criteria will focus on the organisation's relationship to their building and the evidence and impact for the requested energy measures.

Priority will be given to organisations:

- for whom energy is the biggest concern
- directly supporting individuals and communities with critical needs, particularly those related to the rising cost of living.
- with a turnover of less than £1m a year.

Practical support will be available to help organisations manage capital installation projects. All measures will need to be installed and paid for by March 2025. More information on the scheme, including application guidance, is available through the following link.

You can find out more at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vcse-energy-efficiency-scheme>

Higher Fines for Environmental Crime

People who illegally drop their litter, dump items by fly-tipping, graffiti and do not follow their household duty of care will now face higher fines as West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) rolls out increased fines for environmental crime.

The higher amount that anyone found committing these crimes in West Northamptonshire increased on 1 February 2024. To help strengthen councils in their fight against waste crime, Government has laid a statutory instrument increasing the upper limits for various fixed penalty notices (FPNs). The costs for these crimes in West Northamptonshire will be:

- 1) The maximum amount those caught fly-tipping could be fined will increase from £400 to £1,000
- 2) The maximum amount those who litter or graffiti could be fined will increase from £150 to £500.
- 3) The maximum amount those who breach their household waste duty of care could be fined will increase from £400 to £600



WNC is one of many Councils adopting these increased fine levels, while some other local authorities will follow in April.

To find out more about householder duty of care, and to report an environmental crime visit www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cleaner-communities

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Local Area Partnership Rural East

The last meeting of the Rural East LAP took place on 23 January 2024 at 1.00pm and the next meeting is on 27 February at 1.00pm. At our last meeting, we discussed the progress on the Website Development, the Highlight Report Update and heard from Samantha Hosking, Brackley and Towcester Town Manager.



Family hub

A business case was written to seek additional funding to develop the family hub model. Floor plans are being reviewed to ensure space meets need and Public Health is working with providers to develop a shared space for families and they are ensuring that the Family hub aligns with the work going on in our LAPs. The Milestone plans for next month are universal stay and play sessions, expansion of health visiting support, looking to get a social prescriber onsite to provide support and looking for an Engagement officer and community navigator in place.

Dementia Support

There is funding of £2,000 that has been agreed to start an evaluation pilot with Robopets. Rachael Byrne has met with the Alzheimer's society and Prof. Jackie Parkes from the University of Northampton (UoN) to do a pilot together. By using UoN evaluation framework we will get robust information from this; it reduces anxiety and agitation to a level where patients may not need so much intervention in terms of drugs and they could stay in their own home if they have something to focus on. Dementia is the biggest killer, and we have the highest number of older people in this LAP. Babies that are born now, one in two of them will get dementia. This is to do with the aging population and indicators leading to lifestyle choices. Rachael Byrne will meet with Dr Philip Stevens to talk about some interventions where we can bypass the 9-month wait for assistance if someone gets diagnosed. The different kind of assets that can help with that will be discussed. Once we get the evaluation strategy up, we'll link in with adult social care and a local parish, Cogenhoe and Whiston and 5 subjects have been identified.

Men's Wellbeing group

We're looking to start a men's wellbeing group. Rachael Byrne will discuss with repair café groups and Café Renew who are keen to host, and we'll link with these two. A questionnaire has been circulated to potential attendees asking what they would like to see offered at the project. The group will be named by the participants so that they have complete ownership. WNC has some tickets for Silverstone to give away as an initiative to attend and we have a 35-questionnaire response. Terms of Reference for the group has been agreed and topics will be set for each month which will be done with the help of the repair café and the veterans group. WNC will expand this service to the villages as well.

Teen Clinic

There is a proposal for a teen clinic in this area to replicate the one in Daventry. An initial meeting has taken place with Northamptonshire MIND, NHFT mental health support, Ngage, Service 6 and Sponne school who are keen to engage. The new head of Roade school, Emma Reed is eager, and we can host it at the school. It is a perfect location because there are multiple rooms enabling discussions about different subjects. A GP or nurse prescriber would be needed at the clinic.

Welcoming Spaces

There are 53 welcoming spaces in this LAP area. We will need to outreach to as many places as possible and include a variety of assets within these welcoming spaces. Rachael Byrne will build on it with the local parishes. Current conversations for outreach sessions include Adult social care team, NHFT IAPT Talking Therapies and Armed Forces Covenant. There's work going on with Community law to help financial issues. Citizens Advice are keen to be involved which will help with the cost-of-living crisis and poverty projects.

Social Isolation

In the socially isolated areas, Wi-Fi signal or internet access isn't particularly good. In order to reach people in these areas to help them with digital skills if they don't have internet access or computer, it's going back to basics. Digital 'how to guides' will be circulated. Workshops will be set up for simple things like how to pick a mobile phone, how to write an email, how to do online shopping and online banking. The plan moving forward is to get students from 6th forms to teach the older people. It is part of their task-based learning such as Duke of Edinburgh awards preparation for university. Rachael Byrne will also explore whether this could form part of the IT apprenticeships. Asset map has been produced by Helen Barrett and SNVB. We're looking at how to get people in the communities to access and utilise it. Rachael Byrne has created a 40-point loneliness task plan of simple things like joining an online group and getting out in nature for a walk. Each task will be linked with all our assets and will be pulled in to generate something practical and workable. Prevention is key to keeping older people independent for as long as possible and keeping children at home with their families if safe to do so. Reducing the need for expensive specialist care.

CYP Collaborative

South Northants Volunteer Bureau have received seed funding from West Northants Council (WNC) to help establish a new local youth partnership. This is a good foundational work that shapes into an independent charity that becomes a hub for the focus and strengthening of local youth and children's offer across the county. Though the seed funding is from WNC, it is a county wide project. It will be adapted to reflect local context, needs and resources. The Young Peoples Foundation are providing guidance in developing this local youth partnership and mirror similar projects across the country. With a national template adapted to reflect local need and resource. Helen Barrett is liaising with Free-2-talk, the University of Northampton and Homestart who are part of the steering group in establishing this new collaborative. WNC are putting the terms of reference together and we will liaise with all LAPs. The CYP collaborative is an infrastructure project. It is about identifying needs, matching assets with the best practice across the county and working collaboratively. The project is at its development stage, it is an 18-month project, and it will be independent and in operation within that period. WNC has released their second round of grant funding for the voluntary sector to apply, with majority of the money coming from central government.

South Northants Youth Engagement (SNYE)

SNYE is a small charity with board of trustees. Cllr Sue Sharps is one of the trustees. There are two youth leaders one representing Towcester and the other representing Brackley, with a team of volunteers and students that's constantly growing. SNYE works with 7-18-year-olds and provide youth clubs. It was funded by South Northants Council for two years to deliver youth provision. Now that South Northants council has been abolished and funding has run out, SNYE is currently being funded by small amounts of money from different places including Towcester and Brackley Town Councils. The charity is writing a funding bid to the Big Lottery Fund due to no funding being provided by WNC. It is on a mission to find a large sum of money to continue the work that was ongoing across South Northants.

The Active Life Strategy was adopted by the Health and Well-Being Board in September. Therefore, all partners that sit around the board have committed to ensure that this is utilised in their own organisations, staff, and the people that they'll work with. Each LAP might end up with its own active lives' framework bespoke to the needs of the local population.

SNYE has two successful youth clubs, Southfield Primary School, and Brackley Leisure Centre. Membership has grown from 3 young people to 80 quickly. There is a youth club in Towcester in the community centre has just started which is growing rapidly Towcester Youth Coffee House for some social sessions for another project that is funded by NSport. SNYE is also working with Sponne and Magdalen College School. SNYE is keen to develop youth offers across the whole South Northants and into the villages, but funding is limited and participation in the LAP meetings is essential and keen to be involved in the task group.

There is a youth forum and youth leaders are doing accredited courses, the volunteer scheme is great where they are trained and can lead sessions. The aim is to take youth leaders into other places that desperately need youth projects, recruit volunteers, and support them.

The charity was just granted a funding bid from WNC for anti-social behaviour and knife crime. It will be doing a lot of prevention work with young people and working with crime stoppers in youth clubs in Towcester and Brackley. Hopefully, the Big Lottery Fund bid is successful so that a lot more work can be done and develop a mobile service to provide support in more rural areas. It is important to support young people especially after the COVID19 pandemic.

Website Development

The webpages will be bespoke to each LAP geography, but will also contain generic information across all LAPs. There is a post code search and an interactive map, information on places to visit, spotlight on key projects, information on the priorities the LAP is working on. Information will also be included on how we're working together and the difference we are trying to make, what's happening in the area -including new stories and case studies. Different news stories will appear every month and will be kept up to date on the website. We have all the partners logos loaded onto the websites. The website will be going to the West Northants Health and Wellbeing Board meeting for final agreement before being formally launched.

Get in touch

We are working on a generic e-mail address which will be monitored by the LAP administrators to review emails and signpost where appropriate. There will be a local events calendar and asset mapping on each of the LAP websites. Those wishing to display information for the website will need to complete an online form.

Get up and Go Classes Near You

Fun and effective strength and balance exercise sessions are taking place across West Northants this winter. In a bid to help older people stay fit and healthy. The classes use exercises that have been designed to improve strength and balance, and help people stay independent and falls free. They have a brilliant atmosphere and go at a pace that works for everyone.

With classes happening in Daventry, South Northants and Northampton, people can book onto the nearest one by calling Katy on 07955 441975, emailing: Katy.Downing@northamptonshiresport.org or visiting the Northamptonshire Sport website

<https://www.northamptonshiresport.org/.../find-a-get-up.../>
If you are looking for more information on staying steady on your feet please visit: <https://northamptonshire.steadyonyourfeet.org/>

or for information on staying well over the winter period,
please visit: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and...>



Make Every Meal Count

Public Health in West Northamptonshire have teamed up with Community Health-Works UK CIC to offer free training on healthy eating and lifestyle behaviour change for different groups in the workforce who work directly with adults and families. The training has been very well-received by various teams so far and is relevant to anyone in a client-facing role who works within statutory services or commissioned services working directly with these same client-groups. It is not designed for schools. Join WNC for a whole day face to face workshop to complete the training.



Public Health in West Northamptonshire have teamed up with Community Health-Works UK CIC to offer free training on healthy eating and lifestyle behaviour change for different groups in the workforce who work with adults and families. The training has been very well-received by various teams so far. See testimonials on page 2 of this document.

Join us for a short introductory session or book onto the whole training by signing up via the relevant links. Choose two of the online sessions OR a whole day face to face workshop to complete the training.

SHORT INTRODUCTION to the training - online (45 mins)
 28th Jan 1pm - 1.45pm To book: <https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/730756692477>

FULL (but concise) ONLINE training sessions - in two parts (2.5hrs each)

If you wish to attend this training then book ONE date from the first column and ONE from the second column.

Nutrition and food education element (online) - 1 of 2	Behaviour and lifestyle/habit change techniques (online) - 2 of 2
2nd January - 9.30am-12.00pm https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/760336897327	20th January - 9.30am-12.00pm https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/760348892307
7th February - 9.30am-12.00pm https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/761069338847	8th February - 1pm-3.30pm https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/760391279387

OR... Choose ONE of the following face to face events:

ONE-DAY FACE-TO-FACE training sessions (9am-4pm):

21st March 2024 - Brackley - Egerton Hall, June Cres, Brackley NN13 6SN https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/776029592787
17th April 2024 - Deserethy - Deserethy Children's Centre - Sturton Road, Deserethy NN11 8EY https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/776130892487
12th May 2024 - Northampton - One Angel Square Angel Street Northampton NN1 1ED https://www.ehealthworks.co.uk/776130892487

Praise for Success in Tackling Substance Abuse

Professor Dame Carol Black and Dr Ed Day MBE visited West and North Northamptonshire Councils last week. Dame Carol Black is an Independent Advisor to Office for Health Improvements and Disparities (OHID) and Dr Ed Day is the UK government's Recovery Champion. She chaired the gov't's review of substance misuse systems which brought out the 'Black' Report. This resulted in a lot of the additional funding around substance misuse and the new national Drug Strategy, From Harm to Hope, and the new infrastructure around Combatting Drugs Partnerships.



Accompanied by senior officials from OHID and the Home Office Joint Combating Drugs Unit, they arrived at One Angel Square first before visiting the Bridge Recovery Project in Northampton and spent time talking to service users. A working lunch took place at Moulton Community Centre where partners from the Combating Drugs Partnership were invited.

This was followed by a visit to the CGL treatment site in Kettering where they met

people with lived experiences and discussed key challenges including pathways out of prison into treatment, mental health and new innovative treatment interventions taking place in Northamptonshire. Initial feedback from OHID was that it was a very successful visit. Dame Carol was complimentary about what she'd seen and the sense of purpose that people had got over in the conversations.

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

School Admissions for September 2024

Parents and carers of children living in West Northamptonshire can apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a year 3 place in a junior school, or a Year 7 place in a secondary school, for the September 2024 intake. Parents and carers will be able to apply up until midnight on the closing dates for both Primary and Secondary applications. Parents and carers can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years old on or before 31 August 2024. The closing date for applications for places in reception (and year 3 at junior school) is 15



January 2024 at midnight.

All applications, whether postal or online, must be received by the closing date to be considered as on time. Late applications will not be processed until after National Offer Days and will be processed in monthly rounds. All on-time applicants will receive an offer of a school place on National Offer Days – 1 March 2024 for secondary places and 16 April 2024 for reception/junior school places.

Applicants will then be provided with information on the next stage of the process. There is a separate application process for children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, details of which can be found on the SEND admissions page. It is a big decision choosing the preferred school places for your child or children, whether it is for reception, year 3 or year 7 – all just as important but equally exciting for your child / children in the next step of their education journey. If you are unsure of how the process works or are not sure where to start, please do look at the information available on our website.

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

Launch of New Online SEND Directory

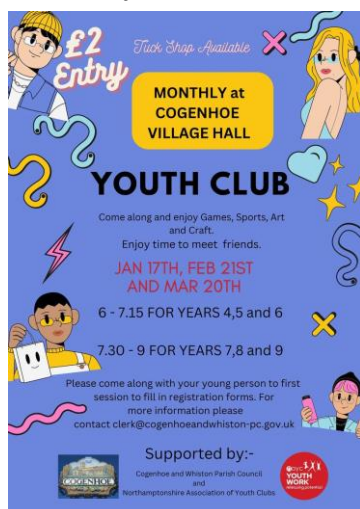


A new online directory of services for children and young people in West Northamptonshire with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has been launched.

Developed together with partners, young people and their families, the Local Offer website is a user-friendly online platform that brings together a range of information about the services available for children and young people with SEND, including youth clubs, early years support, social care and transport, as well as health services and much more.

At the heart of the Local Offer is a directory which aims to help families find the right service, support group or activity as quickly and as easily as

possible. It includes the ability to filter searches by age group, location, type of need or service - helping people find exactly what they are looking for. It is vital that our families, children and young people can access helpful and accurate information at their fingertips, and the revised Local Offer is a real step forward in helping to achieve this. Visit the Local Offer for West Northants pages here <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/local-offer> or join the community online by following them on Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter)



New West Northants Parent Forum Group

If you're a parent and/or carer of a child or young person aged 0-25 who has SEND, please add West Northants Voices in Partnership

This is the NEW West Northants Parent Forum Group! Register your membership: <https://membermojo.co.uk/wnvp>

Cogenhoe New Youth Club

A new youth club starts on 17 January, everyone welcome.

Welcome to West Northants Voices in Partnership

Who are WNVP?
We are a group of Parent Carers who all have a Child/Young Person (CYP) with SEND. Our aim is to listen and empower the voices of our members at strategic level to achieve better outcomes for the CYP of West Northants. We do this by ensuring that we share good practice and the challenges faced by our Parent Carers with our local authority, education, health, and care services, and the voluntary sector.

Who can join?
Any Parent Carers of a CYP between the ages 0-25 with a Special Educational and/or Disability (SEN/D) living or attending a provision within West Northants.

What can we offer?
Opportunities to share lived experiences in a safe environment, participate in meaningful surveys/consultations, influence and shape SEN/D services, and chances to be a part of a solution focused partnership approach. Also, being able to meet other Parent Carers of SEN/D CYP at engagement events.

Scan QR code to view our Facebook page

If you would like to get in touch with a member of our team, please email admin@wnvp.co.uk

To join our free membership, scan QR code

Term Dates for West Northamptonshire Schools

Below are the term dates for the area, according to West Northamptonshire Council. Dates will vary at independent schools, and there could be additional days off at all schools for teacher training days, which will vary from school to school.

Spring term 2024

Thursday January 4 to Thursday March 28.

February half term: Monday February 19 to Friday February 23.

Easter bank holidays: Friday March 29 and Monday April 1.

Easter holiday: Tuesday April 2 to Friday April 12.

Summer term 2024

Monday April 15 to Tuesday July 23.

Bank holiday: Monday May 6.

May half term: Monday May 27 (bank holiday) to Friday May 31.

Summer holiday: Wednesday July 24 to Friday August 30.

Autumn term 2024

Monday September 2 to Friday December 20.

October half term: Monday October 28 to Friday November 1.

Christmas holiday: Monday December 23 to Friday January 3, 2025.

WNC One of Beacon Sites to build Youth Services Model

West Northamptonshire has been designated as one of the beacon sites for a national programme to build a model of co-designed youth services. We are one of only three areas in England selected as a partner for the National Youth Agency (NYA)'s Routes to Community Success programme. The programme, made possible with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF), aims to pilot a collaborative and youth-led approach to designing youth work services over the next two years. Cornwall and Norfolk have also been selected.

The NYA has been awarded funding of £495,155 from the Lottery to deliver Routes to Community Success with the aim of gathering evidence to inform a model approach for boosting the capacity of the youth sector, through the co-design of services with young people and building the skills, capacity and resilience of grassroots providers. Through the project at least eight local organisations in West Northants will put in place organisational development plans, leading to training and capacity building opportunities, identified in partnership with the local young people who will benefit from their services. A total of 15 local Youth Ambassadors will be recruited, who will engage with young people across West Northants, to ensure that their needs and aspirations, relating to their local youth work offer, inform the development plans. Youth Ambassadors will benefit from in-person training, mentoring and peer support drawing upon the expertise, tools and development frameworks of the NYA, to develop their knowledge of community engagement, youth voice and effective youth participation. The lottery funding is also enabling an independent evaluation of the programme.



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Local practitioners and volunteers will benefit from training to build their skills in areas such as youth participation, in line with feedback from young people to improve the quality of their youth work services.

Healthy Schools Awards

Twenty-eight schools across West Northamptonshire have become some of the first in the county to be rewarded with our Council's new Healthy Schools Awards accreditation. The award is designed to improve the health and wellbeing of school communities, which must attain certain standards across areas including mental health and wellbeing, healthy eating, physical activity and PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) to achieve the award. Standards have been specifically designed and tailored to Northamptonshire, which makes it unique compared to other healthy schools awards. It is wonderful to see so many schools make a continued commitment towards giving our children a healthier future by gaining a bronze level award, and exciting to see so many of those schools sign-up to work towards getting their silver award.

The bronze award winners are: Lumbertubs Primary School, Hunsbury Park Primary, Spring Lane Primary, Briar Hill Primary School, Falconer's Hill Academy, Crick Primary, Billing Brook School, Hospital and Outreach Education, St James Primary, The Parker Academy - E-ACT, Waynflete Infants School, Eastfield Academy, Greenfields Specialist School for Communication, Stoke Bruene CE Primary School, Gayton CE Primary School, Yardley Gobian CE Primary School, Tiffield CE Primary School, Whittlebury CE Primary School, On Track Education, Northampton, Croughton All Saints CofE Primary School, Newnham Primary School, Welton Academy, Cedar Road Primary School, St Mary's Catholic Primary School, The Bliss Charit



y School, Wootton Primary School, Hopping Hill Primary School.

Visit our website for more information on the Healthy

Schools Award Programme

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../healthy-schools-service>

Early Help Services

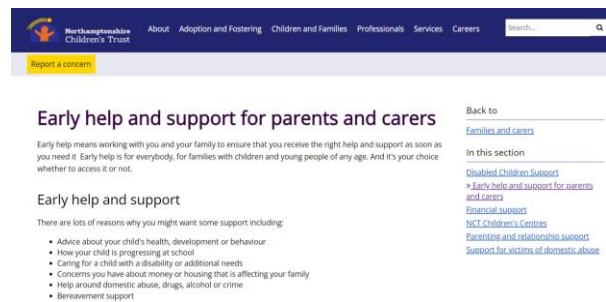
In West Northamptonshire there is lots of work happening together with partners in the system to review our early help offer for children, young people and their families, and to look at how we can strengthen this to ensure there is the right, preventative support available. Across West Northants there is some excellent services which work in the Early Space, for example our schools, health colleagues, voluntary sector, our libraries, there are many others. However, needs of children and families that require help and support continues to increase and we want to develop the system further to provide the right help, at the right time by the right service.

So, what is early help?

Firstly, early help is everyone’s business. When we talk about early help, we are referring to the support available to our children, young people and families that they can access themselves without a referral from a health or support professional. The aim of this support is for it to be easily accessible and to offer information, advice and guidance on a range of topics – this may be advice on newborn support and development, vaccinations for children, mental wellbeing advice for teenagers and the list goes on. By ensuring that people have access to the right early help can make a difference to their wellbeing, development and ultimately, life experiences.

Hopefully, what is clear in the above is that the early help offer is not just about one team or organisation owning it. For example, our ‘Strong Start’ service works from libraries and is for children between the ages of 0-5 years and their parents/carers. Our Children’s Trust delivers targeted early help in the Children and Family Support services – you can find out more information here:

<https://www.nctrust.co.uk/.../early-help-and-support.aspx>



What needs to change?

We would like to build and strengthen the support already available, to ensure it is meeting the needs of our population and streamline how people can access this support. To help with this, an early help partnership board has been established who have developed a strategy and action plan to set out how together we can embed and work together across the whole of Northamptonshire. In West Northants, we are working at pace to review the early help offer and the opportunities for its development. An example of this is that we, as a Council, are currently looking at development of Family Hubs and to provide an improved offer for children and families to access all the help and support they need, in one place, when they need it most. This includes exploring different ways to make these accessible – for example a digital and in-person offer. As work continues with the development of early help in West Northants, we will continue to keep you updated.

Consultation Helps Shape Better Short Breaks Service

Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) conducted a survey seeking residents views on a proposed new way of delivering activities and respite (short breaks) for disabled children in Northamptonshire. Conducted throughout October and November, the survey received an overwhelming response, with 150 individuals contributing their valuable insights and a further 134 attending the various workshops.

We want to thank all those who took part and are immensely grateful for the enthusiastic participation of our community. These responses have proven instrumental in addressing key issues that currently exist.

Key Findings Include:

- The idea of a single referral pathway is beneficial to help avoid families having to tell their stories repeatedly.
- Any assessment that is already in place should be



- used for access to the short break's services.
- Some respondents did want to keep self-Any assessment that is already in place should be used for access to the short break's services. Some respondents did want to keep self- referrals.
 - Respondents agreed with the principle of reallocating funding, however, they did not agree with closing the residential short breaks unit 1 day a week.
 - That daytime activities preferred included swimming, activities involving animals, cooking or musical activities.
 - The need for better links with activities already taking place in communities and support for children and young people to access them.
 - The need for 1:1 or 2:1 staffing, followed by secure environments and small groups to access services.
 - The sleep service should not be added to the short breaks group of services.
 - Sensory impairment services should not be added to the short breaks group of services.
 - Adding personal care and support services to the short breaks group of services would be positive.
 - That in general, respondents agreed with some parts of the proposals but not all of it.
 - The survey covered a broad spectrum of topics allowing us to review the entire provision and receive appropriate feedback.

Thanks to this, a new model of short breaks and respite will be implemented; this will consist of:

- 1) A single referral route into the short break's services.
- 2) Existing assessments being used to access the short breaks services and allowing parents to self-refer.
- 3) Residential short breaks unit reducing the bed capacity rather than closing 1 night a week; analysis shows this will still enable the need to be met.
- 4) The Sleep Service (and budget) will not be included in the Short Breaks group of services.
- 5) The Sensory Impairment services will not be included in the short breaks group of service
- 6) Consideration of adding PCaS services during the 2nd year of the contract after modelling the viability of this.

The next steps of the process are:

- Commissioning the new services to be in place by November 2024.
- Complete a whole service review of the sleep service and agree a joint plan to reduce the waiting list.
- Ensure the transition from the current services to the new services are as smooth as possible to avoid any negative impact on children, young people, and their families.

We want to continue listening and supporting you as we go through the next stages. Keep in touch with us at:

Sufficiency@nctrust.co.uk

if you have any questions. The complete survey report is available on the NCT website.

<https://www.nctrust.co.uk/.../Short%20Breaks%20and...>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

WNC Launch Grants for Volunteering Opportunities

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has launched a second round of grant funding which aims to create additional volunteering opportunities in West Northants. The Community Funding grants project has received £47,000 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Voluntary and Community Sector organisations can apply for grants of up to £1,500 for projects which address a local community need while supporting the Council's vision to make West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work, visit and thrive.

Free 2 Talk CIC was recently awarded funding to support new supervised volunteers work which aims to improve outcomes across academic, behavioural, emotional, and social areas of young people's lives in Northampton.



Northamptonshire Mind also received a grant to deliver their Rural Outreach Project which will recruit supported volunteers to provide community outreach in areas identified as being at the highest risk of social exclusion. In addition, Renew169 Wellbeing Café in Towcester received funding to enable the recruitment of volunteers to support safe space sessions, which aim to reduce loneliness and isolation in people with emotional or mental health difficulties.

Further information and the full criteria for applications can be found on the WNC website and in the Council's Community Funding Grants Framework. If you would like to speak to the Community Funding Grants Team about your project or your eligibility to apply for this grant, email: communitygrants@westnorthants.gov.uk including your contact telephone number.

Community Ownership Fund

The £150m Community Ownership Fund (COF) exists to help communities across the UK to take ownership of assets at risk of closure. It will run until March 2025. For more information:

<https://mycommunity.org.uk/.../What-is-the-Community...>

Assets of Community Value (ACV) form a part of the Community Right to Bid. It acts as the first stage in identifying and nominating buildings or other assets such as land that have a main use or purpose of furthering the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so into the future. Once listed as Assets of Community Value with the local authority, the local community will be informed if they are listed for sale within the five year listing period.



The community can then enact the Community Right to Bid, which gives them a moratorium period of six months to determine if they can raise the finance to purchase the asset.

An Asset of Community Value is defined as: A building or other land is an asset of community value if its main use has recently been or is presently used to further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community and could do so in the future. The Localism Act states that 'social interests' include cultural, recreational and sporting interests.

The following community organisations can nominate land and buildings for inclusion on the list:

- 1) Parish councils
- 2) Neighbourhood forums (as defined in Neighbourhood Planning regulations)
- 3) Unincorporated community groups of at least 21 members which do not distribute profits to members (this could include community groups with constitutions)
- 4) Not-for-private-profit organisations (e.g. charities).

Community organisations also must have a local connection, which means their activities are wholly or partly concerned with the area, or with a neighbouring authority's area.

Improve your Interview Skills

Are you struggling to write an impressive CV or looking at ways to perfect your interview technique? Join us and our employment support partner, Key Business Skills, on 14th February where we'll be looking at how to create an impressive CV & helping you to improve your interview skills.

This session will help you:

- Sell yourself
- Write a winning CV
- Prepare for a successful interview
- Answer those awkward competency questions
- Be more confident in interviews

The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD

14th February 2024

11 am - 12.30 pm

This workshop is for residents based in West Northamptonshire only, aged 18+ and unemployed.

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/.../2024.../11:00/t-pggkxmk>



WNC Launches Grants to Support Rural Business

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has launched a Rural Business Grants programme to support businesses in the most rural parts of West Northants to diversify and grow.

Utilising £919,772 of UK Shared Prosperity (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF), this programme will provide up to 50% of equal match-funding of between £2,500 and £100,000 to businesses located in Defra's designated rural areas within West Northamptonshire.

Grants can be used to support the building and equipment of capital projects, for example converting a farm building for an alternative business use such as a business hub, wedding venue or for hospitality; growing rural tourism; the acquisition of food and drink processing equipment; or the purchase of commercial grade equipment to increase productivity. All projects and expenditure must be complete by 31 March 2025.

To secure a grant, applicants will need to check the eligibility criteria on the WNC website and complete an online application form. This will be appraised with a final decision made by a Grant Decisions Panel which will include representatives from both local businesses and the Council.

The Rural England Prosperity Fund is a 'top up' to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund provided by Defra and managed for the Government by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to support the Government's levelling up agenda. It is intended to provide investment for identified rural areas facing additional challenges and can be used alongside UKSPF funding.

The Council has appointed Ngage Solutions Ltd to manage the Rural Business Grants programme. Ngage Solutions has worked with rural businesses in West Northamptonshire for over 7 years through the LEADER project. Full details of all UKSPF and REPF funded projects in West Northamptonshire can be found on the WNC website.



West Northamptonshire Council Rural England Prosperity Fund LEVELLING UP Funded by UK Government

Start Up Fund

The West Northamptonshire Social Enterprise Town (WNSSET) Development Fund is offering social enterprises in Northampton up to £5,000 in grant funding.



Any social enterprise who can demonstrate the potential to grow and sustain the social enterprise sector in Northampton and support societal or environmental inequality faced by any community is welcome to apply.

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

WNC Community Transport Grant Scheme

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has launched a new £950k grants scheme to create new and support existing community transport initiatives in West Northants, as well as support the expansion of current grant funded transport projects and services.

This grant funding will be available over the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 for eligible community transport projects from 1 April 2024, following £547,181 funding from Central Government via the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) and £60,337 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), in addition to £342,000 of Council funding.



The grant funding will be allocated to community transport projects and services that meet identified needs and assist the Council in achieving one or more of its corporate priorities, including improving accessibility to employment, healthcare, leisure and education services; addressing unmet needs where there are gaps in the commercial bus network provision; and connecting rural communities to the locations they need to access.

The types of community transport projects or services that will be considered for the grant funding will also play a crucial role in enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and communities by addressing the various transport-related challenges they face including:

- Increasing accessibility and inclusion by providing access to transportation for individuals who may have limited mobility, disabilities, or live in areas with inadequate public transport options.
- Reducing social isolation by enabling independent living especially among young people, older adults, and individuals with disabilities who may otherwise be confined to their homes due to a lack of suitable transport options.
- Providing access to healthcare by providing reliable community transport that is critical for individuals to access healthcare services.
- Enabling safer transport by prioritising safety and the training of drivers, community transport providers will understand their users' needs to make transportation a safer option, especially for vulnerable individuals.
- Supporting economic opportunities by helping people access employment opportunities, education and training and contributing to economic development, economic empowerment, and self-sufficiency.
- Assisting in the maintenance of sustainable communities by connecting rural communities to the services they need and providing dependable travel resulting in well-connected places.
- Providing environmental benefits by using more sustainable and eco-friendly vehicles or limiting car mileage, contributing to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and a cleaner environment helping us to reach net-zero by 2045.
- Relieving traffic congestion by providing alternative transportation to reduce the number of individual vehicles on the road, thus alleviating traffic congestion in urban and suburban areas.

- Providing a cost-efficient alternative to existing transport services, particularly for users who might find traditional private transportation unaffordable.
- Building communities by promoting a sense of community, bringing people together and facilitating social interaction.

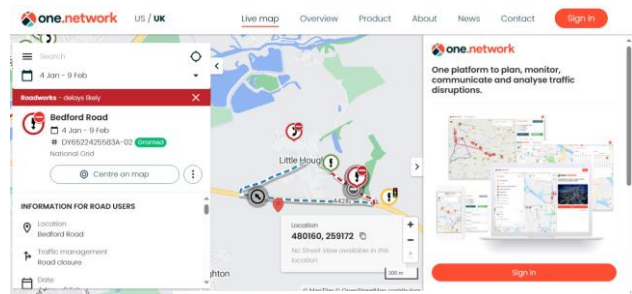
Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Organisations that operate within the geographical area of West Northamptonshire and the Town and Parish Councils within the area are invited to submit an expression of interest form for this Community Funding Grant.

Further information and the full criteria for applications can be found on the WNC website and in the Council's Community Funding Grants Framework. If you would like to speak to the Community Funding Grants Team about your project or your eligibility to apply for this grant, email: communitygrants@westnorthants.gov.uk including your contact telephone number, as a telephone conversation can sometimes clarify a question more efficiently. More information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) can be found on the Gov website.

Road Closure Bedford Road, Little Houghton

ROAD CLOSURE
Bedford Road
4 Jan - 9 Feb
DY6522425583A-02
Granted
National Grid

<https://one.network/?tm=136044460..>

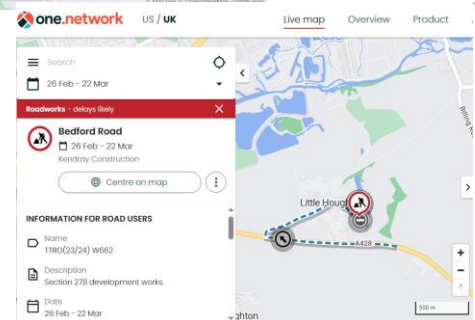


Major Section 278 Works Bedford Road, Little Houghton

I have just been notified that Kendray Construction are carrying out major section 278 works along a section of the above road. These works include kerbing, footpath/footway construction and resurfacing works. To undertake the works safely the road is expected to be closed from the 26th February until the 22nd March 2024.

The closure and diversion can be viewed here <https://one.network/?tm=137246187>

If you require more information about the works, please contact Kendray Construction on 07971 042813.



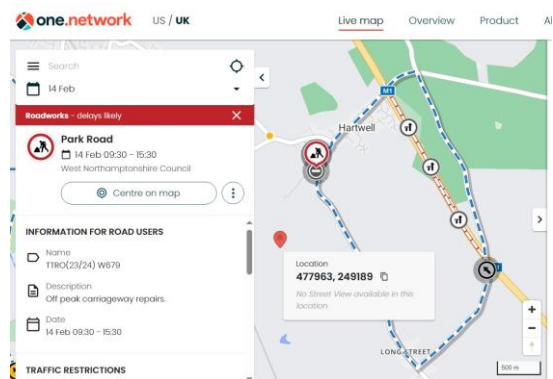
TTRO (23/24) W679 Park Road Hartwell

Kier are intending on carrying out carriageway repairs on a section of the above road between Blacksmith Way and Folly Lane. To undertake this work safely will require that the road is closed for one day between 9.30am and 3.30pm and is expected to take place on the 14th February 2024.

The closure and diversion can be viewed here

<https://one.network/?tm=137308784>

If you require more information please contact Dave Coleman on 01604 529700.



E-Scooter Advice

Electrical scooters also known as e-scooters come under the category of “powered transporters”; this covers a range of personal transport devices which are powered by a motor. E-scooters are classed as motor vehicles under the Road Traffic Act 1988. Which means the rules that apply to motor vehicles, also apply to e-scooters including the need to have a licence, insurance and tax.

It's not currently possible to get insurance for privately owned e-scooters, which means it's illegal to use them on the road or in public spaces. If you're using a private e-scooter you risk the vehicle being seized under S.165 Road Traffic Act 1988 for no insurance. If you cause serious harm to another person whilst riding an e-scooter the incident will be investigated in the same way, it would if you were riding a motorcycle or driving a car.



Rental e-scooter trials

Trials of rental e-scooters are taking place in the UK. Anyone using a rental e-scooter on a public road or other public space, must comply with the relevant road traffic legislation or they face potential prosecution.

To rent an e-scooter you must:

- meet the minimum age limit; these can vary depending on the provider, so please check with them
- hold the correct driving licence (category Q or P/M)
- create an account with the rental company

E-scooters can only be used in approved areas.

Legal use of an e-scooter

It's legal to use an e-scooter on private land with the permission of the landowner. Where a trial rental scheme is running, it's legal to use a rental e-scooter on a public road or cycle lane, provided you have the correct licence and follow road traffic regulations.

Penalties and offences

If you don't have a licence, or the correct licence, or are riding without insurance you could face a Fixed Penalty notice:

- with a £300 fine and six penalty points on your licence for having no insurance
- up to £100 fine and three to six penalty points for riding without the correct licence

You could also be committing an offence if you're caught:

- riding on a pavement; Fixed Penalty Notice and possible £50 fine
- using a mobile phone or other handheld mobile device while riding; £200 and six penalty points
- riding through red lights; Fixed Penalty Notice, £100 fine and possible penalty points
- drink driving: the same as if you were driving a car, you could face court-imposed fines, a driving ban and possible imprisonment

If you're using an e-scooter in public in an antisocial manner, you can also risk the e-scooter being seized under section 59 of the Police Reform Act.

When riding an e-scooter, we would always recommend wearing safety protection such as a helmet and to keep to the speed limit.

Matt Taylor (Northamptonshire Police, PCSO, NS1 South Northants)

New Enforcement to keep Traffic Flowing

Motorists are encouraged to pay attention to the rules of the road as enforcement starts in several areas to improve traffic flow where some are ignoring or unaware of the restrictions in place. New regulations from the Department for Transport (DfT) came into effect in May 2022 through the Traffic Management Act (2004) that enable local authorities to apply for powers to enforce against moving traffic contraventions. The Government approved plans for West Northamptonshire Council to take on this



responsibility, following a positive response to a public consultation around five proposed sites, three of which will be coming forward for enforcement in February.

Many of these will ensure carriageways don't become blocked by vehicles, and to help avoid accidents taking place at busy junctions. These powers have until now only been used by police but a recent change in the law makes it possible for councils to tackle those breaching regulations. With our highways partner Kier and the police, we identified the first five spots which would benefit from this kind of enforcement.

Most public survey responses came from those who either strongly support or support the introduction of these measures, although some of those who responded to the survey disagreed, but their objections were largely around the introduction of enforcement as a concept. If people are aware of and are following the rules of the road, they won't fall foul of these new measures, and we should see fewer accidents and hopefully less congestion as a result.

Cameras will be installed in five locations, the first three of which will be:

- Hermitage Way, Wootton, Northampton is a bus only route which is routinely used by other motorists and enforcement is also set to start there later in February.
- Victoria Gardens junction with St John's Street Vehicles regularly block the hatched yellow box at the junction of St John's Street and Victoria Gardens – anyone driving into a box junction must have means to exit it without stopping. Enforcement will start there on Thursday 1 February.
- Fishponds Road junction with Great Billing Way, Northampton Right turns are not allowed from Fishponds Road into Great Billing Way and enforcement will start there around mid-February.

During the first six months of operation at each site a warning notice will be issued for first offences for any given vehicle, thereafter Penalty Charge Notices will be issued.

Two further locations already agreed are set to be added at a later stage:

- Deanshanger Road, Old Stratford Entry into the specified stretch of Deanshanger Road is prohibited except for buses.
- Horsemarket junction with Gold Street and Mare Fair At the Horse Market junction with Gold St and Marefair, several right and left turns are banned, and drivers should also ensure they follow the blue directional arrow signs. Motorists should avoid stopping in the box junction at the eastern end of Gold Street.

Further sites for enforcement are under consideration, especially those that residents suggested during the consultation process.

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Regional Award for Tackling Violence Against Women

Northamptonshire Police and the Office of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC) have jointly won a regional award for their work in tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) presented the 'Making Spaces Safer' award to both organisations in recognition of their joint efforts in making areas in the county safer, particularly for women at night.

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner successfully bid for Government Safer Streets Funding to create a network of measures to improve physical safety and security, tackle perpetrators and make streets and spaces safer. Some of this work was done in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council.



One such award-winning measure was the introduction of Operation Kayak, a policing initiative to keep people safe on weekend nights out.

Operation Kayak patrols first began as a pilot, funded by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, and have proved to be extremely effective at reducing offending behaviour and in safeguarding the vulnerable. The patrols have since been adopted as a core operational activity. Officers working in the night-time economy are briefed to be proactively on the lookout for suspicious activity, sexual aggression, harassment, inappropriate or predatory behaviour.

The NPCC award also acknowledged the effectiveness of the Safer Nights Out (SNO) vans, which were set up and funded by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to be a haven for anyone who needs support while on an evening out. The SNO vans are customised minibuses, staffed by trained volunteers, who give practical help to anyone who needs it. SNO vans are in the centre of Northampton town centre between 10pm and 5am every Friday and Saturday, and in Kettering, between 11pm and 3am on Saturday.

If you see any behaviours that concern you on a night out, tell venue staff immediately or call the police. Report non-emergency crime via 101 or online at www.northants.police.uk/RO, or in an emergency, always call 999.

Theft of Village Tractors

It has been highlighted by The National Rural Crime Team, that nationally there has been an increase in the Theft of Vintage Tractors. The Massey Ferguson tractor has especially been targeted over the last few months. With the ease of starting, fixing with a spanner, lack of identification opportunities and the worldwide market for such a machine, they have certainly become attractive to the criminal gangs. Their size also makes it easy to transport.



We are asking that should you own one of

these classic machines or know someone who does, please look at ways to add security to protect them from unwanted visitors. If left outside, is there a location you could store inside out of view? Could you fit any security measures like a self-powered tracker or Airtag to the Tractor to assist with locating at any time? any serial numbers or security markings recorded should they be required. Installed security sensors to alert you if people do attend the location?

Over previous years, Northamptonshire has been subject to this crime. Locations where these tractors are used for playing field maintenance and large lawn care have been victims of crime before so we would ask that they especially look at extra ways to secure.

If you would like a visit to discuss Crime Prevention and ways to make your environment less attractive, please, just ask.

Hutch Hutchings (Police, PC, NR Northants Rural Team)

Neighbourhood Policing Week

As part of Neighbourhood Policing Week officers from South Northamptonshire Neighbourhood Team have been out and about in their community. Activities included:

- A drop-in held for students at Cambian Academy, Potterspurty
- A meeting with the Leadership Team of a local secondary school
- A meeting with the coordinator of our Mounted Volunteers
- A bike marking event held in Blisworth
- Speeding enforcement in Nether Heyford, Kislingbury, Blisworth & Quinton.

If you wish to make contact with the Neighbourhood Team to discuss any concerns please email

NT-SouthNorthantsTowcester@northants.police.uk

CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

Rising Sports Stars Urged to Apply for Talent Scheme

Up-and-coming athletes in West Northamptonshire are being given the chance to take their careers to the next level – in an Olympic and Paralympic year – with Everyone Active's Sporting Champions scheme. Relaunching this month, the renowned programme empowers aspiring athletes to unlock their full potential by offering access to state-of-the-art training facilities and mentoring support from Olympians and Paralympians.



Since its inception in 2016, the scheme has transformed the lives of more than 5,000 athletes by providing them with free access to Everyone Active's 230-plus leisure centres nationwide, helping them press forward in their journey to sporting stardom. These include Moulton Leisure Centre and Daventry Leisure Centre, run in partnership with West Northamptonshire Council. For 2024, the legendary Colin Jackson, Olympic 110m hurdles silver medallist and former world

record holder, returns as the scheme's Ambassador. He will be working alongside a line-up of inspiring Elite athletes who have starred on the Olympic and Paralympic stage – Northamptonshire swimmer Maisie Summers-Newton, Lauren Steadman, Lutalo Muhammad, Jessica and Jennifer Gadirova, Kadeena Cox, Richard Kilty – in group mentoring sessions throughout the year. These sporting heroes will share their wisdom and expertise, guiding up and coming athletes every step of the way.

Over the past eight years, the Sporting Champions scheme has poured more than £2million into young athletes, proving its commitment to grassroots sporting excellence. At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, no fewer than 30 Sporting Champions competed, taking home five gold, two silver and three bronze medals. Applications open on Monday, February 12, 2024 and run until Monday, March 11, 2024 via the Everyone Active Sporting Champions website, easportingchampions.com Follow the Sporting Champions Instagram (@easportingchamps) for more information on how to apply.

Nominations for 2024 Inspirational Women's Award

Organised by our Women's Forum, the awards aim to publicly recognise and promote those women who inspire and have a real impact on the lives of others in the community or the workplace. Please save the date for International Women's Day which will take place on Saturday 9th March in The Great Hall & Court Room, The Guildhall, Northampton.

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

Further details to follow re the event.

Please see the press release on how to nominate an inspiring women for the 2024 Inspirational Women Awards.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../nominate-inspiring...>

museum) in Germany. There will be performances from Northamptonshire Music and Performing Arts (NMPAT) and Northamptonshire schools. The event will conclude with the laying of flowers in the courtyard.



Tourism Strategy

A new tourism strategy for Northamptonshire has been given the go ahead by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) at their Cabinet and Executive meetings this month (16 and 18 January).



The Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy sets out a vision and approach to nurturing and enhancing the county's visitor economy and aims to improve pride in place, generate inward investment and create new employment opportunities as well as reduce carbon emissions in line with both councils' sustainability goals.

The strategy, which has been developed over an 18-month period and co-produced by WNC and NNC

alongside partners and stakeholders from across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors, will be implemented focussing on 4 key themes: Visits and Value, Great People, Better Business and Inspirational Places.

Plans also include the exploration of a new private sector-led Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) which will work with national tourism agency Visit England to oversee and drive the delivery of the strategy while playing a crucial role in promoting and marketing specific destinations to attract tourists. The LVEP will also be responsible for identifying and bidding for Government funding streams.

Similar to Visit England, which focuses on showcasing the diverse attractions, cultural heritage, and experiences offered by different regions across England, a LVEP would work on developing and

implementing strategic marketing initiatives to boost tourism, support local businesses, and enhance the overall appeal of Northamptonshire to visitors both domestically and internationally.

The development setting out what the LVEP could look like in Northamptonshire is a priority following the adoption of the Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy and will be explored in partnership with the private sector.

Both councils will continue to deliver specific tourism activities at a local level but will work with wider partners for larger initiatives when appropriate and necessary.

View the strategy on the WNC and NNC websites. A full designed version of the strategy will be available on both councils' websites the coming weeks.

Choirfest Free Pop Up Group Singing Experience

Gareth Fuller and show cast members lead this relaxed, fun singing opportunity, open to all regardless of experience....and its free! An exclusive pop-up taster singing session, offering individuals of all skill levels a chance to discover the joy of singing, is set to prove what many have questioned – everyone can sing! The bold claim is set to be put to the test during an engaging session taking place on Saturday 9 March 2024, from 10.30am to midday at The Carnegie Room, Northampton Central Library. Providing participants with a glimpse into the power of singing together, attendees will learn harmonies plus other vocal techniques and be taught a song by the end of the session, creating a choir in the process! Whether a complete beginner or looking to refine your singing skills, the session promises to be an enjoyable and educational experience plus a great opportunity to discover the many benefits of singing with others.

Gareth Fuller, ChoirFest Music Director and Choir Director to over 450 Northants based community voices and Liam Gallagher's sold out Knebworth shows attended by over 160,000, said: "During our weekly community choirs across Northamptonshire and the UK, we have proven that no matter your ability, singing really is something everyone can do!

"Stress-relieving and confidence-building, I am excited to lead this session and create a choir in a short time and prove that everyone can sing!"



This joint initiative by Public Health, Northampton Central Library and West Northamptonshire Council will also include cast members of the highly anticipated music production Collide: A ChoirFest Experience, sharing a snippet of what to expect from the show which takes place on 30 March 2024, at The Royal & Derngate Theatre.

The specially commissioned musical show celebrates the joys of group singing whilst providing an opportunity

for 200 local community voices to sing alongside a full live band, string section and Karen Gibson MBE, famed for leading the choir at the Royal wedding of the Sussexes, Harry and Meghan.

In addition to the many services available at Northampton Central Library, a large collection of musical scores sets are available for choirs and orchestras to hire at reasonable rates. A variety of service options are available, from an annual subscription to a one-off set. Currently around 40 groups use the service, with 6920 scores loaned in the last year. All fees and charges can be found on the WNC website.

Free tickets for The Exclusive Taster Singing Session will be available from 5 February, book your tickets here:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/.../harmony.../e-ldbgbyb>

Tickets for Collide: A ChoirFest Experience are on sale now, available from the Royal & Derngate website:

<https://www.royalndderngate.co.uk/whats-on/choirfest/>