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MONTHLY NEWS REPORT DECEMBER 2023



E-Newsletter Issue 12/2023

Steve with Amy & Sophie

at

Hartwell Warm Room
Hartwell Community Centre
17 November 2023

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NEWS REPORT DECEMBER 2023

Monthly Highlights

As we approach what has been quite a challenging year for many, I'd like to open by saying a huge thank you to everyone who 'has done their bit' to help others across the area and beyond. Your efforts have made huge differences to the lives of so many people, often unnoticed, but always appreciated. 'Thank you!'

My update for this month is as follows:

The A428 Speed Reduction scheme is subject to a Traffic Order, which Highways are still seeking to complete by the end of November, however this will depend on the availability of our lighting contractor. This scheme only has 2 externally lit signs to install so we're hoping they have availability for this job, the remaining non-illuminated signs will be installed by EMPells. This project has been work in progress for the last two years and the implementation is now in its final stage.

Our site visit at Blacksmith's Way, Hartwell took place on 31 October 2023 where we received the following update:

- Trial holes in both areas of Ashton Road will start on Monday 6 November and should be completed by Thursday 9 November. Once completed WNC will be able to programme the works as we will understand the extent of Traffic Management and works required. It is hoped the works will be able to be completed in December.
- The new gully on Blacksmiths Way – Hartwell Parish Council have received the Invoice, as soon as this is paid WNC will arrange replacement of the gully.
- Vegetation At Bottom of Blacksmiths Way – An order to cut this vegetation back (up to height of bus stop sign) is to be completed in the next 28 days.
- Kerb Entry Gullies on Ashton Road – Andrew Leighton will ask the drainage team to look into the effectiveness of the two kerb entry gullies near to Blacksmiths Way and report back.

As soon as I receive further information, I will provide another update.

I attended lots of events across the ward this month and I expect to attend even more in the lead up to Christmas. Please read about my activities in my Monthly Report.

However, I must ask you to join me in offering congratulations to Louise Brown, Headteacher and her team at Yardley Hastings Primary School on their recent excellent Ofsted report. For them to achieve outstanding across all categories is quite an achievement and one in which we are immensely proud.

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

The consultation on school admission arrangements for September 2025 is open. This survey closes midnight 31 December 2023.

Struggling households in West Northamptonshire can seek help from the Household Support Fund (HSF) in a variety of ways including:

- Financial support for those on a low wage
- The provision of food for children eligible for benefits related free school meals during school

holidays

- Financial grants for charities to extend the offer of support to families and individuals that they are engaged with and working with

See my monthly report.

WNC received major recognition with two national excellence awards at the CIPFA Public Finance Awards event. The Finance Team of the Year and the award for Achievement in Financial Reporting and Accountability.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) launched on Tuesday, 28 November the Stage One consultation for the Community Governance Review that will run until Wednesday, 31 January 2024.

Following Government discussions, planning fees nationally are set to increase on 6 December 2023. The Government have said they expect the fee increase to result in increased investment in the planning service hopefully leading to improved services across the country. See my Monthly Report.

Due to the public holidays, some properties will have a change in the day of their collections over the festive period. Parish areas in the Towcester and Brackley (former South Northants) area: Collections due on Tuesday 26 December, will instead take place on Saturday 23 December. All other collections will take place on their normal days. There will be a short break in garden waste collections from 23 December until 5 January and crews will collect real Christmas trees between 8 and 19 January. Residents do not need a garden waste subscription to take advantage of this. People are asked to ensure trees over 6ft tall are cut in half so they fit in the lorries safely. They can also be taken to the nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

People in West Northamptonshire are being asked to help spread comfort and joy this Christmas by donating items to those in need. The Comfort and Joy campaign aims to provide gifts, treats and essential items such as food and toiletries to help vulnerable families and those staying in refuges. Donations can be made at West Northamptonshire Council's offices at Lodge Road in Daventry, The Forum in Towcester, and the receptions at The Guildhall and One Angel Square, as well as at Daventry Police Station. The deadline to donate items is 12pm on Friday, 16 December. See my Monthly Report for details.

The sessions to help you find a new job will take place every 2nd Wednesday of the month between 1pm and 3pm in the Watermeadows Room at Towcester Library and will run until 14 February 2024. Dates of the sessions are:

- 13 December
- 10 January 2024
- 14 February 2024

People across Northampton are invited down to Northampton's Market at Commercial Street to join in free ice-skating and curling this Christmas. Taking place on 9 and 10 December and 16 to 22 December between 10am and 4pm, people are advised to put on their skates and join in the festive fun.

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 its Community Transport Funding Grant. The closing date is 8 January 2024. See my monthly Report.

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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>

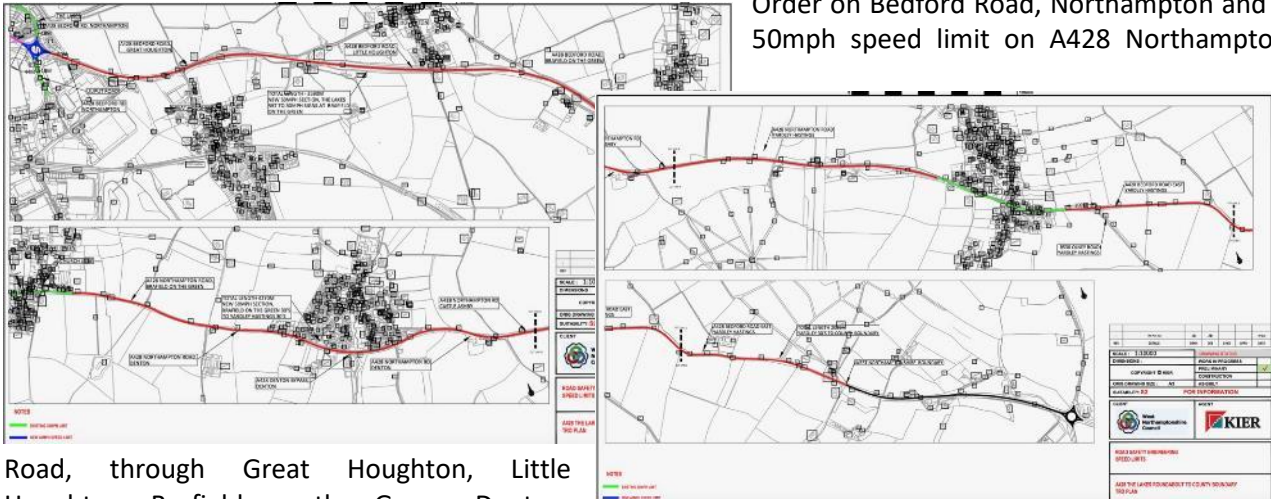
And finally, "It's a pleasure to work with all of you, and I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a happy year ahead."

All the Best, Steve

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

A428 Speed Reduction Scheme

I have received copies of the signing plans for the changes to 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. The A428 Speed Reduction scheme is subject to a Traffic Order made under Part VI of the Road Traffic Regulation Act (RTTA) 1984 dealing specifically with the speed limit, which Highways are still seeking to complete by the end of November, however this will depend on the availability of our lighting contractor. This particular scheme only has 2 externally lit signs to install so we're hoping they have availability for this job, the remaining non-illuminated signs will be installed by EMPells. This project has been work in progress for the last two years and the implementation is now in its final stage.

Update on Drainage Issues in Hartwell

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Important Notice - Hackleton Prescription Deliveries



Hackleton Baptist Church allows Denton Surgery patients to collect their prescriptions from Hackleton Baptist Church, Chapel Lane, Hackleton, NN7 2AH. Their pick-up times are 11.00-13.00 Monday to Wednesday. Medication will arrive on Mondays prior to 11.00 and items not collected by 13.00 on Wednesdays will be returned to the surgery. Please remember to request delivery each time you order. Fridge items and controlled drugs must be collected direct from the surgery.

Little Houghton Winter Warmer 1 November 2023

I attended the reopening of the Little Houghton Winter Warmer Sessions which started on Wednesday 1 November from 2-4pm. It will take place every Wednesday until March 2024. It was well attended by the residents, and I enjoyed catching up with friends from the village. Well done to Julia and Peter for running these events. Also, many thanks to Julia for the great round table photograph of all of us.



Denton Coffee Morning 3 November 2023

On 3 November 2023, I attended the Denton Coffee Morning at St Margaret's Church, one of West Northants Warm Welcoming Spaces. The church is in the centre of the village. It is open every day and provides a community space for everyone in the village.



They hold coffee mornings, weekly craft sessions, quizzes, and many other general community events. Opening times: Open on Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings. I enjoyed the croissant, coffee and of course the friendly chatter. It was good to catch up with Sheila, Doug, Russell, John, Mary, Diane and others. It's always a great place to meet for coffee and a chat in Denton especially on a cold damp Friday morning.

Whilst there, I noticed the four different coloured poppy wreaths, which were on display in the church again this year. Alongside the red poppy wreath, the most famous symbol used to commemorate those who sacrificed their lives in World War One and conflicts that followed, there were three other coloured poppy wreaths-black, purple, and white.

The black poppy wreath commemorates the contributions of black, African and Caribbean communities to the war effort - as servicemen and servicewomen, and as civilians. The charitable organisation was launched in 2010 and aims to highlight "largely untold historical legacies" from the 16th century onwards.

The purple poppy is often worn to remember animals that have been victims of war. Animals like horses, dogs and pigeons were often drafted into the war effort and were remembered and commemorated for their contribution in war zones for the first time with an official purple wreath in 2020. In particular, many horses were killed or injured in World War One. Donations to the Animal Purple Poppy Fund go to charities including World Horse Welfare and the Household Cavalry Foundation. The Animal Purple Poppy Fund uses the word poppy with the agreement of the Royal British Legion.

White poppies represent remembrance for all victims of war of all nationalities, along with a commitment to peace and a rejection of militarism. They were founded in 1933 by the Co-operative Women's Guild. Since 1981 they have been organised and distributed by the Peace Pledge Union (PPU). They say that the

white poppy commemorates people who died in conflict, but focuses on achieving peace and challenging the way we look at war.

The red poppy belongs to the Royal British Legion - a charity created by veterans of World War One. They say that the red poppy represents remembrance and hope.

We missed seeing the cascade of poppies on the tower outside the church as this will be erected tomorrow in time for Remembrance Day. Well done to everyone who has contributed to this Act of Remembrance.



Quinton Coffee Morning 4 November 2023



On Saturday 4 November we attended the 1st Anniversary of the Quinton Coffee Morning at St John the Baptist Church, Quinton.

Open to all, the monthly first Saturday 10.30-12.00 coffee mornings provide an opportunity to relax and catch up with others from the local community. We had our first introduction to Rev Mark Hurley and his wife Barbara who will be joining the living Brook Benefice which includes the churches of St John the Baptist, Piddington with Horton, St John the Baptist, Quinton and Preston Deanery and St Edmund, King and Martyr, Hardingstone, Northamptonshire in the diocese of Peterborough.

Mark is the new House for Duty Clergy with responsibility for Piddington and Quinton Churches and associated villages and we have been invited to his Licensing Service by the Bishop of Peterborough, The Right Reverend John Holbrook, at Piddington Church at 7:00pm on Tuesday 28th November 2023. Saturday gave us all a great opportunity for us to get to know Mark in advance of the formal occasion which takes place later this month.

It was great to catch up with Julia, Barbara and others. The coffee and homemade cakes were most enjoyable. Everyone who turns up always enjoys a warm welcome, friendship and conversation! Well done to those who make it happen especially to Barbara for the 1st Anniversary cake.

Beat Bus Visit to Coffee@Carey 8 November 2023

On Wednesday, I went along to Coffee@Carey to meet with Matt Taylor PCSO and Chris Partridge PC who were in attendance with the Northamptonshire Beat Bus. One



of the main issues raised was the Speeding taking place along Main Road, Hackleton. Hackleton Parish Council has purchased a second 'Speed will be rotated original one. The

Indicator Device' for the Parish. It around the Parish as with the Parish Council has also applied to West Northants Council, who are the highway authority for a Section 50 License to allow additional sites to be used on Brafield Road Horton and Main Road New Hackleton. This

should increase coverage within the parish and hopefully have a positive effect in reducing speeding vehicles.

It was busy yesterday with folks picking up their prescriptions and the men's group in attendance. Attendance at Coffee@Carey, now classed as a WNC Welcoming Space, continues to grow as they add more 'Well Being' Groups.

Whilst there, I was reminded about the details for the Hackleton Remembrance Day Service on Sunday 12 November.

Evening of Remembrance on 10 November 2023

On Friday 10 November 2022, I attended an 'Evening of Remembrance' at Hackleton Village Hall in support of 'Combat Stress for Veterans Mental Health'. The choir started the evening by singing 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' and in the first half of the evening members of 'Just Sing' sang some well-known songs made

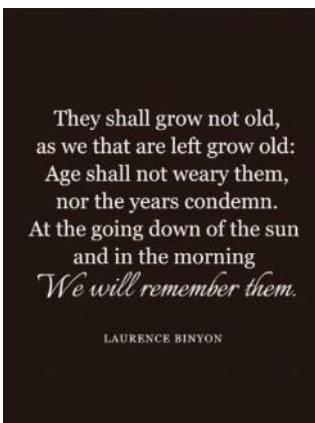
famous in the first and second world wars together with poems and readings of the time.



In the second half we were able to join in with the choir. We started by singing 'Pack Up Your Troubles' and 'It's A Long Way to Tipperary' along with the choir. These traditional songs were put together to form a singing round. It was a near perfect rendition and enjoyed by all. The pace changed with 'Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler' followed by 'White Cliffs of Dover' before a hearty interpretation of 'Run Rabbit Run'. We finished the evening with 'There will always be an England, Land of Hope and Glory and We'll meet again'.

What a wonderful evening of song we all had listening to a variety of music and poetry interspersed with poignant readings. Well done to all those who participated. Just Sing raised £352.10p on the night. A special thank you to all Just Sing members for their lovely homemade cakes and refreshments, WI for lending their mugs and the Scouts who helped by moving their regular meeting in the Hall up to the Chapel to accommodate Just Sing and helping set up the chairs.

Cogenhoe Remembers 11 November 2023



On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918 the guns of Europe fell silent. After four years of bitter fighting, The Great War was finally over. The Armistice was signed at 5am in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne, France on November 11, 1918. Six hours later, at 11am, the war ended. The first Remembrance Day was conducted in 1919 throughout Britain and the Commonwealth. Originally called Armistice Day, it commemorated the end of hostilities the previous year. It came to



symbolise the end of the war and provide an opportunity to remember those who had died.

After the end of the Second World War in 1945 Armistice Day became Remembrance Day to include all those who had fallen in the two World Wars and other conflicts. Armistice Day has been observed every year since 1919 with a two-minute silence at 11am on 11 November across the nation. As well as standing together in Remembrance on 11 November, we also observe a two-minute silence at 11am on Remembrance Sunday.

At 11.00am Saturday, 11 November 2022 at the Memorial on the Cogenhoe playing field, Councillor Jon Bailey, Chairman, Cogenhoe Parish Council read the fourth stanza of the poem 'For the Fallen' written by Laurence Binyon in 1914. Over time this poem has been claimed as a tribute to all casualties of war, regardless of state and it is often taken as an ode and recited at Remembrance Day services.

Afterwards Jon laid a wreath on behalf of residents and then the Headteacher Cogenhoe Primary School laid a wreath on behalf of the school.

This was followed by the "Last Post," which is used in public ceremonials commemorating the war dead and then we all observed two minutes silence concluding with "The Rouse (Reveille)."



Quinton Remembers on 12 November 2023

On 12 November 2023, I was privileged to join some of the residents for their Remembrance Service led by Major Mike Crouch at 12 noon in St John the Baptist Church, Quinton.

There were readings and poems about those who gave their lives for us in the two World Wars, especially the 3 men from Quinton and the 7 from Preston Deanery.



As you enter the church you can't fail to notice the ten 'ghost soldiers' made from Perspex Clear acrylic that are seated in various pews. It makes an impression on you immediately as you carefully sit amongst 'the fallen'.

Originally this type of project was the idea of artist and photographer Martin Barraud, who in 2016, to honour the names on the memorial wall of his local Anglican Church, placed 51 Silhouettes made from Perspex Clear acrylic, in the pews, each representing

men of the village who died in the conflict.

Private Walter Matthews, Private Walter Tysom and Lance Corporal John Henry Newcombe were all remembered. To them and other servicemen and women who paid with their lives to ensure our freedom, we commemorated their sacrifice in a humble way and celebrated their memory in Quinton.



Hartwell Warm Room 17 November 2023

On Friday 17 November 2023, I was pleased to join Amy and Sophie at the Hartwell Warm Room in the Hartwell Community Centre, Hartwell. Everyone had been invited to come along and enjoy a free tea/coffee and a cake in a cosy warm space. It is a new initiative involving the Hartwell Community Centre in Partnership with Hartwell Parish Council.

There were lots of things to do including adult and children's colouring books, jigsaws and playing cards. This was the first of the weekly sessions on Friday's from 1.30-4.30pm and we were asked to spread the word to those who do not have social media.



There is a cost-of-living crisis in the UK resulting in unprecedented pressures on people already struggling with their household bills, and this winter despite the support given by the government, many people in West Northamptonshire will struggle to be able to afford to heat their home. WNC is working with parish and town councils and partners in the voluntary and community sector to create a network of Welcoming Spaces - a group of non-judgemental, safe and welcoming places where people in West Northamptonshire can come together to stay warm, and perhaps enjoy a hot meal or a cup of tea and a biscuit. They have created a directory of all the places available to our

residents across the public, private, health and voluntary sectors so that anyone who is cold knows where they can go to stay warm and enjoy a little company and some hot refreshments this winter.

Well done to everyone working on rolling out this initiative in Hartwell. Keep up the good work! I look forward to catching up with you again soon.

Quinton Book Swap & Coffee Morning 18 November 2023

On Saturday 18 November 2023, I visited the monthly Quinton BOOK Swap and Coffee Morning, which is in the Village Hall from 10.30am. A special thank you to Helen for the great cake and coffee. Well done to Emma, Helen and others for volunteering to raise funds for the upkeep of the Village Hall.

If anyone has a spare bookcase then please let them know.



Welcoming Space & Chatty Café, Cogenhoe Wednesday 22 November 2023

On Wednesday 22 November 2023, I joined others at the Welcoming Space/Chatty Café Cogenhoe Village Hall, which runs from 11.00am-1.30pm every week. There is a £4 fixed price lunch available from the Tea Room from 11.00am -3.30pm. Those that hadn't eaten bacon rolls earlier enjoyed macaroni cheese or curry and rice for lunch. There was lots of chatting once the tea room started to fill up around lunch time and various games such as cards, dominoes, jigsaws and various craft projects started to emerge.

On 29 November 2023, there was a Singing for Fun session from 1.30-2.30 pm, including tea or coffee from 1.15pm. Everyone was welcome to join this informal singing group (regardless of any health conditions). There was no need to book.



Hartwell Coffee Morning 23 November 2023



On Thursday 23 November we joined Denise and others at St John the Baptist Church Coffee morning, Hartwell, which takes place every Thursday from 10.00-11.15am. They had a selection of cakes including Lemon Drizzle, Pavlova and Pumpkin Pie, which gave it an American Theme.

Thanksgiving Day in the United States is celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November each year. This year it falls on 23 November 2023. Traditionally it is a time to give thanks for all the sacrifice and hard work done for the harvest.

On Thursday 23 November we enjoyed meeting and catching up with old friends and new, whilst reflecting on the beautiful sight of the cascading poppies inside the church.

Look out for the Hartwell Christmas Fayre on 2 December 2023 at 2.00pm and the Christingle Light Trail on Christmas Eve between 4-5.30pm.

Blisworth Christmas Coffee Morning & Bazaar 25 November 2023

On Saturday 25th November I joined friends at the Blisworth Parish Church Christmas Coffee Morning and Bazaar from 10am - 1pm. It was a chance for everyone to find Christmas presents and decorations. There were lots of homemade cakes and produce for sale together with Tombola, teas and coffees with cake, sausage rolls and or mince pies. It was great to catch up with folks that I haven't met for some time over a coffee. Well done to everyone who made the event possible.



Denton Church Christmas Fayre 25 November 2023

On 25 November 2023, I joined Pat, Sheila, Mike, John, Carole and others at the Denton Church Christmas Fayre. As I had a prior engagement, I arrived at about 12.30pm just in time to sample some delicious soup with the famous Denton croutons. The Denton Crafty Sew and Sews had made a Christmas Tree of hats and we were invited to buy a hat just in time for the colder weather. Prices from just £2.



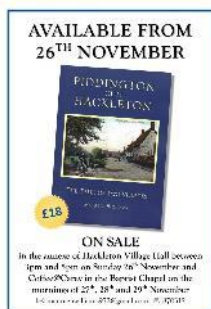
It was very well attended and there were lots of people enjoying the soup together with mulled wine and mince pies before shopping at the various stalls for crafts, tombola, cards, nearly new bric a brac, pottery, Avon gifts and more. There was a raffle for a fabulous luxury hamper and other prizes.

Cogenhoe Christmas Fair 25 November 2023

On 25 November 2023, I attended the Christmas Fair at St Peter's Church Cogenhoe. It was very well attended with wide support from the local community. Thank you to those who organised such a great afternoon. It ran from 2-4pm with Children's craft activities, Cakes, Raffle, Toys, Books, Tombola, Jewellery, Scarves, Jams, Xmas Tree Decorations and more...A special thank you to the volunteer bakers and servers of refreshments-Joy, Jackie and Anne and to Geoff who entertained us with his Christmas carols on the organ.



Piddington Cum Hackleton 26 November 2023



On Sunday 26 November 2023, I attended the Book Launch of 'Piddington Cum Hackleton' at Hackleton Village Hall. I was able to collect my copy that I had ordered previously. Copies of 'Piddington cum Hackleton' will be on sale at Coffee@Carey on Tuesday and Wednesday this week (see poster for details). The book charts the history of the two villages from 1700 to the mid-1950s, with tales of highway robbery, devastating fires, religious dissenters, murder and suicide along the way.

Christmas Afternoon Tea, Little Houghton Church 26 November 2023

It was a most enjoyable afternoon on 26 November 2023 when we were able to

partake of some delicious Christmas snacks with our Afternoon Tea from 2.30-5.00pm at Little Houghton Church. Vicki, John, Tessa, Ralph, Jenny, Geoff, Sue and others chatted away inside the church as the light of the day faded outside. Jenny had donned her special Christmas Apron for the occasion and John wore his Christmas Jumper to celebrate the event as this will be the last Little Houghton Afternoon Tea until February. A special thank you to Jenny who has provided wonderful afternoon teas throughout the seasons of the year. We look forward to catching up again in 2024. In the meantime, we will no doubt see each other at the various events in the lead up to Christmas.



Revd Mark Hurley Appointed to Living Brook Benefice 28 November 2023

On 28 November 2023, I was privileged to attend the Licensing of Revd Mark Hurley as Assistant Priest in the Living Brook Benefice with responsibility for Piddington & Quinton Churches at St John the Baptist Church, Piddington.



The Revd Mark Hurley, joined the Diocese of Peterborough from the Diocese of Bath and Wells where he was Priest in Charge of Bishops Lydeard w Lydeard St Lawrence, Bagborough, Combe Florey and Cothelstone. Bishops Lydeard is a village and civil parish located in Somerset, which is five miles (8 km) north-west of Taunton.

Mark was licensed by the Rt Revd John Holbrook, Bishop of Brixworth and Acting Bishop of Peterborough.

During his introduction the Bishop reminded everyone that Stir-up Sunday which is an informal term for the last Sunday before the season of Advent gets its name from the beginning of the collect for the day in the Book of Common Prayer,

which begins with the words, "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people...", but it has become associated with the custom of making the Christmas puddings on that day. Then, he turned to Mark and said that he expected him to do great things by stirring things up in the Living Brook Benefice!

Congratulations to Mark on his appointment and I look forward to working with him on Community matters as appropriate. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make the evening possible.

Outstanding Ofsted Report for Yardley Hastings Primary School

Inspection of Yardley Hastings Primary School

Castle Ashby Road, Yardley Hastings, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN7 1EL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Congratulations to Louise Brown and team at Yardley Hastings Primary School on your recent excellent Ofsted report. For you and your team to achieve outstanding across all categories is quite an achievement and one in which you all are no doubt immensely proud.

Wellbeing Wednesday ‘Stop Smoking Support’ 6 December 2023

The Cogenhoe Parish Council is organising a series of ‘Wellbeing’ events on a variety of subjects. The next event will be on Wednesday 6 December 2023 in the York Room, Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall, at 7.30-9pm. Do come along if you wish to find out more about ‘Stop Smoking Support’.



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.

REFUGEES

Resettlement: Homes for Ukraine scheme Expression of Interest Form

Are you interested in becoming a host on the Homes for Ukraine scheme? We are currently looking for new hosts to help support Ukrainian guests whose original accommodation has not worked out, or where their original hosts, due to changes in their personal circumstances, are unable to continue to offer the use of their home.

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

If you need any further information please contact us on resettlement@westnorthants.gov.uk



Before you complete this questionnaire, please read the Homes for Ukraine privacy policy which will tell you how the information you give us will be managed.

The scheme opened on 6 January 2023 and closes on 31 December 2023.

<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/it/expression-of-interest-homes-for-ukraine/consultation/subpage.2022-10-05.8708209571/>

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.

School Admission Arrangements 2025

The consultation on school admission arrangements for September 2025 is now open. West



Northamptonshire Council co-ordinates an annual school admissions consultation on behalf of all schools in the council area. The aim of the consultation is to raise awareness of any proposed changes to school admission arrangements and ensure that these are subject to appropriate consultation for those schools taking part.

This survey closes midnight 31 December 2023.

Please visit the Consultation on school admission arrangements for September 2025 intakes overview for further information for schools taking part and ways to feedback.

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

Have Your Say on New Tree Strategy

Work to create a new comprehensive Tree Strategy for West Northamptonshire is well underway - and the views of town and parish councils will be vital in its development. The Strategy will provide a clear framework for managing trees on council land as well as a strategic and proactive vision and action plan for maximising the benefits of trees into the future.



The views of people and organisations across West Northants will be vital to ensuring our approach reflects the needs and aspirations of our communities. So to mark National Tree Week 2023 (November 26 – December 4), we will be launching a public consultation giving town and parish councils - together with members of the public and other stakeholders - a chance to have a say. The survey will run until 31 December and we would welcome the support of Town and Parish Councils in sharing and promoting

this consultation widely, to ensure we hear from a wide range of voices. The results of your feedback and wider public consultation will help to inform a more in-depth engagement opportunity in the New Year, when we will be hosting some workshops. Please look out for further details on this soon.

Background

The new strategy is the result of a recommendation made by our Tree Policy Task and Finish Group, which was approved by Cabinet in autumn last year. The Tree Strategy will support the goals of our Corporate Plan, and provide a clear framework for strategic and operational decision making across the Council, our partners and the wider community. The strategy seeks to:

- Maximise the benefits of trees to people, biodiversity, and achieving net zero.
- Maximise the cross-functional benefits of trees, including nature recovery, flood risk management, and aspirations for quality development.
- Support efficient and effective decision-making.
- Facilitate Improved understanding of trees, their function and role among those involved in managing and caring for trees in West Northamptonshire.

If you have any questions regarding the survey questionnaire or Tree Strategy please contact TreeStrategy@woodlanddwelling.co.uk

New Environmental Policy for Northampton Town Centre

Businesses and residents are being asked for their thoughts on proposals to introduce a new Environmental Policy for Northampton Town Centre. West Northamptonshire Council is seeking to implement a policy which will help improve environmental standards and set out the way that businesses handle their commercial waste. This will be trialled in central Northampton and will then be considered to be rolled out



across the wider West Northamptonshire area. The consultation opens 30 November 2023, closing on 28 January 2024. and will seek public opinion to 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.

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.

The consultation runs from Thursday 30 November until midnight 28 January 2024 and people can view the plans at:

Give us your views on the draft Northampton Town Centre Environmental Policy 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. 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 December 2023. 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

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Household Support Fund

West Northamptonshire Council have received further funding from the Department of Work and Pensions to support eligible residents until 31 March 2024. The Household Support Fund will be distributed in a variety of ways including:

- Financial support for those on a low wage
- The provision of food for children eligible for benefits related free school meals during school holidays
- Financial grants for charities to extend the offer of support to families and individuals that they are engaged with and working with
- Working with our trusted partners to identify and support vulnerable families directly.



Please see below for further eligibility criteria for each scheme

and note that the criteria and type of support offered for each round of funding for the Household Support Scheme can be different.

Further support can also be found on the following web pages:

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

Government Cost of Living Hub <https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living>

Working on a low wage

Support is available for West Northamptonshire residents earning less than £400 per week. This is not intended as emergency support payment.

All households who make an application will be sent information on how to access further support. Please follow the link below to view the eligibility criteria and application form. Only 1 application can be made per household. Residents who have applied for previous rounds of funding will be able to apply again (subject to meeting the eligibility criteria). The application may be closed at any point. The website will be updated with details, to ensure funds are made available throughout the year up until 31 March 2024.

We are currently aiming to process applications within 3 weeks. (However we currently have some payment delays which are 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.)



Make an application for the Household Support Fund

[https://northamptonshireself.achieveservice.com/service/Apply for the Household Support Fund 2023 to 2024 WNC](https://northamptonshireself.achieveservice.com/service/Apply_for_the_Household_Support_Fund_2023_to_2024_WNC)

Please do not submit duplicate applications or contact us to check the progress of your application if it is within this timescale. This will not speed up your application.

Support for families in receipt of free school meals

We are continuing to fund holiday food vouchers as part of the Household Support Fund (provided by the Department for Work and Pensions). This is for all students eligible for benefits related free school meals.

All eligible children will be allocated a supermarket voucher (valued at £15 per student, per week). These will be distributed to parents/carers by the child's school or the free school meal team at the start of each holiday (May 2023, Summer 2023, October 2023, Christmas 2023, February 2024, Easter 2024, subject to individual school holiday dates). Additionally, for the Summer 2023 school holiday, we funded a single £15 School Essentials voucher for each student eligible for benefits related free school meals. This voucher is to be used to support purchases of school essentials such as uniform, clothing and stationery at selected retailers.

Community funding

The Household Support Fund is also supporting community groups. This allows us to provide additional grants and financial support to charities and services offering the following;

- Money and Debt Advice
- Energy Saving Measures and Guidance
- Food Aid; such as Food Banks and Community Larders
- Welcoming Spaces

This additional funding will allow many of our Voluntary and Community Sector Partners to expand the reach of services that they already offer.

For more information on where to find additional support on these services, please see the Cost of Living Support pages. <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost-living-support>

This was last updated on 24 November 2023.

WNC Awarded Finance Team of the Year

Hard work and a fresh approach to managing public finances and pensions in West Northamptonshire have received major recognition with two national excellence awards. The accolade of Finance Team of the Year was awarded to West Northamptonshire Council at the CIPFA Public Finance Awards recently, reflecting the outstanding efforts of the organisation's finance colleagues in balancing the books, creating a 'can do' culture and addressing the young unitary authority's financial challenges. And, in a double celebration at last night's ceremony, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Pension Fund – which is managed by West Northamptonshire and administers the Local Government Pension Scheme, also won the award for Achievement in Financial Reporting and Accountability.



WNC's finance team, initially brought together from the old councils when WNC was created just over two years ago, was recognised for taking a pragmatic and prudent approach to tackling a range of financial challenges as the Council embarked upon a fresh start in the aftermath of the former county council's financial failings and local government reorganisation. This included working tirelessly to close down 10 sets of outstanding accounts from the previous authorities, unpicking and splitting budgets into the two new unitary authorities, then later working proactively to tackle WNC's finance pressures, bridging budget



shortfalls in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Award judges also praised Pension Fund colleagues. The CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) is the accredited and standard-setting body for organisations, accounting firms and other professional bodies who work with public funds.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Voter ID

The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to produce accepted photographic identification when voting in person at a polling station. This new requirement applied for the first time in England from the 4th May 2023 to coincide with local elections taking place in some areas. Your photo ID proves that you are who you say you are when voting, and prevents someone else from taking your vote.

Whilst there are currently no scheduled elections taking place this year in the West Northamptonshire electoral area, it is important that residents are aware of these new requirements as they will be in force for any future local elections, by elections or referendums that take place. From October 2023, the Voter ID requirement will be in place for UK Parliamentary General Elections. By elections and General Elections can occur at any time and with short notice.



Acceptable forms of Photo ID

You may already hold an accepted form of photo ID. You can use expired photo ID, as long as the image within the ID remains a good likeness to you. You only need to bring one of the documents to the polling station to vote in person, but it must be the original document.

You can use:

- Passport (UK, EU/EEA, Commonwealth issued)
- Driving licence (including provisional licences) (UK, EU/EEA issued)
- Blue Badge
- Certain older/disabled people concessionary travel cards
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric Immigration document
- Defence identity card
- Certain national identity cards

For more information and the full detailed list of acceptable voter ID, please visit the Electoral Commissions or call the helpline on 0800 328 0280.

Apply for the free Voter Authority Certificate



If you don't hold an accepted form of photo ID, or you think that your photo ID no longer resembles you, you can apply for a free Voter ID document known as the Voter Authority Certificate. You must be a registered voter to be issued with a certificate, and you can apply for the certificate at the same time as registering. To apply, you will be asked to provide your full legal name, address, date of birth and

National Insurance number. You will also need to provide a recent passport style photo of yourself. This can be taken on a digital camera or camera phone.

Visit the UK Governments website to complete an application form online and upload your photo directly to your application.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority...>

If you do not hold accepted photo ID, you can also apply for the free Voter Authority Certificate.

www.westnorthants.gov.uk/VoterID

WNC Launches Stage One Consultation for Community Governance Review

Residents, parishes, and businesses in West Northants are invited to actively participate in shaping future electoral and governance arrangements for parishes within the area.



West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) launched on Tuesday, 28 November the Stage One consultation for the Community Governance Review that will run until Wednesday, 31 January 2024. This consultation aims to seek views and proposals from residents, parishes, and stakeholders regarding existing parish boundaries, numbers of parish councillors, and potential changes to parishes.

Before starting the consultation, the Council sought requests from parishes that wanted to make certain changes to their parish arrangements. The outcome of this pre-review consultation, in addition to the recently concluded Local Government Boundary Review, has determined the identified parish areas for inclusion in this consultation. Proposals from the Stage One consultation will be refined through the Stage Two consultation launching in April 2024. New parish arrangements resulting from this review will take effect at the May 2025 local elections, providing long-term benefits for the community and ensuring an efficient and representative governance structure.

For more information, please visit the Community Governance Review webpage:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../community-governance...>

Residents can submit their feedback online or request a paper form by contacting cgrconsultation@westnorthants.gov.uk.

Illicit Vapes Seized from Northampton Stores

A joint operation between Northamptonshire Police and West Northamptonshire Trading Standards saw more than £9,000 worth of illicit vapes seized in Northampton last week. On Thursday, November 23, the teams visited two stores in

Wellingborough Road and Abington Square, seizing £4,650 worth of illicit vapes from one and £4,570 worth from the other.

Neighbourhood Policing Sergeant Aaron Dilley said: "Whilst licensed, regulated vapes can be a useful tool to help adults quit smoking, the illicit vape trade is exceptionally dangerous - often containing harmful, psychoactive substances that can have serious health issues. These vapes often make their way into the hands of young people who have no idea how dangerous they really are.

By taking these items off our streets, we are not only safeguarding people from consuming dangerous



substances, but also disrupting serious and organised crime, which is often associated with these types of seizures." We are committed to working collaboratively with Northamptonshire Police to prevent illegal vapes and cigarettes from being sold to young people and residents across the area illegally. Our trading standards team are working proactively with the police to tackle this head on, and I am pleased that together we've prevented £9,000 worth of illegal vapes being sold to our residents.

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

Health & Social Care Conference 29 November 2023

Rural Health & the Workforce Problem

The Rural Services Network (RSN) held its online Health and Social Care Conference on 29 November 2023. James Rourke, Professor Emeritus & former Dean of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland, spoke about 'Rural health and workforce problem'. He spoke about a number of paradoxes:

- Rural communities are wonderful places to live, work and explore on holiday but not to be seriously injured or sick.
- Rural people have greater healthcare needs, but they access fewer healthcare services.
- More centralization often leads to less benefit (for rural health care).
- The rural population has increased healthcare needs, but fewer health services are provided.
- Based on need, the rural health workforce should have at least as many GPs/primary care providers per age/sex/health status.
- Medical Doctors working in under-serviced areas are often paid less than those working in over-serviced urban areas.
- Despite the shortage of rural doctors and the evidence that medical students from rural areas are more likely to return to practice in rural communities, fewer rural students are admitted to medical schools than urban students per population.
- Despite the evidence that more medical school learning in rural areas leads to more graduates choosing rural practice as a career, most medical schools provide very little education in rural and regional centres.
- Despite the evidence that postgraduate rural GP vocational training streams produce more and better prepared rural GPs, rural GP training streams have not been sufficiently funded and developed.
- Despite the need and the talk, there doesn't seem to even be a plan to prioritize strengthening rural health systems, including ensuring an adequately skilled and compensated rural health workforce.

A Case Study from Cumbria

Then we had a Case Study from Cumbria by Dr Adrian Clements, Executive Medical Director, North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust. He provided the following overview of Cumbria:

- Cumbrian population of 500,000
- 5,155sq km with 56% of people living in rural communities (national average 18%)
- 25% of people are 65 or over (national average 18%)
- 17% of North Cumbria is rated as being amongst the most deprived in England
- Delivering care across multiple sites:
 - 2 Acute hospitals
 - 8 Community hospitals
- Poor road networks
- Integrated Trust

- Isolation from other providers

The Challenges faced are:

- Workforce gaps across all professions
- Only 58% of consultant establishment filled with substantive consultants
- Infrastructure to support the needs of doctors in training
- Significant reliance on:
 - Agency doctors
 - NHS Locums
 - Additional hours from colleagues
 - Insourcing
- Non-compliant rosters
- Post-covid backlog
- Previously unstable management structure

There are a number of Non-Consultant Initiatives such as:

- Introduction of a Composite Workforce model (149 in post)
- Increasing the use of Locally Employed Doctors (LEDs)
- Between 120-150 at any one time
- International nursing and AHP recruitment
- Improved on-boarding support for all staff groups
- Working with the University of Cumbria to drive Nursing and AHP workforce pathways
- Pears Cumbria Medical School opening 2025

There are a number of Consultant / SAS Workforce Initiatives such as:

- Creation of a USP for Cumbria
- Trust-wide restructure of clinical services
- Implementation of a new medical leadership structure
- Roadmap for consultant career path
- Trust introduction of a CESR development programme
- 3 consultants have now completed the CESR programme with NCIC support, and are on the Specialist Register
- 29 further colleagues are currently undertaking the CESR programme with NCIC support
- Career Development Programmes
- Aspiring Leader, CD Development course, new consultant course
- An improved study and CPD leave offer
- Developing an enhanced consultant job-plan offer

National priorities for the rural healthcare workforce

Lisa Hughes, Associate Head of Workforce Transformation, NHS England spoke about the opportunities of the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. She covered the context to the rural and coastal workforce challenge by highlighting the following:

- Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2021 highlighting serious health challenges = preventable ill health which will get worse as current populations age.
- Global health research – learning from workforce and digital approaches.
- Education and training interventions that impact on social determinants of health.

Lisa then provided further detail of the NHS England Workforce Plan, which has set out for the first time a comprehensive, government backed plan which assesses how many NHS staff we need now and in the future

- The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan is underpinned by modelling of workforce demand and supply

over a 15-year period and the actions that need to be taken to deliver a sustainable NHS workforce to meet the changing needs of patients over the next 5, 10 and 15 years.

- Our assessment of demand has taken account of various factors and has been influenced by our understanding of how patient need will change over time, as well as the impact of new technology and ways of working.
- The plan covers the workforce employed by the NHS and delivering NHS-funded services in all NHS trusts and primary care.
- The plan builds on Health Education England's Framework 15, the People Plan and Long-Term Plan, and incorporates a focus on staff experience and the People Promise. It reflects sector-wide engagement.
- This is a significant step forward in NHS planning, integrating service, financial and workforce planning for the first time over a longer-time frame.
- NHS England has committed to updating the plan every two years, to keep our planning assumptions up to date, and to continue to improve our modelling

The NHS Long Term Workforce plan will put the workforce on a sustainable footing for the long term and ensure the NHS continues to deliver high-quality patient care. Implementing the Plan will have a significant impact on the NHS workforce of the future and on patient care. The Plan will see the NHS permanent workforce grow from 1.4 million in 2021/22 to 2.2-2.3 million in 2036/37.

There will be a major increase in training across professions; our long-term assessment is that domestic education and training needs to expand by around 50 to 65% over the next 15 years to give us at least:

- 60,000 more doctors
- 170,000 more nurses
- 71,000 more allied health professionals (AHPs)

By better supporting people throughout their careers, boosting the flexibilities we offer our staff to work in ways that suit them and work for patients, and continuing to improve the culture and leadership across NHS will ensure 130,000 fewer staff leave the NHS over the next 15 years. Building on the People Plan, alongside delivery of the equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) improvement plan, will give staff the support they need to thrive, helping to make the NHS People Promise a reality for all.

We will build teams with broad and flexible skills, and deliver more services in the community, supported by new roles and the right technology. Education and training will be reformed to support education expansion and so that students have a more positive experience of learning, and are prepared for work in a modern NHS.

Harvesting Talent across Rural Lincolnshire

Claire Flavell, Strategic Lead, Lincolnshire Talent Academy spoke about "Harvesting talent across rural Lincolnshire".

Claire spoke about their Place Strategy of Delivering Hospital Hubs, Local Engagement, and Community Expansion. Creating a strong sense of community, by integrating schools, colleges, healthcare professionals, and local organisations.

- Creation of local "Hospital Hubs", aligned to the local community, amplifies the natural connection with their local healthcare institutions.
- Strategic positioning of our hospitals as central hubs for engagement, education and recruitment.



The alignment with local schools, colleges and other partners makes healthcare careers more tangible, local and accessible.

- Partnering schools, colleges and other community partnerships with a local hub, fosters a localised strategy and a deeper understanding of the local opportunities available.

They are Enhancing local student connections to retain local talent, by the removal of barriers to engagement through the delivery of a comprehensive one-stop-shop for service users and potential healthcare professionals.

- Remove system fragmentation through a streamlined engagement process, ensuring fair and equitable access to career support services at a local level.
- Prioritisation of engagement with school leavers aged 14 to 25, emphasising the pivotal role of our relationships with schools and colleges in shaping our future workforce.
- Delivery of local activities, tailored workshops aligned with each hospital hub's specialised roles and apprenticeship employment opportunities.

By harnessing local expertise for mutual benefit: they are supporting student transition and onward progression through a collaborative delivery model, fostering local engagement.

- Apprenticeship development pathways created for a wide range of occupations by Talent Academy.
- Strategic College Collaborative Group in place, supporting entry level apprenticeship recruitment and delivery.
- Allocation of each college to individual Hospital Hub, removing previous provider competition
- Agreement across all colleges to work in partnership, includes standardisation and alignment of delivery model, and sharing of resource where appropriate.



New ACRE CEO

Please find attached details of Northants ACRE new CEO, with effect from 2024.

Community Tree Planting Grants

The UK Community Tree Planting Programme aims to support community projects that will:



UK Community Tree Planting Grants

- Conserve, restore and protect indigenous trees and woodlands, forests, habitats and associated biodiversity.
- Support community engagement in tree planting to promote reforestation and to increase

- awareness of the importance of trees and forests to environmental and human well-being.
- Encourage social cohesion and inclusion.

To be eligible, your organisation must be community-based e.g. a school, community group or non-governmental organisation. There are two tiers of funding available:

- Small scale: A maximum of £1,000 is available for projects of up to 1 year in duration. This could be small community woodland, orchards, hedging projects, etc.
- Larger scale: Projects to range from 1000 – 10,000 trees, with a maximum price equivalent to £1.50/tree (inclusive of tree protection). Most suitable for community woodland or hedging projects.

Applications can be submitted from June onwards with a final deadline of 15 December 2023.

UK Community Tree Planting Grant — International Tree Foundation

<https://www.internationaltreefoundation.org/uk-grants>

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

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.

Second Phase of Brownfield Land Release Fund

DLHUC has launched the second phase of its Brownfield Release Fund 2, equating to £60m of the £180m fund.



More than 6,000 homes will be built on brownfield sites across the UK, with funding awarded directly to councils so they can release the land.

In the East Midlands:

- Derby City Council—£570, 686
- Leicester City Council—£713,435
- West Northamptonshire—£750,000

Amber Valley received £1,033,901 in phase one of the fund last November

Levelling Up Bill Receives Royal Assent

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill has received Royal Assent and is now law, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has announced. In a statement released 26 October 2023, DLUHC said that the new laws would: “speed up the planning system, hold developers to account, cut bureaucracy, and encourage more councils to put in place plans to enable the building of new homes.”

The measures in the Act will change the planning system in many ways, including:

- Local planning authorities would be required to have a design code in place covering their entire area
- the Act will replace the current section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regimes with a new Infrastructure Levy.
- the scope of local plans will be limited to ‘locally specific’ matters, with ‘issues that apply in most areas’ to be covered by a new suite of National Development Management Policies
- The ‘duty to co-operate’ will be dropped, and time limits prescribed for different stages of plan preparation
- Planning authorities will have the power to instigate auctions to take leases on vacant high street properties
- Authorities will no longer have to maintain a five-year supply of housing land if they had an adopted local plan



More information about the bill can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/.../new-laws-to-speed-up-planning...>

National Changes to Planning Fees

Following Government discussions, planning fees nationally are set to increase on 6 December 2023. The Government have said they expect the fee increase to result in increased investment in the planning service hopefully leading to improved services across the country.



Town and County Planning Regulations were approved and made on 8 November bringing in regulations to do the following:

- 1) Increase planning application fees by 35% for applications for major development and 25% for all other applications.
- 2) Introduce an annual indexation of planning applications fees, capped at 10%, from 1 April 2025.
- 3) Remove the fee exemption for repeat applications (the ‘free-go’).

- 4) Reduce the Planning Guarantee for non-major planning applications from 26 to 16 weeks.
- 5) Introduce a new prior approval fee of £120 for applications for prior approval for development by the Crown on closed defence sites.

Applicants will still be able to benefit from a free-go if their applications have been refused or withdrawn in the preceding months, as long as all other conditions for the free-go are met.

WNC planning officers are working with all key partners and customers to notify them of the national changes to fees and charges. WNC will be making arrangements to update our website to reflect these changes to planning fees, and it will be completed by the go live date for the new fees on the 6 December.

HOUSING

New Housing Allocations Scheme

Care leavers and veterans are among those to benefit from new housing allocations scheme in West Northants. Housing allocations

People with real housing needs including members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families, care leavers, and victims of domestic abuse will benefit from a new housing allocations scheme approved by Councillors at West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) Cabinet meeting on 14 November 2023.

The scheme, which will be adopted from April 2024, has been developed following a 10-week public consultation and will provide an aligned and harmonised approach to ensuring that the area's valuable housing resources go to those most in need.



The scheme will operate through a choice-based lettings system which enables residents to make choices about which properties they are interested in, making the provision of social housing fairer, clearer and more consistent across the West Northamptonshire area.

The proposed Scheme sets out who is eligible to apply for social rented housing, how the Council will prioritise applicants, and the basis on which accommodation will be allocated. It will replace the existing schemes operating in Daventry, South Northants, and Northampton and recognise people with a local connection to West Northants by residence, employment or close family in the eligibility criteria.

There are currently over 4,000 applicants registered to and active on the existing three housing allocations scheme across West Northamptonshire. The new scheme has the potential to have a positive impact on existing and future applicants' prospects of securing accommodation by providing a greater number of available properties across West Northamptonshire.

Existing housing register applicants will be contacted in the coming weeks with further information on what will be required to register for the new scheme.

The Housing Allocations Scheme Cabinet Report can be viewed on the Council website.

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

SWEP Activated

West Northamptonshire Council is activated its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) from Wednesday 29 November until at least 9am on Monday 4 December in response to the Met Office's forecast of low overnight temperatures.

All known rough sleepers are being made aware, but if you

A blue banner with white and yellow text and graphics. The text reads: "SWEP Severe Weather Emergency Protocol". Below this, it says "Emergency accommodation available for rough sleepers in the West Northants area." and "Call 0300 126 7000 for more information." There is a yellow warning triangle with a black exclamation mark on the right side. At the bottom right is the West Northamptonshire Council logo.

know someone sleeping rough who needs access to accommodation, please advise them to contact the Outreach Team between 8pm – 11pm on 07775036773. After 11pm please contact the Out of Hours Service on 0300 126 7000.

ENVIRONMENT

Streetlights Upgrade to Latest LED Technology

Streetlights across Northamptonshire to be upgraded to the latest LED technology. Works to upgrade over 44,000 streetlights to the latest energy-efficient technology will start across Northamptonshire next week. Both North and West Northamptonshire Councils have declared a climate emergency and the authorities are taking steps to reduce energy consumption. Over the next two-and-a-half years, Balfour Beatty Living Places will upgrade the current lights to LED, a move that will reduce CO2 emissions in the county by an estimated 1,091 tonnes of CO2 a year.



The new LED lights will also bring a range of additional benefits, including white light, which is linked to improving community safety, a reduction in light pollution and greater energy efficiency.

The lights will be replaced as part of regular maintenance rounds carried out by Balfour Beatty, making the process more efficient.

Balfour Beatty took over responsibility for streetlights in Northamptonshire in 2011 under a 25-year PFI deal with the former county council. The streetlighting stock was initially replaced by standard lamps as LED was an

emerging technology with relatively high unit prices and unproven life span.

West Northants Journey Towards Net Zero



WNC recently launched the 'Towards a Net Zero West Northamptonshire' (TANZ West Northants) project in partnership with the University of Northampton. As part of that project they are running expert led webinars for local businesses, with a Q&A session being held last month. The recording of this webinar is available online.

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

The next event is happening on the 5th of December from 1pm to 2pm, this webinar is titled; 'Transformative Strategies in Waste Management', and will be the first of a series of webinars within the TANZ project focused specifically on waste management. To book a place on this webinar please visit the TANZ West Northants website.

<https://slipah.co.uk/event/transformative-strategies-in-waste-management-a-tanz-webinar-in-partnership-with-ciwm/>



West Northamptonshire Urged to Recycle Electricals

West Northamptonshire Council has launched a new campaign to encourage residents across the area to recycle their electricals. HypnoCat, the Recycle Your Electricals pink fluffy cat, will be inviting residents to recycle their electricals and he will appear in social media advertising across Northampton.

The project will encourage residents to recycle small domestic electrical items, including toasters, kettles, sandwich makers, hairdryers, irons and other items alongside their household collections. Small items of waste electrical equipment, which will fit inside a carrier bag should be placed on top of your domestic waste bin as follows:

- Daventry area residents: on top of the black general waste bin,
- Northampton area residents: on top of the blue-lidded recycling bin
- South Northamptonshire area residents: on top of either bin

Residents can recycle their single-use vapes at Household Waste Recycling Centres or return them to where they purchased them from. Please do not place them with your household waste collection.

This is one of over 40 UK projects funded by Material Focus, the not for profit organisation leading the Recycle Your Electricals campaign who have provided £20,000 worth of funding. This will lead the way in West Northamptonshire, joining other projects around the country in making it easier for 10 million UK residents to recycle their electricals. The aim of the nationwide Electricals Recycling Fund is to significantly reduce e-waste and its environmental impact by making it easier for consumers to recycle their electricals. The projects that have been funded by Material Focus include a variety of recycling methods, from kerbside collections to more drop-off points in schools, community centres, and bring banks. Overall there will be over 400 new collection points plus kerbside collections for 5.5 million UK residents.

Recycle Your Electricals research has shown that 80% of consumers believe recycling is a good thing, and many of us already recycle things like paper and plastic. Research has also shown that most of us have unwanted electricals we want to get rid of, even if it's just a drawer of cables - millions of electrical items are hoarded in UK homes. And yet 39% of people bin electricals rather than recycle them because they think it's simply too hard to recycle. The aim of these projects is to overcome these issues by making it easier to recycle electricals.

More information about recycling electrical items and batteries can be found at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/weeerecycle and www.recycleyourelectricals.org.uk



Christmas Waste & Recycling Arrangements

With Christmas just around the corner, our Council is set to send out communications about this year's waste and recycling arrangements. Here are the arrangements for the coming Christmas and New Year period:

Collection Day changes

Due to the public holidays, some properties will have a change in the day of their collections over the festive period. Parish areas in the Towcester and Brackley (former South Northants) area:

Collections due on Tuesday 26 December, will instead take place on Saturday 23 December. All other collections will take place on their normal days.

Garden waste

Those subscribed to the service are advised there will be a short break in collections from 23 December until 5 January.



Real tree collections

Crews will collect real Christmas trees between 8 and 19 January. Residents do not need a garden waste subscription to take advantage of this. People are asked to ensure trees over 6ft tall are cut in half so they fit in the lorries safely. They can also be taken to the nearest Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC).

Food waste

Food waste bins will continue to be collected on their usual weekly schedule. A range of food items can be recycled using the service, including leftover raw and cooked foods, including veg peelings, egg shells, out-of-date food, plate scrapings, solid fats, meat and fish bones. People should not put any liquids in the caddy.

Household Waste Recycling Centres

These are open as usual throughout the festive period except for Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day, when they will be closed. Centres will also close early on Christmas Eve, at 2pm.

Additional recycling

Anyone with more recycling than their bin can handle, can put it in clear or white plastic bags, or in cardboard boxes, and present it alongside your recycling bins or boxes. It can also be taken to the nearest HWRC.

Keeping on top of collections

Downloadable bin calendars with information about arrangements for the different areas across West Northants will be available online by the end of November. We are also urging people to download the free West Northamptonshire Council app from the Apple or Google Play stores. The app allows people to check their collection day, and set up reminders so they never forget to put their bins out.

More information is available at westnorthants.gov.uk/christmas

Coronation Oak Planted for National Tree Week

The Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire marked National Tree Week 2023, 27 November - 4 December 2023 by planting a Coronation oak tree. A commemorative oak tree was planted in Abington Park on Thursday, 30 November by James Saunders Watson Esq, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire to commemorate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III on 6 May 2023.



The Friends of Abington Park, the council's grounds maintenance contractors Idverde and the park's rangers arranged the planting close to the park's cafe and were joined by the Leader of the West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), Councillor Jonathan Nunn, the WNC Chairman, Councillor John Shephard and Councillor Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste and dignitaries from across West Northamptonshire.

James Saunders Watson Esq, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, said: "It is an immense honour for the Northamptonshire Lieutenancy to plant this tree at Abington Park creating a sustainable, living legacy marking His Majesty's Coronation. This oak tree is the perfect addition to the park, and I hope visitors will enjoy the stunning blossom every spring for years to come."

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Local Area Partnership Rural East

The last meeting of the Rural East LAP meeting took place 7 November 2023 at 3.00pm. The date of the next meeting is 12 December at 1pm.

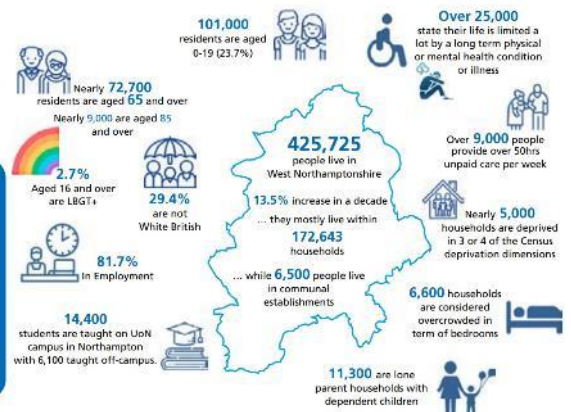


LAP Website Prototype

WNC Digital Team are building individual websites for each of the LAPs using a wire frame. The role of the LAP is to make sure that we have the right content. The front of the webpage will be a welcome and

Our current position in West Northamptonshire

The diagram (right) explains the population of West Northamptonshire and highlights a number of key statistics, including 6,600 households are considered overcrowded in terms of bedrooms, 11,300 are lone parents with dependent children, 81.7% are in employment and nearly 101,000 of our residents are aged between 0 to 19.



Key health challenges that we face

- Our key health challenges are informed by our joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) and supporting themed fact sheets. (Link to JSNA summary and fact sheet)
- Social determinants and poverty set a pattern of poor lifestyle behaviours that compound poor health.
- We must take a preventative approach to poor health and tackle the social determinants whilst supporting people to have positive behaviours.

Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy

information about the area. There will then be information on meeting the LAP team, all the organisations that are involved in the LAP, along with information of the LAP. Information will also be included on how we're working together, what's happening in your area - including news and case studies about how we're working together, how we're able to improve things for people. This is very much asset based and about the strengths of the community and trying to build on that kind of good news.

There will be a dropdown menu to pick the closest area to you, where you will be re-directed to the relevant LAP webpage. The priority section will include information on the Family Hub and Welcoming Spaces pilot site. Information could also be included on mobility, transport, access to services. It is expected the website will go live at the end of November.

More developments are needed on the Get in touch function. It will need to be some sort of generic e-mail address monitored by the LAP administrators to review emails and signpost where appropriate. We need to have photos of the local area. If anybody has flyers or photos that will be helpful to include. We will need to be careful to not overload the website with all the information we have access to. The proposition is to have a page with a link to different websites like the WNC Cost of Living page or the Wellbeing Launchpad. Information and photos on the website will constantly be updated.

We will consider including individual interactive maps, bigger than just the LAP area, because people travel and do not always work and live in the same place, including asset mapping. Making the website into a local repository of information that people can discover groups/associations. End user groups are being created to provide feedback on the development of the websites. WNC are exploring including welcome packs for new residents, with their council tax letter.

Also, we now have business intelligence support, each of our project leads has a dedicated Business intelligence partner. Discussions with Parish Councils in the area have highlighted the following they consider to be the priorities for their areas:

- Transport – access to services
- Men’s health
- Children and Young People – youth engagement
- Older people
- Young parents
- Health and Wellbeing
- Funding

Engagement and communication with Parish Councils will be important for development of the LAPs.

The Welcoming Spaces programme continues to provide residents with a welcoming community space with the offering of a warm, trusted setting for people to socialise and access services tackling social isolation and cost of living challenges. We are inviting all spaces to re-register so we can update the online directory. There is also the opportunity for Spaces to become part of the Chatty Café Scheme to help reduce social isolation and loneliness. We are also working in partnership with the Action for Happiness movement and have the opportunity to receive toolkits/promotional flyers and training.

Community Law Service

Community Law Service held free drop-in advice sessions at our Welcoming Space Towcester Library from Thursday 26 October from 10am – midday.

Community Law Service (Northampton and County) is a registered charity and an independent provider of specialist social welfare advice. Their aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents through the provision of specialist advice in the areas of Welfare Benefits, Debt, Housing, Energy Advice, and Immigration.

Services range from one-off specialist advice to a comprehensive specialist casework service and representation at court or tribunal. They offer a mixed model of service delivery aimed at promoting equality of access to their services.

These drop in sessions will be piloted for the next 6 months. The next session is on 23 November 2023.



Free drop-in advice service
For specialist debt advice and ongoing casework

- ✓ Free
- ✓ Independent
- ✓ Confidential

4th Thursday of the month
at Towcester Library
The Forum, Moat Lane, NN12 6AD
from 10am - midday

2023: 26 October 23 November
2024: 25 January 22 February 28 March

Find out more
communitylawservice.org.uk
01604 621038

Supported by
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Denton Surgery Patients' Group won first prize in the Corkill Awards

The Denton Surgery Patients' Group won first prize in the Corkill Awards - for their Volunteer Transport Scheme and the Wellbeing Coffee Morning. Well done to all those involved!



Health & Wellbeing Services to the Homeless Community

The Northampton Hope Centre, in collaboration with the Public Health Team at WNC, organised a successful Health and Wellbeing Day on the 20 October, benefiting over 45 individuals within the local community. This initiative aimed to provide crucial public health services to the homeless community, with a focus on preventive healthcare measures. The Public Health Team offered a range of essential services, including COVID and flu vaccinations, NHS health checks, sexual health consultations, drug and alcohol support, HEP-C testing, stop smoking services, smear testing, and access to optical care.

Public health services play a pivotal role in enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and communities by preventing diseases and injuries, detecting health issues early and responding promptly to avoid the development of severe illnesses. Unfortunately, individuals experiencing acute hardship and homelessness face unique challenges in accessing healthcare, including barriers related to transportation and lack of structure to their lives. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to health inequalities and have disproportionately poor health outcomes. Northampton Hope Centre is a charitable organisation dedicated to providing vital support to individuals experiencing hardship and homelessness in Northamptonshire. We are delighted to continue our collaborative working with the Hope Centre and our other health system partners. People who are homeless experience many barriers, particularly with accessing healthcare services. By coordinating a wide range of health services at this event, we hope to have made a positive difference to the health of many of Hope's service users. This initiative is particularly significant at this time of year, as we go into the winter months when there is an increased risk of illness and infection amongst this vulnerable population.



Spread Comfort & Joy in West Northants this Christmas

People in West Northamptonshire are being asked to help spread comfort and joy this Christmas by donating items to those in need. Organised by the Community Safety team at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), the Comfort and Joy campaign aims to provide gifts, treats and essential items such as food



and toiletries to help vulnerable families and those staying in refuges.

Many women, men and children who flee domestic abuse do so quickly and may have no personal items with them at all. The campaign is asking for donations to bring comfort and joy to those vulnerable families this Christmas. Donations can be made at West Northamptonshire Council's offices at Lodge Road in Daventry, The Forum in Towcester, and the receptions at The Guildhall and One Angel

Square, as well as at Daventry Police Station.

The deadline to donate items is 12pm on Friday, 16 December. All of the items donated will go directly to local people living in refuges and other vulnerable families in West Northamptonshire this Christmas. These donations will be distributed between Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS), Eve and Home Start. All donations must be brand new and unwrapped.

Suggested donations include:

Comfort donations

- soap
- body wash
- shampoo and conditioner (for adults, children and babies)
- deodorant
- sanitary products
- nappies and wipes
- toothbrush/paste for adults and children

Joy donations

- perfume/aftershave
- hats and scarves
- make-up
- toys
- books
- arts and crafts

Food donations

- mince pies
- tea and coffee
- chocolates
- cereal
- dry pasta
- baby food

The Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service 24 hour helpline: 0300 0120 154.

Eve – 01604 230311

Voice – 0300 303 1965

In an emergency, please call the police on 999.

RIBU One Year On

The Turn Furlong, Recovering Independence Bed Unit (RIBU) team recently celebrated their first birthday having had a busy yet incredibly successful year working as one team with NHFT providing clinical staff and West Northamptonshire Council providing social care staff at the Northampton site.



The residential rehabilitation centre was formally a specialist care centre and delivers short-term care for people who are not quite ready to return home after a hospital stay.

Combining WNC social care and NHFT clinical teams as a joint workforce was a new concept but has been fully embraced by both teams and the 51-bed unit is

continuously occupied with patients, with 336 admissions between Nov 22 to Oct 23 and 328 discharges. Turn Furlong's joint leadership team had a vision to build a great overall team culture. This has been achieved with the team now working incredibly well together and even hosting social events including a summer fete and having meals out together. Because of the unique staffing model, an MDT meeting takes place once a week, which is a holistic discussion with health and social care teams all in one room. This way of working is incredibly effective and allows individual care plans to be looked at and reviewed. In addition, the changes has enabled a supported discharge of people back into the community with Reablement WEST, where they benefit from further rehabilitation from the team and therapists in their own familiar surroundings.

An important team development activity that has taken place over the past year is staff training. Training that teams are taking part in has included wound and pressure care, stoma care, mental capacity act (MCA), delirium, and falls training. The team of reablement support workers from WNC have been upskilled as well.

All the training that the team has undertaken has meant that as well as the day-to-day efficiencies and camaraderie, when there have been emergencies in the unit – the team has handled them well through working and learning from each other. Friendships have formed and there is a sense that you can ask anyone anything.

Recent implementations and innovations

- The team has been working with local GPs to look at Venous thrombosis assessment and the team is looking at what they can do in terms of VTE assessment and protocol to prevent this from happening.
- What patients eat and drink is also being continuously reviewed and working with the kitchen to develop menus with more protein to encourage tissue healing in them is one such innovation. There has also been a hydration drive – with hydration stations set up to keep this at the top of the staff members' minds.
- New mattresses have been introduced to help with pressure ulcers and wooden floors have replaced carpets in patients' bedrooms which are much more efficient to clean.
- There is also lots of new equipment on site such as, floor beds and falls alarms, lifting equipment.
- Both teams have worked together to identify what is needed and to train each other on how to use it when it arrives.
- Running a 51-bedroom facility is busy, and so volunteers from NHFT have been introduced to help with capacity and further help patients with dementia by reminiscing about their lives and walking in the garden. These activities make a huge difference to patients and using volunteers helps the team a great deal.
- Champions have been introduced in specific areas such as end of life and Infection Prevention Control - with staff taking on an extra responsibility by volunteering to do this.
- There has also been engagement and fundraising with the local Northamptonshire Health Charity <https://northamptonshirehealthcharity.co.uk/> and plans to connect with local schools.

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Are you thinking about Holiday Dates this Christmas 2023?

According to West Northamptonshire Council, these are the Christmas dates for 2023:

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

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>

New SEND Facebook

Local Offer West Northants have launched their new Facebook page, where you can find news and activities for families of 0-25s with special education needs or disabilities (SEND) in the area.

<https://www.facebook.com/LocalOfferWN>



WNC Signs Care Leaver Covenant

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) celebrates National Care Leavers Week by signing the Care Leaver Covenant to formally pledge its commitment to support those who leave care to live independently.

The Council recognises the unique challenges that care leavers face and is committed to providing them with the help they need to thrive. WNC's commitment to the Care Leaver Covenant goes beyond the standard support provided by local authorities, focusing on enhancing opportunities and improving outcomes for care-experienced individuals.

Signing the Covenant is WNC's pledge to support those leaving care to thrive by offering council tax and housing support to training and employment opportunities, work experience, partnerships with local businesses and much more.

The Council is also actively developing a range of work experience, placement, and shadowing opportunities for care-experienced individuals, complete with general and tailored support plans to



help them achieve their educational, employment, and training goals.

Vera Burford, care experienced young person, said: "Leaving care and going out into the world on your own can be scary and overwhelming, but knowing that there are organisations that can provide extra support can really help. The Council have provided me a lot of support in my career, and I don't think I would be where I am now without that. I hope that by signing the Covenant other care experienced people can get that help too, and other organisations will be encouraged to join the covenant as well."

WNC's commitment to supporting care leavers also extends to seeking social value through procurement opportunities and fostering partnerships with local businesses to create meaningful opportunities for care leavers.

Residents and businesses can find out more about the Care Leaver Covenant here.

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

Autism Central

Support is available for families and carers of autistic children and adults thanks to a new, free education programme being launched across England. Autism Central aims to build knowledge and understanding of autism and empower families and carers to advocate for autistic people they support to get the right understanding and adjustments in place across the services they use.



Commissioned by NHS England and informed by or co-produced with autistic people, parents and carers, the programme offers one-to-one and group sessions complemented by high-quality online learning and information. Families and carers can also talk to people with similar experiences by joining workshops, drop-in sessions, coffee mornings or virtual meetups.

Each session is delivered by parents and carers of autistic people who have been trained to share their knowledge and experience with others, as peer educators.

Autism Central is the latest example of the NHS's commitment to improving health outcomes for autistic people - including improving assessments and rolling out the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism for NHS staff, and enhanced autism training for psychiatrists.

The NHS is focused on investing in community services so people can receive support close to home, with the number of people with a learning disability or autistic people in mental health hospitals falling by around a third since 2015, despite the number of people diagnosed with autism increasing significantly.

The nine other organisations involved in Autism Central are Ambitious about Autism, Autism Alliance, Autism Education Trust, Autistica, British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD), Contact, Great Minds Together, National Autistic Society and the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.

Information, guidance and events are all available on the Autism Central website. Families and carers can explore topics such as diagnosis, employment and mental health, and find resources from partners and other trusted sources.

The programme is looking for more parents and carers of an autistic person to become peer educators and help others.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

Monthly Drop-in Sessions to help find a new job

Residents in West Northamptonshire are invited to attend a range of free monthly drop-in sessions to access the help they need to identify sustainable, local opportunities and benefit from dedicated support to land their dream job.

The drop-in sessions will be led by West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) Economic Growth and Inward Investment team alongside employment support partners including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus and many more.

The sessions aim to help as many people as possible become employment ready and find the best job for them, with support including job searching, updating CV's and cover letters, any training needs along with mental health support, volunteering, money advice and more.



The service is supported by many local businesses including Screwfix, Paisley Pear, Sainsbury's and Whittlebury Hall.

The sessions will take place every 2nd Wednesday of the month between 1pm and 3pm in the Watermeadows Room at Towcester Library and will run until 14 February 2024. Dates of the sessions are:

- 13 December
- 10 January 2024
- 14 February 2024

More information about the employment support service can be found on the WNC website.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/free-employment-support>

Second Phase 24 Guildhall Road

Chartered Building Contractor Steele and Bray Ltd, based in Northampton, have been appointed by West Northamptonshire Council to carry out the second phase of improvement works to 24 Guildhall Road. NN Contemporary Art and West Northamptonshire Council are working in partnership to transform this historic building into a major new cultural centre in the heart of Northampton's cultural quarter.



The £4.7 million project will see the five-storey heritage building transformed into a vibrant creative community, with a contemporary art gallery, affordable creative studios and public space. Through extensive regeneration, the building is being brought to life to provide a gallery and artists spaces alongside cultural-commercial opportunities. The second phase of works started on site in October and consist of installing new heating and electrical systems, improvements to the expansive upper floors and detailed refurbishment to NNCA's space.

To find out more about the regeneration of Northampton Town Centre visit www.wearenorthampton.com

Derelict Land Set to be Car Park

An area of derelict land in Northampton town centre is set to be turned into a much-needed new car park after a major clear-up operation. The area of land is near Greyfriars in Northampton sometimes referred to as 'Rat Island' which is located close to the former Greyfriars bus station. The site has been inhabited by rough sleepers and drug users for some time, and as a result anti-social behaviour and other matters have required regular Police attendance.

The area has also become infested with rats due to litter and the general untidiness of the site. East Island is part-owned by our Council, with the other part recently being acquired by Zone Developments; the company overseeing transformation of the former Debenham's site. In recent months WNC has been working closely with Zone Developments and the area has now been cleared and fenced off with the prospect of becoming a CCTV controlled car park within the next few months. Environmental Health teams have conducted a pest control operation to resolve the rat infestation and WNC Outreach Teams have been working closely with the homeless occupants to provide support and advice around alternative accommodation. All rubbish has been cleared and stone is being laid down. A planning application has been submitted and we are hoping the carpark will be up and running by Christmas to provide additional parking for Christmas shoppers.



Innovation Programme to Support Entrepreneurs

Funded by WNC utilising £40,000 of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), Vulcan Creatives is a free, six-month programme run by the team at the Vulcan Works flexible workspace in Northampton. It aims to support ambitious individuals with their business ideas by developing their concepts further, creating a business plan and teaching the skills needed to succeed in the world of entrepreneurship.



The programme will be led by Vulcan Works' <https://vulcanworks.co.uk/vulcan-creatives/> on-site business growth manager, Darren Smith, an entrepreneur who has started and sold businesses and worked in mentoring roles over the last 20 years. It aims to support a minimum of 40 entrepreneurs in becoming enterprise-ready.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../new-programme...>

Mysteries Unearthed at Northampton Market Square

In September this year, fragments of medieval shoes, textiles, pot fragments, dating back to the 13th-14th century, animal bones and wood, and the remnants of several structures were uncovered underneath Northampton Market Square. Since these discoveries the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) has been monitoring the historical finds that have been taking place on the site of the Market Square regeneration.



On 26 October MOLA made an incredible and exciting discovery whilst proceeding with the groundworks for the surface renovation program of the Market Square. During the surface works an underground cellar was exposed at the site and with archaeological supervision of the excavation of a shallow trench for electrical cables along the western perimeter of the site, the structure was

revealed. The unearthed cellar is part of the wider cellar network.

The row of buildings between the Market Square and the Drapery, including the cellar, was constructed after the Great Fire of Northampton in 1675, possibly during the 18th and 19th centuries. During the excavation, several post-medieval sherds also were found, providing valuable insights for dating purposes. While opening the trench, one of the blocks was damaged, allowing a rare peek inside this piece of Northampton's history. To much surprise, the entire cellar was filled with concrete almost up to its ceiling. The only visible feature beyond the concrete layer was a small fragment of a possible door frame leading into the Market Square building.

Fragments of the textile material, sometimes used to stop spillage during the concreting process, were also found on the opposite wall, suggesting that some relatively recent work on this cellar was undertaken, possibly dating back to the 1970s when parts of Market Square were redeveloped.

The discovery of this hidden cellar not only adds a new chapter to Northampton's history but also underscores the intricate layers of the Town's past waiting to be uncovered.

The Market Square regeneration is just one part of the Northampton Forward Town Investment Plan to transform Northampton town centre. The works on Market Square will create an accessible space for everybody including families, tourists, young professionals, and the elderly. The newly rejuvenated area, opening in the summer of 2024, will offer new permanent market stalls for traders, high-quality seating and planting, a flexible event space, and a new water feature to activate the area. To find out more about this exciting regeneration project and other transformation projects happening across Northampton visit the We are Northampton Website. <https://www.wearenorthampton.com/>

Ice-Skating & Curling this Christmas

People across Northampton are invited down to Northampton's Market at Commercial Street to join in free ice-skating and curling this Christmas. Taking place on 9 and 10 December and 16 to 22 December between 10am and 4pm, people are advised to put on their skates and join in the festive fun.

West Northamptonshire Council is working with market traders to deliver a free events programme to offer something for everyone. Following the summer of fun throughout the summer holidays, we're pleased to extend this throughout December.

To help support with access to the market's temporary location at Commercial Street, WNC is working with Bounds to offer free journeys for the bus station to the market. Simply press a button at either location and a free taxi will be called to take you to or from the market.

To find out more about the local produce, gifts and services on offer at the Northampton Market, visit Love Northampton Market on Facebook.



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.

£959 Million to Improve Roads in the East Midlands

The Department for Transport has announced that the East Midlands will receive £959m to improve roads in the region. Across the UK, £8.3 billion of redirected HS2 funding, enough to resurface over 5,000 miles of road, has been allocated.

In the region:

- Derby—£20,545,000
- Derbyshire—£174,114,000
- Leicester—£24,241,000
- Leicestershire—£131,939,000
- Lincolnshire— £287,750,000
- North Northamptonshire—£62,450,000
- Nottingham—£20,554,000
- Nottinghamshire—£138,443,000
- Rutland—£17,696,000
- West Northamptonshire—£79,281,000



Across England, local highway authorities will receive £150 million this financial year, followed by a further £150 million for 2024/2025, with the rest of the funding allocated through to 2034.

Funding for Expanding EV Charge Point Infrastructure

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has applied for and secured over £400,000 worth of funding from the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capability Fund. An initial £73,000 worth of funding was secured earlier in the year, and the Council have now successfully received an additional £335,000 from the fund. The LEVI Fund is designed to support local authorities to develop their electric vehicle charge-point infrastructure. It has two main objectives, to transform the deployment of on-street EV charging infrastructure across England and to accelerate the commercialisation



of the local EV charging sector. As part of the next steps WNC will go to the market to select the best partner to deliver EV charging across West Northamptonshire, using private investment alongside the Government grant to extend the range of opportunities across our towns and villages. Wider access to on-street EV charge-points will make owning an electric vehicle more convenient and increase access more readily available across West Northamptonshire. Increased use of EVs across West Northamptonshire will help the Council reach the broader residents and business 2045 net-zero carbon emissions target. The capability funding, which is what we have received so

far, will enable the Council to build a team that will be responsible for developing an EV charging infrastructure strategy. Once we have a strategy in place for the planning and delivery of the charge-point infrastructure we will be able to apply for a £2.8m capital funding from the LEVI fund to implement the strategy.

North & West Northamptonshire Councils to Receive over £2 Million Funding

The government has confirmed that more than £27 million redirected from HS2 funding will be available to bus services across the East Midlands over the next financial year- meaning both North and West



Northamptonshire Councils will receive over £2 million. This is in addition to the bus fare cap of £2 remaining until at least December 2024. This initial funding of just under £28 million is the first chunk of an eventual £1 billion worth of new funding for bus services across the Midlands and the North-part of the Network North Plan. It will be down to local authorities to allocate their slice of the budget but the total £150 million to be provided across next year would be enough to support up to 25 million miles of new bus services.

As for the fare cap, that was supposed to rise to £2.50 but instead the “Get Around For £2” scheme will be extended to keep buses affordable and encourage the use of them. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak believes that the government’s support package and keeping bus fares down will “ensure the country’s favourite means of transport is more affordable for millions of people.

Local authorities may use the additional funding to reintroduce evening services to support the night-time economy, increase service frequency meaning less waiting time for passengers, introduce new routes to ensure areas previously unconnected are now connected or introduce a Demand Responsive Transport service to improve connectivity in rural areas.

A Department of Transport report suggests that over half of the respondents are encouraged to use buses again on the fairer fares which have cut prices down by as much as 11 per cent in some rural areas.

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Specialist Team to tackle Domestic Abuse

A specialist team set up to tackle the earliest signs of domestic abuse has helped more than 1,400 families in the first nine months of this year. Demand for their support is such that the number of domestic abuse specialists in the team has been increased from two to eight, to ensure they can continue to help all the families referred to them. Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has invested in a specialist team to focus on prevention and intervene early with young people to reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on their life chances.



Two dedicated workers were then added to this team to

focus on domestic abuse and family conflict, so support can now be offered to families from the very first time they come to police attention, and further incidents can be prevented. When a police officer attends a call to domestic abuse, details of the incident are given to a multi-agency team that reviews every incident, every day to ensure that the highest risk are tackled quickly. This approach deals effectively with the more complex cases, but previously, there was no ability to tackle incidents that appeared to be lower risk, to prevent them escalating. The two specialist Domestic Abuse Practitioners were added to the ACE Team in 2020 with the brief to engage with everyone who has been visited by police following a report of a domestic or family conflict incident that was lower risk.

The Domestic Abuse Practitioners follow up each incident and contact every family that has received a police response to an incident. They try to understand what has sparked an incident, offering help and advice and signposting to other sources of support.

Support can be given to both the victim and the perpetrator, as well as any children who might have seen domestic abuse.

Sometimes the Team find earlier incidents of abuse that had gone unreported and will ensure that the proper action is quickly taken to safeguard the family involved.

Supporting Young People at Risk of Going Missing

An innovative approach to supporting young people who are at risk of going missing was launched in Northamptonshire on 1 November. Young people who go missing are vulnerable and at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. The aim of the pilot scheme was to see if by acting quickly and focussing on the young person involved, the factors causing them to run away could be understood and addressed, without support put in place to make it far less likely that they would go missing again. The scheme builds on a pilot phase that ran for three months earlier this year, when a specialist Youth Worker from the Early Intervention Team that is based in the Office of Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, visited every young person who had been missing three times or



less, soon after their return. Fifty-two young people in Northamptonshire went missing during the pilot phase, and Youth Workers visited each of them as soon as possible after their return – following up in more detail the statutory visit that all young people who have been missing receive from their local authority. As a result, not one of the 52 young people involved – all aged around 14 or 15 – has gone missing again. In addition, 75 per cent of the young people has taken up the offer of further support. Parents told the project team that they felt supported to deal with any issues the young person had revealed and knew how to contact a named worker if they needed further help. A specialist Youth Worker will now be based in the Force's Missing Persons Investigation Unit and the approach taken during the pilot scheme will now be standard in every case to prevent a young person from going missing.

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£94K Awarded to Mitigate Youth Violence and Knife Crime

Grants of up to £10,000 have been awarded to Voluntary and Community Sector organisations for projects that aim to alleviate youth violence and knife crime in local communities by promoting community safety, deterring potential offenders, and providing support and resources to at-risk individuals or groups to prevent their involvement in violence and crime.

Projects which have been awarded funding include Northampton Town FC Community Trust's Anti-Crime Ambassador project which will deliver sessions across Primary and Secondary Schools on anti-social behaviour, youth violence and knife crime. The Secondary School sessions will also look to develop youth ambassadors who can help carry on the project's messages.

Northampton's Rough & Ready Boxing Academy have been awarded funding to deliver their Knives



Down Gloves Up programme which provides boxing training for young people who have been through the Youth Offending Service deterring them from carrying knives as a means to address real-life situations.

Daventry Youth Hub has also been awarded funding to deliver sessions to 10–18-year olds on exploitation, youth violence, knife crime and how to de-escalate situations, and provision and diversionary activities will be delivered by South Northants Youth Engagement in Brackley and Towcester.

Projects awarded funding, include:

- ASSIST Trauma Care- Guiding Young Minds for Streetwise
- Trilogy Active for Talk and Sport

- Future Challenges for Youth Leadership Ambassador
- Emmanuel Group of Churches for Emmanuel Community Youth Groups
- Safety Centre (Hazard Alley) Ltd for Knife Crime Prevention through Safety Education
- The University of Northampton Students' Union and Niger Delta Youth Association for Anti-Knife Crime & Youth Violence Concert

Sixth Successful Bid for Safer Streets Funding

Almost £650,000 is to be invested in preventing crime in the county thanks to a successful bid to the Home Office Safer Streets fund by Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Stephen Mold.

As part of Round Five of the Safer Streets Fund, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has secured £646,570 to support practical and targeted projects to tackle burglary and vehicle crime and reduce violence against women and girls.

This is the sixth time that the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has made a successful Safer Streets bid since the scheme was launched four years ago. Rounds one – five focussed on neighbourhood crime



and a sixth that focussed on tackling violence against women. As a result of those bids, Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has been awarded nearly £4m to invest in crime prevention, and his office and partners have invested a further £1m to boost safety in communities across the county.

The three successful Safer Streets projects in this round are:

- Weston, Northampton and Kingswood, Corby: A forensic property marking, and asset recording scheme called 'Stand up to crime' will be rolled out to residents to help tackle residential burglary. Equipment to find stolen property will be installed in custody suites and given to second-hand dealers.
- Junction 15 A and Watford Gap M1 Services: Several physical security measures such as improved fencing, lighting, CCTV and ANPR will be put in place to tackle theft from HGVs and other vehicles.
- Violence against women and girls: Staff at bus and train hubs in the county will be trained to recognise when women are vulnerable and how to respond appropriately. Working with West Northamptonshire Council, a scheme will see taxi marshals working in Northampton town centre.

CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

West Northants Heritage Open Days

A visitor feedback survey has revealed that this year's Heritage Open Days event was the most successful in West Northamptonshire yet following peak engagement, brimming attractions and glowing feedback.

The survey captured highlights from residents, visitors and attractions who took part in the 10-day festival, which took place between 8 and 17 September, as they discovered and explored cultural and historical attractions across the area.

West Northamptonshire is rich in culture and



heritage, with dozens of stately homes including Sulgrave Manor, Lamport Hall and Canons Ashby; buildings of historic interest including 78 Derngate and Weedon Royal Ordnance Depot; and museums and places of worship, which all took part in the annual festival organised by the National Trust.

Many attractions not normally accessible to the public were opened up for visitors to explore and special guided tours, walks and open days took place in Daventry, Northampton and South Northants, all free to attend. Many venues were also connected by Northampton Transport Heritage buses, enabling visitors to get between attractions in vintage style for free.

Feedback from the survey revealed that 74% of people felt the event made them feel prouder and more part of their local community while 87% said they learned something new about their local area from attending a Heritage Open Days event.

Users commented on the friendliness and professionalism of the event staff, the variety of workshops, exhibits and events, and the overall organisation of the event and free Heritage bus service.

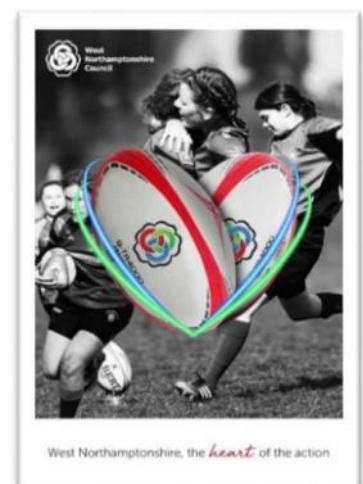
West Northants to host Women's 2025 Rugby World Cup

West Northamptonshire will be taking part in the biggest-ever celebration of women's international rugby having been announced as a host for the Rugby World Cup 2025 – and the 2-year countdown kicked on 22 August. The 10th edition of the women's pinnacle global tournament is set to take place between 22 August and 27 September 2025, and will see matches taking place in front of a worldwide audience at Northampton's legendary Franklins Gardens stadium - home of the internationally renowned Northampton Saints.

The tournament will be the most accessible women's Rugby World Cup ever and will expand the reach of the game across the five-week period by bringing the world's best players to cities and venues across the country, including:

- Brighton and Hove – Brighton and Hove Albion Stadium
- Bristol – Ashton Gate
- Exeter – Sandy Park
- London – Twickenham Stadium
- Manchester – Salford Community Stadium
- Northampton – Franklin's Gardens
- Sunderland – Stadium of Light
- York – York Community Stadium

While the full match schedules and ticketing details will be announced next year, the milestone two-year celebration and confirmation of dates and venues provides the ability for fans across England to start to plan their Rugby World Cup 2025 experience.



West Northants Approve Youth Justice Plan

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a statutory multi agency service, which has a responsibility to prevent offending and reoffending by those aged under 18 years who are resident in Northamptonshire. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 there is a statutory requirement to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan which must provide specified information about the local provision of youth justice services.

The plan covers 2023 to 2024 and sets out how, through the delivery of a range of services and interventions, the YOS will work hard to ensure that children and young



people are kept out of the formal criminal justice system.

The plan also sets out the direction and strategy of youth justice services, describing how quality services will be provided to ensure positive outcomes for children and improvements in performance indicators, in particular: reducing first time entrants to the youth justice system:

- 1) reducing the use of custody
- 2) reducing reoffending rates
- 3) locally agreed performance indicators that evidence positive outcomes for children

The areas of work for the YOS are laid out in legislation, government policy and national guidance and are developed in partnership with key local strategic boards including the Community Safety Executive; Children Trust Board; Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Northamptonshire's North and East Criminal Justice Board.

These indicators are identified under three key priority areas:

- 1) Early Help & Prevention.
- 2) Recognising and responding to child exploitation and serious youth violence.
- 3) Tackling disproportionality in the criminal justice system