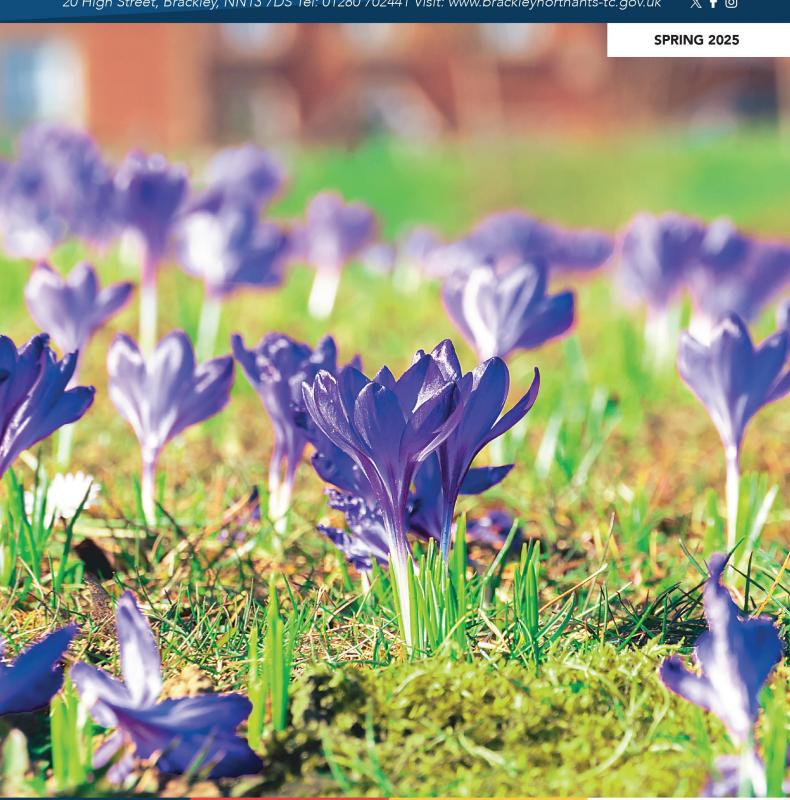


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### THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE

### Hello Residents of Brackley,

It's been a busy few months with events! I was delighted to open the Old Brackley Bakery on the 15th February and pleased to see so many of you turn out despite the cold and rain. Since then, Danny Webster has been kept on his toes, managing both businesses.

I was also delighted to visit the lovely new boutique, *Rock My Dress*, which offers a stunning selection of wedding and evening dresses. Wishing her every success with the beautiful shop! I also wish the new Brackley Community Shop every success, which showcases products from many talented local traders. It's wonderful to see the town becoming so vibrant again. A huge thank you to Brackley residents for your support. Shopping local makes all the difference, so please keep it up!



There are several events coming up in town. The Civic Dinner, hosted by me, will take place on Friday, 25th April, at 7 p.m. This is a ticketed event, and a few tickets are still available. They are on sale at the Town Council Offices for £60 per person, with all proceeds supporting the Mayor's charities. If you're interested in attending, please contact the office for more details.

The Town Council, along with various local organisations, is planning VE Day celebrations in Brackley. The event will take place in the Town Park throughout the afternoon and evening, culminating

in a beacon lighting at 9:30 p.m. Also don't forget armed forces day which will be celebrated at the rugby club on 28th June. The event is organised by the Brackley Branch of the Royal British Legion in partnership with Brackley Rugby Club. Over the past few years, it has grown in popularity and promises to be a fantastic day out for all ages.



I will be handing over to the new Mayor after the elections on 19th May and wish them every success in the role. In the next issue of *Town Talk*, I'll be sharing my farewell message and announcing the total amount raised for my chosen charities, NMPAT.

Elaine Wiltshire
Brackley Town Mayor

#### **Editorial Notes:**

This magazine is produced by Brackley Town Council. Town Talk magazine is for the people of Brackley to help keep residents informed of community news, services and events, and to meet its statutory duty to inform residents of council business.

Where copy is supplied we retain the right to refuse, edit: spelling, grammar, any material that may cause offence or upset and non-essential copy in order to fit the space allowed.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this April 2025 publication. The next issue will be in July 2025. Until then, please visit our website or social media channels for regular updates, news, projects, events and services in Brackley.

This edition is also available on our website as a PDF copy.

Artwork and print by: Banbury Litho.

# YOUR LOCAL TOWN COUNCILLORS CONTACT DETAILS

Town Mayor: Cllr Elaine Wiltshire Deputy Town Mayor: Cllr Fiona Baker

**NORTH WARD** 

**Cllr Anthony Bagot-Webb** 

Email: cllr.bagot-webb@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

Cllr Kate Nash

Email: cllr.nash@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Paul Wiltshire** 

Email: cllr.pwiltshire@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Luke Young** 

Email: cllr.young@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**EAST WARD** 

**Cllr Jason Kew** 

Email: cllr.kew@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Simon Weaver** 

Email: cllr.weaver@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Elaine Wiltshire** 

Email: cllr.ewiltshire@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Adrian Watt** 

Email: cllr.watt@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**SOUTH WARD** 

**Cllr Will King** 

Email: cllr.king@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Stewart Manley** 

Email: cllr.manley@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Bernard Tiller** 

Email: cllr.tiller@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Scott Langford** 

Email: cllr.langford@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**WEST WARD** 

**Cllr Christopher Cartmell** 

Email: cllr.cartmell@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Graham Judd** 

Email: cllr.judd@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Sue Sharps** 

Email: cllr.sharps@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

**Cllr Fiona Baker** 

Email: cllr.baker@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk

Brackley Town Council is made up of 16 councillors who are elected every four years to represent their particular Wards.

All Town Councillors are volunteers and receive no payment.

### **BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS**

APRIL 2025	
28th April	Planning & General Works Committee / Direct responsibilities & General-purpose committee / Finance & Policy Committee
MAY 2025	
19th May	Full Council Meeting, Planning & General Works Committee
19th May	Planning & General Works Committee / Direct responsibilities & General-purpose committee / Finance & Policy Committee
JUNE 2025	
2nd June	Full Council Meeting, Planning & General Works Committee
16th June	Planning & General Works Committee / Direct responsibilities & General-purpose committee / Finance & Policy Committee
JUNE 2025	
7th July	Full Council Meeting, Planning & General Works Committee
21st July	Planning & General Works Committee / Direct responsibilities & General-purpose committee / Finance & Policy Committee

All meetings are held in the Civic Hall (Brackley Town Hall). Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings.

### **BRACKLEY BIODIVERSITY**

Brackley Town Council continues its commitment to enhancing biodiversity in the town, building on the success of its 2024 initiatives. Following a review by the Biodiversity Task and Finish Group, new and refined strategies are set to be introduced in 2025 to better support local wildlife and green spaces.



# WILDFLOWER PLANTING EXPANDS

In 2024, wildflower planting proved a success across various locations, despite challenges posed by weather conditions. Areas such as St James Lake, Pavillons Way, Burwell Hill, Mill Lane, Rose Open Space, Swift Way, Nether Close, Halse Road, Rugby Club Open Space, and

Poppyfields Central Park all benefitted from increased biodiversity, with positive feedback from residents.

Building on this momentum, the 2025 plan will not only continue wildflower planting in these locations but also extend it to Carpenters Place (pending legal completion) and Foxhills Way.

#### **RESIDENTS FLOWER BOMBS**

Brackley Town Council also has flower bombs that will be donated to the community with the aim of encouraging residents to join in our initiative to increase biodiversity in Brackley. These can be collected anytime from the council office!

#### INTRODUCING 'LESS MOW BRACKLEY'

One of the key learnings from 2024 was that the 'No Mow May' initiative had limited benefits for



biodiversity while requiring a significant clear-up effort at the end of the month. As a result, Brackley Town Council is adopting a more flexible approach in 2025 with the introduction of 'Less Mow Brackley.'

Instead of completely halting mowing for just one month, selected areas will have extended mowing intervals throughout the year. This allows the grass to grow longer, benefiting wildlife while ensuring better maintenance and usability for residents. The designated areas for 'Less Mow Brackley' include:

- Rear sections of Foxhills
- Parts of Carpenters Place (which developers currently mow twice a year)
- Mill Lane
- St James Lake
- Pavillons Way

This shift in approach is supported by the Wildlife Trust, which agrees that a longer-term strategy offers greater ecological benefits than a single month of non-mowing. Additionally, many existing wildlife corridors along hedgerows will be maintained, allowing smaller animals to move safely through green spaces.

# TREE PLANTING AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Unfortunately, Ash dieback continues to affect trees in Brackley, leading to the necessary felling of several affected trees. Areas particularly impacted include St James Lake, Banbury Road, and Pocket Park. However, the council is taking a measured approach, removing only high-risk trees in the hope that others may develop resilience to the disease.

To counteract these losses, new trees will be planted in multiple locations. Carpenters Place will see an increase in tree planting, not only replacing felled trees but also creating an avenue of greenery, funded through contributions from developers. Additional tree planting will also take place at St James Lake and other locations where trees have been lost.

#### **ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY**

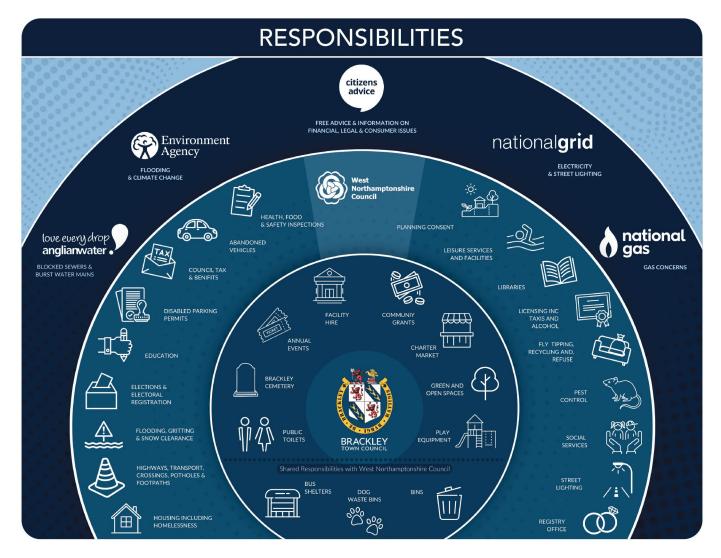
A key focus for 2025 will be ensuring residents understand the reasoning behind these biodiversity initiatives. The council plans to communicate updates through social media and Town Talk, highlighting the designated biodiversity areas. By keeping the community informed, Brackley Town Council aims to foster support and awareness for its ongoing efforts to create a greener, more wildlife-friendly town.

With these initiatives, Brackley is taking a thoughtful and sustainable approach to improving its natural spaces, ensuring both residents and wildlife can enjoy the town's green areas for years to come.

### 2025 - 2026 COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

Every year, Brackley Town Council allocates funds for a Community Grants Scheme to support local groups. Here are the successful groups and charities receiving funding this year.





# BRACKLEY BOY'S INCREDIBLE 100KM CYCLE RAISES OVER £1,000 FOR HOMELESS CHARITY



Seven-year-old **Albie Emms** from Brackley has completed an incredible 100km cycling challenge, raising an impressive £1,010 for the Northampton Hope Centre, a charity that supports homeless individuals.

Inspired by Paddy McGuinness' *Ultra Endurance Cycle Challenge*, Albie set out in November to cycle 5km routes around Brackley, reaching his 100km goal on February 17. Albie has always been passionate about helping the homeless, and with the support of his mother Katy, he decided to turn his compassion into action.

"Ever since he was little, Albie has always asked about homeless people and wanted to help them," said Katy. "So we decided to raise money for the Hope Centre."

As part of her own training for a half marathon, Katy ran alongside Albie on his routes, ensuring the challenge remained achievable for him. "We aimed for 5km on most weekends and during school holidays," she explained.

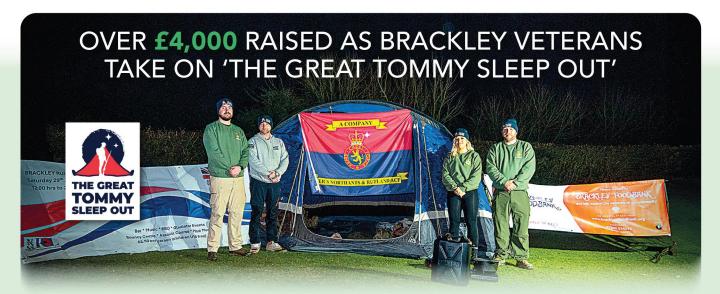
"At first, the hills were tough, but by the end, his fitness had improved so much I could barely keep up!"

Originally setting a target of £250, Albie and his family were overwhelmed by the generosity of supporters,

quadrupling their goal.
On February 21, Albie visited the Northampton Hope Centre to meet staff and learn more about how his donation will make a difference.

Katy hopes his achievement will inspire other young people to take on their own challenges, big or small. "In a world with so much unkindness, it's wonderful to see the younger generation thinking about helping others."





On the night of Friday, March 7th, four dedicated individuals camped out beneath the stars at St James' Lake in Brackley to support the Armed Forces community. The group, all ex-service members, took part in The Great Tommy Sleep Out 2025—a nationwide initiative raising funds for Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI), a charity that provides support to veterans, disabled individuals, and those facing unemployment.

The idea for the Brackley-based sleep-out came from Dean Bridgman, a veteran who saw the event advertised on social media

and felt inspired to take part. He was joined by fellow members of A Company LNR ACF: Hamish McAllister, Phil Mabbott, and Kacey Knapman. Together, they have already raised an impressive £4,200, with donations still open for those who wish to contribute.

For Hamish, the event was familiar territory, having participated in previous years. However, this was the first time the sleep-out had been held at St James' Lake in Brackley. The night was filled with camaraderie, laughter, and even a warm meal generously donated by Brackley Food Bank—pasta with

Bolognese sauce, cooked by one of the campers (with no reported food poisoning!).

Reflecting on the experience, the group described it as a rewarding challenge, despite the sounds of the local geese keeping them awake! Encouraged by the success of this year's event, they hope to make it an annual tradition, welcoming even more participants in the future.

If you would like to support their efforts, donations can still be made to RBLI. Let's help them continue making a difference for our Armed Forces community!

### **CONTEST SUCCESS FOR BRACKLEY & DISTRICT BAND**

We are delighted to announce that on Sunday 9 March, under the baton of Mark Probert, we placed 3rd in the Fourth Section of the Midlands region of the National Brass Band Championships. We competed against 16 bands, each performing a set test piece called 'I, Daedalus' by Andrea Price which is based on the Greek mythological figures of Daedalus and his son Icarus and their ill-fated attempt to escape from a tower in Crete in which they were imprisoned.



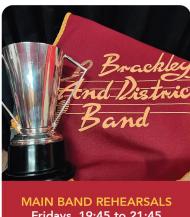
The two adjudicators felt that our performance was worthy of 3rd place, winning the band a trophy, £100 prize-money and an invitation to the National Finals in September. This is where the top bands in the Fourth Section from each of the regions come together to see which band is the best in the country. This will be the first time since 2002 the band has qualified for the Finals.

In the meantime, we are concentrating on our next exciting project which is

our Disney Showcase on Saturday 19 April 2025. We received funding from Brackley Town Council to put on an event that would inspire young people to enjoy brass music and give them the opportunity and guidance to help them have a go and get involved. The event invites people to get dressed up and come as their favourite Disney characters. The entertainment includes a meet and greet with Elsa and Ariel, music performed by the band and a magician. All 200 places got booked up within 24 hours so we are looking forward to this very much.

We also have a programme of other concerts and events already in the diary and of course the Finals competition in September 2025. We have places available for new players (percussion and brass) in both our main band and development band. Instruments can be made available to those who need them. Please do get in touch if you are interested to find out more about the band or would like to come and give us a try.





Fridays, 19:45 to 21:45

DEVELOPMENT BAND REHEARSALS Fridays, 18:30 to 19:30

#### **BOTH AT**

The Brackley Band Club, 2 Draymans Walk, Brackley NN13 6DF.

#### CONTACT

т 01280 703934 м 07737 077009 E brackleyband@gmail.com w brackleyband.org.uk





### YOUNG BRACKLEY RESIDENT'S OAKS TAKE ROOT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

In November 2022, young Brackley resident Albert Walker set out on a special mission—collecting acorns from around the town and nurturing them into oak saplings. With the support of his Mum, Dad, Granny & Grampy, Albert carefully planted each acorn, nurturing them with patience and dedication. With the help of his family, he ensured they had the best start in life.

His efforts were so successful that he recently donated the thriving young saplings to Brackley Town Council. In recognition of his dedication to nature and the local environment, the council has now planted them at the Rose Open Space, where they will take root and, over time, grow into magnificent oak trees. These trees will stand as a lasting legacy, providing beauty, shade, and a haven for wildlife for generations to come. Thanks to his efforts, future generations will enjoy the beauty and benefits of these trees for years to come.

Albert's dedication embodies the spirit of a well-known saying: "A society grows great when people plant trees whose shade they know they shall never

### MAKING EVERY MOMENT COUNT WITH HELEN & DOUGLAS HOUSE



### LOCAL CHILDREN'S HOSPICE CONFIRMED AS OFFICIAL **TEAM CHARITY OF MERCEDES-AMG PETRONAS F1 TEAM**

While we race across the globe, our local community is incredibly important to us, and we want to ensure that our presence positively contributes to those around us.

We are therefore delighted to announce that Helen & Douglas House, the world's first children's hospice, located twenty-five miles from our Brackley campus, has been selected as our 2025-2026 Official Team Charity Partner.

Founded in 1982, Helen & Douglas House supports families in Oxfordshire and nearby counties, providing 24/7 care for children with life-limiting conditions and helping them create precious memories.



Our charity partnerships are chosen and led by our team members. Helen & Douglas House was nominated by

one of our team members Chris, who forms part of our Composites Manufacturing department:

"In April 2019, my daughter Penny was born with a rare genetic condition called Ogden syndrome, which affects 1 in 11 million people. Tragically, due to complications with her condition, we lost Penny just six months later.

"The support that Helen & Douglas House provided to my family six years ago - and continue to provide today – is invaluable.

"So, when the Charity Committee invited the team to nominate their preferred cause for 2025 and 2026, it was one of the easiest emails that I have written. Our support will make such a difference."

On supporting Helen & Douglas House, Chief Operating Officer Rob Thomas said:

"We are delighted that Helen & Douglas House has been selected as our 2025-2026 Official Team Charity Partner, and we



can't wait to get started on our fundraising journey for this incredible local cause.

### Sarah Robson from Helen & Douglas House commented:

"We are delighted to be chosen by Mercedes-AMG PETRONAS F1 Team as their charity partner for 2025 and 2026. The hospice is a very special place where local families can make the most of their time together, creating happy memories during their children's short lives.

"90% of our funding comes from voluntary donations and this year we need to raise almost £6,000,000 to fund the cost of the care for the families we support. This partnership will raise a significant amount of money to help local families, which we are very grateful for."

To launch our campaign to raise £100,000 for the hospice by December 2026, the team's Charity Committee were pleased to visit Helen & Douglas House in February, spending time with the hospice team, meeting with some of the families in their care, and touring the house and its grounds.

One of the first events on the team's fundraising calendar is the Silverstone 10k in May, where sixty team members will run a lap of our home circuit to support those cared for by Helen & Douglas House.



On Thursday 17 July, the team will swap the racetrack for the football pitch and take on Aston Martin F1 Team in a Charity Football Match at Brackley Town Football Club. Two games will be played on the night, with timings as follows:

- 17:00 Gates, Bar and Catering Open
- 18:00 19:00 Women's Charity Football Match
- 19:30 21:30 Men's Charity Football Match

Tickets will be available to purchase via the Brackley Town Football Club website from Thursday 1 May. All are welcome!

### THE SAINTS COMMUNITY PROJECT

The Saints Community Project at Brackley Town Football Club has become a cherished hub for elderly Brackley residents, offering warmth, companionship, and a true sense of belonging. Held every Wednesday, this muchloved initiative was launched by Kim Grantham in 2015, beginning as a 'Day at the Seaside' event. From those humble beginnings, it has grown into a vibrant weekly gathering, where attendees can enjoy unlimited tea and coffee (with cake!) and a subsidised home-cooked lunch, all provided by a dedicated team of volunteers.

The project offers a safe and welcoming space for individuals to reconnect with their community, build friendships, and regain confidence. Regular attendees often describe it as a highlight of their week, where they can take part in bingo, quizzes, craft activities, and themed event days. The project is entirely volunteer-led, apart from some professional catering support, and is driven by the belief that no one in Brackley should feel alone.

Over time, the initiative has evolved to meet the changing needs of its members. Chair-based exercise sessions and healthy living talks encourage physical well-being, while strong ties with the local policing team provide additional reassurance. Officers frequently visit

to offer crime prevention advice and personal safety tips, ensuring that members feel supported both inside and outside the group.

One of the most treasured aspects of the Saints Community Project is the way it brings people

together to celebrate special occasions. Christmas, Easter, and Valentine's Day are marked with special lunches and thoughtful gift distributions, often made possible by local businesses and volunteers. During the colder months, initiatives like the Brackley Elves ensure that isolated residents receive food hampers, warm clothing, and handwritten messages from local schoolchildren.

The project remains an integral part of community life, offering a place where laughter is shared, friendships are formed, and support is always available. Through the dedication of volunteers and the generosity of the Brackley community, the Saints Community Project continues to make a lasting impact on the lives of those who need it most.



### HEDGEHOG RESCUERS URGENTLY NEEDED

Local charity, Brackley Hogwatch, was founded in 2011 by the late Andrew Jackson (1969-2023). From that time forward he devoted his life to rescuing ill and orphaned hedgehogs with the aim of conserving the local hedgehog population in Brackley and the surrounding five-mile radius. He dedicated his time to saving over 1000 hedgehogs. Andrew was knowledgeable and passionate about preventing their extinction.

Andrew was affectionately known as The Hedgehog Man by the children of Brackley due to his educational visits to local schools. He provided guidance on what actions to take when encountering a hedgehog out in



the day. The phrase "A hedgehog out in the day is not OK" became their mantra, significantly contributing to the rescue and care of numerous ill hedgehogs.

Andrew had been experiencing health issues for some time, and he passed away in September 2023 at home, doing what he loved, caring for hedgehogs. Since then, the trustees and volunteers have been continuing his work but are actively seeking additional volunteers to join their local network of hedgehog rescuers. Prospective rescuers will need to have ample free time, a suitable space to keep hedgehogs (such as a converted shed or garage), and the ability to drive (to finders, vets, courses, etc.). They must be prepared to medicate ill hedgehogs and attend a training course at The Vale Wildlife Hospital which Brackley Hogwatch will sponsor. Hogwatch will also assist with funding for food and medicines. Existing rescuers will also be on-hand to offer advice, guidance and support. Previous animal care experience is beneficial but not essential; an interest in hedgehogs is desirable.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a rescuer and contributing to the conservation of these remarkable creatures, please contact us on 07528 119416.



Registered charity 1059995

### Age UK Northamptonshire

would like to say a big thank you to Julie Wilson, Customer Relations Manager Brackley Care Home, for the invitation to a Coffee Morning Celebration of Volunteers on Wednesday 19th March. Volunteer Coordinator Caroline Roy and some of the charity's volunteers were treated to tea, coffee and delicious homemade shortbread. They also enjoyed an enthusiastic and comprehensive talk about The Morris Dance by local expert and practitioner John Weaver (pictured with Caroline).

Caroline says "We would not be able to manage without the friendly team of 19 volunteers who work in our Brackley shop. We also have two students on Duke of Edinburgh placement with us at the moment."



Age UK Northamptonshire is a local independent charity that relies on an army of volunteers to run its nine shops in the county. Every penny raised enables the charity to support over 18,000 older people and their families every year.

"We always need more volunteers, especially Telephone Befrienders whose regular telephone chats help older people feel less lonely or isolated," says Caroline. Visit www.ageuknorthants.org.uk to find out more about the current volunteer roles available or call 01604 611200 for more details.



Scan me to apply



### Community Responder Volunteer - Can you help make a difference to older people?

The Community Responder Volunteer Service provides company, reassurance and low-level support to an older person in their own home, when a delay is anticipated for Primary or Secondary care support. It can be a worrying time when older people are waiting for further support at home, our volunteers are that much needed "friendly face" for up to two hours.



To join this rewarding service, we ask that you are:-

Age 18 or over - a confident, caring person with empathy for older people - able to stay calm and offer reassurance - living within Northamptonshire - willing to complete a DBS check - willing to undertake relevant training.

### Your visit could include:-

Providing reassurance - packing an overnight bag - making somebody comfortable after a fall contacting a family member or friend - collecting a prescription - completing a welfare check - delivering mobility equipment.



If you are interested in this role and would like an informal chat to find out more, please call our Community Responder Coordinators on **07881 230222** or email **communityresponders@ageuknorthants.org.uk** 

Head Office: 01604 611200 www.ageuknorthants.org.uk

Registered Office: The William and Patricia Venton Centre, York Road, Northampton NN1 5QJ. Registered Charity No. 1059995













# **Join Our New Aventure**

### **Unleash Your Potential with Royal Marines Cadets!**

Are you 13-18 and ready for a wild journey? Join our Royal Marines Cadets detachment and embark on an epic adventure that will transform you into the person you aspire to be.

Discover New Experiences: From orienteering and rock climbing to rowing, fieldcraft, and adventure training, there's never a dull moment. You'll even master First Aid, Engineering, and powerboating. Plus, you can take on the ultimate thrill of offshore challenges!

Boost Your Confidence: Want to walk into any situation feeling unstoppable? Our program helps you take charge of your life, make a lasting impression, and lead with confidence.

Lead the Way: Learn how to support and guide others, captaining your own team and making a standout impression in interviews.

Ready to launch into a new chapter of excitement and selfdiscovery? Get in touch and join the Brackley Royal Marines Cadets

E: info@brackleyseacadets.org.uk



(f) X / Brackley Sea Cadets

sea-cadets.org/brackley

### **VE DAY** MAY 8

On Thursday 8 May we will join the rest of the country in celebrating the **80th Anniversary** of the VE day, the official end of World War 2. Start the festivities with a picnic in the park, then explore the wartime artifacts and vehicles on display! Ask questions of our on hand historian to find out the exciting details of this historic day. Then as the sun begins to set enjoy musical performances, before the festivities come to a close with the Brackley beacon lighting in memory of all those who fought for our freedom.



### **TEDDY BEAR PICNIC AUGUST 6**

DON'T MISS THIS INCREDIBLE CELEBRATION OF CLASSIC CARS!

Join us for a fun-filled day at the **Brackley Teddy Bear Festival** on 6 August in Brackley Town Park! Bring your teddy bears and picnic for a family-friendly event featuring a range of exciting activities. Watch in awe as your teddies take part in the Teddy Bear Parachute, soaring through the sky in a thrilling parachute drop! Enjoy heartwarming teddy bear stories and rhymes, bringing your favourite characters to life. With plenty of entertainment for all ages, it's the perfect way to spend a day outdoors with your loved ones. **Don't miss out on this charming celebration!** 

### **SUMMER CLASSICS** AUGUST 17

Join us for the **Brackley Classic Car Show** on August 17th, 2025, in Brackley Town Park! This annual summer event brings together over 150 classic vehicles, including cars, vans, tractors, motorbikes, and military vehicles. Explore a stunning array of vintage and rare vehicles, each with its own history and charm. It's a perfect day out for car enthusiasts and families alike. All proceeds from the event will support the Town Mayor's local charities, making this not just a fun day, but a great way to give back to the community.

### **USEFUL INFO**

### **LLOYDS**

Town Hall Office Wednesdays

9:00am – 2:45pm

#### **BARCLAYS**

Van on the Piazza Every other Tuesday, 10:00am – 2:00pm

April 22nd, May 6th, 20th

### **REGISTER TO VOTE**

#### **ELECTIONS MAY 1ST**

Don't miss out on your chance to vote in the upcoming elections on May 1st. Simply search

'Register to vote West
Northamptonshire Council'
and follow the link
on their page to register.

### WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL DROP-IN SESSIONS

**Brackley Library**Last Friday of every month
10am – 12pm



## **CONTACT US**

♥ 20 High Street, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 7DS

## FOLLOW US

Visit our social media channels for all the latest news, projects, events and services.

#### Attention Brackley residents!

If you would like to advertise any community groups, achievements, events or services to feature in the next Town Talk magazine, please email comms@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk or call 01280 702441.

We would love to hear from you.