



Town & Parish Briefing

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Welcome to the latest Town and Parish Briefing, bringing you a round-up of news, activities and information about West Northamptonshire Council.

We hope you'll find this briefing informative, and we encourage you to share it widely within your organisations. If you have ideas and suggestions for future content, please email us at communications@westnorthants.gov.uk

Reflecting on another year of service to communities across West Northants

By Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of West Northamptonshire Council

In this month's briefing we reflect upon our second year as a unitary council – and another extremely busy 12 months serving communities across West Northamptonshire.

2022/23 has not been without its challenges for all of us, as we have found ourselves dealing with significant cost of living rises in an uncertain international and economic climate.



I am so proud of the great spirit, generosity and continued resilience shown by all our communities who have continued to pull together during tough times, with town and parish colleagues playing a key role in helping residents, whether sharing information about local support and advice to working with us to establish a network of over 90 Warm Spaces for our most vulnerable.

This year our Council has also found itself dealing with many other major issues, including helping to resettle families fleeing the war in Ukraine, leading our county's emergency response to the death of our Queen and then taking steps to tackle emerging significant financial challenges in our future budgets which we could not have predicted this time last year.

In our second year we've also travelled so much further on our journey to transform and improve the services we inherited from the legacy authorities, developing and embedding new strategies with more sustainable places and better outcomes for local people. We know there is more work to be done, but we're making good progress.

I would like to thank all parish and town councils for your support over the past year and the fundamental role you continue to play as we continue on our journey towards making West Northants a great place to live, visit, work and thrive.

Please read on for a flavour of just a few of the many highlights as we've worked towards our priorities this year.



Our Priority: Green and Clean Places

Over the past 12 months we have prioritised the environment and considered the carbon cost of our decision-making, working hard towards our sustainability goals – from improving energy efficiency, reducing waste and achieving net zero emissions by 2030, to making our streets, parks and open spaces cleaner and greener.

Here are some of the many highlights:

- Establishing a new dedicated sustainability service was key to steering and developing our response to climate change and as a result more communities, partners and businesses have been engaged over the past year.
- We published a robust set of baseline CO2 emissions data for our Council's first year, giving us a baseline against which to progress a detailed action plan to monitor and reduce these.
- Government funding of £1.25m was secured to make over 100 council-owned homes more energy efficient and a further £7m towards decarbonising our leisure centres.
- Working with many partners, we have pledged to plant over 11,300 new trees across West Northants as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.
- We retained international Green Flag Award status for the high quality of Daventry Country Park, Abington Park, Bradlaugh Fields and Delapre Park, with plans to work towards achieving similar accolades for Towcester's Water Meadows and Hunsbury Country Park.



- We expanded the success of the Northampton e-scooters scheme with the rollout of new e-bikes for hire across the town centre.
- We received nearly £300,000 government funding to roll-out new initiatives aimed at researching and improving air quality in Northampton.
- Our Cleaner Communities campaign was launched with partners to crackdown on fly-tipping and littering and change public behaviour.

- Our new garden waste service was successfully rolled out to include South Northants residents and with increased take up for 2023-24 and we introduced kerbside recycling for small electrical items and batteries in the Daventry area.
- We introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order across the Daventry and South Northants areas to promote responsible pet ownership and ban smoking in more public spaces, with consultation now taking place on similar proposals for Northampton.



Our Priority: Improved life chances

Helping our residents through the ongoing cost of living crisis has been our top priority over the past 12 months and we've worked with a range of partners to provide a broad range of practical and financial packages.

- We developed and approved a new Anti-Poverty Strategy, setting out how we will support people struggling financially or with food security, what we will do to help people avoid falling into poverty and how we will work to influence the Government and other national organisations to get the best deal for the people of West Northants. This crucial strategy has brought support to many families, as a collaboration between the Council and all the relevant voluntary organisations.
- Over the past 12 months we have distributed approximately £5million of the Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) to support thousands of vulnerable households in West Northants, including 23,500 free school meal vouchers, Over 7,000 pension credits to the elderly and nearly 10,500 food vouchers via a network of around 20 local voluntary and community groups.
- We worked with our partners and local communities to set up a network of 97 welcoming warm spaces across West Northants and set up a dedicated Cost of Living hub online and by phone to offer residents a range of tailored advice and information.
- We prioritised work to create more school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including progressing plans for a new 250-place special school in Tiffield near Towcester, with the budget approved and detailed design work under way. This is in addition to a £1.1 million expansion and creation of 50 new specialist places at Hunsbury Park Primary School, 20 of which have now been delivered. This year a further 20 places were also created at Hardingstone and Castle Academies and new 'SEND Ranges' have also been introduced which provide a set standard for each child or young person in an education setting to better outline what support is needed based on children's individual needs or behaviours.



- A new integrated care system for the whole of Northamptonshire was established in July 2022 which sees the Council working more closely in partnership with all local health and care partners to deliver better joined-up services under a new 10-year strategy to help residents to 'Live Your Best Life'. This has subsequently led to the establishment of Local Area Partnerships across West Northants, a pioneering approach that has for the first time brought together council, health, police, the VCS and other services to identify and meet the specific needs of local communities.
- Our Reablement West service, which provides vital care and support to people upon discharge from hospital to enable them to continue to live confidently and independently in their own homes – received a Good rating in the latest inspection from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).
- Our Shared Lives Service, where carers share their lives and homes to support others was rated 'outstanding' by CQC which found that "people received exceptional care and support from dedicated carers.

Our Priority: Improved life chances

- We made encouraging progress in our work towards protecting vulnerable children across West Northants, with Ofsted lifting its rating of Northamptonshire's children's services from 'inadequate' to 'improvement to be good'.
- We received almost £575k to help improve adult numeracy in the area - the first tranche of funding approved from a £1.9m bid submitted to the Government's Multiply Fund. Money will be allocated over a three-year period and could benefit more than 3,000 people in the area during that time.
- More than 300 primary school students from across West Northants took part in this year's Young Citizen's Scheme organised by WNC, Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Children's Trust, where they learned about online safety, fire and water safety, and anti-social behaviour.
- Our School Attendance Support Service arranged virtual sessions for parents and carers who home school children aimed at helping young people to stay safe online.
- Services helping domestic abuse victims find safer accommodation across West Northamptonshire received extra funding of over £273,000 under plans to boost the funding provided to the Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS) and even, Domestic Violence & Abuse support services.
- We also staged our annual campaign to bring comfort and joy to those staying in West Northamptonshire refuges, with donations of Christmas hampers.
- Less than a year after achieving bronze status in the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme we were awarded Silver status for our work in supporting our armed forces community, also setting up community hubs and resigning the Armed Forces Covenant for the year ahead.



Our Priority: Connected Communities

- The launch of our new highways service in autumn saw our appointed contractors Kier set out their commitment to working with WNC on sustainability goals to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, as well as increasing social value to benefit the wider West Northants community and economy, such as supporting local disadvantaged groups and working with local sub-contractors. Within weeks Kier embarked on a Community Enhancement Plan, reaching over 161 parishes, clearing over 3km of vegetation and cleaning more than 1,500 road signs to date. Alongside this, Kier has also rectified over 1,494 road and footpath defects, which includes nearly 5,633 carriageway repairs, since the contract was launched.
- We then set out further plans in our budget for the year ahead to invest an extra £1m towards repairing local roads and potholes, particularly following harsh winter conditions.



Our Priority: Connected Communities

- Introducing free parking up to 10.30am on Saturdays at Daventry and Brixworth country parks and reducing the proposed maximum daily charge at the two sites by a third to £8.



- Investing £215,000 in the year ahead towards bus services while the Council shapes a new bus strategy and considers the most viable options for supporting and delivering the services in the future.

- Progressing proposals for the Abington Park Area Active Travel scheme which would introduce segregated cycleways and footways to provide better alternatives to driving, reduce traffic and increase safety for walkers and cyclists.

- Starting preparatory work on the new Northampton North-West Relief Road which will link the A428 Harlestone Road to the A5199 Welford Road. Over the past 12 months, WNC

has worked with partners to acquire the land for the £54m development, working with experts to scope and begin the relevant archaeological field work – while protecting our environment and manage the careful construction of the rail and river bridges

- Continuing to work with partners to future-proof the digital connectivity of West Northants through the Superfast Broadband scheme and with partners. CityFibre, the UK's largest independent full fibre platform, has now laid a staggering 840km of full fibre internet cables through Northampton as part of its £40m initiative for the area.

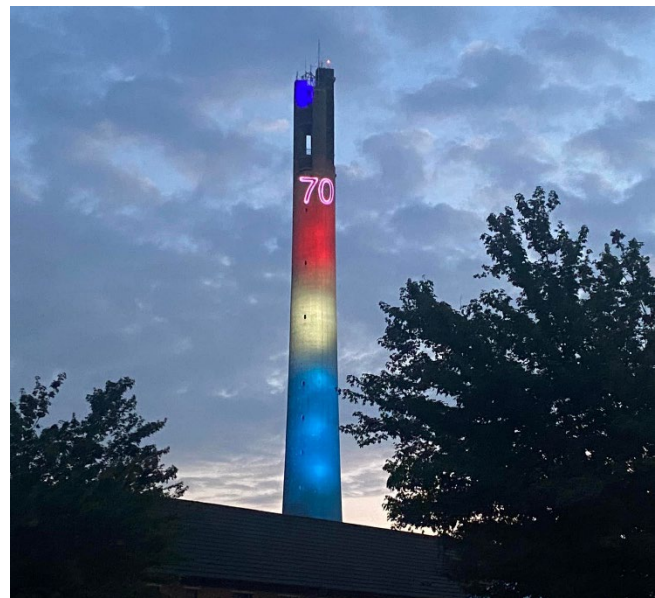
Our Priority: Thriving villages and towns

- We embarked on a comprehensive review of how the Council deals with Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to thoroughly investigate concerns raised by residents. The review will include a robust analysis of current policies concerning HMOs in Northampton, alongside looking at ways we can use best practice from elsewhere in the country.

- A fresh three-year strategy was developed and approved for improving housing for residents across West Northamptonshire whilst tackling issues including homelessness and the cost-of-living crisis.

- We organised a packed summer weekend of bank holiday events and activities for thousands of residents to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Commemorative beacons were lit across our area, including a virtual beacon at the Northampton Lift Tower, followed by a spectacular countywide pageant through Northampton centre involving military and emergency services personnel, youth and community groups and businesses and a Big Lunch community event for residents at Delapre Abbey.

- Our Council also supported The Birmingham 2022 Queen's Baton Relay which visited Northampton in July in the run-up to the Commonwealth Games, providing an opportunity for local communities to experience the excitement in the run-up to the big event.



Our Priority: Thriving villages and towns

- We supported over 400 West Northants residents who welcomed over 700 people fleeing conflict as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, arranging support, welfare and safety checks on their arrival and staging workshops for parish councils. We also increased payments for Homes for Ukraine hosts to £550 a month from December through to March 2023, with the additional £200 to help cover rising living costs.
- We also continued to provide resettlement support for Afghan refugees and liaised with Home Office officials over future proposals around bridging accommodation to ensure our local communities were represented and their needs met.
- We worked with partners to construct and open the award-winning Northampton Bike Park to provide new sustainable leisure facilities in the town, linking to existing cycle networks and improving the wellbeing of residents.
- Northampton Museum and Arts Gallery received full accreditation from the Arts Council England after nearly a decade, recognising its ongoing commitment to providing an outstanding facility that helps visitors to engage with collections and protect them for the future.
- We worked with our partners to stage over 30 community events and activities to bring our communities together, celebrate diversity, foster good relationships including Srebrenica, International Youth Day, International Women's Day, Northampton Pride, Diwali, Holocaust Memorial Day, Refugee Week, the Male Role model awards.
- Nearly £100,000 was received from the Government's Safer Streets fund to improve lighting and CCTV and create youth engagement activities in Blackthorn and Bellinge, two areas of Northampton with disproportionately high crime levels partly due to the prevalence of alleyways, underpasses and deprivation.



- West Northamptonshire joined the rest of the country and people around the world in mourning the loss of Queen Elizabeth II, with memorial services taking place across West Northants. Our Council supported the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire in leading Operation London Bridge, the countywide response to death of the late Queen and proclamation of King Charles III, co-ordinating arrangements for official events, ceremonies and services.

- We continued our work in bringing together and improve planning services across West Northants, welcoming an independent review of the service and shaping an action plan for development. Priority is being given to improving the way in which WNC handles section 106 agreements and getting payments to local organisations in a timelier fashion. Colleagues across the service have also been taking part in planning focus weeks to concentrate on processing exceptional numbers of planning applications.

Our Priority: Economic development

Attracting inward investment, breathing new life into our urban areas, and supporting businesses across West Northamptonshire have underpinned our work to drive economic development during our second year as a Council, with a broad range of activities moving forward.

- Vulcan works – a brand new £14 million hub of revitalised office space supporting start-up businesses in creative industries opened in the heart of Northampton's Cultural Quarter.
- We supported the launch of the new Social Enterprise Development Fund aimed at growing and developing social enterprises in Northampton that are making a positive impact on the community and the environment, while also generating income and creating jobs.
- The final stages of developing Daventry's Mulberry Place leisure complex were completed with the opening of two new restaurants alongside The Arc multiplex cinema.
- We were successfully granted more than £5.4m from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund to boost our local economy over the next three years. This is the largest allocation in the Southeast Midlands and will be used to improve people's life chances, increase skills, create stronger communities, and support local businesses.



- Work started to demolish the old derelict Co-op supermarket in Towcester's Sponne Arcade to make way for additional parking spaces in the heart of the town centre.
- Our Council received a prestigious Federation of Small Business Local Government Award for supporting the local small business community, beating off competition from around 250 other councils to achieve the All round Small Business Friendly' regional category.
- We exchanged contracts on the former BHS and M&S stores in Abington Street to progress plans for modern new residential, retail and leisure units in the town centre.
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- We worked with partners to progress plans to restore the Old Black Lion public house in Marefair, Northampton, with conservation repair work starting recently to bring the derelict premises back into use for our local community.
- Work started on the multi-million-pound redevelopment of Northampton's historic Market Square, which will include a flexible event space, bespoke fixed stalls, more trees, tiered seating and an interactive water feature.
- Our partners at NN Contemporary Art unveiled plans for a major new cultural centre at 24 Guildhall Road – a £4.7 million project supported by the Government's Towns Fund and part of the Town Centre Masterplan.
- We encouraged residents across West Northants to shop local and support our independent traders as part of activities for Small Business Saturday.



Our Priority: Robust resource management and good governance

- Our work on transforming and improving public services inherited from the old legacy councils continued at pace throughout our second year, with the new unitary council's efficiencies on course to save taxpayers a further £34million than originally anticipated by the end of 2025/26.
- This year we worked hard to set a balanced budget for 2023/24, despite facing severe financial pressures like other councils due in the current economic climate, with high inflation rates driving up running costs and an increase in demand for services, particularly around supporting children in care and vulnerable adults.
- We made tough choices to set a Council Tax increase of 4.99% for 23/24, significantly below current inflation levels but crucially generating an extra £12m to protect essential frontline services – with 2% of the increase going towards adult social care. This represents an average increase on a Band D property of £80.50 a year, the equivalent of £1.55 a week.
- We restructured a range of service areas to improve efficiency, including bringing our community-focussed services together with a place-making collaborative focus, including libraries, economic regeneration, ports and cultural services.



- The previous countywide approach to public health services changed as we established our own service focused on the wellbeing and needs of West Northamptonshire residents
- We gave our feedback and recommendations to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as part of its review of our Council's electoral boundaries which are due to be introduced at our next elections in May 2025.
- Our Revenues and Benefits colleagues worked around the clock to distribute a

range of benefits and payments to residents struggling during the cost-of-living difficulties, including the government's £150 Council Tax energy rebates to households.

- We reviewed our buildings as part of ongoing work to bring our services together more economically and efficiently for residents and pursued plans to relocate from our current Daventry offices at Lodge Road to a new locality hub at the nearby Abbey Centre.
- We continued to develop the way we inform, engage and interact with residents, including key improvements to our website, the launch of our residents e-newsletter, regular briefings for town and parish councils, and increased audiences on our social media channels.
- Our efforts to improve outcomes for residents this year have resulted in widespread recognition, with key projects and activities being shortlisted for six national awards. WNC is among only a small number of finalists out of hundreds of entries from councils across the country for two leading local government sector awards ceremonies, the LGC (Local Government Chronicle) Awards and MJ (Municipal Journal) Awards.

Getting ready for a right Royal celebration

Communities across West Northamptonshire will no doubt be finalising plans to celebrate the Coronation.

The Coronation Service will take place at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May, when His Majesty King Charles III will be crowned alongside Camilla, Queen Consort.

Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be further opportunities for people to come together in celebration of the historic occasion.



Plans for the Coronation weekend

If you are planning a community event or street party over the Coronation bank holiday weekend we've got some helpful information on food and health safety:

- The [Food Standards Agency](#) has lots tips about how to keep food safe
- If you are organising a larger event including food vendors, you may need to [inform us about your plans](#)
- If you have a bouncy castle, here are some top tips to keep everyone safe: [Bouncy castles and other play inflatables: safety advice](#)
- If you are having live music or the sale of alcohol you may need a [Temporary Events Notice](#)

Saturday 6 May

The [Coronation Service](#) will take place in Westminster Abbey.

Northampton Town Council will be hosting a Coronation Celebration Community Festival from 10am-4pm on Guildhall Road. [Applications for performers, stalls and sponsors remain open](#)

Sunday 7 May

Coronation concert

[Coronation concert and lightshow](#) will take place at Windsor Castle produced, staged, and broadcast live by the BBC and bringing together global music icons and contemporary stars in celebration of the historic occasion.



Big Lunch

The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country between Saturday 6 and Monday 8 May.

Residents are **invited to join us for a Coronation Big Lunch and After Party at Delapré Abbey** on the Sunday from midday to 10.30pm. A host of performers will take to the stage during the event, while the National Coronation Concert is broadcast live on a big screen. [Free tickets for the event are available here](#) and [applications for performers, stalls and sponsors remain open](#)

Monday 8 May

Big Help Out

On Monday 8 May, members of the public will be invited to take part in [The Big Help Out](#), which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas and create a lasting volunteering legacy from the Coronation Weekend.

Put your event on the map

Are you hosting an event or activity to celebrate the Coronation? If so, share your plans here to populate the official [interactive map and events listing](#)

Investing in sustainable and renewable energy

Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

Our Council has been successful in attracting funding towards a range of innovative projects as we work towards our goal of achieving net zero in our carbon emissions by 2030.

As Town and Parish Councils may be aware, our Council has committed to becoming net zero in our carbon emissions by 2030, with plans to invest in sustainable and renewable energy sources.

We are working with key partners to help achieve this, working closely with our Highways partner Kier for instance, to consider how vehicles can be replaced with electric or ultra-low emission equivalents.

In waste services, many of our contractors already use electric vehicles for recycling collections and street cleansing services, and we will be working with Northamptonshire Partnership Homes to introduce electric vans for that service.

We are also working with NPH to carry out a feasibility study for a sustainable heat network for Northampton and Rothersthorpe Village – a project which has attracted £112,000 of funding from the Government's Heat Network Delivery Unit.

Our Council was also recently awarded £7 million to invest in green technology and improve the energy efficiency of our leisure centres in Daventry, Moulton, Brackley, and Towcester.

We were recently awarded £73,000 to develop an electric vehicle strategy and research new innovations which will see new technology rolled out across the area.

As part of this work, we will be applying for external funding to set up a team that will look at implementing the strategy and install EV infrastructure in our car parks and on streets.

Other steps being taken range from the removal of single-use cups from our offices, to the increased use of solar energy across the area.

Town and Parish Councils can find out more about our Council's work in this area and get involved by [visiting the Sustainable West Northants website](#)

Download the free West Northants app

Residents across West Northamptonshire are encouraged to download our free West Northants app to help them access information about bin collections, council services and more.

The easy-to-use app allows users to set up automatic alerts to remind them to put their bins out, and also features a handy recycling guide to help people recycle or dispose of their waste in the correct way.

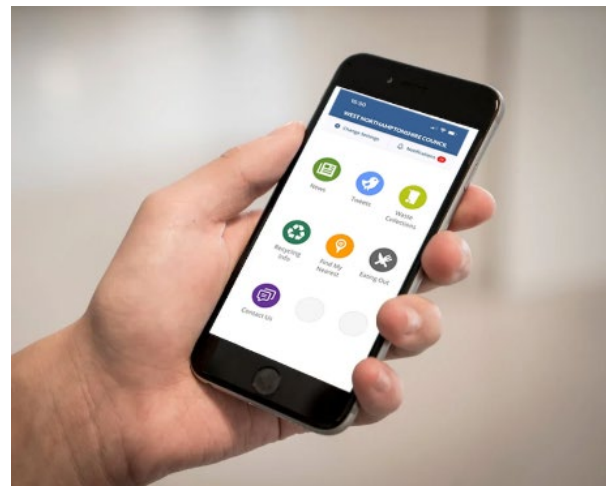
Users also receive notifications and alerts if there are any service changes in their area, such as disruption due to snow, or collection changes over the Christmas period.

The app allows people to keep up-to-date with Council news, find the opening times and locations of local facilities such as car parks, household waste and recycling centres, and public toilets. Local food businesses and their hygiene ratings are also listed.

The app has been in operation across the Daventry and South Northants areas for some time, but has recently been extended to include Northampton too.

With more features being developed in the coming months, the app will continue to expand to meet the needs of residents.

It is free to download and use, people can find it by searching for 'West Northamptonshire Council' on the app store on your mobile or tablet. The app is available for both [Android](#) and [Apple](#) devices.



Have a say on home to school travel services

Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to remind residents to have their say in our Home to School Transport services consultation.

The two-month consultation launched at the end of March, inviting residents to share their views on proposed changes to the service for children up to the age of 16.

The review of the service is the first to take place in a decade and seeks to ensure it is delivered in line with other local councils and at a reasonable cost, by tackling challenges including a significant increase in demand from users and rising operating costs caused by high fuel prices and inflation.

It also explores opportunities for a more flexible, environmentally friendly service that increases choices for parents and better supports the independence of young people.

How to take part

The consultation runs until midnight on Tuesday, 30 May, with residents encouraged to take part via [the Council's consultation hub](#).

Children and young people, their parents and carers will also have an opportunity to have their say at a number of drop-in sessions taking place at locations across West Northants, both during and around school hours. These are as follows:

- **Towcester:** 4 May, from 4pm to 7pm, in the Council Chamber, The Forum NN12 6AD
- **Northampton:**
 - 27 April, from 10am to midday, in the Engine Room, One Angel Square, NN1 1ED
 - 2 May, from 4pm to 7pm, in the Jeffrey Room, Guildhall, NN1 1DE
- **Daventry:** 10 May, from 4.30pm-7.30pm, at Daventry Volunteer Centre, New Street, NN11 4BT
- **Brackley:** 28 April, from 5pm to 8pm, in Egerton Hall, NN13 6GN

If residents contact you with queries or comments about the consultation we have produced some [Frequently Asked Questions on our website](#) to help.

Emergency Alert test to sound this weekend

A country-wide emergency alerts test will take place in the afternoon of **Sunday 23 April** which will see people receive a text message on their mobile phones.

When you receive the notification, you'll hear a loud siren-like sound – please don't be alarmed, as this is just a test and no further action is required.

The Emergency Alerts system will allow the government to get urgent messages quickly to nearly 90% of mobile phones in a defined area. Following successful tests in East Suffolk and Reading, the system is now ready to be tested across the UK on Sunday 23 April.

Alerts will only ever come from the government or emergency services, and they will issue a warning, the details of the area impacted, and instructions about how best to respond. This could include events such as public health emergencies, severe floods, fires, and industrial incidents.

To learn more about Emergency Alerts, [visit the government website for more information](#).



Letting green areas grow for No Mow May

Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

Throughout the month of May, we will be leaving certain green areas to grow as we support No Mow May.

The national campaign encourages organisations and individuals across the country to reduce or stop mowing through May to allow space for nature to bloom.

Designated green areas across West Northants will be left to grow throughout May, encouraging biodiversity and giving nature a helping hand to bloom.

The environment benefits in many ways when mowing is reduced or stopped for a month, this includes:

- Provides a vital food source for pollinators – helping our global food supply
- Healthier lawns
- Gives wild plants a head-start before summer
- Encourages different types of plant life to grow



This spring, we're encouraging residents to support no mow may and put their mowers away for a little longer to give a much-needed boost for wildlife throughout the summer.

Smaller plants such as daisies, dandelion, selfheal and clover will get a chance to flower. You can continue to mow less and at different lengths and frequencies throughout the summer to support biodiversity in the community.

Town and parish councils across West Northamptonshire are supporting the campaign, and WNC will be leaving designated areas at Abington Park, Racecourse, St Katherines Gardens and Daventry Country Park to grow throughout May.

For more information about no mow May and how you can take part visit Plant Life's website: [Take part in No Mow May - Plantlife](#)

Bird housing measures lifted as flu risk reduces

Following ongoing monitoring and a robust risk assessment, bird flu risk levels have been reduced meaning poultry and other captive birds will no longer need to be housed from the 18 April and can be kept outside, unless they are in a Protection Zone.

The decision means that as of 18 April, eggs laid by hens with access to outside range areas can return to being marketed as 'Free-Range' eggs.

The enhanced biosecurity requirements that were brought in as part of the Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ) will remain in force as infection may still be circulating in the environment for several more weeks.

West Northamptonshire Council officers are continuing to work with national organisations and those who are registered to keep birds to monitor the ongoing situation surrounding bird flu, and will communicate any future changes.



[More information can be found on the Government website](#)

Get involved in shaping new SEND strategy

Cllr Fiona Baker, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

Town and Parish Councils can play a key role in encouraging parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in their communities to get involved in helping to shape a new three-year SEND strategy for West Northants.

Our Council is inviting people to share their comments, ideas and feedback for the new strategy at a series of events taking place this month and in early May.

The sessions, which are for those who care for or support a child/children or young person up to the age of 25 at home or at work, will give attendees the opportunity to discuss what is working well and what needs to be to better improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people. The feedback will shape West Northamptonshire's new co-produced SEND strategy.



Residents are urged to come along and share their views and input at **one or more** of the events below listed below [and book their attendance online](#)

- **Daventry:** 25 April, 10am to 12pm, Daventry Town Football Club, Browns Road, NN11 4NS
- **Northampton:** 28 April, 10am to 12:30pm, Northampton Guildhall, St Giles Square, NN1 1DE – *this event will be recorded by a local artist, Jon Ralphs*
- **Northampton:** 4 May, 7pm to 8:30pm, Northampton Guildhall, St Giles Square, NN1 1DE (parents/carers)
- **Brackley:** 9 May, 10am – 12pm, Brackley Town Football Club, St James Park, Churchill Way, NN13 7EJ

New branding for SEND support service

West and North Northamptonshire Councils have launched two new separate SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS).

The new service in the West started on 1 April, and continues to deliver the IASS remit of providing free, impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their families.



As part of the Children and Families Act 2014, it is a legal requirement that all local authorities ensure children and young people aged 0 to 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their parents have access to impartial information, advice and support.

These services operate at arm's length from local authorities and clinical commissioning groups and are independently trained.

They provide practical, factual and impartial information advice and support to enable children and young people and their parents to participate fully in decisions about education, health and social care.

West Northants SEND IASS covers the entire West Northamptonshire Council area and has new branding, as shown above.

The service can be accessed by calling 0300 12 61039, emailing SENDIASS@westnorthants.gov.uk or at www.iassnorthants.co.uk

Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to share this information with children, young people and their parents and carers to help ensure a seamless transition and continuation of service delivery.

Update on West Northants planning services

You may be aware of our new council's work to transition and improve planning services from the previous legacy authorities which covered West Northamptonshire.

As part of this we have now completed the first phase of bringing together the old legacy online planning systems – where residents can view and comment on planning applications via our website – into a new single system.

This has been one of the largest data migrations of planning data undertaken in England, and has required a huge amount of time and effort from the small team of officers working on this project to ensure we have done as much as we possibly can during the transfer, and have a system that meets all the legal requirements of the service as well as the user functionality required.

However, as with any system transfer, there were expected to be some teething problems when we went live, and this has proven to be the case with this project.



Planning Register on the website

Despite some initial access issues during the week beginning 3 April, this is now fully operational and all live for applications in the former South and Daventry area at <https://wnc.planning-register.co.uk/>. Northampton applications will be joining on this register in phase two, expected to be completed by the end of June 2023.

Historical documents on applications

Historical documents on applications from the former Daventry District area are not publishing at the moment, and we are aware of this issue. To meet GDPR compliance, we need to ensure that all the historical documents meet data protection requirements before they are accessible online, as a failure here will put the Council at risk of legal action from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Work is underway to get these documents online as soon as possible, but if you require sight of ANY former Daventry District area planning application documents that are not available online, please email planning@westnorthants.gov.uk with an application number and/or location of the site and the Technical Support team will prioritise this application for online publication within 5 working days of the request being made.

System processes

There are several technical issues with the processes our officers follow in the new system, and these are being worked on and addressed on a case-by-case basis, with priority given to any issues affecting the issuing of decision notices. As all the officers are learning a new system, along with new ways of working, this means we are taking a bit longer at the moment to do the things we need to do in the new system. This is resulting in some backlogs in processing new applications, comments made of applications and other requests from the service. Your patience and understanding is greatly appreciated during this period.

Future updates

Going forward, plans for the Northampton integration into the new system are already underway and more details on this will be shared nearer the time. Plans are also underway to host both a members forum and a separate forum for our Town & Parish Councillors to meet the planning leadership team, hear about some of the exciting developments we have planned for the coming months as well as hear direct from you on what you want and need from the service to best enhance both our relationship and services we offer.

Thank you all for your continued patience as we work to improve our planning system for all residents across West Northamptonshire.

Disappointment as Women's Tour is cancelled

Cllr Adam Brown, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure

Our Council will continue to explore opportunities to put on major sporting events following the disappointing news that this year's Womens' Tour is to be postponed.

The organisers last month made the announcement that the prestigious cycling event will be taking a one-year hiatus due to a combination of increased running costs and a reduced level of commercial support.

The event would have seen the second stage of the Tour launch in Northampton before travelling through Daventry, Towcester and Brackley, and formed part of a wider programme of sport and wellbeing events and activities in West Northants this summer.

While it is extremely disappointed we will not be hosting the Women's Tour this summer for reasons beyond our control, it was an honour to be one of just nine locations chosen to take part.

Our Council is committed to doing everything possible to encourage and promote increased participation in sport – particularly by women and girls, and we will continue to strive to bring world-class events to our area as we build a legacy for future generations and establish West Northants as a destination for sporting excellence.

We will also be looking at repurposing funding for other cycling and sporting initiatives which play an important role in bringing communities together and inspiring people to take up sport and live a more active and healthier lifestyle.



People urged to have a say on Short Breaks

Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board and Northamptonshire Children's Trust is calling on the support of Town and Parish councils in signposting parents and carers to a consultation on the Short Breaks service.

Short breaks are breaks for children and young people who have a disability which give them rich opportunities while also allowing their carers to have a break from caring to carry out other vital activities they may not otherwise be able to do.

Currently Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the NHS Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board fund a range of different services from a number of different organisations to provide these breaks, ranging from residential and non-residential breaks, personal care and support, holiday clubs, sensory impairment services and sleep support.

Having worked with parents and practitioners the organisations have developed a potential new model for the services and are looking for feedback on this before going any further.

The new proposed model would bring all current short break services into one offer, led by one organisation – as opposed to the current situation where services are provided across a range of different organisations. The aim is to ensure these services are better joined up to meet the needs of families.

Workshops are being held for families and practitioners working in the field and a questionnaire has also been published to gauge views.

People can have their say by [completing the survey on our Consultation Hub](#)

Nominate someone for county-wide awards

Cllr André González De Savage, Chairman of the Council

A countywide awards scheme is being relaunched to celebrate those unsung heroes who do so much for our communities through their volunteer work.

The Rose of Northamptonshire Awards were first launched in 2021 by the High Sheriff's Office, the Lord Lieutenantcy, and the former Northamptonshire County Council.

The Awards were part of the Unsung Heroes Initiative, looking to identify and express thanks to groups and individuals who worked tirelessly to keep communities safe, and businesses moving, during the global Covid-19 crisis.

In 2023, this county-wide awards initiative is being re-launched by a partnership between our Council, North Northamptonshire Council, and the Northamptonshire Community Foundation. The awards are supported by several representatives for the county, including the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire James Saunders Watson Esq, the High Sheriff Crispin Holborrow DL, the Chairman of North Northamptonshire Council Cllr Larry Henson, and myself.

I am delighted at the return of these awards, through which we can rightfully recognise the quite outstanding efforts that stars in our community put in. Those brilliant people do what they do in such selfless and generous ways and deserve our full recognition.

If you know someone who goes above and beyond to support their community, please [nominate them for a Rose of Northamptonshire Award](#)

Before submitting your nomination, please read the [nomination criteria](#). If you have any questions, please contact roseawards@ncf.uk.com



Building Control services move back in-house

Cllr David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement and Regulatory Services

Building Control services for the Daventry area of West Northamptonshire were brought back in-house on 1 April.

As some Town and Parish Councils will be aware, the Building Control function for the former Daventry District Council was transferred to a shared service with Warwick and Rugby Councils in 2015.



Following the establishment of our unitary Council, work has been ongoing with partners, officers and stakeholders to bring this service back in house to enable a single consistent service to be provided across the whole of West Northants.

The building control service for the Daventry area is now provided by WNC, and the contact details for West Northamptonshire Building Control Service, including the Daventry area, are buildingcontrol@westnorthants.gov.uk, telephone 01604 838920.

Find out [more about building control services](#)

Youth charity goes from strength-to-strength

A charity which supports young people in the Brackley, Towcester and Kings Sutton areas is going from strength-to-strength with support from local partners.

More than 1,000 young people and their families benefit from the events put on by South Northants Youth Engagement (SNYE), including two regular youth clubs at Brackley Leisure Centre and Southfields School and a range of community play and activity days.

Most of the events are free or cost no more than £2 per session to cover costs, but are proving invaluable in helping local children build their confidence and skills.

The charity is supported by a range of organisations, including West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and both Brackley and Towcester Town Councils.

Councillors Sue Sharps, Fiona Baker and Tony Bagot-Webb sit on both councils and between them supported SNYE with £2,000 of funding from their Councillor Covid Support Funds. Cllr Sharps is also a trustee of the charity, alongside Towcester Town Councillor Martin Johns.

Brackley Town Council recently funded training for SNYE staff to allow them to put on popular skateboarding sessions for children ahead of the installation of a new skate ramp in the town.



And SNYE also works with Northamptonshire Sport, Sponne School and Towcester Leisure Centre to run regular sports sessions for young people, with plans for a youth club in the town once a suitable venue is found.

The charity this year appointed two new youth workers to work in Brackley and Towcester, but is always in need of new volunteers to help them support more children in the area.

Anyone interested in volunteering should email admin@youth-engagement.co.uk

More information about the club can be [found on their Facebook page](#) or on the [South Northants Youth Engagement website](#)

Say hello to our customer service team

Our Customer Service Teams visit locations across West Northamptonshire on a monthly basis, offering advice and guidance to residents on a range of issues.

We are grateful for your support in promoting these events to residents, but Town and Parish Council Clerks, and your local councillors, are also very welcome to attend for help with any casework or other queries you may have.

Sessions coming up over the next month include:

- **Brackley Library** (Manor Road, NN13 6AJ): Fri 28 April from 10am to midday.
- **Hunsbury Library** (Overslade Close, Northampton, NN4 0RZ) Thurs 11 May 1-4pm.
- **Moulton Library Plus** (Moulton Reedings, NN3 7AX): Fri 28 April from 10am to midday.
- **Weston Favell Library** (Weston Favell Shopping Centre NN3 8JZ): Fri 12 May 12.30pm to 3pm

[View listings for all of the drop-in sessions on our website](#)

Get involved in shaping Wellbeing strategy

Cllr Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Public Health

Town and Parish Councils are invited to share their views on how partners across West Northamptonshire can work together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our communities.

Your input will help to shape the new West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is being developed by the West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

The strategy will outline a delivery plan which will set out how together, we are going to achieve the 10 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions and some of the steps we need to take.

To ensure that the strategy represents the views of communities and stakeholders we are gathering insights from the community and partners who represent different groups, through collecting existing reports and insights, attending events and running workshops.

- [You can share your views by completing this survey](#)

Background

Earlier this year, Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN) launched its 10-year strategy to support people in Northamptonshire to 'Live Your Best Life'.

The [Integrated Care Northamptonshire Strategy, Live your best life](#) strategy has been developed collaboratively with NHS providers, local councils (all parish and town), voluntary and community organisations and other partners, with a focus on enabling residents to benefit from equitable opportunities to live their best life, whoever they are and wherever they live in Northamptonshire.

The strategy sets out ambitions to achieve better outcomes throughout all stages of a person's lifetime: from pregnancy, birth, and early years, through improved education and better employment opportunities, to better access to health and care services, right through to the end of life – all the time supporting everyone to be valued for who they are.



To help meet the strategies vision, ten 'Live Your Best Life' ambitions have been developed to support improved outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire over the coming years. Each ambition looks at the approaches we need to take together to help us improve outcomes in partnership with our residents.

The ambitions are for people to have:

- The best start in life
- Access to the best available education and learning
- The opportunity to be fit, well and independent
- Employment that keeps people and families out of poverty
- Good housing in places which are clean and green
- Feel safe in homes and when out and about
- Connection with family and friends
- The chance for a fresh start
- Access to health and social care when they need it
- Valued for who they are.

Our Council in the news

Here's a roundup of the news releases and updates published by our Council during the last month.

Don't forget you can keep up-to-date with these and search the news archive by [visiting the News section of our website](#). You can also [sign-up to receive our newsletter](#)

In the past month, we issued press releases on:

- [Communities invited to support the Great British Spring Clean](#) – 17 Mar
- [Statement regarding Ofsted report on Northamptonshire's Fostering Service](#) – 21 Mar
- [Be part of the Coronation celebrations](#) – 21 Mar
- [Progress underway to create Northampton North-West Relief Road](#) – 21 Mar
- [E-bikes are coming to Northampton this month](#) – 21 Mar
- [Council-owned homes in Northampton to become more energy efficient](#) – 23 Mar
- [Update on Fostering Service Inspection](#) – 23 Mar
- [West Northants leisure centres benefit from multi-million-pound funding](#) – 23 Mar
- [West Northants Council partners with Jobs22 to help residents secure local employment](#) – 23 Mar
- [Residents are invited to the Chairman's Community Fair](#) – 24 Mar
- [Businesses urged to join in Coronation celebrations](#) – Mar 24
- [Low-income households to benefit from energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades](#) – Mar 29
- [Council takes action to address Ombudsman findings on SEND placement](#) – Mar 30
- [Gang of criminal landlords fined £434,000 for housing offences](#) – Mar 30
- [Have your say in the Home to School Transport Consultation](#) – Mar 31
- [West Northants continues to explore major sporting opportunities](#) – Mar 31
- [Consultation period for Abington Park area travel scheme extended](#) – Apr 3
- [National scheme to offer £2 bus fares extended until June](#) – Apr 4
- [System-wide remote monitoring project shortlisted at the HSJ Digital Awards](#) – Apr 6
- [Help shape our new SEND strategy 2023-2026 for West Northamptonshire](#) – Apr 6
- [Work starts to regenerate the Old Black Lion Public House](#) – Apr 6
- [Get your tickets for the Coronation Big Lunch and After Party](#) – Apr 6
- [Get more out of our services with the West Northants app](#) – Apr 11
- [Drainage work complete at Northampton Bike Park](#) – April 12
- [Council to take step forward in delivering the A43 major road scheme](#) – April 12
- [Encouraging nature to grow this May](#) – April 12
- [Bite Street NN in Commercial Street market take over](#) – April 12
- [Thousands of pupils allocated primary school places – for September 2023](#) – Apr 17
- [Investing in sustainable and renewable energy sources](#) – Apr 17
- [Improving services for children with disabilities](#) – Apr 18
- [Council to mark Stephen Lawrence Day 30 years on from tragic murder](#) – Apr 18
- [£14m hub for creative businesses officially launches in Northampton](#) – Apr 20