

MONTHLY NEWS REPORT JANUARY 2025



E-Newsletter Issue 12/2024
Father Christmas
Making a surprise visit to
Cogenhoe Community Christmas Lunch
on
13 December 2024

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NEWS REPORT JANUARY 2025

Monthly Highlights

Great Houghton Parish Council were promised a resolution to a longstanding problem with Leys Lane. I have asked Sam Simons, Service Manager Commissioning & Contract Management, WNC Highways to shed some light on this matter so that we can consider next steps. (See Monthly Report).

MKCC have agreed a timetable adjustment to the 33/33A Bus Service, which is effective from 5 January 2025. The new timetable is not ideal, but it will better suit potential commuters. However, the adjustment will not address all the needs of parents who wish to send their children to non-local, “out of catchment” schools.

On 6 December 2024, I escalated the need to repaint the worn ‘No Entry’ road markings on the slip road into Denton from Northampton. There had been some recent difficulties regarding motorists who were not giving way to people turning right into the village from Yardley Hastings. I have asked for a site visit to consider any highway safety improvements. In the meantime, the existing white lines have been repainted to comply with highway safety.

WNC is carrying out a survey to find out if West Northamptonshire has a suitable and sufficient level of childcare available for children up to the age of 14 years old, or up to the age of 25 if they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Consultation closes on 19 January 2025.

WNC is proposing a new Direct Payments Policy for Adult Social Care, which will include direct payments for transport needs and changes to how carers' payments are managed. This activity closes midnight 19 January 2025.

WNC is inviting feedback on a draft Climate Change Strategy, which aims to achieve net zero emissions in West Northamptonshire by 2045, supporting the UK's 2050 target. This consultation closes midnight 19 January 2025.

WNC has recommended a balanced revenue budget for 2025/2026 of £933.8m (£427.7m excluding Dedicated Schools Grant). Having initially forecast it would face a £53m funding shortfall for 2025-26, the Council embarked quickly on an early review of its budgets, reducing the overspend to £39m by July, followed by a further major drive over the autumn to close the gap and deliver a balanced budget. WNC is now seeking views on these proposals. The draft budget proposes to raise Council Tax by 4.99%, including 2% going towards adult social care as specified by the Government. The detailed proposals including the Housing Budget and Capital Programme are set out in my Monthly Report. This consultation closes midnight Tuesday 21 January 2025.

Residents across West Northamptonshire who burn solid fuels in an open fire, burner or stove are being asked to get involved in government-funded research which aims to understand more about their impact on air quality and any potential links to health conditions. The survey closes on Friday, 31 January 2025.

A special meeting of WNC's Full Council will be held on Thursday 9 January 2025 to consider future devolution plans and whether they should support proposals to progress a strategic mayoral authority with Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and North Northamptonshire. The councils have successfully worked together for many years as part of the Central Area Growth Board, more recently becoming the South Midlands Authorities. If WNC approves the proposals and its joined by the other authorities, then Government accepts the principle of a strategic mayoral authority for the South Midlands, there would then

be a period of public consultation guided by the Government to ensure the views of all our residents are fully heard.

In light of the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) all local planning authorities must produce an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF, i.e. by no later than 6 March 2025. Under new plans, applications that comply with local development plans could bypass planning committees entirely. The measures would see a national scheme of delegation introduced, the creation of streamlined committees for strategic development and mandatory training for planning committee members. Local planning officers will have an enhanced decision-making role to implement agreed planning policy.

The Government published tables for West Northamptonshire housing targets, show the annual requirement increase from 2,124 to 2,515. For the current plan period (to 2041) this would increase numbers by 6,647 (17 x 391), assuming the base date of the Local Plan was moved from 1st April 2023 to 1st April 2024. Then the additional work required to meet this need will extend the period required to produce the plan and therefore, the plan period will need to be extended. For every year extension there will be a requirement of a further 2,515 dwellings. For illustrative purposes an extension of two years would see an overall total additional requirement of approximately 12,000 (11,677) dwellings.

The Government is consulting on changes to the Right to Buy scheme. This consultation closes on 15 January 2025.

On 10 December 2024, WNC adopted its Trees & Woods Strategy. "To double the canopy cover of West Northamptonshire to 20% with appropriate and well managed trees and woods". See my Monthly Report.

An assessment that explores the causes and health implications of poor air quality and identifies ways to improve it across West Northamptonshire has been published.

Training providers are invited to apply for an opportunity to deliver courses that will significantly enhance mental wellbeing across Northamptonshire. The deadline for submissions is Monday 27 January 2025.

I have enclosed details of the term dates for West Northamptonshire Schools. See my Monthly Report.

Northampton Film Festival will take place from 7 – 15 March 2025 at Delapré Abbey, Cineworld Northampton and the University of Northampton, but the action began before that, in December 2024 - with Northampton residents invited to take part in the production of a film about Northants: a county of Rebels and Revolutionaries, Misfits and Mavericks, Creatives and Changemakers. See My Monthly Report.

Just before Christmas, I was selected to represent you when the ward changes from Hackleton & Grange Park to the Cogenhoe and the Houghtons ward. If elected, it will be a privilege to serve you again and tackle the many challenges you face. In the meantime, I wish you and your families a Happy, Healthy & Prosperous 2025.

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

All the Best, Steve

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

Leys Lane Great Houghton

Great Houghton Parish Council were promised a resolution to a longstanding problem with Leys Lane by Councillor Jonathan Nunn in April 2022. I have asked Sam Simons, Service Manager Commissioning & Contract Management, WNC Highways to shed some light on this matter so that we can consider next steps. I have asked him to clarify what work has been completed and what remains outstanding. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

Arriva 33/33A Changes

Further to my meeting with Adam Brown, WNC Leader and officers on 19 November 2024 to discuss the 33/33A bus service timetable changes, I can confirm that MKCC have agreed a timetable adjustment which is effective from 5 January 2025. The adjustment will result in the 08:19



AM to be moved forward by 24 minutes to a 07:54 AM departure from Hartwell, arriving at Northampton Bus Station (Bay 14) by 08:30 AM. The evening peak service from Northampton has also been delayed by 15 minutes to a 17:15 PM departure. These adjustments are not ideal, but it will better suit potential commuters. The adjustment will not address all the needs of parents who wish to send their children to non-local, “out of catchment” schools. You can find the adjusted timetable here:

https://api.arrivabus.co.uk/routes/services/ATSE_WV_33-ATSE_WV_33A-ATSE_WV_X33/250105-250313/33-33A-X33-Milton-Keynes-to-Northampton-from-05-Jan-2025.pdf

So where does this leave us:

- WNC will not subsidise this service and MKCC are unlikely to make any further changes and the route will be reviewed in April 2025
- WNC still needs to honour its commitment to address how best to meet the transport needs of the residents in future and allocate BSIP funding to a study of public transport need in the area so as to identify preferred options for meeting this.
- The residents have raised a petition in good faith. WNC must meet the petitioners as soon as possible. I understand that Nick Henstock, WNC, Assistant Director Highways & Transport will be writing to the petitioners to this effect.



No Entry White Lines Denton

On 29 November 2024, I met with a local resident to discuss the slip road into Denton from Northampton. The road markings are very worn and not clear especially when wet. There had been some recent difficulties regarding motorists who were not giving way to people turning right into the village. I agreed that I would work on this matter with Highways. I raised 'Fix My Street 6827608-Denton' on 6 December 2024. I have asked for a site visit to consider any highway safety improvements. In the meantime, the existing white lines have been repainted to comply with highway safety.



White lining at the junction of the High Street, Great Houghton

I escalated the problem with the road markings on the junction at the bottom of the High Street Great Houghton and Bedford Road with WNC, Highways Service Manager on 15 November 2024 and I am pleased to report the work has been completed.

Yardley Hastings URC Coffee Morning 5 December 2024

I was pleased to join some local residents at the Yardley Hastings Coffee Morning at the United Reform Church, Castle Ashby Road, Yardley Hastings. This was the first time that I had been able to meet folks there for a chat. I enjoyed catching up with Rev'd Derek & Janette Hopkins, Jeni, Kathleen, and others. We discussed the ongoing need for public transport services to provide accessibility and mobility for rural communities. Fortunately, Yardley Hastings has a Good Neighbours Scheme run by local people to provide neighbourly support to others who may need help on an occasional or regular basis. Volunteers are free to give as much or as little time as they like, helping others with practical tasks like driving to the GP Surgery or the Hospital.

Janette told us about a recent quilting fair she had attended and showed us a quilted bowl cosy for the microwave which I had never seen before. A perfect way to protect your hands from hot bowls.

Well done to Derek & Janette for arranging this event at 10.45am every other Thursday. The next few sessions will be on 19 December 2024, 9 & 23 January 2025. I look forward to catching up with you all soon.



Yardley Hastings Tree Festival 6 December 2024

On 6 December 2024, I joined parents and children at the Yardley Hastings Memorial Hall for the Tree Dressing Festival. What a splendid display of beautifully decorated trees by lots of different community groups. We were all invited to come and view the decorated trees before voting for our favourite. That was a challenge as you were only given one button to place in the box next to your chosen tree. It was a splendid group of Christmas trees, and we could have voted for all of them.

Afterwards we were invited to partake in the refreshments courtesy of Friends of Yardley Hastings School (FOYS). The hot chocolate and the mince pies were delicious and with the sounds of Christmas Music and many children arriving at 3.30pm it made it a real Christmas Event.

Tree Dressing Day falls on 7 December 2024 when people are encouraged to decorate trees with colourful ribbons, fabrics, and natural ornaments. It is said that the decorations transform ordinary trees into vibrant symbols of unity and environmental respect. Well, the Yardley Hastings Tree Festival continued over the weekend with different community groups being responsible for the refreshments. Well done to everyone who participated in this event.



Brafield Christmas Market 7 December 2024

We braved the weather to join the Christmas Market in Brafield on 7 December 2024. A rare red weather warning was in place in Wales and south-west England with yellow and amber alerts elsewhere. So, the market, which was due to be outside the Red Lion, Brafield was moved inside, and those stall holders selling their Christmas wares were very pleased to be inside. However, Storm Darragh didn't keep everyone away. Despite the icy cold wind and the heavy rain, we were able to mingle with others enjoying the Christmas Market, before driving across to Cogenhoe for their Christmas Fair.



Cogenhoe Christmas Fair 7 December 2024



After the Brafield Christmas Market, we went to the Christmas Fair at St Peter's Church, Cogenhoe at 2.00pm on 7 December 2024. As we arrived in the wind and rain, we were warmly invited into the church to join everyone for their festive Christmas Fair. There were a number of craft stalls and lots of activities for children too. After our time in the church, we went across to the Memorial Hall where the kettle was on, and there was plenty of cake as well as more craft stalls. We chatted to those lingering with hot drinks in the warmth of the hall before we left to face the elements outside. Well done to everyone who worked so hard to make the Christmas Fair a most enjoyable festive fundraiser for the church.

Cogenhoe Christmas Community Lunch 13 December 2024

On 13 December 2024, I attended the Cogenhoe Community Lunch. Cogenhoe & Whiston Parish Council hosted this popular event at the Village Hall in York Avenue, where we enjoyed home-cooked turkey with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas Pudding with Custard or Cream prepared by Dale Cheney, Comunita Café and served by a strong team of helpers.



A party spirit reigned throughout. Father Christmas put in an appearance and distributed sweets to everyone.

James Reynolds a vocalist & entertainer delighted us with a selection of Christmas songs and well-known swing music. We had a fair bit of audience participation throughout and James's serenade to Margaret was wonderful. We finished with a Cogenhoe rendition of

"Sweet Caroline, good times never seemed so good. I've been inclined to believe they never would; oh no no..."

There is nothing like Sweet Caroline to bring a crowd together to create an unforgettable

atmosphere. A special thank you to all who made the lunch possible and especially to Deborah, Julie, Dale, Jackie Joy and others without whom the event would not have been such a success.



Little Houghton Christmas Coffee Morning 14 December 2024

On 14 December 2024, I attended the last Coffee Morning of the year at St Mary the Virgin Church, Little Houghton. Although very cold outside it was warm and inviting in the church. It was good to meet up with friends again. There was a Christmas flavour to the event and I enjoyed catching up with Lawrence, Alice, Gill, Richard, Vicki, Joy, John, Anne, Alison, Alex, Sheila, Paul, Shane, Colin and others. Everyone is welcome for tea or coffee and biscuits and to try your luck at the monthly raffle whilst meeting your friends, or even making some new ones. All proceeds go to support the Village Church Charity.

Well Done to Sarah Arrowsmith for organising 'An Advent Calendar Around Little Houghton 2024'. Houses displayed their window for the first time on their allotted day and then for each day until Christmas. Some residents were offering refreshments. The next meeting of this friendly and welcoming group will be 25 February 2025 at St Laurence Church, Brafield followed by 8 February 2025 at St Mary the Virgin Church, Little Houghton.

Brafield Christmas Tree Festival 14 December 2024

On Saturday 14 December 2024 at 2.00pm, I joined many of our friends at St Lawrence Church, Brafield on the Green for the Christmas Tree Festival. What a splendid display of beautifully decorated trees by different community groups. All proceeds go to support the Village Church Charity. As well as beautiful trees, this year's festival included a cake stall, refreshments and a raffle at the back of the church. Therefore, we were able to chat and listen to some Christmas music whilst bathing in the half light of the Christmas trees before exploring the festival in a relaxed setting and at our own pace. It is a huge undertaking of organisation, time and effort to bring this beloved annual event to the local community. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make it a success.



Cogenhoe Community Help Desk 19 December 2024

On 19 December 2024, I met with Deborah Rush, Clerk to Cogenhoe Parish Council at the Tea Rom, Cogenhoe where she was delivering the weekly Denton Surgery prescriptions and providing support from the Parish Help Desk. Whilst there, I heard about the Cogenhoe Youth Club winning an award from Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC) for New Group of the Year. Councillor Jon Bailey and Deborah Rush attended the NAYC Annual Awards Celebration 2024 on 14 December 2024 to receive their award. The Awards Celebration is an opportunity for NAYC to recognise and appreciate the work and commitment of the hundreds of volunteers supporting young people across the county. Well done to everyone involved in this new initiative. The next Community Lunch Club is on 6 January 2024.



Little Houghton Christmas Lunch 19 December 2024

On 19 December 2024, I attended the Little Houghton Christmas Lunch at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton. After a short service from Rev Kris, we all tucked in to a two-course meal of Roast Turkey and all the trimmings followed by Christmas pudding with custard or cream and tea or coffee. It was a special time of celebration in the truest spirit of Christmas. The lunch was marvellous, and all the helpers were so kind and helpful. A special thank you to Joy Mayhew and her team for organising such a special lunch. If you would like to join the next Parish Lunch, which takes place from 12-2pm on the third Thursday each month, then let Joy know if you would like to come on 01604 890498. It's a great way to catch up with friends and meet some new ones too.



Lessons & Carols at Little Houghton Church 22 December 2024



Although Nine Lessons and Carols is popularly associated with King's College, Cambridge, we were able to join others at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton on the evening of 22 December 2024 for their unique version of this tradition. On hearing carols like "While shepherds watched their flocks by night" and "O Come, All Ye Faithful" many of us were reminded of our own school carol services.

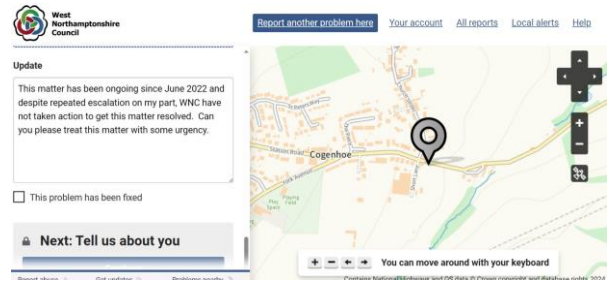
When we arrived, James was standing on an extremely high stepladder lighting the beautiful candles atop the various chandeliers. It's quite a feat to light and extinguish those

flames. But a joy to experience them being lit all the same.

Many had already warmed up their vocal cords as they sang the descant. Perhaps they were seasoned singers, but all our voices made this a night to remember. A special thank you to Revd Kris, the readers and everyone else who made the evening such a success. It was a delightful evening of carol singing at St Mary's Church, Little Houghton. This evening of readings and favourite carols created a warm and festive atmosphere that left us all feeling full of Christmas spirit.

Fix My Street Cogenhoe 3585915

This matter has been ongoing for quite some time and despite repeated escalation on my part, WNC have not taken action to get this matter resolved. I have raised the matter yet again requesting that it be treated with some urgency. I have escalated this matter six times since December 2023. It requires enforcement, yet I am not receiving a response or an update. I have referred the matter directly to highways for resolution on 2 January 2025.



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.



Tell us your views about early years and wraparound childcare

WNC would like to hear from parents and carers of children who receive childcare in West Northamptonshire to understand their experiences and needs. We are carrying out a survey to find out if West Northamptonshire has a suitable and sufficient level of childcare available for children up to the age of 14 years old, or up to the age of 25 if they have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). As a local authority, we have a duty to complete a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment each year on how we meet our legal requirement to secure sufficient and affordable childcare. The assessment compares the supply of childcare with the demand for it, to help us see gaps in the childcare market. The Consultation closes on 19 January 2025.

Adult Social Care Direct Payments Policy

WNC is proposing a new Direct Payments Policy for Adult Social Care to ensure transparency and consistency. This policy will include direct payments for transport needs and changes to how carers' payments are managed. We are seeking your feedback to shape this policy.



Help shape our Adult Social Care Direct Payments Policy

For further information, including details of drop in events, and how to provide views please visit: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../help-shape.../>
This activity closes midnight 19 January 2025.

Draft Climate Change Strategy

WNC is inviting feedback on a draft Climate Change Strategy, which aims to achieve net zero emissions in West Northamptonshire by 2045, supporting the UK's 2050 target. The strategy outlines plans to reduce emissions, adapt to climate impacts, engage the community, and monitor progress.

For further information and how you can provide comments please visit:



https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../draft_climate.../

This consultation closes midnight 19 January 2025.

WNC Draft Budget 2025-2026 Consultation

At their meeting on 10 December 2024, the Council's Cabinet approved plans to consult on WNC's Draft Budget for 2025 to 2026 and are now seeking views on these proposals.



This consultation closes midnight Tuesday 21 January 2025. If you would like further information on the proposals and to give us your comments, please visit West Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2025 to 2026 Consultation: <https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../wnc-budget.../>

If you have any queries, comments or you need a copy of the consultation questionnaire in another format you can contact us by email, post, or telephone. Our contact details are as follows:

Email address: haveyoursay@westnorthants.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 126 7000

Postal address: Budget Consultation Response

West Northamptonshire Council

The Guildhall

St Giles' Street

Northampton

NN1 1DE

Solid Fuel Burning Habits Survey

Residents across West Northamptonshire who burn solid fuels in an open fire, burner or stove are being asked to get involved in government-funded research which aims to understand more about their impact on air quality and any potential links to health conditions. Solid fuel can include things such as coffee logs, wood, briquettes, coal and there is little information available locally on the types of burners people use, the kind of fuel they burn, and how often they're used. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has been successful in receiving Government funding so it can work with residents to understand the impacts of solid fuel burners in the home. With the increased popularity of solid fuel burners alongside a potential link with exacerbating existing health issues such as asthma and other lung conditions, the Council wants to see if there are any links between what we burn and the impacts on our most vulnerable adults and children.

Whilst accepting that items such as wood burners are now part of a lifestyle choice for some and can be an essential way of heating and cooking in the home for others, this funding will enable the Council to help people to make more informed decisions on how they heat their homes and cook. The work also forms part of a wider range of actions being progressed to reduce pollution across the area and raise public awareness in relation to the type of fuel and how and where burners are used.



Provide your views on Solid Fuel Burning

Residents are being encouraged to complete an anonymous survey designed to provide insights into this. The Council is also looking for volunteers who use solid fuel burners to have an air quality monitor installed within their home to capture information on levels of Particulate Matter (PM) throughout the burning season. The Particulate Matter (PM) it is looking at is the small particles about the width of a human hair that are released when fuel is burnt. People who complete the survey will have the option to enter a draw to win a bespoke Better Burning bundle by providing their contact details, which will be stored separately to ensure that responses remain anonymous. Items in the bundle could include a stove thermometer, stove fan or a supply of compliant fuel.

The survey closes on Friday, 31 January. For more information and to share your experience of owning and using a solid fuel burner, please visit the survey website.

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Cost of living

Further information and support can be found on:
<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost-living-support>
<https://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living>

Support where you live.

Local Voluntary and Community Organisations have been able to apply for grants funded by the Household Support Fund. This allows them to use their knowledge and understanding of the needs of residents to provide tailored support.



**For advice on
cost of living support**

Visit:
[westnorthants.gov.uk/cost-of-living](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost-of-living)

call:
0300 126 7000*
*Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

or scan:

Draft Budget Proposals Protect Services

Essential public services across West Northamptonshire will be protected from cuts in the financial year ahead, despite the council continuing to face significant funding and demand challenges.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has set out its draft budget for 2025-26, with a range of proposals that address a multi-million-pound funding shortfall without reducing the delivery of services to residents.

Like other local authorities across the country, the Council continues to face severe financial pressures due to factors such as an increase in costs and demand for services, particularly around supporting children in care, vulnerable adults, people facing homelessness and home to school transport.

Despite these pressures, the authority is on course to set a balanced revenue budget for 2025/2026 of £933.8m (£427.7m excluding Dedicated Schools Grant). Having initially forecast it would face a £53m funding shortfall for 2025-26, the Council embarked quickly on an early review of its budgets, reducing the overspend to £39m by July, followed by a further major drive over the autumn to close the gap and deliver a balanced budget.



The draft revenue budget was considered by WNC's Cabinet on Tuesday 10 December 2024 with a six-week public consultation launching the following day 11 December 2024 when residents will be encouraged to have their say ahead of the final budget going to Full Council in February.

Key to helping the Council protect essential services whilst balancing the books in its fifth year as a unitary authority is the income it receives from Council Tax. The draft budget proposes to raise Council Tax by 4.99%, including 2% going towards adult social care as specified by the Government. This increase, in line with last year's, would mean an average rise of £1.71 per week on a Band D property yet would contribute around £19m a year towards services. The Council has also continued to review, restructure and transform services within the organisation to find better, more efficient ways of working without adversely impacting the services it delivers to residents. These initiatives are set to achieve efficiencies of around £26m next year. The proposals also include a full review of fees and charges where appropriate to keep up with inflation and to ensure they fairly reflect today's operating costs.

The draft budget also proposes that WNC invest over £155m in its capital programme over the next four years, to improve local infrastructure and assets such as land, buildings and equipment. The Council will also be investing in accommodation to reduce its reliance on expensive private placements. Additionally, the Council will spend an estimated £20m in public health support which is funding from the Government in the year ahead to progress a range of schemes aimed at improving residents' wellbeing, reducing health inequalities and continuing to support communities.

There are also proposals how the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) should be funded in 2025-26 – this is money spent on maintaining and improving social housing, including building new homes. There are plans to invest £77m in social housing during the next financial year, which forms part of a total five-year capital programme amounting to £261m.

The draft 2025-26 budget proposals were approved by WNC's Cabinet on Tuesday 10 December 2024:

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

Public consultation on the proposals launched on Wednesday, 11 December 2024, when further information on how to get involved will be available on the Council's consultation hub.

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

The deadline for completing this questionnaire is midnight Tuesday 21 January 2025.

Housing Budget 2025/2026

On 10 December 2024, West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) Cabinet agreed to consult on the housing budget for 2025/26. Funding from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is spent on maintaining and improving social housing, including building new homes. Within the HRA there are plans to invest £77m in social housing during the next financial year, which forms part of a total five-year capital programme amounting to £261m.

The investment in 2025-26 includes:

- £8m on External Improvements
- £7m on Internal improvements
- £6m on structural works and compliance
- £3m on Energy Efficiency, heating and ventilation, and window improvements
- £2.3m on disabled adaptations
- £39m on new build programmes and major projects
- £10m on buying back social housing and acquisitions of suitable properties.



The Council has submitted a draft budget for 2025-26 proposing an increase of 2.7% in accordance with the Government's amended Rent Standard, with effect from 1 April 2025. This is expected to see the average rent increase from £111.79 to £114.80 per week. The draft housing budget proposal launched on 11 December 2024 will last six weeks enabling residents to have their say ahead of the final budget going to Full Council in February. The deadline for completing this questionnaire is midnight Tuesday 21 January 2025.

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

£100m Capital Programme for 2025/26

In a bid to strengthen local communities and pave the way for a more sustainable future, West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is set to invest £100 million in capital funding next year. The Council has unveiled an ambitious £100m capital programme for 2025-26, rising to £155m over the next four years, demonstrating its commitment to improving infrastructure, supporting residents, and encouraging sustainable growth. The capital programme is different to the Council's revenue budget, which funds day-to-day services like waste collection and social care. Instead, capital funding is used to improve local infrastructure and assets such as land, buildings and equipment and other projects that will deliver long-term benefits for the area.

The key projects planned for the coming year are:

- a substantial £12.4 million allocation to improve highways. This funding will support a wide range of projects and activities including road improvements across the area.
- Projects such as the ongoing regeneration of Northampton town centre will continue to drive economic growth across the area. This includes a multi-million-pound investment in the Greyfriars

Featured: [West Northamptonshire Council Draft Budget 2025 to 2026 Consultation](#)

Give us your views on the Council's Budget proposals for the 2025 to 2026 financial year. Each year West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) plans for the money it will have available and how it should be spent on delivering services in line with the priorities and objectives set out in its...

Closes 21 January 2025



redevelopment, which will also see the vacant Corn Exchange transformed into a hub for performance and creativity.

- Providing a link from Greyfriars to the wider town centre, this project will attract significant footfall and investment, revitalising the area as a vibrant urban hub.
- Parking infrastructure will also receive a modern upgrade, with investments in Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology at key locations like Sixfields Reservoir, Racecourse, and Primrose Hill car parks. This initiative aims to improve the parking convenience and safety for residents and visitors.
- To support families and strengthen community resources, the Council has committed £2 million towards the creation of new family hubs in Daventry and Northampton, providing essential services for families.
- The plans also include improvements to the Central Library. The library enhancements will include a new adult learning service, a dedicated children's area, and modernised reception facilities, as well as the addition of public toilets to improve accessibility for all users.
- Housing remains a key focus, with £10 million allocated to addressing the need for temporary accommodation. This funding will enable the Council to purchase 50 properties, providing safe, secure homes for residents facing urgent needs.
- The programme also funds adaptations to homes for vulnerable adults, enabling them to live independently with greater comfort and security, reducing reliance on more intensive forms of care.

Beyond the capital programme, the Council remains committed to residents' well-being, addressing health inequalities, and supporting communities through the challenges posed by the ongoing cost of living crisis, with initiatives funded through government public health funding.

The full 2025/26 draft budget reports are available to view on the Council's website. Public consultation on the proposals launched on Wednesday, 11 December and close on 21 January 2025.

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

Approach to Devolution

West Northamptonshire Councillors will meet on 9 January 2025 to decide their future approach to devolution. The Government's White Paper published on 16 December 2024 sets out plans to create more unitary councils, combined authorities (CAs) and strategic mayoral authorities (SMAs) across England and



devolve more local decision making from central government to a regional footprint. Devolution is used to describe the transfer of powers from national to local government and in places with a regionally-elected mayor, this also means the transfer of significant investment to drive new infrastructure, jobs and growth. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is already a unitary authority created in 2021, replacing and simplifying the two-tier system of county, district and borough councils to deliver all their services to

residents in the West Northants area. But WNC is not currently part of a combined authority or strategic mayoral authority, which are formed by two or more neighbouring councils and typically cover around 1.5million residents.

A strategic mayoral authority is led by a regionally elected mayor, which is entirely different to civic and ceremonial mayors at town councils and has enhanced powers and funding devolved from national government to make collective decisions on issues such as economic growth, transport, housing, skills and employment. A new strategic mayoral authority covering the West Northamptonshire area would not replace the existing unitary council but would provide it with a stronger say and more significant role in regional investment and decision making.

A special meeting of WNC's Full Council will be held on Thursday 9 January 2025 for members to consider future devolution plans and whether they should support proposals to progress a strategic mayoral authority with Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and North Northamptonshire. The councils have successfully worked together for many years as part of the Central Area Growth Board, more recently becoming the South Midlands Authorities.

In September, the six authorities submitted an Expression of Interest to the Government for a strategic mayoral authority and now have until 10 January 2025 to formally confirm if they wish to proceed and be part of the national Devolution Priority Programme. The Government's plans for devolution propose fundamental changes to local government across England so it's essential that our members consider and discuss these, and how everyone living and working in West Northants might benefit from the future opportunities it may bring. The South Midlands authorities have a strong history of working together to drive economic growth across our region so it makes sense to consider how we can build on this partnership further for the benefit of all our communities, through a devolution deal that could leverage in hundreds of millions of pounds of further investment.

If WNC approves the proposals and its joined by the other authorities, then Government accepts the principle of a strategic mayoral authority for the South Midlands, there would then be a period of public consultation guided by the Government to ensure the views of all our residents are fully heard.

Councillors will meet to consider the devolution proposals at 5pm on Thursday, 9 January 2025 in the Guildhall, Northampton – the report can be viewed on the website and the meeting watched live on WNC's YouTube channel.

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

The Government's English Devolution White Paper is available to view on

[GOV.UK https://www.gov.uk/.../eng.../english-devolution-white-paper](https://www.gov.uk/.../eng.../english-devolution-white-paper)

and further information explaining Devolution is available on the Local Government Association website.

REGULATORY SERVICES

E-Petitions

WNC welcomes petitions as they are a useful tool for highlighting important issues and allowing individuals to share their concerns. If you live, work or study in West Northamptonshire you can submit a petition or e-petition for WNC to deliberate. All petitions must relate to an area that we have authority over. You can find more information on these services throughout this website. All petitions sent or presented to us that meet the requirements below will receive an acknowledgement from us within 10 working days of receipt, setting out what we plan to do with the petition.

A petition should include the following details:



- 1) A clear concise statement which sets out your concerns and what action you would like us to consider
- 2) The name and contact details of the lead petitioner who we can send correspondence relating to the petition and communicate with on behalf of the people you are supporting.

How do I submit a petition?

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

RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

Rural Economies are Vital to Industrial Strategy

Recognising and nurturing the contribution and potential of rural economies is a 'vital ingredient' to a successful Industrial Strategy, according to the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE). NICRE submitted a response to the Government's Green Paper consultation which set out that the strategy's ambitions for growth will only be achieved if it harnesses the diversity, spatial reach and sectoral strengths of the nation's rural economies.

NICRE's submission states:

"Rural economies bring a range of distinctive contributions and comparative advantages to wider regions



and the nation as a whole, as well as a basket of solutions for economic renewal. There are 600,000 registered business units in rural areas in England alone, employing 4.2million people. They make up a quarter of businesses and contribute over £315billion to the economy, with their supply chains, workforces and innovations reaching well beyond rural areas.

NICRE's response, based on evidence and insight, together with inputs from its Rural Business Beacon network, also highlights:

- 1) All of the priority sectors identified have a substantial rural footprint.
- 2) Emerging sub-sectors and technological priorities should be reflective of devolved, locally and regionally-driven opportunities and specialisms and should particularly recognise the vital role that micro and small businesses play in their development, and which in rural areas account for higher share of employment in registered businesses.
- 3) Land-based and agri-food enterprises should be strongly recognised as quintessential foundational sectors which underpin extensive supply chains of firms and jobs across cities and towns, as well as rural communities.
- 4) Significant proportions of businesses in rural areas perceive local opportunities for business development, which is the critical starting point for entrepreneurial activities that can lead to growth and productivity improvements. However, these investment plans are held back by key barriers

- which include, in order of significance: difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff; lack of financial resources; lack of availability of affordable housing, lack of transport services and infrastructure; planning restrictions; inadequate broadband capacity; and lack of availability of business premises.
- 5) Recruitment and retention of staff is a chief constraint for rural and urban firms, with slightly more rural than urban businesses facing this challenge. There is a need to develop support and provide advice provision to help small and micro-businesses to tackle their recruitment challenges, including to develop different recruitment approaches, in-house training provision, and access to apprenticeships, as well as support for collaborative approaches and solutions between groups of firms.
 - 6) Rural electrification is a key agenda for the Industrial Strategy to tackle. Rural areas are key sites of electricity generation, however ongoing research funded by Rural England and NICRE is highlighting challenges in rural areas in transitioning to new electric-based technologies, such as heat pumps and vehicle-charging points.
 - 7) Many examples of cutting-edge science and technology clusters in rural settings across the country that are globally respected.
 - 8) Embedding rural enterprise across local growth and investment plans, which are the cornerstone of a place-based approach, will be key to delivering the economic development goals of the many local and combined authorities that have a rural footprint.

Lessons, for example, should be drawn from the experience of the North East Combined Authority and its development of an Environmental Stewardship, Coast and Rural Growth Investment Plan, and the establishment with Government of a 'North East Coastal and Rural Taskforce' focused on the natural environment and coastal and rural regeneration and growth.

Read NICRE's full response:

<https://nicre.co.uk/.../nicre-submission-to-green-paper...>

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 thirty-two dwellings on Land off Blenheim Rise, Kings Sutton Hearing -**Dismissed**
- WNN/2021/0466 Land North Of, Bedford Road, Great Houghton - **Dismissed**
- WNS/2022/1525/FUL Land North of Whiston Road, Cogenhoe, Northamptonshire – **Allowed subject to conditions.**
- WNS/2021/1858/EIA Solar Farm Milton Road Gayton-**Dismissed**
- N/2020/1474 a 6-storey building providing up to 112no. one, two & three bed flats and apartments (Use Class C3), commercial development (Use Class E (a,b,c,d,e,f,g(i)) and associated ancillary infrastructure', 123 - 135 Bridge Street, Northampton-Appeal **Allowed**
- N/2020/1497 6 storey building providing up to 66no. one, two & three bed flats and apartments (Use Class C3), commercial development (Use Class E (a, b, c,d,e,f,g(i)) and associated ancillary infrastructure', 153 - 165 Bridge Street, Northampton- Appeal **Allowed**
- APP/W2845/W/23/3327830 Hall Farm, Main Street, East Haddon, West Northamptonshire NN6 8BU. Appeal **Allowed**
- WNS/2022/2060/MAO. Outline Application - with all matters reserved to provide later living accommodation (Class 2) as three integrated types of accommodation on a site off the main entrance to Whittlebury Park. Appeal **Dismissed**.
- 2024/0734/FUL. Application for the increase of occupancy from a six person HiMO (Use Class C4) to a seven person HiMO (Sui Generis). Appeal **Allowed**.
- 2023/6537/OUT. Whittlebury Park Creation of an indoor/outdoor Wedding Ceremony facility, in conjunction with returning the Greenkeepers Compound to formerly approved location. Appeal **Dismissed**.
- WNS/2023/0011/MAF. Land east of The Meadows, Old Stratford (Grid Ref Easting: 477964, Grid Ref Northing: 240789. Appeal **Allowed**.

Pending

- 2023/5711/PIP Permission in principle for development of 8-9 custom/self-build Land Poundfield Road Potterspury Towcester NN12 7QB Appeal **Pending**
- 2023/6117/MAO Outline planning application for 11 serviced plots for self-builders and public open space Forest Road Piddington Appeal **Pending**
- WNS/2021/1819/EIA Land North Of The Bell Plantation Watling Street Towcester Hybrid planning application comprising of Part A: Full planning permission for a new roundabout access from the A5; internal spine road, creation of development plots with associated earthworks and plateauing; delivery of plateaus and access for Towcester Town Football Club (TTFC); site-wide structural landscaping and infrastructure; and a single warehouse (Use Class B8) and ancillary office, with associated access, hardstanding, landscaping, parking and supporting infrastructure. Part B: Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the development of TTFC and employment floorspace falling within Use Classes B2 and B8, with ancillary office space on the development plots; as established through Part A of this application Appeal **Pending**

New National Planning Policy Framework with a Return of Housing Targets

East Midlands Councils (EMC) has produced an analysis of the impact of the new housing figures on LPAs in the East Midlands. There are a number of significant changes included within the revised housing allocations

and EMC will provide further information in a NPPF briefing note to be shared early in the New Year. The government has announced significant planning reforms, including ‘mandatory’ housing targets for councils, aiming to deliver 1.5 million new homes by 2029. Councils across country will now be required to build 370,000 homes annually, with higher targets set for areas facing severe affordability issues. The reforms also introduce changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), encouraging development on brownfield sites first and reviewing "grey belt" land for potential use while ensuring greenbelt protections remain strict. Additionally, developers will face new “golden rules,” requiring infrastructure and affordable housing as part of any new projects.

To support the changes, councils will receive £100 million in funding to hire staff and conduct technical studies, with an aim to recruit an additional 300 planning officers nationwide. The government has also introduced measures like a New Homes Accelerator and increased housing guarantees to unblock stalled developments and support small-scale builders.

NPPF Published

The Government has published its full response to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation. The Government received over 10,000 responses to the consultation, and the document now includes some refinements to the proposals set out in the original document. Under new planning rules, updated via the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Councils were told to play their part to meet housing need, with new immediate mandatory housing targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding and deliver growth across the country. Areas with the highest unaffordability for housing and greatest potential for growth will see housebuilding targets increase, while stronger action will ensure councils adopt up-to-date local plans or develop new plans that work for their communities.

A new approach will be introduced to the greenbelt. While remaining committed to a brownfield first approach, the updated NPPF will require councils to review their greenbelt boundaries to meet targets, identifying and prioritising lower quality ‘grey belt’ land. Any development on greenbelt must meet strict requirements, via the new ‘golden rules’, which require developers to provide the necessary infrastructure for local communities, such as nurseries, GP surgeries and transport, as well as a premium level of social and affordable housing. To further tackle the housing crisis, councils and developers will also need to give greater consideration to social rent when building new homes and local leaders have greater powers to build genuinely affordable homes for those who need them most.

Updated Timetables for Local Plan Preparation

In light of the changes to the NPPF, the Deputy Prime Minister has asked that all local planning authorities produce an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS) within 12 weeks of the publication of the NPPF, i.e. by no later than 6 March 2025. The updated LDS should include clear, realistic, and specific dates for consultation and submission of the local plan.


New Standard Method for Housing Need December 2024: East Midlands Summary

Local Authority Name	Average Annual Net additions (2020/21-2023/24)	Old Method	Proposed Method	New Method	Difference Old/New	Difference Proposed/New
Amber Valley	516	353	682	615	264	-67
Ashfield	405	446	604	535	89	-69
Bassetlaw	931	260	665	613	353	-52
Blaby	354	329	559	542	213	-17
Bolsover	464	195	424	353	158	-51
Boston	317	250	379	356	106	-23
Broxtowe	332	384	658	621	237	-37
Charnwood	698	1,115	1,017	978	-117	-34
Chesterfield	359	211	558	500	289	-58
Derby	892	1,244	1,062	906	-338	-156
Derbyshire Dales	222	216	571	580	364	9
East Lindsey	544	437	1,091	1,009	572	-82
Erewash	201	376	569	523	147	-46
Gedling	551	460	665	609	149	-56
Harborough	891	510	706	723	213	17
High Peak	362	243	585	553	310	-32
Hinckley & Bosworth	589	422	689	646	217	-40
Leicester	1,030	2,435	1,690	1,557	-878	-133
Lincoln*						
Mansfield	377	259	540	495	236	-45
Melton	374	192	370	302	170	-8
Newark and Sherwood	675	437	730	707	270	-23
NE Derbyshire	625	224	622	591	367	-31
North Kesteven*						
NW Leicestershire	755	357	621	595	238	-26
Nottingham	1,893	1,845	1,451	1,247	-598	-204
Osby and Wigston	258	198	389	382	184	-7
Rushcliffe	1,079	609	831	800	271	-1
Rutland	101	123	264	266	143	2
South Derbyshire	1,033	507	606	581	74	-25
South Holland	680	427	573	542	115	-31
South Kesteven	567	687	912	895	208	-17
West Lindsey*						
N Northamptonshire	1,765	1,856	2,064	1,978	122	-86
W Northamptonshire	2,095	2,124	2,584	2,515	391	-69
*Central Lincs Joint Plan	1422	1,054	1,676	1552	498	-124
EM Total	23,348	20,793	27,383	25,760	4,967	-1,623

Higher Figure
Lower Figure

Question 54 – Rural Affordable Housing

The NPPF consultation included over 100 questions and the Governments response to these has also been



published at this link. <https://www.gov.uk/.../government-response-to-the...> Question 54 in the consultation specifically focused on rural affordable housing.

What measures should we consider to better support and increase rural affordable housing?

A total of 1,254 respondents answered this question.

Key points

Respondents suggested additional and better targeted funding to support the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas, both as capital grant and resource funding to provide the necessary capacity within local authorities, housing associations and others. Respondents also supported making more use of rural exception sites. Respondents recognised the value of the national network of Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs) in bringing housing development forward in rural areas and the need for their support to be maintained.

The importance of optimising the amount of affordable housing on individual development sites was widely acknowledged among respondents. The key issue raised here was the threshold below which affordable housing contributions should not be sought. There is also ambiguity over whether the policy allows a threshold to be set for sites of between 5 and 10 units. A total of 1,254 respondents answered this question.

West Northamptonshire Council Housing Targets

The Government published tables identifying what the changes would be for each local authority (See above). For West Northamptonshire, this would see the annual requirement increase from 2,124 to 2,515. For the current plan period (to 2041) this would increase numbers by 6,647 (17 x 391), assuming the base date of the Local Plan was moved from 1st April 2023 to 1st April 2024. Then the additional work required to meet this need will extend the period required to produce the plan and therefore, the plan period will need to be extended. For every year extension there will be a requirement of a further 2,515 dwellings. For illustrative purposes an extension of two years would see an overall total additional requirement of approximately 12,000 (11,677) dwellings.

Future of Planning Committees

The Government has announced last week a 'sweeping overhaul of local planning committees, as part of new measures to tackle the housing crisis. Under new plans to modernise the planning approval process,

applications that comply with local development plans could bypass planning committees entirely. The measures would see a national scheme of delegation introduced, the creation of streamlined committees for



strategic development and mandatory training for planning committee members. Under the new plans, local planning officers will also have an enhanced decision-making role to implement agreed planning policy.

Next Steps

The Government has published a Planning Reform Working Paper entitled 'Planning Committees'. The measures set out in the working paper will seek views from a range of planning, housing and local government experts before finalising proposed details for planning committees. The government will then publish a formal public consultation on these detailed proposals to coincide with the introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill next year.

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.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Crucial Support to Vulnerable Individuals this Winter

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has launched its comprehensive Winter Provision Service and Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) to provide vital support for people experiencing homelessness, rough sleeping and other vulnerable individuals this winter. The service, developed in partnership with local charities Northampton Hope Centre and The Salvation Army, will provide crucial support to the most vulnerable residents from November to March 2025, ensuring they have access to shelter, warmth, and essential services.



This will include implementing a temporary nightly shelter when SWEP is activated and temperatures reach zero °C and below, providing verified rough sleepers with a safe place to sleep as well as access to housing advice and wrap around support. In addition, a winter shelter will be run by Northampton Hope Centre during January and February, to provide verified rough sleepers with a safe place to sleep during the worst period of winter. In addition, expanded day centre services will be available at the

Northampton Hope Centre offering hot meals, health check-ups, and access to housing support services seven days a week. The programme will also provide holistic services including mental health support, debt advice, and substance misuse counselling to help individuals transition towards long-term housing solutions. SWEP is usually activated when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 0°C for three nights in a row or during extreme weather conditions such as heavy snowfall or storms. WNC's outreach teams will be deployed to identify and assist individuals at risk, ensuring they are aware of the overnight accommodation and available services. To find out more about support available for people sleeping rough in very cold or extreme weather, please visit the WNC website.

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

If you are concerned about someone who maybe sleeping rough, or are sleeping rough yourself, you can let us know by using Street Link. <https://thestreetlink.org.uk/>

This is a national service that informs local authorities about people sleeping rough in their area and helps to connect people to local services and support. You can also email the Council's Outreach Team.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/housing.../homelessness>

If you use What Three Words, <https://what3words.com/products/what3words-app>

you can email the location this gives you to let us know where we might find someone.

£3 Billion Housing Support

The government has announced a £3 billion housing support package aimed at unlocking more homes and driving growth within the UK housing sector. This package includes a range of guarantees designed to help housebuilders access more affordable credit, a key step in overcoming barriers to growth.

The newly announced guarantees will help housebuilders, particularly smaller and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), to secure low-cost loans from banks and lenders. These guarantees, designed to reduce risk for lenders, aim to stimulate housebuilding by making credit more accessible. This additional funding will support the construction of over 20,000 new homes across the country, helping to progress the government's target of delivering 1.5 million new homes by 2029.



One of the key elements of the package is the doubling of the ENABLE Build scheme, which will now provide £2 billion in funding to support smaller housebuilders. This will help to deliver over 10,000 new homes, including those for students and older people, in areas where housing needs are particularly high. In addition, the Private

Rented Sector Guarantee Scheme will reopen later this year, with nearly £2 billion available for Build-to-Rent developers. The scheme is expected to help ramp up housebuilding efforts, offering more accessible funding for a wider range of housing projects, particularly in areas where private rental accommodation is in high demand. While the announcement has been welcomed by many in the housing industry, including the Federation of Master Builders and the British Business Bank, it also highlights the ongoing challenges faced by smaller housebuilders in securing finance. With access to credit often limited for SMEs, these new guarantees are seen as a necessary step in ensuring they can continue contributing to the housing market. As the government looks to accelerate the delivery of new homes, it remains to be seen how these additional support measures will impact housebuilding rates across the UK in the months and years ahead. The goal remains to meet the demand for affordable housing and improve the availability of homes for communities across the country.

For rural areas, this package could be particularly important as smaller builders and developers, who often focus on rural and underserved locations, stand to benefit from the increased financial backing. If successful, the schemes could help address housing shortages in these regions and contribute to wider economic growth by supporting local construction projects. The Rural Services Network will continue to monitor the rollout of these schemes and provide updates to members, particularly those involved in local housing and development projects.

Reforming the Right to Buy

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) state: "Right to Buy is an integral way for social tenants to get on the property ladder; many of whom may not otherwise be able to access home ownership. However, reform of Right to Buy is essential to better protect much-needed social housing stock, boost council capacity and build more social homes than we lose, supporting the government's commitment to deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation."

The consultation follows the reduction in maximum Right to Buy cash discounts, which was announced at Autumn Budget 2024, and asks for views on:

- 1) The qualifying criteria for tenants
- 2) Initial and maximum discounts as a percentage of the property value
- 3) Which types of properties should be exempted under the scheme
- 4) Whether there should be increased restrictions on properties after sale
- 5) The replacement of homes sold under the Right to Buy rules governing the use of Right to Buy receipts and how these could be simplified.

This consultation closes on 15 January 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/.../consult.../reforming-the-right-to-buy>

ENVIRONMENT

WNC Trees & Woods Strategy

On 10 December 2024, WNC Cabinet adopted the Trees & Woods Strategy. You will hear about its Vision Statement:

“To double the canopy cover of West Northamptonshire to 20% with appropriate and well managed trees and woods”

<https://westnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/.../Adoption%20of...>

Figure 4: Tree Canopy Percent by Ward⁵

WARD	CANOPY COVER %	WARD AREA (HA)	CANOPY COVER (HA)
TALAVERA	20.38%	387	78.87
BILLING & RECTORY FARM	19.47%	330	64.25
DELAPRE & RUSHMERE	15.71%	623	97.87
EAST HUNSBURY & SHELFLEYS	15.56%	560	87.14
BRACKLEY	15.35%	688	105.61
SIXFIELDS	14.99%	862	129.21
NENE VALLEY	14.59%	1,196	174.50
RIVERSIDE PARK	14.52%	735	106.72
HACKLETON & GRANGE PARK	13.73%	9,483	1,302.02
BOOTHVILLE & PARKLANDS	12.57%	490	61.59
DAVENTRY WEST	12.33%	595	73.36
MIDDLETON CHENEY	10.42%	11,790	1,228.52
KINGSTHORPE SOUTH	10.18%	366	37.26
SILVERSTONE	10.02%	21,120	2,116.22
TOWCESTER & ROADE	10.01%	4,433	443.74
ST GEORGE	9.41%	267	25.12
DEANSHANGER	9.00%	8,566	770.94
DAVENTRY EAST	8.97%	2,241	201.02
HEADLANDS	8.89%	269	23.91
DUSTON WEST & ST CRISPIN	8.74%	404	35.31
MOULTON	8.36%	8,783	734.26
WOODFORD & WEEDON	8.07%	13,730	1,108.01
KINGSTHORPE NORTH	7.72%	305	23.55
DUNSTON EAST	7.71%	257	19.81
BRIXWORTH	7.58%	18,180	1,378.04
DALLINGTON SPENCER	7.12%	557	39.66
LONG BUCKBY	6.95%	11,450	795.78
BRAUNSTON & CRICK	6.17%	11,340	699.68
BUGBROOKE	6.12%	7,245	443.39
ABINGTON & PHIPPSVILLE	6.08%	164	9.97
CASTLE	5.99%	303	8.15
TOTAL	9.03%	137,719	12,433.49



West Northamptonshire has a population of over 400,000 residents living and working mainly in the four largest conurbations of Northampton, Daventry, Towcester and Brackley, the remainder in the villages spread across the district. As well as West Northamptonshire Council, the upper tier local authority there are 166 town and parish councils, some responsible for notable areas of public space, woods and trees. This will make achieving the vision a complex project, with many opportunities for these communities to influence and contribute.

The district covers approximately 137,700 hectares, with a current average trees and woods canopy cover of 9%, well below the national average of 13%. The review identified that a 30% canopy cover is the optimum to deliver the full benefits that trees provide, however the careful analysis undertaken of the opportunities to plant new trees and woods in West Northamptonshire

described revealed that the available land would be limited. This has led to the target of 20%. This will be challenging to achieve, but working together, planting and establishing new trees and woods, and protecting and caring for the ones we already have we can achieve this. Whether this be as a landowner with space, volunteers helping to plant trees or a neighbour pouring a bucket of water on nearby trees in a dry spell there is plenty we can all do, and it all helps.

Our Vision to 2045 is intended to meet the key priorities informed by current evidence, best practice, and from feedback gathered through extensive consultation. The vision will allow enough time for the benefits of the strategy and work we and our partners carry out to become apparent:

- Plant new trees and woods.
- Effectively maintain and protect existing trees and woods.
- Develop productive partnerships, and support them.

- Inform and influence communities and decision makers.
- Work in cost a effective manner; demonstrating this with meaningful data to inform and update our benchmarks.

We will have the knowledge, expertise and resources we need to deliver and plan for the future, and the passion to get us there. People, wildlife and our local economy will be thriving. This is a strategy for everyone in West Northamptonshire. It is about creating the safe, wildlife rich and resilient town, village and rural surroundings of our future.

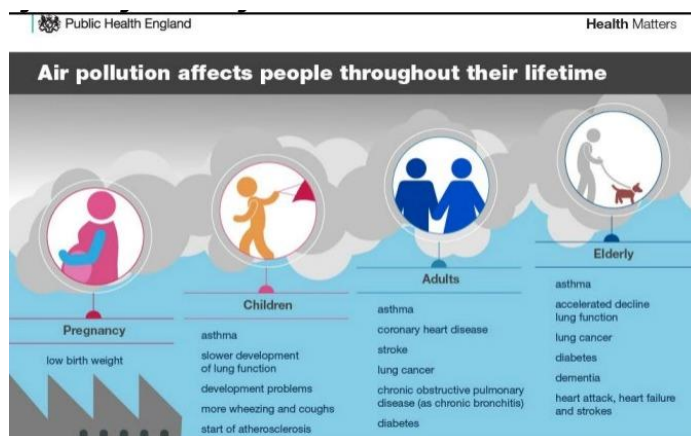
Why trees are good for us



Air Quality Assessment Published

An assessment that explores the causes and health implications of poor air quality and identifies ways to improve it across West Northamptonshire has been published. Shaped with input from healthcare professionals and partners, the Air Quality Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) was approved at West Northamptonshire Council’s (WNC) Health and Wellbeing Board in November. This initiative aims to enhance the wellbeing of local communities and supporting vulnerable residents.

Two of the main pollutants affecting our area come from vehicles and fuel burning. Air quality monitoring carried out by WNC show that levels are generally improving, the JSNA provides an in-depth analysis of the causes and impacts of air pollution, particularly focusing on health conditions. It identifies a range of contributing factors and emphasises the importance of indoor air quality.



Vulnerabilities identified include people with existing health conditions such as asthma and respiratory conditions, and living in places where people face multiple challenges that make it hard to live well and improve their situation such as living closer to air pollution hotspots.

The JSNA outlines a series of actions for the Council, healthcare providers and other partners in order to meet health and social care needs and the document aligns with the corporate priorities and existing strategies to ensure a joint up approach to improving air quality.

Key areas that the JSNA focuses on include:

- Reducing emissions – particularly around schools and encouraging and enabling active transport modes
- Raising awareness of the impact of pollution on people’s health
- Providing resources to healthcare professionals to support patients
- Adopting policies to support sustainable future housing growth
- Strengthening joint working opportunities across internal services and with partners

The work undertaken for the JSNA helped inform the Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for West Northants which was approved by DEFRA in October.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/environmenta.../air-quality>

The AQAP sets out an overall plan to improve air quality across the area and was shaped with the help of local residents, businesses and stakeholders. This follows approval of the Annual Status Report detailing the

air quality across the area which is available on the Council's website. The Air Quality Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Action Plan, as well as advice and guidance on reducing pollution outdoors and within the home, can be viewed on the Council's recently refreshed Air Quality webpages.

Training Providers Invited to Apply

Training providers are invited to apply for an opportunity to deliver courses that will significantly enhance mental wellbeing across Northamptonshire. As part of the All-age Mental Health and Suicide Prevention



Training Framework, successful providers will deliver a range of courses designed to promote positive mental health and provide crucial support for suicide prevention.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) are committed to reducing stigma around mental health and empowering communities with the confidence to recognise, refer, and signpost to support services. This framework aims to build a mentally healthier Northamptonshire by offering comprehensive

training that equips individuals and organisations with the skills needed to support mental wellbeing.

The training will cover key areas such as mental health awareness, suicide prevention and intervention, and postvention support, including bereavement. Courses available range from introductory awareness sessions to in-depth skills training, including:

- Mental Health Awareness
- Suicide Awareness
- Suicide Bereavement
- Mental Health First Aid
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Mental Health First Aid Refresher
- Mental Health Skills for Managers
- Suicide First Aid (Understanding Suicide Intervention)
- Suicide First Aid (for Children and Young People)
- Trauma Informed Practice

WNC and NNC are excited to offer this opportunity to training providers who are passionate about enhancing mental wellbeing in the community. By participating, providers will play a vital role in creating a supportive environment where individuals feel confident to seek help and support others.

Applications for this tender were invited from Wednesday 18 December 2024. Interested training providers are encouraged to apply by clicking here.

<https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/.../1ef12f94...>

The deadline for submissions is Monday 27 January 2025.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

West Northamptonshire Local Area Partnerships

Many of you are aware that I am the Hackleton and Grange Park WNC Representative on the Rural East LAP. If you live in West Northamptonshire, your area will be part of one of the following Local Area Partnerships:

- 1) Northampton East: Billing and Rectory Farm, Riverside Park, and Talavera
- 2) Northampton South: Delapre and Rushmere, East Hunsbury, Nene Valley and Shelfleys

- 3) Northampton West: Duston East, Duston West, St Crispin and Sixfields
- 4) Northampton Central: Abington and Phippsville, Castle, Dallington, Spencer and St George
- 5) Northampton North: Boothville and parklands, Headlands, Kingsthorpe North, and Kingsthorpe South
- 6) Rural North: Braunston and Crick, Brixworth, Long Bucky and Moulton
- 7) Rural West: Daventry East, Daventry West, and Woodford and Weedon
- 8) Rural South: Brackley, Middleton Cheney and Silverstone
- 9) Rural East: Bugbrooke, Deanshanger, Hackleton and Grange Park and Towcester and Road



Local Area Partnership Rural East

The date of the next LAP Rural East meeting is 21st January 2025 at 13:00 to 14:00

Spring Social Prescribing Service

Spring is a community-driven support network to help people in Northamptonshire manage their health and wellbeing.

<https://www.springnorthamptonshire.org/>

Grants Scheme for a New Healthwatch Service

A new grants scheme to operate a local Healthwatch service starting in April 2025 has been launched by West Northants Council (WNC). This initiative aims to deliver a Healthwatch service on a local basis for residents across the



area. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 requires local authorities to establish and maintain a local Healthwatch service to understand the needs, experiences, and concerns of people who use health and social care services and to speak out on their behalf. Currently, West Northamptonshire Council and North Northamptonshire Council have a joint Northamptonshire Healthwatch organisation contract that will expire on 31st March 2025. This transition will enable the Council to separate from a Northamptonshire-wide Healthwatch service and develop a new, local Healthwatch West

Northamptonshire service. This new service will be more inclusive and representative of the residents of the Council by embedding Healthwatch into the area, raising awareness of its role and function, maximising local participation and representation, and providing a strong and local independent public voice that is both recognised and valued.

Healthwatch West Northamptonshire will have several key rights and responsibilities, including:

- The power to monitor, known as “Enter and View,” health and social care services (with some exceptions). The primary purpose is to find out what patients, service users, carers, and the wider public think of health and social care.
- Reporting findings of local views and experiences to health and social care decision-makers

SPRING Social Prescribing and Rural & Sustainable Futures THEMATIC logos.

SPRING Social Prescribing

If you're living in Northamptonshire with a long-term health condition, and you sense that things offer more than what you're experiencing right now, we can help. And it's here to hear from you.

SPRING is a partnership of social sector organisations, commissioned by Integrated Care Northamptonshire, to improve the wellbeing of people in Northamptonshire using social prescribing.

The three partners are Age UK Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire Carers and General Practice Alliance (GPA).

What do they do?
They provide support for six to 12 months, enabling people to take steps to improve their health and wellbeing.

- People aged 18 and over
- Have at least one long-term health condition
- Are willing to make the changes that will improve their health and wellbeing

You can contact our SPRING Social Prescribing Service on behalf of someone else, or for yourself. Our Link Workers aim to connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support.

Call on: 01604 974995

Part of the VCSE Assembly
VCSE Assembly
www.vcseassembly.org.uk

AUTUMN 2024

and making the case for improved services.

- Being a strong and powerful voice for local people, influencing how services are planned, organised, and delivered.
- Being an effective voice rooted in the community. Healthwatch will find out what local people think about health and social care, researching patient, user, and carer opinions using various methods.
- The option to escalate concerns and report evidence to national organisations, including Healthwatch England, NHS England, and the Care Quality Commission.

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places limitations on the types of organisations that can provide Healthwatch services. These limitations ensure that providers meet the definition of voluntary, community, or social enterprise organisations, and certain not-for-profit constitutionalised organisations. A grant of up to £137,000 per year is available to provide Healthwatch West Northamptonshire from 1 April 2025 for two financial years, with an option to extend for a third year. The closing date for applications is 5pm on Wednesday 22 January 2025. Click here for more information on the grant programme.

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

To request an expression of interest grant application form or to find out more about your eligibility, please email: communitygrants@westnorthants.gov.uk.

EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Term Dates for West Northamptonshire Schools

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

Spring term 2025

Monday 6 January to Friday 4 April

Half term holiday: Monday 17 February to Friday 21 February

Easter holiday: Monday 7 April to Thursday 17 April

Summer term 2025

Tuesday 22 April to Tuesday 22 July

Bank holidays: Friday 18 April and Monday 21 April

Bank holiday: Monday 5 May

Half term holiday: Monday 26 May to Friday 30 May

Summer holiday starts: Wednesday 23 July

Academic year 2025 to 2026

Autumn term 2025

Monday 1 September to Friday 19 December

Half term holiday: Monday 27 October to Friday 31 October

Christmas holiday: Monday 22 December to Friday 2 January

Spring term 2026

Monday 5 January to Friday 27 March

Half term holiday: Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February

Easter holiday: Monday 30 March to Friday 10 April

Bank holidays: Friday 3 April and Monday 6 April

Summer term 2026

Monday 13 April to Monday 20 July

Half term holiday: Monday 25 May to Friday 29 May

Summer holiday starts: Tuesday 21 July

Bank holiday: Monday 4 May

Apply for School Places for September 2025

It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2025. Parents and carers of children living in West Northamptonshire can now 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 2025 intake.

Parents and carers can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years old on or before 31 August 2025. The closing date for applications for places in reception (and year 3 at junior school) is 15 January 2025 at midnight. The closing date for applications for Year 7 places was 31 October 2024 at midnight. 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.../appeals-process>

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 – 3 March 2025 for secondary places and 16 April 2025 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.

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

An independent admission appeals process is available for families who wish to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied. To find out more about applying for a school place in West Northamptonshire and to submit an application, visit: www.westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

Northamptonshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP)

Richard Clinton, Delapre Abbey's Chief Executive, has been appointed as Chair of the new LVEP, which brings together partners from across the sector as well as both North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire with the aim to strengthen and build on the area's visitor economy.

Following a recruitment campaign, candidates were interviewed by a panel including representatives from North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council and sector stakeholders with Richard being identified as the most suitable candidate to lead the new partnership through the next phase of its creation, which includes the key next stage of the process - the submission of the LVEP application to Visit England. This application is due to be submitted imminently with a decision expected in the early part of 2025. If approved and Northamptonshire gains LVEP status, the area would receive national accreditation and a boost to the area's tourism offer and unlock new opportunities.

Richard has been the Chief Executive of Delapré Abbey Preservation Trust since April 2020, where he oversees the strategic direction of the historic 900-year-old Delapré Abbey in Northampton. Under his leadership, the Trust has aligned heritage, culture, and wellbeing to benefit the community, including plans to restore and repurpose the 19th-century stables into a mixed-use development featuring a community wellbeing space.



Richard is also the Chair of Fermynwoods Contemporary Art - an educational charity that supports life through art by commissioning innovative ways for artists to engage with audiences.

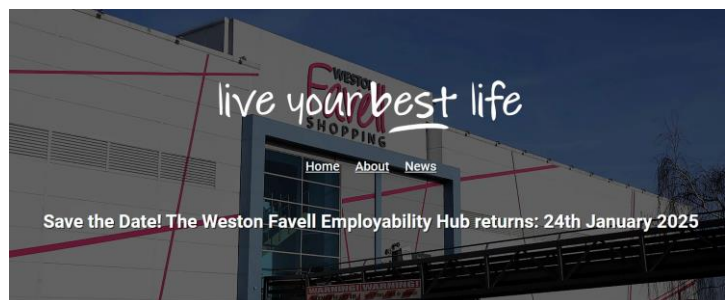
Prior to his role at Delapré Abbey, Richard served as part of the leadership teams for The Culture Trust and Royal & Derngate Theatre. Richard has also been the Vice Chair for Northamptonshire Surprise, supporting its efforts in promoting the heritage, culture, and attractions of Northamptonshire, positioning it as an attractive visitor destination.

Richard will now oversee the creation of the new Northamptonshire LVEP with responsibilities including:

- Overseeing the implementation of the comprehensive Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy.
- Collaborating with local and national stakeholders to promote Northamptonshire's attractions.
- Enhancing marketing efforts to raise the region's profile.
- Supporting local businesses in maximizing the benefits of tourism.
- Ensuring sustainable growth of the visitor economy through innovative practices.

Employment Support

Don't forget to come along to Weston Favell Library, Northampton, NN3 8JZ on 24th January 2025 (10 am - 2.00 pm) where WNC will be on hand with their dedicated employment support partners to help you with job searching, CVs, training, one-to-one guidance & more. It's free and no booking is required. You can find further details below.



<https://westnorthantsliveyourbestlife.uk/.../save-the-.../>

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS

Towcester Relief Road

The construction of the Towcester Relief Road has taken a step forward following technical approval for the A43 section of the road. Technical approval is a complex process and has been achieved following many meetings between housebuilder Persimmon Homes, National Highways and West Northamptonshire Council. Work has now started on the construction of the A43 roundabout with limited vegetation clearing.

These works will initially be undertaken from the land to the East of the A43, to mitigate the effect on the road network. The vegetation clearing will then be completed under overnight nearside lane closures.

From 25 November 2024, for a four-week period, the installation of temporary crossovers will be undertaken which will involve overnight closure of the offside lanes on both the north and southbound carriageways with a temporary 40mph speed limit in place. The nearside lanes on both carriageways will remain open during this phase. Information boards will be erected three weeks prior to commencement of the main works which will include contact details for the contractor and details of the dedicated website where up-to-date information can be found. A 24/7 emergency recovery service for vehicle breakdowns within the working area will be provided throughout the period of these work. Persimmon Homes, National Highways and West Northamptonshire Council are committed to keeping local residents and businesses informed of progress throughout these works and will be communicating on a regular basis. A dedicated website www.resident-portal.co.uk/towcester has also been developed so the status of the work can be reviewed at any time.



Two Enforcement Cameras Go Live

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is continuing to roll out enforcement cameras across the area, as part of a phased approach to improve pedestrian, cyclist and driver safety and encourage better driver behaviour.

Drivers in Northampton will face charges if they flout the rules or ignore signage at two newly enforced locations: the Marefair/Horseshoe Street Junction with Gold Street and the top end of Gold Street, between College Street and Bridge Street, both of which are very busy junctions with high levels of vehicles and pedestrians. The Marefair/Horseshoe Street Junction camera went live on Monday, 16 December 2024 and will enforce banned turnings; left from Horseshoe Street into Marefair and right from Horseshoe Street into Gold Street. This follows enforcement going live at this location last month for those turning left travelling out of Marefair.



At the Marefair/ Horseshoe Street Junction, during the first six months of enforcement measures going live, a statutory warning notice will be issued for first offences by any vehicle, however anyone breaching the rules for a second time or first time from June next year, will receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) of £70, reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days.

The camera at the top end of Gold Street, between College Street and Bridge Street will enforce the bus-only section and is due to go live on Monday, 13 January 2025. It will enforce existing bus lane regulations similar to The Drapery, and at this location, there will be no statutory six-month warning period for motorists so any motorist who breaches the rules will receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) of £70, reduced to £35 if paid within 21 days. The purpose of these cameras is to stop people from making a dangerous manoeuvre on the highway.

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Safer Northants Website

The Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (NSVPP) has launched Safer Northants, a new online resource aimed at providing information to make communities safer. The website is designed to

empower young people, parents and guardians with the knowledge they need to stay safe and support one another.

<https://safernorthants.co.uk/>

Packed with practical advice and guidance, the website covers important topics such as knife crime and substance use. It equips young people with the knowledge to make informed decisions and provides parents with the tools to guide and support their children.



Safer Northants also caters to professionals by providing key information on serious violence, a detailed overview of the public health approach to prevention, and guidance on applying for Serious Violence Duty Grants. These key insights will enable professionals to support future prevention efforts and community safety initiatives. The website serves as a hub for information on the NSVPP's efforts offering visitors a comprehensive introduction to the partnership's work, its strategy to tackling violence and the latest news and updates. By connecting users to critical support services, the platform seeks to foster a more informed and engaged community.

Special Constable Recruitment

We are recruiting for Special Constables. This is a great way to make a difference in your community and develop your personal skills and experiences. [#DoSomethingSpecial](https://www.northants.police.uk/dosomethingspecial) and apply on our website:

www.northants.police.uk/dosomethingspecial



Neighbourhood Watch Schemes without a Co-ordinator

The Following Schemes in Hackleton & Grange Park are without a Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator:

Denton ; Horton & Little Houghton. It has proved difficult to fill the vacant positions which are being advertised on the South Northants Volunteering Bureau (SNVB) website. If there is anyone living in these areas who would be interested in finding out more about what's involved in being a coordinator please do contact Nick Hamp (See below). By and large we continue to live in a relatively low crime part of the country, being part of Neighbourhood Watch contributes to this this, we are keen to increase membership, so please do encourage friends and neighbours to sign up if they have not already done so, it really does make a difference. The South Northants Area Support Team (SNAAT) will be meeting in January to discuss how to take the organisation forward. We are very open to ideas and suggestions from members so please do get in touch with any thoughts you may have on making us more relevant and increasing activity. The outcomes of our discussions will be brought to an AGM which will take place in April / May.



Nick Hamp, Neighbourhood Watch South Northants Sector Lead
(nick.hamp@gmail.com)
07818 640455

Parking Outside Schools

This is a source of regular complaint, I know almost every school sends regular reminders to parents about parking responsibly, but a parent's "right to choose", means more and more cars are coming to and from our schools as there simply is no other alternative.

Pick-up and drop-off times are busy outside schools. This can cause an increased safety risk to both children and parents. Parking restrictions outside schools are there to keep you and your children safe. Parking inconsiderately can put people in danger and you also risk being fined. It's important that motorists follow the Highway Code.

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code-road-safety>

Further advice on parking near schools can be found here
<https://www.northants.police.uk/.../parking-outside-schools/>



CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

Holocaust Memorial Day 2025

The Holocaust Memorial Day will be on 27 January 2025.

<https://www.hmd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/HMD-2025-Theme-Vision.pdf>

For more information please visit The Lewis Foundation:

<https://www.thelewisfoundation.co.uk/>

Northampton Film Festival 7-15 March 2025

Ready for "lights, camera, action"? Then get involved in the



production of a film about Northants' unique

independent spirit, set to premiere at the launch of the 2025 edition of Northampton Film Festival. Northampton Film Festival will take place from 7 – 15 March 2025 at Delapré Abbey, Cineworld Northampton and the University of Northampton, but the action began before that, in December

2024 - with Northampton residents invited to take part in the production of a film about Northants: a county of Rebels and Revolutionaries, Misfits and Mavericks, Creatives and Changemakers.

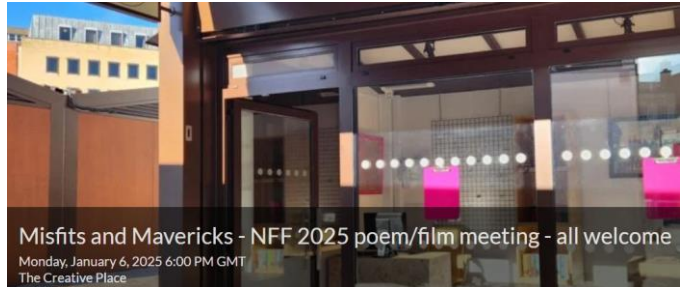
The film will be produced between December and February through free workshops and filming sessions, including evenings and weekends. Any Northampton resident aged 13 years+ is welcome to take part, including people with no film experience, as well as film professionals.

<https://northamptonfilmfestival.co.uk/>



Misfits & Mavericks Poem/Film Workshop for Northampton Film Festival

On Monday 6th January 2024, 6pm to 7.30pm at The Creative Place, Northampton Market Square you can help create a poem celebrating Northants' unique spirit, which will be turned into a film premiering at Northampton Film Festival 2025. This event is open to all Northampton residents aged 13+ (no upper limit), no experience or prior attendance required—just bring your creativity! For more details, email info@northamptonfilmfestival.co.uk or contact:



<https://northamptonfilmfestival.eventive.org/.../misfits...>

Women's Rugby World Cup 2025

Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 has already smashed records as the fastest-selling edition of the tournament ever, with more than 220,000 tickets sold to date. In the ticket application window, 90,000 tickets were secured by fans, building on the 130,000 sold during the presale period. With just over eight months to go until the opening match between England and the USA at Sunderland's Stadium of Light on 22



August, the continued strong interest in Women's RWC 2025 has led to ballots for high-demand fixtures, including England's pool matches and the final at Twickenham Stadium. The surge in demand ensures that the largest sports event in the UK next year, hosted across eight cities in England, will also be the biggest and best Women's Rugby World Cup in history. Fans from across the globe are eager to join the excitement, with applications received from 72 countries. Notably, there has been an

equal balance of men and women purchasing tickets, setting the stage for the most inclusive and widely celebrated Women's Rugby World Cup in history. There will be a further chance for fans to secure tickets when the next ticket phase opens from 11:00 GMT on Tuesday, 25 February 2025. To be the first to hear the latest ticketing news, fans can register for updates at rugbyworldcup.com/2025/newsletter.

Fans can also now elevate their Women's RWC 2025 tournament with a ticket-inclusive premium experience package. All experience packages include an official match ticket and are available now for every match via experiences.rugbyworldcup.com. Prices start from £240 (including VAT) per person. With such exceptional demand for tickets and to avoid disappointment, fans are urged to secure their tickets through the official channels at tickets.rugbyworldcup.com or experiences.rugbyworldcup.com. Tickets bought via unofficial sources and reselling platforms will not guarantee access to the match venues.

England 2025 will be the first Rugby World Cup hosted under a new joint-venture model (Local Operating Company) between World Rugby and the RFU, with funding from the UK Government, which will aim to optimise efficiency and impact across the tournament. All the latest tournament news, including the full match schedule, can be found at rugbyworldcup.com/2025

Women's Rugby World Cup 2025 is supported by its Principal Partners Mastercard, Capgemini, Gallagher and Asahi.

Trilogy Support for Adults & Kids Leaving Care

A partnership between health and fitness provider Trilogy Active and West Northamptonshire Council has seen over 100 adults and children leaving the care system being given the opportunity to use pools, gyms and access exercise classes as they journey on to the next chapter of their lives.



It is estimated that across the UK over 100,000 children are in the care system and experiencing real and impactful challenges as they leave care and move in to the community. Trilogy Active and West Northamptonshire Council are delivering a scheme for 120 Annual Supergold memberships and 10 Annual Junior Active Memberships at Trilogy Active that are available to young adults and children leaving the care system. Trilogy Active operates Cripps Recreation Centre, Danes Camp, Duston Sports Centre, Lings Forum, The Mounts Baths and the

Forum Cinema as well as Berzerk Active Play Centres in Northampton, Derby and Birmingham and Belper Leisure Centre in the Midlands. The project is jointly funded by West Northamptonshire Council and Trilogy Active. The programme has seen Trilogy Active and West Northamptonshire Council partnering with the Northamptonshire Children's Trust to ensure the memberships go to the correct people so that all users can benefit from access to all Trilogy Active Centres. An Annual Supergold membership at Trilogy Active gives users unlimited use of all five Trilogy Active gyms, four swimming pools, over 220 fitness classes, two health suites and free cinema and off-peak racket sports. The Junior Active Membership at Trilogy Active includes a weekly lesson in swimming, gymnastics or football plus swimming, cinema, holiday activities, after schools clubs, roller-skating, Berzerk and gym use for those over 11 years old. The programme started in September 2024 and 100% of memberships have been allocated and they run until August 2025. The 130 memberships that this programme includes, covers approximately 15% of all care leavers receiving this benefit in Northampton.