

NEWS REPORT NOVEMBER 2025

Monthly Highlights

On 7 November 2025, I heard from Sam Simons, WNC Service Manager, Highways & Transport regarding our Great Houghton site visit on 14 October 2025 to discuss the work in Leys Lane and the Street Lamps at the following locations in the Cross, Cherry Tree Lane, Lime Farm Way, and Wymersley Close. He was happy that lighting levels were appropriately lighting all highway areas but that he will continue to pursue the specification changes to help demonstrate the issue, and report back in the next few weeks. Regarding Leys Lane, Highways has agreed to undertake the resurfacing of the Lane from its junction to the car park entrance, if the parish council undertakes the white lining including marking a footpath. The overlay surfacing to be provided for in the next annual programme setting cycle. This proposal was subsequently approved by the Parish Council.

I thanked Carly Musson for taking the time to attend the Great Houghton Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 21 October 2025. She and Chesney provided the much-needed background to the operation of Robin House and on 10 November 2025 she agreed to keep me informed of anything significant that happens at the home and she will continue to maintain communications with neighbours. The staff and the resident are already creating Christmas Cards for the neighbours.

We are making some progress on the fly tipping on private land in Yardley Hastings, which is under the control of the Forestry Commission. WNC officers have been liaising directly with the Forestry Commission Manager who has agreed to undertake the clearance of waste from the site. The arrangements to facilitate this work are still in progress, but the plan is underway. WNC believes that a collaborative approach will be the most effective way to achieve long-term improvements in this area. Once the waste is removed, we will arrange a meeting with relevant partners to discuss implementing measures on this land aimed at preventing, deterring, or identifying further fly-tipping incidents at this location.

I met with Nick Henstock, Assistant Director, Highways & Transport on 30 October 2025 to discuss a number of Highways and Transport issues. During our meeting, I raised the matter of Green Hill Solar Farm and his e-mail of 7 October 2025, and I sought a response to the following comments/questions.

- The routing set out by Wynnes Ltd does not provide for any conditions or restrictions. What guarantee do we have that there will only be five lorry abnormal loads/movements on York Avenue past the Cogenhoe Primary School?
- How can we guarantee that all other HGV construction traffic for the BESS site will go via the A45 and Station Road and not via Cogenhoe?
- I remain unconvinced that we will be able to enforce construction traffic routes, timings, and vehicle types. How can WNC guarantee this?
- There had been no evidence of WNC responding to the Green Hill Solar Farm Proposal or requesting any alternative access routes.
- I would like to understand the transport modelling being conducted by the Consultants Pell Frischmann on behalf of WNC and I would welcome a discussion with them.
- On a separate note, risk management for BESS solar farms involves addressing physical, operational, and financial risks through a combination of engineering controls, safety procedures, and strategic planning. I cannot see where WNC or NNC are requiring measures for fire safety through adequate spacing and suppression systems, robust electrical and thermal monitoring, proper site and vegetation management, and adherence to safety standards. Thermal runaway and fires are significant risks for BESS combined with solar projects, which in this case would have a significant impact on WNC villages adjacent to the site. Has WNC considered any of these issues for the Green Hill BESS?

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However, on 12 November 2025, WNC sent their Impact Assessment to the Planning Inspector which addressed the concerns I raised in relation to the Construction traffic. I will provide a further update in my December Monthly Report.

I received an enquiry regarding grant funding for Solar Panels. However, there are no current WNC funding schemes for solar panels and at this stage in the financial year all Community Funding Grants Schemes are closed. However, I have reviewed other Third-Party Funding Grants, and I have identified three opportunities. See My Monthly Report.

GO Travel Solutions are working with West Northamptonshire Council to bring together local stakeholders to increase bus use and improve sustainable travel options across the county. As part of the Partnering for Success initiative (Funded by UK Government), they are looking to grow their network of strategic partners, and they would love to hear from organisations of all sizes who want to get involved. See my Monthly Report.

The ONS has launched a consultation to inform the 2031 Census. The consultation is looking for views on how census data is used, and requirements for topic data from Census 2031. See My Monthly Report.

The WNC Place and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee is now responsible for the budget setting cycle from October until February as was customary for the former Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee. See My Monthly Report.

WNC has started work on identifying and shaping proposals for next year's draft budget to help bridge the shortfall, which includes exploring further savings and efficiencies and looking at how we can be more consistent in our approach to things like fees and charges for discretionary services. We will be developing proposals over the coming months, with the draft 2026–27 budget due to go to Cabinet in December. Please note that the WNC December Cabinet meeting has been moved from Wednesday 10 December 2025 to Monday 22 December 2025, to allow members to consider the draft budget with the full picture of Government funding.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has taken the next step in transforming its housing services by approving a phased plan to bring management of its housing stock back in-house by 2027. The decision, approved by Cabinet on 11 November 2025, follows an extensive consultation with tenants, leaseholders, and stakeholders earlier this year, which showed strong support for the proposed change, with 60% of respondents (1,619) in favour compared to just 9.6% (259) who were not.

A new reuse shop opened this month at Sixfields Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC), operated in partnership with local charity Cynthia Spencer Hospice. The shop will offer residents a convenient and sustainable way to donate and purchase pre-loved items, helping to reduce waste, support local charity work, and promote a circular economy. See my Monthly Report.

On Thursday 20 November 2025 at 4pm, there will be a 'Faces of the Ukrainian Dream' exhibition at Northampton Central Library, featuring drawings by Ukrainian children who have lived through the war, sharing stories of loss, courage, and hope. Each artwork, letter, or reflection offers a tender, powerful glimpse into their dreams—of peace, of freedom, of a future without fear.

Each month, in addition to my work on the Council, I complete a large amount of resident specific casework across the seven parishes of Cogenhoe & Whiston, Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Brafield on the Green, Denton, Castle Ashby & Yardley Hastings. "It's a pleasure to work with all of you" so please do get in touch if I can be of support.

All the Best, Steve

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