

MONTHLY NEWS REPORT AUGUST 2025



E-Newsletter Issue 8/2025

**Pat Terry and Sheila Underwood with Councillor Steve Clarke
At Denton Welcoming Space
St Margaret's Church, Denton
1 August 2025**

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NEWS REPORT AUGUST 2025

Monthly Highlights

Sam Simons has suggested a site meeting to discuss the legal intricacies of the work in Leys Lane. I have asked him to send me details of a suitable time and date for us to meet with Great Houghton Parish Council to discuss matters in September. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

I have recommended a site visit with Highways and members of the Great Houghton Parish Council to consider and discuss the street lights further. We just need to agree a suitable date and time of day for us to meet.

The engagement phase of the Northampton – Bedford Area Local Bus Study is now live. WNC has been allocated this money from UK Government funding. The survey is now open for feedback. If you are an individual who lives or works in the area, please complete the survey and encourage others to do likewise. The survey will run until Monday 11 August 2025. Those that take part in the individual survey will have the chance to win a £25 Vue cinema voucher. See my Monthly Report for the link to the survey.

I have asked Barry Wain, the Agent for the Planning application 2025/0503 on behalf of the Applicant, Mr P Henry, Wardle and Keach International Ltd to assist with the formation of the Transport Review Panel Group (TRPG). This duty falls on the applicants to arrange and comply with the planning conditions. It is for them to liaise with the Parish Council and anyone else they wish to invite. Therefore, I have asked Barry Wain to ask Mr P Henry to contact Mark Lyon, Clerk, Little Houghton Parish Council, Liz Dutton, Chairman, Little Houghton Parish Council and Lisa Lane, Councillor Little Houghton Parish Council with a copy to me suggesting a suitable location, date and time for the first meeting of the TRPG. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

Dan Johnson, Street Cleansing Supervisor has written to Mark Lyons regarding the bin on Lodge Close, Little Houghton which is constantly breaking. WNC is expecting a delivery of new litter bins to arrive soon and once they have arrived, he will arrange for the new bin to be installed on the grassy area next to the garages unless the Parish Council has another area in mind. With the new bin Dan will place a larger one on site so hopefully the dog walkers will use that one instead. At the same time he will replace the broken bin on Lodge Close.

I received enquiries regarding drains maintenance in Nursery Close and Meadow Lane, Little Houghton. Following investigation with Highways, I was advised that Nursery Close is a private road and has not been adopted by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). As such, any previous maintenance works carried out by the local authority, or its contractors should not have taken place. This means that responsibility for maintenance including the clearing of any drains rests jointly with the property owners. I am now looking into the status of drains clearance in Meadow Lane and whether we can do anything further to improve the drains maintenance. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

On 22 July 2025, I contacted Fiona Unett, WNC Assistant Director for Waste, Environment, Development and Transport to discuss the number of fly tipping incidents in my ward. There is a disproportionate amount of commercial waste involved, including hazardous waste such as asbestos which requires specialist clearance. The clearance timescales can take longer to remove and varies between South Northants and Northampton which is indicative of the different contracts. There are several locations which are fly-tipping hotspots, and I have arranged a meeting with Dan Johnson and Liz Newbury to discuss how best to deal with the problems on the A428 and Castle Ashby.

I have received an enquiry from a local resident who is employed in the Housing sector. She says that WNC intends to close NAASH (Northampton Association for Accommodation of Single Homeless) and is concerned about the 250 vulnerable people facing homelessness when this occurs. NAASH provides supported accommodation for people who are homeless and works to help them transition into longer-term housing. The issue faced by the Council is a lack of supporting evidence for claims made by NAASH. WNC has been working over a long period to try and address anomalies in the housing benefits claims made for NAASH properties and the tenants that live there. Housing is working through WNC's position at present should NAASH evict the current occupants. WNC has not taken any decision to close NAASH. However the Housing Benefits team has identified errors within the claims for payment and the council has no choice in this matter if we are not legally obliged to make the benefit payments. Please be advised that support will be given to vulnerable people. There are various Housing teams across WNC that are aware of these risks, anyone that approaches services will be supported accordingly.

On 30 June 2025, I wrote again to Highways and Transport expressing my concern about the future funding of the Village Hopper. I am particularly concerned about the future funding for the Village Hopper bus service run by Cogenhoe Parish Council, which had received WNC funding from the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund UKSPF but is now reliant on some funding from North Northamptonshire Council to meet its short-term requirements. Without a clear statement from WNC about its commitment for rural bus services, bus operators cannot plan for the future. I have asked for the requirements of the Village Hopper to be properly considered by West Northamptonshire Council and not left to North Northamptonshire Council. WNC Highways has strongly recommended that Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council participates in the Highways Transport Engagement Study on the A428(S) by completing the survey which closes on 11 August 2025.

This month, I received a complaint about the noise levels from the Billing Aquadrome 'outside theatre', and I have asked the appropriate officer to contact me regarding the current status of the various complaints already received by WNC and any actions taken. Additionally, I have asked for confirmation that WNC Planning Enforcement is investigating whether Billing Aquadrome is using noise monitors as per the planning conditions and for them to provide me with details of any enforcement carried out so far. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

On Monday 28 July 2025, I attended the HMO Consultation event at The Court Room, The Guildhall, St Giles' Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.

At the event, I was able to:

- 1) view details outlining current Council policy and more information on the current number and distribution of HMOs
- 2) learn more about the emerging proposals and policy ideas we are exploring
- 3) speak with members of the consultation team and ask questions about the review
- 4) share feedback and local knowledge to help fine-tune future policy recommendations

Residents are invited to take part in a public consultation to help shape the future delivery model for housing services in West Northamptonshire. Tenants and leaseholders have also been invited to take part in a tenant consultation during the same period. The consultations will run for eight weeks from Monday 14 July to midnight on Sunday 7 September 2025 and offer people the opportunity to share their views on how housing services are provided in West Northants.

The Draft Statement of Accounts which presents the statutory financial statements for West Northamptonshire Council for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and gives a comprehensive summary of its overall financial position is now available. See My Monthly Report.

West Northamptonshire Council has published its organisation structure for the top three management tiers. It is a snapshot of the senior leadership team as of 1 April 2025. The Senior Salaries information requires the publication of our senior employees whose annual remuneration is £50,000 and above. See My Monthly Report.

Why not read a new report published by CPRE, entitled Getting Solar Off the Ground, which reveals that a significant proportion of England's most productive farmland is now being used for large-scale solar energy generation. The research analyses the location and land classification of solar farms generating more than 30MW and calls for a shift in solar energy development away from high-quality farmland and towards rooftops and brownfield sites.

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee has issued a stark warning that the current local government funding system is no longer sustainable and is calling for urgent reform to protect vital services and local democracy. The Committee's report, The Funding and Sustainability of Local Government Finance, highlights spiralling costs for councils now exceeding £139 billion a year, with demand-led services such as adult social care, SEND provision and homelessness pushing many local authorities to the financial brink.

A hybrid planning application for the comprehensive reconfiguration of the Billing Aquadrome site comprising a reduction in the number of static caravans from 3,104 to 2,245 units was received on 14 July 2025. See My Monthly Report.

Residents are invited to take part in a public consultation to help shape the future delivery model for housing services in West Northamptonshire. Tenants and leaseholders have also been invited to take part in a tenant consultation during the same period. The consultations will run for eight weeks from Monday 14 July to midnight on Sunday 7 September 2025.

Residents across West Northants are invited to take part in a competition that launched on 1 July 2025 to raise awareness of how easy it is to recycle your food waste and bag the chance to win some fantastic prizes. The competition runs until midnight on Monday, 14 September. Winners will be selected at random from eligible entries and contacted soon after the closing date.

Senior leaders from across Northamptonshire's health and care system, including primary care, met on 23 July 2025 to discuss how to improve outcomes for local people by delivering more integrated care closer to home. It was agreed that Northamptonshire will be organised into two 'places' - West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire across nine neighbourhoods. See my Monthly Report.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are gaining confidence and independence through a pioneering immersive technology travel training project. By simulating real-life bus journeys, the initiative helps students become familiar with public transport in a safe and supportive way. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is working in collaboration with Billing Brook School, Café Track, Stagecoach, and BT's Immersive Hub, to support students transitioning from door-to-door transport to more independent group travel. The bespoke immersive technology and virtual reality (VR) content guides pupils through each step of the journey, from waiting at the bus stop to recognising landmarks, empowering them to travel with greater ease and assurance.

West Northamptonshire Council is encouraging local youth organisations to apply for money from a new national funding pot available over the next three months. This funding is designed to support additional hours of youth work in areas with higher rates of anti-social behaviour, helping to improve the range of opportunities available to young people, offering them more places to go and positive things to do. Grants of between £30,000 and £100,000 are available to eligible organisations operating or supporting designated areas across West Northamptonshire.

Community organisations are now able to apply for vital funds via West Northamptonshire Council as applications open for the Welcoming Spaces Grant Scheme will run until October 2025. See My Monthly Report.

Residents are being advised of the next planned road closures for the Queen Eleanor Interchange improvement works. See my Monthly Report.

WNC has prepared a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This sets out how the Council will engage and consult in the undertaking of its Planning functions to ensure that anyone within and with an interest in, the local authority's area can get involved in the decisions that are made. WNC is undertaking an eight week consultation and is seeking views on the draft SCI. The consultation commences on Tuesday 1st July 2025 and will close at 23.59 pm on Monday 25th August 2025.

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has revealed the information it is likely to share with Reform UK's DOGE team, ahead of their deep dive into council spending. Though no formal requests have been received yet, reflections from the initiative at Kent County Council (KCC) and discussions with DOGE officials highlight potential requests for a round-up of financial data that is already publicly available, as well as a focus on potholes, asylum hotels and demand-led services. West Northants is the second local authority to receive a visit from the Musk-inspired efficiency team, which is reportedly made up of software engineers, data analysts and forensic auditors. DOGE chief Zia Yusuf met with council officers and Cabinet members last month, on the invitation of WNC Leader Mark Arnull, to discuss the details of the project. See My Monthly Report.

On Wednesday 16 July 2025, during a cabinet meeting, Reform voted to revoke pledges to reach net zero operational emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045. However, the proposals did not go without fierce objection.

I prepared a lengthy series of agenda items with lots of questions that I intended to cover during my meeting with Start Timmis and Nick Henstock on 31 July 2025 at 2pm. The meeting was fruitful and I am looking forward to the opportunity of gaining a better understanding of the Highways and Transport Portfolio and making a positive contribution during the months ahead. We have agreed quarterly meetings which have been arranged already and we will liaise directly in between our planned sessions on any critical matters.

Best wishes, Steve

All the Best, Steve

www.facebook.com/stephen.clarke.31924

PARISH MEETINGS, VISITS AND CASEWORK

Leys Lane Great Houghton



Sam Simons has suggested a site meeting to discuss the legal intricacies of the work in Leys Lane. I have asked him to send me details of a suitable time and date for us to meet with Great Houghton Parish Council to discuss matters in September. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

Great Houghton Street Lamps

I have recommended a site visit with Highways and members of the Parish Council to consider and discuss the street lights further. We just need to agree a suitable date and time of day for us to meet.



A428 Northampton-Bedford Local Bus Study

The engagement phase of the Northampton – Bedford Area Local Bus Study is now live. The project has been commissioned by West Northamptonshire Council and is being led by GO Travel Solutions. For more background, please go to the project web page

<https://www.go-travel-solutions.com/northampton-bedford>

The work is being funded by the Bus Service Improvement Plan. WNC has been allocated this money from UK Government funding, and the studies have been approved by The West Northants Enhanced Partnership. The survey is now open for feedback. If you are an individual who lives or works in the area, please provide your feedback on local bus services here

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BedfordBusA428/>

The survey will run until Monday 11 August 2025. Please publicise this survey in order to maximise its feedback. Those that take part in the individual survey will have the chance to win a £25 Vue cinema voucher. How can you help?



- Promote the survey to those that live and/or work in the Northampton to Bedford (A428) and surrounding villages using the attached poster.
- If you would like more graphics to assist you in this, please contact becky.watson@go-travel-solutions.com
- Complete the survey yourself.

The work is scheduled to run until **14 October 2025**. GO Travel Solutions are a social enterprise that specialise in reviewing, developing, and promoting sustainable transport. Your input, and the views of those you represent, will be vital in helping to inform and shape the conclusions of the study. To assist in this, you received an invitation to an online briefing for the A428 Northampton to Bedford Local Bus Study. This took place at **1400 on 17 July 2025**. If you were unable to attend, a recording can be provided. Don't forget, the survey will run until Monday 11 August 2025. Please publicise this survey in order to maximise its feedback.

Rural Bus Services are a topic of concern across Cogenhoe & The Houghtons and other WNC rural wards and I continue to highlight those areas that need attention in the

Short Term (by 2030), Medium Term (by 2040) and Long Term (by 2050). I would appreciate your input on the Local Transport Plan. This is the link to the LTP on the Council's website: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../highways-plans-and...>

A508 Northampton-Milton Keynes Local Bus Study

West Northants Council (WNC) has commissioned E&E Consultants with GO Travel Solutions to undertake a study to better understand the local bus service needs between Northampton and Milton Keynes. This Local



Bus Study will engage the local community to better understand current provision and travel between Northampton and Milton Keynes, including the villages surrounding the A508 corridor. It will also help to shape any potential future local bus investment. The work is being funded by the Bus Service Improvement Plan. WNC has been allocated this money from UK Government funding, and the studies have been approved by The West Northants Enhanced Partnership. A similar study has been previously undertaken in the

Brackley area during 2024. The work is scheduled to run until **Tuesday 30 September 2025**.

Clifford Mill Hill, Little Houghton Transport Review Panel Group

I have asked Barry Wain, the Agent for the Planning application 2025/0503 on behalf of the Applicant, Mr P Henry, Wardle and Keach International Ltd to assist with the formation of the Transport Review Panel Group (TRPG). This duty falls on the applicants to arrange and comply with the planning conditions. It is for them to liaise with the Parish Council and anyone else they wish to invite. Therefore, I have asked Barry Wain to ask Mr P Henry to contact Mark Lyon, Clerk, Little Houghton Parish Council, Liz Dutton, Chairman, Little Houghton Parish Council and Lisa Lane, Councillor Little Houghton Parish Council with a copy to me suggesting a couple of suitable location, dates and times for the first meeting of the TRPG. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.



Little Houghton Waste Bins

Dan Johnson, Street Cleansing Supervisor has written to Mark Lyons regarding the bin on Lodge Close, Little Houghton which is constantly breaking. WNC is expecting a delivery of new litter bins to arrive soon and once they have arrived, he will arrange for the new bin to be installed on the grassy area next to the garages unless the Parish Council has another area in mind. With the new bin Dan will place a larger one on site so hopefully the dog walkers will use that one instead. At the same time he will replace the broken bin on Lodge Close.

Drains Maintenance Nursery Close & Meadow Lane, Little Houghton

I received enquiries regarding drains maintenance in Nursery Close and Meadow Lane, Little Houghton. Following investigation with Highways, I was advised that:

“The reason the Fix My Street report was cancelled is that Nursery Close is a private road and has not been adopted by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). As such, any previous maintenance works carried out by the local authority, or its contractors should not have taken place. Ownership of the area is shared among the various properties along Nursery Close, meaning that responsibility for maintenance including the clearing of any drains rests jointly with the property owners. It is unclear why FixMyStreet (FMS) is currently allowing reports to be submitted for this location. We will raise this issue with our third-party supplier to

investigate and resolve the matter.” I am now looking into the status of drains clearance in Meadow Lane and whether we can do anything further to improve the drains maintenance. Once I have further news I shall be in touch.

Fly Tipping Hot Spots

On 22 July 2025, I contacted Fiona Unett, WNC Assistant Director for Waste, Environment, Development and Transport to discuss the number of fly tipping incidents in my ward. There is a disproportionate amount of commercial waste involved, including hazardous waste such as asbestos which requires specialist clearance. The clearance timescales can take longer to remove and varies between South Northants and Northampton which is indicative of the different contracts. There are several locations which are fly-tipping hotspots, and I would like advice on how best to address this problem. The two prime spots are:



1. Castle Ashby estate, which has several quiet desolate areas where waste can be dumped under cover of darkness without encountering any interference such as at the Engine Pond, Castle Ashby at the junction of Castle Ashby Road and Grendon Road.
2. The A428 laybys just outside Great Houghton and Little Houghton is another prime target as it is just a short hop out of Northampton.

I have arranged a meeting on site with Dan Johnson and Liz Newbury to discuss how best to deal with the problems on Castle Ashby and the A428.

NAASH

I have received an enquiry from a local resident who is employed in the Housing sector. She says that WNC intends to close NAASH (Northampton Association for Accommodation of Single Homeless) and is concerned about the 250 vulnerable people facing homelessness when this occurs. NAASH provides supported accommodation for people who are homeless and works to help them transition into longer-term housing. The issue faced by the Council is a lack of supporting evidence for claims made by NAASH. WNC has been working over a long period to try and address anomalies in the housing benefits claims made for NAASH properties and the tenants that live there. Housing benefit is governed by nationally set regulations and where evidence cannot be provided to support claims that are made then WNC is not able to pay benefit, this is also true of historic payments which if, upon review, are not supported by the required evidence also have to be recovered as overpayments. The council has no choice in this matter as the government both sets the regulations and will not pay the council to meet these costs if they do not comply with the regulations.



I have since heard that Housing is working through WNC's position at present should NAASH evict the current occupants. WNC have not taken any decision to close NAASH, and this would not be within our gift under the current circumstances, however as contained within the public statement the Housing Benefits team

have identified errors within the claims for payment and the council has no choice in this matter if we are not legally obliged to make the benefit payments. This has created concern which WNC appreciate, and the housing teams are working hard to support all vulnerable residents. There are various Housing teams across WNC that are aware of these risks, anyone that approaches services will be supported accordingly. Please let me know if I can help any further.

Village Hopper Services, Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council

On 30 June 2025, I wrote again to WNC Highways and Transport expressing my concern about the future funding of the Village Hopper. I said:

“I am particularly concerned about the future funding for the Village Hopper bus service run by Cogenhoe Parish Council, which had received WNC funding from the United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund UKSPF but is now reliant on some funding from North Northamptonshire Council to meet its short-term requirements. Without a clear statement from WNC about its commitment for rural bus services, the operator cannot plan for the future.” And that “I would appreciate it if the requirements of the Village Hopper were to be properly considered by West Northamptonshire Council and not left to North Northamptonshire Council.”



On 31 July 2025, I met with Stuart Timmis and Nick Henstock to discuss a number of matters relating to my Shadow Portfolio responsibilities for Highways and Transport. On 4 August 2025, I received confirmation from Nick Henstock that Highways and Transport are currently in the process of updating the WNC Enhanced Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan to reflect emerging legislation (Buses Bill), and reference will be made to Community Transport in this work. He refers to the fact that North Northants Council has invested in the VH1 service and that that he strongly recommends that Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council participates in the Highways and Transport engagement study. I had already circulated the details of this engagement study to all Parish Councils in Cogenhoe and the Houghtons and on 4 August 2025, I reminded Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council of the need to participate in the engagement study by completing the survey which closes on 11 August 2025.

Noise Level from Outdoor Theatre Billing Aquadrome

This month, I received a complaint about the noise levels from the Billing Aquadrome ‘outside theatre’, and I have asked the appropriate officer to contact me regarding the current status of the various complaints already received by WNC and any actions taken. Additionally, I have asked for confirmation that WNC Planning Enforcement is investigating whether Billing Aquadrome is using noise monitors as per the planning conditions and for them to provide me with details of any enforcement carried out so far. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.



Out & About in Yardley Hastings 4 July 2025

Whilst out and about in Yardley Hastings on 4 July 2025, I managed to grab a bite to eat at Pastures Farm Shop & Café before my next appointment. The lovely little café contains lots of homemade



produce and the shop has a range of fresh and frozen poultry as well as homemade pies, pasties, sausage rolls, quiche, cakes, puddings and homemade preserves. They source beef, lamb and pork from local producers and keep a range of local cheeses, bread, milk, beer, gins and ice cream. They sell and serve Whittlebury Bakery Bread in their cafe.

The weather was glorious, and I enjoyed my short break in the sunshine. Yardley Hastings is a charming and picturesque village that is steeped in history and surrounded by beautiful countryside. All sorts of businesses play a part in creating a thriving rural economy in West Northamptonshire, and there are lots of quiet corners with surprising, delightful rural outlets and Pastures Farm Shop is just one of them.

Oakfield Community 'Music in the Meadow' 5 July 2025

Sharon Wykes, MD, Oakfield Community, kindly invited me to their Music in the Meadow fundraising event on Saturday 5 July 2025. Music in the Meadow hosted singers, dancers, a BBQ, refreshments, raffle, tombola and many stalls.

As I was parking my car in the car park, I could hear the sound of music coming from a group of excited singers and carers who were accompanying the band in the meadow adjacent to the house. As I wandered around the stalls, I bumped into a number of residents from Yardley Hastings who were there too, including Georgia who we know from the Pop Up Shop. Whilst enjoying a cup of coffee and a short rest later on, we met a lovely family from Birmingham who were here to see their sister Caroline who has lived in the Oakfield Community for 30 years. John, Diane, and Margaret were very complimentary about Oakfield and the care and support their sister received. We had a happy time as we chatted in the sunshine. The family hope to see us again at the next Oakfield event.



Oakfield Community provides homes, care and support to adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities and autism over two sites within Easton Maudit and Yardley Hastings. In addition to the main house in Easton Maudit, Oakfield also own a house in Yardley Hastings where they have been providing a specialised supported living service since 2016. The Yardley Hastings home is a Grade 2 listed building, of which there are 12 individual supported living flats. Within the grounds there is a Community Garden which consists of a Sensory Garden, seating and vegetable patches, with an array of flowers adding colour and scents to the garden.

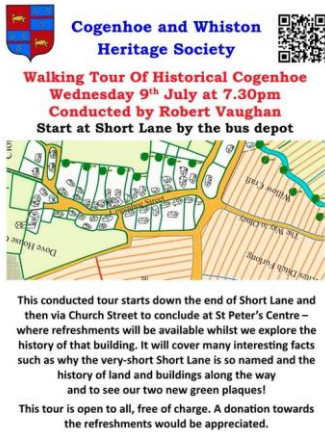


I have supported them and assisted with the marketing of the Oakfield Community small pop-up Charity Shop at 1 Castle Ashby Road, Yardley Hastings, NN7 1EL which is open on both a Wednesday and Friday from 10am-4pm. WNC has shared information on its social media accounts and drafted material for its residents e-newsletter. They also intend to include the wording in the next available edition of West Northants Life.

All proceeds from the Yardley Hastings pop-up shop go directly to the Northamptonshire-based Oakfield Charity, which provides quality housing, support and community opportunities to help people with learning disabilities and autism reach their full potential and live as independently as possible.

Cogenhoe Community Lunch 7 July 2025

On 7 July 2025, I joined others at the Cogenhoe Community Lunch at the Village Hall, Cogenhoe. Clifton's Café had prepared the lunch today, which was very good. We had Sausage and Mash with peas and gravy followed by Lemon Drizzle Cake and cream.



Robert Vaughan told us about the walk which he is leading this Wednesday evening. Just assemble at Church Lane at 7.30pm for a walk which will cover the history of Church Street. Thank you to everyone who came along and supported our community lunch today. It is a very well attended event which runs every 2 weeks and is the perfect opportunity to chat with others whilst having something to eat. Lunch clubs can help you forge new friendships, share good food and enjoy a selection of interesting activities. A special thank you to Deborah and helpers who are giving so much back to their local community.



The next lunch is on Monday 21 July 2025 so please book your place by emailing: clerk@cogenhoeandwhiston-pc.gov.uk

After lunch we had a talk from Cheryl Brading, Groundwork, Northamptonshire about Home Energy savings. Cheryl invited us to use their services which are impartial and completely free by contacting them for a visit on 07936 941056 or cheryl.brading@groundwork.org.uk

The advice about saving money if you took a 4 minute rather than a 7 minute shower was quite a topic of conversation in my household afterwards. It seems that by reducing shower time from 7 minutes to 4 minutes, you can save approximately 3 minutes of water usage and potentially reduce energy consumption for heating the water, leading to cost savings on your energy and water bills. According to the Energy Saving Trust, a typical household could save £70 per year on energy bills by switching to a 4-minute shower.

Little Houghton Coffee Morning 12 July 2025

On 12 July 2025, I attended the Little Houghton Coffee Morning at St Mary the Virgin Church, Little Houghton. It was good to meet up with friends again including John, Anne, Mira, Colin, Ralph, Fiona and others. The next meeting of this friendly and welcoming group will be 9 August 2025.

Everyone is welcome for tea or coffee and biscuits and to try their luck at the monthly raffle whilst meeting friends, or even making some new ones. All proceeds go to support the Village Church Charity.

Whilst there, I had an update on the Deli@Number1, which has been a little delayed in opening, They intend to open very soon. It is a great addition to the village and I can't wait to try it out.

Fiona reminded us about the Little Houghton Fete on Saturday 2 August 2025. They were seeking contributions for the home produce and bottle tombola stalls.



Denton Open Gardens 13 July 2025

On 13 July 2025, I attended Denton Open Gardens with its 15 gardens open to the public all within walking distance of the church and some with special points of interest. There were stalls and plants on the Village Green and lots of wonderful cakes and refreshments at St Margaret's church.

As well as the gardens I saw a number of places of historic interest including a Dovecote thought to date back to the 17th century, which is Grade II listed. There was the opportunity to observe willow weaving, and spinning before marvelling at an elephant topiary. After seeing half the gardens, I rested in St Margaret's Church where I chatted to the many visitors



who were admiring the murals painted by Henry Bird. All of the funds raised were to support Denton Village Hall and St Margaret's Church. Thank you to everyone who opened their gardens and made so many budding gardeners welcome. A special thank you to the organisers of the refreshments in the church and the stalls on the Village Green.



Little Houghton Parish Lunch 17 July 2025

On Thursday, 17 July 2025, I joined the Little Houghton Parish Lunch that takes place at St Mary's Church from 12-2pm on the third Thursday each month. We all enjoyed delicious food and great company. There was a choice of coronation chicken, mackerel or gammon with salad followed by a selection of home-made puddings. The lunch was marvellous, and all the helpers are so kind and helpful. A special thank you to all who make and serve the lunch and to Rev Irene for her thoughtful words. The next lunch is on 21 August 2025. If you would like to come along and make new friends, share your stories, and have a good time with other people in your local community then contact Joy Mayhew on 01604 890498.



Summer Get Together 23 July 2025

I sampled the delights of the Warm Welcoming Space at the Little Houghton village Hall on 23 July 2025. It was good to chat to everyone before the August break. A special thank you to Gill Bailey for organising these events. There is no Summer Get Together in August. The next meeting of this Group will be at the Garden Party on Saturday 13 September 2025 from 2.30-5.00pm.

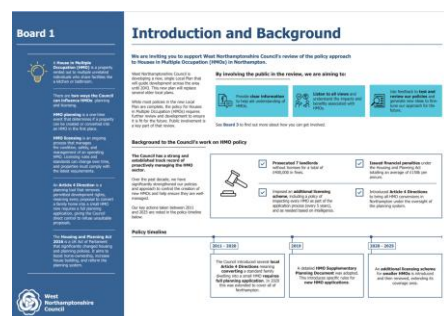


HMO Consultation Event 28 July 2025

On Monday 28 July 2025, I attended the HMO Consultation event at The Court Room, The Guildhall, St Giles' Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE from 1pm.

At the event, I was able to:

- 1) view details outlining current Council policy and more information on the current number and distribution of HMOs
- 2) learn more about the emerging proposals and policy ideas WNC is exploring
- 3) speak with members of the consultation team and ask questions about the review



- 4) share feedback and local knowledge to help fine-tune future policy recommendations

All event details and supporting materials can be found here:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../new-local-plan-west...>

Cogenhoe Community Support Desk 31 July 2025

On 31 July 2025, I went to Clifton's Coffee Shop, Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall for the Community Support Desk. Deborah was handing out lots of prescriptions this week and we spoke briefly about recent events and e-mails. We spoke about a number of current matters including the Bus Service Improvement Plan. WNC has been allocated money from UK Government funding, and the Bus studies have been approved by The West Northants Enhanced Partnership. The survey of the Northampton-Bedford Route is now open for feedback. If you are an individual who lives or works in the area, please provide your feedback on local bus services here:



<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/BedfordBusA428/>

The survey will run until Monday 11 August 2025. Please publicise this survey in order to maximise its feedback.

Rural Bus Services are a topic of concern across Cogenhoe & The Houghtons and other WNC rural wards and I continue to highlight those areas that need attention in the Short Term (by 2030), Medium Term (by 2040) and Long Term

(by 2050). I would appreciate your input on the Local Transport Plan. This is the link to the LTP on the Council's website: <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../highways-plans-and...>

Denton Coffee Morning 1 August 2025

On 1 August 2025, I attended the Denton Coffee Morning at St Margaret's Church, one of West Northants Warm Welcoming Spaces. The church is in the centre of the village. It is open every day and provides a community space for everyone in the village. They hold coffee mornings, weekly craft sessions, quizzes, and many other general community events. It is open on Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings. I enjoyed the croissant, coffee and of course the friendly chatter. It was good to catch up with Sheila, Pat, Alison, Mary and others. It's always a great place to meet for coffee and a chat in Denton. When we arrived everyone had completed their quiz about well-known proverbs. Thank you Peter for preparing the quiz each week.



Well done to everyone that makes this welcoming space possible, especially Pat and Sheila who have been involved since the outset and have seen the group go from strength to strength.

WNC can award a grant to support the creation and / or development of Welcoming Spaces across West Northants. Grants of £500 to £1,500 are available to community and voluntary organisations, registered charities, and other qualifying bodies, with funding intended to provide support until the end of March 2026. The closing date for all applications is 10 am on Monday 6 October 2025. Organisations can apply once during the funding period. As applications open for the Welcoming Spaces Grant Scheme, Community organisations are now able to apply for vital funds until October 2025. Applications will be assessed based on the strength of the proposal and the organisation's ability to deliver the project effectively. The on-line application form is available from this website page:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost.../welcoming-spaces>

Unfortunately we won't be able to attend the Outdoor Theatre Performance on Saturday 16th August 2025. The Pantaloons, a fantastic professional theatre company, is returning to Denton Village Hall for another show entitled 'Robin Hood'. Tickets are available from: Allison - 07796 021 303

Little Houghton Summer Fete 2 August 2025

On 2 August 2025, we attended the Little Houghton Summer Fete from 2-5pm in the Paddock, Little Houghton. It was a great day out for everyone. Although the sky was overcast at the start of the afternoon, it didn't rain and the sun came out as we watched the Children's Fancy Dress followed by the Dog Show.

This year's Summer Fete provided a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for neighbours to interact, socialise, and build relationships. There was something for everyone including Afternoon Tea, Burgers, Bottle Tombola, Home Produce and other gifts. We met a number of people who were new to Little Houghton and some who had moved away now reconnecting with family and friends over a cream tea in the sunshine.



Thank you to everyone who had spent so much time and effort in organising and setting up the Summer Fete in the Paddock, it was a wonderful event.

Community Lunch Cogenhoe 4 August 2025

On 4 August 2025, I attended the Cogenhoe Community Lunch at the Village Hall, Cogenhoe. Well done to Deborah Rush and her team who were managing the event with the lunch being provided by Clifton's Coffee Shop. As we started our Community Lunch today, Deborah reminded us that it was Roy's 80th Birthday and we all sang Happy Birthday to him before we started lunch.



We had a very good lunch of Quiche with salad and new potatoes followed by peach flan and cream. Thank you to everyone who came along and supported our community lunch today. Afterwards, everyone was asked to complete the Bus Survey by 11 August 2025. West Northants Council are carrying out a survey about local bus travel, and whilst it is mainly concerned with the Bedford to Northampton route. You can make any further comments in box 8 about bus services from Cogenhoe to Northampton such as the Village Hopper which are a life line to the village.

<https://www.go-travel-solutions.com/.../northampton-bedford>

A big thank you to Deborah, Clifton's Coffee Shop and everyone else involved in making it such a great fortnightly event. All your efforts are appreciated.

The next Community Lunch event is on 18 August 2025, York Room, Cogenhoe & Whiston Village Hall and the Forget-Me-Not Group, the Social Group for anyone living with Dementia is on 11 August 2025, so please book your place by emailing Deborah at clerk@cogenhoeandwhiston-pc.gov.uk or phone 07512 045418.

The Deli at Number 1, Little Houghton 4 August 2025

I was delighted to stop at the Deli at Number 1, Little Houghton on 4 August 2025 after attending the Community Lunch in Cogenhoe. During the Little Houghton village fete on Saturday, we heard so many great reports about this new food hub in the village that I couldn't wait to sample food from the Deli. Upon entering, Harry gave us a warm welcome and then we saw a treasure trove of gourmet treats which were perfect for food lovers and Ideal for sharing. They specialise in ready-to-eat or prepared foods including Pizza and Lasagne Al Forno, fresh from the Deli@Number1 oven, which Harry prepares and bakes on the premises. They typically offer a wide array of items, including cooked meats, sausage rolls, cheeses, salads, sandwiches, wine and other delicacies. Fresh Bread arrives on Thursday but it goes quickly. They have Cheese

& Marmite Sourdough, Large Sourdough Rounds, Small Malted, Small White Farmhouse, Wholemeal Large Batch, Olive Foccacia and Plain Foccacia, also a few Portugese Custard Tarts and Pain Au Raisin. On Monday, we bought some delicious Chilli & Cheese Foccacia bread, Scottish Cheese and a couple of pastries. Whilst there we sat inside drinking coffee and chatting to Harry before he had to serve other customers.

What other village has such a gem on its doorstep? The current opening hours are:

3. Monday 10am to 7pm (stock up and prep day)
4. Tuesday to Saturday 9am to 7pm
5. Sunday CLOSED (for now, this may change in the future)

You may need to advance order pizzas as they have been selling briskly from 4.30-7.00pm. So if you are wanting pizza's tonight please order on the website www.thedeli@number1.co.uk or call Harry on 07880850075.

We can't wait to return.

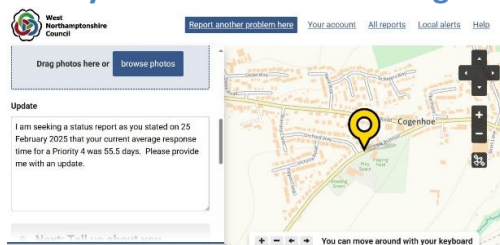


Fix My Street 7051020 Billing Road/Station Road Junction Cogenhoe

Reported via mobile in the Blocked/Damaged category on Wednesday 29 January 2025. Rain is not running from the path but out of the drain grate, it appears to be blocked and causes flooding every time it rains. I have escalated the need to get this fixed as quickly as possible. On 16 May 2025, WNC indicated that the repair was on-going. On 7 August 2025, I asked Highways to provide a status report.



Fix My Street York Avenue Cogenhoe 7177818

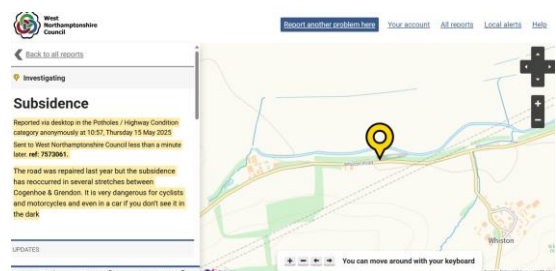


I am seeking a status report from Highways as they stated on 25 February 2025 that the current average response time for a Priority 4 was 55.5 days. This is still recorded as outstanding by Cogenhoe Parish Council, I have escalated it to Highways again this morning. On 14 July 2025, maintenance was scheduled.

Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

Fix My Street Cogenhoe 7573061

On 4 July 2025, I asked for a status report from Highways about Fix My Street 7573061. I understand that this road is used to access the local gravel extraction sites and it has significant HGV traffic. The road was repaired last year but the subsidence has reoccurred in several stretches between Cogenhoe & Grendon. It is very dangerous for cyclists, motorcycles and cars and unless repaired poses a safety risk. It seems that the defect meets the requirement for a Priority 4 repair. WNC will schedule a repair to be completed within 26 weeks and the current average response time for a Priority 4 repair is 47 days.



Gravel Extraction at Earls Barton & Earls Barton Spinney

Whilst escalating Fix My Street 7573061, I asked whether West Northamptonshire Council had an agreement with the Quarry Operator for the costs associated with the impact of gravel extraction on the road network which are typically borne by the quarry operator, who is responsible for mitigating the damage caused by

their operations and ensuring road safety. This often involves contributions to road maintenance and potentially funding upgrades to accommodate increased traffic.

I understand that Mineral planning authorities (usually county or unitary councils) grant planning permissions for gravel extraction. These permissions often include conditions related to road usage, traffic management, and road maintenance, requiring the operator to address the impact of their activities. Indeed, Operators may be required to make financial contributions to local authorities to cover the cost of road repairs, upgrades, or traffic management schemes necessitated by their operations and/or may enter into agreements with local authorities to maintain specific sections of the road network affected by their activities, ensuring roads remain in good condition.

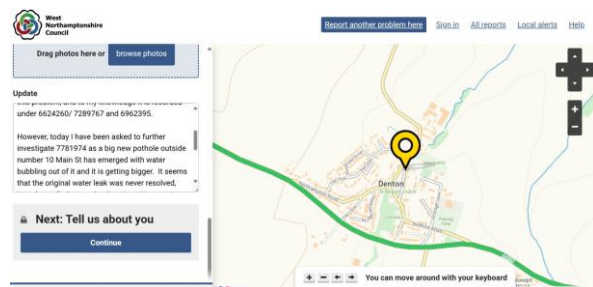
I have since heard from Mark Chant, Head of Planning Services (Minerals and Waste) for Northamptonshire that both of the active quarry permissions in the area (Earls Barton & Earls Barton Spinney) do not contain any conditions (nor a legal agreement) relating to road maintenance. The Earls Barton permission (Heidelberg/Mick George/PJThory) does have a condition in relation to the White Mills Bridge maintenance. Both quarries have routing agreements/conditions directing all quarry traffic onto the A45 via the White Mills Bridge except for local deliveries only.



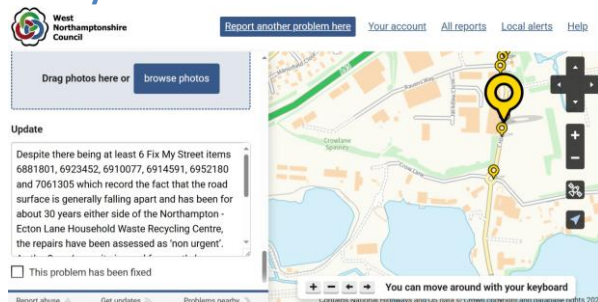
Fix My Street 7781974 Denton

Further to WNC Highways e-mail of 30 June 2025, regarding outstanding Fix My Street cases, I escalated the long outstanding problem with the water leak in Main Street, Denton again. There have been many and various instances of this problem, and to my knowledge it is recorded under 6624260/ 7289767 and 6962395.

However, I was asked to further investigate 7781974 as a big new pothole outside number 10 Main St has emerged with water bubbling out of it and it is getting bigger. It seems that the original water leak was never resolved, just channelled to another location. Yet on 14 May 2025, Highways changed the state to 'Fixed' stating that the action to fit a 450mm pipe would keep the water below tarmac level. Following my escalation the repair was scheduled on 4 July 2025. I have asked for a status report this month.



Fix My Street 6881801 Crow Lane

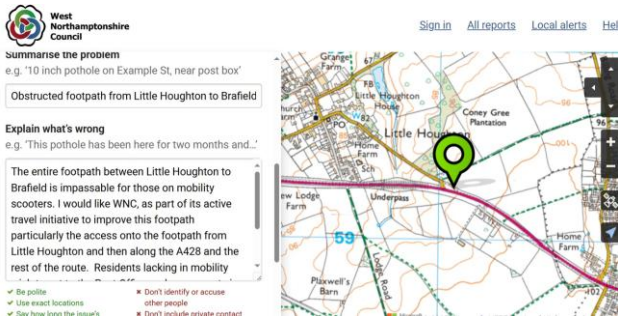


Despite there being at least 6 Fix My Street items 6881801, 6923452, 6910077, 6914591, 6952180 and 7061305 which record the fact that the road surface is generally falling apart and has been for about 30 years either side of the Northampton - Ecton Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre, the repairs have been assessed as 'non urgent'. As the Crow Lane site is used frequently by many residents, I have asked WNC Highways to consider how best to fix this problem once and for all. I

have been advised that WNC is aware of these issues, and a long term solution it is on the list of resurfacing schemes however it will not be completed within this financial year. In the meantime, WNC will continue to keep the road safe with routine inspections.

Fix My Street Little Houghton to Brafield 7428641

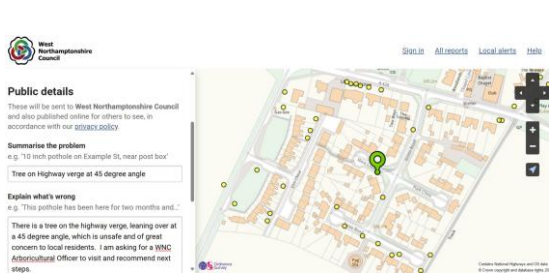
I was asked to look into whether anything can be done about the entire footpath between Little Houghton to Brafield which is almost impassable for those on mobility scooters. I have asked WNC, as part of its active travel initiative to improve this footpath, particularly the access onto the footpath from Little Houghton and then along the A428 and the rest of the route. Residents lacking in mobility wish to get to the shops in Brafield as they no longer have these facilities in Little Houghton. It is far too dangerous to ride disability scooters along the A428. I have been advised that a qualified Highways Inspector has assessed the location, and confirmed that in accordance with the WNC Highways Inspection Manual, this defect does not meet the investigatory levels for a repair. WNC will continue to monitor the condition as part of routine highway inspection. I am seeking to get a change to this policy through the Active Travel component of the WNC Transport Plan. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.



Fix My Street 7745734 Denton

As this looks like the emergence of a sinkhole at the entrance to Bridge Meadow, Denton, I have escalated the incident to Highways with a request to treat this as a matter of urgency. WNC confirmed that they have been made aware of this issue and a works order has been raised on a routine safety inspection. The expected completion date for these works was 21/07/2025.

Fix My Street 7920817 Mere Close, Brafield on the Green



There is a tree on the highway verge leaning over at a 45 degree angle, which is unsafe and of great concern to local residents. I have asked for a WNC Arboricultural Officer to visit and recommend a



course of action. A WNC Highways Inspector has made the area safe. WNC has requested a tree inspection to take place within 28 working days. Once the tree inspection has taken place WNC will carry out any recommended works. Once I have further news, I shall be in touch.

Fix My Street 7549020 Little Houghton

The WNC update for this item is incorrect. I visited the site on 28 July 2025 and it still shows a stream of water in the gutter. The second Photograph shows an Anglian Water card tucked into the top of the brick wall and the third photograph is a copy of the card from Anglian Water with a date of 26/6/2025 on it. Therefore the WNC narrative for their visit on 23 July 2025 is incorrect. I have asked Anglian Water for a current status. I have since heard from Anglian Water. See Below.



Fix My Street 7549020 Little Houghton, Anglian Water TLS/905026674 Job Reference: 66418418

There is a water leak at what3words: ///tend.fingernails.shock Little Houghton, Northamptonshire and I have asked Anglian Water to arrange for a member of their Water Networks team to carry out a check as to the source of the water and undertake the necessary repairs. I am asking them to communicate with me directly at stephen.clarke@westnorthants.gov.uk to assure me that they will now take action. I want to be in a position to advise residents that we now understand the source of the water so that we can gain commitment to a resolution of a problem that has been outstanding for some time.

I have now heard from Anglian Water (AW) about the Water Leak on Station Road, Little Houghton. On 27th June 2025, the above job was raised for a burst main in the carriageway at this location. AW identified visual water escaping into the ducts and becoming visual further down the hill. The hydrant 20m from this burst is also full of water and has a good noise on it. The main was correlated and a good peak and top noise was present on an old patch.

The work has been passed to AW contractors to dig on the old patch in the road. 2-way traffic lights are required, no parking cones needed in the area of excavation as cars usually parked there all day. BT overhead cables present. The job requires a CDM pack (Construction Design and Management) for health & safety/risk assessment purposes and a 9k tanker.

On 9th July 2025, the CDM pack was completed and AW is just awaiting CAD drawing before it could be sent off for approval. On 23rd July 2025, the level of service on the job was extended to 15th August 2025 as per AW Network Technician. AW is still awaiting approval before a plan date will be known.

On 23rd July 2025, the level of service on the job was extended to 15th August 2025 as per AW Network Technician. AW is still awaiting approval before a plan date will be known.

I hope this update is sufficient. However, Once I have further news I shall be in touch.

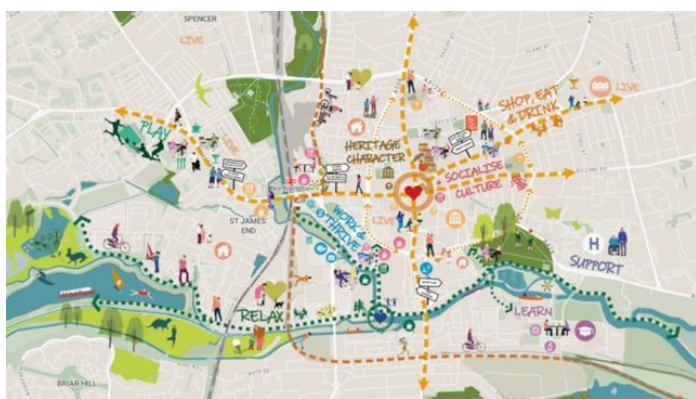


CONSULTATIONS

A range of consultation and engagement activities take place across West Northants from time to time. I summarise the main consultations in this section of the report, but please remember you can check new consultations, have your say, and sign up to receive alerts and updates via our Consultation Hub.

Help Shape the Future of Northampton

Local residents, businesses and community groups are invited to help shape the future of Northampton town centre as West Northamptonshire Council launches a public engagement activity on the draft Northampton Town Centre Masterplan. The masterplan will set out a long-term vision to guide how the town centre should evolve over the next 15 years. This includes how we'll improve streets, public spaces and provide new homes and neighbourhoods, whilst supporting local businesses and culture.



Northampton's town centre is already undergoing significant transformation, with major regeneration projects such as the newly revitalised Market Square, plans to regenerate Greyfriars, the redevelopment of former M&S and BHS stores, and the new Castle Park well underway. The draft masterplan will build on this momentum, offering a joined-up plan to ensure future investment is focused on the right places and reflects the needs and aspirations of local people.

The plan is structured around six ambitions:

- 1) A walkable, better-connected town
- 2) A revitalised riverside for leisure and nature
- 3) Heritage buildings brought back to life
- 4) New homes that support town centre living
- 5) More and better spaces for local businesses
- 6) A cultural and social hub that gives people reasons to visit

Town centre living is a key theme, supporting local shops, improving pedestrian and cycling routes and increasing the vibrancy of the town centre. The plan includes ideas for a range of housing types including homes for families, older people and young professionals on currently underused or vacant sites. Any future housing would be developed with design quality, green space and local infrastructure in mind.

A new website has been launched at northamptonforward.com, where people can:

- View the emerging masterplan proposals
- Explore key areas and ideas
- Complete a short survey to give their feedback

The engagement will be live until Sunday 10 August, and all feedback will help shape the final version of the masterplan, due to be published later this year.

All comments and suggestions received during this first stage of engagement will be reviewed by the project team and used to develop the masterplan. The final plan will reflect the priorities, opportunities and challenges identified by local people, businesses and community groups. A revised version will be shared in

the autumn, followed by a clear action plan to guide delivery over the coming years, bringing positive change to the town centre in a way that's shaped by the community.

Have Your Say on Planning

WNC has prepared a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This sets out how the Council will



Have your say on how people are involved in local planning

engage and consult in the undertaking of its Planning functions to ensure that anyone within and with an interest in, the local authority's area can get involved in the decisions that are made. WNC is undertaking an eight week consultation and is seeking views on the draft SCI in order to make sure that the engagement and consultation processes for the planning service are clear and transparent, effective and inclusive and set out the minimum standards for those who live, work and undertake business in our area. It will explain what interested parties can expect during the consultation process.

The consultation commences on Tuesday 1st July 2025 and will close at 23.59 pm on Monday 25th August 2025. WNC cannot guarantee that representations received after this date will be considered.

How can I submit my comments?

Online: View the draft SCI and consultation page on line here :

<https://westnorthants.citizenspace.com/.../statement-of-.../>

Email: localplan@westnorthants.gov.uk

In writing: Planning Policy SCI West Northamptonshire Council, The Guildhall, St Giles' Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE

Documents can be viewed at the following locations:

6. West Northamptonshire Council, The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester,
7. West Northamptonshire Council Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE
8. West Northamptonshire Council libraries and Community Libraries
9. List of libraries <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/list-libraries>

What Happens Next?

After the consultation on the draft SCI is finished, all feedback will be carefully reviewed. The consultation responses and an updated draft SCI will be reported to the Planning Policy Committee for further consideration in the Autumn.

If you have any further queries please do not hesitate to get in touch via email

localplan@westnorthants.gov.uk

Future of Housing Services in West Northamptonshire

Residents are invited to take part in a public consultation to help shape the future delivery model for housing services in West Northamptonshire. Tenants and leaseholders have also been invited to take part in a tenant consultation during the same period. The consultations will run for eight weeks from Monday 14 July to

midnight on Sunday 7 September 2025 and offer people the opportunity to share their views on how housing services are provided in West Northants.

Your thoughts on the future management of Council Homes

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is consulting on bringing social housing services currently run by Northamptonshire...



Following the 'minded to' decision to bring housing services previously delivered by Northamptonshire Partnership Homes (NPH) back under direct Council control, work is now progressing to develop a long-term model that meets the needs of tenants, leaseholders and local communities for the future. Feedback gathered through the consultation will help inform a detailed options appraisal which will be

presented to Cabinet in November. Approval will also be required from Full Council and the Secretary of State. The proposed transfer would follow a phased approach, with a robust implementation plan being developed and delivered over the next two years to enable a structured and collaborative transition and ensure services continue to meet the needs of residents throughout, with minimal disruption. Full details of the consultation, including an online survey and supporting information, are available via the Council's consultation hub.

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>

West Northants Cost of Living Roadshow



The final cost-of-living roadshow

event and pop-up stalls will take place in West Northamptonshire this month to highlight the support available to residents across the area. People are encouraged to attend and speak to a range of organisations to find out what help is available to them and where to find it. Organised by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), the events will offer information on accessing grants, money and debt advice, wellbeing tips, and much more.

Remaining Roadshow date

The remaining Roadshow date is at Semilong Community Centre - Friday 15 August, 1–3pm.

For those unable to attend, the Cost of Living Support Hub is full of information and advice to help residents find the support they need. This includes a list of welcoming spaces across West Northamptonshire, a group of non-judgemental, safe and welcoming places where people in can come together to stay warm, and perhaps enjoy a hot meal or a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Reform & DOGE team Area of Interest at WNC

I have the following information about the areas of interest for Reform's DOGE team at WNC courtesy of Nadia Lincoln, Chronicle and Echo on 14 July 2025. West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) has revealed the information it is likely to share with Reform UK's DOGE team, ahead of their deep dive into council spending. Though no formal requests have been issued yet, reflections from the initiative at Kent County Council (KCC) and discussions with DOGE officials highlight potential requests for a round-up of financial data that is already publicly available, as well as a focus on potholes, asylum hotels and demand-led services.

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:



West Northamptonshire Council

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT

West Northants is the second local authority to receive a visit from the Musk-inspired efficiency team, which is reportedly made up of software engineers, data analysts and forensic auditors. DOGE chief Zia Yusuf met with council officers and Cabinet members last month, on the invitation of WNC Leader Mark Arnall, to discuss the details of the project.

Since 2021, the council has managed to keep to its balanced budget each year and deliver almost £115m of efficiency savings to protect service provision. However, the report noted that finding new savings is getting



more difficult for an authority that is already “lean”. WNC has confirmed that it has not yet received a formal letter from Reform UK setting out details of the project or what data it would like to access, as was previously seen in KCC. However, in anticipation of the DOGE requests, some information has already been collated based on what was asked for in Kent. This includes all expenditure over £500, contractual arrangements, audits and inspections, and budget monitoring. The council has stated that all of the information referenced is already available in the public

domain and has provided links to its publications in the report. Further discussions during meetings with the DOGE team also highlighted other areas of interest. These include information on IT infrastructure, current and previous budget forecasts, temporary accommodation, housing, home to school transport, adults’ and children’s social care, potholes, and asylum hotels / HMOs. The Cabinet approved DOGE’s access to the information at its meeting on Wednesday 16 July 2025, subject to legal agreements and due diligence checks signed off by the Chief Executive. WNC has confirmed that no personal or special category data will either be requested or shared with DOGE. An appropriate legal agreement setting out robust confidentiality requirements will also be required to be completed prior to the provision of any data. Identities of the individuals within Reform’s DOGE team have not yet been disclosed to the council. WNC has said that checks to understand the skills, experience and qualifications of the members involved will be carried out before any data is shared. Any subsequent reporting on the findings would also be controlled through strict confidentiality requirements. The Council is already in the process of commencing its detailed financial work required for setting the budget for 2026/27, and says the approach taken will not be “fundamentally different” from previous years. The authority has confirmed that the DOGE review will come at no cost to the taxpayers, but did note that a small amount of officer time has and will be used to collate the information.

Draft Statement of Accounts 2024/25

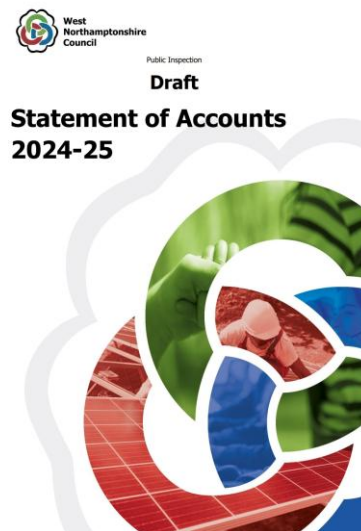
The Draft Statement of Accounts which presents the statutory financial statements for West Northamptonshire Council for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and gives a comprehensive summary of its overall financial position is available here:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/transparency/statement-accounts>

The accounts are presented in the format recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), as set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024-25 (the Code). The core financial statements use this format and meet the conditions of the Code. West Northamptonshire Council provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the collection and disposal of waste, household waste recycling, leisure and community wellbeing, highways, planning, economic development, collection of council tax and business rates, housing benefit, council tax support, housing and support for the homeless. Throughout 2024-25 the economic climate in which the Council has been operating continued to be challenging, with rising demand and cost pressures for statutory services mirroring those being experienced

on a national basis across many local authorities. Within both Adults and Children's social care, demand-led pressures have continued to show significant increases in the number of people requiring support and the cost and complexity of these care packages. There are also additional pressures which have emerged as a result of more self-funding adult clients seeing their financial assets drop to below the upper asset threshold and therefore becoming entitled to Council funding for all or part of their care.

Other demand led services such as Home to School transport services have also experienced significant demand increases which includes the full year effect of prior year demand alongside increased growth in Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport. Within housing services both the number of residents requiring support through the provision of temporary and emergency accommodation has increased throughout the year, along with increased costs which are also reflected in the Council's 2024-25 provisional outturn position. Service project groups have been focussed on driving forward key incentives across our demand services to address prevention and provision options which aim to bring down both the demand for services and the costs of meeting needs over time. For housing there are also ongoing projects using predictive analytics designed to spot the early risk of homelessness so that services can act before homelessness becomes unavoidable and to have lower cost options for housing for those that need temporary housing. We are also continuing to challenge contributions to ensure that we optimise housing benefit or health contributions where possible. All these initiatives will continue to be progressed during the next financial year having instigated the required changes and solutions this year.



The Corporate Plan

The 2024-25 Corporate Plan set out the Council's vision for making West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work, visit and thrive. The Council's key priorities during the year included:

- 1) Green and Clean – Environment and wellbeing
- 2) Improved Life Chances – Health, social care, children and families
- 3) Connected Communities – Transport and connectivity
- 4) Thriving Villages and Towns – Place shaping and homes
- 5) Economic Development – Growth and prosperity
- 6) Robust Resource Management – Transparency and financial probity.

Delivery of these key Council's priorities is supported and resourced through the Council's budget and medium-term financial plan. The budget is aligned to the delivery of the Corporate Plan and strategic principles that underpin the Corporate Plan to ensure robust resource management.

Out-turn Position 2024-25

The Council's financial performance against budget is monitored throughout the year, through the budget monitoring process along with regular updates provided to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The provisional outturn as reported to Cabinet on 24th June 2025 reported a small underspend of £0.4m as set out in the table below.

Table One – Provisional Outturn 2024-25 by Directorate

Directorate	Net Budget £'000	Forecast Net Spend £'000	Provisional Outturn Variance £'000	P9 Outturn Forecast Variance £'000	Movement Since P9 £'000	Forecast Variance against budget
Chief Executive's, Customer Services and IT	14,773	12,899	(1,874)	(491)	(1,383)	-12.7%
Education Services	5,289	5,053	(236)	389	(625)	-4.5%
Children's Trust	92,966	103,114	10,148	7,242	2,906	10.9%
Communities and Opportunities	13,647	15,377	1,730	1,282	448	12.7%
Adults, Communities & Wellbeing	142,825	151,123	8,298	9,346	(1,048)	5.8%
Place and Economy	94,666	89,240	(5,426)	(683)	(4,743)	-5.7%
Finance and Corporate Services	19,930	18,711	(1,219)	(4)	(1,215)	-6.1%
Cost of services	384,096	395,516	11,421	17,081	(5,660)	3.0%
Technical / Centrally Controlled Budgets	30,413	18,923	(11,491)	(11,994)	503	-37.8%
Total budgeted expenditure	414,509	414,439	(70)	5,087	(5,157)	0.0%
Less funding	(414,509)	(414,829)	(320)	0	(320)	0.1%
Net Position 2024-25	0	(390)	(390)	5,087	(5,477)	

*Note that the budget figures above exclude reserve and year-end technical adjustments

The provisional outturn position for 2024-25 is an underspend of £0.4m after the use of £10.1m of general budget contingencies, which were set aside in the budget for risks that may crystallise in the current financial year.

Sara Bool MP, Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire, Question in Westminster on 23 June 2025

On 23 June 2025, Sarah Bool MP tabled the following question about West Northamptonshire Council Finance.

Question Asked by Sarah Bool

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of the proposed Fair Funding Review 2.0 on the financial settlement for West Northamptonshire Council.

Answered by Jim McMahon on 30 June 2025

On 20 June 2025, we launched the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation on proposals to update and reform the funding system through the 2026-27 Local Government Finance Settlement. Subject to consultation, our proposals will create a balanced, more transparent and simpler Settlement. We will publish the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later this year, which will inform local authorities, including North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils, of their provisional multi-year allocations, and allow authorities to make budget decisions and plan for the course of the multi-year Settlement.

WNC Organisation Structure & Senior Salaries

The Transparency Code 2015, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, sets out what information local authorities must publish about their organisation structure, senior employees and senior salaries. West Northamptonshire Council has published its organisation structure for the top three management tiers. It is a snapshot of the senior leadership team as of 1 April 2025. The Senior Salaries information requires the publication of our senior employees whose annual remuneration is £50,000 and above. Further information is set out on the link below:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../leadership...>

REGULATORY SERVICES

Annual Canvass

West Northamptonshire Council is encouraging residents to check and respond to their annual canvass email or letter to

ensure
they
remain
registered
to vote and
their
household



information is up to date. This simple step helps make sure that everyone who's eligible is able to vote in future elections. It also plays a part in wider areas of daily life, from confirming identity for credit checks to qualifying for jury service. By taking just a few minutes to respond, residents help the council keep the electoral register accurate and avoid the need to send reminders. If someone in your household needs to be added to the form, they'll also need to register to vote. We'll be sending out registration forms where needed, but they can also register quickly and easily online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Every household will receive a message, either by email or by post, asking someone to confirm who lives at the address and is eligible to vote. Those who have shared an email address with the council should look out for an official message from electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk. It's safe, secure and clearly marked as being from the council, with a link to check and confirm your details online. For households that haven't responded, reminder letters will start going out in August, and

Leadership, organisation structure and senior salaries

Corporate leadership team

See details of our senior leadership team at West Northamptonshire Council.

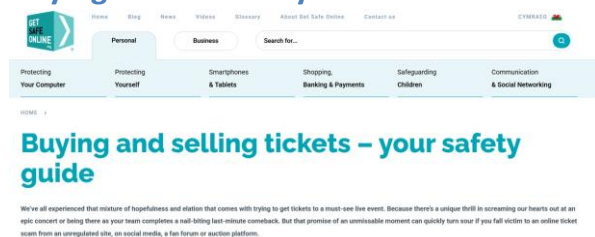
Position	Name
Chief Executive	Anna Earnshaw
Assistant Chief Executive	Rebecca Purnell
Chief Executive Children's Trust	Colin Foster
Executive Director of People Services	Vacant
Executive Director, Place, Economy and Environment	Stuart Timmiss
Executive Director, Corporate (currently seconded to NCT)	Sarah Reed
Executive Director Resources (Chief Finance Officer) and Deputy Chief Executive	Martin Henry
Director of Communities and Opportunities	Jane Carr
Interim Director of Public Health	Chloe Gay
Interim Director Governance and Monitoring Officer (MO)	Sarah Hall
Director for Children's Services (DCS)	Melanie Barnett
Acting Director, Adult Social Care (DASS)	Neil Cox
Assistant Director, Workforce and Transformation	Alison Golding
Assistant Director, Adult Services	Amy Brock
Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance	Ashley Leduc
Assistant Director, Health, Wellbeing and Reablement	Emma Skey
Assistant Director, Housing and Communities	Jodie Archer
Assistant Director, Place Shaping	Louise Seymour
Assistant Director, Assets and Environment	Simon Bowers
Assistant Director, Planning and Development	Stephanie Gibrat
Assistant Director, Waste	Fiona Unnett
Assistant Director, Highways and Transport	Nick Henstock
Assistant Director, Customer Services	Luiza Morris-Warren
Assistant Director, Finance - Strategy	James Smith
Assistant Director, Finance - Accountancy	Audra Statham
Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits	Belinda Green
Assistant Director, Education	Ben Pearson
Assistant Director, Integrated Children's Services	Louisa Russell
Chief Information Officer	Vacant
Head of Transformation Delivery (currently seconded to NCT)	Matt Prisk
Head of Communications	Becky Hutson
Head of Business Intelligence and Performance Insights (BIPI)	Simon Bryant
Head of Pensions	Mark Whitby
Head of Audit and Risk Management	Adrian Ward
Project and Executive Support Manager	Leanne Howells
Sustainability Manager	Martin Wilson

some properties may receive a home visit from a member of the Electoral Services team if they do not respond to the reminder.

There are a few changes to the canvass this year. For the first time, some households will see a message on their form if any postal votes linked to that address are due to expire. This is to give people time to reapply in plenty of time, ensuring they can continue voting by post if they wish. The council reminds residents that it will never ask for personal or banking information in its canvass communications. Anyone unsure about a message they've received is encouraged to call 0300 126 7000 to check. Residents who have recently moved, or who are not currently registered to vote, can register easily and securely online at www.gov.uk/registertovote.

More information about the canvass process, is available on West Northamptonshire Council's website. <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/electoral.../annual-canvass>

Buying Tickets Safely On-Line



Every music and sports fan knows that often, tickets for gigs, festivals, big games and tournaments sell out very quickly. To avoid disappointment this summer, you might turn to social media, online marketplaces or fan forums to look for tickets. You may get lucky, or you may get scammed, which is even more disappointing as not only do you miss out on tickets, you also lose your hard-

earned money. In a ticket scam, the seller tells you they'll post or email the tickets as soon as you've transferred the money to their bank account. But when you try to contact them after nothing's arrived, they've disappeared into thin air. Chances are, dozens of other people have fallen victim to the same fraud. Before buying tickets this summer, check out the expert advice on this website:

Buying and selling tickets – your safety guide - Get Safe Online
<https://www.getsafeonline.org/buyingticketssafely/>

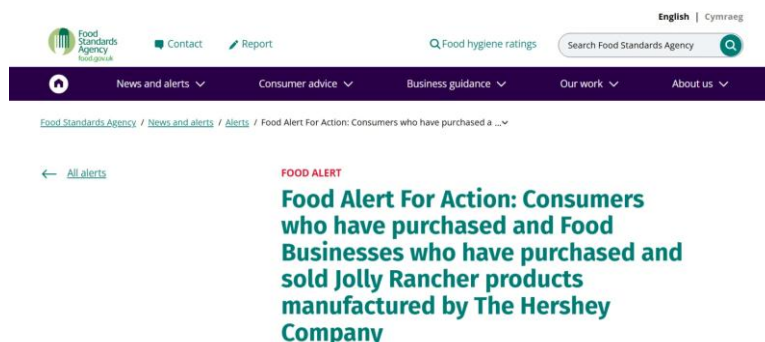
Food Alert Jolly Rancher Products

The FSA have recalled Jolly Rancher products which contain Mineral Oil Aromatic Hydrocarbons, (MOAH), and Mineral Oil Saturated Hydrocarbons, (MOSH), making them unsafe to eat and not compliant with UK laws. As these foods are usually aimed at children WNC is asking schools to make parents aware of the recall from The Food Standards Agency.

Food Alert For Action

Consumers who have purchased and Food Businesses who have purchased and sold Jolly Rancher products manufactured by The Hershey Company Please see the link below for further information.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/news-alerts/alert/fsa-fafa-02-2025>



RURAL SERVICES NETWORK (RSN)

Getting Solar off the Ground

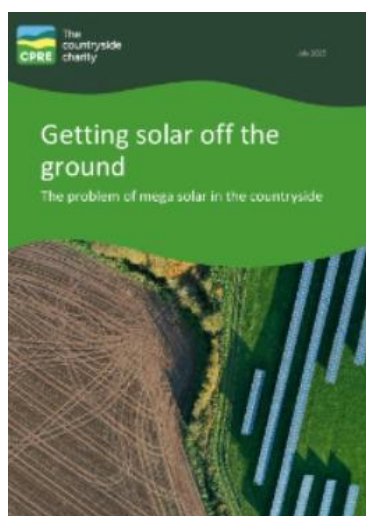
A new report published by CPRE, entitled Getting Solar Off the Ground, reveals that a significant proportion of England's most productive farmland is now being used for large-scale solar energy generation. The

research analyses the location and land classification of solar farms generating more than 30MW and calls for a shift in solar energy development away from high-quality farmland and towards rooftops and brownfield sites.

Key findings from the report include:

- 1) 59% of England's largest operational solar farms are situated on productive farmland.
- 2) 31% of the total land area used for these solar farms is classified as 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land, which includes Grades 1, 2, and 3a.
- 3) The total BMV land used by these sites equates to 827 hectares, an area the size of approximately 1,300 football pitches.

Three operational solar farms—Sutton Bridge in Lincolnshire, Goosehall in East Cambridgeshire, and Black Peak Farm in South Cambridgeshire—are located entirely on BMV land.



The report examines 38 solar farms over 30MW currently operational in England. Of these, 27 are located on greenfield land, and 20 contain BMV land. An additional 755 hectares of Grade 3b farmland—moderately productive land—are also covered by solar installations, bringing the total proportion of productive land affected to nearly two-thirds.

CPRE's analysis suggests that current planning protections for high-quality farmland are not being effectively enforced, with development clustering in areas with high-quality soils and grid access.

The report also highlights:

The government's current solar roadmap could lead to 60-65% of solar capacity being delivered via large-scale ground-mounted projects by 2030. Proposals from CPRE include a target for at least 60% of solar generation to come from rooftops, brownfield sites, and car parks.

CPRE's own research shows rooftop and brownfield solar could deliver 40–50 GW by 2035 and up to 117 GW by 2050.

In addition to its land use analysis, the report includes recommendations for the government to ensure a more strategic and sustainable approach to solar development. These include prioritising rooftop installations, updating the Agricultural Land Classification system, upgrading grid infrastructure, and improving community engagement.

Read the full report on CPRE's website here:

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/res.../getting-solar-off-the-ground/>

Local Government Finance is Broken

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee has issued a stark warning that the current local government funding system is no longer sustainable –

calling for urgent reform to protect vital services and local democracy. The Committee's report, *The Funding and Sustainability of Local Government Finance*, highlights spiralling costs for councils now exceeding £139 billion a year, with demand-led services such as adult social care, SEND provision and homelessness pushing many local authorities to the financial brink.

The Rural Services Network welcomes the Committee's recognition that current funding mechanisms disproportionately impact councils with higher service demand and limited fiscal flexibility – an issue felt



acutely by rural authorities. The report explicitly acknowledges that rural and urban areas face different funding pressures and recommends that future funding reforms be designed to reflect this. It also urges the Government to review and update the Indices of Deprivation, noting that current measures may not capture hidden disadvantage in rural areas. This echoes long-standing RSN concerns that standard data sets often fail to reflect the reality of rural life.

Other key points relevant to rural communities include:

- 1) Over-reliance on council tax – labelled the most unfair and regressive tax in England. The Committee calls for local authorities to have greater control over valuation and banding decisions.
- 2) Erosion of discretionary and preventative services – such as libraries, roads, and transport, which are essential for sustaining rural communities but are increasingly squeezed out by statutory demand.
- 3) Unfunded mandates – the report calls for the New Burdens doctrine to be strengthened so that new responsibilities are fully funded, and local taxpayers are not left to plug the gap.
- 4) Need for fiscal devolution – the Committee backs replacing ringfencing with an outcomes-based accountability model and ending competitive bidding for core funding.

Importantly, the Committee stresses the need for a clear vision of local government's role, warning that without this, reforms risk entrenching unfairness for the long term.

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:

10. 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 **Allowed**
11. 2023/5711/PIP Permission in principle for development of 8-9 custom/self-build Land Poundfield Road Potterspurty Towcester NN12 7QB Appeal **Allowed**

Pending

12. WND/2021/0960 Overstone Park Golf Club Overstone NN6 0AS Appeal **Pending**
13. **2024/4562**/Shepstone House 27 Church Street Cogenhoe NN7 1LS proposal: listed building consent for the demolition of existing rear conservatory and replacement Appeal Written Representations Start Date 20/05/2025
14. **WNS/2021/0492/EIA** Environmental Impact Assessment Land to the west of Brackley NN13 6FA Outline permission, with access not reserved, for up to 700 residential dwellings, areas of public

open space, a rugby pitch, landscaping, allotments, sustainable drainage and associated infrastructure. Application accompanied by an Environmental Statement **Pending**

2025/2392/MAF Planning Application Billing Aquadrome

A hybrid planning application for the comprehensive reconfiguration of the Billing Aquadrome site comprised of the reduction in the number of static caravans from 3,104 to 2,245 units was received on 14 July 2025. It includes the following elements:

Full planning permission

Demolition of a cluster of four single storey brick buildings (previously occupying garden centre, rage rooms, hair and beauty salon) and removal of existing plant and equipment; demolition of existing toilet block; external and internal alterations to existing Guest Services to incorporate new reception, changing rooms and toilets for marina and retain tackle shop, external and internal alterations to existing maintenance shed to re-purpose as residential hub building, removal of existing caravan sales and holiday reception units, erection of new Residential Reception Building, erection of new Holiday Sales Building, erection of new Residential Sales Building, Reconfiguration of Entrance, new retention pond, stationing of 110 static caravans for permanent residential occupation, reconfigured roads, bases, footpaths, landscaping areas, parking areas, drainage, and flood infrastructure and mitigation works

'Phase One'

Full planning application for the use of the balance of the Billing Aquadrome site for 886 static caravans for permanent residential occupation and 1223 holiday static caravans, 26 floating lodges and area for stationing of touring caravans and tents. Outline planning permission (scale) for the reconfiguration of the Billing Aquadrome layout outside of Phase One to incorporate raised pontoon access to boats; roads, footpaths, caravan bases, landscaping areas, parking areas, drainage areas and infrastructure, flood infrastructure and mitigation works including new lake, and refurbishment of existing family entertainment building with restaurant services, and outdoor canopied seating area, extension to swimming pool. See Phase 1 Above.



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

Future of Housing Services

Residents are invited to take part in a public consultation to help shape the future delivery model for housing services in West Northamptonshire. Tenants and leaseholders have also been invited to take part in a tenant consultation during the same period.

The consultations will run for eight weeks from Monday 14 July to midnight on Sunday 7 September 2025 and offer people the opportunity to share their views on how housing services are provided in West Northants.

See Consultations Report.

New Government Company Platform4 to deliver 40,000 New Homes

On Wednesday 30 July 2025, the government unveiled a new company, Platform4, to start work on the delivery of up to 40,000 new homes over the coming decade by transforming surplus rail land. Previously, London and Continental Railways Ltd and Network Rail's Property Team operated independently, each managing different aspects of surplus rail land across the UK.

Now, Platform4 will bring these two functions together in a unified structure to deliver 40,000 homes over the coming decade by disposing of surplus rail land, attracting private investment and accelerating community regeneration. The company will tackle the challenges associated with building on railway land and will form partnerships with other public sector landowners to make the land more attractive to private developers

<https://www.gov.uk/.../first-time-buyers-to-benefit-from...>



ENVIRONMENT

Pledge to Recycle Your Food Waste

Residents across West Northants are invited to take part in a competition that launched on 1 July 2025 to raise awareness of how easy it is to recycle your food waste and bag the chance to win some fantastic prizes. Prizes up for grabs include Silverstone Museum tickets (including a racing simulator session), Rockingham Castle season tickets, British Touring Car Championship tickets, Afternoon Tea at Delapre Abbey, a premium food caddy, and much more.

To enter, people simply need to:

15. Answer four quick questions about food waste
16. Make a pledge to recycle their food waste regularly.



The competition is part of a wider initiative to increase food waste recycling across the area and show residents how easily their food scraps and veg peelings can be separated at home and collected for recycling at the kerbside every week.

All food waste collected is used to generate green electricity, as well as a nutritious liquid fertiliser which is spread onto farmers' fields – helping to grow more food.

You can also meet WNC's waste team at a series of events and markets over the summer where residents can find out more about the recycling services available, enter the competition and take part in a range of interactive games. Look out for information on the Council's social media channels for where they will be across the area. The competition runs until midnight on Monday, 14 September. Winners will be selected at random from eligible entries and contacted soon after the closing date. Terms and conditions apply. Visit Food Waste Recycling Competition <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/food-waste-promo> to enter and make your pledge today. Find out more about food waste recycling at <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../what-goes.../food-waste>

WNC has officially scrapped its net zero targets

I have the following information about the areas of interest for Reform's decision to scrap Net Zero at WNC courtesy of Nadia Lincoln, Chronicle and Echo on 17 July 2025. The Reform UK administration has said it wants to "refocus" the council's sustainability commitments and prioritise public resources towards



delivering practical projects for residents. On Wednesday 16 July 2025, during a cabinet meeting, members voted to revoke pledges to reach net zero operational emissions by 2030 and those of residents and businesses by 2045. The proposals did not go without fierce objection. The cabinet meeting was briefly paused and moved into a different room after clean air campaigners from Northampton group 1000 Voices took over the chamber, playing music, wearing fancy dress

costumes and reciting from a script on climate issues. Campaigners staged a protest and refused to leave the council chamber unless the administration removed the net zero paper from their agenda. The meeting temporarily disbanded and returned after protestors left the building, however the administration's proposals were still met with further objection from opposition councillors.

Leader of the Conservative group, Councillor Dan Lister, called the report "deeply disappointing".

"The green sector is one of the fastest growing parts of our economy, creating skilled local jobs. By watering down our commitment we risk losing investment to councils showing real leadership.

"Without clean targets and deadlines this strategy becomes just another document gathering dust.

Residents deserve to know when will the flooding stop, when will our air be cleaner, when will the energy bills reduce."

The cabinet unanimously voted to approve the motion and remove the 2030 and 2045 net zero targets.

Going forward, reference to the 'climate impact' of council projects will also be removed, replacing it with a section on the 'environmental impact'.

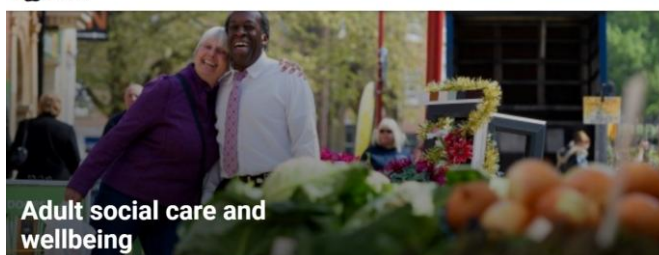
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

CQC To Carry Out Assessment of WNC Adult Social Care

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has confirmed their intention to carry out an onsite assessment of WNC Adult Social Care services during the week commencing 18 August 2025. This is a key stage in the Local Assurance Assessment process and provides WNC with a valuable opportunity to demonstrate the impact of our services, the strength of our leadership, and the difference we make in the lives of our residents.



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The process includes:

- A review of our self-assessment and data return
- Interviews with a range of WNC colleagues and partners who support the services we deliver
- A focus on the four key themes: Working with People, Providing Support, Ensuring Safety, and Leadership

Progress on Integrated Care in West Northamptonshire

Senior leaders from across Northamptonshire's health and care system, including primary care, met on 23 July 2025 to discuss how to improve outcomes for local people by delivering more integrated care closer to home. It was agreed that Northamptonshire will be organised into two 'places' - West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire across nine neighbourhoods:

- 1) Corby
- 2) Kettering
- 3) East Northamptonshire
- 4) Wellingborough
- 5) Northampton Central
- 6) Northampton North and East
- 7) Northampton South and West
- 8) Rural East and South
- 9) Rural North and West

This work is a key part of delivering the NHS ten year plan, which was published on 3 July 2025 following Lord Darzi's independent review of the NHS in September 2024.

The plan sets out three major shifts to help the NHS thrive:

- From hospital to community
- From analogue to digital
- From treatment to prevention

More care will be delivered closer to home through Neighbourhood Health Services. These will include co-located centres open 12 hours a day, six days a week. Two thirds of outpatient appointments will move to digital formats, and by 2027, 95 percent of people with complex needs will have a universal care plan.

A Single Patient Record will be accessible through the NHS App by 2028. This will support AI-powered diagnostics, medicine management, and care planning. New tools using the Federated Data Platform will reduce paperwork and free up clinicians' time.

The plan aims to create a smoke free generation, reduce obesity and alcohol harm, eliminate cervical cancer by 2040, and expand access to screening and predictive analytics to support prevention.

Supporting Reforms

Five key reforms will underpin these changes:

- 1) A new operating model that empowers local systems and reintroduces earned autonomy for high performing NHS organisations.
- 2) Greater transparency in care quality, including league tables and AI-



Fit for the Future: The 10 Year Health Plan for England

The case for change

NHS is at an existential brink: In critical condition, public satisfaction has fallen from 70% (2018) to 21%; productivity down 20-25% post-COVID

Financial unsustainability: NHS consumes 20% of government spending, projected to reach 50%. Risks becoming a poor service for poor people

Demographic challenges: Aging population; 25% of population have long-term conditions, accounting for 65% of NHS spending

However, there is transformational opportunity: unparalleled population health data, single-payer efficiency, and digital healthcare revolution driving genomics leadership and new era of patient choice

Three major shifts

From Hospital to Community

- Neighbourhood health service to bring care into the places people live. Will restore GP access and introduce 2 new neighbourhood provider contracts ('single' and 'multi' neighbourhood serving 50,000 and 250,000+ people)
- Infrastructure: Neighbourhood Health Centres open 12hrs/day, 6 days/week, 'one stop shop' for patient care, co-locating NHS, council and voluntary services. £120m for ~85 mental health emergency departments co-located with A&Es.
- Patient empowerment: 95% of complex patients to have care plans by 2027; 1 million personal health budgets by 2030
- Financial realisation: 15% lower non-elective, 10% lower ambulance observed in systems spending more on community services and £100 spent on community care can unlock £131 of acute savings (citing CF/NHS Confid research)
- Digital transformation: 2/3 of outpatient appointments (costing £14bn a year) to be replaced by digital advice

From Analogue to Digital: Power in Patients' Hands

- NHS App as 'front door': shifting power to patient via AI-powered advice, appointment booking, self-referral, medicines management, care plans. Supplemented by HealthStore: a marketplace for approved digital health apps for patients
- Single Patient Record: Patients to control their data, accessible via NHS App by 2028, starting with maternity.
- Supplemented by advances in genomic data for personalised and predictive care
- Staff liberation: Ambient voice technology reduces paperwork by 51%; procurement framework 2026/27. New AI tools being tested on the Federated Data Platform, which connects information across healthcare settings and links siloed sources, increasing productivity

From Treatment to Prevention

- Tobacco: Create smoke-free generation (£5.6bn savings by 2100)
- Alcohol: mandatory requirement for health warning labels for alcohol; increasing 'alcohol free' threshold to 0.5% ABV
- Obesity: Expand Healthy Start scheme, free school meals (Sep 2026), increase soft drinks levy. Collaborations with industry to test weight loss service delivery models, like GLP-1. Digital NHS points scheme, rewarding people taking healthy actions
- Mental health: national coverage of mental health support teams in schools and colleges by 2028/29
- Genomics Population Health Service: for predictive and personalised medicine. Universal access (via SPR and NHS app) by decade end; 150,000 adult sequencing study; babies and all cancer patients to be offered genomic analysis
- Vaccinations and screenings for disease elimination: increasing uptake via Neighbourhood Health Service. Cervical cancer eliminated 2040; end HIV transmissions by 2030; 10,000 cancer vaccines to clinical trial patients in next 5 years

Underpinned by 5 key enabling reforms

New Operating Model

- Healge NHS with ONSIC control headcount halved by 2027
- Reintroduce earned autonomy: every NHS provider to be a Foundation Trust by 2035. Some to be Integrated Health Organisations (IHOs) holding population health budgets
- Integrated Care Boards to be strategic commissioners (like Commissioning Support Units, CSUs) to aim to be autonomous with strategic authorities

New transparency of care

- League tables of providers and patient-reported experience measures to be published to make data easier to understand and more accessible
- NHS App for providers and patients. Maternity care to be a priority
- National Quality Board to be established, and be single authority on quality, supported by Dr Perry Dean's report.
- All but existing system building on Federated Data Platform, to identify services at high risk, based on clinical data

Workforce transformation

- Fewer staff than previous projections but better equipped (AI training for all, releasing £1.5bn through technology-enabled productivity)
- Advanced practice roles for specialist/PA, reduce international recruitment to ~15% by 2035
- Ultra-Heads employment contracts; eliminate agency staffing by parliament and prioritise staff wellbeing to save £1.5bn cost of poor wellbeing among NHS staff

Innovation & technology

- Five 'Big Miss' (Data, AI, Genomics and predictive analysis, Wearables, Robotics)
- Global initiatives for each set (NHS funded) to drive global leadership
- Regional Health Innovation Zones to bring together ICBs, providers, and industry.
- Clinical trial set-up: 200-150 days to Health 2026; participant satisfaction to influence private patient
- Pre-innovation: eliminate agency staffing by 2026; to improve speed of health care
- EBDm Health Data Research Service

Finance & productivity

- 2% annual productivity gains; return to pre-pandemic levels by 2028
- Phase out deficit-funding from 2026/27
- Introduce multi-year budgets and require 2% of budget for service transformation
- Patient Power: Patient-led patient satisfaction to influence new capital models and generate three and pension fund partnerships

Timeline of key commitments

Year	First wave of new Foundation Trusts	Integrated Health Organisations	NHS App complete SPR accessible	AI-supported telemedicine/hubs	Personal Health Budgets for 1m people	All integrated into best clinical pathways
2025	+	+	+	+	+	+
2026	+	+	+	+	+	+
2027	+	+	+	+	+	+
2028	+	+	+	+	+	+
2029	+	+	+	+	+	+
2030	+	+	+	+	+	+
2035	+	+	+	+	+	+

Source: Fit for the Future: The 10 Year Health Plan for England

led early warning systems.

- 3) Workforce transformation through advanced roles, flexible contracts, and AI-enabled productivity.
- 4) Investment in innovation and technology, including AI, genomics, robotics, and faster clinical trials.
- 5) Financial sustainability through value based care, productivity gains, and new funding models linked to patient experience.

For more detail, you can read the full summary of the NHS ten year plan here.

https://www.carnallfarrar.com/.../250701_10YP_snapshot-1.pdf

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.

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

Libraries Launch 2025 Summer Reading Challenge

This summer, children aged 4 to 11 are invited to let their imaginations bloom as the 2025 Summer Reading Challenge, Story Garden – Adventures in Nature and the Great Outdoors, launches across West Northamptonshire libraries from Saturday 5 July. Created by The Reading Agency and delivered in partnership with local libraries, the Challenge encourages children to connect with the wonders of storytelling and nature. This year's theme is brought to life through the vibrant illustrations of award-winning artist Dapo Adeola, transforming libraries into lush, story-filled gardens. Children can expect a summer of adventure, discovering magical creatures, colourful plants, and rich landscapes as they dive into their reading. The challenge is simple: read six books over the summer holidays - any books, including fiction, non-fiction, e-books or audiobooks. Each completed book earns a reward sticker, and those who finish all six will receive a medal and certificate. It's a fun, free way to keep reading levels up over the summer break and promote wellbeing through creativity and outdoor inspiration. Alongside the reading challenge, families can enjoy a range of free, nature-inspired activities in libraries throughout the summer.



West Northamptonshire's LibraryPlus service has partnered with Family Learning and Teach Outdoors to deliver exciting events such as teddy bear festivals, seed paper making, magic shows, bird and butterfly feeders, nature trails and much more. Children can also look forward to special collaborations with local country parks. Sign up for free at your local library from Saturday 5 July, or visit the Summer Reading Challenge website to get started online.

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

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For more information about local events and activities, speak to your library or visit the West Northamptonshire Council Libraries webpage.

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Gateway School Opens in September

Pupils at The Gateway School in Towcester are set to benefit from a transformative expansion that will open this September, offering a broader, more inclusive curriculum and a range of new facilities tailored to their social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. The new spaces are designed to foster engagement, build confidence, and support the further development of academic, practical and vocational knowledge and skills, helping students thrive, laying the foundation for successful adult lives beyond the school gates. Key figures from West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), The Gateway School, and Creating Tomorrow Trust came together for a first look at the newly completed facilities. The expansion nearly doubles the size of the school and reflects a shared commitment to inclusive education and tailored support for every learner.



Attendees toured the new facilities, which have been sensitively refurbished from an abandoned building to meet the needs of the SEMH students. They feature a gym, food technology suite, ICT and science rooms, drama studio, nurture spaces, multi-use games area (MUGA), horticulture area, and a newly refurbished sports hall and pool. These complement the current specialist areas for craft design and technology (CDT), art, music, motor vehicles, bricklaying, and hair and beauty.

Free CarKraft Driving Course Returns this Autumn

Following its continued success, Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance (NSRA) has released another date for its hugely popular CarKraft experience. Now in its 24th year, the FREE road safety event returns to the Silverstone Porsche Experience Centre on Sunday, 28 September 2025, to provide young people, both qualified and not yet driving, the opportunity to get behind the wheel. For non-drivers aged 15 and over, it will be an opportunity to experience driving for the first time in a controlled environment while qualified drivers (aged 17-30) will have the chance to enhance their skills. Young drivers are one of the most vulnerable road user groups in the county, and since launching in



2001, more than 16,000 participants have already benefitted from taking part in the premier, award-winning driving experience.

Places for the CarKraft sessions fill up fast so anyone interested in taking part is advised to book early to avoid disappointment. Places can be booked online at www.carkraft.info

Get Kids Safe On-Line

Today's children are growing up in a connected world – but that doesn't mean they always know how to stay safe in it. As a parent, grandparent or guardian, your guidance can make a huge difference. A new leaflet, attached, provides some practical ways to help your child explore the internet with confidence and care this summer holiday. Alternatively, take a look at the advice on the Get Safe Online website: <https://www.getsafeonline.org/safehappykidsonline/>



Pilot for Home to School Transport for SEN Students

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are gaining confidence and independence through a pioneering immersive technology travel training project. By simulating real-life bus journeys, the initiative helps students become familiar with public transport in a safe and supportive way. West Northamptonshire



Council (WNC) is working in collaboration with Billing Brook School, Café Track, Stagecoach, and BT's Immersive Hub, to support students transitioning from door-to-door transport to more independent group travel. The bespoke immersive technology and virtual reality (VR) content guides pupils through each step of the journey, from waiting at the bus stop to recognising landmarks, empowering them to travel with greater ease and assurance. The training blends classroom sessions with real-world experiences, including supported journeys to Café Track, a local social enterprise that helps provide autistic people with employment skills and opportunities. Café Track has also played a vital role in the pilot, providing personal

assistants on the bus and delivering neurodiversity training to bus drivers. An open day at Billing Brook School showcased the Immersive Hub and welcomed other SEN schools, parents, and university representatives to learn about the pilot. Stagecoach supported the event by bringing a bus on-site for students to explore and meet the driver.

Between April and July this year, 90 students successfully completed Independent Travel Training as part of the pilot programme. The pilot team has been closely monitoring their progress, with a focus on helping students build the confidence and skills needed to transition towards more independent and group-based travel options. While 19 of these students are currently applying their training by using the dedicated closed bus service introduced through the pilot, all 90 have demonstrated measurable progress. Many have moved away from relying solely on door-to-door transport and are now better equipped to explore more independent travel arrangements. Early feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting a newfound sense of independence and confidence in their children as a direct result of the scheme. One parent commented: "My child was nervous at first to board the bus for the first time and became emotional at the bus stop. It was the warmth of the driver, the kindness of the Personal Assistants, and encouragement from other pupils that gave her the courage to board. Watching her step onto that bus was deeply moving. This pilot scheme has created something truly special an environment where children

feel safe, supported, and seen. The pilot will be reviewed over the summer to assess lessons learned and explore opportunities to expand the programme in the next academic term. With potential route adjustments and growing interest from families, the future looks promising for this innovative approach to SEN transport.

Youth Groups to Apply for Grant Funding

West Northamptonshire Council is encouraging local youth organisations to apply for money from a new national funding pot available over the next three months. This funding is designed to support additional



hours of youth work in areas with higher rates of anti-social behaviour, helping to improve the range of opportunities available to young people, offering them more places to go and positive things to do. Grants of between £30,000 and £100,000 are available to eligible organisations operating or supporting designated areas across West Northamptonshire. A postcode checker is available to confirm eligibility.

The funding has been made available through the Million Hours Fund, a joint initiative from The National

Lottery Community Fund and Department for Culture, Media and Sport, to help young people by increasing access to safe, structured and engaging activities which focus on; improving emotional wellbeing, develop life and practical skills and build trusted relationships. Funded projects must:

- 1) Benefit young people aged 10 to 18, or up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)
- 2) Engage effectively with young people who may be at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour
- 3) Deliver additional hours of youth work beyond what is currently offered
- 4) Involve young people in shaping the services and activities provided
- 5) Offer open access youth work, welcoming a wide range of participants
- 6) Be led by trusted adults, such as qualified youth workers, youth support workers, or experienced volunteers

Organisations including voluntary and community organisations, schools, community interest companies (CICs), charitable incorporated organisations (CIOs) and statutory bodies are encouraged to apply to help build on and improve the offer available to young people. This funding is an opportunity to build on and strengthen the support available to young people. Applications are now open and must be submitted by 12 noon on Wednesday 22 October 2025. Organisations are encouraged to apply as soon as they are ready, in case the fund closes early if application volumes exceed expectations.

For more information on the funding available and how to apply please visit:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/.../pro.../million-hours>

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & GRANT FUNDING

Third Party Grant Funding Opportunities

I distribute a Grant Funding document quarterly. Please contact me if you wish to receive this document on a regular basis.

Welcoming Spaces Grant Funding Re-Opened

Community organisations are now able to apply for vital funds via West Northamptonshire Council as applications open for the Welcoming Spaces Grant Scheme will run until October 2025.



These spaces offer a safe, warm, and welcoming environment for local people, especially during colder months, and can provide vital services and support to those in need. Using funds from the Household Support Fund for West Northamptonshire, the Council is seeking to support the creation or development of Welcoming Spaces across the area. These spaces provide a non-judgemental, safe environment where residents can come together, enjoy refreshments and access wider support services. Grants of £500 to £1,500 are available to community and voluntary organisations, registered charities, and other qualifying bodies, with funding intended to provide support until the end of March 2026. The closing date for all applications is 10 am on Monday 6 October 2025. Organisations can apply once during the funding period. Applications will be assessed based on the strength of the

proposal and the organisation's ability to deliver the project effectively.

The on-line application form is available from this website page:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost.../welcoming-spaces>

Or direct via this link:

<https://northamptonshire-self.achieveservice.com/.../Appl...>

More information on Welcoming Spaces can be found on our website:

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost.../welcoming-spaces>

Cummins Female employment Program

Cummins are thrilled to share that they have launched their Female Employment Programme and are offering exciting full-time opportunities at their flagship Daventry site. These include a Manufacturing Operator Dot, Maintenance Technician and a Manufacturing Operator Trim. No experience needed, just a willingness to learn and collaborate. They are also offering on-the-job training and endless possibilities.

<https://cummins.jobs/.../16F17972E9EA429E908AF3FD393.../job/>



Demolition at St James Bus Depot as Work Progresses

West Northamptonshire Council's regeneration of the former St James Bus Depot in Northampton is well



underway, with significant progress made on the enabling works that will pave the way for over 70 much-needed family homes. As of late July 2025, demolition works are approximately 70% complete, marking a major milestone in transforming the long-vacant 4.5-acre brownfield site into a vibrant new neighbourhood. The internal strip-out of the buildings is also 70% complete, while asbestos sheet roof removal has reached 70%. Work on the removal of notifiable asbestos, a critical and carefully managed process which takes considerable time, is currently 30% complete. These works are being carried out by Armac Demolition, appointed by the Council following a

competitive procurement process. The project is supported by £1.368 million in funding from the Government's Brownfield Land Release Fund, which is enabling essential remediation and site preparation. The regeneration will retain and sensitively restore the Grade II listed Transport Office, preserving key elements of Northampton's transport heritage. Where feasible, original facades of the early 1900s tram depot will also be retained, maintaining a strong link to the town's past. The Council will soon begin the process of selecting a development partner to bring forward the full scheme, which will align with the emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan and include supporting infrastructure such as schools and healthcare services.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Upcoming Closure for Queen Eleanor Interchange

Residents are being advised on the next planned road closures for the Queen Eleanor Interchange improvement works as work progresses on this scheme to ease congestion in the area. The next closures will be overnight between 8pm and 6am on the following dates:

Western side

Road closure will be in place from 30 July until 8 August (re-opening the morning of 9 August)

During this period a one-night closure will also occur on the eastern side on Friday, 1 August

The western end of the roundabout will be closed on the 30 July. This will affect London Road, Mere Way and A45 entry and exit slips.



Eastern side

Road closure will be in place from the 11 to 15 August (re-opening the morning of 16 August)

Closures also in place from 18 to 20 August (reopening morning of 21 August)

This will affect Hardingsstone Lane, Newport Pagnell Road, and A45 entry and exit slips (southbound).

The next phase of the project will involve excavations from the central roundabout to the outer edge of the road, to install drainage systems and traffic signal connections.

Residents and businesses will have access to their properties at all times, however bus stops on A45 slip road and nearest the roundabout on London Road and Newport Pagnell Road are suspended for the duration of this works and passengers are asked to use alternative bus stops during this time. For more information on these works and other major highways projects, visit

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../major-highways-projects>

How to Find out about Roadworks in Your Area

Information on roadworks and road closures are available by using the roadworks site. This provides information on all roadworks taking place, including road closures and diversions. You can search for roadworks today, next two weeks, next three months and next 12 months. This is the best site to visit to see what is happening within your area.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/our-highways.../roadworks>



Leaders Challenge Rail Electrification Pause

East Midlands Councils have written to the Secretary of State for Transport to express their strong opposition to the indefinite 'pausing' of Midland Main Line electrification. The letter highlights that, despite consistent under investment (just 58% of the UK average per head) the East Midlands has delivered recent electrification works on time and on budget.

In contrast, projects elsewhere with higher costs continue to be funded. Leaders warn of risks to local rail jobs, wasted public money on preparatory works, and an ongoing reliance on outdated diesel trains. They have asked the Government to set out its long-term vision for rail in the East Midlands, stressing that further delay will only deepen regional inequalities.



Towcester Relief Road Takes Step Forward

The construction of Towcester Relief Road has taken a step forward as contractors move into phase four of the project following a short pause for the British Grand Prix at Silverstone.



Phase four works include the construction of the west side of the roundabout including the completion of drainage, Openreach and National Grid diversions and the installation of streetlighting and traffic signals. During these works, the traffic will utilise the already constructed southbound carriageway to run a two-lane contraflow. Phase four is expected to be completed in mid-October, when traffic will then be able to flow within contraflow on each side of the roundabout. Phases five and six will include the latter stages of construction works, with the road anticipated to open in

early 2026, according to Persimmon. The relief road will join the A5 to the A43 to stop traffic travelling through the town centre on the A5.

Keep up to date with the progress of the relief road on the dedicated website here: www.resident-portal.co.uk/towcester.

Final Stage of Sandy Lane Relief Road Set to Open

The final stretch of a much-anticipated relief road to ease congestion and improve connectivity across Northampton will open to motorists next week.



Following the completion of the southern section of the Sandy Lane Relief Road to the A4500 junction, West Northamptonshire Council's highways partner Kier has been conducting essential technical works, quality and safety inspections during June and July to ensure it is ready for vehicles. This final section of the road will now open to motorists from next Tuesday 12 August 2025, providing better relief to local communities to the north and west of Northampton including Duston and Harpole.

Residents can keep up to date with highways projects across the area on our Major Projects page. <https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/.../major-highways-projects>

POLICE FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Fire Service Launches New Form for Farmers

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has launched a new way for farmers to tell the Service about information that can help to keep their land safe. Fire crews are having to attend wildfires more regularly, particularly during dry spells of weather where field fires start more easily and spread quicker and further. Now, a new digital form on the Fire Service website allows farmers to detail what water bowsers and machines are on site, access information, any nearby water supplies, and emergency contact details for those responsible for the land. This information will help crews should they be called to a fire on that land.



Group Manager Matt Butler said: "We hope farmers can spare a few minutes to fill in this form, which will help to shape our tactical plans when dealing with rural fires. "Wildfires are a growing risk for the Fire Service, so we want to be proactive in working with farmers to ensure our plans to protect land and property across the county are robust."

The form can be filled in on the NFRS website here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx...>

CULTURE, HERITAGE & SPORT

Run set to 'light a fire' under town

Three-hundred-and-fifty years ago fire spread through Northampton, destroying 700 of the town's 850 buildings. The Amazing Northampton Run half-marathon – set to take place on 14 September 2025 has always had the town's heritage at its heart, so giving the 2025 edition a 'Great Fire' theme seemed natural. Organisers want to attract 2,000 runners this year, offering an opportunity to not only showcase the town's history, but to energise it by attracting thousands of people.

For more information:

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

Northampton to Host Official Women's Rugby World Cup 2025



Northampton Market Square is set to host an exciting line-up of free events, entertainment, and live match screenings this summer as part of the official Women's Rugby World Cup Fan Zone. From cutting-edge technology and family fun to music, arts and festival vibes, each Fan Zone event will be themed to celebrate the spirit of the tournament and bring the local community together across four key dates. Whether you're a rugby fan or simply looking for free entertainment in the heart of town, the Northampton Fan Zone is not to be missed.

Fan Zone dates

Sunday 24 August - Innovation & Technology

Step into the future with a day full of interactive tech experiences for all ages:

17. Explore Virtual Reality: try free VR games and test your speed on twin racing simulator pods and compete on the leaderboard
18. Meet and have a photo with a giant walking robot plus have your picture drawn by an iPad caricaturist
19. Creative activities: design your own flag with Lemon Pop and take part in face painting and rugby activities
20. Northampton Saints and Loughborough Lightning presence
21. Live match screenings: Ireland vs Japan, South Africa vs Brazil
22. Plus much more!

Saturday 30 August - Festival Vibes

A lively, colourful celebration filled with music, dance, and creative flair:

23. Silent Disco: choose your beat with three music channels in a party tent
24. Live Stage with BBC Introducing and walk-to-stadium music route featuring local performers
25. Interactive mural & eco crafts: help colour in a rugby-themed mural and make festival headbands and sound wands with Wild Tribe
26. Irish Dancers, magicians, stilt walkers, jugglers and Samoan weaving workshops
27. Northampton Saints and Loughborough Lightning presence
28. Live match screenings: Canada vs Wales, Scotland vs Fiji, England vs Samoa

29. Plus much more!

Sunday 31 August - Family Fun

A fun-packed day for the whole family, with plenty of things to see and do:

30. Inflatable activities including a bouncy castle, Last Man Standing, surfing simulator, rodeo rugby ball, and a giant maze
31. Basketball challenges with Northants Basketball
32. Make & take craft: paint your own canvas to celebrate the tournament
33. Giant dinosaur, Bubbologist, and Stilt Walkers roaming the square
34. Spanish dance workshop and face painting
35. Northampton Saints and Loughborough Lightning presence
36. Live match screenings: Ireland vs Spain, New Zealand vs Japan, Italy vs South Africa
37. Plus much more!

Sunday 7 September - Music, Art & Culture

A creative celebration of local talent and global inspiration:

38. Northampton Music Festival takeover with live performances throughout the day
39. Make & take activity: design your own frisbee with Lemon Pop
40. MMAP: poetry and urban art from a local creative artist
41. Giant games and face painting
42. Northampton Saints and Loughborough Lightning presence
43. Live match screenings: all matches will be shown (on mute during performances)
44. Plus much more!

The event is proudly supported by partners Discover Northamptonshire, Muse, and Zone Developments. Find out more about the tournament on the council's WRWC webpage.

<https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/womens-rugby-world-cup>

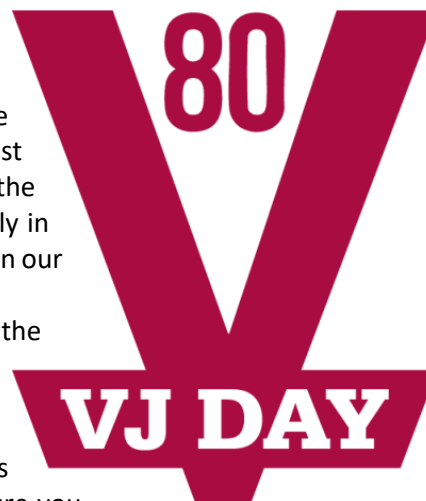
80th Anniversary of VJ Day

To mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Japan (VJ) Day, we will be observing the national two-minute silence at 12 pm on Friday 15 August 2025. This moment of reflection honours the end of World War II in the Pacific and pays tribute to all those who served and sacrificed, particularly in the Far East. To signal the start and end of the silence, alerts will be made in our main buildings via:

- The fire alarm system in One Angel Square, the Abbey Centre, and the Forum
- The public address system in the Guildhall

Important: If you hear the fire alarm at any other time during the day, it is not a test, and you must evacuate the building immediately. Please ensure you are familiar with the evacuation procedures, which can be found on the Buildings and Facilities intranet pages.

We encourage everyone to take this time to pause and reflect, wherever you are working.



Northampton Marks 350 Years Since the Great Fire

The town has come together over the past five months to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Great Fire of Northampton — a devastating blaze that changed the face of our town in 1675. Join us for the grand finale on Saturday, 20 September 2025 in Northampton Market Square from 11am to 7.30pm, followed by a special service at All Saints Church at 7.30pm.

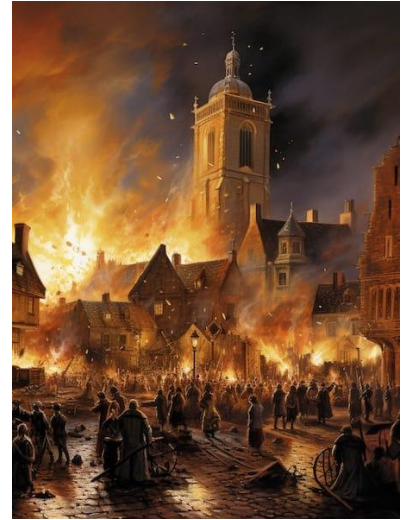
Here is the List of Events:

Fire Fantastic

Monday 15th September – Sunday 21st September 2025, 7 pm – 10 pm, in All Saints Church

Experience “Fire Fantastic,” a nightly light and sound show that brings the Great Fire’s history to life.

For more information, please contact Father Oliver Coss at rector@allsaintsnorthampton.co.uk.



Fiori Musicali – HANDEL Music for the Royal Fireworks

Thursday 18th September, 7 pm at All Saints Church

A spectacular concert to mark the 350th anniversary of this significant Northampton event, featuring Handel’s Music for the Royal Fireworks.

- Purcell – Symphony from Hail! Bright Cecilia
- Purcell – Rejoice in the Lord alway
- Purcell – Chacony
- Handel – MUSIC FOR THE ROYAL FIREWORKS

FIORI MUSICALI BAROQUE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA and the CHOIR OF ALL SAINTS’ CHURCH, NORTHAMPTON
With PENELOPE RAPSON conductor

Tickets: £15-£45, concessions for children, students and blue badge. Wheelchair users, free ticket for carer.

Full details & booking: <http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/.../great-fire-of.../e-yipeyl>

Booking opens 20 July 2025.

The Mystery Tours: The Great Fire of Northampton – 1675

Saturday 20th September, 5.30 pm in the Town Centre

Step Into the Flames of History!

Join us for an immersive journey back to September 20th, 1675, when a single spark ignited a catastrophic fire that reduced much of Northampton to ashes. Guided by our enigmatic Time Traveller, you’ll witness the unfolding disaster, hear the tales of survival, and see how the town rose from the ashes. Tickets £15.

To book tickets, please visit, <https://www.eventbrite.com/.../the-mystery-tours-the...>

For more information, please visit www.themysterytours.com

From Ashes to Restoration: the Great Fire that reshaped Northampton

Saturday 20th September – Sunday 5th October (Please note: not available in the afternoon on Friday 26th September or Saturday 27th September).

Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

Visit <https://www.discovernorthampton.co.uk/gfon350/> for more information.