



Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 6 | 3 October 2022



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

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

Accessing our cost of living support

Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

As I underlined [in a recent video on the subject](#), we understand the cost of living crisis is affecting residents throughout West Northamptonshire, and we are working with the Government as well as a number of local organisations to support people.

We are also very appreciative of the role town and parish councils play in supporting residents and sharing sources of support with local communities.

Residents facing financial difficulties are encouraged to [visit our Cost of Living Support webpages](#), which provide a range of information and links to sources of support.

We are also working on a printable resource, to help you share this information with residents who do not have internet access.

Half term meal vouchers

Work is underway to provide meal vouchers to Northamptonshire's most vulnerable families during the October half term break, to help them cope with the cost of living crisis.

The move, announced at our Full Council meeting on 29 September, is the first stage of plans to share out the latest round of money from the Government's [Household Support Fund](#) (HSF) this autumn.

In this third tranche of HSF funding launching next month, our Council will be distributing around £2.6million from the Department for Work and Pensions to struggling households across West Northants.

Schools will soon be contacted about the plans to issue vouchers ahead of the half-term break, and work is also underway to shape arrangements for other elements of the scheme to ensure all the funding is distributed within the community to those people who need it most.

Household support fund

More than 25,000 vulnerable households in West Northants benefitted from the second phase of the HSF.

Between July and September 2022, our Council issued 11,296 school meal vouchers to parents, totaling £1.4million. More than 7,000 £100 Post Office cash vouchers were issued to residents who receive Pension Credit, and we worked with the Northamptonshire Community Foundation and more than 30 voluntary agencies, local charities and support groups to issue 7,450 vouchers to those in food and energy poverty. A donation of £20,000 was also made to local food banks and Age UK to support the elderly throughout the winter months.



Have your say on Boundary Commission review

Cllr Suresh Patel, Chairman of the Council's Democracy Standards Committee and the Local Boundary Review Working Group



Communities across West Northamptonshire are invited to have a say on how our Council's electoral ward boundaries should be shaped.

The consultation is being run by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) as part of a review of our electoral arrangements.

It follows the Commission's announcement last month that they agreed with our proposals to reduce the number of councillors on West Northamptonshire Council from 93 to 77 for the next local elections in 2025.

The consultation

For its consultation, the LGBCE is starting with a 'blank map' of our Council area.

People are invited to give their views on how the electoral wards should be drawn up, by providing evidence such as community interactions, geographical features and local circumstances.

The consultation runs until 7 November and we are encouraging people across West Northamptonshire to have a say by [giving their views on the LGBCE's website](#), where they will also find useful guidance and maps of the current wards.

People can also email reviews@lgbce.org.uk or share their views by post, by writing to the West Northamptonshire Review Officer at: LGBCE, PO Box 133, Blyth, NE24 9FE.

Please encourage residents to have a say

We want as many people as possible to get involved in this process, by having their say on how our wards should be shaped around the proposed new number of councillors.

This is the first opportunity in almost a decade to review the electoral arrangements for West Northamptonshire, so it's great news that we're now moving on to the next stage, and a real chance for our residents and communities to now get involved and help shape our future electoral wards.

It's important we get the best outcome possible from the Commission's review, so I would urge our town and parish councils to encourage as many people as possible to have a say.

The review is expected to end in late 2023, once the LGBCE has made its recommendations to government and an Order is laid in Parliament to change the legislation and make the new electoral arrangements.

You can [access the consultation](#) and see more [information and timescales about the the review on the LGBCE website](#)

Please help support Covid vaccination survey

Our Council is supporting colleagues in Public Health with their next COVID-19 vaccination drive and are looking for community feedback on how they can improve communications access with harder-to-reach groups.

Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to share the following survey with community groups in their ward area, in order to help with this work: [Complete the Covid-19 Vaccination survey here](#)

New Highways contract launches

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

Our new partnership with Kier got underway this month, delivering a new highways service with increased investment for residents across West Northamptonshire.

The new service is focussing on increased activity in our communities, including maintaining local roads, footpaths, signage and drainage, repairing potholes and winter gritting.

Working together with Kier, we have outlined fresh priorities and requirements specifically tailored towards the needs of West Northamptonshire residents.



Under the new contract with Kier the Council is increasing investment to the service by more than £1million per year, and will also have greater control, increasing its own resource to manage and monitor performance, which will include clear, strong goals for improving customer focus and providing value for money.

We have a long-established working relationship with Kier. As an organisation, they have the knowledge and expertise to deliver an effective, value for money service, which meets the needs of residents across the whole of West Northamptonshire. This is especially needed during the challenging times that we are facing right now.

We know the condition of our roads, verges and signage is very important to our residents and businesses and I am confident this new partnership will deliver improvements. We look forward to continuing to work together over the forthcoming months and years.”

Kier has set its commitment to working with the Council on its sustainability goals to achieve net zero emissions by 2030, as well as increasing social value to the service to benefit the wider West Northants community and economy, such as supporting local disadvantaged groups and working with local sub-contractors.

North Northamptonshire Council is also working with Kier to manage its highways services, which will lead to some cost advantages for our two authorities, as Kier will utilise some back office roles and systems across both areas.

[Information about Highways can be found on our website](#), and we would also encourage everyone to follow the new [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages that have been launched to keep people informed.

Chance to comment on taxi fares proposals

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

People are being asked for their views on a new proposed table of fares for Hackney carriages, after our Council answered drivers’ calls for an increase.

As members will be aware, Cabinet members discussed the matter at their meeting in September, when they supported proposals for a single table of fares to cover West Northants.

People have until Thursday 17 October to have their say on the proposals by [visiting the Council’s Consultation Hub](#)

Applications for school places now open

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

Parents and carers can now apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a year 3 place in a junior school, or a Year 7 place in a secondary school for the September 2023 intake.

From this year, parents and carers will be able to apply up until 12 midnight on the closing dates for both Primary and Secondary applications, making the process easier and fairer for families.

Parents and carers can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years of age on or before 31 August 2023. The closing date for applications for places in reception and year 3 (junior school) is 15 January 2023 at midnight.

The closing date for applications for Year 7 places is 31 October 2022 at midnight. We hope this time extension means it will be easier for families to submit their application before the deadline, giving them the best chance of getting a place at their preferred school and avoiding any disappointment.



All applications, whether postal or online, must be received by the closing date to be considered as on time. Late applications will not be processed until after the National Offer Day and will be processed in monthly rounds.

All on time applicants will receive an offer of a school place on the National Offer Days – 1 March 2023 for secondary places and 17 April 2023 for reception places. Applicants will then be provided with information on the next stage of the process.

There is a separate application process for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, details of which can be found on the SEND admissions page.

An independent admission appeals process is available for families who wish to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied.

Find out more about [applying for a school place in West Northamptonshire and submit an application](#)

New special school gets the go-ahead

The budget for a new 250-place school for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has been given the go ahead.

At the meeting of full council last Thursday (Sept 29) councillors approved the latest report on plans to convert an empty facility in Tiffield near Towcester into a SEND school for children aged four to 18.

The unit will cater for children who are on the autistic spectrum (ASC) and have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), and those with severe learning difficulties (SLD).

The plans come in addition to a £1.1 million expansion and the creation of [50 new specialist places at Hunsbury Park Primary School](#), which was given the go ahead earlier this year.

A proposal has also been submitted to extend Northgate School Arts College in Queens Park Parade, Kingsthorpe which caters to almost 250 autistic students.

How a county mourned our late sovereign

Communities across the world came together to mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth II, and reflect on her life of great service to her country and the Commonwealth.



Town and Parish Councils across West Northamptonshire played a key role in this, organising a number of well-attended events held both in tribute to the Queen and to proclaim our new King. Other activities included the opening of books of condolence, and the designating of areas in which residents could lay floral tributes, and we thank you all for your support.

A number of County-wide services also took place during the period of mourning, including the laying of [laying of wreaths by civic leaders](#) in the Memorial Gardens at All Saints Church on Saturday following the Queen's death.

James Saunders Watson, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Northamptonshire and the King's representative in the county, also [paid tribute to the Queen in this video](#).

Then on the Sunday, hundreds of people gathered outside All Saints Church in Northampton for an historic ceremony, when The High Sheriff of Northamptonshire, Crispin Holborow DL, formally proclaimed the beginning of King Charles III's reign to the people of Northamptonshire (pictured above).

Ahead of the Queen's state funeral on the Bank Holiday Monday, Northamptonshire also held a special Service of Remembrance at All Saints Church in Northampton.

The service, [which was live streamed on social media](#), began with a ceremonial procession from Judge's Lodgings in George Row, arriving at the church for the service to start at 11am.

A service of commemoration took place in Kettering later that day, while a multi-faith event was held in Wellingborough on the Saturday.



The iconic Northampton Lift Tower was lit up on Monday night in tribute to the Queen, providing a fantastic spectacle which could be seen for miles around.

And at Abington Park, Becketts Park, Bradlaugh Fields and Delapre Park in Northampton, our Park Rangers worked with partners at idverde to draw these special markings in the grass.

New mobile app to boost our attractions

By Cllr Dan Lister, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth

We have launched a mobile app encouraging people to explore West Northamptonshire and find out what's on offer.

The app showcases everything that makes West Northants such a quality place, right in the palms of people's hands, enabling them to:

- Gain access to a huge variety of local deals, offers and discounts
- Explore what's going on in the area with a live events calendar and easy-to-access information about local attractions
- Find hidden gems and purchase their favourite products
- Fuel their spirit to explore the market towns and rich heritage right on their doorstep
- Grow the local economy by supporting independent businesses and attractions, benefiting everyone in the community.

Keeping people connected to the places they live, work and visit is a fantastic way to ensure that local businesses and attractions grow and thrive.

West Northants has the perfect combination of rural and urban offers and ExploreWN is going to showcase the many reasons to visit. We are dedicated to supporting local employers and growing our economy, and ExploreWN is going to be a strong tool to deliver this.

ExploreWN is also the perfect platform to showcase our area's rich cultural heritage, along with the many, many things to enjoy and discover. It allows people to plan family days out and explore the wealth of attractions from museums, art galleries and theatres to grand stately homes.

Town and parish councils can find out more and [download the app on our website](#)

We would also urge you to please encourage businesses and local attractions in your town and parish areas to [visit the website where they can sign-up for free to feature on the app](#).



Autumn booster jabs are now available

The Autumn booster vaccinations are now open for bookings in Northamptonshire, with even more sites offering jabs.

Those eligible include people aged 65 and over, those who are at higher risk or are pregnant, frontline health and social care workers, carers, and those living with someone with a weakened immune system.

In the latest phase of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, the first set of eligible people can now book vaccinations online via the [National Booking System](#), by calling 119 or by visiting a local drop-in clinic.

This autumn, even more pharmacy-led community sites will be open across the county, making sure everyone has a site within easy reach. A new variant-tackling jab has also been made available.

[Find out more about the Autumn booster vaccination rollout](#)

Neglected natural habitats set to flourish

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

Our Council is taking the lead on fresh plans to halt the decline of local habitats, joining up with local partners to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

This summer, [Cabinet members agreed to progress proposals for the new strategy](#), which will set out plans to restore local natural habitats. The idea is to bring together a plan that public, private, and voluntary sectors can help to inform and deliver, as part of a national Nature Recovery Network.

The longer term restoration of earmarked natural habitats across West Northants will enable species to thrive, as trees are planted and peatlands restored. This will ultimately mitigate flood and fire risks, and create green spaces for local people to enjoy.

We have received £16,000 towards the preparation of this strategy, with more on its way to cover what is estimated to be two years' work leading up to publication.

The UK has suffered long-term decline in nature and various steps have been taken locally and nationally to address this, but undoubtedly more is needed. We have reached a critical juncture and it is no longer sufficient to protect the remnants that we have left – we must step up to the huge task of recovery.

If we wish to have rich and abundant wildlife, more carbon captured in trees, soil and hedges, better protection from extreme weather and enough places for people to gain the wellbeing benefits of good quality green spaces, then we must invest in nature's recovery, and at scale.

This work will help bring a broad range of groups together; from farmers to businesses to local communities, – to deliver priorities for nature recovery at a local level. We look forward to working with our partners to create bigger, better, and more connected natural places to halt and then reverse the decline in our environment.



Green Flags are just reward for wonderful parks

Green Flags fly above four parks managed by our Council after they retained their international mark of quality.

Daventry Country Park, Abington Park, Bradlaugh Fields and Delapre Park all retained their Green Flag Awards - recognised as the benchmark for the management of recreational outdoor spaces around the world.

There are now future plans ahead to work towards achieving similar accolades for Towcester's Water Meadows and Hunsbury Country Park.



Working towards a sustainable West Northants

With our council's ambitious goal of being net zero for CO2 emissions by 2030, we're backing up that commitment with the appointment of two new project officers to our Sustainability Team.

Felicity Parker and Eugene Tom now complete the team, working alongside our Sustainability Officer Joely Slinn and Sustainability Manager Martin Wilson.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Good work has already been carried out through workshops with Cabinet Members, Directors, and Assistant Directors in which they discussed the pathway to net zero through each directorate, to shape a sustainability workplan and what the next steps should be.

We've also made good progress on gathering data to establish a baseline for Council emissions which will provide key information on where our efforts should be directed and will be a yardstick against which to measure our success.

Future work will look at the emissions for the whole of the area ahead of the longer-term goal for West Northants to be net zero by 2045. Sustainability is a vital thread that runs through everything we do as a council and will be at the heart of every service, so that economic, social and environmental sustainability are key to everything we do.

The team are keen to work with Town and Parish Councils on future projects, and had an exhibition stand at the recent ACRE Grow Green Together conference.

There will be another chance to speak to the team at the [online Northants CALC Climate Change conference on 22 November](#). This will include a breakout session offering you an opportunity to hear more about our sustainability commitments, and ask questions.

You can find out more by following the Team on [Twitter @SustainableWN](#) or by visiting the [Sustainable West Northants website](#)

New electric charge points are installed

Councillor Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for the Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

New electric vehicle charge points have been installed as part of our Council's ongoing work to support more sustainable modes of transport.

Developed in partnership with Connected Kerb with help from a grant from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles through the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme, the scheme has seen new charge points provided at **Newlands Car Park in Daventry, and in West Street in Welford.**

The two new chargers in Daventry can cater for up to four vehicles at a time, while the new unit in Welford offers two charging bays. They are Connected Kerb's Gecko 7kW Fast Chargers, which can fully charge a car from empty to 80% in 3-4 hours.

Connected Kerb is entirely responsible for the charging infrastructure's operation and maintenance, leaving our Council with no liabilities associated with infrastructure, power or maintenance. The grant has provided £17,310 towards the project, with Connected Kerb providing a further contribution, meaning the project has been delivered at minimal expense to the Council.



Councillor Dr Martin Gorrod, Chairman of Welford Parish Council, said: "We are pleased to support village environmental groups, parishioners' and WNC's Sustainable West Northants initiative in addressing environmental issues and encouraging the move to lower emission vehicles by enabling EV owners to be able to charge their vehicles in rural and remote areas of the county.

"This charging point will also encourage and enable parishioners who are unable to charge an EV at their home address to use this public facility. We also look forward to welcoming visitors to the village to use the charge points while they enjoy the village and its amenities and also take in the countryside walks."

New 'no cold-calling zone' is established

A new 'No Cold Calling Zone' has been set up in a residential street in Woodford Halse, thanks to our Trading Standards Team working with local police and residents.



A no cold calling zone is a designated area where the residents declare they will no longer accept traders calling at their homes without an appointment.

They are clearly signposted, sending a clear message to uninvited callers that they are not welcome.

There is strict criteria for where zones can be located. They must be small areas – for example individual streets or sheltered housing areas - where there are higher than average levels of doorstep crime and many of the residents are elderly or vulnerable.

This is the 38th such zone to be designated in West Northamptonshire.

If you wish to find out more about No Cold Calling zones or request a No Cold Calling sticker, please contact WNC Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service on 0808 223 1133.

Our journey to improve local rail services

The government's planned HS2 high-speed rail project is certainly a project which divides opinion. Yet whether our Council supports or opposes the scheme is no longer the issue, as our focus shifts towards making it work for the residents of West Northamptonshire.

Cllr William Barter, Assistant Cabinet Member for Rail, explores this important issue...

As you will be aware, HS2 is Britain's new high speed rail line, now being built from London to Birmingham the North-West, and speeding up journeys between London and Manchester, Birmingham as well as Scotland

It is the largest infrastructure project in Europe and the most important economic and social regeneration project in decades.

Of course we must ensure that the construction of HS2 in West Northants is done in such a way as to cause the minimum of disruption to our residents, and I know my colleagues in the affected areas are working hard to achieve that. That's why we have established a HS2 Liaison Group including effected local communities, and why we recently employed a HS2 Marshall to police the construction.

Phase one of HS2, now under construction and scheduled to open in stages between 2029 and 2034, will take long distance city-to-city traffic away from the southern end of the West Coast Main line. These trains tend not to call at stations serving West Northants, and removing them will free up capacity for services that do serve our stations.

So HS2 also brings with it opportunities for the whole of West Northants, and we are working hard to ensure our residents and businesses benefit from the potential improvements in rail services on the existing lines.

The Government's Department for Transport (DfT), which is responsible for future consultation on rail services, has sanctioned a move by our Council to hold ongoing discussions directly with the West Coast Partnership (WCP) which operates the West Coast Main Line, in order to influence the shaping of future proposals for the line once HS2 is completed.

To help guide these ongoing talks, our Cabinet recently agreed a 'shopping list' for how we want to see rail services improved not only at Northampton and Long Buckby stations, but also at Rugby and Milton Keynes where although the stations are outside our boundary they still serve our residents

Currently, rail services for our local area take second place to the long-distance trains, which means our local services are less frequent and have longer journey times than we would like.

With HS2 on its way to divert city-to-city travel and the West Coast Partnership already beginning its work to advise the DfT on future local service patterns, it's crucial our Council is also around the table and able to influence these future proposals.

It may seem a long way off, but the decisions we make now will have far reaching implications and it is important the people of West Northants have their needs heard.

This is a real opportunity to influence emerging proposals in favour of West Northamptonshire and our aspirations agreed by Cabinet will underpin all our efforts in doing so.

More information about our rail aspirations are set out in [the report that went to Cabinet in July](#)



Elections Act to bring changes to voting

Our Council continues to work towards putting in place voting changes as a result of the Elections Act.

The new Act brings in a number of changes to the way we vote, as well as to campaigning and the rules on campaign spending and funding.

The Government is proposing changes to require voters at polling stations to show photo ID before they receive their ballot paper.

Anyone who does not have one of the required forms of photo ID will be able to get a free voter identification document from their local council.

This new requirement would apply to local elections in England, as well as the general election, and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.

Our elections team is working with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in order to ensure these changes are put in place in West Northamptonshire, and was recently advised of several updates to the implementation plan, which are summarised below:

- **The introduction of voter identification has been moved from December 2022 to January 2023.** This requires voters to present some form of photo ID at polling stations in order to receive their ballot paper. Voter Card application service is expected to go live in January 2023 and will be first used in any elections from May 2023.
- **Postal Vote Handling and Secrecy measures will now be put in place after May 2023.** These rules, which will place added restrictions on who can hand in completed postal votes, will most likely come into force in Autumn 2023.
- **A new Voter Card, or Electoral identification Document, could include added security features.** This will be based on market testing and input from government experts, balanced with the need for a secure document that can be quickly produced and dispatched in potentially high volumes. More information will be available in due course.
- **The Voter Card application deadline will be six working days ahead of a poll.** This will enable central production and delivery management, removing pressure on local authorities in the immediate lead-up to a poll.

More information about the changes being brought in as part of the new Election Act can be [found on the Electoral Commission website](#)

School benefits from Covid support grant

Children at Whittlebury C of E Primary School enjoyed two fun events thanks to a Councillor Covid Support Fund grant.

Deanshanger Ward member Cllr William Barter facilitated the grant following an application from the Friends of Whittlebury School, allowing the children to take part in Skate and Scooter and Circus Skills activities.

The Councillor Covid Support Fund exists to support our local communities to recover from the impact of Covid, with each Councillor allocated £2,500 to make local decisions on grant funding awards for the benefit of the communities' they represent.



Find out more about the [Councillor Covid Support Fund on our website](#) or by [contacting one of your WNC local ward councillors](#)

A fresh strategy for improving housing

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

Our Council has approved a fresh strategy for improving housing for residents across West Northants while tackling issues including homelessness and the cost of living crisis.

At the Cabinet meeting on Friday, 23 September, members agreed to [progress proposals for the new Housing Strategy](#), which focuses on four key objectives:

- Deliver homes people need and can afford
- Improve the quality, standard and safety of homes and housing services
- Support residents to live healthy, safe, independent and active lives
- Support thriving and sustainable communities.

Housing is a crucial component of wellbeing - good quality housing provides a sound platform to build a good quality of life. It is vital that we have ambitious plans to create homes people need alongside a thriving economy to ensure we meet the housing needs and demands of existing and future residents, and achieve the best outcomes for our area.

We recognise that there are challenging times ahead and the current energy crisis and the cost of living increases are causing severe financial difficulties to many households. This strategy sets out to tackle big issues like affordability, health, the supply of new homes and the environment - these are not easy things to solve, but we can make a real contribution to improve outcomes for many people by taking the right steps now. Find out [more information about our Housing Strategies and Policies](#)

Funding to support facility in Moulton

Cllr Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing, and Health Integration

Up to 1,600 adults and children with special educational needs and disabilities will have proper access to join in sports and activities thanks to a funding award from our Council.

We are awarding a £40,000 Changing Places Grant to Sport4Fitness at Fernie Fields in Moulton, to help fund a new bespoke changing places facility.

Sport4Fitness is a Community Interest Company providing multi-sport activities to children and young people with disabilities and special needs as well as supporting their parents, carers and siblings. Their ethos is their activities can be 'achieved by everyone and affordable to all.'

The tailored facility is for those with multiple and complex disabilities and specially designed to meet the needs of people for whom 'standard' accessible toilets are insufficient.

The Fernie Fields site is widely used and open seven days a week. Providing further funding can be raised, the facility will hopefully be ready by March 2023.



Christmas waste and recycling arrangements

Information on the arrangements for waste and recycling collections over the Christmas and New Year period will be sent to Town and Parish Councils in the coming weeks.

We recognise how important this information is to residents, and thank you in advance for your support in sharing these messages among your town and parish areas. You can also [check the latest waste and recycling information on our website](#)

East Hunsbury: Parish in the spotlight

By Liz Carroll-Wheat, Community Projects Officer at East Hunsbury Parish Council

As a parish council, East Hunsbury has an ethos of working with, and linking up organisations and individuals. As part of the community engagement project, one of the activities which is about to restart is the School of Life project.

Our School of Life has run in East Hunsbury for six years, firstly as part of a County-wide lottery funded project, and now delivered by the parish team and local partners.

The ethos is incredibly simple – everyone knows how to do something, and you are never too young or old to learn! Often based around skill-swapping or shared goals. Partners include East Hunsbury Seniors, Hunsbury Library, a raft of local individual volunteers, and all three local schools – East Hunsbury Primary, Simon de Senlis and Wootton Park.

Projects are varied, with key activities including:

Library Games Swaps – hosted at Hunsbury Library, our local schools bring classes to play board games, and take part in discussion sessions with senior members. Games can vary, from traditional board games to computer games, and the discussion topics range from favourite foods, right up to what you would do if you were the prime minister!

Other sessions have included baking skill-swaps, intergenerational question time and graffiti art projects.

During Covid, the scheme was kept going online, with seniors being linked to pupils, again to discuss all manner of topics.

With life returning to more normal times, we are all looking forward to re-establishing the sessions in the new school year.



Gardening Friends - with funding and support from Waitrose & Tesco , we work with our Library volunteers (the Gardening Friends) and local schools, to create and tend growing spaces in East Hunsbury. This has included transforming a derelict area, to create of a garden at the library site and ongoing bulb planting with pupils from East Hunsbury Primary School. In November, as part of National Tree Week, all three of our local schools will join in with the planting of the new community orchard, funded from lottery funding. Our schools also work with us on planting schemes for our Wildflower project, which has also encouraged local gardeners to transform their gardens into bee-friendly spaces.

Family Yoga Sessions – a new addition to the scheme, we have partnered Yoga Pebbles, to trial outdoor yoga in our park areas. This allows family groups to learn together and is perfect way to encourage use of our green spaces.

The School of Life project really joins the community together, groups of people who would not normally spend time together. Everyone has some sort of skill, and our residents and our parish, benefit from encouraging people of all ages to be active in their community. A win-win situation!

Share your news! Do you have a story to share with us and your fellow parish and town councils? Perhaps you would like to highlight an innovation that has proved particularly beneficial? Or shine the spotlight on a new scheme you are developing? Submit your ideas for future articles by emailing us at communications@westnorthants.gov.uk

Poverty campaign targets cost of living crisis

Northamptonshire Community Foundation has launched the #PovertyHurts appeal to raise urgent funds for Northamptonshire residents that are experiencing financial distress due to the rising cost of living.



The appeal encourages local residents that can afford to do so to donate part or all of the energy rebate to help those who have been plunged into poverty get the support they need. The money raised will be used to support local charities and community organisations who will help vulnerable people in supported environments and those experiencing financial hardship.

If 2,500 residents donated the energy rebate, £1 million would be raised to support local charities and community groups providing a much-needed lifeline and services to people in financial hardship in Northamptonshire.

To help kickstart the appeal, Northamptonshire Community Foundation is match-funding the first £20,000 £1 for £1. Once an initial £40,000 is raised the foundation will start making urgent grants to local charities such as food banks, debt advice, help for people with disabilities and older people, access to digital support and community transport services, homelessness charities, mental health support and wellbeing services.

Find out [more information about the #PovertyHurts appeal](#) or [donate online here](#)

Smokers urged to quit during Stoptober

Northamptonshire's estimated 95,000 smokers are being encouraged to quite for health and wealth during this year's annual Stoptober campaign.

Research suggests that up to two thirds of lifelong smokers die from the habit, and smoking increases the risk of developing more than 50 serious health conditions. In 2019, a quarter of all cancer deaths were connected to smoking.

While the health benefits of quitting smoking are enormous, an often-overlooked benefit is financial wellbeing. The average cost of a pack of premium cigarettes now totals £12.71 and smokers in Northamptonshire spend on average £1,945 per year on the habit.

Stoptober offers a range of free quitting tools including: the NHS Quit Smoking app, Facebook messenger bot, Stoptober Facebook online communities, daily emails and SMS, and an online Personal Quit Plan.

These services are available for free whether this is your first time trying to quit or you have made attempts in the past.

Those who would like to take part in Stoptober 2022, and get free specialist support, can refer themselves on the [Stop Smoking pages of our website](#)

With
support
you are
3 times
more likely
to quit
for good

Start your
smoke free
journey today

Sign up now for your
**FREE 12 week
course**



Latest consultation and engagement update

This update is produced by our Consultation and Engagement Team to provide you with an overview of consultation and engagement activities.

Please remember you can sign up to receive alerts and updates on our [Consultation Hub](#)

Open activities on the Consultation Hub

[Hackney Carriage fares](#): To help align Hackney Carriage taxi fares across West Northants and to assist with managing the difficulties drivers are experiencing with the cost of living, the Council have discussed and supported a proposal to increase fares. Closes: 17 October

[Harlestone Neighbourhood Plan](#): Harlestone Parish Council and the Harlestone Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have submitted the final version of the Harlestone Neighbourhood Plan. Closes: 2 November

[Local Government Boundary Changes](#): West Northamptonshire Council is currently undergoing an electoral review that is run by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. The Commission is undertaking an independent and impartial review of electoral arrangements, and is seeking views. Closes: 7 November

[How prepared are you?](#): As part of the national #30Days30WaysUK campaign we are running an annual survey to find out how prepared people are for emergencies that may happen. Closes: 30 November

[Parks visitor survey](#): WNC manages more than 190 parks and open spaces. This feedback survey is about 24 of these parks. Closes: 23 March



Recently closed activities

[Parklands Maintained Nursery School](#): West Northamptonshire Council along with the governing body of Parklands Maintained Nursery School consulted on proposals to lower the nursery age range from 3 to 5 years to 2 to 5 years from 31 October 2022. Closed: 15 September

[Gambling Act statement of licensing principles](#): The Council regulates the provision of premises for gambling (including betting shops, bingo halls and amusement arcades), gaming machines in pubs and clubs, and small society lottery registration. A consultation was held as part of a review of our Statement of Licensing Principles. Closed: 21 August. Feedback is being analysed

[Northampton Local Plan Part 2](#): The Northampton Local Plan Part 2 was examined by Government-appointed inspectors who have stated that, subject to certain main modifications to the Plan being made, they would be able to find the Plan sound.

Closed: 18 August 2022. Additional consultation on Further Main Modifications has been recommended by the Inspector which will again be subject to further consultation due in November.

[South Northants Employment Allocations](#): The Council sought people's views on a new draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for employment land allocations, which would sit alongside the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029. Closed: 18 August. Feedback is being analysed

[Newnham Conservation Area](#): West Northamptonshire Council consulted on a draft appraisal and management plan which was prepared for the Newnham Conservation Area. Closed: 18 July. Feedback is being analysed.

Please join monthly drop-in sessions



As you may be aware, our Customer Service Teams visit locations across West Northamptonshire on a monthly basis, offering advice and guidance to residents on a range of issues.

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

Sessions coming up this month include:

- **Brackley Library** (Manor Road, NN13 6AJ): Friday 28 October from 10am to midday.
- **Doddridge Centre** (St James Road, Northampton, NN5 5LD): Wednesday 5 October from 3pm to 5pm.
- **Hunsbury Library** (Overslade Close, Northampton, NN4 0RZ): Thursday 20 October 1pm to 4pm.
- **Moulton Community Centre** (Moulton Reedings, NN3 7AX): Friday 28 October from 10am to midday.
- **Weston Favell Library** (Weston Favell Shopping Centre, NN3 8JZ): Friday 7 October from 2.30pm to 3pm.
- **Brixworth Library** (Spratton Road, NN6 9DS) Tuesday 25 October from 10am to midday.

For more information about the Brackley event please contact simon.mills@westnorthants.gov.uk
For information about the other events please email jan.pearey@westnorthants.gov.uk

Details of all the sessions between now and the end of the year are available on our on our [Monthly Drop-in Sessions webpage](#)

New event management portal launched

Our Council has worked with colleagues in the north to launch a new event notification process that will help ensure a supportive and consistent approach to event safety management in Northamptonshire

The North and West Northamptonshire Event Safety Partnership, which offers advice for local event organisers, has developed the new easy-to-follow online application form.

Once the form has been completed, relevant services across the Council and partners can access this information and ensure that organisers have the support they need to deliver a safe and secure event.

Our licensing team can ensure that organisers obtain the appropriate licenses, and our health and safety services will ensure events are delivered safely and securely. We hope that this process will benefit all future events across the county.



Anyone in Northamptonshire who is delivering an event can [notify the Council of their upcoming event by completing the online form](#)

Our Council in the news

Here's a roundup of the news releases and updates published by our Council during September. Don't forget you can keep up-to-date with these and search the news archive by [visiting the News section of our website](#)

In the past month, we issued press releases on:

- [Council takes steps to deal with emerging financial challenges](#) – 1 Sept
- [Campaign to improve resilience to emergencies now in its eighth year](#) - 1 Sept
- [High hopes for £64.5 million bid to Levelling Up Fund](#) – 2 September
- [Council leaders meet families with special educational needs](#) – 6 September
- [Two more pay the price for disregarding neighbourhood](#) – 6 September
- [West Northamptonshire Council to consider alignment of taxi fares](#) – 6 September
- [Cabinet to consider proposals to continue key engineering projects | West Northamptonshire Council \(\[westnorthants.gov.uk\]\(http://westnorthants.gov.uk\)\)](#) – 7 September
- [Cabinet to discuss £23 million budget for a new special needs school](#) – 8 September
- [Suicide Prevention Strategy to launch on World Suicide Prevention Day](#) – 8 September
- [In Memory of HM The Queen](#) – 8 September
- [Books of condolence and floral tributes](#) – 9 September
- [Evensong event to celebrate the life of HM The Queen](#) – 9 September
- [Historic proclamation of the accession of King Charles III](#) – 9 September
- [Wreaths laid in memory of HM Queen Elizabeth II](#) – 10 September
- [Services of Remembrance for Queen Elizabeth II](#) – 14 September
- [Faith communities come together to remember Queen Elizabeth II](#) – 14 September
- [The funeral of Queen Elizabeth II](#) – 15 September
- [Falls Prevention Awareness Week – Steady on Your Feet](#) – 20 September
- [Council will present update on current in-year financial position this week](#) – 20 September
- [Multiply funding to help with numeracy](#) – 20 September
- [Businesses, communities and individuals to benefit from new funding stream](#) – 21 September
- [It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2023](#) – 21 September
- [Council supports 'cost of living' alignment of Hackney carriage fares](#) – 23 September
- [Revised plans to improve walking and cycling routes in Northampton](#) – 23 September
- [Council updated on proposals for innovative town centre project](#) – 26 September
- [Northampton Bike Park geared up and ready to go!](#) – 26 September
- [New contract launches for Highways services in West Northamptonshire](#) – 27 September
- [Northampton takeaway fined £22,000 for hygiene breaches](#) – 28 September
- [Northamptonshire smokers encouraged to quit for 'Health and Wealth'](#) – 29 September