



Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 17 | 18 September 2023



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

Grants to boost volunteer opportunities

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

A new grants scheme launched by our Council aims to create additional volunteering opportunities following funding from Central Government via the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund \(UKSPF\)](#).

Grants from £100 to £1,500 are available for Voluntary and Community Sector projects to address a local community need and support the [Council's vision](#) to make West Northamptonshire a great place to live, work, visit and thrive.

The funding is available for new or existing projects or services in West Northamptonshire which create additional volunteering opportunities.

This can be for one-off events or an extended number of times such as weekly, monthly, or as and when required.

Registered charities, voluntary or community groups, constitutionalised clubs, or not-for-profit organisations which operate within the geographical area of West Northamptonshire Council and meet the needs of local residents are invited to submit an [expression of interest form](#).

The Voluntary and Community Sector are often the unsung heroes who provide vital services to our communities and we're delighted to be able to offer the opportunity to apply for this fund.

These grants will enable organisations to recruit new volunteers and continue their valuable work. So, if Town and Parish Councils are aware of organisations that fit the criteria, please encourage them to fill out an expression of interest form or get in touch with our Grants Team to find out more.

Further information and the full criteria for applications can be found on the [WNC website](#) and in the Council's [Community Funding Grants Framework](#).

Organisations that would like to find out more should speak to the Community Funding Grants Team by emailing communitygrants@westnorthants.gov.uk, including their contact telephone number.



Range of issues on the agenda for Cabinet

A range of key issues and initiatives are set to be discussed by Cabinet at their next meeting tomorrow (Tuesday 19 September).

The meeting is set to take place in the Council Chamber at The Forum in Towcester from 6pm and will also be [broadcast live on our YouTube channel](#)

Items on the packed agenda will see Cabinet members consider:

- A [proposal to close Boniface Care Home in Brixworth](#), following a public consultation. As part of this, the Council would support residents to move to alternative residential care accommodation within the local area providing a suitable environment to meet their individual needs.
- Plans to open a [new 45-place unit for children with Autism Spectrum Condition](#). Phase one of this scheme was completed at Hunsbury Park Primary School last year, with phase two proposed for nearby Chiltern Primary School.
- Planned work to [remove asbestos in 35-39 Abington Street and 20-28 Wood Street](#) ahead of the demolition of the former BHS, M&S and Jobcentre, to bring forward the regeneration scheme.
- A [finance report looking at the first four months of 2023/24](#), and highlighting how our Council, like other councils nationally, is continuing to see significant financial pressures from the increasing cost and demand for children's services, adult social care and temporary housing along with the ongoing impact of high inflation.
- The [Public Spaces Protection Order currently in place in Daventry and South Northants areas, with a view to it also covering Northampton area](#). If approved, the order will come into force on 3 October 2023 until October 2025.
- The [release of our Council's first Annual Sustainability Report](#), showing our progress toward achieving key sustainability commitments, including the ambitious goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2030.
- The [Procurement and Implementation of Education Services Case](#)
- The procurement of [new leisure contract\(s\) for the Council's leisure service facilities in the Northampton and Daventry areas](#), ahead of the expiring of the current contracts on 31 March 2026.



The [full agenda can be viewed on Modern Gov](#)

Winter Covid programme gets underway

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

The local Covid-19 vaccination programme has been launched this month, ahead of the winter months.

Care home residents are now able to receive a vaccination, and eligible people are also able to [book a jab on the NHS website](#) or app. Eligible groups include:

- everyone aged 65 and over
- pregnant women
- adults and children (aged 6 months and over) with certain health conditions
- health and social care staff and carers.

Our Public Health outreach vaccination programme has also started with homeless and rough sleepers' clinics planned.

Support is on hand for farming community

Cllr Rebecca Breese, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs

Members of the farming community with concerns about their wellbeing are encouraged to contact a West Northamptonshire-based charity dedicated to supporting farmers and families within the farming community.

Whether the issue is personal or business-related, the Farming Community Network can offer a range of help and support.

They run a confidential, national helpline and e-helpline which is open every day of the year from 7am to 11pm and their volunteers provide free, confidential support to anyone who seeks help. More than 6,000 people a year benefit from FCN's support.

Town and Parish councillors with concerns about anyone in their local farming community are encouraged to share details of the support with them.

The helpline is available from 7am to 11pm, 365 days of the year, on **03000 111 999**

People can also email help@fcn.org.uk

Town and Parish Councillors and clerks who would like to find out more about the FCN, which is headquartered in West Haddon, are welcome to contact the charity's Regional Support Officer for the Midlands, Andrea Beddows, on 07866 803798 or by email on andrea@fcn.org.uk

[Find out more information about FCN](#)



Getting ready for new voter ID arrangements

We are encouraging people in West Northamptonshire to be prepared for new voting rules which require people to show photo ID to vote at a polling station.

As Town and Parish Councils will be aware, the new requirements were introduced last year following the Elections Act 2022, and apply to UK Parliamentary elections, police and crime commissioner elections and at local elections in England.

Local elections were not held in West Northamptonshire this year, but we are starting to advise residents ahead of next year. Elections of police and crime commissioners in England and Wales are due to be held on 2 May 2024, while a General Election is scheduled to be held no later than 28 January 2025.

Accepted forms of photo ID include passports, driving licenses, Blue Badges, some older/disabled people's concessionary travel cards, and identity cards with the PASS mark.

This rule only applies to voting in person at a polling station, and does not apply to those voting by post.

Those without an accepted form of photo ID [are encouraged to apply for a free Voter ID document, known as the Voter Authority Certificate.](#)

Information about the new rules has been published on our website at westnorthants.gov.uk/VoterID



Grants on offer to support knife crime response

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

The Council, in partnership with the Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC), has launched a new grants scheme to help tackle youth violence and knife crime in West Northants.

Grants of up to £10,000 are available for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations who have identified projects, either new or existing, that aim to alleviate youth violence and knife crime in local communities.

These projects can be prevention or intervention projects, including projects that promote community safety, deter potential offenders, or provide support and resources to at-risk individuals or groups to prevent their involvement in violence and crime.

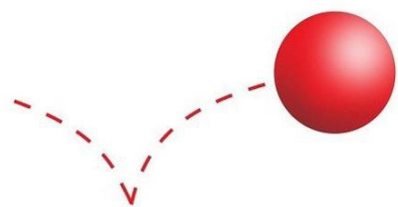
Town and Parish Councils are urged to help support the initiative by encouraging any registered charities, voluntary or community groups, constitutionalised clubs that engage with young people, and not-for-profit organisations to submit an [expression of interest form](#) outlining their project to be considered for the funding.



September campaign aims to boost resilience

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

We are in the middle of the annual "September is Preparedness Month" campaign, with the #30days30waysUK initiative running to 30 September, offering a diverse range of daily activities designed to boost preparedness and resilience.



#30days30waysUK

As part of the campaign, residents are encouraged to participate in the "[Emergencies: How Prepared Are You?](#)" survey to assess how prepared they are for emergencies that may happen.

People can engage with the campaign on a daily basis throughout September by participating in themed quizzes that will give people the chance to enter a prize draw. These quizzes cover a wide range of topics, from emergency response to personal safety and community resilience.

They can also stay connected and informed by following the campaign's daily updates on social media platforms. Search for the hashtag #30days30waysUK to find the latest resources and engage in discussions with fellow participants.

The aim of the #30days30waysUK campaign is to empower individuals with knowledge and skills that contribute to better preparedness and community resilience. The campaign is supported by Local Resilience Forums, emergency services, local authorities, health organisations, utilities, the voluntary sector, and various partners.

For more information about the campaign, please visit 30days30waysUK.org.uk [Draft Street Trading Policy 2023](#)

Drop-in sessions to offer careers advice

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

Residents in West Northamptonshire are invited to attend a range of free monthly drop-in sessions to access the support they need to land their dream job.

The [drop-in sessions will be led by our Economic Growth and Inward Investment team](#), alongside employment support partners including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobcentre Plus and many more.

They will aim to help as many people as possible become employment ready and find the best job for them, with support including job searching, updating CVs and cover letters, any training needs along with mental health support, volunteering, money advice and more.

The sessions will take place **every 2nd Wednesday of the month between 1pm and 3pm in the Watermeadows Room at Towcester Library** and run until 14 February 2024.

There is a vast and growing range of employment opportunities in West Northants, from working in our thriving transport and logistics industries, to engineering and construction, to retail and hospitality.

Find out [more information about the employment support service](#)



New programme is helping businesses thrive

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

A new 'Build Your Business' programme is empowering small businesses, local entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners across Northamptonshire.

Delivered by both our Council in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council and the Business & IP Centre Northamptonshire (BIPC) with £600,000 of funding from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) over a two-year period, [the dynamic business support initiative is accessible to businesses free of charge](#).

It offers a diverse range of support to help local businesses grow, flourish and succeed, including workshops, webinars, one-to-one support, mentoring and more.

Local businesses less than a year old can also apply for a start-up grant of £2,000 to help towards business-associated costs.

This dynamic project not only fuels the entrepreneurial spirit across the county, it enables every local business to access dedicated expert advice to grow, expand, innovate and diversify within Northamptonshire.

Supporting local businesses is a priority for both local authorities in this area and we have a vision to enable every business to be sustainable, resilient, and continuously developing and growing.

Both the West Northants Economic Growth & Inward Investment Team and the BIPC are on hand to enhance the local offer, delivering numerous funding streams for businesses and working collaboratively to see every business in the area thrive. [Find out more about Build Your Business](#)

Parents invited to apply for school places

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

Parents and carers of children living in West Northamptonshire can now apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a year 3 place in a junior school, or a Year 7 place in a secondary school, for the September 2024 intake.

Reception places

People can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years old on or before 31 August 2024. The closing date for applications for places in reception (and year 3 at junior school) is 15 January 2024 at midnight.

Year 7 places

The closing date for applications for Year 7 places is 31 October 2023 at midnight.

The application process

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

All on-time applicants will receive an offer of a school place on National Offer Days – 1 March 2024 for secondary places and 16 April 2024 for reception/junior school places. Applicants will then be provided with information on the next stage of the process.

There is a separate application process for children who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, details of which can be found on the [SEND admissions page](#)

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

To find out more about applying for a school place in West Northamptonshire and to submit an application, visit: westnorthants.gov.uk/school-admissions

Falls Awareness Week highlights key service

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

Our Falls Management Service is aiming to highlight the important it carries out to promote safety and wellbeing as part of Falls Awareness Week, which runs from 18 to 22 September.

We know that falls are a concern and worry for many, particularly among the elderly population as they can often result in injuries that can have long-lasting effects on an individual's health and independence.

However, falls in older people are often preventable, and reducing falls is important for maintaining the health, wellbeing and independence of the elderly population – and our Falls Management Service is on hand to help individuals minimise falls and their associated risks.

The Falls management services offer a comprehensive approach to identify, assess, and mitigate the risk factors.

These services typically involve healthcare professionals, such as physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and falls technicians who collaborate to create personalised fall prevention plans. The plans often include exercises to improve strength and balance, home safety assessments, walking aids/minor adaptations, signposting to other services based on individual needs and educational resources for individuals and caregivers.



[Information about the range of support available can be found on our website](#)

September's consultation round-up

A range of consultation and engagement activities are currently taking place across West Northants.

We have summarised the main consultations below, but please remember you can check new consultations, have your say, and sign up to receive alerts and updates via our [Consultation Hub](#)

Public Spaces Protection Order at Marble Arch, Northampton

Deadline for comments: 8 October

We are considering whether to renew an existing Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to continue to close Marble Arch in Northampton. The alleyway was gated in 2018 due to anti-social behaviour, and the option to renew this is being explored.

[Public Spaces Protection Order consultation for Marble Arch Northampton](#)

West Northamptonshire Heritage Open Days Visitor Experience

We are asking for feedback on the recent West Northamptonshire Heritage Open Days from those that attended any of the events.

[Heritage Open Days Visitor Experience 2023](#)

Emergencies: How prepared are you?

Deadline to complete: 31 October

September is Preparedness Month and as part of the national #30Days30WaysUK campaign we run an annual survey to find out how prepared people are for emergencies that may happen, as well as providing some useful tips. The detail provided is used in ongoing national research.

[Emergencies: How prepared are you?](#)

Library Service Strategy 2023-2027

Deadline for comments: 29 October

We are gathering views on how we propose to continue to develop our libraries as thriving community hubs. We have drafted a Library Service Strategy that sets out our Council's ambition for the library service for the next 4 years. We would like to gain feedback on the strategies priorities, and what you feel could be done to improve the service.

[Have your say on the Library Service Strategy 2023-2027](#)



Funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Deadline for comments: 1 October

Our Children and Young People's Services are looking to gather feedback on peoples' thoughts on how those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are funded. We are also keen to explore the level of understanding around SEND funding.

[Have your say on funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#)

Focus on task group looking at road safety

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

West Northants Community Safety Partnership runs a multi-agency tasking group to deal with issues relating to road safety.

This is called the Road Joint Action Group or Road JAG, which includes West Northants Highways, National Highways, Northants Police and Northants Fire and Rescue.

Together they look at a range of issues, from long-term initiatives such as seeking an injunction against car-cruising (where drivers meet on the public highway to race or show off their vehicles) to smaller scale local issues such as speeding in specific villages.

During 2022 the JAG considered 31 new items, and below we look at a few examples to show how the Road JAG is working to improve road safety across West Northants.

Watford: the village was suffering from very high traffic due to vehicles entering and exiting the M1 via the service roads to Watford Gap services.

Road Chef were seeking planning permission for a new drive-through coffee concession at the time, so when the plans were submitted, the police made a request to the WNC's planning service that a clause for new barriers to be installed and maintained should be a condition of granting consent.

The new barriers were installed and, although they have been damaged on a few occasions since, Road Chef have arranged for them to be repaired in short order as soon as they have been made aware by Road JAG.

Quinton: the PCSO for the area referred issues caused by HGVs attempting to pass through the village and becoming stuck at a narrow right-angled bend. This was not an isolated incident and the Parish Council gave details of vehicles which had followed this inappropriate route.

Additional signage was installed to highlight the route was not suitable for HGVs and the Chair of the meeting wrote to the Transport Managers of several companies to alert them to issues caused by a glitch in a navigation app. This has helped deal with the issue.

Brackley: The Road JAG received reports delivery drivers parking on double yellow lines just after traffic lights in order to make collections from a local food business. Works are now in the pipeline to install pedestrian barriers at this location to make it less attractive as a set-down location.

Kings Sutton: there were several complaints of speeding vehicles on Charlton Road. As a result, police carried out handheld speed gun enforcement, followed by a day of action.

West Northamptonshire Highways liaised with the Parish Council regarding road layout, signage and lighting to make the road feel more like 30 mph was the appropriate speed. Some small-scale improvements have been made and a network improvement bid has been submitted to carry out more substantial re-engineering.



Parish Council liaison officer can support you

Town and Parish Councils have a new dedicated officer at our Council who they can contact for help and support with all things WNC.

Our Parish Council Liaison Officer Alan Burns has been in post since January 2023 with a remit to maintain and enhance good working relationships between West Northamptonshire Council and our Town and Parish colleagues.

Find out more on the [Town and Parish Council help centre on our website](#), or email alan.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk for more information.



Action being taken over RAAC in public buildings

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

Town and Parish colleagues will be aware of the ongoing issues over the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in some public buildings.

RAAC has been identified in both the Northampton International Academy and Royal & Derngate Theatre, and Moulton Primary School is still being assessed.

While the theatre remains closed, the [Northampton Filmhouse has reopened](#) and we continue to work together to find a way for audiences to safely return as soon as possible.

Access to the Northampton International Academy remains restricted, while Moulton Primary School was closed on Monday and Tuesday to allow further tests to be carried out.

All agencies continue to work together in an effort to resolve these issues as quickly as possible.

We have also assessed all of our care homes and children's homes and leisure centres and, while we will follow up a small number of buildings to double check with a visual inspection, we do not appear to have as many impacted buildings as other authorities.

Our strategy has been based on an initial risk assessment which considers the use of the building, prioritising those which are used by large numbers of people, alongside considering the age of the building – RAAC was only in use between 1950 and 1990. Every single building owned by the Council will be reviewed and we are confident that within the next two months we will know the overall extent of the issue.

If any further RAAC is found, our priority is to inform the building users, before we update other stakeholders. We are in the process of contacting all schools and users where we have deemed properties safe, and will release a full list in the very near future.

Chance to meet our customer services team

Cllr Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

Our Customer Services Team visits locations across West Northamptonshire on a monthly basis, offering advice and guidance to residents on a range of issues.

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

Sessions coming up over the next month include:

- **Brackley Library** (Manor Road, NN13 6AJ): Fri 29 September from 10am to midday.
- **Brixworth Village Hall** (Holcot Rd, NN6 9BS) Tues 10 October from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.
- **Crick Old School** (Church St, NN6 7TP) Fri 17 November from 3pm to 4.30pm.
- **Moulton Library Plus** (Moulton Reedings, NN3 7AX): Fri 29 September from 10am to midday.
- **Road Community Larder** (Road Community Village Hall, Bailey Brooks Lane NN7 2LS): Mon 25 September 1.15pm to 2.15pm. [View listings for all of the drop-in sessions on our website](#)



Get involved in Community Governance Review

Town and parish councils will have further opportunities this autumn to get involved in a Community Governance Review being carried out by our Council.

The review is a process which can review and make changes to governance arrangements for town and parish councils and parish areas, allowing for boundaries to be altered, the number of councillors sitting on a council to be changed, and for new parishes to be created or existing parishes to be merged.

It was set in motion following the ward boundary review for our West Northamptonshire Council, carried out by Local Government Boundary Commission for England. We have also received requests for changes from some Town and Parish councils, due to factors such as population increases caused by new developments.

As you will recall, we wrote to all town and parish councils across West Northants in July, asking if you wished to express an interest in being part of the review, and we would like to thank you for your responses. Following on from that, our Council's Democracy & Standards Committee has met to consider the Terms of Reference for the review.

This document, which sets out which town and parish councils will be included in the scope of the review, will now go to our next Full Council meeting on 28 September, when councillors will be asked to formally launch the Community Governance Review. The [agenda and papers for this meeting will be published here on Wednesday 20 September](#)

Further research and information gathering will take place during October and November, and we may be in contact with some Town and Parish councils as part of this.

This will be followed by an initial consultation, set to run from late November to late January, during which people will be able to have a say on what governance changes, if any, they feel should be made to the councils under review. Only parishes that asked to be included, together with any parishes affected by the boundary review, will form part of this consultation.

A further round of consultation on a set of draft recommendations will then be carried out in spring/summer 2024, with the final decision set to be made by our Council in September 2024. This would allow elections due to take place in May 2025 to do so with the new arrangements in place.

Town and Parish councils with any questions about the review can contact us at electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk

Taxi initiative up for international award

A [pioneering training package](#) for all taxi and private hire drivers in Northamptonshire that aims to help keep women safe on nights out has been shortlisted for an [international award](#).

The online tutorial is currently being rolled out in both North and West Northamptonshire Council areas – to help taxi and private hire drivers spot signs that women may be in danger.

Drivers already play a big role in informally coming to the help of revellers who may find themselves vulnerable. The training aims to consolidate good practice and provide formal support.

Now the training package has been recognised on the global stage, making the finals of the Music Cities Awards – a competition designed to acknowledge economic, social, environmental and cultural development in cities and places all around the world.

It will compete against entries from Bogota and Dallas in the Best Night-Time Economy Initiative category with the winners announced at a ceremony in Huntsville, Alabama, USA on October 18, 2023.



Our Council in the news

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

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

- [Reminder to have your say on the way social housing is allocated in West Northants](#) – August 21
- [Fresh plans to help reduce barriers for care leavers](#) – August 21
- [West Northants announced as host for prestigious Rugby World Cup 2025](#) – August 22
- [Residents urged to give their views on consultation to close train station ticket offices](#) – August 22
- [Views sought on closing town centre crime hotspot](#) – August 23
- [Northampton clocks up 3 million rides on Voi e-scooters](#) – August 23
- [Tackling environmental crime across West Northamptonshire](#) – August 23
- [Grants scheme launched to mitigate youth violence and knife crime in West Northants](#) – August 23
- [Cabinet member congrats students on their GCSE results](#) – August 24
- [Travelling sofa highlighting suicide prevention](#) – August 25
- [Prepare for home to school transport this September](#) – August 29
- [Be Prepared, Be Resilient: Join the #30days30waysUK Campaign](#) – August 30
- [Preparing your food for the new year ahead](#) – August 31
- [One week to go until Heritage Open Days in West Northants!](#) – September 1
- [People invited to have their say on developing West Northants' Library Service](#) – September 4
- [Free family fun continues at Northampton Market](#) – September 4
- [New grants scheme launched to create volunteering opportunities in West Northants](#) – September 4
- [Statement regarding reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete](#) – September 5
- [Advice on coping in hot weather as Amber Alert issued](#) – September 5
- [Unlock your business potential with the build your business programme](#) – September 6
- [Fire-damaged building requires demolition](#) – September 6
- [Statement on the increase in demand for children with SEND](#) – September 7
- [Historical finds on Market Square present new mysteries](#) – September 7
- [It's almost time to apply for your child's school place for September 2024](#) – September 7
- [Businesses benefit from robust support showcased at exhibition](#) – September 8
- [Moulton Primary School confirmed to be affected by RAAC](#) – September 11
- [West Northants Council funds dedicated service to help people find their dream job](#) – September 11
- [Get your two or three-year-olds protected with the free flu nasal spray](#) – September 11
- [Cabinet set to discuss proposals on the outcome of a Care Home in Brixworth](#) – September 12
- [Cabinet set to discuss next steps for much-needed SEND provision](#) – September 12
- [Plans to demolish the former BHS, M&S and Job Centre buildings](#) – September 12
- [Key routes in Northampton Town Centre to undergo extensive transformation](#) – September 12
- [Have your say on renewing PSPO in Northampton crime hotspot](#) – September 12
- [Cabinet to receive latest finance update](#) – September 12
- [Cabinet to consider PSPO for dog control and smoking in public open spaces](#) – September 12
- [Council prosecutes fly-tipper for illegally dumped waste](#) – September 13
- [West Northamptonshire Council releases its first Annual Sustainability Report](#) – September 13
- [Coming up at September Cabinet meeting](#) – September 14
- [Thousands in Northamptonshire invited to book COVID-19 and flu jabs](#) – September 14