



Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 18 | 17 October 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

Could you offer a Welcoming Space?

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

Our Council is looking to partner with more community and voluntary organisations to re-launch a scheme which aims to support vulnerable people across West Northamptonshire.

Town and Parish Councils were instrumental in the success of last winter's warm spaces initiative, and I would like to thank you all for your support.

I am really pleased to say we are launching this essential initiative for a second year, and I would like to ask for your support in offering community buildings to act as spaces for

Relaunched as Welcoming Spaces, the scheme aims to tackle loneliness and social isolation by providing residents with a place to go where they can meet new people, socialise and access support services whilst being in the warm, and all within reach of where they live.

Each of the spaces can choose what they wish to offer, from cups of tea to knit and natters or board game activities for example. The last programme saw 96 community and voluntary partners sign up to be a warm space, which saw over 52,932 attendees visit between January to March 2023 putting a spotlight on how important this support is for residents.

You will all know that the winter months in particular can be a challenging time for many – whether it be due to financial worries, struggling with household bills or feeling a bit lonely. By working together offer welcoming spaces, we can enable a real community focused approach that can help to address these challenges and provide support that can be used and accessed locally by residents. We are really encouraging community and voluntary organisations to register – whether that's new organisations or those who were involved last year registering again. We have had a great response so far with 40 organisations registered to date.

As part of the registration for the welcoming spaces, organisations will be invited to apply for the Welcoming Spaces Grant that has been developed to further enhance the welcoming spaces by providing funding to voluntary and community sectors organisations.

Organisations are invited to [register their interest online](#)



Latest update on school closure announcement

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

Work is under way to make alternative arrangements for all children affected by Southfield Primary Academy trustees decision to close next year, with our Council's admissions staff on hand to meet and support parents and carers.

Our Council was recently informed that Trustees of the Brackley-based school, with approval from the Department for Education (DfE), have decided to close the school at the end of the current academic year in July 2024.

This decision was made due to a significant shortfall in the take-up of places – 109 children on roll out of a possible 420 – which they said made it no longer financially viable to continue.

Following the school and DfE's closure announcement last week, our Council took immediate steps to support families of the pupils affected and provide assurance to them that they will all have access to an alternative school within a reasonable distance from Southfield Primary.

The aim will be to ensure that friendship groups are maintained and that siblings can stay together wherever possible. A letter on place availability is being sent by the WNC admissions team, alongside details of a simplified application process, when parents will then be able to start considering alternative future options.

Members of the Schools Admissions Team are also attending sessions with parents and carers at the school from this week to discuss concerns and answer queries about the future process.

I fully understand how distressing this news will be to children and their parents. I would like to reassure them all that our Council will be doing everything possible to support them through this, by providing alternative school places still within the Brackley area, to maintain continuity and a smooth transition for youngsters for next year.

We know Southfield has faced challenges in recent years but the school has worked hard to make improvements. We have also looked at how to help the school resolve its under-capacity, such as exploring other ways to use the space for alternative educational purposes, although unfortunately these did not prove viable in the end.

Sadly the number of parents choosing to send their children there continues to be low and, at just under a quarter full, we understand why the trustees and DfE feel it is no longer financially viable to stay open from next summer.

Our priority now is to ensure all families affected by this decision are kept fully informed and updated around future steps in the process and we support Southfield staff to help them find new positions at other schools.

We are aware that some people have expressed concerns that the closure of Southfield, coupled with planned housing growth, will lead to pressures on places at nearby schools, and have provided this information to the DfE as part of our annual planning forecast.

There have also been suggestions around controlling the number of pupils admitted to Southfield but this is not something we could legally do nor would wish to, as it is important that parents are given a choice of which school their child attends, and they make this based on what best suits their family's needs and the performance of schools available to them.



Exciting opportunity to shape leisure services

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

Plans to procure leisure centre contracts in Northampton and Daventry have been approved by Cabinet.

There are three centres operated by Trilogy Active, including Mounts Baths, Lings Forum Leisure Centre and Danes Camp Leisure Centre, and three operated by Everyone Active, including Daventry Leisure Centre, Daventry Sports Park and Moulton Leisure Centre.

The contracts with those operators expire at the end of March 2026, so procuring a new contract(s) allows the Council the best opportunity to deliver value for money, improve service delivery and ensures we do not breach procurement law.

The contract operated by Parkwood Leisure in South Northants expires in 2034, therefore a separate procurement exercise will take place at a later date.

At the forefront of our priorities is to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents, by appointing a contractor that will not only achieve value for money but work innovatively to enhance sports and leisure facilities in West Northants, communicate effectively with the public and add social value, such as providing sports activities that will collectively benefit the wider community.



Helping businesses achieve a sustainable future

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

A new project is aiming to help local businesses with their transition to net zero.

Our Council has been collaborating with the Sustainability Local Innovation and Partnership Agenda Hub at the University of Northampton to develop the 'Towards a Net Zero West Northants (TANZ West Northants)' project, with help from funding provided by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This work builds on the ground-breaking Northampton Sustainability Accord.

Through this project, businesses across West Northamptonshire, including start-ups and small and medium enterprises, will be given the opportunity to participate in expert led workshops, training sessions and webinars on the transition to net zero.

This will allow them to obtain the knowledge, resources and expertise needed to create an action plan which will enable their green transition, allowing our local economy to remain competitive in an increasingly environmentally conscious world.

The project will also provide local businesses with access to the University's carbon calculator, a powerful tool enabling businesses to measure and understand their emissions, as well as support for emissions monitoring.

We are inviting businesses to be at the forefront of the sustainability revolution happening across West Northamptonshire, enabling them to contribute towards the collective effort of reaching our net zero goal by 2045.

TANZ West Northants will provide businesses with the opportunity to be a part of a supportive and collaborative community of like-minded businesses and organisations, empowering them on our journey to net zero.

[Find out more about TANZ West Northants](#)

Further support on offer for households

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

Our Council has been allocated almost £5.2million by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support residents in the fourth round of the Household Support Fund.

To make sure these funds reach and support as many West Northants residents as possible, we have implemented several strands of support with the aim of making each one available to those who need it most. We anticipate being able to support at least 33,500 households or individuals.

Working on a low wage applications

We have launched a 'working on a low wage' application, allowing adults in West Northants earning less than £400 a week to apply for a £300 payment.

To be eligible residents must be in full or part-time employment earning less than £400 a week after tax, including any government benefits, have less than £5,000 in household money, savings and investments, and must not have received the recent government cost of living payments.

Eligibility is assessed on an individual basis for each application and will consider the information and evidence provided with the application as well as other information available to us.

The £300 payment will be given in two instalments. Those that meet the criteria will receive £150 following approval of the application, with the second payment going to the same bank account 60 days later, without the need for a further application.

More information can be found on our [Household Support Fund page](#).



Tackling challenges faced by care leavers

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

WNC has strengthened its commitment to supporting people who have been in care, by signing up to two national initiatives aimed at reducing barriers and tackling discrimination for care leavers.

The Council signed up to the Care Leaver Covenant, to formally pledge our commitment to support those who leave care aged between 16 and 25 to live independently.

This follows on from the recent Cabinet meeting where councillors agreed to support and treat care leavers as a protected characteristic until such time it becomes legislation, joining a number of other local authorities across the country.

These are both great initiatives that I am confident are going to make a difference to outcomes for our care leavers.

We know that care leavers can often face prejudice, discrimination and challenges in accessing support, all of which I have heard first hand from our care leavers and am really passionate that we tackle.

I hope by us signing up to these as a Council, and by starting to bring about these changes internally will further support conversations with partners to encourage them to do the same.

Seasonal vaccination programme is launched

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

The local Covid-19 and flu vaccination programmes have been launched, ahead of the winter months.

The NHS in Northamptonshire is urging those eligible for the jabs to come forward to top up their protection as soon as possible. The vaccines can be administered together, at the same appointment, and both are vitally important to staying well this winter.

Those eligible to receive both the free COVID-19 and flu vaccines 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
- carers and residents of care homes for older people.

Eligible people can [book a jab on the NHS website](#) or app.

Our Public Health outreach vaccination programme is also underway, with homeless and rough sleepers' clinics taking place.

Council's pledge to tackle air pollution

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

West Northamptonshire Councillors have unanimously pledged their support to tackling air pollution with a range of actions set to move forward.

At last month's Full Council meeting, members across the political groups discussed plans to address concerns from residents about poor air quality locally.

The Council is aiming to publish a cohesive clean air strategy as early as possible next year and already working with partners to develop effective local actions.

Measures will include using nearly £300,000 of Defra grant funding to assess the health, economic and social impacts of extending the existing smoke control areas in West Northamptonshire, progressing a pilot project with local schools to promote active travel and reduce car idling and improving traffic management systems to reduce pollution levels linked to idling traffic.

At the meeting councillors also recognised West Northamptonshire Council have already made several commitments to deliver clean air, including signing up to the UK100 Net Zero Pledge in 2022, committing to be 'Clean and Green' in the corporate plan, and inheriting Northampton Borough Council's Northampton Low Emission Strategy (NLES) until 2025.

Although air quality levels in our area generally fall within Government limits, we know it is a matter of concern for our residents and that more work needs to be done improve them.

A range of actions are being planned towards improving air quality across West Northants and the unanimous support shown by councillors at last night's meeting demonstrates the widespread commitment and support to achieving this.



New measures for dog owners in place

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

Additional measures to encourage responsible dog ownership and ban smoking in specific public open spaces in the Northampton area have been implemented.

The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in place across the Daventry and South Northants areas has been extended across Northampton, forming a West Northamptonshire-wide order relating to dog control and prohibiting of smoking in certain public spaces.

It will remain in place for a period of two years, following approval by Cabinet last month.

The PSPO means dog owners could be fined £100 if they fail to:

- pick up their dog's mess and dispose of it properly
- carry the means to pick up after their dog
- prevent their dog from entering public places from which dogs are excluded, including children's play areas, schools and skate parks
- put their dog on a lead when asked to do so by an authorised officer.
- keep their dog on a lead in Northampton town centre, Upton Country Park Phase 2 (land between Kislingbury and Upton), near the café at Daventry Country Park, and in cemeteries, memorial gardens, allotments and sports grounds, fields and pitches when in use for authorised sporting activity.

The order restricts a person from walking more than four dogs at any one time in a public open space (unless they are a licensed dog day care provider, boarder or breeder whereby a maximum of 6 can be walked at any one time).

It also prohibits smoking in children's play areas, land near schools, skateparks, tennis courts, multi-use games areas and bowling greens.

Town and Parish Councils can [find out more about the PSPO here](#)

New courses set to support our volunteers

Cllr Matt Golby, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Wellbeing and Health Integration and Cllr David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement and Regulatory Services

A series of free bite-sized courses have been launched to help up-skill front-line workers and volunteers across West Northamptonshire.

Our Council is funding the initiative, which is being run by the Northampton Hope Centre in partnership with the Community Law Service (Northampton and County).

Designed and delivered by professionals, the courses cover a range of topics including the benefits system, encouraging individuals to seek support for mental health issues, addressing debt-related challenges and other topics that empower delegates to recognise issues and understand how to refer individuals to appropriate services.

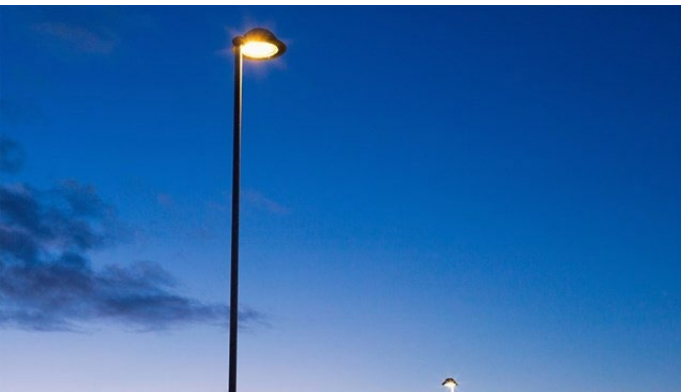
They are delivered over Zoom in easily digestible 1-2 hour sessions, and can be booked by any front-line worker or volunteer working within the West Northamptonshire area.

People can sign-up to the service and join training sessions at communitytrainingpartnership.org.uk



Streetlights are set for a major upgrade

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



A major project to upgrade 44,000 streetlights across Northamptonshire is set to get underway.

Balfour Beatty Living Places will [upgrade the lights](#) to new white LED versions over the next two-and-a-half years, in a move that will reduce CO2 emissions in the county by an estimated 1,091 tonnes of CO2 a year.

The new LED lights will also bring a range of additional benefits, including white light, which is linked to improving community safety, a reduction in light pollution and greater energy efficiency.

The lights will be replaced as part of regular maintenance rounds carried out by Balfour Beatty, making the process more efficient.

We are committed to investing to save in order to provide better value for money and an improved service for our residents.

LED lighting is far more energy efficient and therefore more sustainable. It is welcoming that the white light that LED lighting provides maintains and improves the lighting of our highways, ensuring our communities are safe. This is also a step forward in meeting our commitment becoming net zero by 2030.

Balfour Beatty took over responsibility for streetlights in Northamptonshire in 2011 under a 25-year PFI deal with the former county council. The street-lighting stock was initially replaced by standard lamps as LED was an emerging technology with relatively high unit prices and unproven life span.

Nominations open for Male Role Model awards

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

Nominations have opened for the West Northamptonshire Male Role Model Awards 2023.

The awards aim to [raise awareness around men's wellbeing](#) and celebrate those who inspire and have a positive impact on the lives of others in the community or workplace.

WNC is looking for men who have been inspirational in the broadest sense and would like to know how they have inspired you or others, what they have achieved, or what they have done to help you or your community.

International Men's Day is celebrated around the world, and in the UK focusses on the core themes of making a positive difference to the wellbeing and lives of men and boys and promoting a positive conversation about men, manhood and masculinity.



[Nominations can be submitted here](#) and close on Sunday 29 October.

The finalists will be announced at an awards ceremony which will take place at Northampton Museum on International Men's Day on Friday 17 November 2023.

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 27 Oct from 10am to midday.
- **Brixworth Village Hall** (Holcot Rd, NN6 9BS) Fri 8 Nov from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.
- **Bugbrooke Community Living Room** (High Street, NN7 3PA): Thurs 26 Oct 2pm to 3.30pm.
- **Crick Old School** (Church St, NN6 7TP) Tues 21 Nov from 3pm to 4.30pm.
- **Hackleton** (Chapel Lane, NN7 2AH): Tue 24 Oct from 10am to midday.
- **Hunsbury Library** (Overslade Close, NN4 0RZ): Thurs 19 Oct from 1pm to 4pm.
- **Long Buckby Library** (Long Buckby, NN6 7QB): 10 Nov from 10.30am to 12.30pm.
- **Road Community Larder** (Road Community Village Hall, NN7 2LS): Mon 23 Oct from 1.15pm to 2.15pm.
- **Towcester Community Larder** (Islington Road, NN12 6AU): Wed 15 Nov from 4pm to 5pm.
- **Weston Favell Library** (NN3 8JZ): Fri 3 Nov from 12.30pm to 3pm.



[View listings for all of the drop-in sessions on our website](#)

Our journey to improve children's services

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

Hundreds of people involved in co-producing a new strategy to improve outcomes for West Northants children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) gathered to mark its launch.

More than 500 parents, carers, health and education professionals attended the two events at Daventry's iCon Centre, enjoying a presentation, workshops and information sessions alongside stalls and displays from a range of local organisations providing support for SEND families.

The SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy sets out the key priorities towards ensuring the West Northamptonshire Partnership better meets the needs of families over the next three years as the partnership continues to tackle the challenges across the system against an ever increasing demand. It was co-produced with the involvement of over 800 people who attended over 20 engagement sessions providing over 3,000 pieces of feedback.

The launch was planned and co-delivered by students from Creating Tomorrow College, which has a campus at the iCon Centre.



October'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](#)

Give us your views on the interim bus policy priorities

Deadline to complete: 12 November 2023

A short-term local bus policy is being developed as part of a review of current provision. An interim bus policy will enable the Council to maintain support for local bus services and the communities they serve until a new Local Transport Plan is developed and adopted.

We are asking for views from people about the priorities we have identified to take forward into the interim policy, we are also keen to hear if people have any other thoughts about local bus services.

[Give us your views on the interim bus policy priorities](#)



Activities and respite for children with disabilities

Deadline to complete: 19 November 2023

We are working with our partners at Northamptonshire Children's Trust, who are seeking views on a proposed new way of delivering activities and respite (short breaks) for disabled children in Northamptonshire.

You can also give us your views by emailing or writing to us or attending one of the engagement sessions, detail of which is given on the consultations overview.

[Activities and respite for children with disabilities](#)

Consultation on the future of Ridgway House Care Home

Deadline for comments: 19 November 2023

We want to be able to ensure we are in a position to offer high quality care which continues to meet the changing needs of its care home residents both now and in the future.

We are therefore reviewing the current and future usage of the residential care service at Ridgway House in Towcester. We would like to understand the impact of allowing the current position at the home to continue or what the impact would be if we commenced with a safe closure programme of the home.

[Consultation on the future of Ridgway House Care Home](#)

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.



Recognising our armed forces during Remembrance

With November just around the corner, we are looking ahead to Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday on Sunday 12 November. We are proud to be supporting a number of Remembrance ceremonies, parades and events led by Town and Parish Councils across West Northants.

Are you planning something for Remembrance Day? Let us know, and we would be delighted to support you with promoting these events to our communities through our [Armed Forces Covenant Northants website](#)



Here's how you can make a difference:

1. **Shine the spotlight on your event:** We're all about spreading the word and bringing communities together. If you've got something planned for Remembrance Day, give us a shout at Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk. Let's make sure your event gets the attention it deserves.
2. **Join the Covenant:** Remembrance Day isn't just about ceremonies; it's about standing in solidarity with our Armed Forces Community whether you're serving, have served, or are part of a military family. If you're part of a Town or Parish Council that hasn't signed the Armed Forces Covenant yet, why not consider it? It's a powerful way to show your commitment to those who've dedicated their lives to our nation. Want to know more? Contact our Armed Forces project team at Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk

Advice and support available

We know that Remembrance can be a difficult time for many members of our Armed Forces Community, as we remember those who have sadly been lost. The [Armed Forces Covenant Northants website](#) has lots of information on local support services and groups who can help – please do signpost to this information and encourage anyone who needs help to come along to one of our Armed Forces Community Hubs below:

- Wednesday 1 November, 12pm-1:30pm at The Bridge, 63c Gold Street, Northampton, NN1 1RA
- Friday 24 November, 10am-12pm at Brackley Library, Manor Road, Brackley, NN16 0AY
- Tuesday 28 November, 10am-11:30am at Brixworth Library, Spratton Road, Brixworth, NN6 9DS
- Monday 4 December, 2pm-3:30pm at Daventry Library, The Abbey Centre, Daventry, NN11 4XG
- Wednesday 6 December, 12pm-1:30pm at the Bridge, 63c Gold Street, Northampton, NN1 1RA
- Tuesday 12 December, 2pm-3:30pm at Towcester Library, The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AD

This Remembrance Day let's come together and show our gratitude for the sacrifices made by our heroes. Your involvement can make a world of difference.

Reach out to us at Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk to share your Remembrance Day plans, or take that important step of signing the Covenant to create a lasting impact.

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](#)

- [Stepping towards safety and independence with our falls management service](#) – September 15
- [Pupils at Hunsbury Park Primary School help to keep Northampton workers safe](#) – September 18
- [Have your say on funding for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) – September 19
- [Fairfields School affected by RAAC](#) – September 20
- [Cabinet approves plans to seek leisure providers in Northampton and Daventry](#) – September 20
- [Moulton Primary clear to fully reopen](#) – September 20
- [Plans to remove asbestos at former BHS stores to go ahead](#) – September 21
- [A further drive to supporting care leavers](#) – September 22
- [Vehicles seized in West Northamptonshire](#) – September 22
- [Northampton construction project reaches award final](#) – September 26
- [West Northants' libraries go green for Libraries Week](#) – September 27
- [Hundreds turn out to show their support for new SEND strategy](#) – September 27
- [Requirements on dog control and smoking in public open spaces to be introduced](#) – September 28
- [Earning £400 or less a week? You may be eligible for £300 towards bills](#) – September 28
- [Have your say on extending measures to curb anti-social behaviour in Daventry](#) – September 29
- [Council pledges support to tackle air pollution](#) – September 29
- [Progress being made towards improving children's services](#) – September 29
- [Celebrating National Customer Service Week](#) – September 29
- [Barclays Eagle Lab launches at Vulcan Works](#) – September 29
- [Cornerstones of West Northants community join forces to tackle climate change](#) – October 2
- [Community and voluntary organisations urged to join welcoming spaces project](#) – October 3
- [Help shape the interim bus policy for West Northamptonshire](#) – October 3
- [Stoptober: When You Stop Smoking Good Things Start to Happen](#) – October 3
- [Streetlights across Northamptonshire to be upgraded to the latest LED technology](#) – October 3
- [Nominate your West Northants Male Role Models](#) – October 3
- [Announcement regarding Southfield Primary School](#) - October 6
- [Vaccination gives protection for pregnant women and their unborn babies](#) – October 9
- [Update on Southfield Primary School, Brackley](#) – October 10
- [Gritting fleet set to go as Met Office reveals winter snow forecast](#) – October 13