Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers
Leader of the Council

19 May 2023

Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

North Northamptonshire Council has been accredited with being a Foster Friendly employer – demonstrating the importance the council places on this vital role for families. We have updated our HR policy to give staff that foster children extra support in balancing their work and care responsibilities. I'm thrilled that we have signed up to be Foster Friendly and it demonstrates the depth of our commitment to improving the life chances of everyone.

The new primary school in Rushden set to open in September has been named the Alfred Lord Tennyson School. The opening of the school has come about after formal approval was given to amalgamate Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School. After consultation with the school community, the school has been named after one of England's greatest poets.

There have been further changes to the Corporate Leadership Team at North Northamptonshire Council. Last week, the council announced Graeme Kane as the proposed Interim Executive Director of Place and Economy. Earlier this month, George Candler was proposed as the Interim Chief Executive, which is subject to Full Council approval on Thursday 25 May - the date of the Annual Council meeting. If approved, both will assume the new roles in early June when the current Chief Executive, Rob Bridge, moves to the top job at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Graeme already occupies a substantial post in the Place directorate and has a great understanding of the area. Graeme has been a director previously and carries an enormous wealth of experience making him a valuable asset to the leadership team and to the North Northamptonshire area as a whole. I look forward to working with him.

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council Public Health teams are undertaking a Sexual Health Needs Assessment. We need you to help us improve sexual health in Northamptonshire and shape sexual health services. Please share your views by completing our survey to help us better understand your experiences, concerns and perceptions of sexual health and services in your local area.

I have provided details of several current consultations and engagement activities in this Update. Please feel free to provide your feedback and inform council decisions - and please share with family and friends who may be interested in shaping future plans.

North Northamptonshire Council recently seized the opportunity to clean up the roadside and verges in safety during a closure of the A14 eastbound carriageway in Kettering. More than 100 bags of rubbish – together weighing over a tonne – were collected during a recent night time litter pick.

An exciting new initiative will be showcasing hundreds of job opportunities in and around Kettering. The Kettering Recruitment, Skills and Careers Event will take place on Tuesday 13 June, and will bring together the biggest and best employers in the area and help potential employees to understand the training pathways which are open to them towards new or more rewarding careers.

Corby's Friday night meal and soup kitchen, the Big Blue Bus, is relocating to outside Corby Cube on James Ashworth VC Square. The service will be available on Friday nights from 7pm until 9pm to homeless people and those struggling with the cost-of-living.

The dates of next month's Armed Forces Community Hub sessions have been confirmed. All members of the Armed Forces community are welcome to attend to gain advice and support, or just pop by for a chat. The June sessions will take place in Towcester, Northampton, Corby and Daventry.

The fifth annual tech innovation showcase event, Merged Futures 5, will take place at the Learning Hub at the University of Northampton's Waterside Campus on Friday 30 June. The free event, organised by Digital Northants, brings together people from different sectors interested in digital, tech and innovation to share and spark ideas.

Whatever your plans are, I hope you have a great weekend!

North Northamptonshire Council's commitment to be fostering friendly

North Northamptonshire Council has been accredited with being a Foster Friendly employer – demonstrating the importance the authority places on this vital role for families.

The status means that the council has updated its HR policy to give staff that foster children extra support in balancing their work and care responsibilities.

The announcement coincides with Foster Care Fortnight, an annual national campaign organised by The Fostering Network, which also administers the friendly-employer scheme.

Cllr Scott Edwards is North Northamptonshire Council's Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills and will soon take over as chairman of the council's Corporate Parenting Board.

The Fostering Friendly employers scheme offers businesses of any size a chance to make a difference for foster carers and the children they care for in their local communities and improve support for their own employees at the same time.

According to the Fostering Network, nearly 40% of foster carers combine fostering with other work. Those who do say that a supportive employer can make all the difference, enabling them to balance employment with looking after children.

Making sure every child is safe in North Northamptonshire is imperative and our foster carers play a wonderful role in nurturing children and young people to ensure they are loved and cared for. I'm thrilled that we have signed up to be Foster Friendly and it demonstrates the depth of our commitment to improving the life chances of everyone.

Further information

Anyone who is interested in fostering can get in contact for an initial chat with the fostering team at **Northamptonshire Children's Trust** or alternatively you can call them on 0300 126 1009.

Employers interested about becoming Foster Friendly can find out more from **The Fostering Network**.

Introducing Alfred Lord Tennyson School - North Northamptonshire's new primary

The new primary school in Rushden set to open in September will be called the Alfred Lord Tennyson School.

The opening of the school has come about after formal approval was given to amalgamate Tennyson Road Infant School and Alfred Street Junior School.

After consultation with the school community, the new school has been named after one of England's greatest poets. Alfred Lord Tennyson was considered as a suitable name as he was prominent in literature and was thought to embody the British values which are important to the national curriculum. In 1832, when there was widespread reluctance among the landed classes, he supported the extension of suffrage, which contributed to the democracy enjoyed today.

The headteacher for the new school has been named as Mrs Kelly O'Connor, who is the current headteacher of Alfred Street Junior School.

The new school uniform will be red and will feature the new school logo which will be based on designs created by pupils at the two existing schools. The council will support pupils' transition into the new school by providing a school jumper or cardigan, a PE t-shirt and, for younger pupils, a book bag in the new school's colours.

A new school website to showcase the school is currently being developed and will be ready for the opening in September.

The school will open on the two existing school sites on 1 September. Staff, pupils, parents, carers and the wider school community will be kept informed of further developments from now until September.

Primary education is so important for laying down academic foundations so young people can fully realise their potential. I am pleased that the council has been able to help drive forward some much-needed change. I look forward to the new school opening in September and wish everyone well in this new chapter.

Proposed Interim Executive Director of Place and Economy announced at North Northamptonshire Council

Following recent changes to the Corporate Leadership Team at North Northamptonshire Council, a proposed Interim Executive Director of Place and Economy was announced last week as Graeme Kane.

Graeme is currently the council's Assistant Director of Highways and Waste. He was due to leave shortly but the new appointment has allowed the council to secure Graeme's employment.

The position of executive director had become vacant following the news that George Candler, who currently fills the role, had been proposed as Interim Chief Executive.

It was announced in March that the current Chief Executive Rob Bridge has secured the top job at Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

I'm delighted that we've been able to propose Graeme to this very important role and secure his employment at the council.

Graeme already occupies a substantial post in the Place directorate and has a great understanding of the area. Retaining quality staff with deep local knowledge is important to the council and helps build excellence in our services for residents.

Graeme has been a director previously and carries an enormous wealth of experience making him a valuable asset to the leadership team and to the North Northamptonshire area as a whole.

I look forward to working with him and our Corporate Leadership Team as we continue our journey and further our progress as a council.

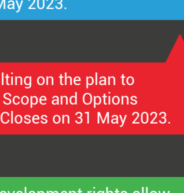
Forthcoming meetings

- **Full (Annual) Council:** Thursday 25 May from 6pm.
- **Executive:** Thursday 8 June from 10am.

The agendas will be displayed on our **website** the week before the meetings.

Open activities on the Consultation and Engagement Hub

Please find below details of several current consultations and engagement activities. Please use the links below to provide your feedback and inform council decisions - and share with family and friends who may be interested in shaping future plans.



Kettering Energy Park - Masterplan Consultation. North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is promoting First Renewable Developments' public consultation on the draft Masterplan for Kettering Energy Park to ensure residents and other interested parties can fully input into its development. Closes 22 May 2023.

Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities - Engagement 2023. Have your say on the new short breaks model which was co-produced with families and professionals. We want to hear the views of families, staff and other professionals on the future shape of the way short breaks are provided for children with disabilities. Closes 29 May 2023.

Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan - Scope and Options. We are consulting on the plan to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The Scope and Options consultation invites views on what should be included in the plan. Closes on 31 May 2023.

Non-immediate Article 4 Direction: Kingswood, Corby. Permitted development rights allow certain types of building work or changes of use without the need for planning permission. An Article 4 Direction allows a local planning authority to withdraw certain permitted development rights, so that planning permission is required. We are proposing to withdraw the permitted development right to convert houses to houses in multiple occupation, and planning permission will be required instead. Closes 5 June 2023.

Have your say on sexual health services. North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council Public Health teams are undertaking a Sexual Health Needs Assessment. We need you to help us improve sexual health in Northamptonshire and shape sexual health services. If you are 13 or older, please share your views by completing our survey to help us better understand your experiences, concerns and perceptions of sexual health and services in your local area. Closes 11 June 2023.

Home to school transport policy review consultation 2023. We want to hear your views on our proposed revision of our home to school transport policies in North Northamptonshire for 2024-2025 onwards. Closes 12 June 2023.

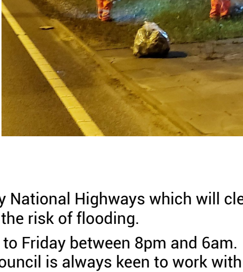
Further information

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the **North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub**.

If you have any questions, please email the Consultation and Engagement Team at **CET@northnorthants.gov.uk**.

One tonne of litter collected from roadside along stretch of A14

More than 100 bags of rubbish – together weighing over a tonne – were collected during a litter pick along the A14 in Kettering.



National Highways has been carrying out essential maintenance between junctions 9 and 10 of the busy A14 which has meant some overnight road closures.

North Northamptonshire Council recently seized the opportunity to clean up the roadside and verges in safety during a closure of the eastbound carriageway for maintenance work.

Vehicle parts, mesh fencing and 105 bags of litter weighing a total of 1,100kg were collected over just five nights.

Further litter picks will be carried out during closures on the westbound carriageway.

The closures are necessary for the maintenance scheme by National Highways which will clear and improve the drainage system in this area and alleviate the risk of flooding.

Road and lane closures take place overnight, from Monday to Friday between 8pm and 6am. The scheme is due to be completed late next month. The council is always keen to work with partners to keep the local area clean and tidy.

Kettering Recruitment, Skills and Careers Event

An exciting new initiative will be showcasing hundreds of job opportunities in and around Kettering. Being staged on Tuesday 13 June, the event will bring together the biggest and best employers in the area and help potential employees to understand the training pathways which are open to them towards new or more rewarding careers.

North Northamptonshire Council, Jobcentre Plus and Tresham College are putting together the largest event of this kind to have been staged for years. More will follow in coming months at the Tresham College Corby and Wellingborough campuses.

Tresham College is part of The Bedford College Group and will be advertising its own vacancies to visitors as well as talking to employers about training funding which is available for apprenticeships and continuing professional development of staff.

Jobs with North Northamptonshire Council and via Jobcentre Plus will also be promoted to people, together with those from other major employers.

The event will be open to the public from 4pm to 6pm at the Tresham College Kettering campus where potential employees can come and find out more about employment opportunities from the organisations attending, and training opportunities available to help them into employment including apprenticeships, part-time courses and T Levels.

New parking space for Corby's Big Blue Bus

Corby's Friday night meal and soup kitchen, the Big Blue Bus, is relocating to outside Corby Cube on James Ashworth VC Square. The service is available every Friday night from 7pm until 9pm.

Since the launch over a year ago, our Rough Sleeper Team has been able to offer a safe place for homeless people and those who are struggling with the cost-of-living.

The team operates with the kind support from Hope Church, Corby, run by Pastor Damien Carr. The church provides the bus that has been fully kitted out with tables and seating areas. Volunteers from Hope Church give up their time to support our local community.

A member of the council's Rough Sleeping Team will also be present to help anyone who is currently homeless.

If you would like to donate a hot meal that can be served on the night or non-perishable items, such as food and toiletries, please visit the team for a chat during opening times.

Armed Forces Community Hub - June sessions

The Community Hubs are a friendly, informal drop-in service. All members of the Armed Forces community are welcome to gain advice and support, or just pop by for a chat.

Photo from Armed Forces Community Hub Facebook page

The June dates have been confirmed as:

- **Friday 2 June**
  2:30pm to 4pm at Towcester Library (The Forum, Towcester NN12 6AD)
- **Wednesday 7 June**
  12 noon to 1:30pm at The Bridge (63c Gold Street, Northampton NN1 1RA)
- **Friday 16 June**
  9:30am to 11am at Corby Library (Corby Cube, Corby NN17 1QG)
- **Monday 19 June**
  2pm to 3:30pm at Daventry Library (The Abbey Centre, Daventry NN11 4XG)

Further information

For more information, please visit the **Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire** website, email **Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk** or call 07741 684647.

Merged Futures 5: The fifth annual free tech showcase from Digital Northants

Start-up gaming companies helping archaeology come to life and virtual reality enhancing healthcare are amongst an array of digital stories on offer at Merged Futures 5, the fifth annual tech innovation showcase event organised by **Digital Northants**.

The event takes place at the Learning Hub at the University of Northampton's Waterside Campus on Friday 30 June from 10am to 4pm. As with all Digital Northants events, it's free to attend.

A celebration of Northamptonshire's innovators, educators and entrepreneurs, the event brings together people from different sectors interested in digital, tech and innovation to share and spark ideas.

It's also an opportunity for the business community to discover some of the University of Northampton's innovative teaching methods, the skills developed by students and the potential to partner and collaborate with the University in different fields.

The keynote speech will be from local tech entrepreneur Steve Walsh who will explore how innovation works, and how businesses can create a culture of innovation within teams.

Also at the event will be Royal & Derngate theatre and urban sports venue Adrenaline Alley on how technology powers their business.

Find out more and book your free ticket on the **Digital Northants** website.

Press releases

North Northamptonshire Council
LATEST NEWS

To help you stay abreast of the key things the Council has been doing, I have included some links to the Council's press releases below (starting with the most recent):

- **Kettering Recruitment, Skills and Careers Event**
- **North Northamptonshire Council's commitment to be fostering friendly**
- **Apprenticeships success - Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing**
- **Proposed Interim Executive Director of Place and Economy announced at North Northamptonshire Council**
- **Introducing Alfred Lord Tennyson School – North Northamptonshire's new primary**
- **Merged Futures 5: The fifth annual free tech showcase from Digital Northants**

If you would like stay up to date with the Council's media releases, you can visit the news section of the Council's website: **www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news**

Or follow Twitter **@NNorthantsC** and/or Facebook **@NorthNorthants**

Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts on **Facebook** and/or **Twitter**.

Top Facebook posts so far this week (15 to 17 May)

- We've been delayed collecting garden waste in Irchester. We'll be back tomorrow (Wednesday 17 May), so please leave your garden bin out to collect from the following streets: Station Road, Alexander Court, Biscay Close, Knuston, High Street, Townwell Lane and St Katherine's Way.
  (Reach 3,690, Post Clicks 422, Reactions 341)
- The Big Blue Bus has a new permanent home! Corby's Friday night meal and soup kitchen has now got a new location outside the Corby Cube on James Ashworth VC Square. Since its launch over a year ago, the team offers a safe place for not just our homeless, but those who are struggling through the cost-of-living crisis. They operate on Friday nights from 7pm till 9pm. Thank you to the kind support from Hope Church in Corby, run by Pastor Damien Carr, who provides the bus that has been fully kitted out with tables and seating areas. Hope Church also provides the volunteers who give up their time to support our local community. A member of NNC's Rough Sleeping Team will also be present to help anyone who is currently homeless. Whether you are homeless or finding the cost-of-living crisis is hitting hard why not come down and grab a hot meal/drink and have a friendly chat with someone with a sympathetic ear and take your mind off things for a couple of hours. If you would like to donate a hot meal that can be served on the night or donate non-perishable items such as food and toiletries then why not pop along and have a look at what we are doing.
  (Reach 2,667, Post Clicks 228, Reactions 209)
- We're sharing success stories from our directorates based on the apprenticeships their team members have completed or are participating in. Well done to all of them! https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news/apprenticeships-success-adults-health-partnerships-and-housing
  (Reach 2,204, Post Clicks 65, Reactions 55)

Top Tweets so far this week (15 to 17 May)

- Tomorrow is International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia. Together always: united in diversity is this year's theme, and we're proud to support our LGBTQ+ community. Visit our forum website for more information https://t.co/VhyW7Ihvhr
  (Impressions 1,727, URL Clicks 6, Engagements 54)
- We want to hear your views on our proposed revision of our home to school transport policies in North Northamptonshire for 2024-2025 onwards. Find out more about the proposals: https://t.co/2R2fSlvHoE Have your say: https://t.co/UKCCvWpsBt
  (Impressions 854, URL Clicks 15, Engagements 20)
- We're taking part in #BCAW2023 with the focus on 'Embracing the challenge of resilience'. Our staff will learn about 5 key areas of resilience: Cyber resilience, Supply chain resilience, Operational resilience, Personal resilience and Organisational resilience. @TheBCEye
  (Impressions 816, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 4)

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have ideas of items to include in future updates please let me know at: **executive@northnorthants.gov.uk**

With Best Wishes,
Jason

North Northamptonshire Council

Follow me on Twitter
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