



Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers
Leader of the Council



11 August 2023

Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

The council's Executive held an Extraordinary Meeting last week to consider the future of Kettering Leisure Village. The report recommendations to develop a business case and options appraisal for the longer-term operation of the site were approved. North Northamptonshire Council is committed to working with the parties concerned to find a resolution to support the facility to remain open for the community. The meeting was live streamed so you can watch the recording on YouTube if you wish. I have provided further details below.

The Executive will meet on Thursday 17 August in the Council Chamber at Corby Cube where they will consider a range of items important to the local area. There will be a report on 'Designating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic' which will propose that the council treats being in care as a protected characteristic to help reduce barriers to those individuals. There will also be a report on 'Local Authority Housing Fund - Round 2 Funding (Resettlement & Temporary Accommodation)' which will see members discussing 11 homes for people and families who have settled in the area from Afghanistan and alleviate wider homelessness pressures.

I'm delighted to share the news that the council has now taken over the running of Thackley Green specialist care centre in Corby. The centre provides short-term care to those discharged from hospital and has typically taken patients from Kettering General Hospital and residents from North Northamptonshire. The move will more than double the availability of 'reablement' beds in North Northamptonshire from 25 to 51 and allow our residents to access quality care closer to home.

North Northamptonshire Council, in partnership with Kier, has improved the condition of 13 roads across the county with a micro-asphalting programme. The works span 5.8km - the equivalent of nearly six football pitches - and form part of North Northamptonshire's £19.5m capital works programme to improve roads this year.

A new Changing Places toilet has been installed at East Carlton Countryside Park which will make a huge difference for many people. Changing Places toilets are potentially life-changing large spaces and are accessible for people with limited mobility or specific disabilities and care needs. Our growing network of inclusive spaces ensures that people can plan visits confidently, using toilets safely and with dignity, making it possible for everyone to enjoy day-to-day activities that we can sometimes take for granted.

The council's LIVE Team has started to provide baby change bags to Kettering General Hospital to give parents a helping hand at the start of their parenting journey. The idea is to support new parents who are struggling financially or when babies arrive prematurely. So far, the first five baby change bags have been handed over. If you can help by donating toiletries, nappies, baby wipes and new baby items of clothing, please contact the team.

Following North Northamptonshire Council on social media means that you don't have to search for news: you can let the news come to you. We regularly post on a wide range of topics: press releases, events, advice and information, campaigns, consultation and engagement activities and job vacancies. We also provide live streams or live tweeting from some council meetings for those who want up-to-the-minute news. Please follow us on your favourite social media platforms and share our posts with your networks.

A new survey provides an opportunity for residents to comment on the proposal for the introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and associated Electric Vehicle Charging Only Bays for residential on-street parking in North Northamptonshire. The proposed locations are in Corby, Earls Barton, Kettering, Oundle, Raunds and Wellingborough. Please give your views via the online survey before Friday 25 August.

I have provided details of several other current consultations and engagement activities in today's Update. If you haven't already visited our online Consultation and Engagement Hub, please do so. This is your opportunity to have your say on a range of local issues and shape future plans. Please encourage your family and friends to do the same.

Wellingborough based charity, Family Support Link, has won two Rose of Northamptonshire Awards. The awards are organised by the Northamptonshire Community Foundation on behalf of North and West Northamptonshire Councils. The award is available for anyone in the county to nominate someone or a group who have gone the extra mile in helping the Northamptonshire community over the last 12 months. Family Support Link is a free and confidential service that provides free, accessible and non-judgemental support, to those affected by another's substance misuse throughout Northamptonshire.

The Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire provides information and advice on support services available within the county for the Armed Forces community and their families. The Community Hubs offer the chance to socialise and seek help and advice in a relaxed setting. The dates and locations of the August sessions have been confirmed and are detailed below. Whatever your plans are, I hope you have a great weekend!

Extraordinary Meeting: The Future of Kettering Leisure Village

The council's Executive held an Extraordinary Meeting last week to consider the future of Kettering Leisure Village.

The Executive:

- Noted the motion approved by Council on 22nd June 2023;
- Agreed to receive a comprehensive business case, including associated options appraisal and details of any agreement between North Northamptonshire Council and Phoenix Leisure Management as set out in Paragraph 5.13;
- Endorsed the agreement in principle to agree revisions to the provisions of the lease to support the site to remain open.

The meeting was live streamed so you can watch the recording on our YouTube channel if you wish.



Forthcoming meetings

- Executive:** Thursday 17 August from 10am.
- Full Council:** Thursday 31 August from 6pm.

These meetings will be live streamed on our YouTube channel. Please visit the Council meetings section of our website in the week before the meetings to view the agendas and papers.



Proposal for being in care to become a protected characteristic at North Northamptonshire Council

A report before North Northamptonshire Council's Executive will propose the authority treats being in care as a protected characteristic to help reduce barriers to those individuals.

Recommendations to be discussed next week outline how the authority would take the needs of those who have had a care experience into account in all future policy and decision making.

If the Executive agree to the recommendations the proposals would then be taken to Full Council for ratification.

National data suggests that being in care can be a disadvantage:

- 41% of care experienced young people aged 19 to 21 are not in education, employment or training (NEET), compared with the national average of 12%.
- 13% of care experienced young people are in higher education by their 19th birthday, compared to 45% in the wider population.
- 25% of all homeless people are thought to be care experienced.
- Almost 25% of adult prison population have previously been in care.
- Nearly 50% of under 21-year-olds in contact with the criminal justice system have spent time in care.

If adopted as a protected characteristic, having been in care, will allow join the existing characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, which are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership.

Extending the definition of protected characteristics also places a duty on the council to include details about care experience in the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment.

This will include a requirement to undertake Equality Impact Assessments that explicitly considers the needs of this cohort of people.

This will enable the council to measure and monitor the impact of services and policy decisions on this group more meaningfully.

We need to do whatever we can to improve life chances for all our residents and to bring down barriers that can stop people reaching their full potential. This proposal marks a positive step forward.



Homes for refugees on Executive agenda

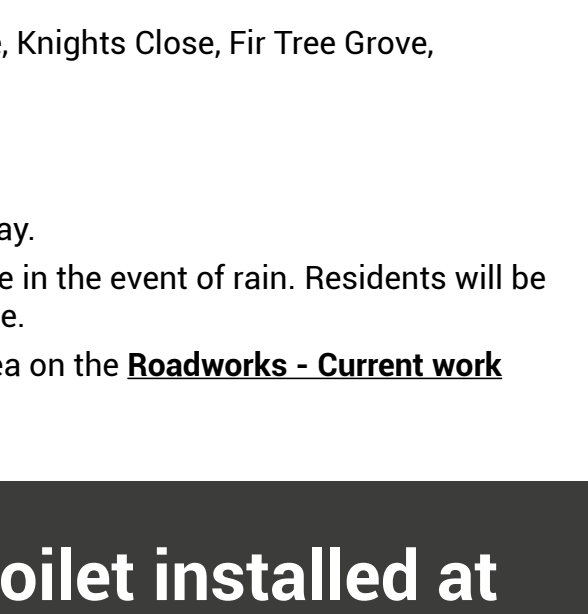
A report at next week's Executive meeting will see members discussing 11 homes for people and families who have settled in the area from Afghanistan and alleviate wider homelessness pressures.

The council has been allocated funding from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to deliver 11 houses during 2023/2024. Nine of the houses will be for Afghan families, with the remaining two homes purchased for temporary accommodation.

At the meeting, councillors will be asked to approve to provide the required match funding against the central government grant.

It is proposed that the council commits to the programme to alleviate increased demand on homelessness and temporary accommodation services and to assist refugees who have arrived in the area to move on from bridging hotels or sponsor placements.

I look forward to considering this report with my fellow Executive members. As well as providing homes for those who have had to flee their homes in such awful circumstances, it will also reduce local housing pressures beyond the scheme by providing better quality temporary accommodation to families across North Northamptonshire.



North Northamptonshire Council takes over the running of Thackley Green specialist care centre

Residents, staff and dignitaries, including Corby and East Northamptonshire MP Tom Pursglove, held a celebration earlier this week to mark the handover of the running of the Thackley Green specialist care centre to North Northamptonshire Council.

Thackley Green in Corby provides short-term care to those discharged from hospital and has typically taken patients from Kettering General Hospital and residents from North Northamptonshire.

With the unit now in the control of the council, it will more than double the availability of 'reablement' beds in North Northamptonshire from 25 to 51.

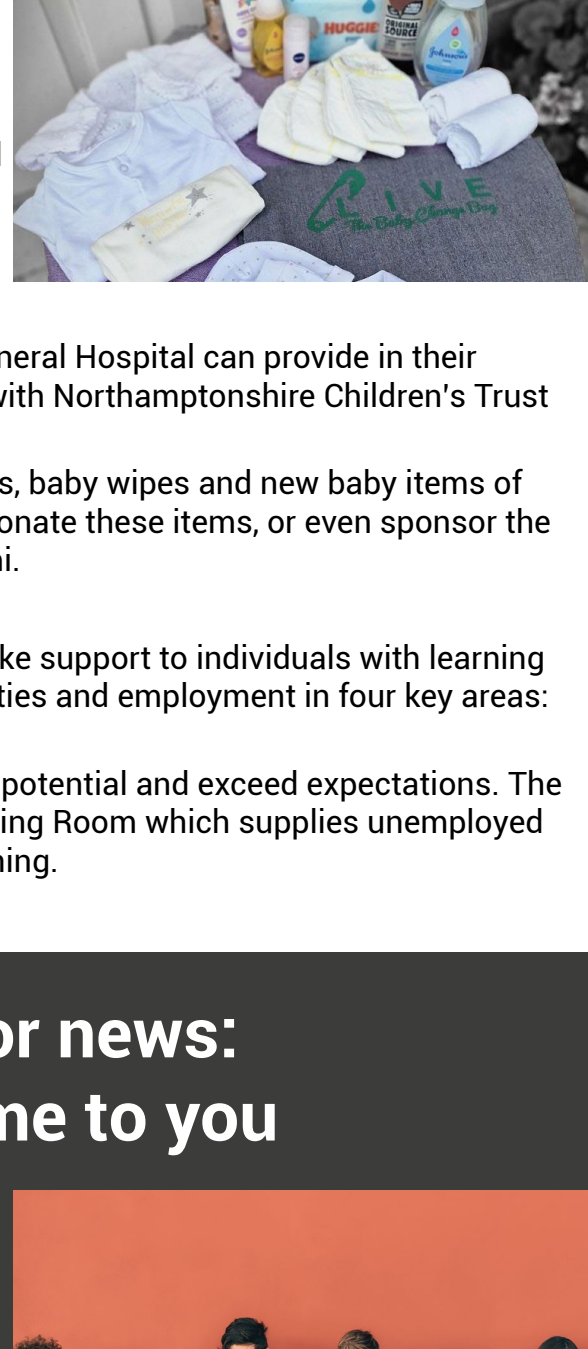
These beds are used to support people and enable them to recover their independence and return home following an episode in hospital or admission from the community.

West Northamptonshire Council took on the centre from the former county council in April 2021, and had been reviewing its care provision, working closely with North Northamptonshire Council and partners to ensure the right support is available across the health and care system.

The review aimed to improve people's experiences after being discharged from hospital to support individual independence and recovery in their own homes or as close to home as possible.

This is a long-established specialist care unit which plays a vital role in getting people ready for a return to home after a stay in hospital. I'd like to thank all of their staff for their hard work and commitment and Tom Pursglove MP for coming along.

I'm delighted that we've now taken over the running of Thackley Green as it will increase capacity in North Northamptonshire and allow our residents to access quality care closer to home.



6km of North Northamptonshire roads improved with micro-asphalt programme

North Northamptonshire Council, in partnership with Kier, has improved the condition of 13 roads across the county with a micro-asphalting programme. The works span 5.8km - the equivalent of nearly six football pitches.

Micro-asphalt schemes are a preventative form of maintenance used to extend the life of a road by up to 10 years. They create less carbon emissions and cause less disruption compared to resurfacing. The scheme forms part of North Northamptonshire's £19.5m capital works programme to improve roads this year.

Roads identified for the treatment have undergone a condition assessment and meet the criteria for intervention at a critical point, before needing replacement. The process allows road users to be back on the treated roads within 30 minutes - with an improved surface texture.

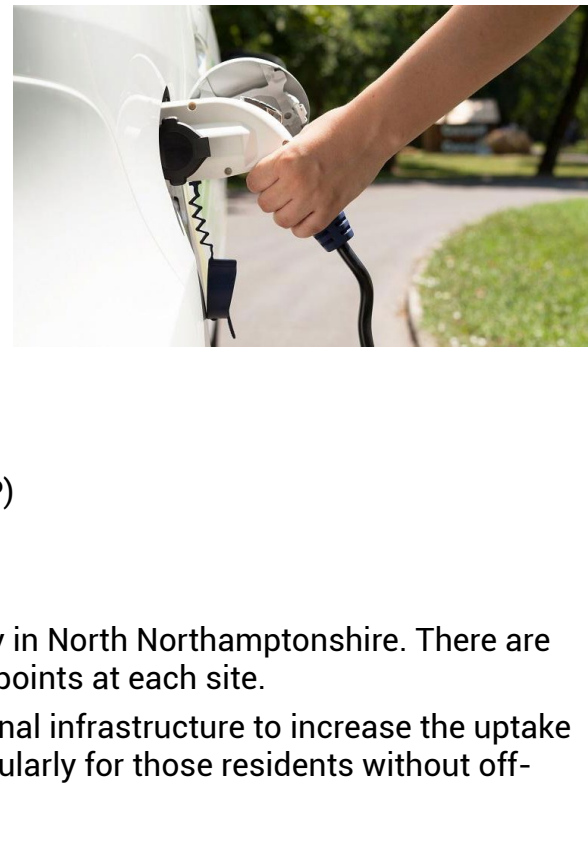
Micro-asphalt treatments involving a two-phase process used to seal the existing road surface - which involves applying a levelling layer of materials, followed by a surface layer. Kier Highways will be returning to the roads at a later stage to install ironwork and road markings.

Roads identified for treatment:

- Bozeat:** Hewlett's Close, Hillside Close, Wyman Close, Knights Close, Fir Tree Grove, Brookside, St Mary's Road / Church Lane.
- Wellingborough:** Kingsway.
- Islip:** Drayton Close, Nene View.
- Corby:** Oldenburg Road, Brandenburg Road, Viking Way.

The process is weather dependent and cannot take place in the event of rain. Residents will be informed 48 to 72 hours before work is due to commence.

You can find further updates regarding works in your area on the [Roadworks - Current work](#) section of our website.



New Changing Places toilet installed at East Carlton Countryside Park

The council has installed a Changing Places toilet (CPT) at East Carlton Countryside Park. This is one of a growing list of CPTs in North Northamptonshire now, with similar facilities having been installed at Corby Cube, Rushden Lakes, Wicksteed Park, Waendel Leisure Centre and Corby Swimming Pool.

The aim of the national Changing Places initiative is to make public spaces inclusive for people with disabilities and their carers.

Changing Places Toilets

Over a 1.4 million people in the UK need Changing Places toilets to enable them to get out and about and enjoy the day-to-day activities which many of us take for granted. To use a toilet in safety and comfort, these people need to be able to access a CPT, which has more space and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench, a peninsular toilet and a ceiling hoist.

It has modern features including a powered height-adjustable changing table, raising and lowering sink, movable ceiling hoist, grab rails, non-slip flooring, privacy screens, an alarm and a large clear space to accommodate wheelchair users and their carers.

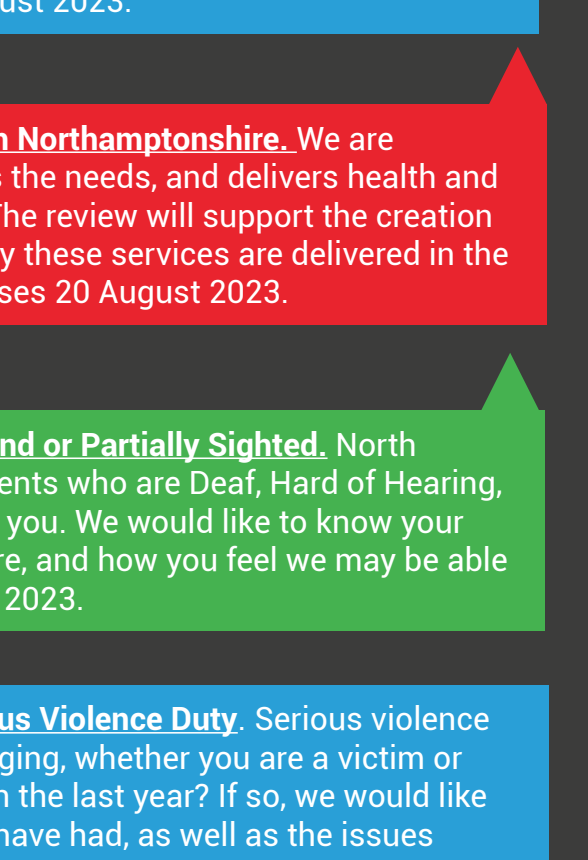
People may be limited in their own mobility so need equipment to help them to either get on the toilet or to have their continence pad changed.

(Source: [Changing Places website](#)).

The CPT at East Carlton Countryside Park is funded by £330,000 of the government's Levelling Up Fund and further investment from the council's capital programme.

More Changing Places toilets are being planned and will be installed at popular locations across the area in the coming months. This growing network of inclusive spaces ensures people can plan visits confidently, using toilets safely and with dignity.

A list of CPTs can be found on the [Changing Places website](#).



Baby change bags delivered to Kettering General Hospital

The council's LIVE Team has started to provide baby change bags to Kettering General Hospital to give parents a helping hand at the start of their parenting journey. The idea is to support new parents who are struggling financially or when babies arrive prematurely.

So far, the first five baby change bags have been handed over. The recyclable tote bags include four nappy changes, two complete outfit changes, a hand-knitted cardigan, bibs, hat, scratch mitts plus toiletries for mum.

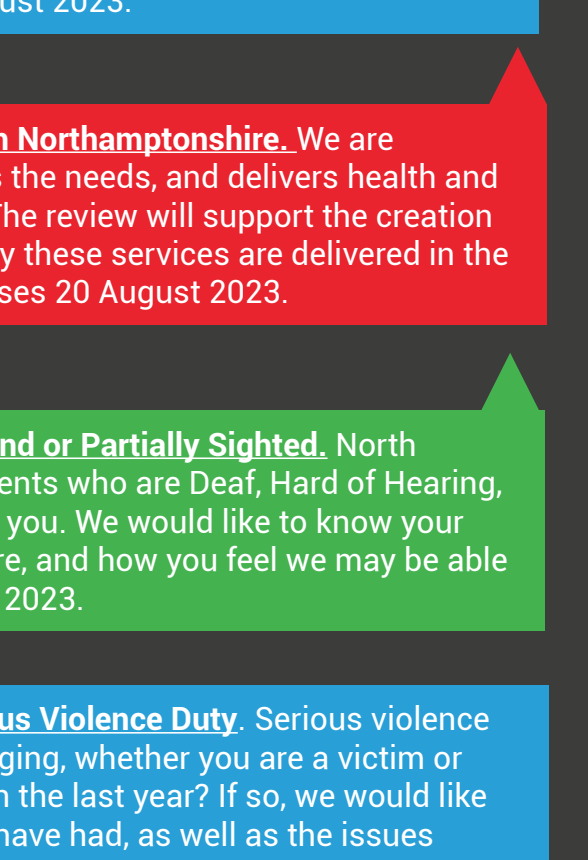
The bags will make a difference to the care Kettering General Hospital can provide in their Delivery Suite and Neonatal Unit. Work is also ongoing with Northamptonshire Children's Trust to help distribute the packs to families in need.

The team would welcome donations of toiletries, nappies, baby wipes and new baby items of clothing. If you know anybody who would be willing to donate these items, or even support the project, please call 01604 362820 and ask for Su or Demi.

LIVE Team

LIVE is a specialist enabling team which provides bespoke support to individuals with learning disabilities and related barriers to community opportunities and employment in four key areas: Learning, Independence, Volunteering and Employment.

LIVE raises aspirations and enables people to fulfil their potential and exceed expectations. The team also runs community projects including the Changing Room which supplies unemployed people with interview clothes or everyday essential clothing.



Don't search for news: let the news come to you

Twitter's rebranding from the iconic bird logo to an 'X' may have caused a social media storm in recent weeks, but it's been 'business as usual' for our Social Media Team.

Following North Northamptonshire Council on social media means that you don't have to search for news: you can let the news come to you.

Social media posts

- Press releases.
- Events.
- Advice and information.
- Campaigns.
- Consultation and engagement activities.
- Live streams - Full Council and Executive meetings
- Live tweeting from Executive meetings.
- Job vacancies.

August highlights:

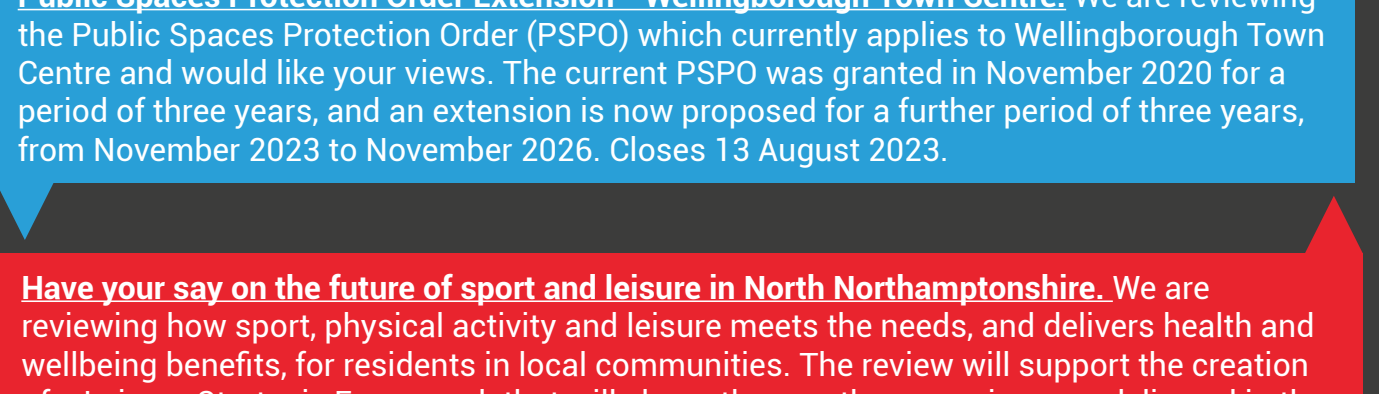
- Summer activities** - A range of activities for local children throughout the school holidays.
- Hi Street on Tour** - A town-wide 'right up your local' film. Includes our 'Let's take a trip into a campaign... It's support up your street' film.

If you missed these posts, the full information is still available on our website. View [Summer activities](#). Visit [Hi Street on Tour](#).

Coming soon:

- Health and Wellbeing Festival** - A week-long event taking place from 18 to 24 September. This year's theme will be Youth. The event coincides with Youth Mental Health Day.

Please follow us on your favourite social media platforms and share our posts with your networks.



Survey on proposed on-street electric vehicle charging points in North Northamptonshire

A new survey provides an opportunity for residents to comment on the proposal for the introduction of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and associated Electric Vehicle Charging Only Bays for residential on-street parking in North Northamptonshire.

Proposed locations:

- Corby** - Hove Street (NN18 0JB)
- Earls Barton** - Churchill Road (NN6 0ND)
- Kettering** - Bath Road (NN16 8NL), Roundhill Road (NN15 6BU), Weekly Glebe Road (NN16 9NP)
- Oundle** - New Street (PE8 4EE), South Road (PE8 4BP)
- Raunds** - High Street (NN9 6HS)
- Wellingborough** - Shelley Road (NN8 3DA).

Public charging point availability has grown significantly in North Northamptonshire. There are currently **12 on-street charging sites** with two charging points at each site.

It is vital that we consider investment and install additional infrastructure to increase the uptake of ultra-low emission ('plug-in') vehicles (ULEVs), particularly for those residents without off-road parking.

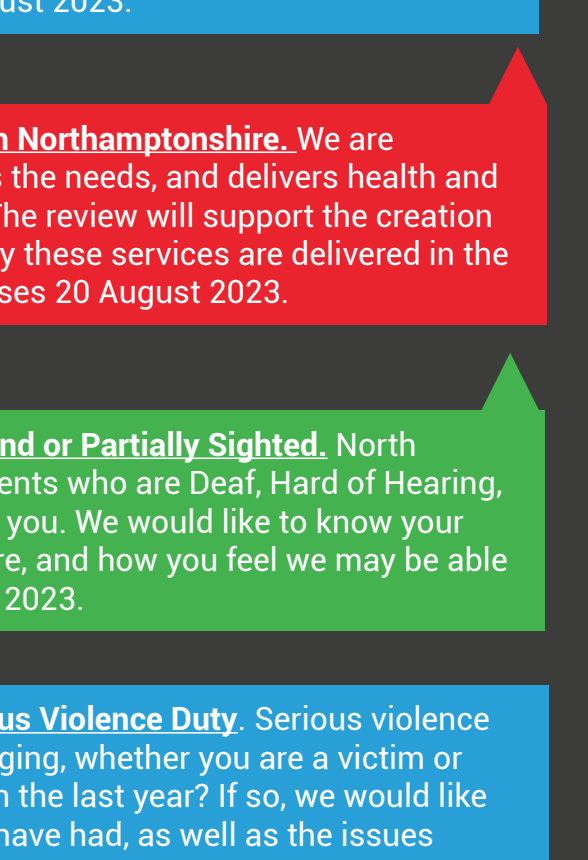
Benefits:

- To meet growing demand from residents.
- To support the adoption of low emission electric vehicles.
- To help adopt more sustainable travel.
- To improve air quality.

North Northamptonshire is committed to working in partnership with project partners like [Believ](#) (formerly Liberty Charge) to help roll out on-street electric vehicle charging points that use green electricity across the country and provide affordable charging facilities for residents.

The closing date for this survey is Friday 25 August.

All feedback will be reviewed by the council. Before installation can go ahead, residents will have a further opportunity to comment on the designation and operation of the bays through the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process.



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.

Public Spaces Protection Order Extension - Isebrook and Victoria Ward Alley Gates. We are reviewing the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which currently applies to four alley gates in the Wellingborough Ward of Isebrook and Victoria and would like your views. The current PSPO was granted in November 2020 for a period of three years, and an extension is now proposed for a further period of three years, from November 2023 to November 2026. Closes 13 August 2023.

Public Spaces Protection Order Extension - Wellingborough Town Centre. We are reviewing the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which currently applies to Wellingborough Town Centre and would like your views. The current PSPO was granted in November 2020 for a period of three years, and an extension is now proposed for a further period of three years, from November 2023 to November 2026. Closes 13 August 2023.

Have your say on the future of sport and leisure in North Northamptonshire. We are reviewing how sport, physical activity and leisure meets the needs, and delivers health and wellbeing benefits, for residents in local communities. The review will support the creation of a Leisure Strategic Framework that will shape the way these services are delivered in the future to support the wellbeing of our communities. Closes 20 August 2023.

Have your say on Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Partially Sighted. North Northamptonshire Council would like to hear from residents who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind or Partially Sighted about the services provided to you. We would like to know your experiences of using services in North Northamptonshire, and how you feel we may be able to improve the support we provide. Closes 1 September 2023.

Tackling violence and improving lives through the Serious Violence Duty. Serious violence affects many communities. The impact can be life changing, whether you are a victim or a witness. Have you been affected by serious violence in the last year? If so, we would like to know about the experience you and your family may have had, as well as the issues affecting your community. Closes 27 October 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 CEI@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Family Support Link wins two Rose of Northamptonshire Awards

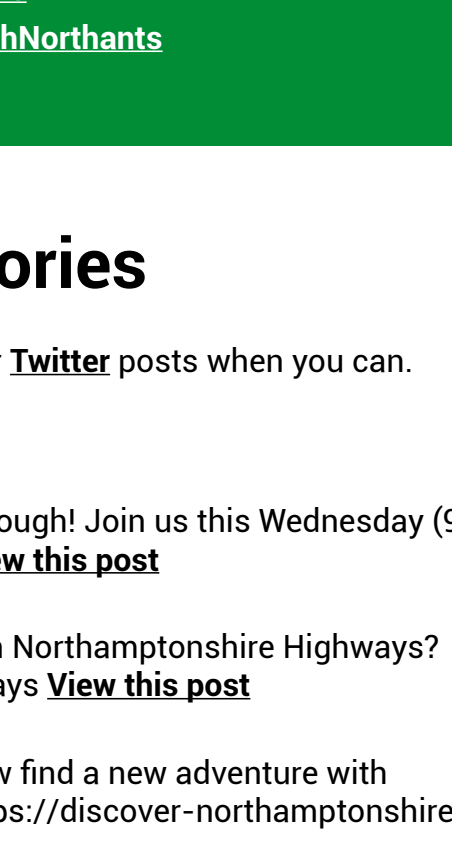
Wellingborough based charity, [Family Support Link](#), has won two Rose of Northamptonshire Awards.

The awards are organised by the [Northamptonshire Community Foundation](#) on behalf of North and West Northamptonshire Councils.

The award is available for anyone in the county to nominate someone or a group who have gone the extra mile in helping the Northamptonshire community over the last 12 months.

Family Support Link is a free and confidential service that provides free, accessible and non-judgemental support, to those affected by another's substance misuse throughout Northamptonshire.

More worthy winners of Rose of Northamptonshire Awards are expected to be announced in the coming weeks.



Armed Forces Community Hubs - August dates

Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire provides information and advice on support services available within the county for the Armed Forces community and their families.

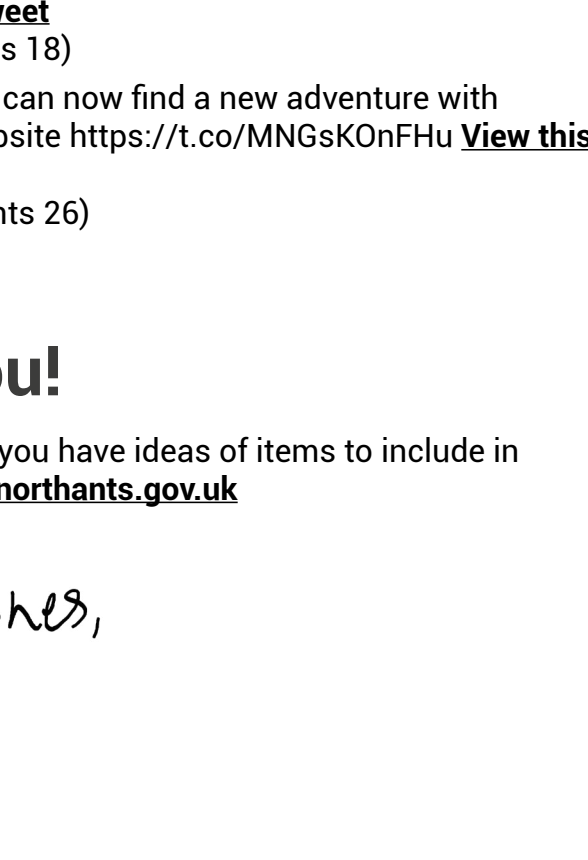
The Community Hubs offer the chance to have a cup of tea and a chat with friends - and an opportunity to seek help and advice in a relaxed setting.

Friday 18 August

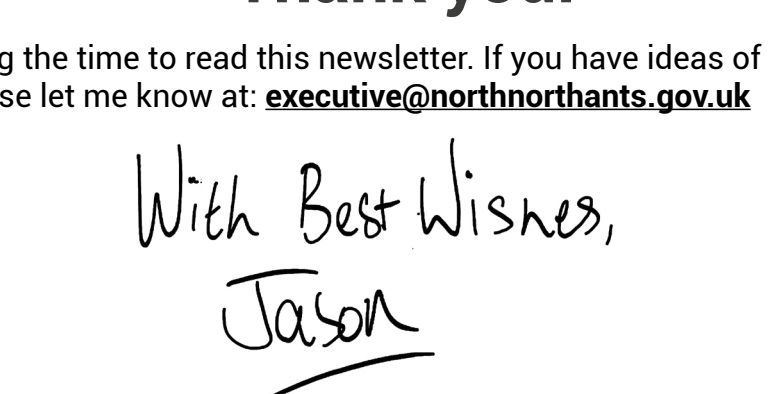
- 9:30am to 11am at Corby Library (Corby Cube, Corby, NN17 1QG)
- Tuesday 22 August**
- 12 noon to 1:30pm at Towcester Library (The Forum, Towcester, NN12 6AD)

Further information

For more information, please visit the [Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire website](#), email Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk or call 07741 684647.



Press releases



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):

- [Proposal for being in care to become a protected characteristic at North Northamptonshire Council](#)
- [Homes for refugees on Executive agenda](#)
- [North Northamptonshire Council takes over the running of Thackley Green specialist care centre](#)
- [6km of North Northamptonshire roads set to benefit from 2023 micro-asphalt programme](#)
- [Baby Change Bags delivered to Kettering General Hospital](#)
- [New toilet facility opened at East Carlton Countryside Park to support people with disabilities and their carers](#)
- [Engagement with local residents on Electric Vehicle Charging Points launched](#)

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 and share our Facebook and/or Twitter posts when you can.

Top Facebook posts so far this week (7 to 9 August)

- This week's family fun day takes place in Wellingborough! Join us this Wednesday (9 August) from midday to 4pm at Castlefields Park. [View this post](#) (Reach 5,706, Link Clicks 0, Engagements 336)
- Did you know we have a page dedicated to our North Northamptonshire Highways? Give them a follow - North Northamptonshire Highways [View this post](#) (Reach 3,451, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 317)
- Struggling to keep the kids entertained? You can now find a new adventure with Discover Northamptonshire on their new website <https://discover-northamptonshire.co.uk/> [View this post](#) (Reach 1,953, Link Clicks 15, Engagement 27)

Top Tweets so far this week (7 to 9 August)

- This week's family fun day takes place in Wellingborough! Join us this Wednesday (9 August) from midday to 4pm at Castlefields Park. [View this tweet](#) (Impressions 722, URL Clicks 1, Engagements 17)
- Did you know there is a forum group for our LGBT+ residents and allies? Find out more online <https://t.co/zp4hdDx082> [View this tweet](#) (Impressions 701, URL Clicks 6, Engagements 18)
- Struggling to keep the kids entertained? You can now find a new adventure with Discover Northamptonshire on their new website <https://t.co/MNGsK0nFHu> [View this tweet](#) (Impressions 630, URL Clicks 18, Engagements 26)

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

[@SmithersJason](#)

Contacting North Northamptonshire Council

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www.northnorthants.gov.uk