



Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers
Leader of the Council



25 August 2023

Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

It has been another busy couple of weeks with the Executive meeting taking place last Thursday (17 August) and a Full Council meeting in the diary for next Thursday (31 August). These meetings are live streamed on our YouTube channel so you can either watch them live or on catch-up. The agendas and meeting notes are displayed on the council meetings section of our website in the week before the meeting.

The latest Household Support Fund (HSF4) provides financial support to individuals and households who have not been eligible for Cost of Living benefits. Find out if you are eligible for financial aid on our website and apply online. HSF4 is also helping families with children on free school meals by providing voucher support for all holiday periods until Easter 2024.

Yesterday saw Ukrainian families and their hosts celebrate Ukraine's 32nd Independence Day across North Northamptonshire. The Council continues to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. The Homes for Ukraine scheme has continued the arrival of more than 600 Ukrainian guests to the local area, and we will continue to help them resettle and integrate into our communities.

North Northamptonshire Council, in partnership with Kier, has started its annual surface dressing programme to improve the condition of four roads in North Northamptonshire. The works that span 83.9q kilometres - the equivalent of 12 football pitches - will prolong the life expectancy of the roads for up to 10 years and reduce the need for further repairs.

Executive Members approved the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy at last week's Executive meeting at the Corby Cube. The strategy sets out the key priorities towards better meeting the needs of children and their families up to 2026. Our aim is to make North Northamptonshire the best place for all children and young people from all backgrounds and communities to thrive as they grow into adulthood.

The last two weeks have seen thousands of Year 11 and Year 13 pupils up and down the county receiving their exam results. Results day is a nerve-wracking time for many young people, bringing new opportunities and new challenges. Schools will be able to offer advice, guidance and support. The Department for Education website, The Education Hub, explores many of these options and is worth a browse.

With a growing number of electric vehicles (EVs), it is vital that we work with residents and stakeholders to ensure that future aspirations to shift to EVs are not frustrated by inadequate infrastructure. I would encourage everyone to have their say on our draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy before we approve the final strategy later this year.

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.

People in new road safety campaigns are being asked to look out for each other while using the roads in a new road safety campaign that has been prompted by some accidents in the area. Northamptonshire Police, North and West Northamptonshire Councils and e-scooter company Voi have launched a campaign together to raise awareness of the rules of the road for e-scooters and e-bikes.

North Northamptonshire Council will hold a public meeting in the Council Chamber at its Bowling Green Road office, Kettering on Tuesday 12 September. The meeting is open to residents who have been previously impacted by the flooding of the East Brook Culvert in Kettering.

Our third Health and Wellbeing Festival will take place from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 September at various locations across North Northamptonshire. The council is collaborating with many local experts and partners to showcase North Northamptonshire's health and wellbeing offer. Further information about the event and the festival timetable will be available soon.

The Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire provides information and advice on local support services for the Armed Forces community and their families. Community Hubs offer the chance to socialise and seek help and advice in a relaxed setting. The dates and locations of the September sessions are detailed below.

The consultation on the future provision of sport and leisure in the North Northamptonshire Council area has been extended until Friday, September 15. The Council is reviewing how sport, physical activity and leisure meets the needs, and delivers health and wellbeing benefits, for residents in local communities.

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

Forthcoming meetings

- **Full Council:** Thursday 31 August from 6pm.
- **Executive:** Thursday 14 September from 10am.

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.



Household Support Fund offers struggling residents a financial boost

The council is firmly committed to supporting households that are struggling to manage food and utility costs.

The latest Household Support Fund (HSF4) provides financial support to individuals and households who have not been eligible for Cost of Living benefits. The one-off HSF4 payment of up to £320 (depending on household size) is paid directly into bank accounts.

- **Find out if you are eligible for financial aid.**
- **Apply online for household support funding.**

If you do not have access to a computer, there are computers available for free public use at all North Northamptonshire libraries.

Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund is financed by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Funding is ongoing until March 2024 or until funds run out.

For any queries, please email HSF4North@northnorthants.gov.uk.

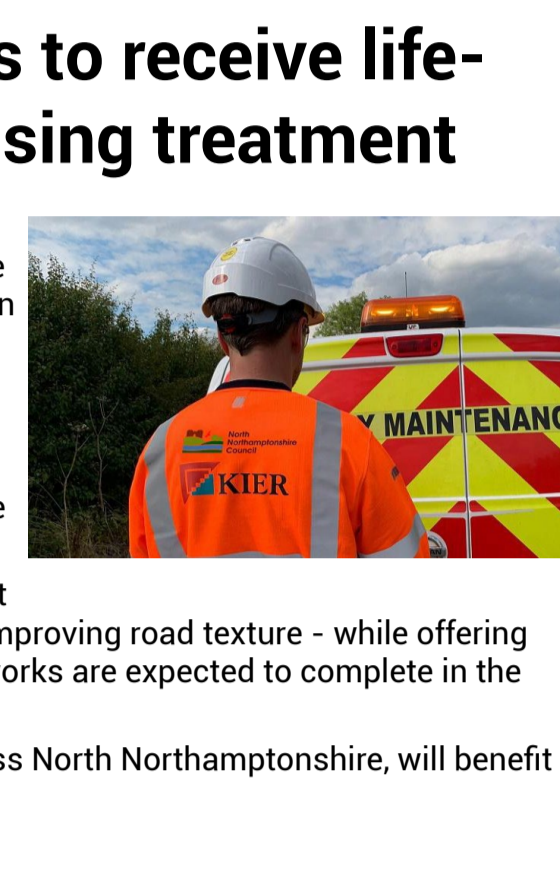
HAF Summer 2023 programme

HSF4 is also helping families with children on free school meals. They are provided with £15 per week per child supermarket vouchers for all holiday periods until Easter 2024. The same voucher support has been given to families who choose to home educate but meet free school meal eligibility criteria.

All those meeting the free school meals threshold have also been given the opportunity to participate in sessions through the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) run for North Northamptonshire Council by Northamptonshire Sport.

HAF vouchers are sent out through schools (one per child). If you have one, it entitles you child to up to 20 free sessions during the summer holidays.

The HAF Summer 2023 programme in North Northamptonshire is running until Friday 1 September. The sessions include multi-sports, arts and crafts, music production, dance and drama, cooking and computer coding.



Ukrainian Independence Day celebrated in North Northamptonshire

Ukrainian families and their hosts in North Northamptonshire celebrated Ukraine's 32nd Independence Day yesterday.

The Ukrainian flag was flown at various locations this week. Many of our guests chose to celebrate at our Active Families Fun Days.

North Northamptonshire Council continues to stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and will continue to support the UK government in its efforts to help resettle refugees from Ukraine via the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Through the scheme, the council, residents, businesses and communities have supported the arrival of more than 600 Ukrainian guests to the local area.

We will continue to do all we can to support the Ukrainian people as they fight to protect their freedom and safeguard their independence.

Further information

Please visit our designated [Ukraine](#) web pages.



Nearly 85,000 square metres of North Northamptonshire roads to receive life-extending surface dressing treatment

This week, North Northamptonshire Council and Kier, its highways maintenance provider, began its annual surface dressing programme which is set to improve the condition of four roads totalling 83.9q kilometres across North Northamptonshire.

The scheme, which will improve the road texture of the equivalent of 12 football pitches, will prolong the life expectancy of the roads for up to 10 years and reduce the need for further repairs.

The preventative treatment is used on roads showing first signs of deterioration and is a cost-effective method of improving road texture - while offering greater carbon efficiency than resurfacing methods. All works are expected to complete in the next four weeks.

The following roads, which include two major roads across North Northamptonshire, will benefit from the improvements:

- **Polebrook:** Oundle Road, Lutton to Lutton Road.
- **Corby:** A427 Oakley Road.
- **Grendon:** Main Road.
- **Thorpe Waterville:** A605 Peterborough Road.

Surface dressing is quick to apply, meaning disruption is kept to a minimum with temporary road closures. Once applied, road users can travel on the new surface immediately.

The carriageway is safe to drive on following application of the chippings, however, for the safety of road users, a revised mandatory speed limit will be in place whilst the chippings bed in.

Loose chippings are swept away within five days of surface dressing, and the road markings will be reinstated. A heavy roller is used after initial treatment and the surface is usually fully embedded after a week, due to the action of traffic moving across it.

Residents and businesses located in the surrounding area of the surface dressing work will be notified with details of the closure and access/egress information. Advanced warning signs will also be displayed.

It's important that vehicles are moved off the road in advance of the scheme to minimise delays and disruption. Weather can impact the programme and dates may change, with people advised to check the on-site signs for the latest information and also go online where updates will be published.

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



Executive Members approve North Northamptonshire's SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2023-26 and Co-Production Charter

Members of North Northamptonshire Council's Executive approved the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy at last week's executive meeting (Thursday 17 August) at the Corby Cube.

The strategy sets out the key priorities towards better meeting the needs of children and their families up to 2026.

The two documents were actively co-produced between the council and parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs, including the Northamptonshire Parent Forum Group, health and social care colleagues, teaching and non-teaching staff, academics and nurseries.

The strategy focuses on six priority areas which will ensure better outcomes for SEND families over the next three years, including:

- **Co-Production:** Embedding co-production as a way of working together with families (parents / carers and young people) in everything that we all do across North Northamptonshire.
- **Early Identification and Intervention:** Identifying and meeting needs at the earliest opportunity - developing inclusive practice and providing the right support at the right time as locally as possible, meeting statutory time periods.
- **Sufficiency:** Building the capacity in the SEND system (including specialist provision / places and specialist support to mainstream settings / schools) to meet identified need locally.
- **Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood:** Improving Transitions for children and young people, 0 - 25.
- **Skilled Workforce:** Developing a skilled workforce that is confident in identifying and meeting SEND and additional needs.
- **Partnership Working:** A shared understanding of the outcomes sought for, and by children and young people with SEND, and clarity of the progress made towards those outcomes across the Local Partnership.

Our aim is to make North Northamptonshire the best place for all children and young people from all backgrounds and communities to thrive as they grow into adulthood.

A detailed action plan is also being developed with partners to underpin the new strategy, which the SEND Accountability Board will be responsible for ensuring delivery and holding partners to account.



Options still open for students

The last two weeks have seen thousands of Year 11 and Year 13 pupils up and down the county receiving their exam results - an important but largely nerve-wracking time for many.

Results day marks the start of the next phase of many young people's lives as they move on to new challenges, whether that is continuing to study at Sixth Form, college or university, or moving on to an apprenticeship or other work-based learning opportunity.

Some students may not have received the grades they have hoped for or may still be unsure what they would like to do from September.

There are many options still open and schools will be able to offer advice, guidance and support. The Department for Education website, [The Education Hub](#), explores many of these options and is a great source of information for pupils, parents and carers.

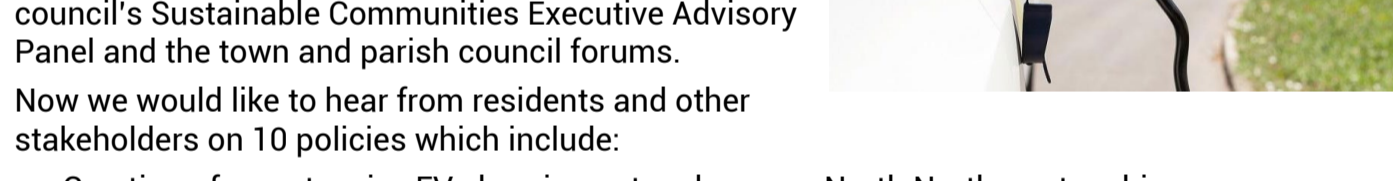
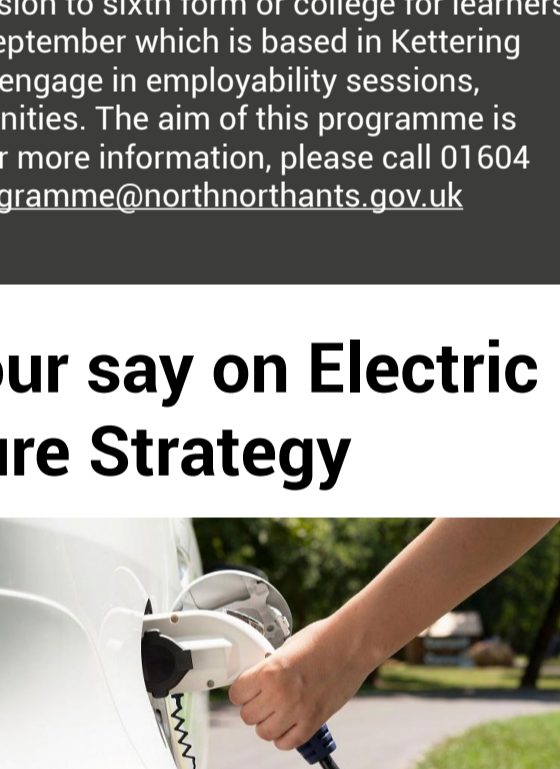


Are you following us on social media?

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.

With just a few clicks you can have all the latest news at your fingertips: events, campaigns, information and advice, consultation and engagement activities and job vacancies.

If you like what you see, please share our posts with your networks.



More time to have your say on the future of sport and leisure in North Northamptonshire

The consultation on the future provision of sport and leisure in the North Northamptonshire Council area has been extended until Friday, September 15.

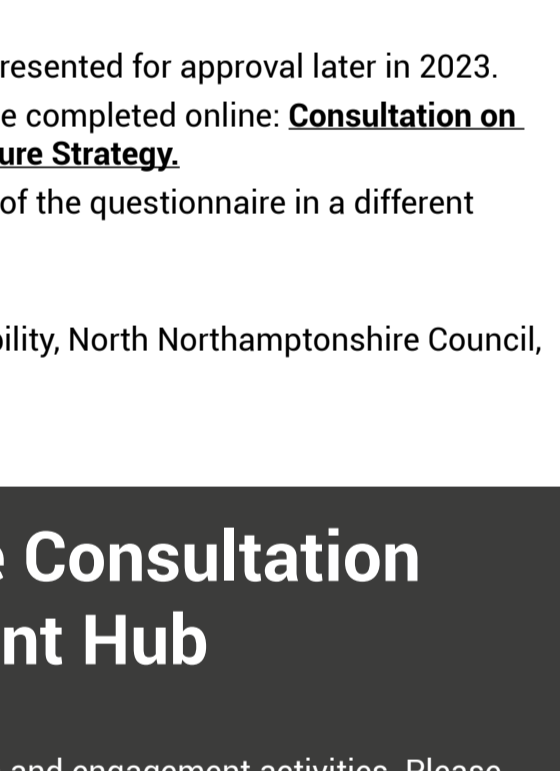
The Council is reviewing how sport, physical activity and leisure meets the needs, and delivers health and wellbeing benefits, for residents in local communities.

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.

The plan has three main elements:

- **Active Communities** - to ensure residents have increased opportunities to be more active and build healthier active communities
- **Leisure Facilities** - an assessment of current use and future needs, focussing on quantity and quality in relation to supply and demand
- **Playing Pitches** - an assessment of current use and future needs, focussing on quantity and quality in relation to supply and demand

The Council is directly liaising with sports clubs, schools, national governing bodies and other stakeholders but every resident can [have their say on our consultation pages](#).



Wishing the best of Year 11 students across North Northamptonshire

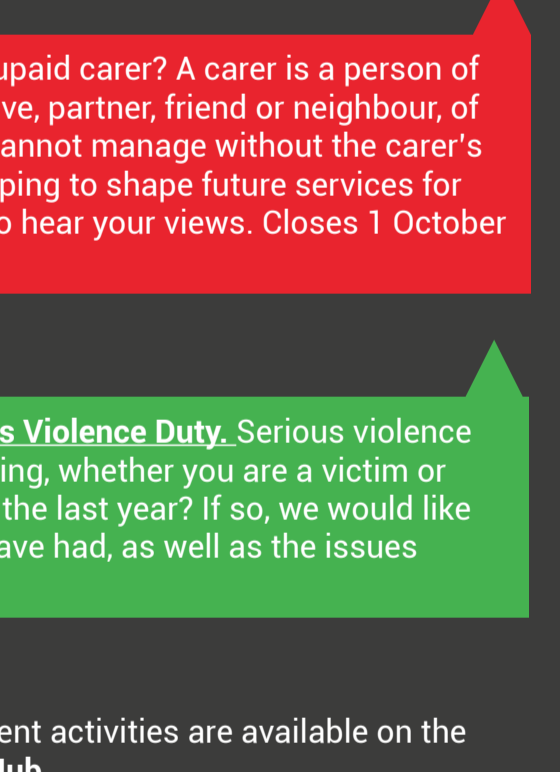
North Northamptonshire Council is wishing all Year 11 pupils across the area who will be receiving their examination results tomorrow, 24 August 2023, the best of luck.

It marks the start of the next stage of many young people's lives as they move on to new challenges whether that is continuing to study at sixth form or college, moving on to an apprenticeship or other work-based learning opportunity.

Some pupils may not have received the grades they have hoped for or may still be unsure what opportunity they would like to take up in September, there are many options available, and schools will be able to offer advice, guidance and support. In addition there are plenty of resources available online including information on [what happens after Year 11](#) and [Sixth Form](#) places.

There is information on [apprenticeships](#) which are available for those wanting to go down this route.

The [Study Programme](#) is available as an alternative provision to sixth form or college for learners 16-18 years old. It is a 34-week programme starting in September which is based in Kettering and Wellingborough. As a part of the course learners will engage in employability sessions, maths, English, work experience, and enrichment opportunities. The aim of this programme is to prepare young people for further learning and work. For more information, please call 01604 367119 or email the Study Programme team on studyprogramme@northnorthants.gov.uk



Drive for change: Have your say on Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

We are asking residents and stakeholders to have their say on our draft Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure Strategy.

Central government expects all local authorities to develop electric vehicle infrastructure strategies. Our draft strategy has been developed with input from the council's Sustainable Communities Executive Advisory Panel and the town and parish council forums.

Now we would like to hear from residents and other stakeholders on 10 policies which include:

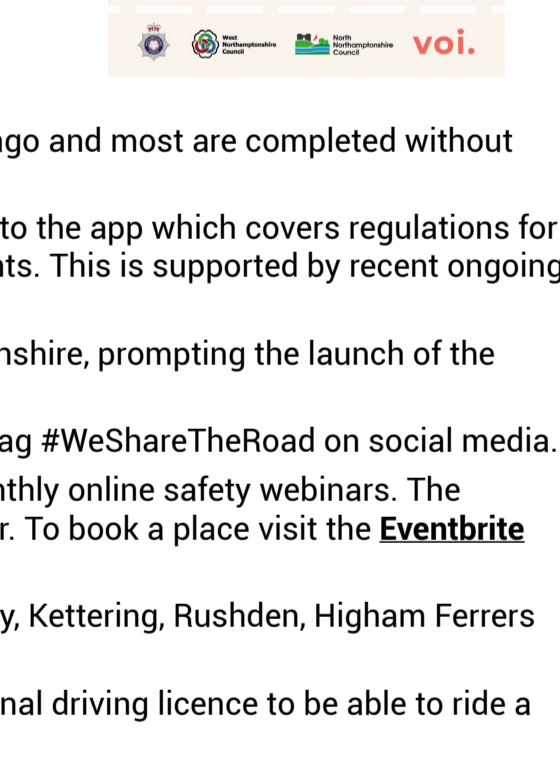
- Creation of an extensive EV charging network across North Northamptonshire.
- Installing off-street Charging Hubs, with multiple connectors, in public NNC car parks.
- EV charging in on-street locations to help meet future demand and make the transition easier.
- Creation of one or more charging Superhubs.
- Smart charging technologies to optimise the capacity of the energy network to support EV charging infrastructure.
- New development and EV charging infrastructure.
- Shared electric transport to provide an alternative and flexible alternative to ownership.
- Investment in EV infrastructure to support the development of a self-sustaining charging network.
- Support for EV uptake through trials, campaigns, public engagement, collaboration, and other initiatives.

All feedback will be reviewed before the final strategy is presented for approval later in 2023.

The consultation will run until 11 October 2023 and can be completed online: [Consultation on North Northamptonshire draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy](#).

Anyone with any queries, comments or would like a copy of the questionnaire in a different format can contact us in the following ways:

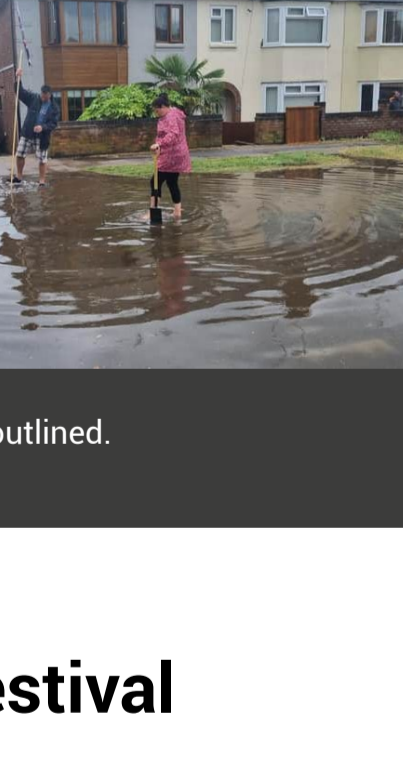
- By email: ev@northnorthants.gov.uk.
- By post: NNEVI Project, Economic Growth & Sustainability, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Kettering NN16 8TL.



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.

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.



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 15 September 2023.

Have your say on support for Unpaid Carers. Are you an unpaid carer? A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid help and support to a relative, partner, friend or neighbour, of any age, who has an illness or long-term condition and cannot manage without the carer's help. As an unpaid carer, your experiences are vital in helping to shape future services for unpaid carers in North Northamptonshire, and we want to hear your views. Closes 1 October 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 CET@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Councils and police urge road users to help keep each other safe while on the roads

People in Northamptonshire are being asked to look out for each other while using the roads in a new road safety campaign.

Northamptonshire Police, North and West Northamptonshire Councils and e-scooter company Voi have launched a campaign together to raise awareness of the rules of the road for e-scooters and e-bikes.

The key aim of the campaign is to ensure everyone using the roads know what to do in order to remain alert at junctions and roundabouts.

There have been nearly 5.5 million journeys on Voi e-scooters since the e-scooter trials started three years ago and most are completed without any problems.

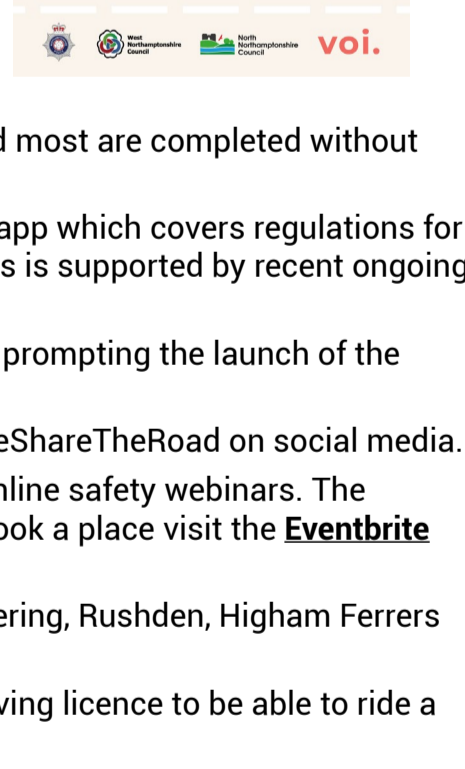
Voi users must complete online training when signing up to the app which covers regulations for using e-scooters and e-bikes including safety requirements. This is prompted by recent ongoing in-person safety training in the county.

However, there have been some accidents in Northamptonshire, prompting the launch of the campaign.

Find out more about the campaign by following the hashtag #WeShareTheRoad on social media. Voi runs a series of safety events, both in person and monthly online safety webinars. The next in-person event in Northamptonshire is in September. To book a place visit the [Eventbrite](#) website.

Voi shared e-scooters are available in Northampton, Corby, Kettering, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Wellingborough.

Riders must be aged 18 or over and have a full or provisional driving licence to be able to ride a Voi e-scooter.



Save the date - Health and Wellbeing Festival

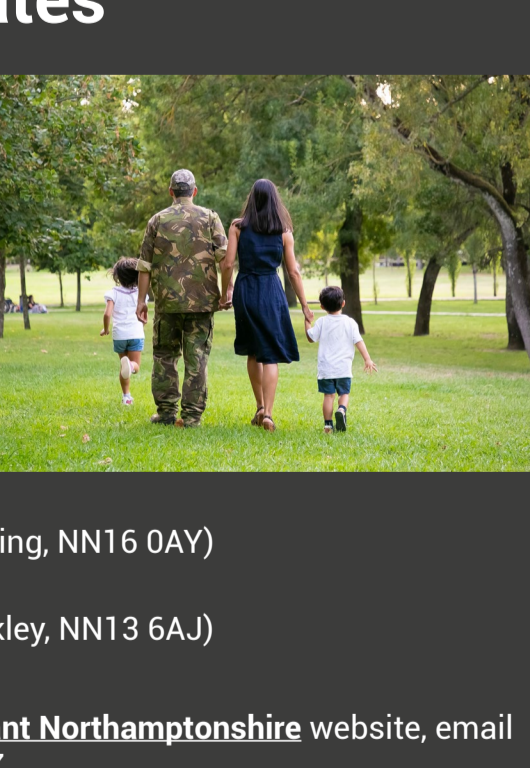
Our third Health and Wellbeing Festival will take place from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 September at various locations across North Northamptonshire.

The council is collaborating with many local experts and partners to showcase North Northamptonshire's health and wellbeing offer.

Our aim is to give people the chance to experience a range of activities and access to local organisations and support services which we hope they will benefit from and continue to use beyond the event.

This year's theme will be 'Youth'. The event will coincide with Youth Mental Health Day.

Further information about the event and the full festival timetable will be available soon.



Armed Forces Community Hubs - September 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.

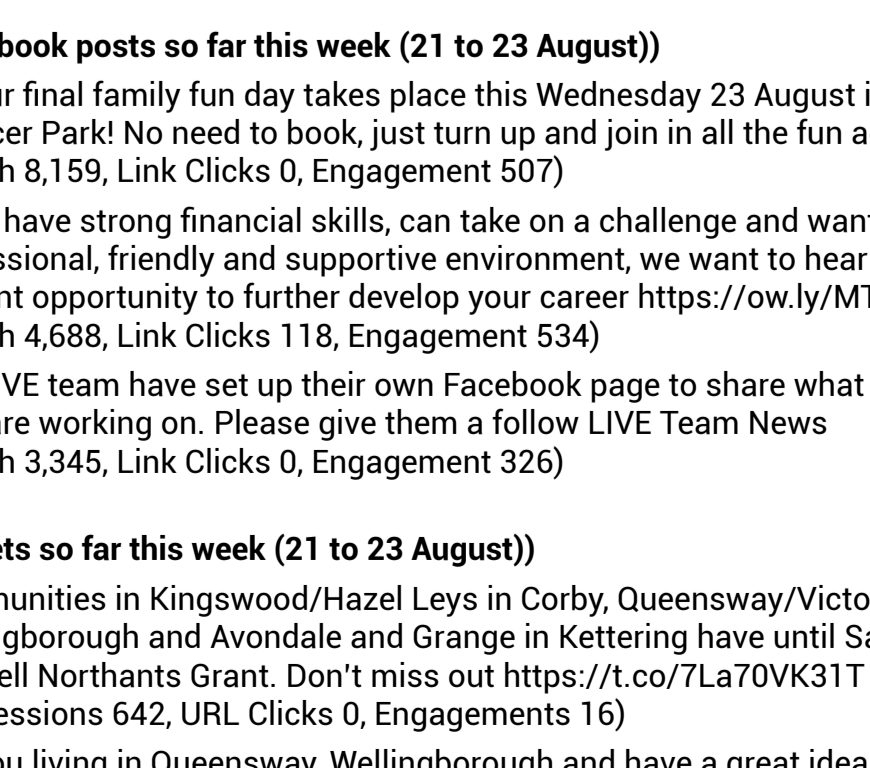
- **Wednesday 6 September**
12 noon to 1:30pm at The Bridge (63c Gold Street, Northampton, NN1 1RA)
- **Thursday 21 September**
2pm to 3:30pm at Kettering Library (Sheep Street, Kettering, NN16 0AY)
- **Friday 29 September**
10am to 12 noon at Brackley Library (Manor Road, Brackley, NN13 6AJ)

Further information

For more information, please visit the [Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire](#) website, email Community.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).

- **More time to have your say on the future of sport and leisure in North Northamptonshire**
- **Wishing luck to year 11 students across North Northamptonshire**
- **Drive for change in North Northants - have your say on Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy**
- **Struggling North Northants residents given chance to apply for Household Support Fund**
- **East Brook Culvert meeting**
- **We're wishing students the very best of luck!**
- **SEND families shape future approach for improving outcomes for young people across North Northamptonshire**
- **Councils and police urge road users to help keep each other safe while on the roads**
- **More than £2.5m spend on improvements to school buildings and facilities across North Northamptonshire to be discussed next week**
- **Nearly 85,000 square metres of North Northamptonshire roads to receive life-extending surface dressing treatment**

If you would like to 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 (21 to 23 August)**
 1. Our final family fun day takes place this Wednesday 23 August in Rushden at Spencer Park! No need to book, just turn up and join in all the fun activities on offer. (Reach 8,159, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 507)
 2. If you have strong financial skills, can take on a challenge and want to work in a professional, friendly and supportive environment, we want to hear from you. This is a brilliant opportunity to further develop your career <https://ow.ly/MT3150PblyE> (Reach 4,688, Link Clicks 118, Engagement 534)
 3. Our LIVE team have set up their own Facebook page to share what amazing projects they are working on. Please give them a follow LIVE Team News (Reach 3,345, Link Clicks 0, Engagement 326)

- **Top Tweets so far this week (21 to 23 August)**
 1. Communities in Kingswood/Hazel Leys in Corby, Queensway/Victoria in Wellingborough and Avondale and Grange in Kettering have until Saturday to apply for the Well Northants Grant. Don't miss out <https://t.co/7La70VK31T> (Impressions 642, URL Clicks 0, Engagements 16)
 2. Are you living in Queensway, Wellingborough and have a great idea that would benefit your community? We could fund it! Find out more at <https://t.co/LSR4DcQooS> or email wellingnorth@northnorthants.gov.uk We look forward to hearing from you. (Impressions 637, URL Clicks 5, Engagements 26)
 3. Struggling North Northants residents given chance to apply for Household Support Fund: <https://t.co/2PZ5A0ZWT1> (Impressions 562, URL Clicks 12, Engagements 18)

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

Follow me on Twitter [@Smithers.Jason](#)

Contacting North Northamptonshire Council

0300 126 3000

www.northnorthants.gov.uk