

Issue 81 - 23 August 2024



Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest update.

This issue includes:

- North Northamptonshire Council working on cultural masterplan for the area.
- South Midlands Authorities Joint Committee and opportunities for devolution.
- New Rushden rehabilitation service will boost care provision in North Northamptonshire.
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- Oundle Library remains closed but will re-open.
- New Corby Towns Deal board members required.
- Thirteen businesses awarded grants in second round of Build Your Business Programme.
- New classrooms open in time for September term in £1.6m project at Wellingborough special school.
- New £2.3m North Northamptonshire SEND unit proposal to be discussed.
- £3.3m secondary schools' expansion to provide extra Year 7 places across North Northamptonshire to be discussed.
- Drug warning and guidance issued by authorities across Northamptonshire.
- Open letter on highways maintenance to Gen Kitchen, MP.
- Kettering and Rushden residents invited to Active Families Fun Days.

In addition, you will find below some useful information about forthcoming meetings, Your Voice Matters (our consultation and engagement hub) and all the latest press releases. Whatever your plans are, I hope you have a great weekend!

Latest news

North Northamptonshire Council working on cultural masterplan for the area

North Northamptonshire Council has started work on a project that, once completed, will look to enhance and develop the cultural infrastructure in the local area.

The masterplan, using funding from central government, will focus on theatres, art galleries, museums, public art and community cultural programmes. It will provide strategic direction for cultural growth, growing community engagement and promote economic development in the tourism industry.

The cultural masterplan will complement and enhance the already developed Northamptonshire Tourism strategy and the North Northamptonshire Council Culture, Tourism and the Heritage Service business plan by providing a focused and strategic framework for cultural development.

The project to develop the cultural masterplan will start in September 2024. Once a plan has been developed alongside key stakeholders in the sector, it will be sent to the council's Executive for formal approval. If approved, the council would then seek external funding to help deliver the masterplan.



South Midlands Authorities Joint Committee and Opportunities for Devolution

Boosting prosperity and infrastructure in North Northamptonshire by working with neighbouring councils will be the subject of a [report before our Council meeting](#) next week.

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of initial discussions set to take place on opportunities for devolution and to seek approval from Council on the establishment of a Joint Committee governance model for the wider South Midlands Authorities.

This would replace the current Central Area Growth Board governance model and in particular its decision-making powers.

The report also includes background on the Government's proposals for devolution and seeks approval to submit an initial expression of interest.

North Northamptonshire Council is part of the Central Area Growth Board (CAGB) along with five other authorities: Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and West Northamptonshire.

These joint working arrangements will be known as the South Midlands Authorities group.

The CAGB involves the Leaders of all participating councils but does not have executive decision-making powers.

Discussions have started on different options for the operation of CAGB and, at the Board meeting on 9 July 2024, the Leaders collectively expressed a preference for a joint committee model to be developed which would have decision-making powers.

Further discussions are planned to take place on the creation of a joint committee at the next CAGB meeting on 17 September 2024.

The report also provides a brief update on the creation of a new business board for the area. This was a requirement from Government linked to the integration of the Local Enterprise Partnership services into local authorities.

Following the recent General Election, the new Government has signalled its intentions to devolve more powers and funding to the local level. It has asked councils to begin discussions with neighbouring local authorities and asked for initial expressions of interest to be submitted by the end of September 2024.

A report will be brought to a future meeting of the Council following the outcome of the discussions with other local authorities, and officials, and when further details are available from Government on devolution.



New Rushden rehabilitation service will boost care provision in North Northamptonshire

North Northamptonshire Council has welcomed a new specialist rehabilitation centre that has been set up by Kettering General Hospital for their patients – boosting care provision in the area.

Spinneyfields Specialist Care Centre in Rushden will be used by University Hospitals of Northamptonshire (UHN) – which runs KGH and Northampton General Hospital - so patients transferred there will be given care and support before being discharged from hospital care.

The unit will run alongside the Council-run Thackley Green in Corby which also provides re-ablement services for those leaving a hospital setting and who are not quite ready to return home.

Providing the best reablement for residents after they are discharged from hospital is a priority for the Council and we are pleased that our in house reablement service was recently rated as good by CQC.

This wonderful new facility is a terrific boost for North Northants and will help bolster the already excellent care which is provided for those leaving hospital, who aren't quite well enough to return home.

The Council took on the operation of Thackley Green in July last year.



Make sure your Electoral Registration details are up to date

It's that time of year again where we make sure electoral register details are up to date and all households will receive a letter or form.

There are two types of mailings being sent out to households in North Northamptonshire:

- **Letters marked CCA:** If you receive a letter marked CCA, you only need to respond if any elector details are incorrect. We will not send any reminders for letters marked CCA, this is the only letter that your household will receive.
- **Forms marked CF:** If you receive a form marked CF, you must respond even if all elector details are correct for your household.

Registered electors may receive response reminders via email, telephone, text message, personal visit or paper form up until late October.

All contact will be easily identifiable as North Northamptonshire Council and we will only ask for limited information relating to voter registration such as name, nationality, date of birth and national insurance number.

We will only visit a property where a canvass form marked CF has been received and not responded to by Friday 6 September.

If you have received a form marked CF the quickest way to respond is to visit the [Household Update Service](#) website and enter the security codes on your form to login and record if any changes.

The requested information is required by law and not responding or providing false information can result in a £1000 fine.

To avoid being disturbed at your doorstep, please respond to your canvass form (if you have received a form marked CF) by Friday 6 September. Door knocking will commence from Monday 9 September until Monday 7 October.

If you're not currently registered to vote, your name will not appear in messages we send. You can [register to vote](#) on the GOV.UK website or call 01832 742 076.

Not being registered to vote can affect your applications for loans, mortgages and even mobile phone contracts. It also means you will not be able to vote at election time.



Oundle Library remains closed but will re-open

We would like to assure customers of Oundle Library that although it remains closed since last month's fire the library will re-open as soon as works are completed.

Although confined to a small area of the library, the fire was quickly contained and extinguished by the fire service. The damage caused has meant that the remedial work needed is more extensive than first anticipated.

Staff have been busy behind the scenes safely moving books to one area of the library to enable the works to be carried out and to avoid any further loss to the library contents.

This has unfortunately meant that the 'pick and pack' service the library staff had hoped to provide while repairs are being carried out, cannot happen, as it would be impossible for them to safely pick and pack any requested titles.

Residents will be aware there are contractors on site, and we are pleased to say that progress has been made with the electrics and the fire system, including rewiring and replacing the main library lights.

However, the area containing the source of the fire is currently covered and work has not been able to start there yet. Staff will not be able to be present in the library, for safety reasons, while that work is done.

Once remedial work is complete the whole library will need to be deep cleaned before re-opening is possible.

We are unable to confirm a time frame for re-opening and appreciate that the closure is frustrating. However, the safety of both staff and library users remains our primary focus and we will only re-open Oundle Library when it is safe to do so.



New Corby Towns Deal Board members required

As part of the Corby Towns Fund, the council is seeking new members for the Corby Towns Deal Board.

The Board meets every six weeks via Microsoft Teams.

We are looking for voluntary representatives to join the Board and bring their skills and local knowledge to assist with the development and completion of the Towns Fund projects.

We are looking for individuals who can reflect and represent different sectors across Corby such as communities, business, charity, culture, educational and heritage interests of the area and can make a meaningful contribution.

Please visit the [Corby Towns Fund](#) website for further details.



Thirteen businesses awarded grants in second round of Build Your Business Programme

West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) in collaboration with the Business & IP Centre Northamptonshire (BIPC), are proud to announce the thirteen winners of the second round of start-up grants through the Build Your Business programme.

This initiative, supported by £600,000 from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) over two years, aims to empower small businesses, local entrepreneurs, and aspiring business owners across the county.

The Build Your Business programme consists of five comprehensive modules covering key areas of running a business. These modules, delivered by specialist partners, include marketing, business growth, financial planning and personal development for business owners. Additionally, the programme offers 1-2-1s, workshops, mentoring, and access to specialist business databases.

Eligible entrepreneurs participating in the programme can apply for a £2,000 start-up grant by submitting a competitive business plan, leveraging the knowledge gained through the programme. Successful applicants not only receive this crucial financial boost but also benefit from continued support from the experienced BIPC Northamptonshire team.

The successful grant winners of the second round of grants are:

- Ami & Martin – Whatsup Training
- Clare & Yvette - Believe & Achieve Business Academy
- Douglas - Carduan Ltd
- Esme – Esme Abbott Hair Design
- Nam & Darren - Tara Beauty Therapy
- Heidi - Hartbeeps Kettering
- Kate - Daventry Wellness & Sports C.I.C
- Laura - Laura's Seating Solutions
- Owen - The Ethical Car Wash Company
- Sheila - Take My Lead
- Stuart - Medi8 Therapy
- Susan - The Regent Street Cattery Limited
- Sophia - So Clean (Simply Organic Home Cleaning)

Building on the success of the first two rounds of the Build Your Business programme, BIPC Northamptonshire is excited to announce a third round, offering aspiring local entrepreneurs with businesses under one year old the opportunity to apply for start-up grants of up to £2,000 to help towards business-associated costs.

For more information about the Build Your Business Programme and how to apply, please [visit the BIPC website](#).



New classrooms open in time for September term in £1.6m project at Wellingborough special school

A £1.6m project to build two new permanent classrooms at an outstanding special school is now complete and ready for the September school term.

Rowan Gate Primary School in Wellingborough has replaced two temporary classrooms with a permanent building which will accommodate 140 pupils.

The improvement programme was funded by Department for Education funding and took twelve months for the build to be completed. Rowan Gate Special School is a community special school for pupils aged two to 11 years.

The new classrooms have replaced the former double classroom mobile unit and will now provide the necessary teaching and circulation space needed.



New £2.3m North Northamptonshire SEND unit proposal approved

As part of ongoing work to boost SEND provision across the county, Members have approved a proposal to deliver a newly built, stand-alone special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) unit in Rushden.

The £2,328,800 project will mean an expansion of Whitefriars Primary School by September 2025.

Whitefriars Primary School is an age 5 to 11 Primary school based in Rushden. The unit will address the needs of pupils with moderate to complex needs with four classrooms, its own drop-off and pick up facilities, pathways and external play area.

The provision will be linked to the school for shared facilities like dining, PE, Science and Food Technology.

Now approved the funding agreement will be finalised and the school will start the procurement process.



£3.3m secondary schools' expansion to provide extra Year 7 places across North Northamptonshire

Members have approved a proposal to expand two existing Wellingborough secondary schools in a bid to address the growing number of Year 7 pupils across North Northamptonshire.

The current council's pupil projections indicate a significant deficit of Year 7 places across North Northamptonshire in September 2024 and beyond.

Members approved the proposal to spend £3,383,600, on expanding two schools.

One was Wellingborough's Wollaston School at a cost of £1,691,800. This will provide an additional 16 Year 7 Pupil places by September 2024, with an additional eight permanent places by September 2025.

The Council has liaised with the school and the Trust which runs it, who have confirmed they are able to accommodate the changes and agree to manage the proposed scheme. To complete for the September 2024 intake, the project would need to start in August 2024 and be completed by September 2024.

Members also discussed the expansion of Wrenn School at a cost of £1,691,800 to deliver 30 new Year 7 places. The Council has also liaised with the school and the Trust which runs it, who have confirmed they are able to accommodate the changes and agree to manage the proposed scheme if approved. To complete for the September 2025 intake, the project will need to start in September 2024 and be completed by September 2025.



Drug warning and guidance issued by authorities across Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire's Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Partnership, which is made up of Police, health organisations, local drug and alcohol services, and North and West Northamptonshire Councils, is issuing a warning about the latest dangerous drugs in circulation in the county and across the UK. The Partnership has been alerted to an increasing number of incidents in recent months where drug users have experienced very poor health from taking street drugs, including heroin and cocaine, requiring emergency medical treatment.

The new group of drugs called synthetic opioids, sometimes known as Nitazenes, pose a substantial risk of overdose, drug-related hospitalisation, and drug-related death. The synthetic opioids are combined with street drugs, including heroin, which users may not be aware contains Nitazene. Anyone taking drugs is urged to take extra care and to alert the family and friends of those using street drugs to the danger of synthetic opioids.

Naloxone is a drug that can reverse the effects of opioids, such as heroin, methadone, opium, codeine, morphine, and buprenorphine. Giving Naloxone to someone who is overdosing on opioids can even save their life if it's used soon after they've overdosed and before emergency help arrives. The effects of Naloxone don't last very long, so it's vital always to call 999 and ask for emergency help when you use it. If you think someone is overdosing but you aren't sure what they've taken, you can still give them Naloxone. It won't hurt them, and it could help them. You can find out more about getting Naloxone through [drug and alcohol services in Northamptonshire](#).

There are services across Northamptonshire which provide treatment for drug users and those recovering from addiction, and this includes adults and young people. We urge anyone with any information or concerns about drugs in their community to call the police on [101](#) or Crimestoppers anonymously on [0800 555 111](#).

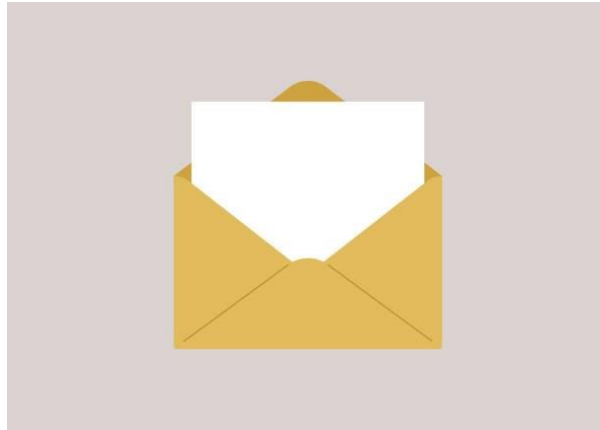


Open letter on highways maintenance to Gen Kitchen, MP

On 19 August, a letter was written to Wellingborough and Rushden MP, Gen Kitchen and published on our website.

The letter was a response to an open letter that was sent by Gen Kitchen MP outlining concerns about highways maintenance in North Northamptonshire.

The [reply](#) sets out that progress has been made in improving the road infrastructure in North Northamptonshire and reiterates the importance of funding promised by the previous government in delivering further improvements.



Kettering and Rushden residents invited to Active Families Fun Days

Sometimes it can be a challenge keeping children entertained during the long summer holidays, so we're delighted to be able to offer our popular free [Active Family Fun Days](#).

Organised by North Northamptonshire Leisure, these events have been taking on Wednesday afternoons during August, and form part of a variety of summer activities on offer in North Northamptonshire.

Our Corby and Wellingborough Active Family Fun Days have already been well attended by local residents so we're urging Kettering and Rushden residents to not miss out on their chance to have fun and get active.

There's no need to book in advance, just come along on the day.

The next one is on: Wednesday 28 August 12noon to 4pm Spencer Park, Rushden, NN10 6UL

Basketball, football, archery, giant garden games, arts and crafts and a bubble station are just some of the attractions on offer at the Active Family Fun Days.

Families attending the Active Families Fun Day are welcome to bring food and drink along to enjoy in the park.



Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our 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. Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub, [Your Voice Matters](#).

- [Polling districts and places – review](#). North Northamptonshire Council is seeking comments from residents and stakeholders on [a review of polling districts and polling places](#) within the North Northamptonshire area.
- [Burial Reservation Policy - Have your say](#). We operate 13 cemeteries across North Northamptonshire. Space is being used up and the way reserved plots are managed is inconsistent across our geographical areas, impacting our ability to manage the space. We are seeking your views on a proposed draft Burial Reservation Policy which will help us manage cemeteries and introduces a consistent approach, including a proposed fee structure. Closes 4 September 2024.
- [Give us your views on Pharmaceutical Needs](#). North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council Public Health teams are completing some important research on how you feel about pharmacy services. Closes 6 October 2024.



Forthcoming meetings

Full Council

- Thursday 29 August from 6pm.

Executive

- Thursday 23 September from 10am.

The agendas and papers will be published on the [Council meetings](#) section of our website in the week before the meeting.

These meetings will be live streamed on our [YouTube](#) channel.



Press releases

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

- [New Rushden rehabilitation service will boost care provision in North Northamptonshire](#)
- [Wishing the best of luck to Year 11 students across North Northamptonshire](#)
- [New classrooms open in time for September](#)
- [Kettering and Rushden residents invited to Active Families Fun days](#)
- [Your Voice Matters - review launched on polling districts and places](#)
- [Open letter on highways maintenance to Gen Kitchen, MP](#)
- [Ditchford Bridge - emergency road closure](#)
- [Thirteen businesses awarded grants in second round of Build Your Business Programme](#)
- [Oundle Library remains closed but will re-open](#)
- [NNC working on cultural masterplan for the area](#)
- [North Northamptonshire Council wishes students the very best of luck](#)
- [We need you - New Corby Towns Deal board members required](#)
- [Make sure your Electoral Registration details are up to date](#)
- [Your Voice Matters - Consultation launched on burial reservation policy](#)
- [New £2.3m North Northamptonshire SEND unit proposal to be discussed at next week's Executive Meeting](#)
- [£3.3m secondary schools' expansion to provide extra Year 7 places across North Northamptonshire to be discussed](#)
- [Drug warning and guidance issued by authorities across Northamptonshire](#)
- [Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum statement - 9 August 2024](#)



Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.

If you have any ideas for items to include in future updates, please email me at executive@northnorthants.gov.uk.

For the latest news, please follow me on X (formerly Twitter) [@smithersjason](https://twitter.com/smithersjason) or visit the [North Northamptonshire Council](https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk) website.

With Best Wishes,
Jason