

Leader's Update

31 May 2024

Issue: 77

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

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- The King appoints new High Sheriff for Northamptonshire.
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- Stay off the pavement if you're riding an e-scooter.
- Community garden unveiled at Northamptonshire heritage site to educate, produce and equip.

In addition, you will find below some useful information about forthcoming meetings, Your Voice Matters (our consultation and engagement hub), all the latest press releases and our top social media posts.

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

Everything you need to know about the General Election on 4 July

North Northamptonshire Council is reminding residents of the important deadlines for the General Election on Thursday 4 July.

The council will be administering the election for parliamentary constituencies of Kettering, Corby and East Northamptonshire and Wellingborough and Rushden with voters in each constituency electing a Member of Parliament (MP).

This election will use new constituency boundaries, after they were redrawn in 2023 to reflect population changes and to try to even out voter numbers in each area. The new boundaries can be found by visiting the [Boundary Commission for England](#) website.

Anyone who is not yet registered to vote must do so by Tuesday 18 June to be able to vote in this election. You can [register to vote](#) on the GOV.UK website.

The last date to [apply for a new postal vote](#) is 5pm on Wednesday 19 June. This is also the deadline for those wishing to apply for a postal-proxy vote, and for those wishing to make changes to an existing postal or proxy vote.

The last date to [apply for a new proxy vote](#) (when someone votes on your behalf) is 5pm on Wednesday 26 June. Postal and proxy votes can be arranged online.

Anyone voting in person on Thursday 4 July will also need to present a valid form of photo ID. People are urged to check the list of acceptable forms of [photo ID](#) now to ensure they can vote. Those without an accepted form of ID have until 5pm on Wednesday 26 June to [apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate](#).

Please visit our website for more information about the [UK General Election - Thursday 4 July 2024](#).

North Northamptonshire highways programme to repair Winter damage

As the weather starts to improve, North Northamptonshire Council has started the Spring and Summer phase of its extensive highways repair programme.

Every year there is a planned programme of works which involves various treatment methods, running alongside the reactive maintenance that addresses issues highlighted by routine inspections and reports received via the [Report potholes or a highway problem](#) section of our website.

Roads everywhere are vulnerable in wintry weather as heavy rain, frost and snow all act to make surfaces more susceptible to deterioration.

Although this Winter has not seen extreme freezing temperatures, it has been very wet with the past 18 months being one of the wettest since records began.

Over the coming weeks, with highways partner Kier, repairs will include a mix of surface dressing treatments, microasphalting and thermal road repairs. These are proactive forms of maintenance offering a more cost-effective and sustainable solution, when compared to typical resurfacing schemes, that future-proof roads for up to 15 years.

More information about forthcoming roadworks can be found on the [Improving our roads](#) section of our website.

Updates on road repairs are also available on North Northamptonshire Highways' [Facebook](#) and [X](#) pages.

New Chair appointed at North Northamptonshire Council

At North Northamptonshire Council's Annual Full Council meeting last week, councillors welcomed a new Chair for the next civic year.

During the meeting, Cllr Lora Lawman was elected as the council's Chair with Cllr Jennie Bone as Deputy Chair. Councillors also thanked Cllr Barbara Jenney for carrying out the role for the past year.

The role of the Chair is a largely ceremonial one, including chairing Full Council meetings and representing the area at civic functions and events.

The new Chair of the Council announced that the local charity Teamwork Trust will be her charity for this year.

During the meeting, the Executive and their portfolios for 2024/25 were confirmed. I shall continue as Leader and Cllr Helen Howell as Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism.

The meeting also saw Claire Edwards approved as Interim Director of Finance and Performance and Section 151 Officer (S151) for North Northamptonshire Council. Tributes were also paid to the departing Janice Gotts, Executive Director of Finance and Performance/S151 Officer who was wished well in her new role.

The King appoints new High Sheriff for Northamptonshire

The King has appointed Amy Crawford as the new High Sheriff of Northamptonshire.

Amy Crawford's appointment as the 13th Lady High Sheriff marks a significant milestone in Northamptonshire's history.

With a lineage dating back over 1,000 years, the role of High Sheriff is the oldest secular royal appointment in the UK. The High Sheriff is supporting the judiciary, police, and emergency services, and now, in the 21st century, to extend that support to the voluntary sector.

As a longstanding member of the Northamptonshire community, Amy has played a key role as a magistrate, volunteering her time and expertise within the justice system. Through her work, she has contributed significantly to local initiatives aimed at supporting young offenders, leaving a lasting impact that resonates on a national level.

In her previous capacity as Chair of the Youth Panel, Amy supported initiatives that have not only earned national recognition but have also helped shape the future of youth justice in Northamptonshire.

Beyond the courtroom, Amy's dedication extended to educating young people about the justice system and the consequences of their actions. Her visits to primary and secondary schools as part of the Magistrates in the Community programme left an indelible mark on countless young minds, instilling in them a sense of responsibility and accountability, promoting a deeper understanding of the justice system and its implications.

As High Sheriff Amy has the privilege of proclaiming the accession of a new Sovereign, together with other ceremonial duties. She also attends to the well-being of the High Court judges when they sit on criminal cases at Northampton Crown Court.

Beyond her ceremonial duties, Amy's focus remains firmly set on championing causes that uplift and empower young people. The High Sheriff's Initiative Fund, run by the Northamptonshire Community Foundation, supports projects in and around criminal justice, law and order, and is her chosen charity.

As Amy steps into her new role, she carries with her the legacy of over 700 High Sheriffs who have shaped the course of Northamptonshire's history. From witnessing historic events to championing causes close to their hearts, each High Sheriff has left an indelible mark on the county's history.

£25,000 grants available for organisations to improve energy efficiency and upgrade community buildings across North Northamptonshire

Voluntary and community organisations across North Northamptonshire are encouraged to apply for grants of up to £25,000 to improve energy efficiency and upgrade facilities in community buildings.

The grants are funded by the UK government through the [Shared Prosperity Fund](#) which aims to increase life chances across the UK, investing in communities and place, supporting local business, as well as people and skills.

If an organisation can effectively demonstrate that the funding will be used to support any of the following priorities, they can apply for a grant of up to £25,000:

- Community facility building upgrades to improve energy efficiency (e.g. LED lights).
- Community facility building accessibility and safety (e.g. ramps, rails, paths, lights, signage).
- Internal upgrades to community building facilities (e.g. equipment upgrades: kitchen, toilets) to enhance community use.

The following groups can apply: parish councils, charities, community and voluntary groups, clubs, not-for-profit organisations and school PTAs (parent teacher associations). 'Friends of' groups, health charities and religious groups can also apply if their projects benefit the wider community and support the overarching aims.

Joint applications between organisations are also welcomed. One organisation needs to apply and take the lead during the application process.

Organisations must:

- Demonstrate value for money in the investment of public funds (environmental, social and economic).
- Identify and quantify beneficiaries and impact of investment.
- Consider on-going sustainability.
- Ensure the identified funding priorities are met in the application.

Applications are open until Tuesday 18 June 2024. Full criteria and application instructions can be found on the [Community support funding](#) section of our website.

More than £170,000 to improve internet speed in primary schools across Northamptonshire

Executive members approved the funding of £171,936 for six schools across the area at North Northamptonshire's monthly meeting in Corby Cube on Thursday 16 May.

The money is from the 'Connect the Classroom' grant, which is a government-funded programme aimed at improving internet speed in schools.

Schools across North Northamptonshire were contacted as part of the programme, and those which fell below Wi-Fi connectivity standards during the assessment and met the criteria were awarded funding.

These standards include:

- Using the latest wireless network standard approved by the Wi-Fi Alliance.
- Having a fully functional signal from a wireless network throughout the school or college buildings and externally, where required.
- Having a solution that can centrally manage the wireless network.
- Installing security features to stop unauthorised access.

This money is to go towards upgrading to the latest wireless network, giving full coverage throughout the schools and externally where required.

The following local schools will benefit from the award:

- Alfred Street Junior School (now Alfred Lord Tennyson), Rushden: £30,036.
- Corby Old Village Primary School: £24,416.
- Mawsley Primary School: £31,487.
- Meadowside Primary School, Burton Latimer: £40,603
- Tennyson Road Infant School (now Alfred Lord Tennyson), Rushden: £21,858.
- All Saints CEVA Primary School and Nursery, Wellingborough: £23,536.

High speed, reliable internet is crucial to helping schools provide the best possible experience for pupils. This investment will expand a whole world of possibilities for schools and teachers in these schools, whether that is through more access to online resources for children, or fast, top quality video streaming.

Augean revenue and small grants fund

Augean plc manages landfill sites in King's Cliffe and Thornhaugh. As part of this, some of their revenue (Section 106 monies) is given back to fund local community projects.

North Northamptonshire Council administers the scheme to fund projects within a 10-mile radius of Augean's landfill sites - you can use our [postcode checker](#) and the magnifying glass in the top menu to

search by postcode and see if it's within the blue or green project areas. Preference will be given to those within a five-mile radius due to the budget.

Total funding changes every year and supports revenue projects and capital projects of up to £5,000. Examples of what the fund can be used for can be found in the criteria and guidelines. There is one funding round in the 2024/25 financial year.

Any organisation with a constitution or charitable status that directly benefits the community can apply (e.g. community groups, parish councils, sports associations).

All groups must be constituted and not-for-profit.

Schools and religious institutions can apply if they can clearly show the wider community will benefit.

Revenue funding is available up to £5,000 for project costs such as administration costs, running costs, feasibility studies (e.g. paying for the running of a volunteer hub, management costs such as facilities manager for small, growing organisations, one off expense such as catering for an annual event).

Capital funding is available up to £5,000 such as one-off equipment purchases for sports club, community centres, signage, defibrillators, benches, park equipment. For any capital projects needing more than £5,000, please visit the [Grantscape](#) website.

Find out more and apply online on the [Augean revenue and small grants fund](#) section of our website.

The deadline for applications is Monday 17 June 2024 at 12 noon.

Household Support Fund extension to provide cost of living support for residents

North Northamptonshire Council is once again able to support households who are having difficulty managing due to the cost of living crisis through funding from the UK government's Household Support Fund (HSF) Extension until Monday 30 September 2024.

To access HSF funding, applicants will need to fill in a simple form on our website at [Wider essential and cost of living support](#) and upload payslips and bank statements, ideally using a computer. Those who do not have access to a computer can visit a North Northamptonshire library where they are available for free public use.

Once approved, applicants will receive payment in supermarket vouchers of up to £320 (depending on household size). Residents can find out if their financial situation means they are eligible at [Wider essential and cost of living support eligibility](#).

This HSF funding is also to be used to [provide support for families](#) where children are on free school meals, including food vouchers for the May break and Summer holidays, as well as an additional voucher intended to cover some of the expense of providing school uniform or other back to school goods.

Should there be any funds not assigned or committed, these will be redistributed to local food banks.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many community groups who have been instrumental in helping us use HSF to distribute funding where it is most needed.

These have included charities and organisations providing all kinds of household support, such as help with emergency energy, white goods replacement and provision of lower energy equipment to cook meals, as well as food parcels.

I know they are continuing to use HSF to help our most vulnerable residents and so would like to publicly thank them for their vital support.

For any queries related to the Household Support Fund please contact the team at HSF4North@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Helping North Northamptonshire residents recover from Long COVID

North Northamptonshire residents can now sign up for a specially designed 12-week Exercise for Long COVID Recovery Programme at Corby's Lodge Park Sports Centre.

Any resident in North Northamptonshire who is suffering from persistent symptoms caused by COVID-19 infection can self-refer onto the programme online at [North Northamptonshire Leisure/Exercise for Long COVID Recovery Programme](#). They can also be referred through any medical professional.

The goals of the programme include helping users manage and increase energy levels and reduce fatigue; boost respiratory function; improve muscle strength and endurance; enhance mental wellbeing; improve coordination, motor skills, balance and mobility; and help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

The sessions are supported by EGYM's suite of equipment and Immunity Boost programme, offering tailored fitness programmes using state of the art technology.

Executive Members, Public Health and Leisure staff were invited to an opening event at Lodge Park Sports Centre to hear all about the programme and how it will support residents, as well as see the equipment demonstrated.

Individuals who opt for the programme will be invited to Lodge Park Sports Centre to complete a full assessment of their condition by the Exercise Referrals Team, who are all trained in Long COVID exercise. Participants will be taken through a health induction and can then train individually, or as part of group sessions, using the EGYM equipment.

The Long COVID offer is a 12-week programme with support from one of the qualified Health and Fitness Team. Individuals can then progress onto Activity on Referral giving them support for six months in total.

The instructor will provide safe and effective activity advice based on medical history and experience, guiding participants through their journey with bespoke programmes and activities.

If they are not digitally confident, or do not have access to a smartphone, the trainers will also show and guide participants using the centre's digital equipment, so they can see, and be motivated by, their progress.

Customers can join the discounted Activity on Referral scheme at £24.50 per month. This option gives access to the EGYM as well as other facilities at Lodge Park, seven days a week. Alternatively, they can opt to 'pay as you go' at a cost of £4.20 per session.

D-Day 80 commemorations

Thursday 6 June 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, and communities across North Northamptonshire will mark the anniversary to commemorate the day.

D-Day was the successful allied invasion of the beaches of Normandy on 6 June 1944. Codenamed Operation Neptune, the Normandy landings made up the largest seaborne invasion in history and played a crucial role in liberating Western Europe from Nazi occupation.

There will be a number of events taking place in towns and villages across North Northamptonshire including the 'Lamp Light of Peace' tribute, beacon lighting, flag raising, wreath laying as well as picnics.

Council offices will be taking part in the 'Lamp Light of Peace' tribute with lamps being lit in our Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden.

Find out more about these events on the [D-Day 80 commemorations](#) section of our website.

Planning a Spring clean? Don't bin your batteries

Residents planning a Spring clean are being reminded to think before disposing of used batteries and items containing batteries, including children's toys and vapes.

Recently North Northamptonshire Council's bin crews have had to think quickly twice to avoid potential bin lorry fires. The incidents could have been avoided if batteries had been recycled correctly.

When waste and recycling bins are collected by crews, any batteries inside can be squashed, punctured or shredded, which could cause batteries to get very hot and ignite, resulting in a fire or explosion in the bin lorry or at the waste facility.

Recent research by Material Focus found that 1.6 billion batteries were thrown away in the past year, including 1.1 billion electrical items containing lithium-ion batteries.

However, batteries can be recycled, easily and safely for free at places such as supermarkets and DIY stores which all have battery bins. All North Northamptonshire Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) also have battery bins, where you can take your old batteries for free recycling.

North Northamptonshire HWRCs also accept all types of vapes. These can be disposed in the household battery containers if they are a solid unit. If they have a removable battery, this can go in the battery bin and the vape body can be put in the bin for electrical items.

Toys can be taken to HWRCs or placed in general refuse bins once the batteries have been removed.

The [Recycle Your Electricals](#) website has a postcode checker where residents can find their nearest battery recycling point.

For more information, please visit the [Recycling](#) section of our website.

Stay off the pavement if you're riding an e-scooter

E-scooter users in Northamptonshire are being urged to stick to the road and stay off the pavement when riding e-scooters.

Northamptonshire Police, North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Councils and scooter operator, Voi, are joining forces to remind riders of the rules.

Rental e-scooters, such as those operated by Voi, can only be ridden on roads, cycle paths or shared use cycle/foot ways designed for use by bikes/scooters and pedestrians. They should never be ridden on pavements.

Shared use cycle/foot ways are marked by blue circular signs with the symbol for a bike and pedestrians (an adult holding a child's hand) in white. They sometimes, but not always, have a white line down the middle to segregate the path and they may have the cycle and pedestrian symbol painted in white on them.

It is illegal to ride private e-scooters on any public land in the UK.

Voi e-scooters can be parked on pavements, except for in no riding or no parking zones, but they should be wheeled on and off the pavement at the start and end of the journey.

Voi will take action against users who ride on the pavement with a three-strike policy which can ultimately result in a lifetime ban.

Pavement riding by Voi riders can be reported by filling in an online form on report.voi.com or emailing support@voi.com with details including date, time, exact location and, if possible, the scooter's four-digit registration number.

Northampton Police advise anyone who spots a private e-scooter being ridden to call them on 101 or report it online at [Northamptonshire Police / Report](#). If caught, people risk a fine and having their e-scooters seized.

Community garden unveiled at Northamptonshire heritage site to educate, produce and equip

A community garden has been unveiled at the Chester House Estate in Irchester with the aim of establishing a learning environment, growing local produce and bringing the sense of community to partners and visitors.

The garden programme is a partnership initiative with Creating Tomorrow College, Nene Rivers Trust and the Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC). The project will focus on providing opportunities for physical activity, social interaction and learning about food and resources.

The community garden will be open for the public to visit from early Summer, where visitors have free parking and free entry to the entire Estate. The project team are urging local businesses to support with funding, grounds clearance and partnerships to further strengthen the garden as a community asset.

The project has been made possible by the Co-op Local Community Fund. To find out more, please visit the [Nene Rivers Trust](#) website.

Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our other 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](#).

- [Wellingborough and Rushden Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#). North Northamptonshire Council is working with consultants Pell Frischmann, Kier and Brightwayz social enterprise to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Wellingborough, Rushden and other towns nearby. Closes 31 May 2024.
- [Proposed Change to Charging Policy for Appointeeship Service](#). North Northamptonshire Council is seeking your views to help guide our decisions regarding the continued provision of an Appointeeship service for customers who lack capacity to manage their money and other financial affairs. Closes 2 June 2024.

Forthcoming meetings

Executive

- Thursday 13 June from 10am.

Full Council

- Thursday 29 August from 6pm.

The agenda 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):

- [Household Support Fund extension to provide cost of living support for residents](#)
- [Helping North Northamptonshire residents recover from Long COVID](#)

- [Everything you need to know about the General Election on 4 July](#)
- [Planning a spring clean? Don't bin your batteries](#)
- [More than £170,000 to improve internet speed in primary schools across Northamptonshire](#)
- [£25,000 grants available for organisations to improve energy efficiency and upgrade community buildings across North Northamptonshire](#)
- [New Chair appointed at North Northamptonshire Council](#)
- [North Northamptonshire highways programme to repair winter damage](#)
- [King appoints new High Sheriff for Northamptonshire](#)
- [Augean revenue and small grants fund](#)

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 (27 to 29 May)

- The next round of the Augean Revenue and Small Grants Fund is OPEN! The scheme funds projects within a 10 mile radius of Augean's landfill sites, one of which is in King's Cliffe. Find out if your local community projects qualifies <https://ow.ly/M6v050RFqjM> (Reach 3,134, Link Clicks 17, Engagement 122)
- Stuck for something to do this Bank Holiday or half term? We have a page dedicated to local attractions and great ideas to keep the kids happy <https://ow.ly/Zb0b50RzbJ5> (Reach 2,283, Link Clicks 16, Engagement 25)
- It's Top Tasks Tuesday! We know waiting on the phone can be frustrating. Leaving your home to queue isn't fun. That's why our website is designed to allow you to do most of your council business from the comfort of your home via your mobile phone, tablet or PC. Below is a long list of the top tasks you can do on our website. What about people who can't access the internet? Which is a great question. If you are able to access our website, please try and do your council business there first. That will then free up the phone lines for people who can't. Our top tasks: Report a highways problem <https://ow.ly/7nhp50Rp2Ax> Report a missed bin <https://ow.ly/JgwI50Rp2AC> Report a full litter bin <https://ow.ly/yuSc50Rp2Ay> Find your collection day <https://ow.ly/yXvJ50Rp2Ap> Pay for something <https://ow.ly/V9mI50Rp2Am> Tell us you have moved <https://ow.ly/ZOxn50Rp2AF> Register to vote <https://ow.ly/XASr50Rp2As> Book a blood test <https://ow.ly/9IjU50Rp2Aq> Apply for a blue badge <https://ow.ly/MWiG50Rp2Aw> Register a birth, death, marriage <https://ow.ly/c2kO50Rp2AA> Apply for a school place <https://ow.ly/9bM550Rp2Av> (Reach 2,264, Link Clicks 2, Engagement 73)

Top Tweets so far this week (27 to 29 May)

- Stuck for something to do this Bank Holiday or half term? We have a page dedicated to local attractions and great ideas to keep the kids happy <https://t.co/yTKqvuVMvp> (Impressions 482, URL Clicks 4, Engagements 6)
- You only have until 18 June to register to vote in the General Election. Have your say - Use your vote <https://t.co/KfCEeeA4WU> (Impressions 412, URL Clicks 1, Engagements 8)
- You only have until 19 June to apply for a postal vote in the General Election. Have your say - Use your vote <https://t.co/aw7ohxQUuf> (Impressions 394, URL Clicks 6, Engagements 13)

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.

With Best Wishes,
Jason

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