

Leader's Update

4 October 2024

Issue: 84

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- Thanks to everyone who helped during the recent flooding.
- It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2025.
- Corby Fireworks returns for 2024.
- Launch of new Cornerstone website.
- Oundle Library now open and offering a reduced service.
- South Midlands devolution bid on the cards.
- Executive set to discuss air quality planning document.
- Increase to environmental crime fines set to be discussed by Executive.
- Street naming and numbering policy in North Northamptonshire to be discussed by Executive.
- The Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership launches the Sideline Project.

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!

Thanks to everyone who helped during the recent flooding

Organisations involved in responding to the recent flooding across Northamptonshire are thanking everyone who stepped in to help.

The county saw three times the average monthly rainfall - the highest September rainfall since records began with almost 15cm of rain compared with an average of around 6cm. Most of this fell between Saturday 21 and Thursday 26 September.

As a result, residential and business properties were flooded, as were some schools and several caravan parks including Billing Aquadrome and Cogenhoe Mill Holiday Park and Yarwell Mill Caravan Park.

Following evacuation from some of these properties voluntary organisations, particularly British Red Cross, 4x4 Response, Re:ACT and Rapid Response Team, stepped in to support.

Organisations from across the Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) came together to deal with the issues. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service led the initial approach, with support from West and North Northamptonshire Councils, Northamptonshire Police, the Environment Agency and the Met Office, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board, the East Midlands Ambulance Service, and Meadow Bay Villages which owns Billing Aquadrome.

The fire service, along with Northamptonshire Search and Rescue, helped get more than 70 people across the county to safety during the worst of the weather.

We saw an incredible amount of rainfall hit our county in a very short space of time which had a significant impact on some of our communities. The response from volunteers, staff and partners to help deal with situation was amazing and I would like to thank everyone who helped.

Residents across Northamptonshire are urged to [sign up for flood warnings](#) on the GOV.UK website. Further useful information can be found on the [Flooding](#) section of our website.

It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2025

Parents and carers are now able to apply for a reception place in a primary or infant school, a Year 3 place in a junior school, or a Year 7 place in a secondary school for the September 2025 intake.

Parents and carers can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years of age on or before 31 August 2025.

Closing dates for applications

- Reception: 15 January 2025.
- Year 3: 15 January 2025.
- Year 7: 31 October 2024.

All applications, whether postal or online, must be received by the closing date to be considered as on time. All on time applicants will receive an offer of a school place on the National Offer Days. Late applications will not be processed until after the National Offer Days.

Applicants will then be provided with information on the next stage of the process.

National Offer Days

- Reception: 16 April 2025.
- Year 3: 16 April 2025.
- Year 7: 3 March 2025.

There is a separate process for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Please contact the allocated case worker for details on this you. Further information can be found on the [North Northants Local Offer](#) website.

An independent school admission [appeals process](#) is available for families who wish to appeal against refusal of a place at any school for which they have applied.

Please note that being offered a place by particular school does not mean that a child will automatically be entitled to travel assistance to that school. Parents and carers should read the [Home to school transport and travel assistance policy](#) carefully to understand the eligibility criteria before applying for a school place.

For more information about applying for a school place in North Northamptonshire, please visit the [School admissions](#) section of our website.

Corby Fireworks returns for 2024

The skies above Corby will be lit up with fireworks once again as the annual bonfire and fireworks returns on Tuesday 5 November.

Organised by North Northamptonshire Council, the free event will take place in the area around the Boating Lake, with the bonfire being lit at 7pm, followed by an impressive firework display from 7:30pm.

As with previous years, the popular torchlight procession will leave from outside Corby International Pool at 6:30pm. It will be led by Councillor Lora Lawman, North Northamptonshire Council Chair, Adele Wylie, Chief Executive and myself.

Road closures will be in place from 6pm with no access from the BP Fourways Garage, Cottingham Road along Westcott Way. Residents are being asked to follow directions from marshals to help keep everyone safe whilst watching the fireworks and torchlight procession.

This year's event has been sponsored by Wilson Browne Solicitors, alongside Premier Roofing Systems Ltd, PILZ - the Spirit of Safety, Corby Fire Designs and Ace Furniture.

Events like this always bring the community together and its always great to see children and their families witnessing the spectacular fireworks display and the torchlight procession beforehand. I hope you will be able to join us.

Launch of new Cornerstone website

In the heart of Kettering town centre, you will find the Alfred East Gallery, Manor House Museum, Kettering Library and Manor House Gardens, known collectively as Cornerstone.

Last week saw the launch of the new [Cornerstone website](#) which includes:

- The history of all aspects of Cornerstone and background to the site.
- Learning opportunities and outreach events.
- Information on the Kettering Library roof replacement project.
- Kettering Library's temporary arrangements and services on offer.

Please note that Kettering Library is currently closed for essential roof maintenance, running a reduced service from its temporary location in the new extension behind the existing building. The Manor House Museum and Alfred East Gallery remain closed while this exciting renovation project continues.

Also last week, we launched a new Cornerstone video which details the Kettering Library roof replacement project, provides residents and councillors with information on the complex project as well as a 'behind the scenes' look at the process for mining the slates required for the roof. As part of the filming, Councillor Helen Howell, Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism, and myself were interviewed. You can see a small part of my interview in the video opposite. The full video can be viewed on YouTube at: [Cornerstone project video](#). It really is a fascinating watch and shows the process we are going through.

The planning application for the replacement roof and Grade II listed building consent is expected to be heard this Autumn. Once the application has gone through the planning process, a contractor will be appointed, and physical work will be able to begin on site.

Oundle Library now open and offering a reduced service

Oundle Library re-opened on Monday 30 September and is now offering a reduced service.

Customers can visit to choose their own books and audiobooks during the usual opening times:

- Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm).
- Saturday (10am to 2pm).

Library loans can now be returned. The grace period to return books is still in place and customers have until Thursday 31 October to return any outstanding loans.

Works are still ongoing at the library to repair damage caused by a small fire in July. Once the works have been completed, the library will be fully back to business and offering all the usual services.

Library staff would like to pass on their continued thanks to those in the community who have been so understanding and supportive during this very difficult period.

South Midlands devolution bid on the cards

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council have partnered with four other authorities in the South Midlands on an expression of interest to the government towards devolution.

The government announced in July that devolution would be a central strand for boosting economic growth inviting local leaders to identify regional partnerships which could benefit from enhanced powers in areas such as transport, housing, skills and employment.

Councils in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and North and West Northamptonshire have successfully worked together for many years as part of the Central Area Growth Board, more recently becoming the South Midlands Authorities (SMA). They have worked jointly on a submission to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

As well as enhanced powers, a devolution deal could also leverage in millions of pounds of future investment into the area.

Following on from the expression of interest, government will produce a framework which will provide more detail on how and when devolution could become a reality and what the specific benefits could be for the SMA.

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council, along with the other four SMA authorities, have already approved the establishment of a Joint Committee governance model for the area as part of their South Midlands Authorities management of the former Local Enterprise Partnership functions.

The new governance model replaces the current Central Area Growth Board and, in particular, its decision-making powers.

Executive set to discuss air quality planning document

Following the approval of North Northamptonshire Council's [Local Air Quality Strategy](#) in July, next week the council's Executive will discuss a new area-wide document next week which has been produced to help reduce the impact of new developments on air quality in North Northamptonshire.

The Air Quality Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was consulted on earlier in 2024 and has been designed to assist developers and their air quality consultants to submit planning applications which mitigate and, if possible, improve the impact of air quality via their proposals.

If approved by Executive, the document will be published and available to all developers who will be advised to read the document prior to submitting a planning application.

If the SPD is adopted, the council's Environmental Protection Team will assess dust mitigation submissions and air quality assessment submitted via the planning process.

Measures in the SPD include advice on:

- When air quality modelling is required.
- Installation of low oxides of nitrogen gas boilers.
- Need for construction management plans for all construction activities that create dust.
- Locating outdoor green spaces away from busy roads.
- Green infrastructure and planting.

Good air quality is extremely important, and we want to ensure that we are doing all we can to monitor air quality and that it meets the highest standards. This includes engaging with developers at the planning stage to ensure that they are thinking about the impact of their developments on air quality levels in North Northamptonshire. I look forward to discussing this report with Executive colleagues.

Increase to environmental crime fines set to be discussed by Executive

North Northamptonshire Council's Executive will receive an update next week on proposals to increase fines for a variety of environmental crimes, including up to £1000 for fly-tipping.

Changes to national regulations were introduced by the previous government in July 2023 and the council is looking at the best way forward for Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for Environmental Crime Offences.

It is proposed that fines are increased to the new maximum levels, which could see a maximum fine of up to £1000 for fly-tipping, alongside changes to fines for littering, graffiti, flyposting and household waste duty of care.

Our teams have a zero-tolerance approach to environmental crimes and will not hesitate to take enforcement action, where necessary. This includes issuing Fixed Penalty Notices which provide an alternative to other enforcement options and prosecution, but still act as a deterrent. In the case of fly-tipping, we hope that FPNs encourages residents to dispose of waste through legal routes such as our household waste recycling centres or via a licensed carrier.

Any changes to fines will be publicised through North Northamptonshire channels.

More information about fly-tipping, including how to report it and how to dispose of waste responsibly, can be found on the [Fly-tipping](#) section of our website.

Street naming and numbering policy in North Northamptonshire to be discussed by Executive

Creating a consistent approach to naming and numbering streets across the North Northamptonshire Council area will be discussed at a meeting of the council's Executive next week.

The policy provides guidance for developers and residents, and covers new developments, both residential and commercial, numbering of properties on existing named streets and renaming and numbering of existing streets. There are currently a few slightly different policies in operation.

The council has the legal responsibility to ensure that streets are named, and properties numbered. It can approve or reject property addresses submitted by developers or the general public and prescribe its own addressing schemes.

The prime objective in naming streets is to facilitate easy identification of premises by, amongst others, the emergency services, the postal services and the public.

The council has powers to charge for the provision of its discretionary services, with the expectation that any charges should not exceed the actual cost of the service.

The charges will be published on our website and will be reviewed annually to ensure costs are covered.

This is part of our wider work to harmonise services across the council to bring a consistent approach to our residents. I'm delighted that we're moving forward with this piece of work and look forward to us bringing further service improvements in the future.

The Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership launches the Sideline Project

The Northamptonshire Serious Violence Prevention Partnership (NSVPP), formerly NSVA, was formed in 2023 to tackle serious violence in Northamptonshire.

The partnership includes North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service, Youth Offending and Probation Services, Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board and the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

The NSVPP aims to stabilise and reduce serious violence, and to understand the underlying causes. The focus will be on preventing violence from occurring.

The NSVPP has awarded £116,430 to Athletic Elite, a basketball coaching and development organisation, to launch the Sideline Project. The Sideline Project uses basketball and sports coaching to improve the physical and emotional wellbeing of young people across Northamptonshire. The project focuses on those young people who are identified as vulnerable to risk, delivering tailored sessions about physical health, confidence, resilience and emotional wellbeing. It aims to empower young people to make healthier choices and create safe places for them to belong.

The project will create six-week programmes for secondary schools in priority areas, evening basketball and mentoring sessions for students with attendance problems and/or those referred by the police. These will support young people between the ages of seven and 19. Alongside these programmes, the Sideline Project will support the upskilling of basketball coaches in crime prevention.

The priority areas have been identified as Kettering, Wellingborough, Corby and Northampton, using the data collected as part of the NSVPP Serious Violence Duty Strategy. This partnership approach ensures that primary interventions, like the Sideline Project, are specifically designed to address serious violence in targeted areas.

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](#).

- [Give us your views on Pharmaceutical Needs](#). Closes 6 October 2024.
- [Statement of Licensing Principles: Gambling Act 2005](#). Closes 18 October 2024.
- [Climate change attitudes and behaviours](#). Closes 20 October 2024.
- [Climate Change Framework - have your say](#). Closes 20 October 2024.
- [Polling District and Polling Place Review 2024](#). Closes 25 October 2024.
- [Wellingborough and Rushden Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - Final stage](#). Closes 27 October 2024.

Forthcoming meetings

Executive

- Thursday 10 October from 10am.
- Thursday 14 November from 10am.

Full Council

- Thursday 17 October 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):

- [Update and Information: Flooding across North Northamptonshire 4pm, Thursday 3 October](#)
- [Thanks to everyone who helped during recent flooding](#)
- [Street naming and numbering policy in North Northamptonshire to be discussed by Executive](#)
- [Executive set to discuss air quality planning document](#)
- [Increase to environmental crime fines set to be discussed](#)
- [Whoosh, bang, wow... Corby Fireworks returns for 2024](#)
- [South Midlands devolution bid on the cards](#)
- [Serious Violence Prevention Partnership invests over £100,000 to launch the Sideline Project](#)
- [It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2025](#)
- [Update and Information: Flooding across North Northamptonshire 2pm, Friday 27 September](#)
- [Flooding: Joint agency update](#)
- [Oundle Library opening for reduced service from Monday 30 September](#)
- [New Cornerstone website launches](#)

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 (30 September to 2 October)

- A reminder that any non-authorized banners or flyers placed on the metal screening at the Parklands Gateway, Corby (car park to the rear of the Corby Cube) will be removed and disposed of. (Reach 8,963, Link Clicks 0, Engagements 802)
- Update and Information: Flooding across North Northamptonshire 12pm, Tuesday 1 October. <https://ow.ly/Sujc50TzS7s> (Reach 8,275, Link Clicks 0, Engagements 1,664)
- It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2025. <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/.../itstime-apply-your...> (Reach 7,086, Link Clicks 29, Engagements 326)

Top Tweets so far this week (30 September to 2 October)

- Update and Information: Flooding across North Northamptonshire 3pm, Monday 30 September. <http://northnorthants.gov.uk> (Impressions 361).
- Looking for a new job? Have you considered a career in local government? Are you the final piece of the puzzle to make our team the best it can be? Check out our latest vacancies, and we look forward to welcoming you to NNC! <https://careers.northnorthants.gov.uk> (Impressions 341).
- Update and Information: Flooding across North Northamptonshire 12pm, Tuesday 1 October. <https://ow.ly/twge50TzS7q> (Impressions 331).

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