

## Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

This edition is packed full of news, updates and events taking place in and around North Northamptonshire.

I cannot believe it is a year ago since I was last writing about the Corby bonfire and fireworks display, which returns on Friday 4 November. It is also a year since the opening of the Chester House Estate. This thriving visitor attraction celebrated its first birthday last weekend. As well as this more recent milestone, the Estate also celebrates 10,000 years of Northamptonshire Heritage.

As it is Chester House Estate's first birthday, this Update includes several features on the Estate, including the news of two new foot bridges connecting the site to surrounding communities and an impressive (and growing) collection of awards.

I have also provided information on gym refurbishments that signal the start of a new Kettering leisure contract and news that a fly-tipping grant scheme for private landowners is being extended into 2023.

You will also find important information on the new contact details for Home to School Transport service users and information on a range of consultations that are currently taking place. This includes one that seeks feedback on a strategy to transform North Northamptonshire Council's in-house adult social care provider services.

Last, and by no means least, I am delighted that Irchester Library has re-opened under community management. Libraries play such an important role in their community. They provide residents access to a wealth of reading materials and act as local community hubs. I am delighted that we have been able to find a way of securing the future of this Library.

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

## Students inspired by entrepreneurial spirit in Digital Showcase event

Tresham College, part of The Bedford College Group, working with North Northamptonshire Council, hosted their 21 Techspo event at the Kettering campus on Friday 21 October.

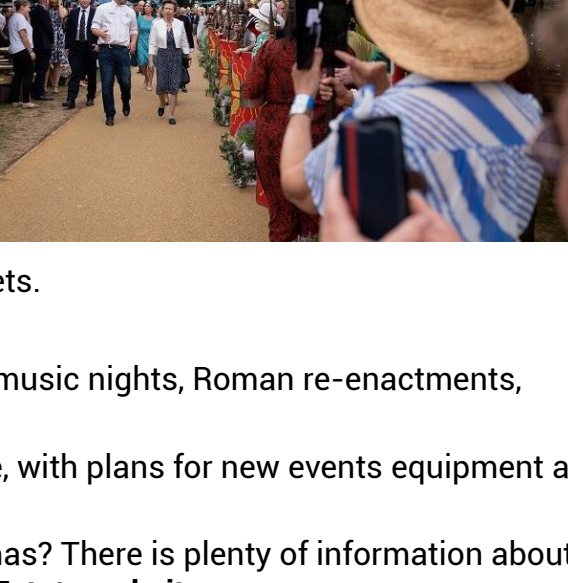
Aimed to inspire their students to think like entrepreneurs and learn how digital technology is being used to transform the world we live in. Students started the day by taking part in a Dragon's Den-style event focused on using technology in the field of sustainability.

Ideas ranged from the use of robots to pick up and recycle litter on beaches to solar powered e-bikes. The winning students pitched the idea of monetising recycling by using a QR code for people to tap, identify their item to recycle before opening a recycling container to drop the item into. Money is then transferred to your bank.

The rest of the day was made up of a marketplace with innovative businesses engaging with students on their area of technology and career pathways.

There were workshops all day for students to attend and learn how different skills, including the user centred design skills to create their own mobile app led by North Northamptonshire Council's Head of Digital, Kat Sexton.

The event was part of the Digital Northamptonshire initiative which also includes a Merged Futures event hosted by the University of Northampton in the summer and led by North Northamptonshire Council's Web and Digital Services Manager, Richard Beards.



## Chester House Estate celebrates its first birthday

Last weekend, Chester House Estate celebrated its first birthday since undergoing an extensive restoration.

Following a challenging and pioneering £17m heritage restoration project, the Chester House Estate opened to the public in October 2021. I wanted to provide a few highlights of Chester House's first year.

### First year highlights:

- Official opening of the site by Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal in July 2022.
- 200,000+ visitors through the gates, surpassing targets.
- 17,000+ archives moved into a new store.
- 30+ events including Christmas, Halloween, outdoor music nights, Roman re-enactments, children's events and craft markets.

The team is actively re-investing funds back into the site, with plans for new events equipment and outdoor history interpretation so watch this space!

Why not visit Chester House in the run up to this Christmas? There is plenty of information about the Estate and its planned events on the [Chester House Estate website](#).



## Corby's bonfire and fireworks display on Friday 4 November

Corby's annual bonfire and fireworks display returns on Friday 4 November.

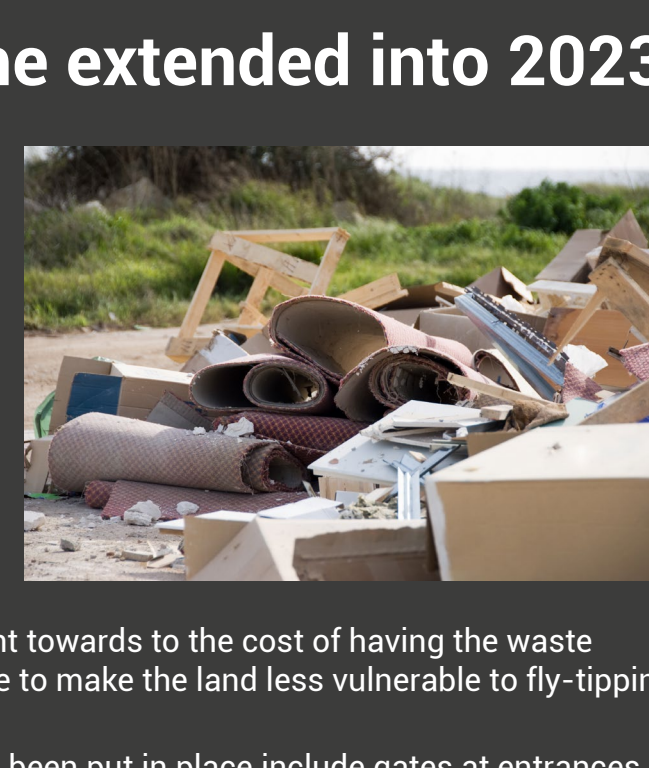
This free event, organised by North Northamptonshire Council, will take place in the area around the Boating Lake, with the bonfire being lit at 7pm, followed by an impressive fireworks display from 7:30pm.

There will be food stalls on site and a torchlight procession which will leave from outside Corby International Pool at 6:45pm.

Road closures will be in place from 6pm with no access from the BP Fourways Garage, Cottingham Road along Westcott Way.

This year's event has been sponsored by Premier Roofing Systems Ltd, Northamptonshire Pallets Ltd and Pipelife UK Ltd.

I hope that you and your family and friends will be able to join us for this spectacular evening of entertainment!



## New contact details for Home to School Transport service users

From Tuesday 1 November there will be a dedicated telephone number for Home to School Transport service users in North Northamptonshire.

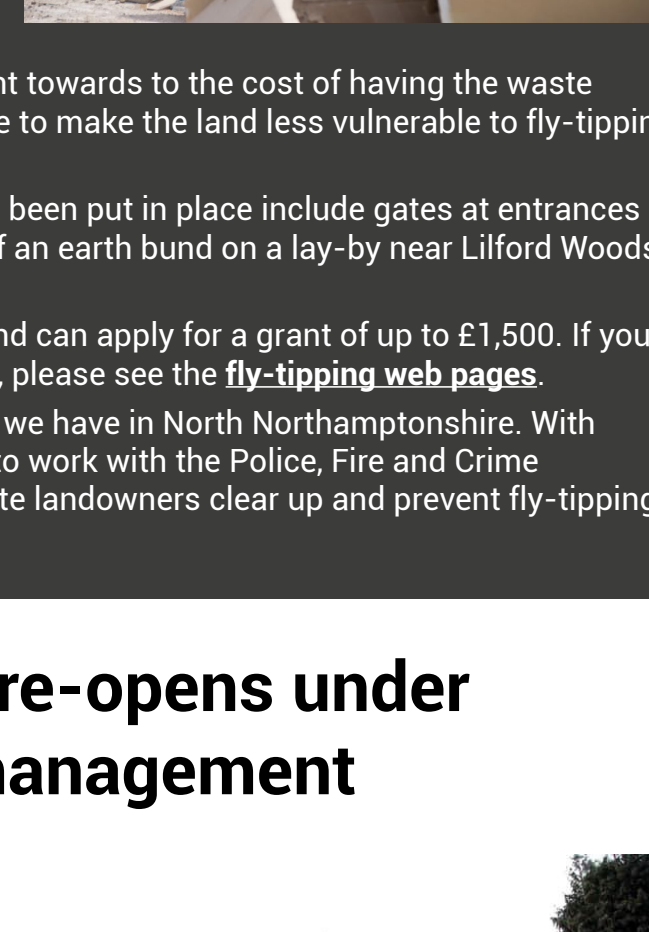
The new number is **0300 373 1023**.

- Option 1 - for SEN Transport users.
- Option 2 - for Mainstream Transport users.
- Option 3 - for Children and Young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who have an application for transport pending.

The new email addresses are:

- SEN Transport – [sentransport.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:sentransport.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk)
- Mainstream Transport – [schooltransport.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:schooltransport.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk)
- Travel Co-ordination Unit (TCU) – [tcu.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:tcu.nnc@northnorthants.gov.uk)

For more information, please visit the [Home to School Transport web pages](#).



## Fly-tipping grant scheme extended into 2023

A scheme which helps victims of fly-tipping on private land in North Northamptonshire has been extended.

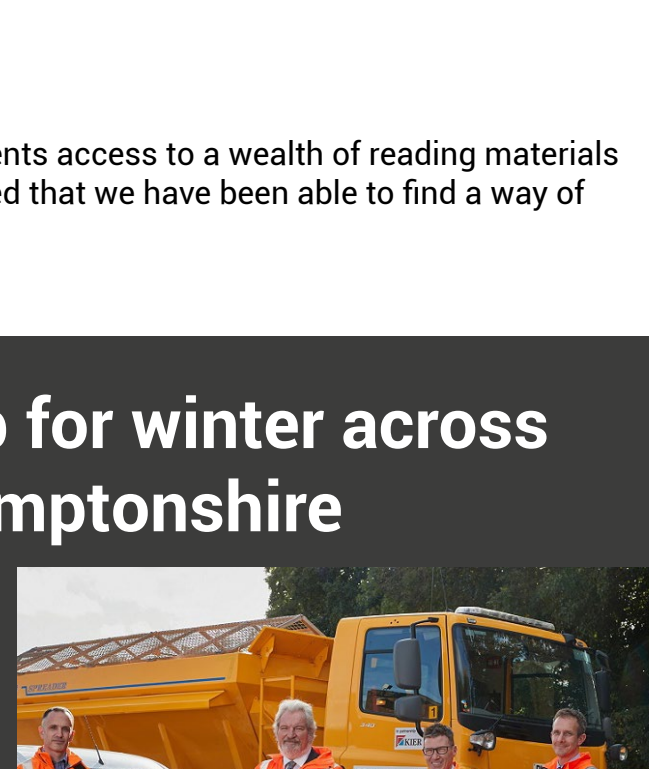
When waste is fly-tipped on private land, it falls to the landowner to arrange for the waste to be removed at their expense. However, since October 2021, a scheme launched by the Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) and administered by North Northamptonshire Council has supported those impacted by fly-tipping on private land.

Under the scheme, farmers and other private landowners can apply through the council for a grant towards the cost of having the waste removed and putting preventative measures in place to make the land less vulnerable to fly-tipping in the future.

Over the past year, preventative measures that have been put in place include gates at entrances to known fly-tipping hotspots and the installation of an earth bund on a lay-by near Lilford Woods along the A605.

Anyone struggling with illegal fly-tipping on their land can apply for a grant of up to £1,500. If you would like more information, including how to apply, please see the [fly-tipping web pages](#).

Fly-tipping is such a blight on the beautiful scenery we have in North Northamptonshire. With this in mind, it is great that we are able to continue to work with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner on this scheme which can help private landowners clear up and prevent fly-tipping.



## Irchester Library re-opens under community management

North Northamptonshire Council has reached an agreement to secure the future of Irchester Library.

The library re-opened on Wednesday 19 October under community management. Irchester Parish Council has signed the lease on the library property and volunteers will be taking on the running of the library.

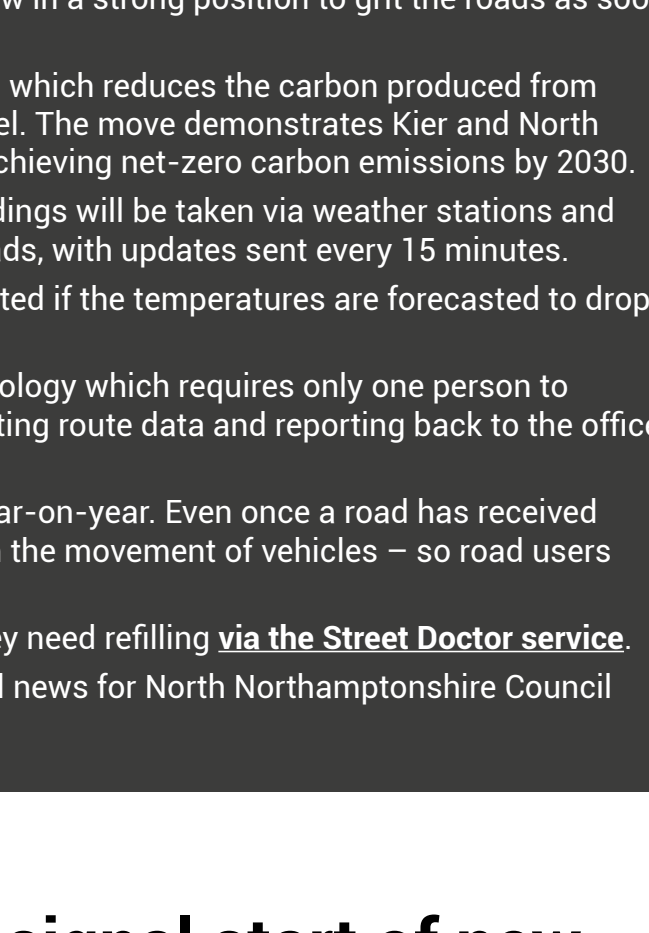
Support in running the library systems will be provided by North Northamptonshire Council including the training of volunteers, provision of lending stock and the library computer systems.

Customers using Irchester Library will be able to continue to use their LibraryPlus library card to access the countywide stock resources and all the electronic resources.

The Library opening hours will initially be:

- Wednesday from 10am to 2pm.
- Friday from 2pm to 6pm.
- Saturday from 10am to midday.

Libraries play such an important role, giving residents access to a wealth of reading materials and acting as local community hubs. I am delighted that we have been able to find a way of securing the future of Irchester Library.



## HVO gritters gear up for winter across North Northamptonshire

North Northamptonshire Council is getting ready for harsher weather conditions as Kier Highways, the council's highways provider, deploys its fleet of gritters to take on precautionary gritting routes.

The contractor activated winter working protocols in mid-October, with the season set to run through to April next year.

The gritters, which are powered by sustainably sourced Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO), will cover over 821 miles (1,841 km) of the council's road network - which is the equivalent of driving from Northamptonshire to Dundee and back.

The Council has reserves of 2,500 tonnes of salt, with 643 grit bins across the region filled for use on public roads and footpaths.

Preparing for winter is an all-year-round task and requires extensive analysis of previous weather conditions to make informed decisions about priority gritting routes.

We're working hard to ensure minimal disruption to road-users throughout the autumn/winter period and after considerable preparation, we are now in a strong position to grit the roads as soon as forecasts predict the weather to drop below 0.5C.

The fleet of gritters uses HVO with immediate effect, which reduces the carbon produced from combustion engines by up to 90% compared to diesel. The move demonstrates Kier and North Northamptonshire Council shared commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Enhanced weather forecasting and temperature readings will be taken via weather stations and sensors set out along North Northamptonshire's roads, with updates sent every 15 minutes.

Through route-based forecasting, routes will be treated if the temperatures are forecasted to drop below 0.5 °C.

The gritters are also fitted with advanced GPS technology which requires only one person to operate the vehicle in clear conditions, by accumulating route data and reporting back to the office to ensure that works are safely delivered.

The UK faces increasingly unpredictable weather year-on-year. Even once a road has received a gritting treatment, the salt requires activation from the movement of vehicles – so road users should remain vigilant.

If Grit bin salt stocks run low, you can report that they need refilling [via the Street Doctor service](#). People can keep up to date with highways and travel news for North Northamptonshire Council highways on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



## Gym refurbishments signal start of new Kettering leisure contract

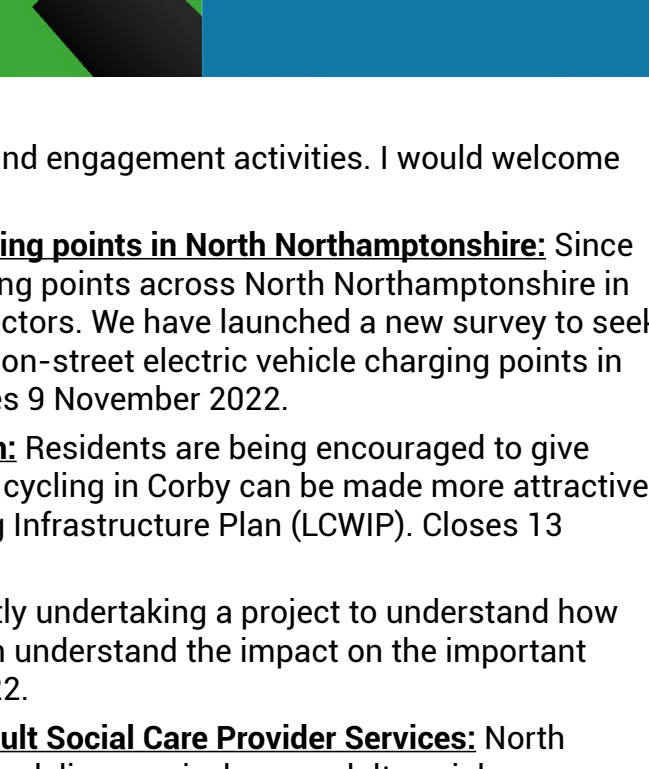
As part of the new partnership between North Northamptonshire Council and Freedom Leisure, an extensive refurbishment of two Kettering leisure facilities has taken place.

Kettering Swimming Pool and Desborough Leisure Centre customers will have seen an immediate impact with a complete revamp of the gyms at both of the popular centres.

From the beginning of October 2022, Freedom Leisure began managing Kettering Swimming Pool, Desborough Leisure Centre, Kettering Pitch and Track and Corn Market Hall, working in partnership with the council.

The £300,000 investment, delivered on time and on budget, is the beginning of a commitment to improve both the health and wellbeing of the residents of Kettering and the facilities themselves.

Freedom Leisure, a leading charitable and not-for-profit leisure trust, manages more than 100 leisure and cultural facilities on behalf of partners across the country, including three nearby council-owned centres in Thrapston and Rushden.



## Have your say on leisure facilities in North Northamptonshire

The annual user surveys are underway to assess the performance of North Northamptonshire Council-owned leisure centres.

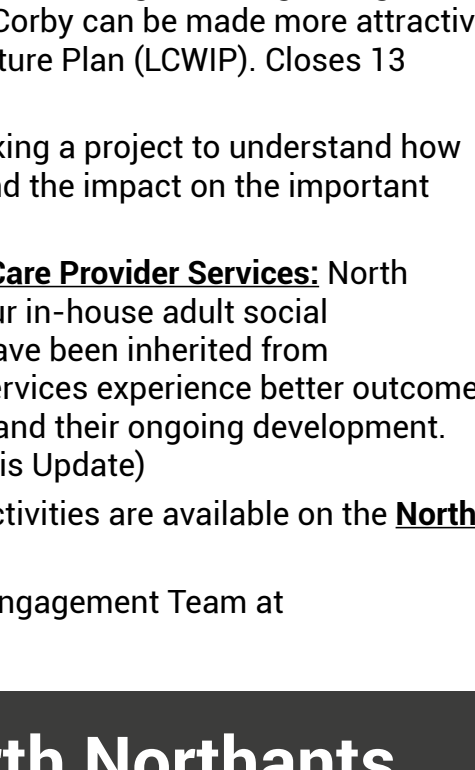
Each leisure centre has their own survey that covers a variety of topics including how helpful the staff were, ranges of programmes and classes on offer, parking and cleanliness.

There are several ways to participate:

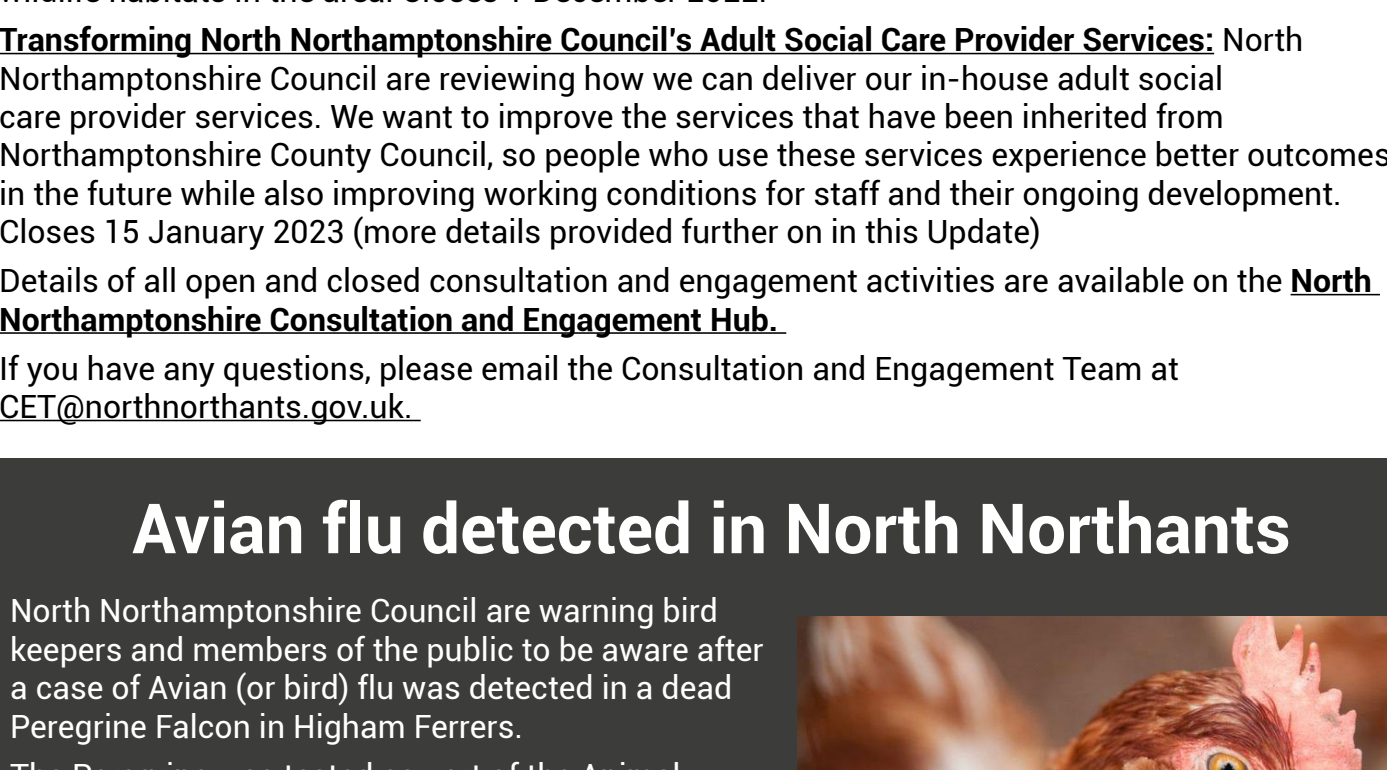
- Online questionnaire.
- Via a QR code on a poster.
- Media a QR code on a poster.
- Social media post links – on leisure centres' social media channels.
- Social media post links – on North Northants Leisure's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.
- Complete a paper copy at a leisure centre.

The feedback we received from last year's surveys was invaluable in helping us improve leisure facilities across North Northamptonshire. I hope we receive the same level of response this year so we can continue to expand and develop our leisure offering across the area.

The surveys are open until Sunday 30 October.



## Open activities on the Consultation and Engagement Hub



Please find below details of our open consultation and engagement activities. I would welcome your feedback on the following:

**Survey on proposed on-street electric vehicle charging points in North Northamptonshire:** Since January 2021 we have installed 23 on-street charging points across North Northamptonshire in 12 locations, each with two 22kW/h charging connectors. We have launched a new survey to seek views of residents on potential further locations for on-street electric vehicle charging points in seven towns across North Northamptonshire. Closes 9 November 2022.

**Corby Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan:** Residents are being encouraged to give their ideas on how routes for walking, wheeling and cycling in Corby can be made more attractive as part of the town's new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Closes 13 November 2022.

**Visitor Use of the Upper Nene Valley:** We are currently undertaking a project to understand how people use the Nene Valley for recreation, so we are undertaking the impact on the important wildlife habitats in the area. Closes 1 December 2022.

**Transforming North Northamptonshire Council's Adult Social Care Provider Services:** North Northamptonshire Council are reviewing how we can deliver our in-house adult social care provider services. We want to improve the services that we have been inherited from Northamptonshire County Council, so people who use these services experience better outcomes in the future while also improving working conditions for staff and their ongoing development. Closes 15 January 2023 (more details provided further on in this Update)

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the [North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub](#).

If you have any questions, please email the Consultation and Engagement Team at [CEI@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:CEI@northnorthants.gov.uk).

## Avian flu detected in North Northants

North Northamptonshire Council are warning bird keepers and members of the public to be aware after a case of Avian (or bird) flu was detected in a dead Peregrine Falcon in Higham Ferrers.

The Peregrine was tested as part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) Wild Surveillance programme, which has been set up to detect the spread of Avian Influenzas in the UK.

Avian influenza refers to the disease caused by infection with Avian (bird) influenza (flu) Type A viruses. These viruses naturally spread among wild birds worldwide and can infect domestic poultry and other bird and animal species.

All bird keepers (whether you have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) must always keep a close watch on them for signs of disease and to maintain good biosecurity.

Anyone who suspects any type of bird flu in poultry or captive birds must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

For all the latest information in relation to the spread of Avian Flu, including the housing measures which have now been brought in for Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Essex and for information on how you can help to protect your birds, please visit [central Government's Avian flu information](#).



## New Highways and Transport Recruitment micro site

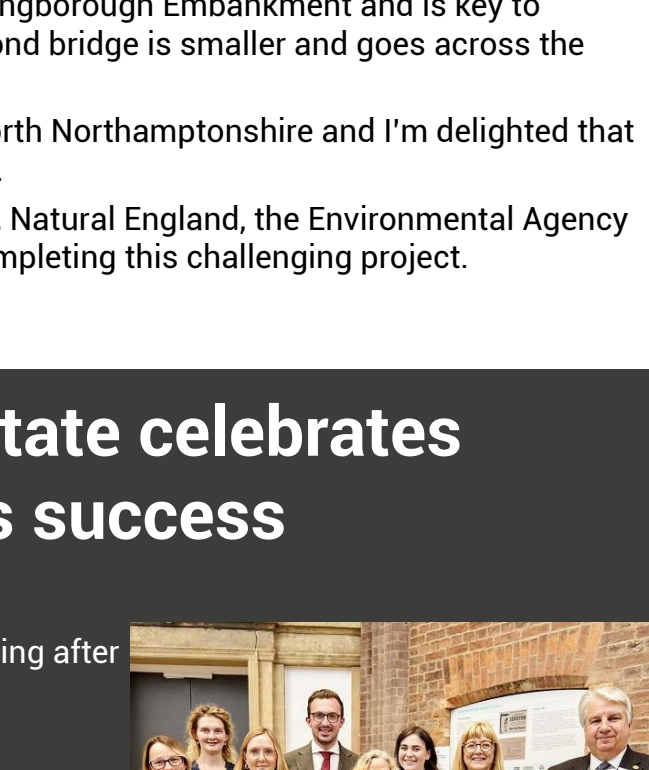
The council has recently launched a **Highways and Transport Recruitment micro site** to support us as we embark on a campaign to build a great team that really delivers.

We are proud of the work we do, so that's why we are looking for people that take pride in their own work, independently take on challenges and can help us deliver the very best Highways and Waste service, which is so important to our residents.

We are currently looking to recruit several talented, ambitious and experienced individuals who are ready to become a part of a team that can shape and deliver our vision and ambition.

Some of these roles have been advertised on the new recruitment website and there will be more to come.

Anyone who might be interested in any of these roles can visit the new pages on the [website](#) to see what we have available.



## Have your say on adult social care strategy

We are seeking feedback on a strategy which will transform North Northamptonshire Council's in-house adult social care provider services.

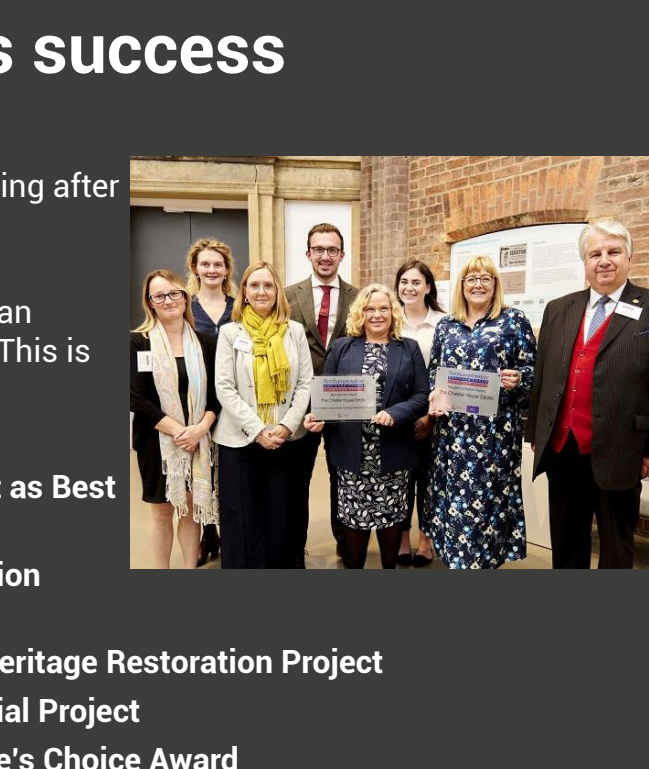
The strategy proposes that the focus of these services will be to provide reablement, enablement and longer-term independence, moving away from the provision of developing independence. It aims to make the direct delivery of the council's provider services fit for the future.

It also aims to further improve pay for care staff and is expected to improve working conditions and the recruitment and retention of staff.

The strategy provides options for different ways that buildings used for care can be improved if possible or look at different options where we cannot deliver what we want from the current buildings.

It is believed that the strategy shows the council's commitment to improving the services that have been inherited, so people who use these services experience better outcomes in the future while also improving working conditions for staff and their ongoing development.

The survey can be accessed via [NNC's consultation and engagement hub](#) and closes on 15 January 2023. I would encourage everyone to have their say and help us shape our future services.



## New pedestrian bridges connect Chester House Estate with surrounding communities

Northamptonshire Highways have completed the installation of two new pedestrian bridges over the River Nene at Chester House Estate.

The wheelchair-compliant, steel structures were opened in time for the Estate's first birthday celebrations last weekend.

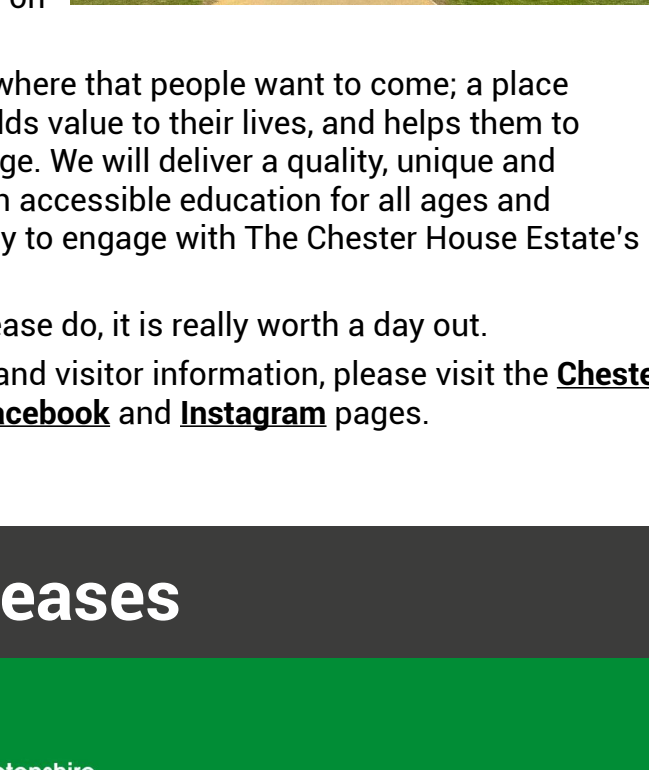
Both foot bridges now form part of the Public Rights of Way network linking Wellingsborough to Rushden and Irchester, providing much easier access to and from the nationally significant heritage site.

The project was funded by the Department for Transport.

One bridge connects Chester House Estate to Wellingsborough Embankment and is key to the future Greenway active-travel project. The second bridge is smaller and goes across the Chester House stream.

Chester House Estate is a wonderful addition to North Northamptonshire and I'm delighted that these new structures now make it more connected.

Thank you to our Highways team, Historic England, Natural England, the Environmental Agency and Kier and all the contractors who worked on completing this challenging project.



## Chester House Estate celebrates after awards success

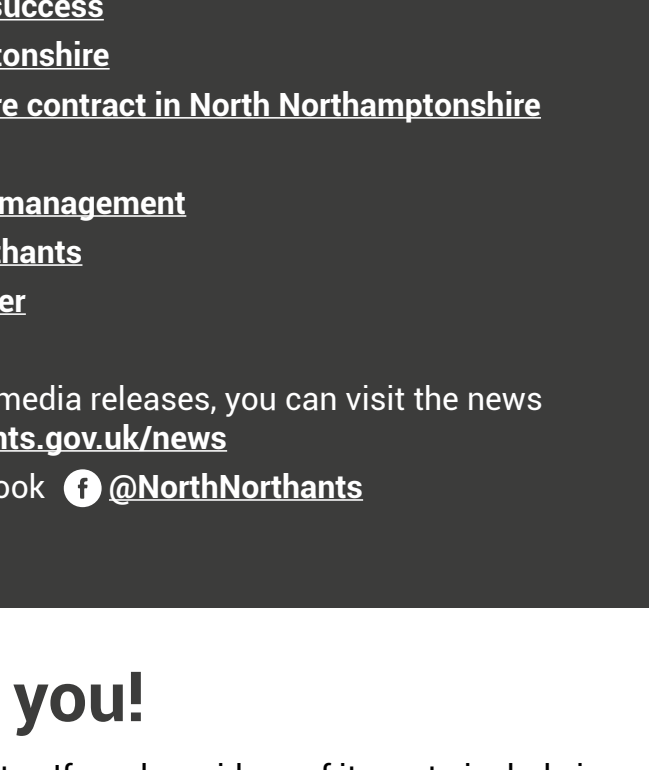
The team at the Chester House Estate are celebrating after winning more awards this month.

The estate is a nationally significant heritage site being one of the few places in the country which can demonstrate over 10,000 years of human activity. This is reflected in the recent award successes.

### Recent awards:

- Northamptonshire Excellence Awards - Finalist as Best New Business
- Wellingsborough Civic Society - Best Conservation Project
- CPRE Northamptonshire Town and Country - Heritage Restoration Project
- Northamptonshire Heritage Forum - Best Special Project
- Northamptonshire Heritage Forum - The People's Choice Award
- Northants Life Awards - Best day out in Northamptonshire

We are extremely proud of everything that Chester House Estate represents. The site is such an important asset, not just for the people of North Northamptonshire but also for visitors to the area.



## 10,000 years of Northamptonshire's heritage brought to life

Northamptonshire County Council purchased the site in 2004 and secured grant funding through working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a sustainable visitor destination with access for the public as well as learning about the history and heritage, as well as becoming the location to house countywide archaeological finds.

The Chester House Estate is overseen by North Northamptonshire Council who have a clear vision of the future of the site.

We wish to make The Chester House Estate somewhere that people want to come; a place that through education, learning and enjoyment adds value to their lives, and helps them to appreciate Northamptonshire's outstanding heritage. We will deliver a quality, unique and sustainable educational offering. We will champion accessible education for all ages and communities, our mission is to give the opportunity to engage with The Chester House Estate's past, present and future.

If you haven't yet visited Chester House Estate, please do, it is really worth a day out.

For more information, including upcoming events and visitor information, please visit the [Chester House Estate website](#) or check out their [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages.



## 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):

- [Students inspired by entrepreneurial spirit in Digital Showcase event](#)
- [Avian flu detected in North Northants](#)
- [Vulnerable Northamptonshire residents urged to take up their free flu vaccine ahead of a predicted Twindemic](#)
- [Have your say on adult social care strategy](#)
- [Chester House Estate celebrates first birthday](#)
- [New foot bridges connect Chester House Estate with communities](#)
- [Chester House Estate celebrates after awards success](#)
- [Home to School Transport for North Northamptonshire](#)
- [Gym refurbishments signal start of new Kettering leisure contract in North Northamptonshire](#)
- [Fly-tipping grant scheme extended into 2023](#)
- [Irchester Library set to open under community management](#)
- [Have your say on leisure facilities in North Northants](#)
- [Custodial sentence for North Northants flytipper](#)

If you would like stay up to date with the Council's media releases, you can visit the news section of the Council's website: [www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news)

Or follow Twitter [@NNorthantsC](#) and/or Facebook [@NorthNorthants](#)

## 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](mailto:executive@northnorthants.gov.uk)

With Best Wishes,  
Jason

Follow me on Twitter

[@SmithersJason](#)

Contacting North Northamptonshire Council

0300 126 3000

[www.northnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)