

# Leader's Update

5 August 2022

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## Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update. My working week started by congratulating the football Lionesses after their historic win against Germany on Sunday night. What an absolutely awesome achievement and a true display of courage and tenacity from the Lionesses – the pride of the nation. And what a lift for everyone over the summer – bringing a tremendous sense of joy to households across the nation. Their display was an inspiring demonstration of what can be achieved through hard work and commitment.

It has been another busy couple of weeks for us all. I am delighted to bring you the latest news stories from right across the council including: four Green Flag Awards, a 'best day out' award for Chester House Estate, the start of the annual canvass campaign, funding bids and schemes, new website developments, a summer road surfacing programme, a new leisure contract, - and the creative use of chainsaws to turn felled trees into natural play areas for children, plus many more items of interest.

The council is celebrating after receiving Green Flag Awards for Coronation Park in Corby, East Carlton Countryside Park, Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods and Rockingham Road Pleasure Park in Kettering. If you haven't visited one of our parks or green spaces recently, I really would encourage you to do so.

Chester House Estate is also celebrating after winning the Northants Life award for 'The Best Day Out in Northamptonshire 2022'. Congratulations to all the members of the estate team. The awards are all public-led and voted for by the public so it's all about supporting your local community.

Canvass forms are hitting doormats across North Northamptonshire this week so that residents can make sure their voter details are up-to-date.

The council has submitted two bids to central government for 'Levelling Up' funding, each comprising of three projects. The bid across the six projects totals £30.8m.

The government has released additional funding – the 'Covid Additional Relief Fund' - for businesses impacted by Covid-19 restrictions but who have not been eligible for previous relief schemes.

This week also saw the start of an extensive summer programme of 'surface dressing' road repairs across North Northamptonshire.

Our new online Registration Service went live on Monday 25 July, which means that residents can now book ceremonies themselves - and at their own convenience.

Freedom Leisure has been awarded the contract to manage Kettering Swimming Pool, Desborough Leisure Centre, Kettering Pitch and Track and Corn Market Hall on behalf of the council following an extensive tendering process.

Our Grounds Services team has turned 30 tons of felled trees into exciting natural play areas for children in several local parks. With a few twists of the chainsaw, our arboriculturists have created fun new structures in eight public parks - with three more on the way.

Speaking of summer, I am pleased to hear that our 'Summer in Northants' and 'DiscoverNN' campaigns are progressing well. Please follow our social media pages for updates, and share our posts when you can.

More on all of these stories later in this Update.

I hope some of you have had the opportunity to take a break from work and spend time with your families and friends. Equally, I would like to thank the staff, partners and volunteers who continue to work through the summer holidays delivering high quality services to local residents.

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

## **North Northamptonshire Council Leader congratulates England Lionesses - the pride of the nation**

Congratulations to the football Lionesses after their historic win against Germany on Sunday night.

What an absolutely awesome achievement and a true display of courage and tenacity from the Lionesses – the pride of the nation. And what a lift for everyone over the summer – bringing a tremendous sense of joy to households across the nation.

Their display was an inspiring demonstration of what can be achieved through hard work and commitment and it really is a lesson to us all.

More importantly, great victories such as this can act as catalysts to encourage more girls into football and other sports, which is very significant and brings so many benefits.

Huge congratulations from myself and the council and all the very best for future tournaments.

The Lionesses beat Germany 2-1 in front of a 90,00-strong crowd at Wembley thanks to goals from substitutes Ella Toone and Chloe Kelly. It was a first major trophy for the Lionesses - and first for a senior England team since the men won the 1966 World Cup.

## **Local opportunities to play the beautiful game**

North Northamptonshire has plenty of opportunities for women and girls to get involved in football, no matter what their age or experience. A growing number of local clubs now have dedicated female sections, with teams ranging from youth to senior women for those who want to play competitively.

Even if players aren't looking to commit to joining a club, Kettering Arena hosts weekly indoor 'Futsal' sessions every Tuesday evening for a social run around. There are a host of Wildcats sessions running locally, allowing girls from 5 to 11 years old to play football in a fun and friendly environment while also making new friends.

Nobody is ever too old to start playing football or restart their career, with female-only walking football sessions providing an ideal environment for women over 40 or those returning from injury to enjoy the beautiful game. Once players have found the competitive spirit there is a chance to compete in a monthly tournament in Wellingborough.

To find your local club, session or for more details, please contact [nnleisure@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:nnleisure@northnorthants.gov.uk) or visit the [Northamptonshire FA website](#) for full information on football opportunities nearby.

## **Four parks across North Northamptonshire awarded coveted Green Flag Awards**

The council is celebrating after receiving Green Flag Awards for Coronation Park in Corby, East Carlton Countryside Park, Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods and Rockingham Road Pleasure Park in Kettering.

This year, 2208 parks have been awarded flags across the UK and in North Northants Coronation Park and Rockingham Road Pleasure Park, East Carlton Countryside Park and Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods have all retained their flags for 2022/23.

The award is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces.

After two years that have seen our parks and green spaces play a vital role for people through lockdowns as a place to relax, exercise and meet friends and family safely, the news that four sites across North Northamptonshire have achieved the Green Flag Award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the team that makes the green space a great space that everyone can enjoy.

The Green Flag Award scheme, managed by environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy under licence from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, recognises and rewards well-managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of green spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.

Our teams work hard, often alongside community groups, to ensure all our parks and green spaces across North Northamptonshire are kept clean and tidy, but also that they are places where residents want to spend time. If you haven't visited one of our parks or green spaces recently, I really would encourage you to do so.

## **Chester House Estate wins 'The Best Day Out in Northamptonshire 2022' award**

Chester House Estate has won the [Northants Life](#) award for 'The Best Day Out in Northamptonshire 2022'. Congratulations to the members of the estate team. The awards are all public-led and voted for by the public so it's all about supporting your local community.

The Chester House Estate promises more 'best days out' this summer with a packed programme of events to keep the whole family entertained:

- Kid's Summer Festival - starts this weekend
- Circus Workshop
- Summer of Fun and
- A Rural Day Out event - featuring Amanda Owen, the Yorkshire Shepherdess from the popular TV show.

Please visit the [Chester House Estate website](#) for details.

## **Are your Electoral Registration details up to date?**

Canvass forms are hitting doormats across North Northamptonshire this week so that residents can make sure their voter details are up-to-date.

The government recently made efficiencies in how the canvass is conducted; every household will receive some form of communication, but unlike previous years, you may not have to respond to the form sent to the property.

Data from the electoral roll is matched against central government records and North Northamptonshire Council's databases. Properties with a 100% match will receive a letter marked CCA, asking for a response only if the details shown are incorrect. Properties with less than a 100% match will receive a form marked CF, which needs a response regardless of whether the details shown are correct or not. A pre-paid envelope will be enclosed to help you respond.

The annual canvass helps North Northamptonshire Council to update household information on the Electoral Register. The register is used for jury service selection and can have a big impact on your credit score, so being on the register is useful when you apply for a mortgage, take out a loan or even open a new mobile phone contract. Responding promptly means you will also be ready to vote in any future elections that you are eligible to vote in.

To update your details:

- Visit the [Household Response website](#) and follow the instructions. You will need the two-part security code given on your canvass communication. Adding a name in this way is not a registration. To register any new people at your property they will need to visit the [Register to vote section on the GOV.UK website](#).
- If you have received a canvass form, you can complete it in pen, sign it and return it by post.

Find out more about the annual canvass and how to register on the [Elections section of our website](#).

## **North Northamptonshire Council bid for £31m in ‘Levelling Up’ funds**

The council has submitted two bids for ‘Levelling Up’ funding, each comprising of three projects, to central government. The bid for funding across the six projects totals £30.8m.

### **‘Levelling Up’ fund bid 1 - ‘Transformation through green growth’ covers the following projects:**

- Development of a rail overbridge to gain better access to Stanton Cross and release more housing development.
- The construction of a segregated active travel link between Wellingborough and Rushden which will extend the current Greenway.
- The repair and refurbishment of the historic Victorian Greenhouse and an events building at the Chester House Estate which will help provide an important local amenity for existing and new residents in the area, including Stanton Cross.

### **‘Levelling Up’ fund bid 2 - ‘Improving life chances and facilities for local people’ comprises the following projects:**

- A new stadium and training facility to be built at Adrenaline Alley.
- Completing the construction of a segregated active travel route between the town centre and railway station in Corby.
- Environmental improvements to Kiln Way and Minerva Way on the Queensway estate in Wellingborough.

Projects submitted for funding must be capital (i.e. involve spending on a physical asset and delivered by the end of March 2025.)

The ‘Levelling Up’ fund is a central government fund of £4 billion available across England to support economic prosperity. North Northamptonshire has been categorised as a Priority 1 area for this round of bids, meaning it is of high importance to receive funding. I am delighted that six projects have been identified that stand a chance of receiving a portion of this funding.

## **Businesses urged to apply for Covid additional relief funding**

Further business rate relief is now available for businesses impacted by Covid-19 restrictions but who have not been eligible for previous relief schemes.

Central government has provided funds for the ‘Covid Additional Relief Fund’ which the council is administering.

Funds from the government are limited and only businesses occupied and liable for business rates in the financial year 2021/22 are eligible to apply for funding (other eligibility criteria also apply). The amounts awarded will be determined once the application window has closed.

The current application window is open until Monday 22 August and more details, including how to apply and eligibility, can be found on the [Covid Additional Relief Fund web page](#).

It is vital that we support the economy of North Northamptonshire as it recovers from what has been one of the most difficult periods of time we have ever seen. I am pleased that the government has recognised this and released additional funding for those businesses most in need.

## **Summer programme of ‘surface dressing’ underway**

An extensive programme of ‘surface dressing’ road repairs is underway across North Northamptonshire.

The work - which runs from now to Friday 9 September is weather dependent and is being carried out on behalf of the council by Highways - provides a cost-effective way of preserving and extending the life of highways in the area.

Surface dressing involves bitumen being sprayed onto the road surface and overlaid by chippings, which are rolled on to the surface. When the bitumen cools, it sets and holds the chippings to the surface of the road.

The carriageway is safe to drive on following application of the chippings. A mandatory speed limit of 20mph is put in place for the first few days, whilst the chippings bed in to reduce the risk of damage from loose chippings and for the safety of the public.

People are advised to drive slowly, keeping their distance and to avoid turning or braking sharply. Motorists should also not overtake at any time.

Loose chippings are swept away within 24 hours of the initial dressing and again within five days.

A heavy roller is used after initial treatment and the surface is usually fully embedded after around a week, due to the action of traffic moving across it.

Although the programme runs through into September, the actual surface dressing treatment will take place in August. Following the treatment, roads will be swept twice and road studs and markings will be reinstated.

Where surface dressing is scheduled in residential areas, people will receive a letter through their door notifying them of when the work will take place at least two days in advance and asking them to move their vehicles off roads and paths. Advisory signs will also be placed in the streets giving times and dates of the work.

Vehicles whose presence is preventing or hindering the works taking place may be relocated to a nearby street. This will be carried out by an approved contractor and vehicles will be moved within the vicinity, with signs located on the street providing information.

Weather can impact the programme and dates may change, with people advised to check the on-site signs for the latest information.

More information about the surface dressing programme, the process, who to contact and the latest updates can be found on the [Kier WSP website](#).

The latest information about highway works on the network can also be found on the [One.Network website](#).

Updates will also be posted on Twitter at [@nnhighways](#).

Ensuring our highways network is in as good a condition as possible is a priority for the council and this innovative, cost-efficient solution is a great way of enhancing the structure of the roads.

## **New Registration Services online booking system**

The Registration Service has implemented a new, streamlined working way of booking ceremony times and dates online.

After reviewing the existing process, a decision was taken to move the booking process online, so customers can make their own bookings - and at a convenient time (including outside working hours).

The [North Northamptonshire Council Registration Services booking system](#) went live on Monday 25 July, allowing customers to book marriage ceremonies, civil partnerships and marriage/civil partnerships statutory registrations on the website.

Please contact Sadie Nightingale, Head of Coroners, West and North Northamptonshire Registration Service at [sadie.nightingale@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:sadie.nightingale@westnorthants.gov.uk) with any questions, comments or requests for further information.

## **Freedom Leisure awarded leisure contract in Kettering**

Following an extensive tendering process, leading not-for-profit leisure trust Freedom Leisure has been awarded the contract to manage Kettering Swimming Pool, Desborough Leisure Centre, Kettering Pitch and Track and Corn Market Hall on behalf of the council.

Freedom Leisure has been successfully working in partnership with the council since April 2017 when it took over the operation of The Nene Centre in Thrapston and The Pemberton Centre and Splash Leisure Pool in Rushden.

The contract has been awarded for an initial 3-year period with an option to extend for two further 12-month extensions. The contract will begin on Saturday 1 October.

Having worked with Freedom Leisure for a number of years, we have complete trust and faith in them to do a fantastic job of managing more of the leisure facilities across North Northamptonshire.

## **Natural play areas for children created from felled trees**

Our Grounds Services team has turned 30 tons of felled trees into exciting natural play areas for children in several local parks.

Earlier this year, Storms Dudley and Eunice brought down and damaged a number of trees in North Northamptonshire. With a few twists of the chainsaw, our 'tree gang' of qualified arboriculturists have created these play areas in eight public parks - with three more on the way.

### **Present locations:**

1. Rockingham Road Pleasure Park, Kettering (x2)
2. Hall Meadow Park, Kettering
3. Ise Valley Parklands, Kettering
4. Greening Road, Rothwell
5. Northampton Road Rec, Kettering.
6. Meadow Road Park, Kettering
7. Coronation Park, Corby (x2)
8. Hall Farm Pocket Park, Desborough

### **Coming soon:**

1. Mill Road, Kettering
2. Dunkirk Avenue Rec, Desborough
3. High Street Rec, Broughton

It's a sad day when a mature tree must be taken down due to disease or damage, but we have to closely manage trees within public areas. Mature urban trees filter our air, feed off climate changing carbon, provide food and cover for thousands of other lifeforms and give us much needed shade to reduce urban heating. However, they are susceptible to damage from high winds and fungal attacks.

Once felled, the large timbers are delivered to parks where the 'tree gang' set them into the ground to make them safe, smooth off any sharp edges and cut steps into the logs to allow children to scramble over them.

Using the logs in this way prevents them from going into the waste stream, has saved over £3,000 from green waste disposal and turned 'waste' into fun, new play facilities, which will last for years.

The next step is to add 1-ton boulders to these play areas to enhance the visual and play value.

National bodies such as the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust have been doing this for some time, but few councils have adopted its use so widely.

## **Campaigns update: ‘Summer in North Northants’ and ‘DiscoverNN’**

We're halfway through our campaign to promote the diverse culture, rich heritage and places to visit in North Northamptonshire. The ‘Summer in North Northants’ campaign showcases everything the region has to offer residents choosing to stay at home, or for anyone who fancies visiting our wonderful towns and villages.

We're also promoting the ‘DiscoverNN’ app with exclusive offers for app users. You can download and discover by visiting the [DiscoverNN web page](#).

Please follow our [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#) pages for updates, and share our posts when you can.

You can also view the full [Culture and Tourism offer](#) on the website.

## **Children in Care awards prove a great success**

Northamptonshire Children’s Trust were delighted to hold the Children in Care awards on Wednesday 27 June at Fernie Fields in Moulton, in conjunction with provider, Sport 4 Fitness.

Over 500 nominations were put forward by carers and social workers for four awards categories: Aspirational Star, Determined to Learn, Super Skills and Making a Difference.

It was wonderful to hear about this event and celebrate the achievements of so many inspirational children and young people.

The day proved a great success with children and young people able to engage in a range of activities on the day from rock climbing to frisbee golf and football.

## **Full Council meeting**

The latest meeting of Full Council took place at the Corby Cube on Thursday 28 July. If you missed the live streaming, you can catch up on the proceedings by [watching the recording](#) on our YouTube channel or by [reading the agenda and reports](#) on the website.

## **Council meetings - Key dates for your diary**

- **Executive:** Thursday 25 August at 2pm. The proposed venue is the Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 9SB. The [Executive meeting agenda](#) will be displayed on the website the week before the meeting.
- **Full Council:** Thursday 29 September at 2pm. The proposed venue is Council Chamber, The Cube, George Street, Corby NN17 9SB. The [Full Council meeting agenda](#) will be displayed on the website the week before the meeting.
- Please visit our [Council meetings web page](#) to browse upcoming meetings with agendas and documents.

## 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):

[Four parks across North Northamptonshire awarded coveted Green Flag Awards](#)

[Are your Electoral Registration details up to date?](#)

[Summer programme of surface dressing underway](#)

[Freedom Leisure awarded leisure contract in Kettering](#)

[North Northamptonshire Council Leader congratulates England Lionesses - the pride of the nation](#)

[North Northamptonshire Council to bid for £31m in Levelling Up funds](#)

[Businesses urged to apply for Covid additional relief funding](#)

## 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 (1-3 August 2022)

- Freedom Leisure awarded leisure contract in Kettering <http://ow.ly/ipLS50K8qou>  
(Reach 11,071, Post Clicks 1,926)
- Congratulations to Maisie Summers-Newton MBE for winning Gold in the Women's 100m Breaststroke SB6 Final at the Commonwealth Games! North Northamptonshire and the whole of the UK is proud of you!  
(Image: BBC)  
(Reach 6,100, Post Clicks 299)
- We'll be adding another three green play areas to the following parks soon: Mill Rd, Kettering; Dunkirk Avenue Rec, Desborough and High Street Rec, Broughton. Our Grounds Services 'tree gang' of qualified arboriculturists are twisting chainsaws as we type, getting them ready for delivery! #LoveParksWeek  
(Reach 4,546, Post Clicks 203)

### Top Tweets so far this week (1-3 August 2022)

- Congratulations to Maisie Summers-Newton MBE for winning Gold in the Women's 100m Breaststroke SB6 Final at the Commonwealth Games! North Northamptonshire and the whole of the UK is proud of you!  
(Image: BBC)  
(Impressions 1,518, Engagements 70)
- We're blessed with green open spaces and beautiful lakes and rivers. So take advantage this summer and check out the Nene Valley <https://t.co/PT5CJnLC6G> #SummerNN #DiscoverNN  
(Impressions 834, Engagements 6)
- North Northamptonshire Council Leader congratulates England Lionesses - the pride of the nation <https://t.co/HgWJU5U69b>  
(Impressions 746, Engagements 21)



## 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