

Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 38 - Monday 22 September 2025

Latest news



New booking system being introduced for recycling centres



A booking system is being introduced at our Household Waste and Recycling Centres in November.

The aim is to reduce queues, ease pressure on surrounding roads, and ensure a smoother experience for visitors.

Anyone visiting one of the centres on or after Monday 3 November will need to book a slot first.

This can be done online via a dedicated booking system, or over the phone by calling our main switchboard number, allowing people to secure a slot up to two weeks in advance, or as little as a half an hour before they plan to visit.

The booking system will go live on Monday 20 October, when a link will be published on our the recycling centres pages of our website.

Communicating the message

We would be extremely grateful for the assistance of town and parish councils in helping to communicate information about this change, and have created some social media graphics and suggested messages, which we have emailed to you.

Information will also be displayed prominently at our Household Waste Recycling Centres, and we will be handing out information leaflets to visitors in the weeks leading up to launch.

If you receive questions about the new scheme, please direct people to the Household Waste Recycling Centre pages on our website in the first instance.

Advice offered over the safe removal of flags



With flags continuing to spring up across West Northamptonshire, we've understandably been approached by a number of town and parish councils seeking guidance – particularly in relation to them being flown from street lighting.

WNC can and is taking action to remove flags placed on lampposts, road signs and other items of street furniture for which we are responsible.

But if your town or parish council has a responsibility for managing street lighting as part of your precept, then it is for you to decide the best approach for dealing with the unauthorised fixing of flags to your lampposts.

To help you navigate this tricky issue, our Highways team has put together the following information and advice:

Your powers and responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of any parish lighting authority to maintain equipment under your control and you have the necessary legal powers to do so under legislation including the Parish Councils Act 1957 and the Public Health Act 1984
- Our Council, as highway authority, will not licence any attachments to parish lighting equipment without the express permission of the town or parish council. Because we have no information on the condition or strength of parish lighting columns, we cannot comment as to whether the presence of flags is a Highway Safety issue unless motorists are clearly being distracted, the flag extends over the carriageway, or it obscures a safety critical sign.

Advice over removal

- Where you decide to remove a flag, this is best carried out from ground level as Parish-maintained lights are not particularly tall and this is a safer method than using ladders. A pruning saw on an extending pole works well for removing cable ties.

- We strongly recommend testing that lighting columns are not live prior to touching the, using a suitable voltage detector pen. This is the pen currently used by Balfour Beatty operatives Ethos 4056 Non Contact Voltage Detector (ETHOS 4056) | CEF.
- If there is a safety issue or you ask for help removing a flag from street lighting you maintain, we can arrange removal, but there will be a cost to your council for doing so.

Messages to residents

- Here is the safety advice and information we are providing for residents, which you are welcome to use on your website and your other communications, should you wish to do so:

We are urging people not to attach flags or other items to street furniture, including lampposts, road signs, and traffic infrastructure.

These actions pose serious safety risks - not only to those attempting to climb and fix items, but also to other members of the public and motorists. Lampposts are not designed to support the weight of ladders or individuals, and there is a very real danger of falls or electrocution. Such distractions can also impact road safety.

Under the Highways Act 1980, it is an offence to fix items to lampposts without the consent of the Highway Authority, and this legal requirement remains in force. Industry experts and agencies continue to issue similar warnings.

To enquire about placing authorised and licensed attachments safely to lampposts, please email [add your contacts here]

We hope this information and approach is useful to your councils as you consider the best approach for your local communities on this issue.

Tough choices ahead as we work to protect essential services



Our administration has highlighted the difficult choices that will be needed as our Council works to bridge an estimated £50m shortfall in our revenue budget for next year.

In essence, the level of funding has not kept pace with our growing population and the continued rise in demand for services supporting the most vulnerable residents, such as children's and adults social care, temporary housing for homelessness and SEND school transport. This means we have to find more efficiencies to balance our budget.

The shortfall equates to around 10% of our overall budget, and action is under way to identify more savings and efficiencies that will seek to address this so we can balance the books for the next financial year.

Like all councils across the country, we continue to face significant financial pressures annually and have already found £115m of savings since our creation over four years ago.

Tough choices lie ahead. But our top priority will always continue to be protecting essential services, wherever possible, and continuing to deliver the value for money that our residents rightfully expect.

We'll be developing proposals over the coming months, with the draft 2026–27 budget due to go to Cabinet in December. Residents will then have the chance to give their views during public consultation before the final budget is agreed by Council in February.

Further boost to bus services



A series of improvements have been introduced to local bus services connecting Brackley, Silverstone, Towcester and Northampton.

They include the introduction of the X88 - a new limited-stop express route from Brackley to Northampton via Silverstone and Towcester, plus an extension of the 88 Brackley to Northampton service, which now also serves Silverstone Business Park and Syresham.

New home for customer services



Our One Stop Shop for customer services in Northampton is moving from The Guildhall to our offices at One Angel Square this Thursday (25 September).

Accessed via the St John's Street entrance (pictured), the new site brings together a wide range of council services and local support partners all under one roof, making it quicker and easier for people to get the help they need in one place.

Time to apply for school places



Parents and carers of children living in West Northamptonshire can now apply for school places for the next academic year.

People can apply for a place in reception if their child will be four years old on or before 31 August 2026, with a closing date for applications of midnight 15 January 2026. Applications for Year 3 at junior school must also be made by the same deadline.

The closing date for applications for Year 7 places is midnight on 31 October 2025.

Postal vote reminders to go out



We're reminding people who vote by post that they may need to re-apply to keep this arrangement in place for future elections.

Changes to the law introduced in 2022 mean postal votes are now only valid for a maximum of three years. It means that if you applied before 31 October 2023, you will need to re-apply by 31 January 2026 to keep voting by post.

Over the coming months we will send reminders to everyone who needs to update their postal vote. This will be done via text message, email, or letter, depending on the contact details they provided.

Ensure children get their jabs



With the start of the new school year, our public health team are encouraging parents to ensure children are up-to-date with their vaccinations.

A range of vaccinations are offered to help support children's immune systems and protect them against preventable illnesses.

It's particularly important ahead of the autumn and winter, when the cooler weather will mean everyone spends more time indoors, which can lead to an increase in the spread of viruses and infections.

Special school opens at Tiffield



Tiffield Academy near Towcester has opened its doors to pupils following a huge effort involving our council and a range of partners.

Part of Greenwood Academies Trust it welcomes young people between the ages of 4 to 18 years with additional and complex needs.

A special opening ahead of the start of the school term included speeches from those involved in the project, a tour of the new facilities, and a ribbon cutting ceremony.

New film focuses on men's mental health



We've worked with partners at North Northamptonshire Council on a new campaign to raise awareness of the importance of male mental health.

Launched as part of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, it features a new film highlighting the stories of local men, encouraging open conversations and offering messages of hope.

Suicide remains a leading cause of death among males, accounting for around three-quarters of all suicides in the UK. In Northamptonshire, around 65 people take their own life each year, with males aged 40–60 statistically at higher risk.

A6 postcard - hwrc booking-0.3

Time for a trip to the tip?

From 3 November 2025, you will need to



Book before you visit

Secure a slot at your local recycling centre,
scan the QR code, visit: **westnorthants.gov.uk**
or call us on **0300 126 7000**

West Northamptonshire Council

West Northants recycles

Book before you visit

From 3 November 2025, residents planning to visit any of our recycling centres must book a free slot first.

The new system is being introduced to reduce traffic and wait times, and ensure fair access to the centres for West Northamptonshire residents.

Bookings can be made up to two weeks in advance or on the day at least 30 minutes before arrival.

The booking system opens for reservations from 20 October 2025

reserve > recycle > relax

It's quick and easy to reserve a slot online at **westnorthants.gov.uk/hwrc**

or call us on **0300 126 7000**

Did you know...

Our recycling centres are open seven days a week from 10am to 4pm

Disposing of trade waste or live outside of West Northants?

Please see our website for info.



Events and activities



World Cup fever hits West Northants













West Northamptonshire has gone Rugby World Cup crazy in recent weeks, with thousands of fans enjoying matches at Franklin's Gardens as well as all the fun activities at the Fan Zone in Northampton's Market Square.

A thumping win for England's Red Roses against Samoa at Franklin's Gardens was perhaps the highlight of a fortnight of activity, which included a Fan Zone in Northampton Market Square and community visits to local rugby clubs and other venues across West Northamptonshire, including a appointment at Daventry Library for the Red Roses.

The final takes place at Twickenham on Saturday (27 September) and will be shown on the big screen in Northampton Market Square. The event, which will also celebrate the success of the tournament, will also feature a DJ, family fun, stalls selling food and drink and a licensed bar. It will run from midday to 7pm.

County day of celebration



The county of Northamptonshire will be celebrated during an event coming to Northampton Market Square this autumn.

Northamptonshire Day will run from 1pm to 7.30pm on Saturday 25 October, offering a range of activities including live entertainment from local artists, stalls, heritage and cultural exhibitions and much more.

Local businesses, schools, and community organisations are also encouraged to get involved by decorating their premises in Northamptonshire colours, running themed promotions, or hosting events of their own.

Have your say



Details of some of our current consultations are listed below, but don't forget you can visit our Consultation Hub throughout the month to discover and take part in all of the consultations and engagement activities run by Council

How can museum be improved?

We're inviting people to have their say on the future of Northampton Museum & Art Gallery as part of an exciting new potential development.

Feedback gathered through the survey will form part of a bid of up to £10 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund which, if successful, would help the museum re-imagine how its world-class collections and unique stories are shared, celebrated, and preserved for future generations.

The deadline for comments is 13 October.

Local validation list

We're inviting comments on our draft Local Validation List - a document that outlines the information required when submitting a planning application.

The consultation forms part of a wider improvement plan for our Planning and Building Control Service, as we aim to make the planning process more efficient, transparent, and responsive to local needs.

The deadline for comments is 26 October

Cycling and walking infrastructure plan

Residents, businesses, and stakeholders are being encouraged to share their views on the draft Northampton Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

This long-term strategy aims to improve walking, wheeling, cycling, and scooting across the town, outlining how we will make active travel safer and more accessible over the next decade and beyond. The deadline for comments is 5 October

Town and Parish Council Help Centre



Town and Parish Councils have dedicated officers at our Council who can be contacted for help and support with all things WNC.

Connected Communities Coordinator Alan Burns and Community Cohesion Officer Sophie Ellidge have a remit to maintain and enhance good working relationships between West Northamptonshire Council and Town and Parish colleagues.

Find out more on the Town and Parish Council help centre on our website, or email alan.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk or sophie.ellidge@westnorthants.gov.uk for more information.

Clerks are also encouraged to use the self-service options on our website to ask questions and access Council services.

Our news releases



We have issued the following press releases over the last month:

- New provider appointed to deliver vital homelessness support in Northampton | West Northamptonshire Council - 22 Aug
- Prepare for the unexpected: join September's emergency planning campaign | West Northamptonshire Council - 26 Aug

- Bus users encouraged to complete survey to improve local services | West Northamptonshire Council - 26 Aug
- A final chance to have your say on alternative education in West Northamptonshire | West Northamptonshire Council - 26 Aug
- Extraordinary meeting to debate asylum accommodation is cancelled | West Northamptonshire Council - 26 Aug
- Brackley, Silverstone and Towcester bus service improvements | West Northamptonshire Council - 27 Aug
- Flying the flag with pride and safety | West Northamptonshire Council - 27 Aug
- Northamptonshire Children's Trust champions fostering at Women's Rugby World Cup | West Northamptonshire Council - 28 Aug
- There's still time to join the 2025 Summer Reading Challenge | West Northamptonshire Council - 28 Aug
- Statement regarding Epping asylum appeal ruling | West Northamptonshire Council - 29 Aug
- Planning made clearer: views sought on what's required to submit planning applications | West Northamptonshire Council - 1 Sept
- Council takes first steps towards planning action over asylum hotels | West Northamptonshire Council - 1 Sept
- SEND Support Service is changing: introducing the Inclusion and Intervention Support Team | West Northamptonshire Council - 2 Sept
- One year of enhanced support for unpaid carers | West Northamptonshire Council - 2 Sept
- Council achieves silver award in national environmental scheme | West Northamptonshire Council - 2 Sept
- 35 Northamptonshire start-ups awarded £2,000 grants through Build Your Business 2.0 | West Northamptonshire Council - 3 Sept
- Northamptonshire to celebrate Heritage Open Days with record number of activities | West Northamptonshire Council - 3 Sept
- Week of activities to commemorate 350-year anniversary of the Great Fire of Northampton | West Northamptonshire Council - 4 September

- £400k investment to boost skills and opportunities in West Northants | West Northamptonshire Council - 4 Sept
- Volunteers help Sixfields sparkle for World Cup | West Northamptonshire Council - 5 Sept
- Tiffield Academy: A new special school opens to support children with additional needs | West Northamptonshire Council - 5 Sept
- Deconstruction of former stores under way | West Northamptonshire Council - 8 Sept
- Males across Northamptonshire share their mental health experiences | West Northamptonshire Council - 10 Sept
- Council works to tackle in-year budget pressures | West Northamptonshire Council - 11 Sept
- It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2026 | West Northamptonshire Council - 11 Sept
- Parents urged to ensure their children are up to date with vaccines this winter | West Northamptonshire Council - 11 Sept
- Amazing Northampton Run attracts elite Kenyan athlete | West Northamptonshire Council - 12 Sept
- West Northants shines as thousands flock to Women's Rugby World Cup matches and Fan Zones | West Northamptonshire Council - 15 Sept
- Put falls prevention into practice | West Northamptonshire Council - 15 Sept
- Two new centres expand adult learning opportunities in Northamptonshire | West Northamptonshire Council - 15 Sept
- Record-breaking day as 1,500 runners shine at Amazing Northampton Run | West Northamptonshire Council - 15 Sept
- West Northants Council to proactively target inward investment and drive innovation | West Northamptonshire Council - 16 Sept
- Residents reminded to re-apply for postal voting arrangements | West Northamptonshire Council - 16 Sept
- Histories of Northamptonshire brings 150 million years of stories to life at Northampton Museum & Art Gallery | West Northamptonshire Council - 17 Sept

- Council's One Stop Shop to welcome residents at One Angel Square from 25 September | West Northamptonshire Council - 18 Sept
- Residents invited to help shape the future of Northampton Museum & Art Gallery | West Northamptonshire Council - 19 Sept
- Plans progress to convert disused site into 18 new affordable homes | West Northamptonshire Council - 19 Sept