

Dear Councillors and villagers,

This is my quarterly update as your Unitary Councillor.

Before, I give you some updates about WNC, I would like to thank you all for your warm welcome at your parish meetings. I have been to all the new villages I now represent and I am looking forward to working with you all in a collaborative manner. I am so grateful to you as you are all volunteers doing a sterling work. What you do on behalf of your village is very often overlooked unless something controversial happens.

As your WNC councillor, I am here to help you to make your work easier. Therefore, if you have an issue with WNC and get frustrated, you should not hesitate to contact me. A problem is always easier when shared.

My other role as a councillor is to help individuals. So please, if someone you know in the village needs the support with accessing the services that the council provides (eg Children SEND, Adult Social Care, Planning...), please give them my email [Cecile.Irving-Swift@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Cecile.Irving-Swift@westnorthants.gov.uk) and I shall endeavour to help them to navigate the complexity of the system. This is the role that as a councillor I like the most as I can often by listening help very quickly. Anyone who contacts me can rest assured that they do so in complete confidence as I have signed a strict code of conduct.

Now, let me update you on WNC.

The most critical point is the matter of finances. At Period 4, WNC has a deficit just above £ 9 millions having used all its contingencies and looking towards the winter months already in a vulnerable position. Adding to this pressure, the administration has to prepare the budget for 2026/2027 where more savings have to be found.

WNC officers are looking at all possible savings to deliver a balanced budget at the end of March 2026. This actual budget was voted in February 2025 and should be deliverable if the cabinet takes the right decisions. I shall keep you informed.

Regarding planning, WNC is preparing the forward plan until 2050. 10 000 more houses have been allocated. All the growth cannot be in WNC four towns, some will be in rural area. For years, I have been an advocate for Neighbourhood plan. As the legislation stands today, it is one of the best protection for villages. A number of the villages in the Rural North East had one. I would encourage the villages which do not have one to

consider the option, knowing that unfortunately no more grants are available to cover consultancy fees at the moment.

And finally I would like to highlight some information you might find useful (of course, you can find them yourself by looking on WNC website)

- E-LIBRARY card : If you do not have one yet, I truly recommend you ask for you on line . when you receive your number and passcode, you will have accessed to Press Reader and ebooks for free
- A new carer guide has been launched. It has been compiled by the NHS, WNC in collaboration with Carers
- New booking system introduced for Recycling Centers
- WNC and Fix my street apps – please use it to report .
- New One Stop Shop at Angel Square Northampton

I hope you find my update useful. Please let me know if you would like me to cover a specific topic in my next quarterly update.

Kind regards

Cecile

Cllr Irving-Swift

Rural North East Rural Ward

Arthingworth, Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025