Town & Parish Briefing 50

Latest news

Parish Conference aims to strengthen partnerships

Will you be joining us at this year's West Northamptonshire Council Parish Conference?

Taking place at The Forum in Towcester on Thursday 26 November, *Parishes in Partnership* provides an opportunity to network with fellow councils, hear from speakers, and strengthen partnership working across West Northamptonshire.

Due to limited capacity, attendance is restricted to two delegates per Town or Parish Council, and advance booking is required. Attendees are asked to provide the names of their delegates when reserving places.

The event will open from 9am for networking, with the conference starting at 10am.

If any places remain available, additional tickets will be released two weeks before the event, allowing councils to book further delegates where capacity allows.

There are currently less than 30 per cent of tickets remaining, so please book your place at WNC Annual Parish Conference – Parishes in Partnership

Local Plan consultation to begin as appeals over Government intervention continue

Residents and businesses can provide formal representations on the Publication Version (Regulation 19) of the emerging West Northamptonshire Local Plan from Monday (5 October).

The consultation gives people an opportunity to comment on whether the document, prepared in line with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012, is legally compliant and sound.

As Town and Parish Councils will be aware, the Council last month decided to restart the preparation of a new Local Plan based on the 2026 National Planning Policy Framework and Town and Country Planning Regulations 2026.

However, following intervention by Ministers, the Council has been directed to submit the current draft for examination by 31 December 2026 and continue progressing it through the examination process.

Launching the Regulation 19 consultation next week enables us to meet that deadline while continuing to make the case that Government intervention is unnecessary.

Earlier this week, we wrote to Ministers setting out our concerns, arguing that moving ahead with the current draft could increase the risk of delays if issues raised during consultation are subsequently upheld by an independent Planning Inspector.

We also highlighted the need for further work on assessing alternative growth options and understanding the capacity of the local electricity network before final decisions are made about future patterns of development.

Ministers will now consider our representations, and we will continue to engage constructively as they determine the next steps.

The consultation will go live on Monday at www.westnorthants.gov.uk/consultations

Latest air quality reports continues to show progress

Cleaner air is helping protect health, with no locations in West Northamptonshire recording nitrogen dioxide levels above the national limit in 2025.

The improvement means we have been able to remove four of the Air Quality Management Areas that had been put in place in areas across West Northamptonshire in a bid to reduce pollution.

Three AQMAs remain in West Northamptonshire - all in Northampton - and these will continue to be monitored.

A big part of these improvements has been achieved through investing in schemes and initiatives which are designed to reduce air pollution, including 71 new electric buses which operate on the busiest routes in Northampton and will assist in improving air quality in the town.

Additionally, a scheme to install more than 3,000 new electric vehicle charging points across the area was launched in summer 2026, supporting more residents who want to switch to cleaner vehicles.

To support healthier homes, a two-year DEFRA-funded project is helping people understand the health risks associated with Particulate Matter (PM), the tiny airborne particles released when fuel is burned, and the impact of domestic solid fuel burning from sources such as wood burning stoves and open fires.

Residents can find easy-to-follow guidance by searching online for The Burning Question webpage.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy approved

The first Local Nature Recovery Strategy for West Northamptonshire has been approved.

Required by the Environment Act 2021, the Strategy identifies long lasting priorities, practical actions to deliver them, and the places where these efforts will have the most impact for nature recovery.

The Strategy strives to replenish West Northamptonshire's wildlife by focusing on the principles of more, bigger, better, and joined up. These actions are categorised on five habitat types - farmland, woodland, grassland, freshwater and wetland, and urban - and supporting the species that live in them.

It also outlines how nature-based solutions such as tree planting, wetland restoration and sustainable drainage can tackle environment risks, and encourages collective action to safeguard and restore the natural environment.

- View the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

News round-up

Refreshed Student Route supporting safer nights out: A walking route to help students get home safely after a night out in Northampton has been refreshed, with new signage and an updated map.

Major gym upgrades complete: Getting active is becoming easier with major improvements now complete at four leisure centres, giving communities access to larger, more modern gym facilities. The latest upgrades at Lings Forum Leisure Centre, Danes Camp Leisure Centre, Daventry Leisure Centre and Moulton Leisure Centre include new fitness equipment, refreshed workout spaces and hydro massage beds.

It's time to apply for your child's school place for September 2027: Parents and carers of children living in West Northamptonshire can now apply for a reception place at 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 2027 intake.

Orange Button Scheme launched to strengthen suicide prevention support: North and West Northamptonshire Councils have launched the Orange Button Scheme across Northamptonshire, creating a visible network of trained people who can support conversations about suicide and help people access the right support when they need it most.

Court order secured to tackle anti-social behaviour at Northampton property: A three-month Closure Order has been obtained on a Northampton property following persistent reports of anti-social behaviour, criminality, and drug-related activity.

Community payback helps improve safety and promotes wildlife: The Community Payback Team has been working alongside West Northamptonshire Council to improve public safety and create cleaner, safer spaces for residents, students, visitors and wildlife.

Council secures 87 affordable homes for residents in West Northamptonshire: Nearly 90 affordable homes have been secured for local residents after we agreed to acquire 87 properties at the Landimore Road development in Hardingstone, Northampton.

Ten new traffic enforcement sites to be added across West Northamptonshire: Ten new locations across West Northamptonshire will be brought into the Council's traffic enforcement programme in the coming weeks after agreement by Cabinet.

New temporary accommodation scheme nears completion in Northampton: A new temporary accommodation development at Lings Park in Weston Favell is nearing completion, marking an important milestone in West Northamptonshire Council's plans to provide better quality accommodation for families and individuals facing homelessness.

Find out more

- Read all of our news releases at westnorthants.gov.uk/news
- Sign-up to our newsletters here

Town and Parish Council updates

Focus on young people at latest Forum

The latest Larger Parish Councils Forum focused on services and support available for children, young people and families across West Northamptonshire.

Family Hubs West Northamptonshire Council provided an update on the Family Hubs programme, which offers universal family support, information, advice and community-based activities. Main hubs are located in Towcester and Daventry, supported by spoke sites in Moulton, Kingsthorpe and Upton. Outreach activity is also taking place through schools, libraries, medical centres and community venues to improve engagement with families.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme N-Sport presented an overview of the HAF programme, which provides free holiday activities and meals for eligible children and young people. Around 25,000 places are available, with activities searchable by location, age and SEND requirements. Parish councils were encouraged to help promote local opportunities and support participation amongst eligible families.

Supporting Children and Young People Discussions highlighted the importance of providing accessible, affordable and inclusive activities for children and young people, particularly during school holiday periods. Examples of successful local initiatives included sports and activity programmes funded through external grants and delivered in partnership with local organisations.

Care Experienced Young People and Care Leavers Attendees received information on support available for care experienced young people, including the Care Leavers Covenant and the Independent Visitor Service, which provides volunteer mentors and trusted adult relationships for young people in care.

Children and Young People Northamptonshire (CYPN) CYPN shared details of its work supporting youth clubs, community-led youth provision, Youth Parliament and Youth Council engagement. The organisation continues to work with local partners to ensure young people have opportunities to influence decisions affecting their communities.

The Lowdown The Lowdown provided an update on its mental health and wellbeing services for young people aged 8 to 25. Recent investment has expanded facilities and increased service capacity. The organisation now delivers a range of support services, including counselling, drop-in provision, youth groups and transition support for young people moving from CAMHS into adult services.

Working in Partnership A key theme throughout the forum was the value of partnership working between parish councils, local authorities, community organisations and service providers. Better information sharing, promotion of local opportunities and collaborative

approaches were identified as important ways of improving outcomes for children, young people and families across West Northamptonshire.

The forum concluded with a shared commitment to strengthening local partnerships and ensuring that children, young people and families can access the support and opportunities they need within their communities.

Progress on environmental services transformation

Work is progressing to bring the delivery of waste and recycling collections and street cleansing services in-house from June 2028.

We're also looking at how other services will be provided in the future, including grounds maintenance, cemeteries, sports pitches and allotments, and this work will continue over the coming years to help make services more consistent, efficient and sustainable across West Northamptonshire.

From April 2027, households with their own set of wheelie bins will move to the same collection system currently used in the Daventry area, where general waste is collected every three weeks.

Residents who have their waste and recycling collected in sacks, or who have a communal collection point, are not affected by these changes and their services continue unchanged.

This is called the 123+ collection service, and will see:

- Food waste collected every week (1)
- Recycling collected every two weeks (2)
- General waste collected every three weeks (3)
- An optional, paid-for garden waste collection service (+)

To support residents to make the change, we'll be communicating a series of hints and tips to help people make the most of the recycling services available to them to help reduce the amount of waste that goes in the black bin.

Residents can find out more about three weekly collections on our website

Chance to discuss planning matters

Town and Parish Councillors and Clerks are invited to book dedicated sessions with Stephanie Gibrat, Assistant Director for Planning to discuss current planning matters, upcoming proposals, or any issues where guidance would be helpful.

These sessions are designed to provide the opportunity to ask any questions on the planning process and allow two-way conversation relating to planning matters.

The next sessions with available slots will take place on:

- Thursday 17 December, 11am to 1pm
- Tuesday 26 January 2027, 2pm to 4pm

If you would like to raise a specific topic or explore planning considerations for your area, please book a slot by contacting Linda.Aphale@westnorthants.gov.uk

Please note spaces are limited and are allocated on a first come basis.

Spotlight on...

Moulton Library Health & Wellbeing Hub

Moulton Library Health & Wellbeing Hub shared a successful example of how local councils and community organisations can support children, young people and families during the school holidays.

Over the summer break, the Hub delivered more than 5,300 activity spaces, including over 3,300 free places, through a varied programme of activities ranging from family games and crafts to sports, educational sessions and community events.

The programme demonstrated how existing community assets, volunteers, local businesses and partnerships can be used creatively to deliver affordable and accessible activities, helping to reduce pressures on families during school holidays while creating opportunities for children and young people to learn, socialise and stay active.

The Hub also highlighted the importance of effective promotion, strong community partnerships and ensuring that free opportunities are available alongside paid activities so that all families can participate.

Could your council do something similar? Whether you are considering a small-scale activity programme, working with local partners, making better use of community spaces, or exploring ways to support children and young people during school holiday periods, please contact your **Parish Liaison Team** (alan.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk and sophie.ellidge@westnorthants.gov.uk) who would be happy to discuss ideas, share good practice and help connect you with relevant partners and future funding opportunities.

Events and activities

Northamptonshire Day returns this month

A free day of entertainment, community activities, heritage displays and local food and drink is coming to the county next month.

After the success of last year's event in Northampton Market Square, Northamptonshire Day will be held in Kettering town centre on Sunday 25 October.

Visitors can enjoy a packed programme featuring live entertainment, community showcases, heritage attractions, family-friendly activities and a range of local food and drink, offering something for all ages to enjoy.

Discover more events and activities

- Visit the events page on our website

Have your say

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

Current consultations

Active Travel in Brackley

We're asking Brackley residents their views on proposals to make walking, wheeling and cycling safer and easier across the town.

- The deadline for comments is 11 October

Northampton Area Transport Strategy

Views are being sought on a new strategy setting out a long-term vision for improving transport across Northampton as it continues to grow and develop.

The draft Northampton Area Transport Strategy looks ahead to 2036 and beyond, identifying ways to support future growth, reduce congestion and give people more attractive alternatives to private car travel.

- The deadline for comments is 15 November

Town and Parish Council Help Centre

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

Help and support for your council

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.

1 - Alan and Sophie