

Leader's Update

20 September 2024

Issue: 83

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

This issue includes:

- New bus services connecting communities in North Northamptonshire.
- New Corby community space officially opens.
- Work to tackle Ash Dieback continues in North Northamptonshire Council parks.
- Apply now for energy-saving upgrade grant for homes with off-grid gas heating systems.
- Northamptonshire seeks dynamic leader for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Chair.
- Climate change framework and climate change attitudes and behaviours.
- Views sought on final proposals for improving walking and cycling routes in Wellingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds areas.

In addition, you will find below some useful information about forthcoming meetings, Your Voice Matters (our consultation and engagement hub), all the latest press releases and our top social media posts.

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

New bus services connecting communities in North Northamptonshire

New bus services are being introduced across the North Northamptonshire Council area for help residents travel to work or school, for shopping or leisure.

The new services have been subsidised by the council from its own budgets, through funding from the government's Bus Service Improvement Programme and from developer contributions.

The funding has been used to provide new bus services to a number of communities and to enhance some existing services on the network.

The move supports the council's Bus Service Improvement Plan which was recently approved by Executive.

Well-connected communities help develop social cohesion and are vital component in assisting economic growth and workforce mobility.

Buses play a major role in reducing congestion on our roads, reducing pollution and helping us meet our ambitious carbon reduction targets.

Further details can be found on the [Buses and transport](#) section of our website and in the recent press release: [New bus services to help connect communities in North Northamptonshire](#).

New Corby community space officially opens

North Northamptonshire Council has opened a new community outdoor hub in Corby.

Following the success of the Corby Woodland Project, the Corby Growing Project has developed a new outdoor green space in the Coronation Park Pavilion to enable residents to come together socially.

The Corby Woodland Project has been caring for Corby's woodland areas for around two decades. While the majority of the dedicated team of volunteers enjoy outdoor and social activities, not all of them are able to take part in coppicing or the more physical activities.

Following interest from volunteers wishing to grow plants and support more local causes, the Corby Growing Project was established, with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The hub has now developed following requests to host yoga, wellbeing sessions and youth groups.

The site was opened last week by the Chair of North Northamptonshire Council, Lora Lawman. Also in attendance were Lee Barron, Corby and East Northamptonshire MP and Adele Wylie, Chief Executive at North Northamptonshire Council. Councillors from North Northamptonshire Council also attended: Cllr Gill Mercer, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, Cllr Harriet Pentland, Executive Member for Climate and Green Environment and Cllr Graham Lawman.

Thank you to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the David Cock Foundation and ReGen for the generous donations that have contributed to the success of various projects across the site.

Work to tackle Ash Dieback continues in North Northamptonshire Council parks

Due to a fungal disease which affects ash trees across the UK, North Northamptonshire Council will re-start work from early October - after the end of the nesting season - to remove potentially hazardous trees from several council-owned parks and green spaces.

Ash Dieback is a fungal disease which it is estimated will result in the loss of a large proportion of ash trees across the UK. Across the country, there is ongoing work to ensure that all trees are as safe as possible and the work in North Northamptonshire has been carefully considered, following national guidance, consultation with experts and with due diligence.

All work being completed is following guidance from DEFRA, the Tree Council, the Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission.

Instead of mass felling, the council is taking a considered approach, removing individual, infected trees from King's Wood Local Nature Reserve, Irchester Country Park and East Carlton Countryside Park.

Work started on this project last year and this winter the total number of trees which will be felled is about 35 predominately in King's Wood Local Nature Reserve. A proportion of the felled timber will be repurposed for habitat piles and the rest will replenish the firewood stock, which provides an income for the parks and woodland service.

Firstly, any trees that pose a high health and safety risk by footpaths, highways and housing will be removed. By removing these trees, sunlight will be able to reach the woodland floor, encouraging new growth of flowers and other vegetation, which will support butterflies and other invertebrates. Doing this will not only make the woodland safer, but it will also make it more diverse and encourage a wider variety of wildlife into the area.

Felling and leaving diseased timber in situ is not a threat to other species but will have a high habitat value and such will be cut into 1m to 2m lengths and stacked up to create log piles, creating small habitats for newts, invertebrates and small mammals to hibernate or use as cover.

Work will start from early October, and it is estimated that it will take about two months to complete.

Find out more on the [Ash dieback management](#) section of our website.

Apply now for energy-saving upgrade grant for homes with off-grid gas heating systems

Earlier this year, North Northamptonshire Council announced the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) - a scheme that provides free energy-saving upgrades to residents with off-gas heating systems.

Applications are open until Monday 30 September 2024 to allow for any approved works to be completed before the scheme ends in March 2025.

Improvements could include insulation or ventilation upgrades, solar panels or a low carbon heating system.

Funding is open to private tenants, landlords and homeowners - and could help you to use less energy, reduce your carbon footprint and spend less on your energy bills.

The grant is available to households meeting specific criteria, including not being heated by mains gas, having a combined annual income of less than £36,000, and having a home that an Energy Performance Certificate declares as 'hard to heat.'

Landlords are also encouraged to apply, subject to eligibility.

The HUG2 scheme aims to phase out the use of fossil fuel heating, supporting the UK's 2050 Net Zero commitment, and promoting household health and wellbeing through the reduction of cold homes.

This is a fantastic opportunity so please check if you are eligible to apply.

For further details, please visit the [Energy grants and support](#) section of our website or call 0800 107 8883.

We have partnered with Agility Eco, a specialist company who will manage all works on your behalf. You can phone them on 0800 107 8883 with any queries.

Northamptonshire seeks dynamic leader for Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Chair

Local partners are excited to announce the launch of a recruitment campaign to appoint a Chair to drive forward the establishment and delivery of a Northamptonshire Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).

This pivotal role offers a unique opportunity for an experienced and passionate leader to drive forward the region's tourism strategy and enhance the local visitor economy.

The LVEP Chair will play a key role in positioning Northamptonshire as a top destination for both domestic and international visitors. By bringing together local businesses, government entities, and community groups, the Chair will lead efforts to showcase the region's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes and vibrant events.

The ideal candidate will possess a strong background in tourism, hospitality, or a related field, with proven leadership experience. They will be tasked with developing and implementing strategic initiatives that will attract more visitors to the area, support local businesses, and contribute to the sustainable growth of Northamptonshire's economy.

Responsibilities of the LVEP Chair will include:

- Overseeing the implementation of the comprehensive Northamptonshire Tourism Strategy.
- Collaborating with local and national stakeholders to promote Northamptonshire's attractions.
- Enhancing marketing efforts to raise the region's profile.
- Supporting local businesses in maximizing the benefits of tourism.
- Ensuring sustainable growth of the visitor economy through innovative practices.

This position represents an exciting challenge for a dynamic leader eager to make a significant impact on Northamptonshire's future. The successful candidate will have the opportunity to work closely with a diverse range of partners, including tourism boards, local councils, cultural organisations, Voluntary

Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE's) and businesses, to create a thriving visitor economy that benefits everyone in the region.

Applications for the LVEP Chair position are now open, and interested candidates are encouraged to apply by 5pm on Tuesday 24 September. For more information on the role and how to apply, please visit the [Discover Northamptonshire](#) website or contact Jack.Pishhorn@NorthNorthants.gov.uk.

Climate change framework and climate change attitudes and behaviours

Residents are being asked to have their say on the council's draft climate change framework.

The draft framework will be used to inform the council's Climate Change Strategy, and outlines the council's vision, approach and key areas of focus to address the effects of climate change over the next six years.

The framework identifies six key areas of focus that climate change could impact in North Northamptonshire: Transport, Homes and the Built Environment, Nature, Food and Farming, Energy, Green Economy and Waste.

Running parallel to this consultation is another survey which asks people for more general views on their attitudes and behaviours on climate change. Responses from this survey will also be used to help shape the strategy.

Please visit the Your Voice Matters hub for further information on both surveys, including how to have your say, via the links below:

- [Climate Change framework – have your say](#)
- [Climate Change attitudes and behaviours](#)

Both of these surveys close on 20 October 2024.

Views sought on final proposals for improving walking and cycling routes in Wellingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds areas

North Northamptonshire Council is asking residents to give their views on final draft proposals for a strategy to shape walking, wheeling and cycling routes in Wellingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds and the surrounding rural areas.

Known as a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) the blueprint will provide a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements at a local level, enabling a long-term approach to developing networks for the next ten years.

The LCWIP also forms a vital part of the government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.

By creating a good network plan for safe walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting in the area, the council will also be in a stronger position to bid for (and win) government funding or acquire funding from other sources to implement these changes.

Originally, there was early engagement with the local community and other stakeholders to develop initial ideas covering specific routes across the area.

After preliminary consultation on these suggestions in May this year, feedback and views were then taken into consideration to further refine the proposals.

A good network gives local people of all ages and abilities better options on how to travel for everyday journeys such as to work, education, healthcare, shopping, social or leisure activities. It will help reduce carbon emissions, reduce wear on roads and congestion, improve air quality, improve access, boost health and wellbeing and improve quality of life for everyone.

The consultation on these final proposals will run until Sunday 27 October.

Have your say:

- Complete the online survey at: [Wellingborough & Rushden Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - Final stage](#).
- Write to FAO David Prior, Interim Principal Transport Planner, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Kettering, NN16 8TL.
- Email yourvoicematters@northnorthants.gov.uk.

Following feedback and the final review, the draft Wellingborough and Rushden Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will be put before Executive for final approval and adoption.

Your Voice Matters

Please find below details of our other current consultations and engagement activities. Please use the links below to provide your feedback and inform council decisions and share with family and friends who may be interested in shaping future plans.

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

- [Designation of the Kettering Central Neighbourhood Area](#). Closes 3 October 2024.
- [Give us your views on Pharmaceutical Needs](#). Closes 6 October 2024.
- [Polling District and Polling Place Review 2024](#). Closes 25 October 2024.

Forthcoming meetings

Executive

- Thursday 10 October from 10am.

Full Council

- Thursday 17 October from 6pm.

The agenda and papers will be published on the [Council meetings](#) section of our website in the week before the meeting.

These meetings will be live streamed on our [YouTube](#) channel.

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):

- [Work to tackle Ash Dieback continues in North Northamptonshire Council parks](#)
- [Northamptonshire seeks dynamic leader for Local Visitor Economy Partnership \(LVEP\) Chair](#)
- [Project blooms into life as new Corby community space officially opens](#)
- [Deadline looms to apply for energy saving upgrade grant for homes with off-gas heating systems](#)
- [Views sought on final proposals for improving walking and cycling routes in Wellingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds areas](#)
- [Have your say on the Council's draft climate change framework outlining plans to address the effects of climate change in North Northamptonshire](#)
- [New bus services to help connect communities in North Northamptonshire](#)
- [Guidance on illegal drug use issued by authorities across Northamptonshire](#)

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 (16 to 18 September)

- Project blooms into life as new Corby community space officially opens <https://ow.ly/BPIY50Tp6RB> (Reach 11,922, Link Clicks 39, Engagements 556)
- We're working with Northamptonshire Carers to bring you Carer's One Stop Shops across the region. The events, open to unpaid carers, and will provide guidance and support by professionals from the organisation. Upcoming dates and venues: 21 Sept - All Saints Church in Earls Barton (10.30am-12.30pm). 4 Oct - Denford Village Hall (10am-3pm). 11 Oct - Easton-on-the-Hill Community Centre (10am-3pm). 17 Oct - Cranford Village Hall (10am-12.20pm). For more info: 01933 677907 community@northamptonshire-carers.org (Reach 5,484, Link Clicks 0, Engagements 107)
- Views sought on final proposals for improving walking and cycling routes in Wellingborough, Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Raunds areas <https://ow.ly/7nQc50Toa6a> (Reach 3,706, Link Clicks 30, Engagements 270)

Top Tweets so far this week (16 to 18 September)

- With so many beautiful waterways in North Northamptonshire, please make sure you keep each other safe if you walk past open water on your way home from a night out. #BeAMate (Impressions 1,025)
- Started to make plans for Christmas nights out? How are you getting home? Well if you walk past open water, make sure you look after each other, and don't let a mate, who has had one too many, walk home alone. We're supporting @RLSSUK #BeAMate campaign - don't drink and drown. (Impressions 355)
- A by-election will take place on 10 October for a Councillor for Burton and Broughton Ward on North Northamptonshire Council. Find out more: <https://ow.ly/zMcY50To11L> (Impressions 335)

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have any ideas for items to include in future updates, please email me at executive@northnorthants.gov.uk.

With Best Wishes,
Jason