

Leader's Update

21 March 2025

Issue: 96

Introduction and welcome

Welcome to my latest Update.

Today's edition includes:

- North Northamptonshire elections - Key dates.
- North Northamptonshire Council allocated £120,000 in grant funding between 46 local charities and non-profit organisations.
- 750 trees planted in new micro forest for Wellingborough.
- Smokers in North Northamptonshire signposted to local stop smoking services.
- Temporary road closures for VE Day street parties.

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!

North Northamptonshire elections - Key dates

Residents are being encouraged to get ready for elections taking place in North Northamptonshire. This follows the publishing of the Notice of Election on Friday 7 March.

On Thursday 1 May, the North Northamptonshire Council elections and Town and Parish Council elections will take place. These elections will be the first under changes to local government boundaries and wards, which will see a reduction in the number of councillors from 78 to 68, and some residents voting in a new or different ward. A list of the new boundaries is available on our website: [Upcoming elections](#).

Due to the changes in boundaries, your polling station might differ from the last time you voted, so please double check your poll card when it arrives. Poll cards are due to start landing on doorsteps across North Northamptonshire from next week.

Key dates:

- **Friday 11 April:** [Register to vote](#). If you have recently moved home or changed your name, you may need to update your details to ensure you can take part.
- **Monday 14 April:** [Apply for a postal vote](#).
- **Wednesday 23 April:** [Apply for a proxy vote](#).
- **Wednesday 23 April:** [Apply for ID to vote \(called a 'Voter Authority Certificate'\)](#) if you don't have an accepted form of ID.

Anyone wishing to vote in person now needs to bring acceptable photographic ID, an Anonymous Electors Document or a Voter Authority Certificate. A list of [Acceptable ID](#) can be found on our website. Applicants for Voter Authority Certificates must be registered to vote beforehand.

Please visit our website for more information on [North Northamptonshire elections](#). A list of candidates will be published closer to election day.

The results for the North Northamptonshire Council elections will be announced on Friday 2 May.

The Town and Parish Council elections results will be announced on Saturday 3 May.

North Northamptonshire Council allocated £120,000 in grant funding between 46 local charities and non-profit organisations

North Northamptonshire Council has allocated £120,000 towards local charities and non-profit organisations whose community work is improving the quality of life of residents. A wide variety of grants were allocated including those that will benefit children and young people, projects for physical and mental health, projects that benefit green spaces and to improve community connections.

Our Stronger Communities Team received 100 applications before Christmas and funded 46 of those organisations up to £5,000. Applicants were required to demonstrate that funding will be used to support one or more of the council's six key commitments as outlined in the council's Corporate Plan.

Charities and non -profit organisations were urged to bid for grants of up to £5,000 each and had to demonstrate that their applications benefitted the wider community and supported the strategic aims and objectives of the council.

The council's Grants Funding Panel were responsible for assessing and awarding the grants of up to £2,500. For those over that figure, the Oversight Board made the final decision.

750 trees planted in new micro forest for Wellingborough

A new micro forest has been established in Wellingborough, following a collaborative effort that saw 750 native trees planted at Castlefields Park last week. The council partnered with staff from [Tomorrow's Forests](#) (a tree planting and habitat restoration company) and volunteers from the [Wellingborough Eco Group](#) to bring this ambitious project to life.

This initiative was made possible through funding awarded as part of the Coronation Living Heritage Fund which was established to mark the Coronation of King Charles III. The funding has covered essential materials, resources and aftercare to help the micro forest establish and thrive for future generations. The council has been awarded £27,765 for the project, which also includes two other micro forests planted last year - one at Croyland Primary School in Wellingborough and the other in Kettering. The funding has been allocated for the careful selection and preparation of the sites, as well as the ongoing maintenance of the trees over the next three years.

A micro forest is a dense, fast-growing native woodland, about the size of a tennis court, using the methods pioneered by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki. Dense planting speeds up growth, increases resilience and improves survival rates of the woodland, producing a fully efficient woodland in 20 years, compared to the usual 100 years.

Micro forests provide a home for butterflies, birds, bees and other wildlife, and a space for people to connect with and learn about nature. Additionally, they help improve air quality and reduce pollution in urban areas.

Tree planting schemes like this one also enable volunteers to get directly involved and make a difference in their communities. Community groups, volunteers and schools will assist with the future maintenance of the Castlefields Park micro forest.

Smokers in North Northamptonshire signposted to local stop smoking services

Smokers in North Northamptonshire are being directed to local services to help them quit smoking for good.

Two in three long-term smokers die from smoking. Smoking causes 64,000 deaths in England each year. In North Northamptonshire, around 14.8% of adults smoke.

Our Stop Smoking Service offers:

- A dedicated stop smoking service, providing up to 12 weeks of free behavioural support.
- Tips and advice on how to stop smoking.
- Face-to-face or telephone appointments.
- Appointments available Monday to Friday across North Northamptonshire.
- A free course of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) which may include an e-cigarette starter kit and 12-week supply of e-liquid.

According to recent data, 95% of ex-smokers experience positive changes within just two weeks of quitting, including increased energy (45%), feeling healthier (42%), and improved breathing (42%).

The average smoker could save around £2,338 per year by quitting smoking (The economic impact of smoking - ASH).

If you are looking for help and advice to stop smoking, please complete the [Contact our Stop Smoking service](#) form and a member of our Stop Smoking team will contact you as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please visit our [Stop smoking](#) web pages or call 0300 126 5700 (option 2). You can contact the service directly without a referral from a health professional.

Temporary road closures for VE Day street parties

Victory in Europe (VE Day), which takes place on Thursday 8 May, marks the Allied victory in Europe.

This year is the 80th anniversary of VE Day and it will be commemorated with a series of events and celebrations that will share stories of the Second World War generation. Street parties will also be held across the country.

If you are planning a street party for VE Day, you can request a temporary road closure for your event. For more information and to apply, please visit our website: [Temporary road closure for community events](#). The application deadline is 11:59pm on Monday 31 March.

Don't miss out; plan a great day for you and your neighbours.

Please note that there will be no charge for road closures for VE Day events.

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](#).

- [Local Transport Plan - Baseline report](#). Closes 23 March 2025
- [Rural health and wellbeing needs assessment](#). Closes 25 March 2025
- [Active Communities in the Corby area](#). Closes 30 March 2025
- [Proposals to remove trees and vegetation as part of Corby Towns Fund project](#). Closes 4 April 2025
- [Draft Housing Strategy 2025-2030 - Have your say](#). Closes 11 April 2025
- [Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment - Have your say](#). Closes 6 May 2025

Forthcoming meetings

Executive

- Thursday 17 April from 10am.

Full Council

- Thursday 22 May from 6pm.

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

The 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):

- [750 trees planted in new micro forest for Wellingborough](#)
- [North Northamptonshire Council allocated £120,000 in grant funding between 46 local charities and non-profit organisations](#)
- [Smokers in North Northamptonshire signposted to local stop smoking services on national awareness day](#)
- [North Northants elections - reminder of the key dates](#)

Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts and share our [Facebook](#) and/or [X](#) posts when you can.

Top Facebook posts so far this week (17 to 19 March)

- From Tuesday, April 1 we will be moving to our summertime opening hours at our cemeteries - 8am until 7.30pm <https://ow.ly/B01M50VeOax> (Views 4,216, Reach 2,997, Interactions 19)
- Due to the weather forecast predicting sub-zero temperatures across North Northamptonshire, the council is triggering its Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). SWEP will be operational for 1 night on 18 March, this will be kept under daily review. The whereabouts and identity of any person sleeping rough should be reported to the Rough Sleeping Team during office hours, and to the council's Out of Hours Service at all other times as follows: Rough Sleeping Team Hotline: 01536 464630. Rough Sleeping Team Email: roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk. Out of Hours Service: 0300 126 3000. (Views 3,433, Reach 2,285, Interactions 24)
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. We recognise the many skills and talents of neurodivergent individuals, creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual. Come and find a career with us <https://careers.northnorthants.gov.uk/> (Views 1,812, Reach 1,351, Interactions 14)

Top Tweets so far this week (17 to 19 March)

- Please report anyone of concern to the Rough Sleeping Team. Phone: 01536 464630. Email: roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk. Contact the Out of Hours Service: 0300 126 3000. (Impressions 343)
- From Tuesday, April 1 we will be moving to our summertime opening hours at our cemeteries - 8am until 7.30pm <https://ow.ly/I9ic50VeOay> (Impressions 258)
- Today is the start of World Social Work Week. An annual worldwide event that aims to bring people together to learn, connect, and influence change. We want to take this opportunity to thank the amazing people that work in the industry and make a difference every day. (Impressions 249)

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