



# News from the Commissioner

## Police at the heart of their communities

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone and Chief Constable Ivan Balhatchet have restated their commitment to making police visible and accessible across the county following a visit to the reopened front office and public enquiry desk at Campbell Square Police Station in Northampton.

Danielle and Ivan talked to staff about the move and asked for feedback as they develop their plans to provide a stronger police presence in the county's major towns.

The front office and public enquiry desk re-opened at the station in January, after relocating from its previous base at Northampton Guildhall. Bringing the enquiry desk service back into a traditional police station location creates a more accessible facility closer to other policing services, such as neighbourhood policing teams.

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone explained that visible and accessible local policing is at the



“...traditional police station location creates a more accessible facility...”

heart of her public safety plan for Northamptonshire. She said: “The Chief Constable and I share an absolute commitment to putting police officers in the heart of the communities they serve and making it easier for the public to contact their police.

“We are actively looking at ways to give Northamptonshire Police a stronger presence in the county's other major towns. This could be through shared hubs with other organisations, seeking innovative ways of engaging the community, or by opening new facilities of our own, and we will balance the

needs of the community with the operational demands of policing.”

The Campbell Square enquiry desk is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm, and the locations and opening times of all the public enquiry desks can be found on the Northamptonshire Police website in the Contact Us section.

## Neighbourhood policing to be strengthened

The Chief and Commissioner are also committed to further strengthening neighbourhood policing in Northamptonshire, with a renewed focus on proactive, prevention-focused community policing, and a strong partnership approach.

Chief Constable Ivan Balhatchet said: “Alongside our ambition to develop community hubs in key locations across the county, and our commitment to supporting our rural communities through better access to and engagement with their local neighbourhood and rural crime officers, we are also introducing new teams dedicated to proactive crime-fighting, reduction and prevention.

“The Neighbourhood Crime Team, which is set to launch in April, will focus on burglary and personal robbery, with neighbourhood constables working alongside detectives and police staff investigators to respond to and investigate those crimes that can really impact on feelings of safety within communities.”



# Successful community grants scheme helps groups make a difference

Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone offers grants to support community initiatives that will reduce crime and disorder and make Northamptonshire a safer place.

The grant schemes are open to voluntary and community groups, parish, town and district councils and other groups who are carrying out projects that will make a difference to communities.

To receive funding, projects must support the objectives of the Commissioner’s strategic Police, Fire and Crime Plan for the county. Danielle’s new plan – Safe and Sound – is now published and so the grant

scheme will change to reflect it. We will announce details of the new scheme soon.

Over the last three months, Danielle has awarded almost £30,000 to community groups across Northamptonshire to fund community safety projects.

You can find out how to apply, and view the Commissioner’s Safe and Sound plan, on the website [www.northantspfcc.org.uk](http://www.northantspfcc.org.uk)



Danielle Stone attended safeguarding training for mosque leaders in January, funded through her Small Grants Scheme

## Groups benefit from grant awards

Groups from across Northamptonshire have benefited from grant awards in the last few months.

Among the beneficiaries is Athena Activities, which successfully applied for funding of £9,975 towards helping to fund their Young Leaders Academy in the Corby area. The Academy helps children aged between 11 and 17 to become responsible and helpful young leaders – giving them an accredited qualification in sports leadership, as well as supporting their long-term goals

to reach College, University, an apprenticeship, or employment. The funding was awarded through the Commissioner’s Making Northamptonshire Safer Fund, which awards groups between £3,000 and £10,000.

It is one of three streams of grant funding made available by the Commissioner. Another stream is the Small Grants scheme, which offers community groups smaller funds of up to £3,000.

### Recent beneficiaries include:

- Fishing For Minds project (£2,999) which operates in Rushden and Higham Ferrers as a diversionary activity to keep people away from anti-social behaviour and criminality.
- Northamptonshire Association for Youth Clubs (£2,560) towards its EXPLORE Youth Voice club’s emerging leaders programme.
- Northamptonshire Council of Mosques (£1,200) to help fund safeguarding training for their leaders in January 2025.

## Funding for road safety

The final funding stream is the Road Safety Community Fund, which is supported by the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance and offers grants of between £500 and £5,000.

Both Yarwell Parish Council and villagers in Laxton were awarded £5,000 for the purchase of Speed Indicator Devices, which will be installed in their respective villages and warn drivers to slow down if speeding.

And Weldon CofE Primary School have joined the ‘parking buddy’ scheme,

with £1,333 awarded to install six signs warning parents not to park inappropriately near the school.

Danielle said she is keen for community groups and not-for-profit organisations to take any opportunity they can to access these funding streams and help improve safety across Northamptonshire.

She said: “We want residents to feel safe in their local communities. We also want young people to have services in place that can help them

and divert them away from causing anti-social behaviour or potential criminality.

“It is fantastic to have been able to help community groups across the county to achieve those aims. I would encourage every community group to consider whether they can utilise the grant schemes I am offering to help continue and grow their initiatives.”

# Immediate Justice scheme set to continue

An innovative project delivering immediate justice for people who have committed low level offences to quickly make amends for their crimes, will be funded for a further year by Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone.

The Immediate Justice scheme was a pilot, funded for a year by the Home Office. It has been so popular and successful in supporting communities across the county, that Danielle has ensured the work will continue.

The programme offers those who have committed anti-social behaviour an alternative to prosecution by working to make improvements to community spaces.

More than 150 people have taken part in the programme, which sees offenders deliver a minimum of four hours repairing and improving our communities. This has helped to clean up and restore 70 public spaces across the county.



Immediate Justice has so far delivered over 750 hours of reparative work that has included litter picking, graffiti removal, gardening, and repairs across parks, public spaces, and community assets.

Danielle said she was pleased to continue the scheme, where the vast majority of people who have taken part so far, have not reoffended.

She said: “This work has had such a positive impact on people’s feelings of safety.

“Parks and community spaces are vital to communities, and I am so pleased that the programme has helped to repair damage where it has occurred and support other agencies in this work.”

## Playing field makeover in Flore

When local authorities were asked to suggest locations that could be cleared up by offenders taking part in the Immediate Justice programme, Flore Parish Council was quick off the mark.

Parish Councillor Geoff Fellows got in touch, suggesting that Brodie Lodge Playing Field would fit the bill. The Field is an important community asset in Flore, next to the primary school and used by the children every day.

Two offenders referred to the scheme spent a total of 12 hours cleaning up and repainting the play equipment in the park, which had become worn and overgrown.

Equipment including sanding paper and paint in primary colours was provided by the trustees of the playing field.

Parish Councillor and Brodie Lodge Playing Field Trustee Geoff Fellows said: "The playing field has been an important asset for Flore village for almost 70 years now. It is well-used by villagers for a large variety of activities, and of course it requires constant maintenance and attention to keep it safe for children and adults, in good repair, and looking cared for and attractive.

“The Immediate Justice Team pitched in to help us with the play equipment promptly and very willingly. We have been most impressed by their "can-do" attitude and cheerful approach.”

“We have been most impressed by their “can-do” attitude...”

The Immediate Justice Team are keen to hear of more locations that could benefit from the programme.

Please get in touch at

 [immediatejusticeteam@northants.police.uk](mailto:immediatejusticeteam@northants.police.uk)

with suggestions of locations and work that could be implemented.



# Home fire safety visits helping the vulnerable

More than 5,400 home fire safety visits have been conducted in 2024 by Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service to help protect the most vulnerable people across Northamptonshire.

Data from January to December 2024 shows that over 3,900 visits have been carried out by crews with an additional 1,550 visits being carried out by Home Fire Safety Advisors.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service's specialist Prevention Team and their Home Fire Safety Advisors focus on people who are most vulnerable to fire due to frailty and complex needs, with enhanced visits.

These enhanced visits to high-risk people look at all the factors that affect the likelihood of a fire taking place and consider how easily they can seek help and escape in an emergency.

Advice and support is provided to reduce the risk wherever possible with the addition of working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

Where needed, visits can take place with carers and other agencies to ensure a joint approach to keeping someone safe.

The Home Fire Safety Advisors can refer someone to other services if they identify the need for other kinds of care and support to reduce risks.

Team members also conduct visits alongside the Arson Task Force for people whose property is at risk of arson.

"...checked that you have suitable and working smoke alarms..."



Head of Prevention at Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service Lisa Bryan said: "Our Home Fire Safety Visits are all about keeping the most vulnerable people of Northamptonshire safe and I am delighted that the continued hard work of firefighters and fire staff has seen more people protected.

"We know through the customer feedback we receive that these visits make a positive difference, helping to change behaviours and making people feel safer."

Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Danielle Stone said: "Communities and prevention are at the core of my public safety plan, so I am pleased to see so many vulnerable people across Northamptonshire are being kept safe."

If you would like to refer yourself, a friend or a family member for a Home Fire Safety Visit, this can be done by visiting [www.northantsfire.gov.uk/home-safety-checks/](http://www.northantsfire.gov.uk/home-safety-checks/)

Or you can complete your own fire safety check online, which can be found at the link above.

Alternatively, you can also phone 01604 797 000.



## What happens during a Home Fire Safety Visit?

After showing their ID at the front door, firefighters will come into your house and discuss a variety of safety measures that can keep you safe at home.

They will ask questions about your lifestyle and quickly identify any potential fire hazards in your home. These include things like electrical safety, how to stay safe when cooking and the use of candles.

Once any hazards have been identified, crews will talk to you about whether further referrals to other agencies might help to keep you safe or refer you to our Home Fire Safety Advisors for an enhanced visit.

Firefighters won't leave until they have checked that you have suitable and working smoke alarms - and they will fit new ones if needed.

### Contact the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

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