



# Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers  
Leader of the Council



24 March 2023

## Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

Spring has finally sprung. It's great to see the daffodils and snowdrops lining our roadsides and in our parks. This Sunday the clocks 'spring forward' an hour at 1am. I'm sure we are all looking forward to the lighter evenings and some much-needed sunshine.

On 1 April North Northamptonshire Council will be two years old. We have had our challenges over the last two years like all other councils, but we are proud of what we have achieved. I would like to say a big thank you to all staff for working diligently to provide vital local services and for their continued support in delivering the council's ambitious plans for the future.

I was delighted to attend the official opening of the Discover Northamptonshire Hub at Rushden Lakes on Monday. The tourism hub has been designed as a fully interactive space, promoting all things Northamptonshire, including days out, attractions, walks, town and village offerings, places to eat, sustainable transport, heritage, accommodation and local and major events. The hub received £245,000 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The council is working closely with partners to provide learning and volunteering opportunities for those interested in working in the local tourism industry.

With only six weeks to go until the coronation of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort, residents who are planning to hold a street party over the coronation bank holiday weekend must submit their road closure applications by Monday 27 March. I have provided some advice for groups planning larger parties and would encourage anyone hosting an event or activity to add their plans on the official coronation events map. The council's digital hub has some useful guidance and information.

The Great British Spring Clean fortnight started on Friday 17 March and will run until Sunday 2 April. It is great to know that so many Parish and Town Councils, voluntary groups and individuals are borrowing our equipment to help with their litter picks.

This week saw the start of the highways maintenance in Occupation Road in Corby. The work is scheduled to take place on weekdays between 9:30am and 3:30pm and will be done in phases with road closures in place between these times. The work is expected to last another two weeks.

Young people can enjoy free swimming sessions across the North Northamptonshire Council area this Easter holiday. The five North Northamptonshire pools are offering free swims to under 18s from Monday 3 April to Friday 7 April and from Monday 10 April to Friday 14 April. I have included the booking details below.

The Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire provides information and advice on support services available within the county for the Armed Forces community and their families. The Community Hubs offer the chance to socialise and seek help and advice in a relaxed setting. The dates and locations of the April sessions have been confirmed this week.

Two new SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS) will start on 1 April. North Northants SEND IASS (covering Wellingborough, Rushden, Kettering and Corby) and West Northants SEND IASS (covering Northampton, South Northants, Daventry and Towcester) will replace the current IASS for SEND in Northamptonshire. The two new services will continue to provide free, impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and their families.

On Wednesday night I met with the Leader of West Northamptonshire Council, senior council officers and the Children's Trust to discuss the Ofsted fostering inspection report issued earlier this week. Also in attendance were Cabinet Members, Chief Executives, Directors and senior staff, and also the Children's Trust's Chair, Chief Executive and senior team. The constructive but challenging meeting discussed our huge concern for the findings of the report, and an absolute commitment to our children and foster carers to improve this situation.

A pioneering project, the Safer Streets Lite programme, has been brought up a Corby community with the aim to help make people feel safer in the town's Kingswood estate. The work was carried out by offenders under the Probation Service's community payback scheme, and included trimming vegetation, replacing lighting, cleaning graffiti from a nearby underpass and improving the CCTV coverage on the estate.

The council's new garden waste subscription service will start on Monday 3 April. Only those who have subscribed to the scheme will have their garden waste bin collected from this date. If you haven't yet signed up, please do so.

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

## Our second birthday

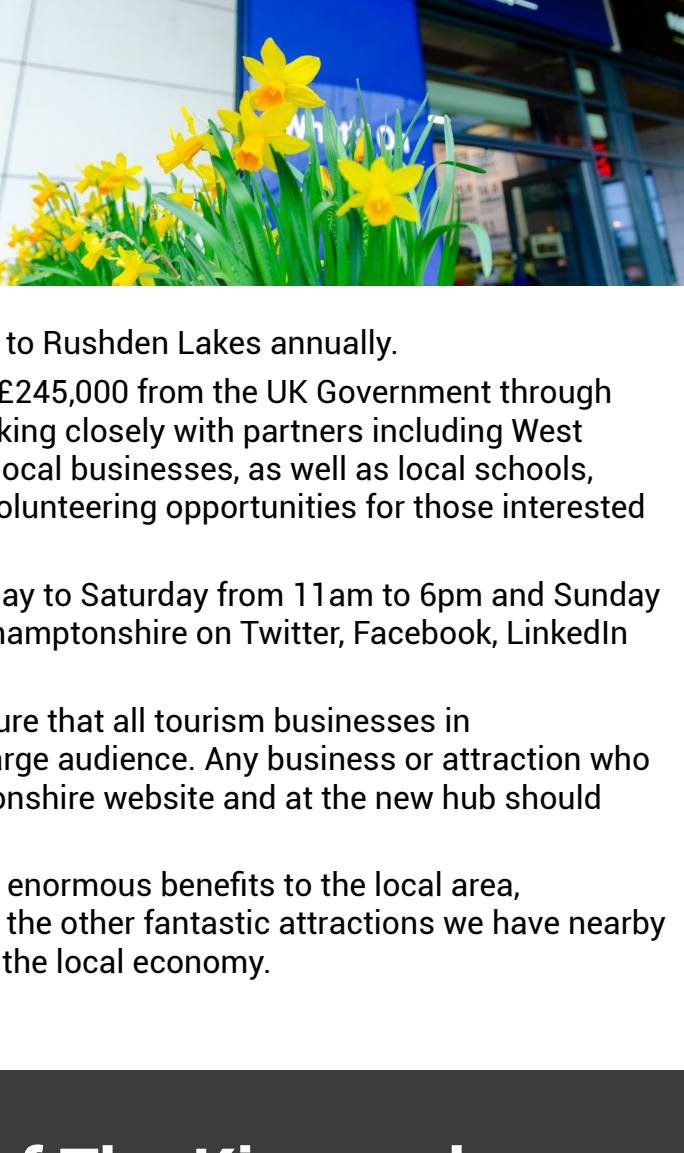
On 1 April North Northamptonshire Council will be two years old. A great deal has happened over the last two years. We have had our challenges over the last two years like other councils, but we are proud of what we have achieved.

The Council set its third balanced budget last month. This focuses on both protecting and investing in vital local public services. The significance of this achievement cannot be overstated, especially when you consider the financial pressures facing the council and the history that led to its creation two years ago.

Whilst celebrating being two years old, the council is focused on the future. We have set an ambitious vision for the future supported by a set of clear priorities driven by meaningful engagement with local communities, staff and elected members. We have agreed a set of values and behaviours that aim to build a strong culture of mutual support, trust and a strong sense of one-team working aimed at delivering better services for local residents and businesses.

The council is continuing to improve, to unify its services and develop its organisational culture. We know from the experience of other new unitary councils that this transformation takes time, but it is happening. The council is proud to be two years old, but there is naturally still lots to do.

I would like to say a big thank you to all staff for working diligently to provide vital local services and for their continued support in delivering the council's ambitious plans for the future.



## Discover Northamptonshire Hub officially opened

The new tourism hub at Rushden Lakes was officially opened on Monday 20 March, coinciding with English Tourism Week (Friday 17 March to Sunday 26 March).

Representatives from North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council, the Crown Estate and partners were present at the opening.

Run by North Northamptonshire Council and supported by The Crown Estate, the Discover Northamptonshire Hub is open seven days a week, located next to the entrance of the cinema and promotes attractions throughout Northamptonshire, highlighting the abundance of unique offerings in and around our local area.

The hub has been designed as a fully interactive space, promoting all things Northamptonshire, including days out, attractions, walks, town and village offerings, places to eat, sustainable transport, heritage, accommodation and local and major events.

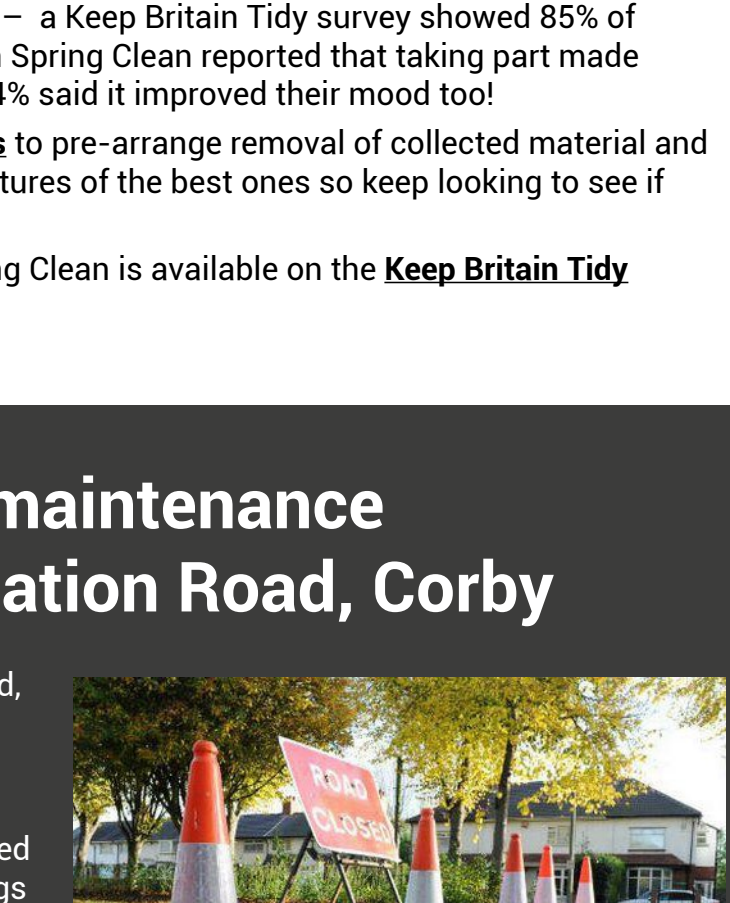
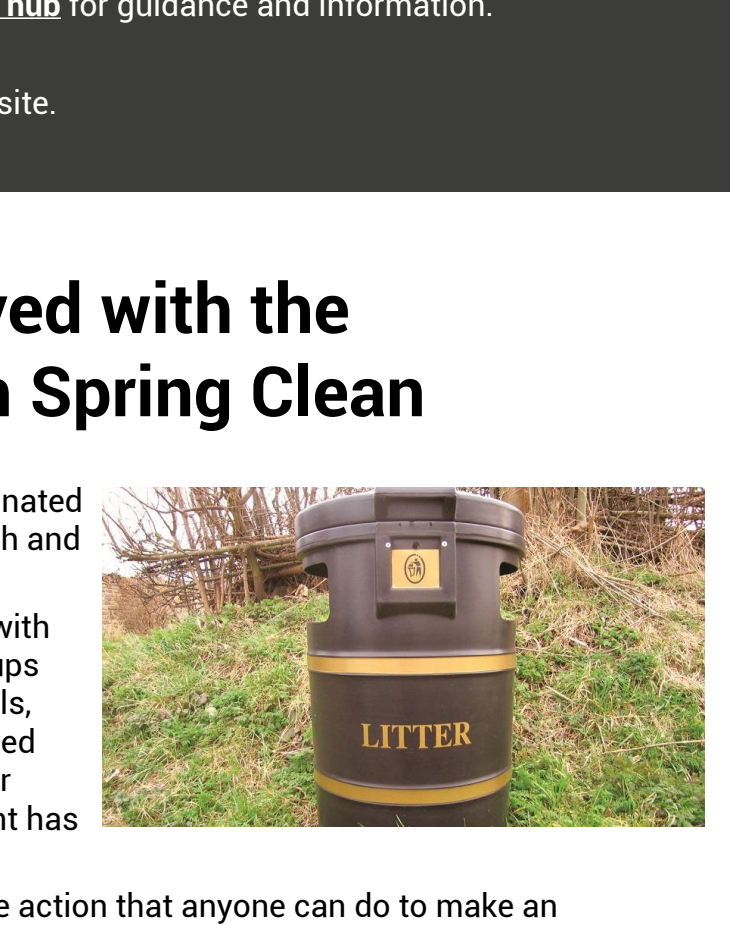
There is also a retail space, providing local businesses with a chance to showcase their products taking advantage of the 6 million visitors to Rushden Lakes annually.

The Discover Northamptonshire hub has received £245,000 from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The council is working closely with partners including West Northamptonshire Council, The Crown Estate and local businesses, as well as local schools, colleges and universities to provide learning and volunteering opportunities for those interested in working in the local tourism industry.

The Discover Northamptonshire hub is open Monday to Saturday from 11am to 6pm and Sunday from 11am to 4:30pm. You can find Discover Northamptonshire on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, with a website launching soon.

The Discover Northamptonshire team want to ensure that all tourism businesses in Northamptonshire are being promoted to such a large audience. Any business or attraction who wants to be promoted on the Discover Northamptonshire website and at the new hub should email [info@discover-northamptonshire.co.uk](mailto:info@discover-northamptonshire.co.uk)

The new Discover Northamptonshire hub will have enormous benefits to the local area, encouraging visitors to Rushden Lakes to travel to the other fantastic attractions we have nearby and, in turn, bringing more money and footfall into the local economy.



## The Coronation of The King and The Queen Consort

Residents looking to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III by holding street parties in their communities, parishes and neighbourhoods have until Monday 27 March to get their road closure applications in.

Communities across North Northamptonshire considering closing a road to celebrate the coronation may need to **apply for a temporary road closure**. There is no charge for these applications over the Coronation Weekend between Saturday 6 May and Monday 8 May.

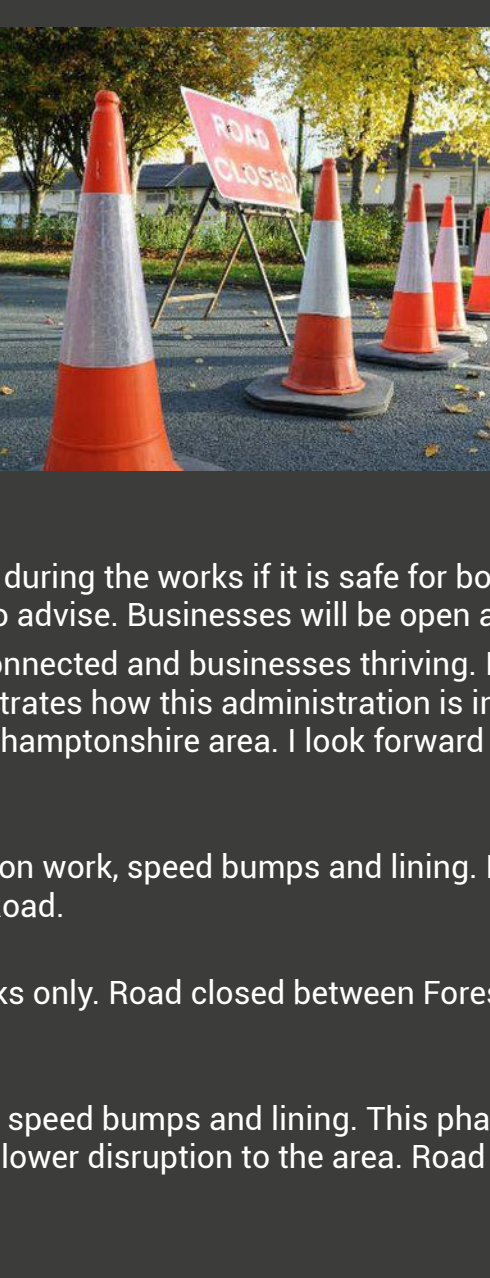
Groups planning larger parties are also encouraged to **let the council know** about the event to check issues such as licensing, safety and traffic management.

Additionally, anyone hosting an event or activity to celebrate the coronation can share their plans and populate the **official interactive map** and events listing.

To support residents, businesses and local communities celebrate this historic occasion, North Northamptonshire Council has set up a **digital hub** for guidance and information.

**Further information**

Please visit the **Coronation** section of our website.



## Get involved with the Great British Spring Clean

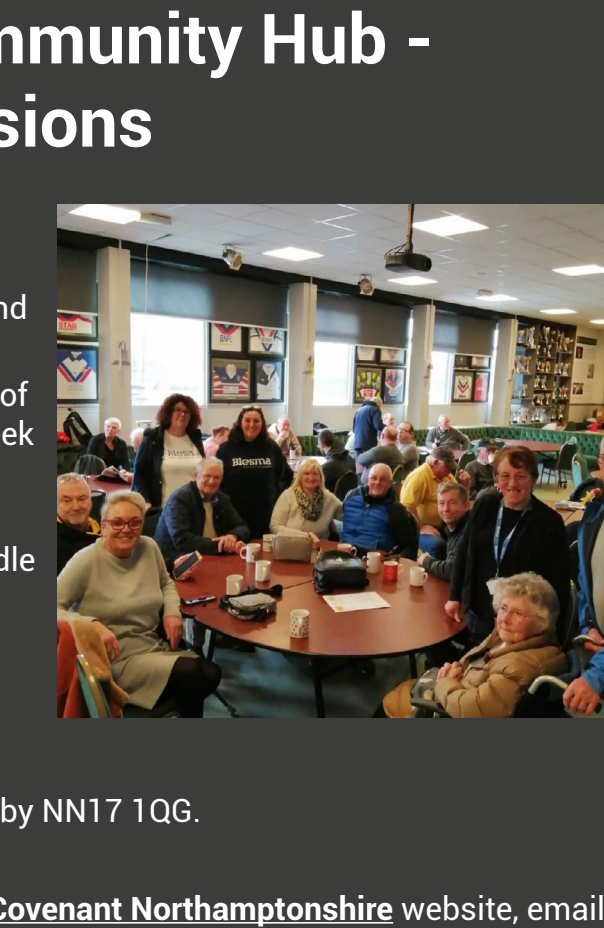
The Great British Spring Clean fortnight coordinated by Keep Britain Tidy started on Friday 17 March and will run until Sunday 2 April.

North Northamptonshire Council is delighted with the response we have received from local groups again this year. Many Parish and Town Councils, voluntary groups and individuals have contacted us to borrow equipment to help them with their litter picks. As a result, nearly all our equipment has already been booked out.

The good news is that litter-picking is a simple action that anyone can do to make an immediate and visible difference to their area – a Keep Britain Tidy survey showed 85% of those who took part in last year's Great British Spring Clean reported that taking part made them feel more pride in their local area. And 74% said it improved their mood too!

We urge everyone that will take part to **contact us** to pre-arrange removal of collected material and take photos. We will publish a selection of pictures of the best ones so keep looking to see if yours is one of the selected ones.

More information about the Great British Spring Clean is available on the **Keep Britain Tidy** website.



## Highways maintenance started in Occupation Road, Corby

The highways maintenance in Occupation Road, Corby that started on Monday 20 March is scheduled to last for three weeks.

The work will include road resurfacing and patching, essential iron work replacement, speed hump replacement, application of road markings and cleaning of drainage gullies.

Work will take place on weekdays between 9:30am and 3:30pm and will be done in phases with road closures in place between these times.

When a road closure is in place, a diversion route will follow Studdall Avenue to where it connects with Rockingham Road in the town.

Residents will be allowed access to Occupation Road during the works if it is safe for both the road user and the workforce with marshals on hand to advise. Businesses will be open as usual.

Our road network is essential to keep communities connected and businesses thriving. It's great to see this work taking place and again demonstrates how this administration is investing in our road network in Corby and the wider North Northamptonshire area. I look forward to seeing the end results.

### • Phase one (March 20 to March 24)

Studdall Avenue to Forest Gate Road – surfacing, iron work, speed bumps and lining. Road closed between Forest Gate Road and Forest Gate Road.

### • Phase two (March 27 to March 31)

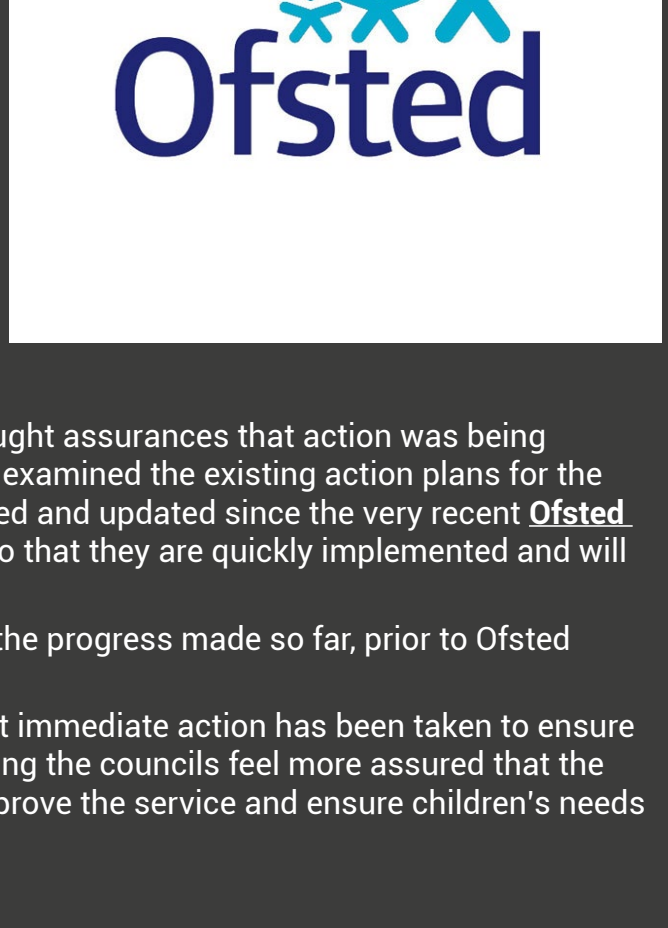
Forest Gate Road to Rockingham Road – iron works only. Road closed between Forest Gate Road and Rockingham Road.

### • Phase three (April 3 to April 7)

Forest Gate Road to Rockingham Road – patching, speed bumps and lining. This phase will be undertaken during the schools' Easter break to avoid disruption to the area. Road closed between Forest Gate Road and Rockingham Road.

**Further information**

Please visit the **Roadworks** section of our website.



## Free under 18s swimming sessions this Easter

Young people are invited to make a splash and enjoy free swimming sessions across the North Northamptonshire Council area again this Easter holiday.

The offer will be applicable in the two weeks of the Easter holiday between Monday 3 April and Friday 7 April and Monday 10 April to Friday 14 April at the five North Northamptonshire pools:

• **Corby - Corby East Midlands International Pool**, Parkland Gateway, George St, Corby NN17 1QG.

• **Rushden - Splash Leisure Pool**, Station Road, Rushden NN10 9SJ.

• **Thrapston - Nene Centre**, Cedar Drive, Thrapston NN14 4JY.

• **Wellingborough - Waendel Leisure Centre**, Thomas Street, Wellingborough NN8 1DZ.

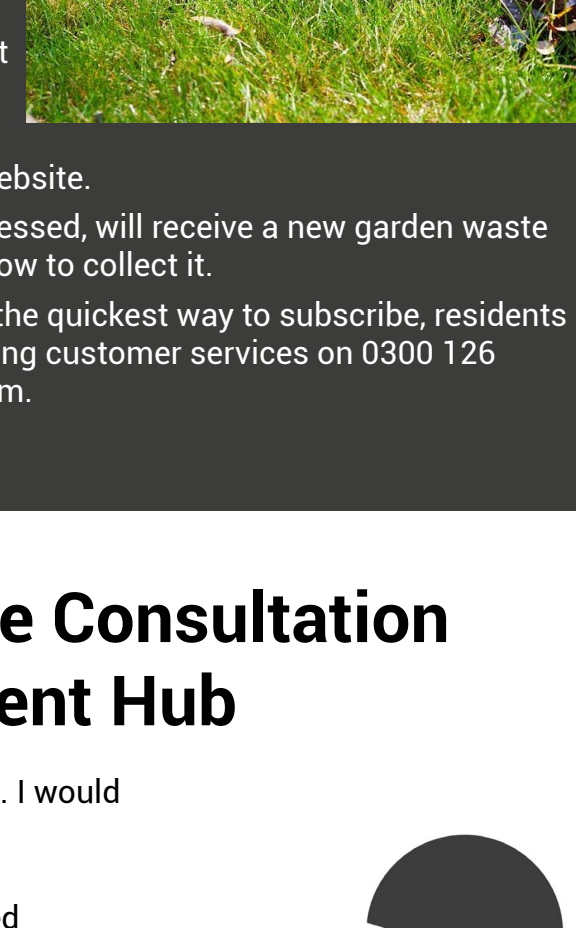
• **Kettering - Kettering Swimming Pool**, London Rd, Kettering NN15 7QA.

The sessions are available to anyone under the age of 18, however under eights will need to be accompanied by a paying adult.

Swimming has so many health benefits as a non-weight-bearing exercise that improves both physical and mental health, while keeping the sessions free makes the activity available to all. Sessions also promote learning about water safety.

**Further information**

For booking and more information, please contact your local **swimming pool**.



## Armed Forces Community Hub - April sessions

Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire provides information and advice on support services available within the county for the Armed Forces community and their families.

The Community Hubs offer the chance to have a cup of tea and a chat with friends – and an opportunity to seek help and advice in a relaxed setting.

### • Tuesday 4 April

10am to 11:30am at The Hub, Fletton House, Oundle PE8 4JA.

### • Wednesday 5 April

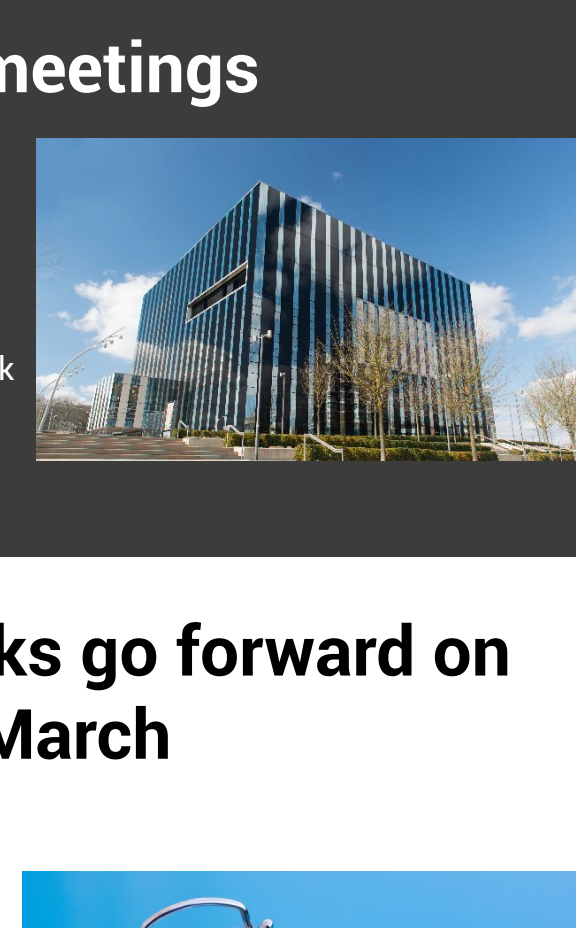
12 noon to 1:30pm at The Bridge, 63c Gold Street, Northampton NN1 1RA.

### • Friday 21 April

9:30am to 11am at Corby Library, Corby Cube, Corby NN17 1QG.

**Further information**

For more information, please visit the **Armed Forces Covenant Northamptonshire** website, email [Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Covenant.NCC@westnorthants.gov.uk) or call 07741 684647.



## Disaggregation of IASS for SEND Northamptonshire service

North Northamptonshire Council and West Northamptonshire Council are ready to launch two new separate SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (IASS).

North Northants SEND IASS and West Northants SEND IASS will replace the current IASS for SEND in Northamptonshire.

The new services will start on 1 April 2023.

• North Northants SEND IASS will cover Northants, Wellingborough, Rushden, Kettering and Corby.

• West Northants SEND IAS will cover Northampton, South Northants, Daventry and Towcester.

The two new services will continue to deliver the IASS remit of providing free, impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND and their families.

As part of the Children and Families Act 2014 it is a legal requirement that all local authorities ensure children and young people aged 0 to 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their parents have access to an impartial Information, Advice and Support (IAS) service.

The two new services will operate at arm's length from the local authorities and clinical commissioning groups. All staff will continue to be independently trained.

The services will give practical, factual and impartial information advice and support to enable children and young people and their parents to participate fully in decisions about education, health and social care.

**Contact details**

North Northants SEND IAS covering Wellingborough, Rushden, Kettering and Corby.

• Telephone number from April 1, 2023 - 0300 373 2532

• Email address from April 1, 2023 - [SENDIASS@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:SENDIASS@northnorthants.gov.uk)

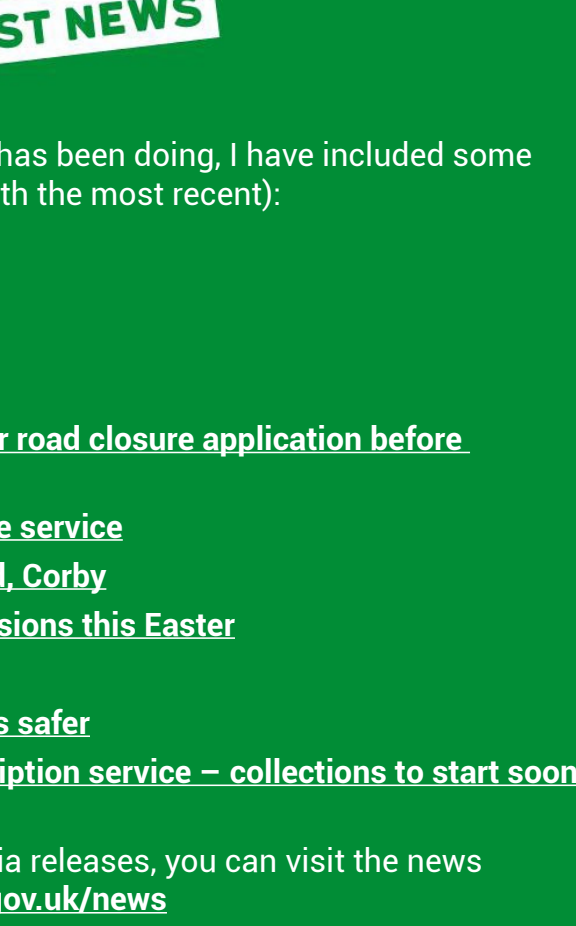
• Website: [www.iassnorthants.co.uk](http://www.iassnorthants.co.uk)

West Northants SEND IAS covering Northampton, South Northants, Daventry and Towcester.

• Telephone number from April 1, 2023 - 0300 12 61039

• Email address from April 1, 2023 - [SENDIASS@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:SENDIASS@westnorthants.gov.uk)

• Website: [www.iassnorthants.co.uk](http://www.iassnorthants.co.uk)



## Update on Fostering Service Inspection

On Wednesday night I met with the Leader of West Northamptonshire Council, senior council officers and the Children's Trust to discuss the **Ofsted fostering inspection report** issued earlier this week.

The urgent meeting was also attended by Cabinet Members, Chief Executives, Directors and senior staff, and also by the Children's Trust's Chair, Chief Executive and senior team. The constructive but challenging meeting discussed its huge concern for the findings of the report, and an absolute commitment to our children and Foster Carers to improve this service.

We raised detailed issues within the report and sought assurances that action was being taken to address the critical findings. The meeting examined the existing action plans for the Fostering Service, which have already been reviewed and updated since the very recent **Ofsted report**. The actions have been urgently upgraded so that they are quickly implemented and will be robustly monitored and overseen.

The Trust will be engaging with Ofsted to validate the progress made so far, prior to Ofsted revisiting the service in April.

The councils have been reassured by the Trust that immediate action has been taken to ensure all children in its care are safe. Following the meeting the councils feel more assured that the commitment of senior leaders in the Trust is to improve the service and ensure children's needs are met and foster carers are fully supported.



## Pioneering project aims to make Kingswood streets safer

Offenders set to work to brighten up a Corby community as part of a pioneering project to make North Northamptonshire's streets feel safer.

The Safer Streets Lite programme has focused on the town's Kingswood estate with offenders carrying out tasks under the Probation Service's community payback scheme.

Work has concentrated on helping people feel safer and has included trimming vegetation, along with replacing lighting and cleaning graffiti from a nearby underpass. Improvements to the CCTV coverage on the estate have also been made.

Safer Streets Lite is a collaboration from the North Northamptonshire Community Safety Partnership and has received funding from the Office for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner.

Improvements works were identified by the community, who then worked with North Northamptonshire Council and the Probation Service to carry out the project.



## New North Northamptonshire garden waste subscription service – collections to start soon

Residents who want to use North Northamptonshire Council's new garden waste subscription service – and who have not already signed up – are reminded that collections will start soon.

From Monday 3 April only those who have subscribed to the scheme will have their garden waste bin collected.

The annual subscription charge for the fortnightly service is £40 per bin and can be paid online via debit or credit card.

Subscription will last 12 months from the point of purchase. If people sign up early ready for the change, it will run from April to April.

More details about the service and how to sign up are available in the **garden waste** section of the council's website.

People can sign up any time and, once payment is processed, will receive a new garden waste permit for sticking onto their bin so collection crews know to collect it.

While signing up online can be done at any time and is the quickest way to subscribe, residents unable to go online can subscribe to the service by calling customer services on 0300 126 3000. Lines are open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm.



## Open activities on the Consultation and Engagement Hub

Please find below details of two current consultations. I would welcome your feedback.

• **East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2**. North Northamptonshire Council is consulting on proposed modifications to the East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2. Closes 21 April 2023. Details of the Local Plan and the schedules of proposed modifications can be found via the **East Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 - Examination**.

• **0-19s CYP Health Needs Assessment - Parents and Carers**. Closes 28 April 2023. The North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire Public Health Team is assessing the health and wellbeing services which support Children and Young People (CYP) aged 0-19 and their families, to gain understanding of the current health and wellbeing needs, demands and any improvements in those services across Northamptonshire. This includes young people up to age 25 where there is a statutory responsibility (as defined under **SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)**).

**Further information**

Details of all open and closed consultation and engagement activities are available on the **North Northamptonshire Consultation and Engagement Hub**.

If you have any questions, please email the Consultation and Engagement Team at [CET@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:CET@northnorthants.gov.uk).



## Forthcoming meetings

• **Full Council**: Thursday 30 March from 6pm. **View details.**

• **Executive**: Thursday 20 April from 10am. **View details.**

The agendas will be displayed on our **website** the week before the meetings.



## Don't forget... The clocks go forward on Sunday 26 March

In the UK the clocks go forward 1 hour at 1am on the last Sunday in March, and back 1 hour at 2am on the last Sunday in October.

The period when the clocks are 1 hour ahead is called British Summer Time (BST). There's more daylight in the evenings and less in the mornings (sometimes called Daylight Saving Time).

When the clocks go back, the UK is on Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

(Source: **'When do the clocks change?'** on the GOV.UK website).



## Press releases



North Northamptonshire Council  
**LATEST NEWS**

To help you stay abreast of the key things the Council has been doing, I have included some links to the Council's press releases below (starting with the most recent):

• **Update on Fostering Service Inspection**

• **Ofsted report statement**

• **Discover Northamptonshire Hub officially opened**

• **Coronation streets - residents urged to submit their road closure application before March 27**

• **Disaggregation of IASS for SEND Northamptonshire service**

• **Highways maintenance to start in Occupation Road, Corby**

• **Take the plunge with free under 18s swimming sessions this Easter**

• **Get involved with the Great British Spring Clean**

• **Pioneering project aims to make Kingswood streets safer**

• **New North Northamptonshire garden waste subscription service – collections to start soon**

If you would like to stay up to date with the Council's media releases, you can visit the news section of the Council's website: [www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/news)

Or follow Twitter [@NNorthantsC](https://twitter.com/NNorthantsC) and/or Facebook [www.facebook.com/NNorthNorthants](https://www.facebook.com/NNorthNorthants)

## Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts on **Facebook** and/or **Twitter**.

### Top Facebook posts so far this week (20 to 22 March)

• In case you missed it last week. If you have signed up to our Garden Waste Service, please ensure you place the subscription sticker on the top or back\* of your bin. Please do not place it on front. \* Leave bin for collection with sticker facing the road so the crew can see it. Update - we are aware that some people have received their pack and it says to place the sticker on the top or front of the bin. We apologise for the confusion. Please only choose the top or back.

(Reach 19,875, Post Clicks 5,873)

• What better way to celebrate English Tourism Week than the official opening of the Discover Northamptonshire hub at Rushden Lakes today! Good luck to the team, and well done for creating a gateway to our local tourism offer. Located next to Cineworld. (Reach 15,086, Post Clicks 297)

• Following on from our earlier post regarding the placement of the garden waste subscription sticker, we have collated several similar questions and answered them below. Where are my stickers? We apologise if you haven't had your pack yet. We are sending out thousands of packs daily, so please bear with us. I've already stuck my sticker on the front, what do I do? It's ok, if you can't remove and re-place the sticker without damaging it, leave it where it is. What about people not on social media? We appreciate that not everyone is on here. Any new packs going out have been amended to say the sticker should go on the top or back of the bin. If you know someone not on social media, please help spread the word. When are you collecting the bin I don't need? Whilst we can collect your unwanted garden waste bin, right now we are prioritising the delivery of the new service. The bin is associated with your household, so if you moved, the bin would stay there for the next resident. If you have already had a space for it since the service began, please leave it where it is for now. You may also change your mind and sign up. Where can I dump my garden waste? Please don't be tempted to place your garden waste in your refuse bin or public bins, or even on the roadside. You don't have to sign up to the full service, you could consider ordering sacks. Details are on our website. We have a page dedicated to the Garden Waste Service that will answer a lot of questions. Please take the time to visit <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/bin-collections/garden-waste> if you have further questions, please use our online form <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/contactus/contact-details> We apologise again for any confusion. (Reach 7,483, Post Clicks 1,273)

### Top Tweets so far this week (20 to 22 March)

• In case you missed it last week. If you have signed up to our Garden Waste Service, please ensure you place the subscription sticker on the top or back\* of your bin. Please do not place it on front. \* Leave bin for collection with sticker facing the road so the crew can see it. (Impressions 1,350, Engagements 47)

• Don't forget, if you are voting in the Rushden by-elections on 23 March, to help keep everyone safe please bring your own pen or pencil to mark your vote in the polling station. (Impressions 972, Engagements 12)

• Discover Northamptonshire Hub officially opened