West Northamptonshire Council

Town & Parish Briefing

Edition 16| 22 August 2023



Welcome to the latest Town and Parish Briefing, bringing you a round-up of news, activities and information about West Northamptonshire Council.

We hope you'll find this briefing informative, and we encourage you to share it widely within your organisations. If you have ideas and suggestions for future content, please email us at communications@westnorthants.gov.uk

West Northants will host Rugby World Cup 2025

Cllr Adam Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure



We are thrilled to announce that West Northamptonshire will be taking part in the biggest-ever celebration of women's international rugby having been announced as a host for the Rugby World Cup 2025, which will be kicking off exactly 2 years from today.

From 22 August to 27 September 2025, the 10th edition of the women's pinnacle global tournament will see a match taking place in front of a worldwide audience at Northampton's legendary Franklins Gardens stadium - home of the internationally renowned Northampton Saints.

The announcement comes following a competitive selection process and months of planning and hard work from the Council, partners, and the Saints Rugby Club, who worked closely with World Rugby to perfect a Bid demonstrating why West Northants is the perfect host venue which reflects WR's core missions to grow the sport and engage with diverse communities to provide a family-focused festival of rugby.



While the full match schedule and ticketing details will be announced next year, the milestone two-year celebration and confirmation of dates and venues provides the ability for fans across England to start to plan their Rugby World Cup 2025 experience.

Major sporting tournaments like this can bring huge benefits to the area, from attracting visitors and boosting the local economy to encouraging people to get active and showcasing West Northants to a worldwide audience. West Northamptonshire's unique rugby culture is something special, and just one of the things we're thrilled to share with teams from around the world.

This event will undoubtedly provide a wealth of opportunities and help us build on our growing reputation as a major sporting destination. We're also intent on securing a lasting legacy that builds participation in both Rugby and other sports for future generations, and especially for women and girls whose participation in sport continues to be lower than amongst males.

Road improvements underway across our area

Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

The condition of eight key roads across West Northamptonshire is set to be improved over the coming weeks.

More than 100,000 square metres of highway are to undergo surface dressing between now and mid-September. This cost-effective, preventative treatment offers greater carbon efficiency when compared to other resurfacing methods, and is used to prolong the life of roads that are in the initial stages of deterioration, extending their life by up to ten years.

Surface dressing is quick to apply, meaning disruption is kept to a minimum, with temporary road closures put in place. Once it has been applied road users can travel on the new surface immediately.

Following the completion of the works, road users should adhere to the temporary road signage, and are required to take extra care.

The roads earmarked for the 2023 surface dressing programme up to 13 September include:

- A428 Bedford Road East, Yardley Hastings
- A5076 Redhouse Road, Northampton
- A45 London Road, Weedon
- A5199 Welford Road, Thornby
- A508 Harborough Road, Maidwell
- Scaldwell Road/Lamport Road, Old
- B4031 Croughton
- Station Road, Aynho



The process is weather dependent and cannot take place in the event of rain, so the programme is flexible. Residents will be informed 48-72 hours before work is due to commence, and people can find further **updates regarding works in their area via our Current Works page.**

The Council also recently invested £450,000 into new equipment to improve the maintenance of roads across West Northamptonshire.

The new Thermal Road Repair machine and the JCB Pothole Pro will allow potholes to be repaired more quickly and efficiently, and follows the announcement in May that an additional £2.8 million worth of funds will be put into the Highways contract in 23/24.

Coat of Arms appears on village welcome sign



Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

The first village entrance sign featuring West Northamptonshire's new Coat of Arms has been unveiled in Whilton Locks.

I was pleased to be joined by Cllr Phil Bignell, representatives from our Highways team and Kier Highways, as we met with members of Whilton Parish Council to see the sign first-hand.

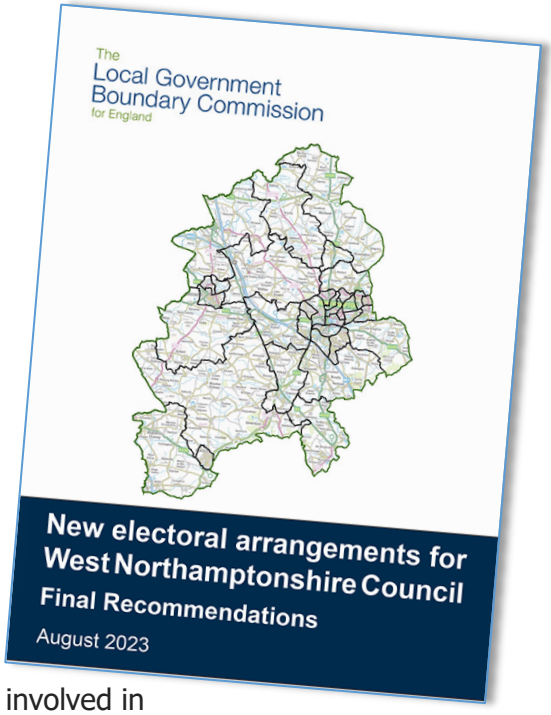
We are delighted to unveil our first gateway sign on the entrance to Whilton, which boasts our **new Coat of Arms**. We would like to thank the Whilton Parish Council and Kier for all their support in producing this.

Town and Parish Councils are asked to please note that this new gateway signage featuring the Coat of Arms is only to replace signs which are due to be updated or replaced.

Changes to Council wards are proposed

Cllr Suresh Patel, Chairman of the Council's Democracy Standards Committee and the Local Boundary Review Working Group

Town and Parish Councils will hopefully be aware that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has today published its final recommendations for the West Northamptonshire Electoral Review.



In their final report published earlier this month, the Commission concluded that West Northants residents should be represented in the future by 76 councillors, as the figure best facilitated a new warding pattern throughout the district.

The LGBCE's conclusion must now be scrutinised and approved by Parliament before legally coming into force for the next WNC elections in 2025.

We welcome the publication of the Boundary Commission's final recommendations in the first review of electoral arrangements across our area for a decade. Their conclusions strike a fair balance in making sure the number of councillors and electoral ward patterns reflect the democratic needs of our residents and support our council more effectively in representing communities, delivering council business and providing efficient governance.

I would like to thank all Town and Parish colleagues who have been involved in the process and everyone who took the time to give their feedback to the Commission.

To help you pinpoint the key changes in the LGBCE's final recommendations, our Democratic Services Team has put together a brief summary.

Summary of Changes

- **Daventry Wards:** The original had a north and south ward. We now have two wards to the North of Daventry and one in the south.
- **Braunston & Crick & Long Buckby:** Watford has moved from Braunston & Crick to Long Buckby
- **Walgrave & East Farndon Ward:** LGBCE has changed this ward name to Rural North East
- **Castle:** Rushmere Avenue Chipsey Avenue and Cranmere Avenue moved from Castle to Weston Ward. The southern border moved to follow the River Nene (Marina ward no longer exists).
- **Weston Ward:** Rushmere Avenue Chipsey Avenue and Cranmere Avenue added to this ward. Weston Ward renamed to Weston Favell and Abington Vale.
- **St George Ward:** name changed to Kingsley & Semilong
- **Phippsville Ward:** name changed to Abington & Phippsville
- **Delapre & Briar Hill Ward:** name changed to Far Cotton, Delapre & Briar Hill
- **Kings Sutton Ward and Middleton Cheney Ward:** Merged into a 2-member ward called Middleton Cheney.
- **Silverstone & Rural South Northants Ward:** Preston Capes parish moves from Silverstone & Rural South Northants to Woodford and Weedon Ward. Name of ward changed to Rural South Northamptonshire.
- **Woodford and Weedon Ward:** Preston Capes parish moves into the Woodford and Weedon Ward.

Concerns raised over ticket office closures

Cllr William Barter, Assistant Cabinet Member for Rail

Concerns have been raised by our Council over proposals to close ticket offices at rail stations in our area.

As Town and Parish Councils may be aware, train operators have proposed changes to the majority of rail station ticket offices in England, with passengers and stakeholders given until 1 September to share their views.



In the West Northamptonshire area, London Northwestern Railway is proposing to close the ticket offices at both Northampton and Long Buckby Stations.

The Northampton station is set to become a customer information centre, meaning staff will be on hand throughout the week to assist passengers with ticket purchases, as well as customer service, passenger assistance, safety and general upkeep duties.

However Long Buckby Station, which is currently staffed for – at most - about four hours each morning Monday to Friday, would in future only be staffed by mobile teams visiting as and when necessary.

Our Council's response to the proposals expresses concern over this. People who may have sought advice at Long Buckby will now have to travel to Northampton to guarantee that they can receive face-to-face advice. Ideally, the mobile teams should visit at a regular timeslot so that there is more certainty on when advice will be available. This is particularly important for passengers with sight loss who need assistance.

While our response to the proposals at Northampton Station welcomes the fact that staff will still be available, it is unclear from the consultation what hours staff would be available, and we would not wish to see a reduction in the staffed hours compared to the current ticket office hours.

Our response also addresses proposals for Milton Keynes Central and Banbury Stations, used by many of our residents in the south of our area.

The same proposals for Northampton Station are also being made for Milton Keynes Central, so our response to that echoes our response to the Northampton proposals. We have also welcomed proposals to increase staffing hours at Banbury Station.

Other feedback provided to the consultation by our Council includes:

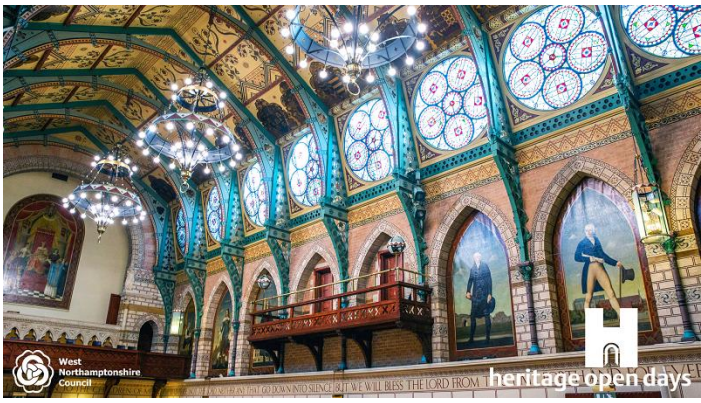
- With the closure of ticket offices and the expectation that everyone will use ticket machines, there will need to be additional ticket machines to avoid increased queues. Machines must be easy to navigate.
- Measures need to be put in place so that those with sight loss can go to a designated place within the station forecourt and know that they will receive assistance. The withdrawal of ticket offices - and in many cases staff altogether – could significantly reduce the confidence of people with sight loss to travel independently by rail.
- In advance of the closure programme being completed, the whole ticketing structure needs to be simplified and an all-industry app and website developed to replace the multiple operator sites. The app and website must be simple, intuitive, accessible and reliable.

You can find out more about the proposals and the consultation here

All aboard for a tour of our rich heritage

Cllr Adam Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure

Everyone is invited to explore West Northamptonshire's history during the Heritage Open Days festival taking place between 8 and 17 September.



Dozens of stately homes, including Sulgrave Manor, Lamport Hall and Canons Ashby, buildings of historic interest, including 78 Derngate and Weedon Royal Ordnance Depot, and museums and places of worship across the county will all be taking part in England's largest annual festival of history and culture.

As well as opening up buildings or parts of buildings not normally accessible to the public, there will also be individual events on offer including guided tours, walks and open days, all free to attend.

Our Council is an official promoter of the event and a **list of all participating attractions and events is available on the Council website** to endorse the festival and boost visitor numbers.

I am pleased to see so many of our local attractions taking part and providing activities which are accessible and free for all, including the fantastic Heritage Bus Service which forms an important part of the event and enables people to travel between venues freely.

I'd like to thank all of our local organisations and dedicated volunteers who share their passion for local history all year round. I know a lot of Town and Parish Councils are involved in this initiative too, and I would like to thank you for helping to showcase West Northamptonshire and its rich heritage.

New deal announced with British Cycling

Cllr Adam Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure



We are thrilled to announce a new two-year partnership with British Cycling that will bring a wide range of cycling events, opportunities and investment to West Northants.

The new partnership will see a shared commitment to supporting cyclists and para-cyclists through the sharing of world-class innovation and expertise whilst supporting the Council's ambition to reach net zero by 2030, encouraging more people to ride and making cycling more accessible for everyone.

It will further establish West Northamptonshire as a destination for major international sporting events, with the partnership confirming the prestigious Women's Tour and Men's Tour of Britain cycling tournaments will be hosted in the area in the coming years.

Initiatives will also include free, friendly local rides led by knowledgeable ride Leaders, traffic-free family cycling events, and indoor and outdoor 'pedal parties' and will work towards embedding disability and para sport into the heart of communities whilst recruiting and training volunteers to create sustainable local delivery.

The two-year partnership, **funded by UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF),** will start in the Autumn and follows other recent cycling initiatives in West Northants including the community cycling hub and Mountain Bike trails at Boddington and Delapré, and will work alongside the active travel enhancements being installed along Abington Crescent, Bridgewater Drive, Rushmere Road and Brackmills.

Sustainable plan to tackle fuel poverty

Cllr Jonathan Nunn, Leader of the Council

Our Council is pushing ahead with a plan to harness renewable and wasted heat to tackle fuel poverty and make the Northampton area a more sustainable place.



We have announced work on a Sustainable Heat Network Feasibility Study to explore the possibility of a district heating system that can deliver lower-cost, low-carbon heat to homes and businesses.

District heating collects warmth from a variety of sources and uses a distribution system of insulated pipes to carry it from a central source to multiple buildings.

This can significantly reduce heating costs and carbon emissions compared with traditional heating solutions which use electricity or burn fossil and other fuels.

This study represents a significant step towards our ambitious goal of becoming a net zero area by 2045 while supporting our residents and businesses.

By exploring sustainable heat solutions, we can tackle the impacts of fuel poverty, reduce carbon emissions, and foster economic resilience within our community.

To bring this vision to life, we have secured £112k from round 12 of the Government's Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU) funding. The project will also be match-funded by contributions of £20k from Northamptonshire Partnership Homes and £40k from the council's Public Health team.

The project, built on work originally launched by Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS, now Department for Energy Security & Net Zero) in 2019, will now focus on the Northampton and Rothersthorpe Village area.

Sustainable engineering firm, Ramboll, will work on the project with infrastructure consultancy, AECOM, following a competitive bidding process.

Upon completion, the feasibility study will provide critical data on sustainable heat sources, technical and financial costs, and potential funding opportunities.

Ukraine flag to be raised to mark independence

Cllr David Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement, and Regulatory Services



Ukrainian families in West Northamptonshire will join people across the UK to celebrate Ukrainian Independence Day on Thursday 24 August.

The Ukrainian flag will be raised at all West Northants Council (WNC) office buildings in Towcester, Daventry and Northampton to mark 32 years since Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

There will be a ceremony to commemorate the day at midday in the Guildhall Courtyard on St Giles' Square in Northampton attended by the Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire and the Chairman of West Northamptonshire Council, and representatives of the Ukrainian community.

Speeches during the event will be translated into Ukrainian and sunflowers - the national flower of Ukraine, will handed out to be laid in commemoration.

Refreshments will be served following the ceremony in the Great Hall alongside a variety of stalls, performances and artwork by members of the Ukrainian community.

Single planning system has now been launched

Cllr Rebecca Breese, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs

A new single planning system has been launched across West Northamptonshire, providing access to applications, documents and associated information all in one place.

Previously, planning information was hosted on three separate sites for the former local authority areas. Following over twelve months of migration, delivered across a phase approach all information has been new transferred into one new cloud based WNC planning system.

All WNC planning applications, and their associated documents can now be accessed and viewed by the public in one location via the West Northants website or directly at **https://wnc.planning-register.co.uk/**

This has been a huge undertaking for the service and its stakeholders to complete, with several millions pieces of data and over a millions document pages needing copying and migrating from all the legacy systems into the one new WNC system. In fact we have it on very good authority this has been the largest data migration of planning data in England!

The service will now continue in its work to enhance the processes and services for applicants and anyone engaging with planning services.

For more information please contact David Simmons-Lindill at **david.simmons-lindill@westnorthants.gov.uk**

What types of applications are you interested in?

Cllr Rebecca Breese, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Built Environment and Rural Affairs

Our Planning Services Team is keen to work with our town and parish councils to understand how we can improve communications with you with regards to planning applications.



The service manages a range of planning applications, and we are always keen to gain a better understanding of the ones which you would like to be updated or consulted on.

The range includes

- Certificate for Lawful Development
- Discharge of Conditions
- Advertisement Consent
- Prior Approval applications

All of these applications are included in the weekly applications lists you are now receiving.

The planning service would like to know your views on the types of planning applications you'd be interested in hearing more about.

Please email the planning service on: **planning@westnorthants.gov.uk** stating which parish or town council you represent, and providing an overview of what you would like to know more about.

August consultation and engagement round-up

A range of consultation and engagement activities are currently taking place across West Northants.

We have summarised the main consultations below, but please remember you can check new consultations, have your say, and sign up to receive alerts and updates via our **Consultation Hub**

Tackling violence and improving lives through the Serious Violence Duty

Deadline for comments: 27 October 2023

On behalf of the Serious Violence Alliance people are being encouraged to take part in a survey if they have been affected by serious violence in the last year. This will help the Alliance to put effective schemes in place that focus on preventing crime and help identify issues to intervene at an early stage.

Tackling violence and improving lives through the Serious Violence Duty

Public Spaces Protection Order renewal for Northampton 2023

Deadline for comments: 12 September 2023

We are consulting on renewing the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Northampton to help tackle nuisance or problem behaviour. The PSPO was introduced in response to anti-social behaviour and we are looking to extend this for a further 3 years up to September 2026.

Public Spaces Protection Order renewal for Northampton 2023

Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for West Northamptonshire



Deadline for comments: 29 August 2023

The West Northamptonshire Health and Wellbeing Board is inviting feedback on the proposed new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for West Northamptonshire 2023 to 2028. The strategy sets out how we will work together as a partnership with residents to improve health outcomes for local people.

Have your say on the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for West Northamptonshire

Draft West Northamptonshire Council Housing Allocation Scheme

Deadline for comments: 26 September 2023

We are consulting on a draft West Northamptonshire Council Housing Allocation Scheme. Which is the scheme to determine how available social housing is allocated to those on the housing register. The scheme looks to harmonise services, making them fairer, clearer and consistent across the West Northamptonshire area.

Have your say on the Draft West Northamptonshire Council Housing Allocation Scheme

Draft Street Trading Policy 2023

Deadline for comments: 27 August 2023

We encourage street traders, stakeholders, residents and others to have their say to help to develop the Street Trading Policy that will supersede the current policies for the Daventry, Northampton and South Northants Areas.

Draft Street Trading Policy 2023

Town centre manager for Towcester and Brackley

Cllr Daniel Lister, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth



A new town centre manager has been appointed to improve the appeal of Brackley and Towcester Town Centres to visitors and businesses.

Samantha Hosking took up her post a month ago and will be the key point of contact working for our Council in partnership with Brackley Town Council and Towcester Town Council.

Her new role, which is funded as part of a Section 106 financial contribution made by local developers as part of their planning permission, will include establishing relationships with local businesses, the community and voluntary organisations.

Samantha, who lives locally, will coordinate and lead on a programme of improvements and innovations to revitalise the much-loved towns whilst promoting the areas for investment and business growth and helping the local economy thrive.

She said; "I am very passionate about improving my local area and supporting business sustainability and growth. I want to bring a buzz back to our high streets.

"These market towns are full of hidden gems with lots of small, independent businesses and I'm confident that by working with the great people who live and work here, we can continue to make these towns thriving places for everyone to enjoy."

We have strong ambitions to broaden the attractiveness of the town centres in terms of their wider leisure and commercial appeal and will look to encourage visitors from far and wide by showcasing the fantastic offer available in both town centres.

I'd like to extend my congratulations on this well-deserved appointment and I look forward to working closely with Samantha and both Town Councils, whom all share our ambition and drive to deliver economic prosperity.

Leisure developer set to bring unique offer

Cllr Dan Lister, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Town Centre Regeneration and Growth



We are delighted to be working with a leisure developer, STACK, to transform the vacant Market Walk shopping centre in Northampton town centre.

STACK completed the acquisition of the Market Walk site earlier this month, and will now bring forward an exciting regeneration and development project to transform the site to offer an innovative food hall and leisure space.

Previously known as Peacock Place, Market Walk occupies a prominent spot at the heart of the town centre, next to the historic Market Square. However the site has stood empty for a number of years.

To complete the project, our council will provide up to £4.2 million investment through the Towns Fund, coupled with private investment of £8 million from STACK.

Once finished, the space will host a series of independent street food traders, a variety of bars and a dedicated space for interactive games, all focussed around communal seating and a main stage for live music performances and entertainment.

Green Flags are flying proudly at our parks

Cllr Phil Larratt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport, Highways and Waste

Green Flags have been raised at four of our parks as they upheld the coveted Green Flag status celebrating Britain's greatest parks and green spaces.



Daventry Country Park, **Abington Park**, **Bradlaugh Fields** and **Delapre Park** have all retained their Green Flag Awards - nationally recognised as the benchmark for the management of recreational outdoor spaces.

Bradlaugh Fields in Northampton has retained the award for the fourth year running, following a community effort to increase biodiversity and conservation.

Abington and Delapre parks, also in Northampton, retain their awards for the tenth and eleventh years in a row respectively, in recognition for the hard work of community groups and volunteers to maintain these widely used open spaces.

Daventry Country Park, which has received investment to its visitor facilities in recent years, achieves the award for the 24th time.

Chance to meet our customer services team

Cllr Mike Hallam, Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

Our Customer Services Team visits locations across West Northamptonshire on a monthly basis, offering advice and guidance to residents on a range of issues.

We are grateful for your support in promoting these events to residents, but Town and Parish Council Clerks, and your local councillors, are also very welcome to attend for help with any casework or other queries you may have.

Sessions coming up over the next month include:



- **Brackley Library** (Manor Road, NN13 6AJ): Fri 25 August from 10am to midday.
- **Brixworth Village Hall** (Holcot Rd, NN6 9BS) Weds 13 September from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.
- **Southbrook Community Centre** (Hood Road, NN11 4JS) Weds 20 September from 1pm to 2.15pm.
- **Moulton Library Plus** (Moulton Reedings, NN3 7AX): Fri 25 August from 10am to midday.
- **Roade Community Larder** (Roade Village Hall, Bailey Brooks Lane NN7 2LS): Mon 25 September 1.15pm to 2.15pm.

View listings for all of the drop-in sessions on our website

Say hello to our Parish Council liaison officer



Did you know that Town and Parish Councils have a new dedicated officer at our Council who they can contact for help and support with all things WNC?

Our Parish Council Liaison Officer Alan Burns has been in post since January 2023 with a remit to maintain and enhance good working relationships between West Northamptonshire Council and our Town and Parish colleagues.

Find out more on the **Town and Parish Council help centre on our website**, or email **alan.burns@westnorthants.gov.uk** for more information.

Access worldwide newspapers and magazines for free

Cllr Adam Brown, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Leisure

Did you know you can get free, same-day access to thousands of newspapers and magazines worldwide, including UK national daily and weekend titles through our online LibraryPlus service?

The PressReader app enables anyone with an online library membership to read publications 24/7 on a computer, tablet, smart phone or any other mobile device. From the Wall Street Journal to Gardeners World magazine, the diverse catalogue features over 7,000 publications.

The online library service also provides access to a wide range of eReads and audio books, all free to access with a virtual library membership.

Our Council in the news

Here's a roundup of the news releases and updates published by our Council during the last month.

Don't forget you can keep up-to-date with these and search the news archive by **visiting the News section of our website**. You can also **sign-up to receive our newsletter**

- Daventry residents benefit from largest jobs fair ever – July 21
- Fifth showcase of digital innovation in Northampton biggest so far – July 21
- Explore West Northamptonshire's extraordinary heritage and history this September – July 24
- New Town centre manager to drive economic growth in Brackley and Towcester – July 24
- Four parks across West Northamptonshire have retained prestigious green flag status – July 24
- Over 20 roads set to benefit from micro-asphalt surface treatments – July 26
- Calling all TikTokers: get involved in Heritage Open Days – July 27
- Regeneration works continue to transform Northampton's Market Square – July 28
- Summer of fun comes to Northampton's Market – July 28
- Are you up to date with your Cervical Cancer Screening? – July 28
- First coat of arms gateway sign unveiled at Whilton Locks – July 28
- New voter arrangements finalised for West Northamptonshire – August 1
- Have your say on extending measures to curb anti-social behaviour in Northampton – August 2
- West Northants Council signs 2-year partnership with British Cycling – August 2
- Ukrainian Independence Day to be marked in West Northamptonshire – August 3
- Share your views on tackling serious violence in Northamptonshire – August 4
- Have your say on the proposed Joint West Northants Health and Wellbeing strategy – August 4

- Popular collectable fair returns to Northampton's market – August 4
- National leisure developer STACK to bring unique offer to Northampton Town Centre – August 7
- West Northamptonshire roads set to benefit from annual surface dressing programme – August 8
- New scheme to help cut fuel poverty and tackle climate change – August 9
- Electoral Commission subject to cyber-attack – August 11
- West Northamptonshire Council acquires former vacant Job Centre site – August 15
- Councils and police urge road users to help keep each other safe while on the roads – August 16
- Congratulations to students picking up A-Level results – August 17
- Reminder to have your say on the way social housing is allocated in West Northants – August 21
- West Northants announced as host for prestigious Rugby World Cup 2025 – August 22