



Leader's Update

Cllr Jason Smithers
Leader of the Council



29 April 2022

Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to the latest Leader's Update. It is hard to believe that we are nearly in the month of May! The Queen's Platinum Jubilee is rapidly approaching and we have updated the [Platinum Jubilee web pages](#) to help you plan for this important event. You will notice that we have included a new events section, if you have events that you would like to add, please do let me know.

As more people start to visit their local town centres, villages and visitor attractions, it is good to see the DiscoverNN App doing well – more below this. Chester House Estate is proving very popular too and I will provide an update on this gem of a venue in a future edition of this Update. I have also provided some information on our recently launched Country Parks section of the website - this is currently the second most visited part of our website. It provides some valuable ideas as to what to do over the bank holiday weekend (although I am always keen to give our staff who work during the bank holiday weekend a well-deserved shout out!)

Also in this edition, I have brought you some important news about a Northamptonshire-wide partnership that tackles violence against women, a detailed update on our response to the Ukraine situation and shared the latest achievements from the Local Test & Trace Team.

This Update also includes a wide-ranging number of events: the Knife Angel visit, the prestigious Waendel Walk, the Platinum Jubilee and the high-tech Merged Futures 4. I hope you are able to support one or two of them.

It only takes one community to say enough is enough and come together to tackle violence against women

North Northamptonshire Council has come together with organisations across the county to say 'it only takes one community to say enough is enough' to violence against women.

A new partnership, led by Northamptonshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and supported by organisations such as Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire Rape Crisis, has created a network of measures to make women safer at night by improving physical safety and security, tackling perpetrators, and starting a conversation that helps people call-out abuse.

The programme of work carried out has included measures to make licensed venues safer and a ground-breaking programme to train venue staff to recognise and tackle predatory behaviour.

Central to the programme is a new communications campaign that will raise awareness of all forms of harassment and violence against women and highlight that it only takes one person to say enough is enough to challenge the attitudes and inappropriate behaviours of some men.

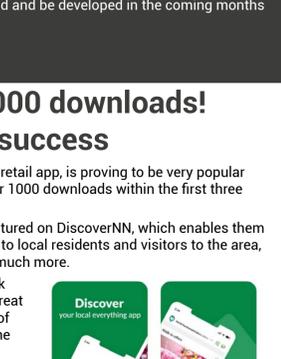
The programme of work was developed in consultation with groups representing women and local communities, and has included:

- Funding to deliver 'Shout-Up!' training and accredit bar staff in identifying and challenging harassing behaviour in their premises.
- ANPR cameras and other safety improvements.
- Funding for licensed premises to take part in the Licensing Safety and Vulnerability Initiative (LSavi) so that they can reassure their customers they take security seriously.
- Support for a special police operation that is targeting perpetrators who prey on women in the night-time economy

The communications campaign will include advertising, social media, and billboards in the first phase, to highlight the different forms that harassment can take and encourage bystanders to offer support, safely and appropriately.

The new website for Northamptonshire – <http://www.itonlytakesone.org.uk/> - provides practical information, signposting to agencies that offer support, and encouraging men to have a conversation about attitudes towards women and the impact harassment and abuse has on their lives.

The wider programme of work will continue to expand and be developed in the coming months and years and rolled out across the county.



New app reaches 1000 downloads! DiscoverNN success

The launch of DiscoverNN, our new local tourism and retail app, is proving to be very popular across the area, reaching a fantastic milestone of over 1000 downloads within the first three weeks of it being available!

Almost 200 local businesses have signed up to be featured on DiscoverNN, which enables them to advertise their services and promote special offers to local residents and visitors to the area, share their events, take bookings, sell products, plus much more.

DiscoverNN is funded by Government's Welcome Back Fund and makes it quick and easy for people to find great products and services nearby. An online web version of the app is also being developed and can be seen on the [DiscoverNN website](#).

Thank you for helping to spread the news about DiscoverNN, please continue to do so (especially with the summer months approaching as there's lots going on across North Northamptonshire for people to get involved with) and don't forget to reach out to any local businesses you know of that could join this great digital platform.

The app is free to download. Find it at:

[DiscoverNN - Apps on Google Play](#)

[DiscoverNN on the App Store \(apple.com\)](#)

Local businesses can join DiscoverNN for free on the [DiscoverNN website](#).



Looking for something to do over the Bank Holiday Weekend?

If you are looking for something to do this weekend, why not visit one of our beautiful country parks and experience the great outdoors on your doorstep?

We have revamped our Country Parks web pages to showcase the country parks we manage and provide essential information for residents and visitors: [Barnwell Country Park](#), [East Carlton Countryside Park](#), [Fermyn Woods Country Park](#), [Irchester Country Park](#) and [Sywell Country Park](#).

The information includes daily parking costs and annual parking passes, events for the whole family, facilities such as cafes and play areas, plus a whole host of other information.

Since the new [Country Parks web pages](#) were launched earlier this month, it has been the Council's second most visited section of the website with over 5,000 visitors (second only to the Council Tax page).



Update on Ukraine response

We all continue to be horrified by the shocking news being reported from inside Ukraine about the atrocities at the hands of the Russian government.

North Northamptonshire Council has put together a Resettlement Team who are working to support the local response.

- 151 households have been matched to 326 guests
- To date, we are aware of 76 guest arrivals

We are continuing to develop the information on our [Ukraine page](#).

Thank you to all the officers who are working on this vital project.

As background, and to answer a number of regular enquiries to the Resettlement Team, there are currently two government schemes supporting Ukrainian Refugees to enter the UK.

1. Ukraine Family Scheme

The Ukraine Family Scheme allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals, people settled in the UK, and certain others resident here, to come to the country. Those entered under the scheme will be granted a visa that lasts three years, giving them certainty and ensuring their future in the country. The scheme is free and does not include any salary or language requirements.

UK family members who are welcoming extended family into their homes are expected to support them in accessing benefits, school admissions and health services, for example, and we as a local authority are not required to provide support. We are not funded to do so, however, we do have a statutory homeless duty should they present to North Northamptonshire Council as being homeless, (eg. family breakdowns).

2. Homes for Ukraine

Home for Ukraine is a sponsorship scheme that allows people and organisations in the UK to offer a home to Ukrainians fleeing the war. This scheme lets individuals, charities, community groups and businesses offer a route to safety for Ukrainians, even if they have no ties to the UK. Previously only Ukrainians with family already settled in the UK could come.

The Council's responsibilities include:

- Accommodation checks to ensure the safety and security of adults and children entering a sponsor's home.
- Safeguarding checks, including Enhanced DBS checks for any sponsor household members over the age of 16yrs where children and/or vulnerable adults will be living.
- Management of the interim payment for guests, of £200 per guest, and the 'thank you' monthly payments for the sponsor (set payment regardless of the number of guests living in the property) and
- Providing wrap-around support for guests and sponsors, to support accessing Universal Credit, education provision, health services, community integration and homelessness assistance.

Under this scheme, funding has been made available from the government:

- The government is providing funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. The £10,500 for Ukrainian nationals is for the first year. The government will review funding for future years in due course.
- Councils will administer 'thank you' payments of £350 per sponsoring household per month. The government is allocating additional funding for these payments, but they do expect councils to cover administration costs within the tariff.
- The government is also supplying more funding to councils to provide education services for children from families arriving from Ukraine under this scheme. The Department for Education (DfE) will distribute funding on a per pupil basis for the three phases of education at the following annual rates:

- Early years (ages 2 to 4): £3,000
- Primary (ages 5 - 11): £6,580
- Secondary (ages 11 - 18): £8,755

These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Other activities

Additional activities to support the response include:

- Ensuring all hosts receive a 'welcome to the scheme' email outlining the process.
- Providing responses to the queries via email, which includes outlining the process, providing additional information on the visa process and what they might expect as part of the home visit.
- Updating the government database as to the progress of each check.
- Collation of Expressions of Interest from community groups, organisations and individuals following the launch of a webform to collect these responses.
- Continued development of the Welcome Pack.

Supporting information

- [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Ukraine Family Scheme and Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- <https://www.northnorthants.gov.uk/ukraine>
- <https://www.northamptonshireccg.nhs.uk/yourhealth/refugees>

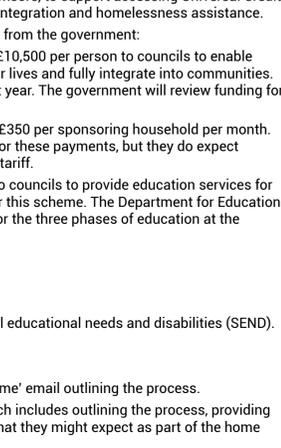
Definitions

'Sponsor' or 'sponsors' refers to an individual, group or organisation who has been approved to accommodate an individual or household from Ukraine under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme.

'Guest' or 'guests' refers to an individual or household previously resident in Ukraine, prior to 1 January 2022, who has secured a visa under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, which is enabled by them to be housed by a sponsor.

Footnote

As a local authority we have no control over the visa application process and are unable to access any information on where they are in the system.



Over 4,000 trees planted in North Northamptonshire to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee

A total of 4,374 trees and whips have been planted across 14 North Northamptonshire Council sites as part of the Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

The Queen's Green Canopy was created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 and as you will all know well now, invites people to celebrate by 'Planting a Tree for the Jubilee'.

Between October 2021 and the end of the planting season, North Northamptonshire Council teamed up with the Northamptonshire Lord-Lieutenant's office, volunteers, local schools and community groups to plant new trees at sites across North Northamptonshire.

All the trees were planted on land owned by the Council, including country parks across the area and community green spaces, with the final 200 trees planted in Hazel Wood, Corby in a section of the wood that is being reverted to natural woodland.

To commemorate the Platinum Jubilee events will take place across North Northamptonshire including beacon lighting and a Big Picnic Lunch at Wicksteed Park on Sunday 5 June. We have put together a new events section on our [Platinum Jubilee](#) page so if you have local events planned and want to highlight them please do let me know.



Knife Angel to visit North Northamptonshire

A nationally recognised anti-violence sculpture will visit North Northamptonshire during May.

The countywide tour will kick off with the sculpture arriving in Northampton for a 2-week period from 29 April to 13 May. It will then stop briefly in Wellingborough on 14 May (for a visit arranged by the Off the Street - NN8 campaign) and then proceeding to Corby where it will be on display from 15 to 19 May.

Whilst in Corby, the iconic sculpture will be on public display on Corporation Street, Willow Place.

The Knife Angel is a sculpture designed by artist Alfie Bradley, in partnership with the British Ironworks Centre and is also known as the National Monument Against Violence & Aggression.

The sculpture, made from over 100,000 seized blades, was specifically created to highlight the negative effects of violent behaviour and act as a memorial to the victims and families affected by knife crime and other forms of violence/aggression. The sculpture travels across the UK to educate children, young people and adults about the harmful effect violence has on communities.

The Knife Angel campaign is looking for 10,000 people across the county to sign up to be 'Anti Violence Ambassadors', with a pledge to turn away from violence and aggression as a solution to disagreements and conflicts.

The Knife Angel is on a countywide tour and the Northamptonshire leg of the tour is being overseen by C2C Social Action, a Northamptonshire based Christian charity that offers practical and pastoral support to offenders.

Further information about the Knife Angel in North Northamptonshire, please keep an eye on our [news pages](#) or follow our Twitter feed [@NNorthantsC](#).



Local Test & Trace Team update

Our Local Test & Trace Team reached 37% of Northants residents to provide them with support for their self-isolation, amounting to 195,814 cases and 82,092 contacts of cases helped.

This was either through the county's own self-isolation support booklets (posted to 8,537 cases and 14,882 contacts of cases), support emails (sent to 154,252 cases and 23,434 contacts of cases) or support text messages (sent to 192,447 cases and 73,764 contacts of cases).

In supporting the national Test and Trace team effort the contact tracing team sent a total of 19,271 cases, with 14,128 of those traces fully completed and 4,588 letters sent to those unable to be contacted. In addition, 25,275 inbound enquiries were also handled.

Others in the team helped Northamptonshire's people get to grips with lateral flow testing. 24,211 assisted lateral flow tests carried out and 192,496 boxes of home test kits distributed.

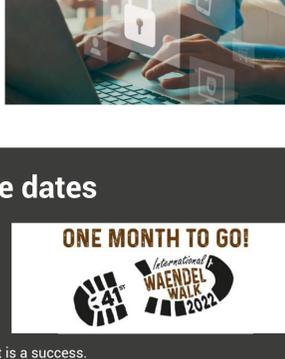


International Workers Memorial Day

28 April was International Workers Memorial Day (IWMD), which takes place every year to remember people around the world who have lost their lives or suffered an injury or ill-health connected to their job.

There are activities happening all over the world to mark the occasion. On Saturday 30 April at 11am, the GMB trade union is holding an event at the Steelworker statue outside The Cube in Corby.

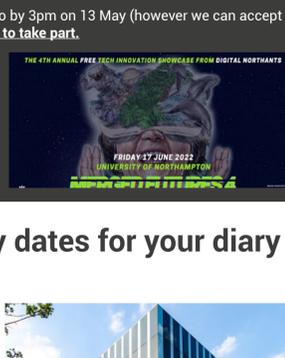
You can find out more about IWMD on the [TUC website](#).



Beware - Council tax rebate scam

Councils across the country are warning people to be on the lookout for scams related to the council tax rebate. With the majority of people paying their council tax by direct debit and also expecting a £150 rebate, people are being reminded to never give out their bank details over the phone.

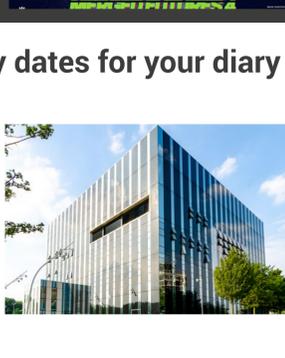
Cllr Mohan Iyengar, Vice-Chair of the Local Government Association's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, said: 'Anyone can fall victim to a scam, and we urge people of all ages to brush up on the tell-tale signs, and the support available to those who need it.'



Secure yourself online

As we all become more dependent on computers and the internet for our daily life, the need to be aware of the fundamental cyber security precautions is of paramount importance. Failure to take relevant precautions can lead to identify theft, fraud and, in some cases, serious mental health issues too.

The [National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK](#) run by the government, provides a wide range of advice and guidance to help you keep secure online. Whether you are an individual, family, small or large business, there is information on the [NCSC website](#) to help you.



Save the dates

International Waendel Walk –
Friday 13 to Sunday 15 May

The prestigious International Waendel Walk returns to Wellingborough from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 May.

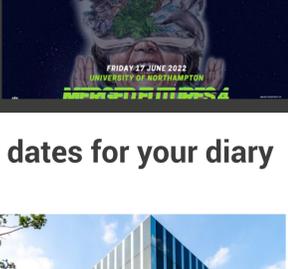
The team at North Northamptonshire Council is working hard with partner organisations and a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure the event is a success.

If you haven't booked your place yet, please do so by 3pm on 13 May (however we can accept bookings on the day.) [Find out more and register to take part.](#)

Merged Futures 4 – Friday 17 June

DiscoverNN returns to the award-winning Learning Hub at the University of Northampton's Waterside Campus on Friday 17 June and it's free to attend.

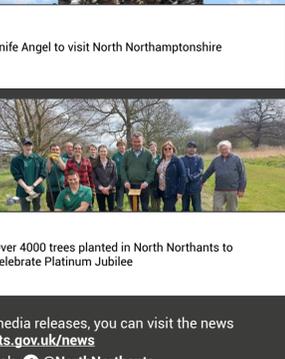
It all takes place from 10am to 3.30pm and includes a buffet lunch. You can find out more and [book your free ticket online](#).



Council meetings - Key dates for your diary

- The Executive will be **meeting** at 10am on Thursday 19 May in the Council Chamber at the Corby Cube.
- The next **meeting** of Council (which will be Annual Council) will be on 26 May. Venue details to be confirmed.
- The Council has a wide range of meetings which you are welcome to attend. You can [browse all meetings on our website](#).

Have you missed an edition of this Update? You can view digital back issues on the [Leader's Update web page](#).

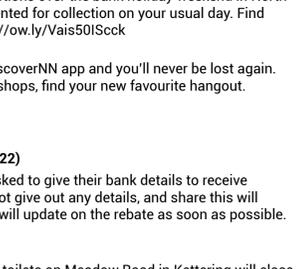


Press releases

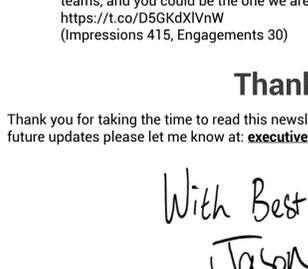
To help you stay abreast of the key things the Council has been doing, I have included some links to the Council's press releases below (starting with the most recent):



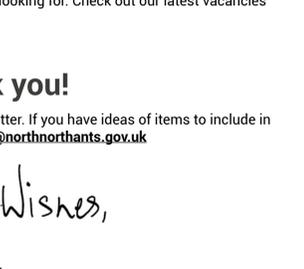
Homes for Ukraine support session held in Irthingborough



Knife Angel to visit North Northamptonshire



Places allocated for primary-aged pupils in North Northamptonshire



Over 4000 trees planted in North Northants to celebrate Platinum Jubilee

If you would like 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

Or follow Twitter [@NNorthantsC](#) and/or Facebook [@NorthNorthants](#)

Social media: Top stories

Follow our social media accounts on [Facebook](#) and/or [Twitter](#).

Top Facebook posts so far this week (25-27 April 2022)

- We are seeing reports of people being asked to give their bank details to receive the £150 council tax rebate. Please do not give out any details and share this will elderly/vulnerable people you know. We will update on the rebate as soon as possible. (Reach 12,117, Post Clicks 517)
- There won't be any changes to bin collections over the bank holiday weekend in North Northamptonshire. Bins should be presented for collection on your usual day. Find your collection day on our website: <http://ow.ly/Vais50I3cck> (Reach 3,490, Post Clicks 32)
- Stuck for things to do? Download the DiscoverNN app and you'll never be lost again. From quirky boutiques to hidden coffee shops, find your new favourite hangout. www.northnorthants.gov.uk/discovernn (Reach 2,693, Post Clicks 54)

Top Tweets so far this week (25-27 April 2022)

- We are seeing reports of people being asked to give their bank details to receive the £150 council tax rebate. Please do not give out any details, and share this will elderly/vulnerable people you know. We will update on the rebate as soon as possible. <https://t.co/N6t8T7DCUu> (Impressions 3,998, Engagements 89)
- 1/3 A quick reminder that the temporary toilets on Meadow Road in Kettering will close tomorrow (Wed 27 April). Businesses in the town are once again offering their toilet facilities for use as part of the Community Toilet Scheme. (Impressions 652, Engagements 15)
- Want to start spring with a new job? We are looking for the best of the best to join our teams, and you could be the one we are looking for. Check out our latest vacancies <https://t.co/D56KdXlVnW> (Impressions 415, Engagements 30)

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. If you have ideas of items to include in future updates please let me know at: executive@northnorthants.gov.uk

With Best Wishes,
Jason



Follow me on Twitter [@SmithersJason](#)

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