

Leader's Update

Clir Jason Smithers
Leader of the Council



6 October 2023

Introduction and Welcome!

Welcome to my latest Update.

Works to upgrade over 44,000 streetlights to the latest energy-efficient technology will start across Northamptonshire next week. Both North and West Northamptonshire Councils have declared a climate emergency and are taking steps to reduce energy consumption. This is a significant step towards our Net Zero pledge and will have environmental, economic and social benefits.

Next week's meeting of the council's Executive will receive a report on government funding to boost the number of electric vehicle charging points across the local area. The council has been identified as eligible for nearly £3m of funding from government and must now submit a business case on or before the end of November on how the funding would be spent. With the funding allocated from government, we are now well positioned to extend the local electric charging network.

October is Black History Month. It is an opportunity to join together to recognise and applaud the invaluable contributions of black women to society, inspire future generations and empower them. To celebrate the impact of black heritage and culture we are proudly flying the Pan-African flag on council buildings. You will also see the four colours (black, red, yellow and green) that represent Black History Month on our website and social media pages.

Due to a fungal disease which affects ash trees across the UK, North Northamptonshire Council will need to start work from early October (after the end of the nesting season) to remove potentially hazardous trees from several council-owned parks and green spaces. All work being completed is following guidance from DEFRA, the Tree Council, Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission. Our teams have obtained the correct felling licenses and are working in a considered way, with no mass felling taking place.

Our Consultation and Engagement Hub has been rebranded as Your Voice Matters. Please visit the Your Voice Matters website for details of our current open activities and have your say to shape our future.

North Northamptonshire Council is partnering with Jobcentre Plus and Tresham College to stage a job fair that will showcase hundreds of job opportunities in and around Wellingborough. On Wednesday 18 October, the event will bring together employers in the area and help potential employees to understand the training pathways which are open to them towards new or more rewarding careers. The event will be open to the public from 4pm to 6pm at the Tresham College Wellingborough campus.

We have almost finished checking that the electoral register is up to date for this year. Letters marked 'CCA' only needed to be responded to if elector details were missing or incorrect. For any household who received a form marked 'CF', you must respond even if all elector details are correct. I have included further details below.

Libraries across North Northamptonshire have been enticing visitors with a variety of green-themed events to celebrate Libraries Week (Monday 2 to Sunday 8 October). This year's theme is sustainability, nature and the environment.

Construction work has started on two more Changing Places facilities in Irchester Country Park and Wellingborough Library which will make a huge difference for many people. Changing Places toilets are potentially life-changing large spaces and are accessible for people with limited mobility or specific disabilities and care needs. Our growing network of inclusive spaces ensures that people can plan visits confidently, using toilets safely and with dignity, making it possible for everyone to enjoy day-to-day activities that we can sometimes take for granted.

Cadent will be investigating an existing high-pressure gas main in the Embankment Splash Park visitor car park in Wellingborough. This is to help inform the scope and design of future works affecting the gas main and is part of a wider technical review process by Stanton Cross Developments (SCD), as part of the implementation of Route Two. No trees will be felled as part of the works. The work will be carried out within a tree root protection zone and under the watching brief of an ecologist.

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 October sessions are detailed below.

Chester House Estate is opening the first of several escape rooms. Spellbound: The Witches of Chester House is set to open in the run-up to Halloween. The new escape room will be a family friendly, fantasy adventure set in an enchanted forest where players must cast a spell to release a witch's curse.

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

Forthcoming meetings

- Executive:** Thursday 12 October from 10am. [View agenda and papers.](#)
- Full Council:** Thursday 26 October from 6pm. The agenda and papers will be published on the [Council meetings](#) section of our website in the week before the meeting.

These meetings will be live streamed on our [YouTube channel](#).

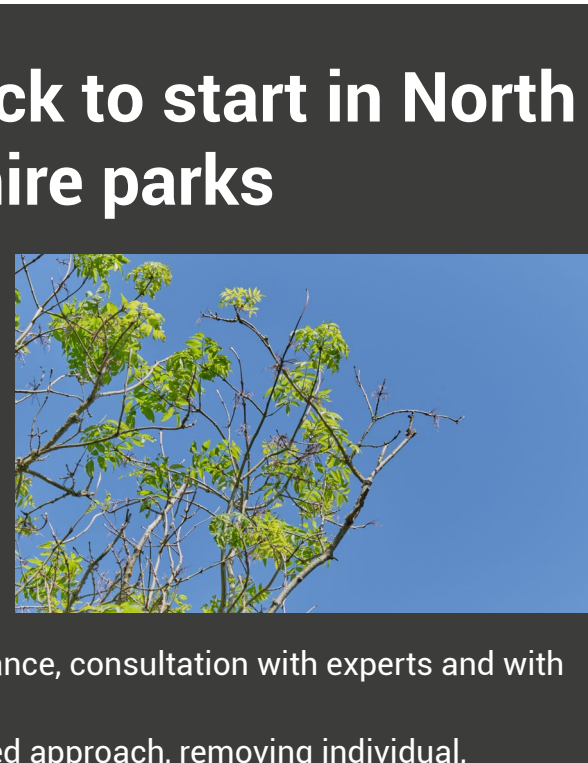


Streetlights across Northamptonshire to be upgraded to the latest LED technology

Works to upgrade over 44,000 streetlights to the latest energy-efficient technology will start across Northamptonshire next week.

Both North and West Northamptonshire Councils have declared a climate emergency and the authorities are taking steps to reduce energy consumption.

Over the next two-and-a-half years, Balfour Beatty Living Places will upgrade the current lights to LED, a move that will reduce CO2 emissions in the county by an estimated 1,091 tonnes of CO2 a year.



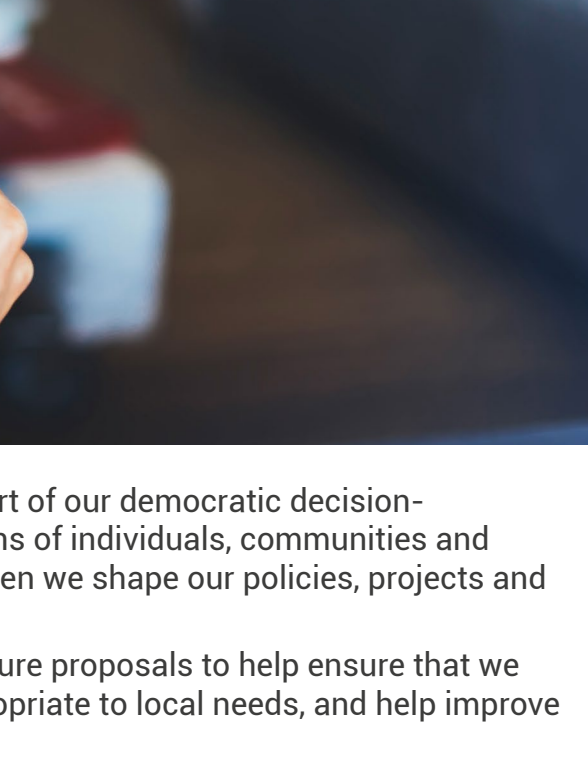
The new LED lights will also bring a range of additional benefits, including white light, which is linked to improving visibility safety, a reduction in light pollution and greater energy efficiency. The lights will be replaced as part of regular maintenance rounds carried out by Balfour Beatty, making the process more efficient.

Balfour Beatty took over responsibility for streetlights in Northamptonshire in 2011 under a 25-year PFI deal with the former county council. The streetlighting stock was initially replaced by standard lamps as LED was an emerging technology with relatively high unit prices and unproven life span.

Growth of Electric Vehicle infrastructure on Executive agenda

Next week's meeting of the council's Executive will receive a report on government funding to boost the number of electric vehicle charging points across the local area.

The council has been identified as eligible for nearly £3m of funding from government and must now submit a business case on or before the end of November on how the funding would be spent.



It is estimated that the number of charging points across the country will need to increase from 37,000 to 720,000 by 2030. In March 2023, the government announced the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure fund, which is designed to improve the accessibility of charging points locally. The funding allocated to the council is primarily to provide solutions for residents across North Northamptonshire without off-street parking.

The council has been identified as eligible for funding in round 1 from government due to its ability to demonstrate commitment, capability and capacity to deliver an investment programme for North Northamptonshire.

Since we declared a climate and environment emergency in 2021, we have been working to develop our policies and identifying ways we can help residents. With the funding allocated from government, we are now well positioned to extend the local electric charging network. I look forward to discussing this report and how we move forward with growing our electric vehicle infrastructure at next week's meeting.

The Executive report will follow on from a [Consultation on North Northamptonshire draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy](#) which closes on Wednesday 11 October, with comments taken on board before the final version is published.

Celebrating Black History Month

October is Black History Month. It is an opportunity to join together to recognise and applaud the invaluable contributions of black women to society, inspire future generations and empower them.

This year's theme of 'Saluting our Sisters' highlights the crucial role that black women have played in shaping history, inspiring change, and building communities.

We are proudly flying the **Pan-African flag** to celebrate the impact of black heritage and culture on North Northamptonshire and the wider world.



During the month, we will be sharing messages with staff and residents about local support groups, events and the #MyNames campaign.

Books celebrating black history will be on prominent display in libraries across the county throughout October. If you're near a library, please wander in for a browse.

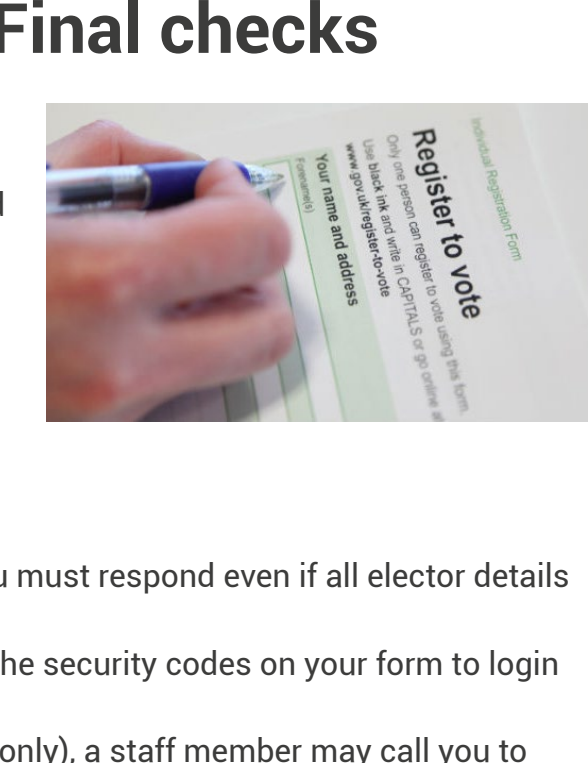
Further information

Please visit the [Black History Month](#) section of our website.

Work to tackle Ash Dieback to start in North Northamptonshire parks

Due to a fungal disease which affects ash trees across the UK, North Northamptonshire Council will need to start work from early October (after the end of the nesting season) to remove potentially hazardous trees from several council-owned parks and green spaces.

Ash Dieback is a fungal disease which it is estimated will result in the loss of a large proportion of ash trees across the UK. Across the country, there is ongoing work to ensure that all trees are as safe as possible.



The work that is due to start in North Northamptonshire has been carefully considered - following national guidance, consultation with experts and with due diligence.

Instead of mass felling, the council is taking a considered approach, removing individual, infected trees from King's Wood Local Nature Reserve, Irchester Country Park and East Carlton Countryside Park.

First, any trees that pose a high health and safety risk by footpaths, highways and housing will be removed. By removing these trees, sunlight will be able to reach the woodland floor, encouraging new growth of flowers and other vegetation, which will support butterflies and other invertebrates. Doing this will not only make the woodland safer, but it will also make it more diverse and encourage a wider variety of wildlife into the area.

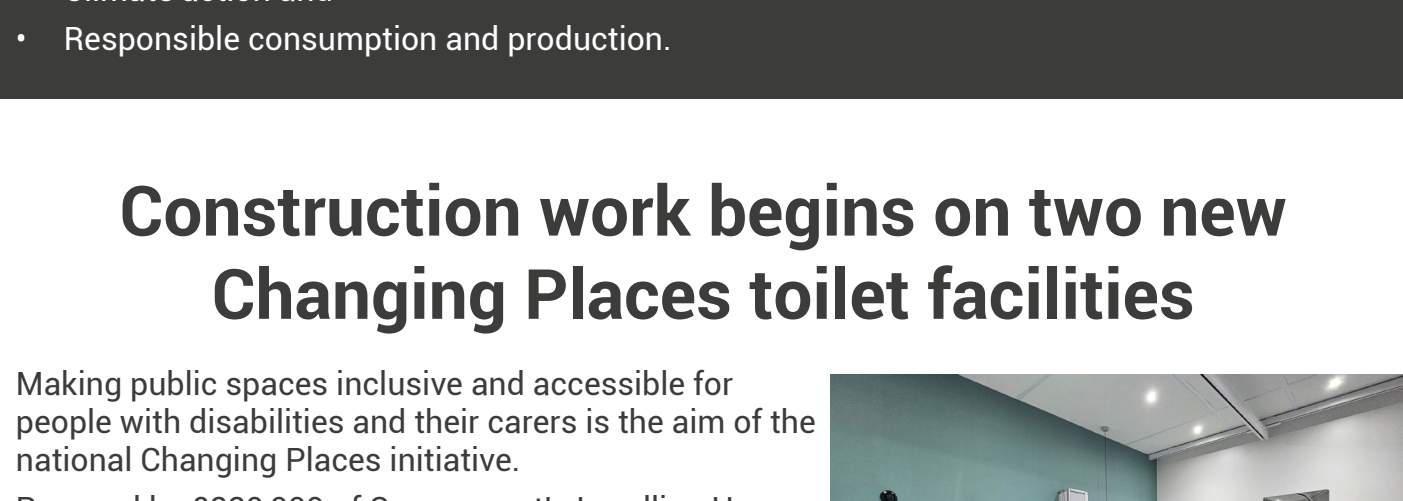
Felling and leaving diseased timber in situ is not a threat to other species but will have a high habitat value. This timber will be cut into 1m to 2m lengths and stacked up to create log piles, creating small habitats for newts, invertebrates and small mammals to hibernate or use as cover.

Work will start from early October.

Further information

Please visit the [Ash dieback management](#) section of our website.

Consultation and Engagement Hub: Rebranded as Your Voice Matters



Our consultation and engagement activities are a key part of our democratic decision-making process. They ensure that the voices and opinions of individuals, communities and stakeholders are considered alongside other aspects when we shape our policies, projects and other initiatives in North Northamptonshire.

It is vital that we hear your views on our services and future proposals to help ensure that we provide great value services, which are flexible and appropriate to local needs, and help improve the lives of those who live, work and visit the area.

Please visit the newly rebranded [Your Voice Matters](#) website and have your say to shape our future.

Please find below details of our current open activities.

Consultation on North Northamptonshire draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. Road traffic currently accounts for a considerable proportion of North Northamptonshire's overall greenhouse gas emissions impacting on air quality, health, and the environment. By 2030 there are projected to be 116,000 battery electric vehicles (EVs) registered in North Northamptonshire, so it is vital that there is adequate electric vehicle infrastructure to support this transition and the journey towards net-zero. North Northamptonshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (NNEVIS), seeks to put in place policies and actions to tackle some of the current barriers slowing down the transition. Closes 11 October 2023.

Tackling violence and improving lives through the Serious Violence Duty. Serious violence affects many communities. The impact can be life changing, whether you are a victim or a witness. Have you been affected by serious violence in the last year? If so, we would like to know about the experience you and your family may have had, as well as the issues affecting your community. Closes 27 October 2023.

Draft Sustainable Travel to Education Strategy 2023. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires all Local Authorities to produce an annual Sustainable Mode of Travel to School Strategy (SMOTS) and for these strategies to be produced and published by mid-September. The legacy strategy is the 2015 Northamptonshire SMOTS. Closes 30 October 2023.

Polling District and Polling Place Review. North Northamptonshire Council is conducting a statutory review of all polling districts and polling places that are used across North Northamptonshire. Polling Stations fall outside of the scope of this mandatory review, however, the council is taking this opportunity to review all polling stations in order to ensure good accessibility for all electors. Closes 30 October 2023.

North Northamptonshire Greenway Wellingborough to Rushden route consultation 2023. One of the most asked for routes is linking Wellingborough to Rushden and a Masterplan has been developed in order to look at how a Greenway connection can be made between Rushden Lakes and Wellingborough to connect to Chester House Estate. It would connect the Greenway from Woodford to Stanwick Lakes, Irthlingborough, Higham and Rushden. Residents have been asking for such a route for a few years now, and the demand is there but developing it has some significant challenges. Closes 1 November 2023.

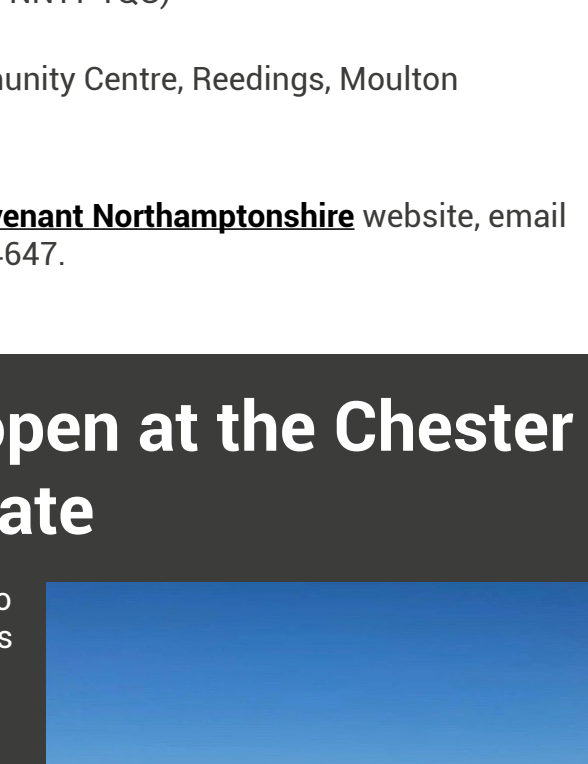
North Northamptonshire Greenway Strategy consultation 2023. North Northamptonshire Council is developing a Greenway Strategy, which is a rural equivalent of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans in place in our towns. The strategy identifies safer routes across our geography which connects places of work, education, tourism, recreation and leisure - nearly 300 kilometres in all. We want to hear the views of the wider community as to how we can achieve this vision and there's also an opportunity to be involved with a network of Greenway Champions. As a Greenway Champion you will help raise the profile of this strategy. Closes 1 November 2023.

Duddington With Fineshade Parish Neighbourhood Plan Proposal. North Northamptonshire Council has formally received the Duddington with Fineshade Parish Neighbourhood Plan, which has been submitted in accordance with Regulation 15 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Closes 3 November 2023.

Wellingborough recruitment, skills and careers event

An exciting new initiative will be showcasing hundreds of job opportunities in and around Wellingborough.

Being staged on Wednesday 18 October, the event will bring together the biggest and best employers in the area and help potential employees to understand the training pathways which are open to them towards new or more rewarding careers.



North Northamptonshire Council, Jobcentre Plus and Tresham College are putting together the largest event of this kind to have been staged for years. This follows a hugely successful opening event held at Kettering Campus earlier in the year.

Tresham College is part of The Bedford College Group and will be advertising its own vacancies to visitors as well as talking to employers about training funding which is available for apprenticeships and continuing professional development of staff.

Jobs with North Northamptonshire Council, The Bedford College Group and via Jobcentre Plus will also be promoted to people, together with those from other major employers.

The event will be open to the public from 4pm to 6pm at the Tresham College Wellingborough campus where potential employees can come and find out more about employment opportunities from the organisations attending, and training opportunities available to help them into employment including apprenticeships, part-time courses and T Levels.

Electoral register - Final checks

We have almost finished checking that the electoral register is up to date for this year.

All householders across North Northamptonshire received either a:

- Letter marked CCA
- Form marked CF



Letters marked 'CCA'

Letters marked 'CCA' only needed to be responded to if elector details were missing or incorrect.

Forms marked CF

For any household who received a form marked 'CF', you must respond even if all elector details are correct.

Simply visit the [household response](#) website and enter the security codes on your form to login and record any changes.

For those that do not respond (and received a 'CF' form only), a staff member may call you to confirm elector details between Monday 2 October and Tuesday 31 October. Staff will not ask for financial information and can offer their names and a number for you to call back to confirm it is a genuine call. Please help them with their work to let us know your elector details are correct.

If you are not sure how to respond or would prefer to contact us about details on the electoral register, our Elections Team will be happy to help. You can call them on 01832 742 076.

The requested information is required by law and not responding can result in a £1000 fine. If you're not currently registered to vote, your name will not appear in messages we send but you can easily [register to vote](#) on the GOVUK website or call 01832 742 076.

Not being registered to vote can affect your applications for loans, mortgages and even mobile phone contracts. It also means you will not be able to vote at election time.

Free green-themed activities for all ages at libraries across North Northamptonshire

Libraries across North Northamptonshire have been enticing visitors with a variety of green-themed events to celebrate Libraries Week (Monday 2 to Sunday 8 October). This year's theme is sustainability, nature and the environment.



Activities this week have included recycling games, community litter picks, pre-loved book sales, knitting, make do and mend workshops, up-cycling craft activities, energy saving advice sessions, plant swaps and much more.

Each of the North Northamptonshire libraries is developing a sustainability pledge and committing to help achieve the [United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals](#).

These goals include:

- Good health and wellbeing
- Quality education
- Decent work and economic growth
- Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- Climate action and
- Responsible consumption and production.

Construction work begins on two new Changing Places toilet facilities

Making public spaces inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities and their carers is the aim of the national Changing Places initiative.



Powered by £330,000 of Government's Levelling Up fund and further investment from the council's capital programme, construction work has begun this week on two more of these important toilet facilities at Irchester Country Park and Wellingborough Library.

Changing Places help people who are limited in their mobility by making sure they have the necessary equipment to meet their needs when they are out and about. They ensure everyone can enjoy visiting places without having to worry about toilet breaks, and that they can do so with dignity.

Modern, accessible features include:

- Powered height-adjustable changing table
- Raising and lowering sink
- Movable ceiling hoist
- Grab rails
- Non-slip flooring
- Privacy screens
- Large clear space to accommodate wheelchair users and their carers
- Alarm.

At Irchester Country Park, the existing disabled toilet will be replaced with the new Changing Places facility. A temporary accessible toilet will be available for the public to use whilst work is being carried out, and visitors to the park must ensure children are supervised and dogs are kept on a lead in the area.

Construction work at Wellingborough Library will see the existing toilet block that is currently not in use being refurbished, and there will be no disruption for the public whilst the work is taking place.

Both facilities are expected to take around 6 to 8 weeks to complete.

The council has recently opened Changing Places facilities at Corby Cube and East Carlton Countryside Park and further construction works are due to start in the coming weeks at Stanwick Lakes, Barnwell Country Park and the Chester House Estate.

Other locations in North Northamptonshire with Changing Places facilities already in use are Rushden Lakes, Wicksteed Park, Waendel Leisure Centre and Corby Swimming Pool.

Once opened, these facilities are registered on the national [Changing Places](#) website to help people locate them and plan visits.

Wellingborough: Details of joint project between Cadent and Stanton Cross Developments

Cadent will be commencing an essential site investigation of an existing high-pressure gas main situated in a section of the Embankment Splash Park visitor car park.



This is to help inform the scope and design of future works affecting the gas main and is part of a wider technical review process by Stanton Cross Developments (SCD), which is seeking to safeguard as many trees as possible, as part of the implementation of Route Two.

No trees will be felled as part of the works. Some investigatory trial holes may be required in an area adjacent to the trees at London Road. We would like to reassure members of the public that these are to investigate the relationship between the tree roots and the high-pressure gas main. This work will be carried out within a tree root protection zone and under the watching brief of an ecologist.

The works

The work is due to be completed by Friday 17 November. The Splash Park car park will be partially closed during this time. Following completion, the car park will be reinstated to the same layout as prior to the works.

To try to minimise disruption to users, we have programmed the works to coincide with the closure of the Splash Park for winter. Should any works be required adjacent to London Road there will be no obstruction to the public footway. All phases of the works will be fenced to so that members of the Cadent team can complete their work safely, and to protect members of the public throughout.

SCD and Cadent have discussed the proposed works with representatives from North Northamptonshire Council who own and operate the car park. All the necessary licences and statutory permissions have been obtained to undertake the works. There will be no interruption to gas service during the works.

We have taken every effort to minimise any inconvenience and will endeavour to complete the works as efficiently as possible.

Contacting Cadent about this project

Customers with questions about this work can contact the team by:

- Phone: 0800 090 3071
- Email: CustomerCareFM@cadentgas.com
- Online: [Cadent Gas](#)

Armed Forces Community Hubs - October dates

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.

Monday 16 October

2pm to 3:30pm at Daventry Library (The Abbey Centre, Daventry NN11 4XG)

Friday 20 October

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

Friday 27 October

10am to 12 noon at Moulton Library (Moulton Community Centre, Readings, Moulton NN3 7AX)

Further information

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

New escape room set to open at the Chester House Estate

The offering at the Chester House Estate is continuing to grow with a new escape room - Spellbound: The Witches of Chester House - set to open in October.



The team at the Chester House, which is overseen by North Northamptonshire Council, have teamed up with Trapp'd on this exciting new venture, which also sees a further two escape rooms planned for the site.

The new escape room will be a family friendly, fantasy adventure set in an enchanted forest where players must cast a spell to release a witch's curse and is set to open in the spookiest month of the year - October.

The team will also be developing two further escape rooms with the Chester House team to launch on the site at a later date.

Trapp'd currently have 18 escape rooms across six UK locations. Follow Trapp'd and the Chester House Estate on social media for more information about the opening and booking information.

Further information

Visit the [Chester House Estate](#) website for more information about their Halloween events.

October half term activities for children

It's October half term from Monday 23 October to Friday 27 October.



Find out about all the [Half term activities for children in North Northamptonshire](#) on our website.

Press releases



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

- [Growth of Electric Vehicle infrastructure on Executive agenda](#)
- [Streetlights across Northamptonshire to be upgraded to the latest LED technology](#)
- [Free green-themed activities for all ages next week at libraries across North Northamptonshire](#)
- [Work to tackle Ash Dieback to start in North Northants parks](#)
- [Calling all householders...](#)
- [Wellingborough: details of joint project between Cadent and Stanton Cross Developments](#)
- [Wellingborough recruitment, skills and careers event](#)
- [New escape room set to open at the Chester House Estate](#)
- [Are we on the right path? Consultations launched on North Northants Greenway](#)

Social media: Top stories

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

Top Facebook posts so far this week (2 to 4 October)

- Streetlights across Northamptonshire to be upgraded to the latest LED technology (<https://ow.ly/Hkp50SP0Sk0x>) (Reactions 22,686, Link Clicks 184, Engagement 2,709)
- Calling local businesses. Have you heard about Corby's modern and professional spaces to run your business from? Corby Innovation Hub and Corby Enterprise Centre offer: Flexible license agreement, Spacious office, studio, co-working areas and virtual offices, Industrial and workshop space, Modern meeting rooms, Free car parking, A welcoming reception team, On-site security, Plus lots more! These innovative business hubs are an ideal place to drive your business forward. Find out more at: Corby Innovation Hub: (<https://ow.ly/WzUe50PR4j0>) Corby Enterprise Centre: (<https://ow.ly/3AEf50PR4jS>) (Reach 2,469, Link Clicks 7, Engagement 41)

- We are looking for people who align with our key values and are ready to make a difference every day. A career in care is like no other. Meet new people and change their lives #ASCNN (<https://bit.ly/3KY2C1J>) (Reach 1,521, Link Clicks 11, Engagement 29)

Top Tweets so far this week (2 to 4 October)

- Streetlights across North