



Leader's Update

Clr Jason Smithers
Leader of the Council



13 May 2022

Introduction and Welcome!

It is lovely now that we are getting some nice spring weather as well as a bit of much needed rain too. There could be no better time to welcome the Knife Angel Corby to Corby this weekend where it will remain until 29 May. I really would encourage you to visit Corby town centre in order to take a look at this incredible piece of art. At the same time, why not spare a thought for what it symbolises in a moment of quiet reflection? See [Leader's Update Issue 23](#) for more details.

Also taking this place this weekend, is the **International Waendel Walk** which returns to Wellingborough today until Sunday 15 May. [Find out more and register to take part](#). We can accept bookings on the day.

As we travel further into May, it will soon be time for our **Annual Council meeting** on 26 May. Council may not be your first choice of online viewing but it does play an important role in local decision-making. Council meetings are the heart of our local democracy. If you would like to find out more about how the Council works and what it is doing, you are welcome to attend in person or watch the live streaming. More details will be shared via our website and social media channels soon.

The **deadline for applications for post-16 and non-entitled school transport** for the new academic year (starting in September 2022) is Tuesday 31 May. Applications need to be made on time to make sure pupils don't miss out. We try our best to offer assistance to families wherever we can, however spaces are limited. More on this story below.

We are now less than a month away from the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee events**. Thank you to Weldon Parish Council for sending in details of the impressive array of activities that they have planned for the occasion. This got me thinking: it would be great if you could share any photos of your Jubilee related activities in your area with us at North Northamptonshire Council so we can put together a montage. If you would like to take part in this, please email your photos to communications@northnonthants.gov.uk.

Finally, I have included details of the **Public Spaces Protection Order Extension Consultation** in Kettering town centre. It's worth keeping an eye on the Leader's Update as I do endeavour to include details of consultations and other important events and activities. You are also very welcome to follow the Council's official Twitter feed which really is a great way to keep up to date with what is going on: [@NNorthantsC](https://twitter.com/NNorthantsC).

£150 council tax energy rebate

The Council has started making payments of the £150 council tax energy rebate to eligible residents who also pay their council tax via direct debit. These should go into people's bank accounts over the next few days once cleared.

The delay has been due to the requirement for changes to be made to the software supplied to the Council to support the payments, this has impacted on all councils to varying degrees. The payments are being made in batches as soon as the system checks are complete, and we are working as fast as we can to get these all processed over this week and next.

Regular updates are being posted on the [Council's website](#).

Please note that we will be in contact directly with those who pay their council tax via other means to explain the procedure to follow.



If you live in a property in council tax bands A to D, you are likely to receive a £150 council tax rebate from the Government to help with the cost of living.

Gearing up for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

It's now less than a month to go until the Queen's Platinum Jubilee events and there is an exciting line up of activities planned.

Whether it is the Big Picnic Lunch at Wicksteed Park, the Jubilee Pageant in Northampton, the Decorated Bicycle Competition in Weldon or The Big Lunch in Ashley, there is a whole host of activities to enjoy.

We have collated some of the local Queen's Platinum Jubilee events on the website. These events are being organised by us and our town and parish councils across North Northamptonshire. Do let us know if you would like to add your event by contacting us at communications@northnonthants.gov.uk.

I would like to say thank you to Peter Dowsett, the Vice Chair at Weldon Parish Council for sharing the spring edition of their Weldon Wide Magazine with me. It focuses so beautifully on Weldon's exciting programme of Platinum Jubilee events and activities including:

Thursday 2 June

Various locations in Weldon, 2pm

Picnic, competitions, activities, choir singing, catering outlets, plus our local Olympic celebrity, Charlotte Worthington, lighting our parish Jubilee beacon.

Friday 3 June

Service, 11am

St Mary's Church, Church Street, Weldon, NN17 3JY. Followed by a tree planting on the Green.

Saturday 4 June

Big Community Lunch

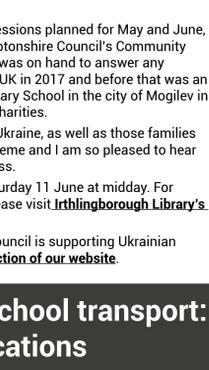
Bring your own picnic to Weldon Cricket Club on Stamford Road, and enjoy the match at 12 noon to toast Her Majesty's reign of seventy years. Celebration ideas are available from TheBigJubileeLunch.com

Sunday 5 June

St Mary's Church Service, 10am

A Trip Down Memory Lane, supported by articles from the parish's history.

The Platinum Cup Cricket Match, 2.30pm and much, much more for you to enjoy with family and friends.



Homes for Ukraine support session held in Irthlingborough

Support sessions for Ukrainian refugees and residents of North Northamptonshire who have applied to the Homes for Ukraine scheme took place in Irthlingborough Library recently, with further sessions planned.

The first session was attended by many people who were at various stages of their applications, with some thinking about applying and hoping that talking to others might help them decide. Other attendees were waiting on visas or families/individuals to join them and others wanted to look for a family to house but didn't know how to find one.

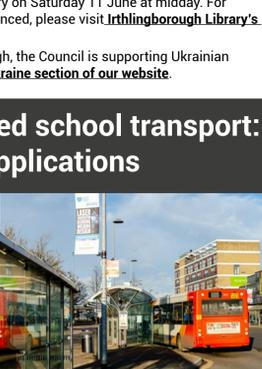
Two Ukrainian ladies, who arrived in the UK and North Northamptonshire just two weeks ago also attended.

The session was run by Irthlingborough Library, with future sessions planned for May and June, and they were joined by Naomi Scannell from North Northamptonshire Council's Community Development team and Anzhalka Hall who is Belarusian and was on hand to answer any questions about basic language or culture. She moved to the UK in 2017 and before that was an Assistant Head and Reception Teacher of a very large Secondary School in the city of Mogilev in Eastern Belarus as well as working for Chernobyl Children's Charities.

As a Council, we are committed to supporting refugees from Ukraine, as well as those families and residents who have applied to the Homes for Ukraine scheme and I am so pleased to hear that this session at Irthlingborough Library was such a success.

A future session is planned for Irthlingborough Library on Saturday 11 June at midday. For more information and future dates as they are announced, please visit [Irthlingborough Library's Facebook page](#).

Alongside the sessions taking place in Irthlingborough, the Council is supporting Ukrainian refugees and more information is available on the [Ukraine section of our website](#).



Post-16 and non-entitled school transport: deadline for applications

Pupils who are considering going into post-16 education in September 2022, or are of statutory school age but not entitled to free home to school transport, are being encouraged to apply for a seat on one of our existing contracted services. This includes children with Education, Health and Care Plans.

North Northamptonshire Council offers travel assistance for both sets of pupils – subject to eligibility criteria and the availability of transport.

The deadline for applications for the new academic year (starting in September 2022) is Tuesday 31 May.

Post 16 and Non-Entitled school transport applications only cover one academic year, therefore a new application needs to be submitted every year.

It cannot be guaranteed that a seat will be available for a child for applications received after 31 May 2022.

Any applications received after the deadline may not be processed until the October half term and will be dependent on spare capacity being available. This would mean that alternative arrangements would need to be made so children could attend their education setting.

Applicants receive a confirmation email upon receipt. For applications received after the deadline, contact might not be made until the applications have been processed and a seat can be offered.

School transport can only be provided at the normal start and finish times (as published by the chosen educational setting). Individual course timetables cannot be taken into account.

For more information and to apply online please visit [the website](#).

Please be aware that if your child will be attending either Northampton College or Moulton College then parents should apply directly to the college for travel assistance.



£2,000 'Kick Start' grants for local business

Entrepreneurs in Northamptonshire with a great idea or a business less than 12 months old are invited to apply for grants and free expert advice by Friday 15 July this year as part of the Kick Start Small Business Grants initiative.

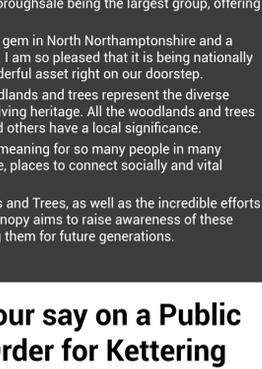
After a Dragon's Den style grant panel session in September for shortlisted applicants, winners will receive: a £2,000 grant for business expenses, a year's free membership with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), and ongoing support from the Business and IP Centre (BIPC) Northamptonshire team.

The Kick Start initiative is supported by BIPC Northamptonshire, which is part of the **British Library's National Network of Business & IP Centres** which supports small businesses by hosting free events, such as networking, workshops, seminars and webinars.

The Network recently **expanded to over 100 regional and local libraries** across England, thanks to £13million in central government funding.

The Library Plus service also provides information and access to database subscription resources for market research, as well as business mentoring and one-to-one advice sessions on self-employment, starting up a business, business planning, and intellectual property.

Further details on how to apply, including eligibility criteria, are available on the [BIPC Northamptonshire website](#).



Local Ancient Woodland chosen for Ancient Canopy to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

I was delighted to hear that Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods in Corby has been chosen as part of a nationwide network of 70 Ancient Woodlands to be dedicated to The Queen in celebration of the Platinum Jubilee.

The **Queen's Green Canopy** recently announced the network of 70 Ancient Woodlands and 70 Ancient Trees across the United Kingdom which will form part of the Ancient Canopy to celebrate Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

The initiative was launched by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, who is Patron of The Queen's Green Canopy, under one of the Ancient Tree dedications - the old Sycamore located at Dumfries House in Scotland.

Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods comprises of 75 hectares of Ancient Woodland, woodland, scrub and grassland located in the centre of Corby and surrounded completely by built development including Corby town centre and the Woodland Parkland Gateway civic quarter. It is estimated to date back to around 800AD and the woodland is largely composed of ash and oak trees, although conifers are also present. It was largely unmanaged through the last century, with active management resuming in 2012.

This beautiful woodland is actively managed by North Northamptonshire Council through the Woodland Project with support from the Friends of Thoroughsale and Hazel Woods. Much of the practical management work is undertaken by the Woodland Manager, two Parks and Woodland Rangers and over 50 regular volunteers.

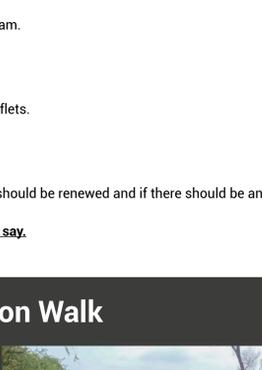
The project also hosts a National Lottery Heritage Funded Heritage Volunteer Officer post, which focuses on providing an all-inclusive thriving volunteer programme. Social engagement is as much a part of managing the woodlands as the operational delivery. There are 6 Friends Of groups in Corby with the Friends Of Hazel and Thoroughsale being the largest group, offering daily activities throughout the week for volunteers.

Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods really is a woodland gem in North Northamptonshire and a special place at the heart of the community in Corby. I am so pleased that it is being nationally recognised and we are so proud to have such a wonderful asset right on our doorstep.

Established over hundreds of years, the chosen woodlands and trees represent the diverse canopy of the four nations, it is a celebration of our living heritage. All the woodlands and trees have a story to tell. Some are famous specimens and others have a local significance.

These ancient natural spaces hold significance and meaning for so many people in many different ways. They are symbols of community pride, places to connect socially and vital spaces for health and wellbeing activities.

By sharing the stories behind the Ancient Woodlands and Trees, as well as the incredible efforts that are made to protect them, the Queen's Green Canopy aims to raise awareness of these treasured habitats and the importance of conserving them for future generations.



Consultation: Have your say on a Public Spaces Protection Order for Kettering



A public consultation should have been launched to seek views on whether a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) should be renewed and extended for a further 3 years.

A PSPO is a power under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, that allows a council to impose restrictions in particular areas to tackle nuisance or problem behaviour, within a defined public area.

The PSPO for Kettering Town Centre was originally put in place in 2016 to prohibit:

- Control of commercial or charity collection or soliciting for money in the street.
- Consumption of alcohol on street.
- Those under 18 in the area between 11pm and 6am.
- Driving/ using a car in an anti-social manner.
- Obstructing the highway/or loitering.
- Anti-social parking.
- Unauthorised distribution of printed material/leaflets.
- Use of skateboards, bicycles and scooters.
- Fouling on the street.
- Begg and abusive language.

The current consultation covers whether the PSPO should be renewed and if there should be any amendments to the Order.

[Find out more about the consultation and have your say.](#)

The Big Elton Walk

On Sunday 1 May, the community of Elton celebrated the re-opening of the long-closed paths beside the River Nene by walking them!

Elton Society and the parish council jointly organised the event and invited the many people from Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Councils who had assisted over the years. The first footpath order was submitted in 2006 so this has been an effort over an 18-year period involving two riverside paths and a new footbridge over the River Nene.

The government planning inspector approved the designation of the path between Warmington and Elton Locks in the Autumn of 2021 and since this time work has taken place to clear scrub and set back a barbed wire fence to make the path safe and usable.

Despite the forecast of rain, over 50 people from the village of Elton took part in the official 'opening' walk and, along the way, took the opportunity to thank Council staff and others who had helped the parish council through the many complicated procedures involved in the project.



Northampton Legal Walk - 19 May

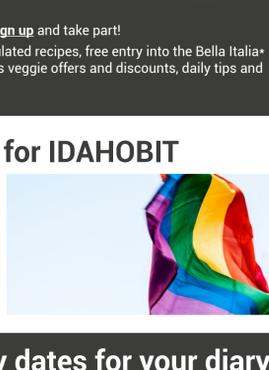
The annual Northampton Legal Walk is taking place on Thursday 19 May. Legal Walks take place in cities and towns up and down the country and are an opportunity to express support and provide a platform for fundraising for those organisations that provide essential free legal advice and assistance to those in the community who are unable to afford the cost of legal services.

The present cost of living crisis is pointing to the ever-increasing value of these facilities for the weeks and months ahead. The walks take place under the aegis of the [Access To Justice Foundation \(ATJF\)](#) in support of its regional trusts (in our case, the Midlands Legal Support Trust) which provide grants to applicant community advice organisations.

The Northampton Legal Walk (which although in Northampton is for organisations serving all the communities of the county) is supported by the Judiciary, the legal profession (the local law society, local law firms and members of the Bar) and the High Sheriff and local judges and magistrates participate as walkers. Other organisations who are engaged in the administration of justice in the county or support the purpose (including the Faculty of Law at the University) join the walk.

The Northampton Walk is a 10km urban/suburban trail starting at the Combined Courts Centre on Lady's Lane, Northampton at 5.30pm that goes down to the University Waterside campus, then around Delapre Park and back up into the town (there is a shorter route of 5km, with a view to accessibility/inclusivity). The walks end at Elgin House, on the Billing Road, where refreshments will be offered. The main walk takes about 2 hours. One of the collateral benefits being promoted by the walk is 'health and wellbeing'.

For more information, please visit [the event website](#).



National Vegetarian Week 2022 is almost here...

The Vegetarian Society's flagship event is happening from 16 to 22 May. The week is always centred on the benefits of choosing vegetarian food, and this year the focus is on the positive impact that we can have on the climate crisis.

Choosing vegetarian food is the biggest change an individual can make to reduce their impact on the planet and on animals, whose habitats are adversely affected by climate change.

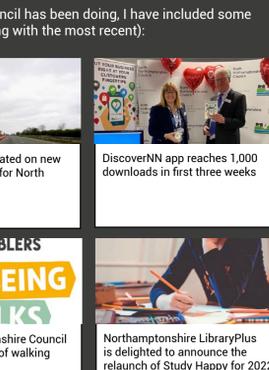
It would be brilliant if you would spread the word, [sign up](#) and take part!

By doing so, you will receive delicious carbon-calculated recipes, free entry into the Bella Italia* prize draw to win one of five £100 gift vouchers, lots veggie offers and discounts, daily tips and more. (*Other Italian food chains are available!)



Minute of Noise for IDAHOBIT

The North Northamptonshire Council LGBTQ+ staff network is holding a minute of noise at 12:30pm on Tuesday 17 May to celebrate and mark the **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)**. The event will be run at the same time as others across the county to show a united community and will involve members of the LGBTQ+ community and allies. The day will include the sharing of advice and guidance.

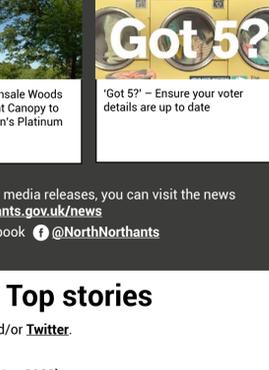


Council meetings - Key dates for your diary

- The Executive will be meeting at 10am on Thursday 19 May in the Council Chamber at the Corby Cube. [View agenda and reports](#).
- The next meeting of Council (which will be Annual Council) will be on 26 May. Venue details to be confirmed. The agenda will be displayed in the week before the meeting.

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](#).



International Waendel Walk – starts today

The prestigious International Waendel Walk returns to Wellingborough today and will run until Sunday 15 May. The team at North Northamptonshire Council has worked hard alongside partner organisations and a dedicated team of volunteers to ensure that the event runs smoothly. If you haven't booked your place yet, we can accept bookings on the day. [Find out more and register to take part](#).



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):

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.northnonthants.gov.uk/news Or follow Twitter [@NNorthantsC](https://twitter.com/NNorthantsC) and/or Facebook [f @NorthNorthants](https://www.facebook.com/NorthNorthants)

Social media: Top stories

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

- **Top Facebook posts so far this week (9-11 May 2022)**
 - Ukrainian resettlement support drop-in sessions are taking place every Friday from 11.30am to 2.30pm at the Victoria Centre in Wellingborough to help people to connect and support each other. More information, advice and support: <http://ow.ly/FJl250J0Ynt> (Reach 3,197, Post Clicks 24)
 - More and more people are embracing their creative side and starting an artisan business. If you are planning on selling your goods at markets or street fairs, did you know you may need a street trading licence. Find out more... <https://www.northnonthants.gov.uk/licensing/street-trading> (Reach 3,015, Post Clicks 140)
 - (Shared post from Queen's Green Canopy) In the town centre of #Corby, an exquisite Ancient woodland exists in an urban setting. Surrounded entirely by development, the Hazel and Thoroughsale Woods is a glorious respite of 75 hectares of Ancient woodland which dates back to 800AD. Today, social engagement is at the heart of the woodland, which hosts many inspiring #volunteering projects. With a focus on community wellbeing, the woodland features walking trails, cycle routes, picnic areas and outdoor learning and educational events for schools and families. This #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek, we encourage everyone to spend time in #nature and try a #woodland walk and talk. #queensgreencanopy #AncientCanopy (Reach 2,387, Post Clicks 59)
- **Top Tweets so far this week (9-11 May 2022)**
 - Whatever your size, shape or type of family, our country parks have an adventure around every corner. Find out more and plan ahead <https://t.co/cHKB0s1SM7> (Impressions 524, Engagements 21)
 - If you're struggling with your mental health, there are organisations and people ready to listen and help. (Impressions 481, Engagements 6)
 - Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual event that focuses on achieving good mental health. We're supporting this campaign to signpost followers to help and support <https://t.co/cvRYUHDJW1> (Impressions 480, Engagements 13)

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@northnonthants.gov.uk

With Best Wishes,
Jason