

Ward councillor's report (Barby & Onley) October 2024

Recent flooding

Northamptonshire was one of 10 counties that experienced their wettest September since records began in 1836, recording three times their average September rainfall. This caused flooding to many residential and business properties as well as schools and caravan parks. As our area continues to experience more frequent and severe climate events associated with climate change WNC are working with partners to seek sustainable, long term solutions for tackling flooding issues.

Councillors were recently shown an example of natural flood plain techniques on the Lamport Estate, where restoring a tributary's natural course, "scrapes" - shallow ponds – and "leaky dams" will help prevent flooding further down in the Nene Valley by slowing the movement and volume of water. These natural flood techniques also provide habitats for declining bird species – all tools to guide action for nature recovery as part of our Local Nature Recovery Strategy [Local Nature Recovery Strategy | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](#)

West Northants Climate Summit

This one day event at Delapre Abbey was the first of a 5 year programme, attended by over 50 councillors from town and parish councils and West Northants. Topics included food consumption and waste, biodiversity and communicating climate change. On waste, it was surprising to learn from WNC that only one third of residents who are supplied with food waste caddies (residents living in flats are not supplied with them) actually use them. If all residents who could dispose of their food waste in caddies this would save WNC £6m per year and given the financial pressures the Council is experiencing this would be a very welcome saving.

Representatives from Crick, Yelvertoft, Braunston and Kilsby parish councils attended the event. With these parish councillors I am setting up a group to share ideas as to how progress climate communication in our villages. If one of your parish councillors would like to join the group please let me know and I can give some more details. This is not envisaged to be a big time commitment – I am very aware that parish councillors are busy people.

Pension Credit eligibility

It's been estimated that over 19,000 pensioners in the Daventry constituency are at risk of losing the winter fuel allowance, following the government's decision to cut the allowance unless a person is eligible for pension credit. Thousands of pensioners who are eligible for pension credit who do not claim this benefit, believing for example that their savings are too high. It's now even more important now that residents check whether they are entitled, in order to continue to receive the winter fuel payment.

With the guidance notes and claim form together coming to a hefty 48 pages it is easy to make an error. This could mean someone who is in fact eligible has their claim rejected – about one third of pension credit applications are turned down. Seeking help to complete the form is the better option and an adviser will be able to give an indication as to whether the claim will be successful. The Citizens Advice office in Daventry can help with pension credit

applications – tel 01327 701646 Citizens Advice West Northants and Cherwell (citizensadvisedaventryanddistrict. co.uk) There is also a lot of information on WNC's website about cost of living support [Cost of living support | West Northamptonshire Council \(westnorthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)

Highways investment

In July WNC announced an additional £10m was to be invested into improving roads. The funding is coming from the capital budget used for improving local infrastructure. While this is of course welcomed it is not known how much of the extra funding will be used for pavements and paths as well as surface dressing for roads, bridge maintenance and resolving drainage issues.

Opposition councillors were very disappointed at last month's Full Council meeting that the administration did not support a motion asking that WNC explore the viability of spending 25% of the £10M additional investment in highways for improving pavements and footpaths. WNC refused to disclose how much of the £10M will be spent making it safer and more attractive for residents to walk on poorly maintained pavements and footpaths. [Agenda for Council on Thursday 26th September 2024, 5.00 pm - West Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk/2024/09/26/agenda-for-council-on-thursday-26th-september-2024-5-00-pm-west-northamptonshire-council)

Consultations – September deadlines

Draft Local Transport Plan Deadline 17th October [Have your say on the draft West Northamptonshire Local Transport Plan - West Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](https://www.westnorthants.gov.uk/consultations)

Cllr Rosie Humphreys

12th October 2024