

# Nene Valley news

YOUR LOCAL INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

Council to pursue fast-track devolution bid

Following an extraordinary meeting of Full Council, North Northamptonshire Council will submit an expression of interest to pursue proposals to work with other South Midlands authorities on a devolution bid.

Councillors agreed that the Council should join the Government's priority programme for devolution for a new strategic mayoral authority covering North Northamptonshire, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire, Luton, Milton Keynes and West Northamptonshire.

Any Council is able to submit an expression of interest and proposal for strategic mayoral authority area, although regions that demonstrate a strong and united approach to devolution are expected to be prioritised by the Government.

Jason Smithers, Leader of North Northamptonshire Council, said:

"Being part of the South Midlands Authorities bid is essential in delivering the best for our residents and businesses and how we can create the conditions to bring increased prosperity to our region."

The Council will now aim to submit an expression of interest to create a Strategic Authority and progress negotiations.

# Winners of Rushden's High Street Christmas Hamper Competition

On the Friday before Christmas, Rushden Town Mayor, Councillor David Coleman, proudly presented the two winners of the Rushden High Street Christmas Hamper Competition with their prizes.



The presentation took place at Rushden Hall during the 'Friends of Rushden Hall' Christmas party.

The winners were:

- Gary Bersey
- Jan Bonner

Each hamper was brimming with lots of Christmas goodies, all purchased from local high street traders.

"The High Street Christmas



Hamper Competition is a wonderful way to bring the community together and showcase the incredible offerings of our local traders," said Town Mayor, Cllr David Coleman. "Congratulations to

our winners, and thank you to everyone who participated."

Rushden Town Council would like to thank everyone who entered and the local businesses which took part and wish them a very Happy New Year.

SHOWROOMS: 69-71 WASHBROOK RD • RUSHDEN • NORTHANTS NN10 6UR [action2mobility.co.uk](http://action2mobility.co.uk)

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# NORTHAMPTON DIABETES CHARITY WELCOMES NEW TRUSTEES

A Northampton-based charity committed to enhancing the lives of people living with diabetes has strengthened its leadership by appointing two new trustees.

The InDependent Diabetes Trust (IDDT) proudly announces the addition of Mabel Blades and Karen Merrey to its board, with their expertise and insights set to bolster the charity's efforts, ensuring its vital work continues to thrive.

Living with type 1 diabetes for nearly 43 years, Karen understands the challenges faced by those managing

the condition. As an original member of the IDDT and still treated with pork insulin today, Karen is passionate about supporting the charity's growth and impact within the diabetes community.

When Karen's daughter was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at just six years old, she took the initiative to lead parent support groups in Pontefract and Wakefield. Her efforts aimed to

not only raise awareness about the condition but also provide encouragement and guidance to families navigating similar challenges.

Karen said: "Joining IDDT as a trustee is a deeply personal and meaningful step for me. As someone who has lived with type 1 diabetes for many years, I understand the daily challenges and the importance of having the right support.

"I'm passionate about advocating for better awareness, better care, and greater resources for everyone affected by diabetes."

She added: "Through my new role, I hope to contribute to the incredible work IDDT is doing to ensure that no one feels alone in their journey and that everyone has access to the information, care and community they need to live well."

Registered dietitian Mabel is also delighted to join the IDDT board of trustees and is hoping to put her diabetes expertise to good use.

With a PhD in diabetes, Mabel is passionate about contributing to a charity that aligns with her commitment to patient-centred care.

She said: "I am truly honoured to join the IDDT trustee board, and I am passionate about ensuring that people living with diabetes have access to the

best possible information and support.

"The IDDT is doing incredible work in this area, and I look forward to helping spread the word, amplify its impact, and continue to empower people on their diabetes journey."

Jenny Hirst, Co-Chair of the IDDT, said: "We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Karen and Mabel to the IDDT board.

"Karen has been a valued member of our community since the very beginning, and her personal experience with type 1 diabetes will bring invaluable insight to our work."

She added: "Mabel, with her expertise as a registered dietician and her passion for diabetes care, will further strengthen our commitment to improving lives.

"Together, they will play a key role in guiding the future of our charity and helping us



Karen Merrey

continue to support those living with diabetes."

The IDDT is a national charity based in Northampton providing vital independent support for people with diabetes, their parents and carers.

The charity formed in 1994 to fight for choice of treatment for all. It now provides a free, confidential helpline, has published dozens of helpful publications, stages events and lobbies the government on behalf of its members.

**If you need to contact the charity, please telephone between 10am and 3pm on 01604 622837 Monday to Friday or email [enquiries@iddtinternational.org](mailto:enquiries@iddtinternational.org)**

## GENEALOGY JOTTINGS

WORDS BY  
JAN PEARSON

A little late but it's still January so happy new year to you all! I hope that you had a great Christmas. Maybe it was spent with family – an opportunity to pick the brains of relatives – or maybe on your own with the opportunity to disappear into centuries past. Whatever you did, I hope that you enjoyed the time.

Last time, I wittered on about where you set up your work, but what do you actually need in order to research? First things first: stationery. Call me old-fashioned, but pen and paper were invented before computers and so I have plenty of both – different coloured pens to denote different things, plus notebooks. Don't forget pencils – you will need them if you visit an Archives office as pens are not allowed. Binders and folders: I have different coloured ones for the different lines that I follow.

Now, as I also mentioned last time, not everyone has a computer but, if like me, you were dragged kicking and screaming into the technology of the 20th century then you will have one. They can be very useful tools. If you decide to put your family

tree on your computer then do shop around for a database. As well as those attached to websites such as Ancestry or Find My Past, for which a subscription is needed, there are also plenty of free ones out there. Use comparison websites to help you find the best deal, as there could be 'whistles and bells' on some that you have no need for.

A good printer is also a must if you have a computer. I have one that is combined with a scanner/photocopier and is most useful for scanning in photographs for posting on my tree software as well as copying articles for my folders.

But remember! You do not have to own a computer and printer to research. As I have said before, the Library has these facilities available to you and, now that Oundle Library is fully functional again, they will certainly be able to help.

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### FEBRUARY

**Sat 1** York's Ice Trail - free event in the town  
**Wed 5** St Albans Market Day  
**Sat 8** Warwick & Leamington Spa  
**Wed 12** Boston Market & Baytree Garden Centre  
**Tue 18** Melton Mowbray  
**Wed 19** Seasonal Mystery Tour  
**Tue 20** Ely  
**Fri 21** Cotswold Farm Park - Adam Henson  
**Sun 23** Orchids at Kew Gardens  
**Tue 25** Barnsdale Gardens Snowdrops

### MARCH

**Tue 4** Springfields  
**Tue 4** Spalding  
**Thu 6** Cotswold Tour  
**Sat 8** York OR Jorvik Viking Centre  
**Sat 8** National Railway Museum  
**Tue 11** Derbyshire & Peak District  
**Sat 15** Saffron Walden - a Cosmopolitan Market  
**Wed 19** Seasonal Mystery  
**Fri 21** Ideal Home Show  
**Fri 21** Royal Mews & Free Time  
**Sat 22** Thriplow Daffodil & Country Fair  
**Thu 27** Canterbury OR Canterbury Cathedral  
**Fri 28** Stratford Upon Avon  
**Sat 29** Hever Castle & Gardens - Anne Boleyn

### MAY

**Sat 10** Andre Rieu

### SEPTEMBER

**Thu 4** Riverdance Show

### NOVEMBER

**Sun 23** Thursford Christmas Spectacular  
**Fri 28** Thursford Christmas Spectacular

### DECEMBER

**Sun 7** Thursford Christmas Spectacular  
**Mon 8** Thursford Christmas Spectacular  
**Sun 14** Thursford Christmas Spectacular  
**Thu 18** Thursford Christmas Spectacular

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### JANUARY

**LATE AVAILABILITY 27-31 JANUARY 2025**  
**YORKSHIRE DELIGHTS - £379.00pp**

Burn Hall Hotel Huby, York. Half Board including excursions. Yorkshire is known for its Roman and Viking heritage, as well as its Norman castles, medieval abbeys, and 2 national parks. The largest area is North Yorkshire which covers nearly 3500 square miles and is known by the locals as 'God's own county', it is celebrated for its varied landscape. York, founded by the Romans, is home to the 13th-century cathedral York Minster, Tudor houses and medieval walls. The interactive Jorvik Viking Centre recalls the area's 9th-century Norse occupation.

### FEBRUARY

**LATE AVAILABILITY 10-14 FEBRUARY 2025**  
**SEASIDE MYSTERY - £359.00pp**

Half Board including Excursions, £359pp. On the way to our chosen hotel we stop usually for morning refreshments and somewhere for lunch and arrive at our 'mystery' hotel in plenty of time before dinner. On the 2 - 4 day, after a leisurely breakfast and usually much discussion about what the day might have in store, we depart for a full day excursion. On the final day, we make our way home via another place of interest. A different experience every time.

### MARCH

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### NOVEMBER

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# North Northamptonshire Youth Advisory Council elected

*North Northamptonshire Council has appointed 10 young people as members of the newly formed Youth Advisory Council (YAC).*

**The Youth Advisory Council will promote the interests and needs of young people from their own localities, and the development of services and activities for young people across North Northamptonshire.**

It will offer consultation services to the Council, statutory and community organisations. The YAC will be leading social action projects for young people alongside the UK Members of Youth Parliament, who will be elected in February 2025.

The Youth Advisory Council has gained cross-party support from Cllr Scott Edwards, the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, Cllr Zoe McGhee, Cllr Emily Fedorowycz and Cllr Melanie Coleman, all of whom have been proactive in the selection process.

Cllr Scott Edwards, Executive Member for Children, Families, Education and Skills said: "It's wonderful to be able to give

young people the opportunity to really have their voices heard and to become involved in the democratic process.

"As a council we understand the importance of co-production – we need to seek the views of young people on issues that affect them, and the best way to do this is to have them included in the process.

"We look forward to the first formal meeting of the Youth Advisory Council, taking place in January."

The inaugural meeting of the YAC took place on 7th January. It provided an opportunity for all members of the Youth Advisory Council to meet for the first time, informally.

The following Tuesday – 14th January – the YAC met once again, but this time formally in the Council Chamber, Bowling Green Road, Kettering.

This was the first of pre-scheduled monthly meetings where Youth Advisory Council members will be able to discuss agenda items as presented to

the Council.

Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council, said: "I am absolutely delighted to announce that North Northamptonshire has now appointed its first Youth Advisory Council.

"The Youth Advisory Council

provides young people with a voice on behalf of all young people on a wide range of important local issues. The Youth Advisory Council is a very exciting initiative and will ensure young people can shape services and facilities in North Northamptonshire.

"Our young people are so vital to all our futures. It is important that young people

have a voice on important local issues as well as having a meaningful say in the area's future. These appointments not only mark a huge milestone achievement for North Northamptonshire, they provide a vital moment in the shaping of services and facilities in

North Northamptonshire – those designed by the future generation for us all, here and now, and for future generations to come."

More information on the Youth Advisory Council is available on the Council's website.

**More information on the Youth Advisory Council is available on the Council's website.**

## Rushden's Neighbourhood Plan Update: Community consultation

**Rushden Town Council invites you to join in shaping the future of the community!**

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan Update, the Council are addressing key areas to enhance and protect the character and functionality of the town.

This update will cover:

- Designation of Local Green Spaces
- Local Heritage List: Safeguarding undesignated heritage assets for future generations

- Town Centre Improvements: Introducing a new section aimed at revitalising Rushden's heart
- Walking and Cycling Infrastructure: Promoting better connectivity and active transportation
- Community Facilities: Ensuring valued spaces remain protected and prioritised

**EVENT DETAILS:**

- Date: Thursday 20th February 2025

- Venue: Rushden Hall, Rushden
  - Time: 12noon – 6pm
- During the event, the Council will also unveil the new Town Centre Design Code, a forward-thinking strategy and guidance document designed to shape future developments.

The code will focus on:

- Enhancing Rushden's distinct

- character
- Creating a vibrant public realm
- Providing direction on built form, architectural details, and materials

This is your opportunity to have your say on the future of your town. The Council want to hear your views! Join the Council at Rushden Hall on 20th February

**For more information, visit the website at [www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk) or contact [info@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:info@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)**

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# Spotlight on > Health & Wellbeing

## > EMBRACING BEAUTY AND CONFIDENCE WITH FALLON AESTHETICS

In our appearance-driven world, Fallon Aesthetics in Higham Ferrers offers a haven for those wishing to enhance their natural beauty and confidence. Jenna, a seasoned nurse with 15 years of NHS experience, runs the clinic, providing expert care and personalised treatment plans designed for you.

"Here at Fallon Aesthetics, we offer a variety of treatments including a certified medical weight loss clinic, private blood tests, anti-wrinkle injections, dermal fillers, skin boosters, fat dissolving treatments, and



radiofrequency microneedling. Each treatment is tailored to your unique needs, ensuring the highest standards of care as we are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

"What makes us here at Fallon Aesthetics truly unique is our warm and inviting environment. Jenna operates from a purpose-built cabin at her family home, providing a private and comfortable space for our clients. This setting allows for thorough consultations, ensuring you the client feel heard and understood.

"The clinic's commitment to excellence is evident in our glowing reviews and satisfied clientele. Jenna's extensive background in Oncology and Haematology has honed her ability to listen and offer the time needed for clients to make informed decisions about their treatments. Whether addressing fine lines, rejuvenating the skin, or tackling specific concerns like hyperhidrosis, Fallon Aesthetics delivers results that clients can be proud of."

In a world of overwhelming beauty standards, Fallon Aesthetics shines as a beacon of hope, offering not just treatments but a journey towards self-acceptance and confidence. Visit Fallon Aesthetics and take the first step towards embracing your true beauty.

## > DIABETES - GETTING OFF THE BLOOD SUGAR ROLLERCOASTER

If you're the parent of a child with type 1 diabetes or if you're worried about your own blood sugars, life can become a rollercoaster of highs and lows. Between carb counting, weighing foods, trying to delay your little ones from eating straight away (insulin takes 15 minutes to act!) and picky eating - figuring out dinner and packed lunches can seem like an impossible equation.

Nutritional Therapist, Anna Mather, from The Nutrition People, knows what you're going through - it has been 4 years since her own daughter's diagnosis and she can weigh foods by eye. She provides local support with some straightforward, family-friendly advice.

### 1. Balance is Your Best Friend

Balanced meals are key to managing blood sugar. Anna suggests visualising a plate: half veg, a fist-sized portion of protein, a thumb-sized portion of fat and a quarter complex carbs. For dinner, try roasted chicken with sweet potato wedges, steamed broccoli and a drizzle of olive oil. For breakfast, a boiled egg, some veggie sticks, and some whole-wheat toast.

### 2. Carbs Are Not the Enemy

Carbs often get the blame, but the



Anna Mather, Nutritional Therapist

trick is choosing the right ones: choose brown over white. Brown pasta, brown bread and brown rice slow the release of glucose. For packed lunches, try wholemeal wraps with leftover chicken or tuna and salad, or a wholewheat pasta salad with a handful of beans.

### 3. Bulk Cook Like a Pro

Busy mornings become less stressful if you've got a freezer stocked with pre-portioned meals. Soups, stews, or chilli made with lentils or beans are diabetes-friendly and easy to reheat.

### 4. Don't Forget Snacks

Healthy snacks can prevent those rollercoaster sugars or those weird sleeping highs! Think cheese cubes

and apple slices or veggie sticks with hummus. Anna calls these "grab-and-go lifesavers."

### 5. Consistency, Consistency, Consistency

Our blood sugars love consistency and routine. As much as possible eat at the same time, with the same balance of foods.

Remember, every meal doesn't have to be perfect. Small steps, simple swaps, making food fun can really help.

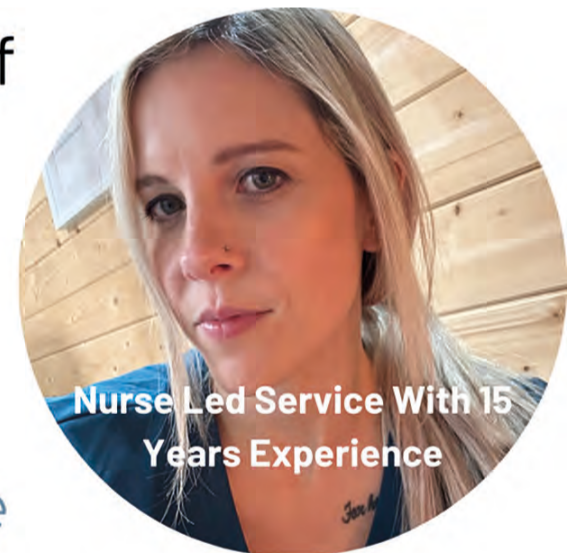
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### > SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEER ACTION: A LIFELINE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary of serving the community in 2025, Volunteer Action has been quietly but powerfully transforming lives in our rural communities. This small, registered charity, based in Oundle, serves Thrapston, Oundle, Brigstock and 48 surrounding villages in North Northamptonshire. What began as a modest operation has grown into a cornerstone of local support, providing two essential services: a Community Transport Scheme and a Befriending Service.

#### A Small Charity with a Big Heart

Operating out of its Oundle office, Volunteer Action is staffed by a dedicated team consisting of two full-time staff members and three part-time. However, the true heart of this charity lies in its volunteers. Over 150 community volunteers, supported by eight office volunteers, give their time and energy to make sure that our rural communities are not forgotten.

#### The Community Transport Scheme: Bridging the Gap

Volunteer Action offers a Community Transport Scheme. This scheme has become a lifeline for more than 700 members, particularly older adults and individuals with mobility restrictions. The transport scheme is driven by a network of approximately 70 volunteer drivers, who work hard so rural communities can get where they need to go.

In the past 12 months alone, Volunteer Action drivers have completed over 131,000 miles within over 12,500 trips, with more than half of those being for medical appointments. For many, these trips are not just a matter of convenience but a necessity. In an area where public transportation is sparse and taxi services are limited, the Community Transport Scheme ensures that people don't miss out on vital healthcare. Without this service,

many would struggle to reach essential medical appointments, risking their health and well-being.

#### The Befriending Service: Combating Loneliness

Alongside the transport scheme, Volunteer Action also runs a Befriending Service. Loneliness is an issue that affects many older adults, particularly in rural areas. Through the Befriending Service, volunteers offer companionship and support, forming meaningful connections with those who might otherwise feel isolated.

Whether it's a regular phone call, a visit to share a cup of tea, joining a Group Befriending event or simply being there to listen, the Befriending Service plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for many in our community. For those who benefit from the service, it's not just about having someone to talk to – it's about feeling seen, heard and valued.

#### The Urgent Need for More Volunteer Drivers

While Volunteer Action has accomplished a great deal, the need for their services continues to grow. Right now, the charity is facing a shortage of volunteer drivers.

Driving for Volunteer Action is not only a rewarding experience but also a flexible one. Volunteers can choose how much or how little they want to drive, fitting their commitment around their own schedules. All that's required is a car and a little bit of free time. The charity takes care of the rest, matching drivers with members in need and providing a monthly mileage allowance to cover the costs. Most insurance companies also include cover for volunteer driving at no additional cost, making it easier than ever to get involved.

If you're interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, Volunteer Action would love to hear from you. You can reach them by phone on 01832 275433, by email at [admin@volunteeractionoundle.org.uk](mailto:admin@volunteeractionoundle.org.uk), or by visiting their website at [volunteeractionoundle.org.uk](http://volunteeractionoundle.org.uk). Facebook - [volunteeractionuk](https://www.facebook.com/volunteeractionuk), X - [@VolActionOundle](https://twitter.com/VolActionOundle)

## Your Health – Stop the January stress

Feeling stressed and in need of a reset this January? If you're already cross with things at work, at home, or on the scales in the morning, there are plenty of wonderful therapies that can reduce stress levels and help you feel like yourself again.

- **Hypnotherapy:** Perfect for those looking to tackle stress and anxiety, or phobias. Hypnotherapy feels like you're dozing in a half asleep-half awake state. While you're in that relaxed state your therapist can work with your subconscious to help you commit to goals you've put in place for the new year, or to help you feel different about things that stress you. The results can be quite astounding.
- **Reflexology:** This relaxing foot therapy isn't just about pampering your toes. By treating your feet a reflexologist can have a profound impact on the rest of your body and also use specific pressure points to help you relax. A trained reflexologist can also help with lymphoedema and can treat during pregnancy. It's worth investigating for so many health reasons.

- **Cranial Osteopathy:** If you carry stress in your neck, shoulders, or jaw, cranial osteopathy could be your new best friend. With gentle techniques, it helps release tension and improve your overall sense of well-being.
  - **Reiki:** For those who love an energy-based approach, Reiki is a gentle and soothing therapy. It focuses on balancing your energy flow, leaving you feeling recharged and deeply relaxed.
- A new year brings all sorts of new stresses – the pressure of being better, more committed, harder working, or thinner and fitter. If you're having negative thoughts about all this and need help getting those thoughts in order so you can achieve your goals without torturing yourself, one of these therapies will help get your positive vibes back.

If you read this column on a regular basis, you'll already know that my own stress levels are increased by using the lawnmower. For me, the best thing about January is that there are no lawns to mow. The nasty, won't-start, won't-cut, noisy machine can stay in its shed and I can relax!

Have a relaxed and refreshed week!

**Claire Short, Registered Osteopath, runs The Ashgrove Clinic in Higham Ferrers. Send your questions to [claire@ashgrovehealth.co.uk](mailto:claire@ashgrovehealth.co.uk) or Tweet to @AshgroveClinic**



## How You Can Help

Volunteer Action is calling on community members to consider becoming a volunteer driver. If you have a car and a bit of spare time, your contribution could make a world of difference. Whether you can drive regularly or just occasionally, your help is needed and appreciated.

**If you're interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, Volunteer Action would love to hear from you. You can reach them by phone at 01832 275433, by email at [admin@volunteeractionoundle.org.uk](mailto:admin@volunteeractionoundle.org.uk), or by visiting their website at [www.volunteeractionoundle.org.uk](http://www.volunteeractionoundle.org.uk).  
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## 20% off Wills this February, from one of the leading Wills and Probate solicitors in Northamptonshire

Making a Will can provide you with peace of mind, knowing that in the event of your death your wishes will be carried out. Your assets can be administered in the way you would want, setting out important choices such as your funeral arrangements, guardians for minor (young) children, and any gifts you wish to make.

When property prices increase, more and more people find that they are worth more than they thought and that their estates will be subject to Inheritance Tax. Making a Will can enable you to plan for matters in a way that reduces the liability for Inheritance Tax.

The beauty of a Will is that you can change it whenever you want to. The chances are that if your Will is more than 5 years old, it may need updating. You may find your



family growing, you may find friends have come and gone or your own circumstances have changed.

Here at Wilson Browne, our Wills and Probate solicitors advise that you review your Will frequently (and certainly at times of change, such as marriage) to ensure wishes are being met, and you have received the best advice in terms of tax planning.

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This could include your assets, guardianship of your children and any specific gifts you wish to make.

It can also help to reduce your dependants’ liability for Inheritance Tax.

If you need to update your Will ask about our free Will health check.

\*Appointments must be booked on Monday 3 February 2025 for an appointment within 28 days. Other terms apply – see [wilsonbrowne.co.uk/terms](http://wilsonbrowne.co.uk/terms) or call for details.

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SOLICITORS

## Executive approves funds for new access ramp along the Greenway

North Northamptonshire Council’s Executive has approved the allocation of funding which will mean that works can start on a new ramp off the Washbrook Road, Rushden onto to the Greenway.

The long-awaited investment to the Greenway was first highlighted as part of the Out to Water, Into History project (funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund) and through Rushden’s Neighbourhood Plan.

The new ramp will provide a safe route down from Washbrook Road at Midland Road to the Greenway and connect the community that live in and around the area and currently have to go out of their way to access the Greenway. It is estimated that approximately 600 more households within a five-minute walk will be able to directly use the Greenway to reach Rushden High Street, go towards Crown Park or further afield.

CLr Helen Howell, the council’s Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism, said: “We know the Washbrook Road ramp has been something that has been on the wish list of Greenway users for many years and we’ve been working behind the scenes to make this happen. I am absolutely delighted that we have now secured the extra funds to complete this work, the escalation in construction costs have been a considerable pressure to the project.

“It is great news that using a combination

of Section 106 money and now approved council funds, works will be able to start on this vital addition to the already well-used stretch of the Greenway, opening it up to more and more residents. We will continue to develop the Greenway throughout North Northants as highlighted in the Greenway strategy which was adopted by the Executive in August 2024.”

Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council, added: “As a council, we’re always looking at ways to improve active travel across the area and the Greenway is one example of this.

“The addition of the new ramp will make this a more realistic choice for residents of Rushden – encouraging residents to use the route instead of getting in their car, which not only reduces the number of vehicles on the road but also helps improve residents’ health and wellbeing.”

Due to escalating costs in the construction industry, the project had been on hold for a number of years until the council received Section 106 funding specifically for the building of the access ramp. North Northamptonshire Council’s Executive has now agreed to fund the shortfall as part of its Capital Programme.

Before the main works start in Spring 2025, there will be a notice of works in advance and there may be periods of time where sections of the Greenway have to be closed – 7 days’ notice will be given before these closures.

## PUBLIC HEALTH CONTRACT AWARDED TO DELIVER SERVICES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, ADULTS AND FAMILIES

North Northamptonshire Public Health team has led a rigorous commissioning process to identify the best providers to deliver Public Health services for children, young people, and families and an integrated, all-age sexual health service.

Following consultation with the public and key stakeholders, North Northamptonshire Council’s Public Health team developed three new service models tailored to local needs in North Northamptonshire. Of particular importance was that the new provider demonstrated that they could deliver innovative services which specifically met the needs of North Northamptonshire’s residents, take tangible actions to improve their health and wellbeing and reduce health inequality.

The contract has been awarded and the new services will increase access, improve early intervention and support, and ensure services are inclusive, community-led, and aligned with national guidance and local health priorities.

Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) will provide these services following a formal procurement process.

The three services are:

- Best Start in Life service for children aged 0-11 and their families. The service will fully integrate with the Family Hubs, ensuring effective interventions to support children and their families through pregnancy and throughout primary school. The service will build on strong working relationships with early years provision and schools.
- Thriving in Life Service for children and young people aged 11 to 19. North Northamptonshire Public Health team developed a service

dedicated to young people, and NHFT will deliver the service in partnership with the Reach Collaborative Reach Collaborative. The service will also work with other local partners to ensure that young people can access the services they need promptly and in a place that suits them.

- An all-age Integrated Sexual Health Service which will provide a full range of sexual health prevention, treatment and contraception services for people in North Northamptonshire.

Councillor Gill Mercer, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, said: “I’m pleased that the new and innovative services will focus on the needs of the people in North Northamptonshire, to support them to make informed choices about their lives, that will help to improve their health and well-being and thus enable them to live healthy and productive lives.”

North Northamptonshire Council will work in partnership with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Family Hubs and the REACH Collaborative to ensure the services meet the needs of the local population.

The REACH Collaborative consists of five agencies who offer FREE, professional, and confidential counselling for young people aged 5-25 across North and West Northamptonshire. It is funded by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Public Health. The collaborative also provides additional support services, including drop-in sessions available Monday to Saturday and dedicated LGBTQI+ groups.

Further information will be provided during the implementation phase of the services in the Spring of 2025.

# HAVE YOUR SAY ON NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S SPENDING PLANS

The draft revenue budget for North Northamptonshire Council was approved for consultation by the Executive on 19th December and the council is now seeking views on its proposals for the next financial year.



People can take part in the consultation in a number of ways including:

- Completing the online survey
- Writing to: Budget Consultation Response, North Northamptonshire Council, Sheerness House, Meadow Road, Kettering, NN16 8TL

Please see the Your Voice Matters webpage for more ways on how to have your say on this consultation and to view all of the Council's consultation and engagement activities.

The Council's draft budget proposals set out a detailed spending strategy for the authority for the financial year 2025/2026 as well as outlining the medium-term financial forecast for the following three years.

Protecting and investing in local frontline services against a backdrop of continued national financial uncertainty is the focus of the Council's budget proposals.

The proposed draft net revenue budget for 2025/2026 is £400.93 million, excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant. This money provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including care to vulnerable adults and children, education, the disposal and collection of

waste, highways maintenance, economic development, housing and support for those that are homeless.

A commitment to maintain vital service provision has seen the Council invest an additional £51.9 million into services, including £23.7 million into adult social care and £6.2 million into children's services to protect the most vulnerable in our communities and address growing demand for these vital services.

These pressures are, in part, offset by savings, efficiencies and further income of £26.3 million. Taken together with an improvement in funding expected from business rates, Council Tax and government grants the Council has been able to set a balanced budget for 2025/2026.

Clr Lloyd Bunday, the Council's Executive Member for Finance and Transformation said: "Our draft revenue budget is just that – a draft – and the consultation phase is a very important one in the budget setting process as it's essential that we get the views of all of the people the proposals affect before we can shape the final plans in February.

"It would be great to hear from as many people as possible from a variety of backgrounds."

Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council, said: "What we've focused on is balancing the budget while working hard to protect services and I'm proud that we have a draft budget that proposes just that.

"The budget is not just about how to manage within available resources but also where funding should be invested.

"There is a balance to be maintained between encouraging growth, providing high quality universal services and protecting those that are the most vulnerable."

Government has permitted local authorities to increase the Council Tax rate by 4.99% in recognition of the increasing demand and cost pressures faced by Councils.

As such the Council is proposing an increase in council tax of 4.99%, which includes the 2% adult social care precept. There is no change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme which will continue at 25%.

#### > NEXT STEPS

The consultation on the proposals will run until midnight on Friday 24th January. The Executive will then meet on 6th February to consider final budget proposals for recommendation to Full Council on 20th February.

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# Nene Valley News - EVENTS

## > SUNDAY 19TH JANUARY, 9.45AM

### Higham Ferrers Footpath Group

Saffron Road car park for car sharing. Contact Sue 07837 158449. 8.8 mile walk, Irchester – Podington – Irchester.

## > SUNDAY 19TH JANUARY, 10.15AM

### Morning Worship at Whitefriars Church

Whitefriars Primary School, Boughton Drive, Rushden NN10 9HX.

## > MONDAY 20TH JANUARY, 8PM

### Nene Valley Astronomical Society: Dr Matt Bothwell will be presenting the case for Dark Matter

Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road Chelveston NN9 6AT. Admission £5, including tea/coffee and biscuits. For further details phone John, 0799056307. Non-members always welcome. It is claimed that Dark Matter makes up 27% of the universe – where is it?

## > SUNDAY 26TH JANUARY, 10.15AM

### Morning Worship with Holy Communion at Whitefriars Church

Whitefriars Primary School, Boughton Drive, Rushden NN10 9HX.

## > SUNDAY 2ND FEBRUARY, 10AM

### Higham Ferrers Footpath Group

Saffron Road car park. Contact Maxine 07906435983. 5.5 mile walk along the Greenway.

## > SUNDAY 16TH FEBRUARY, 9.20AM

### Higham Ferrers Footpath Group

Saffron Road car park for car sharing. Mark 07462 422097. 6.5 mile circular walk, Warmington – Fotheringhay – Elton – Warmington.

## > MONDAY 17TH FEBRUARY, 8PM

### Nene Valley Astronomical Society. A presentation by Dr Ann Bonell

The search for Vulcan and other Solar Enigmas. Chelveston Village Hall, Caldecott Road, Chelveston NN9 6AT. Admission £5 including tea/coffee and biscuits. For further information call Kevin on 07731890594. Vulcan was the planet that was thought to orbit between the Sun and Mercury.

## Kate Bateman 'Story vs History' – a fast, fun-filled delve into her two unusual careers

Thursday 6th February, 7.45pm-8.45pm. Oundle School Common Room, Milton Road, Oundle PE8 4AB.

Join Kate Bateman, antiques expert and bestselling historical romance author and discover answers to questions like 'Is history more fiction than fact?' 'How does the 'provenance' behind a work of art add value?' 'Why do humans need stories?' 'How do authors use real history to add excitement and adventure to their books?'

Kate's event covers everything from Pompeian graffiti and fairy tales to the historical inspiration behind 'Game of Thrones', and a light-hearted look at some classic tropes found in literature and romance.

Kate Bateman is a bestselling author of Regency and Renaissance historical romances, including the Secrets and Spies series, Bow Street

Bachelors series, Ruthless Rivals series, and Her Majesty's Rebels series.

Traditionally published by both Penguin Random House and Macmillan/St Martin's Press, her books have received multiple starred reviews from Publishers Weekly and Library Journal, and have been translated into numerous languages including French, Italian, Japanese, German, Romanian, Czech and Croatian.

Kate is also a fine art appraiser, auctioneer and antiques expert, the co-founder of Batemans Auctioneers in Stamford, Lincs. After a decade living in the USA, she's now back in England and regularly appears as an antiques expert on several popular BBC television shows such as Flog It! and Bargain Hunt.



Tickets £8 (£7), £1 off early bird tickets bought before 23rd January, available from Oundle Bookshop (cash only), or online at [www.authorsinoundle.co.uk](http://www.authorsinoundle.co.uk), Enquiries contact [info@authorsinoundle.co.uk](mailto:info@authorsinoundle.co.uk)

## Tom Newton Dunn Letters From Everest: Unpublished Letters from Mallory's Life and Death in the Mountains

Friday 28th February, 7.45pm - 8.45pm. The Whitwell Room, The Talbot Hotel, New St, Oundle, Peterborough PE8 4EA

Learn about a unique collection of unpublished letters from the climbing legend George Mallory to his family, revealing his innermost thoughts about people, places and mountains.

On 8th June 1924, George Mallory and Sandy Irvine were seen through a telescope on the upper slopes of Mount Everest. They were never seen alive again. In 1999, Mallory's body was found below the ridge where he was last seen. In the 100 years since his disappearance, many words have been written about Mallory, but very little has ever been published of his own thoughts.

Letters from Everest is an eye-opening set of personal letters from Mallory to his family, collected and published for the first time by his great-nephew. In the letters, Mallory is completely open about his life, his climbing and especially the three Everest Expeditions he was a part of – 1921, 1922 and the last in 1924. His writing is full of extraordinary

insights – most of which have never been published in any form. They are a unique collection – an actual reflection, possibly the one and only, of the thoughts of a climbing legend who walked into history a century ago.

'An extraordinary treasure trove' Andrew Marr

'These handwritten artifacts offer a haunting glimpse into the private life of a British mountaineer who ventured into the high-altitude "Death Zone" before anyone knew if reaching the 29,000ft peak was humanly possible' GearJunkie

Tom Newton Dunn is a broadcaster and political commentator, and George Mallory's great nephew. He first made his name as an award-winning defence correspondent before moving to political journalism, where he led coverage of four general election campaigns and the Brexit referendum, interviewing seven British Prime Ministers and US



President Donald Trump twice. Tom was Political Editor at The Sun for 11 years before leaving to help launch Times Radio and presented its flagship Sunday morning political programme. He moved to TalkTV on its launch to anchor an hour-long weeknight news programme.

Tom now works cross-platform for The Times and is an Evening Standard columnist. He has ghostwritten two military biographies, Sniper One (2006) and Apache (2008), both of which were Sunday Times bestsellers.

Tickets £8 (£7), £1 off early bird tickets bought before 14th February, available from Oundle Bookshop, (cash only) or online [www.authorsinoundle.co.uk](http://www.authorsinoundle.co.uk)

An event provided by Raunds Town Council

## Raunds Coffee Afternoon

at Saxon Hall, Raunds Wednesday  
5<sup>th</sup> February 2025  
1:30pm – 3pm  
Refreshments served from 1pm

Live Singer!

# SHOWY

Email [info@raunds-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@raunds-tc.gov.uk) or Ring 01933 622087 between 9:00 am – 2:30pm to reserve your seat

£2 entry (includes tea/coffee and cake)

@RaundsCouncil @RaundsTC @raundstowncouncil

## RAUNDS FILM AFTERNOON

Come & meet new friends

Showing at Saxon Hall, Raunds on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025

Refreshments served from 12:45pm  
Film starts at 1:30pm

London, 1934. Jimmy Erskine (McKellen) is the most feared theatre critic of the age. He lives as flamboyantly as he writes and takes pleasure in savagely taking down any actor who fails to meet his standards. When the owner of the Daily Chronicle newspaper dies, and his son David Brooke (Strong) takes over, Jimmy quickly finds himself at odds with his new boss and his position under threat. In an attempt to preserve the power and influence he holds so sacred, Jimmy strikes a Faustian pact with struggling actress Nina Land (Arterton), entangling them and Brooke in a thrilling but deadly web of desire, blackmail and betrayal.  
Running Time 101 Minutes

£2 entry (includes tea/coffee & cake)

Email [info@raunds-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@raunds-tc.gov.uk) or Ring 01933 622087 between 9:00am – 2.30pm to reserve your seat.

@RaundsCouncil @RaundsTC @raundstowncouncil

An event provided by Raunds Town Council



# HERMITAGE HOUSE RESIDENT TAKES TO THE SKIES

James, a resident of Hermitage House Care Home in Thrapston, soared to new heights during an exhilarating flight simulation adventure as part of the care home's Make a Wish initiative. The staff team at Hermitage House organised for James to step into the cockpit of a wartime Spitfire and experience the thrill of piloting an aircraft in a fully immersive setting.

Part of Hermitage House's Make a Wish initiative, this experience is one of many tailored activities designed to create unforgettable moments for residents. As part of the Country Court group, Hermitage House takes pride in delivering personalised care through meaningful experiences, ranging from boat trips and book launches to off-road driving and family tea parties. By understanding each resident's unique interests and hobbies, the team ensures every activity resonates on a personal level.

The flight simulation was packed with excitement as James took on a series of challenging missions, including:

- Mastering the fundamentals of flight, such as take-offs, landings, and navigating by the horizon
- Flying through the iconic arches of Tower Bridge in a stunning recreation of 1940s England
- Battling enemy bomber planes in an action-packed combat scenario, guided by skilled instructors

- Performing an emergency landing under simulated high-pressure conditions
- Reaching top speeds of 450 mph while exploring the incredible capabilities of the iconic Spitfire

The experience brought plenty of smiles and laughter as James successfully executed acrobatic stunts, including barrel rolls and loop-the-loops. "Yeah, it was great! I'd do it again," James exclaimed with a grin after perfecting a particularly daring manoeuvre.

Throughout the experience, James was guided by experienced flight instructors who provided encouragement and support at every step. One instructor praised his progress, saying, "Very nice flying, very good turn," highlighting James's growing confidence in the simulator.

The excitement of the day extended beyond James, as the care home's staff joined in by exploring other simulators and cheering him on. Wellbeing Coordinator Jessica Bennett



said: "Seeing James light up with joy and humour as he tried something new and meaningful to him is truly heartwarming. Moments like these capture the spirit of our Make a Wish initiative, which allows us to create unforgettable experiences for our residents."



**For more information about life at Hermitage House Care Home or the Make a Wish initiative, please contact Customer Relations Manager Jessica Grayson at [jessica.grayson@countrycourtcare.com](mailto:jessica.grayson@countrycourtcare.com) or call 01832 430 084.**



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## Bi-weekly Coffee Mornings

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\*Starting from 15th January 2025

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To learn more or to reserve a table, please contact Jess, our Customer Relations Manager on 01832 430 084.

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## HOW TO INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS IN NORTH NORTHANTS ON EXECUTIVE AGENDA

North Northamptonshire Council's Executive members met recently to discuss a new Active Communities Strategic framework - comprising three strategies - designed to boost physical activity levels in the local area.

The new Framework sets out active communities' priorities for the next 5 years and will feed into and influence other plans across the council. It also sets out the vision for North Northamptonshire Active Communities: 'Creating cohesive communities where everyone can live active, happy and connected lives.'

Following extensive work, Executive will be asked to approve and adopt three new strategies, which sit within the Framework:

- Active Communities Strategy, which provides an overarching vision for the future of physical activity, leisure and sport in North Northamptonshire.
- Leisure Facilities Strategy, which looks at planning for appropriate leisure facilities to meet the needs of the increasing population in the area.
- Playing Pitch Strategy, which provides evidence on the supply and demand for sports pitches to ensure there is suitable provision in the future.

If approved, the strategies will provide evidence to help with gaining external funding, including S106 (developer) funding, to help make projects and the actions identified a reality.

As part of the work to create the Framework, an analysis of all the active places across North Northants was undertaken, including country parks, leisure centres, the Greenway and community

centres to help understand how they meet residents' needs and where improvements could be made. Work has already started on certain elements of the action plan.

Cllr Helen Howell, the council's Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism, said: "There has been a tremendous amount of time and effort to get to this point and I am so pleased we are now in a position to seek approval from the Executive for these important strategies, which carry on the great work already being completed by our Active Communities teams.

"The benefits of exercise and keeping active are well documented and the Chief Medical Officers have said that if physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure. It is vital that we look at the service provision and when you look at the strategies together, they really would have so many benefits for residents both current and future and help the council work with partners to increase physical activity levels across North Northants."

Jason Smithers, Leader of the Council, said: "As a council, we always aim to be forward-thinking, through our corporate and Big 50 visions, and these three strategies do just this. They take a wider look at the council's approach to increasing physical activity and the broadest possible view of the types of activity, the environment and infrastructure which helps make being active the easy choice for our residents."

The Executive met on Thursday 16th January and the papers are now available to view online.

## OVER 300 REPORTS OF ABANDONED VEHICLES IN NORTH NORTHANTS IN 2024

North Northamptonshire Council received about 340 reports of abandoned vehicles in 2024. Every report was investigated by the council's Waste team, inspecting based on certain criteria.

Abandoned vehicles in the North Northamptonshire Council area should be reported to ELVIS – the End of Life Vehicle Impound Scheme. This is a partnership between Northamptonshire's Arson Task Force, Northamptonshire Police and North and West Northamptonshire Councils.

An abandoned vehicle is one which has not been moved or attended to for a long time. Abandoned vehicles, especially when left in a poor state, can have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those living nearby. They can also attract crime and be set on fire.

For each of the reported abandoned vehicles, an on-site assessment was made to decide whether it met the appropriate criteria to be removed and scrapped. A criteria-based inspection of each vehicle is necessary to ensure the removal of any vehicles is legal and proportionate.

Criteria used to assess whether vehicle is abandoned include:

- significant damage
- it's run-down or unroadworthy
- missing or suspicious number plates
- broken windows, flat tyres
- has a lot of rubbish inside it
- broken or loose ignition/steering column
- left unlocked

The ELVIS scheme does not cover untaxed vehicles in North Northamptonshire. These should be reported directly to the DVLA and not ELVIS.

When the owner of an abandoned vehicle can be identified, a £200 Fixed Penalty Notice is issued to them.

Cllr Matt Binley, the council's Executive Member for Highways, Travel and Assets, said: "Abandoned vehicles can have such a detrimental impact on neighbourhoods across North Northamptonshire – making areas look neglected and unloved.

"We have received positive feedback from residents who have reported an improvement in the environment and the appearance of their local area, but we can't do this work without the help of residents.

"We need everyone to keep reporting abandoned vehicles to ELVIS as we do investigate and take action, where necessary."

Anti-Social Behaviour Sergeant, Wyn Hughes said: "An abandoned vehicle not only makes an area look neglected and unappealing, it can also become a target for anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and arson, as well as leading to parking disputes.

"We know how much of a nuisance abandoned vehicles can be and our ELVIS Team work hard to deal with reports from the local community and act on them. We'd encourage people to report any abandoned vehicles in their local area to us so we can continue working to remove them where we are able."

You can report a vehicle you think is abandoned using the online form on the council website. When you report a vehicle, you need the registration number, make and model, colour, location and the condition of the vehicle.



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## Where to find 'Warm Spaces' in communities across North Northamptonshire

North Northamptonshire Council recognises that it will be unaffordable for many residents to heat their homes for as long as they would do normally again this winter. That's why they are once again running and supporting what has become known as the Warm Spaces initiative.

Warm Spaces provide somewhere a person who needs to get warm can go to, for free, to enjoy warmth, have a hot drink and socialise if they choose to.

This year a total of 45 community organisations, volunteer groups and public bodies, supported by the council, have opened their doors, to give their time and share their resources with local residents to provide a safe, warm and welcome space.

The council has added a map of Warm Spaces across North Northamptonshire to their website. The map sets out locations in each area: Corby, Kettering, Thrapston, Rusdhen, Oundle and surrounding areas and Wellingborough. The venues include libraries, village halls, churches, community hubs and even Bonkers Playhouse Theatre in Kettering!

They are also calling on all residents for their help in spreading the message. If you know someone who you think might benefit, but doesn't have access to the internet, please let them know about their nearby Warm Spaces by looking at the website page, which also offers opening times and dates. Residents can attend for activities at these locations without any need

to discuss their personal circumstances.

Councillor Gill Mercer, Executive Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing, said: "When people enter a warm space they do so with a guarantee they will be treated with respect and dignity, without judgement and in confidence. Supporting our communities is always our priority and that is why, during this continuing cost of living crisis, we are taking urgent and tangible action to ensure that our residents are supported.

"This winter will be a difficult time for many, both in terms of physical health and mental health, which is why both North Northamptonshire Libraries and Community Libraries are being supported to signpost residents to Public Health's free health and wellbeing services. Health and wellbeing advisors will also be on hand at many of the library Warm Space sessions."

Cllr Jason Smithers, Leader of North Northamptonshire Council, said: "Winter can be challenging for many individuals and families struggling to make ends meet. That's why it is important that we put our and our partners' buildings, which are often already heated, at their disposal and so help those worse affected by the impacts of energy costs.

"Importantly, these buildings do more than just help keep people warm – they also offer free facilities such as Wi-Fi, showers, baby changing areas, quiet study areas, eriod products and children's play areas."

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## **An Open Letter to the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board and Northamptonshire Hospitals**

### **Subject: Collaborative action to support Northamptonshire residents during the current Critical Incident**

As a charity deeply rooted in Northamptonshire, Serve is committed to delivering a range of outstanding care services to our community. Recent challenges, underscored by the declaration of a critical incident by the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), demand an urgent, collaborative response from all of us in the health and social care sector.

#### **Serve's Role and Achievements**

As the East Midlands Regional Winner of the Best Home Care Team accolade at the 2024 Great British Care Awards, Serve has consistently demonstrated excellence in community-based care. Our team of over 40 highly trained carers, supported by experienced team leaders, schedulers, and administrators, is well-equipped to adapt to evolving needs and provide high-quality care to residents across Northamptonshire. Our Befriending and hospital transport services have also been acknowledged for making a difference to local people and reducing the impact on hospital services.

#### **Practical Solutions to Relieve System Pressures**

Serve believes that, by working more closely together with ICB and other health and social care services in the county, innovative and rapid solutions can be implemented to address this crisis effectively. With relatively modest investment from the ICB, we propose the following immediate actions:

##### **1. Making a difference to safe and swift hospital discharges:**

Serve is ready to expand our support to local hospitals, ensuring patients are discharged safely and receive tailored care at home. With experience in managing complex care needs, our team can ease the transition from hospital to home.

##### **2. Reducing avoidable hospital admissions:**

By scaling up our community-based services, including personal care, medication management, and befriending checks, Serve can prevent unnecessary admissions. This ensures acute care is prioritised for those who need it most.

##### **3. Expanding transport services:**

With additional funding, Serve can strengthen our transport capabilities to support patient transfers and reduce the strain on hospital transport services.

##### **4. Maximising community connections:**

Serve's strong local ties enable us to understand the unique challenges faced by residents. Our person-centred approach ensures dignity, respect, and tailored solutions for each individual.

#### **Call for Collaboration and Timely Action**

The declaration of a critical incident highlights the urgent need for creative thinking and joint action. We urge the Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board to:

- Notwithstanding existing ICB forums focused on longer term strategies, ICB should urgently convene a task force of health and social care providers - including Serve - to explore practical, community-based solutions.
- ICB need to provide timely funding to expand capacity and implement these solutions.
- There needs to be clear, transparent communication with the public to rebuild confidence during this challenging period.

Serve remains ready to work collaboratively with the ICB and other partners to deliver meaningful, practical solutions for Northamptonshire. As shown during the pandemic, extraordinary challenges can be met with extraordinary responses when we work together.

#### **A Message to Our Community**

To the residents of Northamptonshire: during this worrying time, Serve is here for you. Our award-winning care team is dedicated to ensuring every individual receives compassionate, professional support. If you or your loved ones need care, please contact us. Together, we can face these challenges and emerge stronger as a community.

Yours faithfully,

*Tony Gibbs*

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