

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021**

### **Trading Standards**

The team have carried out further illegal tobacco visits during November in partnership with HMRC.

Thousands more packets of illegal cigarettes have been seized from shops in Northampton after being sniffed out by tobacco detection dogs.

The operation took place as part of Operation CeCe, a National Trading Standards initiative in partnership with HMRC to tackle illegal tobacco.

Officers from West Northamptonshire Council's Trading Standards team seized 1109 packets from one shop, and 1079 from another. They also uncovered 7kg of illegal hand rolling tobacco.

It follows a similar crackdown in the town in September which led to the seizure of more than 3,500 illegal cigarettes.

Further investigations are now underway to decide what action should be taken against the shop owners.

More than 180 victims of a fraudulent flight delay compensation company are to be reimbursed following a successful prosecution by Northamptonshire Trading Standards.

Flight Delay Claims Team promoted themselves through a website which said they could help people claim up to £540 in compensation for delayed, cancelled or overbooked flights.

A lengthy investigation by Northamptonshire Trading Standards led to the company directors, Martin Ryan and his son Joseph Ryan, being charged with fraudulent trading.

And at Northampton Crown Court on Monday (27 September) Martin Ryan was sentenced to 22 months imprisonment, suspended for two years. He was also disqualified from being a director for five years and was made the subject of a five-year criminal behaviour order.

Joseph Ryan was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, suspended for two years, was disqualified as a director for three years, and received a three-year criminal behaviour order. Their company E.Asthampton Ltd, registered in Rushden, Northamptonshire, was also fined £5,000.

The pair had entered guilty pleas at an earlier hearing, when His Honour Judge Rupert Mayo ruled they pay £250,000 to compensate victims, as well as to help cover the costs of the prosecution.

A total of 182 victims identified as part of the court case as having suffered financial loss will now receive their share of the amount set aside for compensation.

The Trading Standards Team have commenced a programme of sampling to monitor compliance with the requirements of the Food Information (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2019. (Natasha's Law). This legislation extends allergen labelling requirements to food items which are prepacked for direct sale. This follows on from a programme of awareness raising about the requirements of the legislation which came into force at the beginning of October.

The team have also been raising awareness of firework safety in the lead up to Bonfire night and will be carrying out further communications in the coming months to raise awareness of product safety issues as Christmas approaches

### **Environmental Health**

The environmental health team have been carrying out inspections of new high risk food businesses which have registered with the Council during the last 18 months. In addition continuing with the programme of inspection of existing food businesses on a priority basis. The team continue to work in support of the partnership efforts to deal with COVID 19 and continue to support investigations of outbreaks and promotion of vaccinations.

Further prosecutions from fly tipping offences have taken place in the last few weeks and the LA Support (Kingdom) team have recommenced litter enforcement patrols in the centre of Northampton.

Four pairs of rapid charging points for electric vehicles have been installed in town centre car parks in Northampton. The charging points which are primarily for use by taxi drivers but may be used by other members of the public are located in Newland, Wellington Street, Commercial St and The Mounts surface car parks. , Each 50kw unit can charge up to two vehicles at a time in dedicated parking bays.

The West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) project was initiated by the former Northampton Borough Council, which received a £45,000 grant from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV).

That funding was matched using Section 106 developer contributions, with EB Charging Ltd financing the remainder.

The scheme follows the publication in 2018 of the Northampton Low Emission Strategy, which aims to encourage and support taxi and private hire operators to switch to ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs). The target is for all taxis and private hire vehicles to be ULEVs by 2028.

### **Building Control**

The team continue to deal with a large number of inspections reflecting the high levels of activity in the construction industry. They are providing building control services for a wide range of customers.

### **Community Engagement**

WNC's Community Engagement Team has supported various community events recently, including:

- Diwali celebrations in Northampton town centre on Saturday 30 October. The annual Festival of Lights celebrations are organised by the Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation with support from West Northants Council. There was food and community stalls and performances from 10am, followed by a lantern procession in the evening.
- International Men's Day was celebrated on 19 November, 5-7pm. People were able to attend in person and there was also an opportunity to watch it livestreamed via

YouTube. Partnership health and mental health agencies were invited to engage, awards were given to the two winners, chosen from the 80 applications received, for this year's Inspirational Male Award.

- Remembering World Aids Day on 1 December was a civic event including the lighting of candles across our locality areas.
- Virtual International Day for Persons With a Disability event – this will be live-streamed over YouTube on Friday 3 December. The event is led by West Northamptonshire Council's Disability Forum, Teamwork Trust's Disability Forum, the Staff Disability Network for both West and North Northants Councils and Northants Sport.

### **Community Safety Initiatives**

The 16 Days of Activism campaign will run from the 25 November to 10 December focused on raising awareness and encouraging reporting of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. During the 16 days we:

- ran a social media campaign
- distributed posters and leaflets detailing how to access support
- held engagement sessions at a range of locations including the University of Northampton and Metro Bank Weston Favell
- online coffee and chat sessions

Working in partnership together, WNC and the Northamptonshire Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner have bid for and secured funding through the Safer Streets 3 and Safer Streets 4 Programmes.

The funding awarded through these programmes is over £800,000. The money will fund a wide range of projects to improve the safety of women and girls on our streets and prevent violence in the night-time economy, including:

- measures to target the perpetrators of harassment or violence
- physical environmental improvements, including lighting, CCTV, fencing and cutting back shrubbery
- training, education, awareness raising/communications campaigns and engagement activity, involving the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, University of Northampton and our domestic abuse and sexual violence providers.

We have also launched a third Party Hate Crime Reporting Service, 'Stop Hate UK'.

### **Beat the Streets**

West Northamptonshire Council worked in partnership with Public Health Northamptonshire and NSport to deliver Beat the Streets Northampton from 22 September to 3 November 2021. Beat the Street is a fun, free initiative that saw Northampton transformed into a giant game! Participants each got a Beat the Street card which contained radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology which participants tapped against sensors called 'Beat Boxes' located on lamp posts across the area. Players received points for each box they tapped. The game encourages residents to get involved and provides an opportunity to form teams linked to schools, community groups and businesses promoting people to get more involved in their local community alongside becoming more physically active. 9.6% (20,699 people) participated covering 113,510 miles. A range of residents participated in the game:

- 73% were children
- 32% were previously inactive
- 45% were from areas of multiple deprivation
- 12% had a long term medical condition, and

- 3.4% had a disability.

The next phase of the project focuses on sustaining the momentum we have seen through the project, for people to continue to lead active lives..

### **Resettlement of people from Afghanistan**

A range of teams across the council and other statutory agencies, North Northamptonshire Council and voluntary/community sector partners continue to deliver a comprehensive package of wrap around support to people who have fled Afghanistan who are currently being accommodated in hotel-type accommodation booked by the Home Office within West Northamptonshire.

As at 19<sup>th</sup> November, 48 families are accommodated in the Hotels comprising of 113 adults and 136 children – a total of 249 people

The number of families that have moved onto permanent accommodation 14, comprising of 32 adults and 36 children – a total of 68 people

We will continue to periodically receive new family groups via the Home Office

Councillor David Smith

**Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services**