

**Thursday 30th June 2022**

### **Armed Forces Day**

Vice Chairman, Cllr John Shephard, attended the flag raising ceremony outside County Hall on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June to mark Armed Forces Day.

### **Community Safety Strategy**

Work has started to develop a West Northants Community Safety Strategy. A strategy development plan has been agreed by the Community Safety Partnership and we are starting to work with statutory partners to determine the key priorities for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour over the next three years. The aim is to have a completed strategy by the end of the year.

### **Knife Angel**

The Angel was well received and generated a lot of activity during the two weeks it was with us. The Community Safety Team are now working with partners to develop a number of legacy projects. A task and finish group focussed on knife crime has been established to continue this work. Some of the key activities that took place whilst the Knife Angel was in Northampton included:

- Church service with 100 people in attendance
- Partnership support of agencies being present and delivering information sessions at the angel, more than 14 agencies in total.
- School engagement – over 600 children attending workshops, including 4 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities schools.
- All students became an anti-violence champion
- Over 30 schools that didn't attend the workshops have signed up for the legacy plan.
- Supported by 25 Cadets and 7 Leaders over 4 days of the 2 weekends. Promoting the Anti-Violence Champions campaign, signed up 153 Northampton residents to Neighbourhood Alert and delivered major bleed first aid demos.
- A number of training sessions were delivered including Child Exploitation awareness, parent sessions and trauma informed practice sessions.

A post evaluation report is currently being developed.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Additional funding from the Government's Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has been provided to Northamptonshire Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS) and Eve to support victims of domestic abuse find safer accommodation. This funding also enables grant funding to NDAS for their Specialist Drug and Alcohol Refuge to continue.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)**

Over the past couple of months, we have seen a notable rise in large groups of youths causing ASB in Northampton. As a result of this, we have set up three localised partnership task and finish groups, working with the Police, Social Care, Schools and Youth Providers to discuss the

ongoing issues and with proactive action taken by speaking to the youths and parents and utilising early intervention methods we have seen positive outcomes and a significant decline in reports of ASB.

## **School Engagement**

Planning is underway for the Young Citizens Scheme, which will take place over three days in September. This project works to promote healthy, safe and strong individuals and communities. Participants will become better citizens, be safer in their schools and communities, online and on the roads; be better equipped to make choices and understand the consequences of their actions; be better informed of how to react in an emergency and have a better understanding of and develop a relationship with the range of agencies which operate in West Northants.

Many agencies wish to get their officers into schools to assist in delivering their service objectives, improve understanding and break down barriers with young people. It is accepted that early interventions are more effective, particularly by targeting pupils in Year 6, the final year before they move up to secondary education having the greatest impact. Given the geographic spread of West Northants it is very difficult for some of these agencies to deliver to all schools at primary level, it is therefore more efficient to bring all the schools to the agencies.

For those schools who are not able to attend Young Citizens we have commissioned Amplitude Media to produce a series of animations which cover this range of subjects. The project is progressing well, with subject experts currently reviewing the scripts before the animation process commences. The series of animations will be available to schools for the autumn term.

## **Community Forums and Events**

West Northants Diverse Communities Forum worked with Town of Sanctuary and the University of Northampton to host a partnership event relating to Refugee Week. The event took place on the 23 June, 4-6pm, in the Great Hall, at The Guildhall, Northampton. There were various stalls for the public to engage with, along with a full programme of speakers and materials such as music and short films. The event had exhibitions from L2L Youth Club, Northampton Town of Sanctuary plus stories from refugees who have settled here in Northamptonshire.

The forum and its members supported and promoted other events during Refugee Week including; a historical talk at Delapre Abbey, Short films being presented at the Derngate, Northampton Inter Faith Forum event and seminars hosted by the University of Northampton.

On Wednesday 22 June at 12 noon the Windrush Flag was raised at The Guildhall, Northampton. Attendees were able to hear from guest speakers. In the evening there was a service at the New Testament Church of God Church, College Street, Northampton.

Discussions have been taking place to explore expanding the reach and scope of the current Northampton Youth Forum. There are plans to set up new Youth Forums in the Daventry and South Northants localities with a view to creating an overarching Youth Parliament for West Northants, giving young people the opportunity to engage in local democracy. The current Youth Forum members have provided views and feedback on what this might look like and how to engage other young people. Three drop-in sessions have been arranged in August to tie in with International Youth Day to start engaging young people in each locality around the future plans.

The annual ‘I am still me’ face to face conference returned on 17 May and delivered a day of workshop sessions to education staff from across West Northants to improve LGBTQ inclusive education for young people. Over 40 teaching staff attended the event and heard from experts from Stonewall and local LGBTQ providers as well as sessions delivered by local schools Cedar Road and Northampton School for Boys regarding Primary and Secondary best practice. Attendees were also able to join the council, partners and community over lunch in a small event in the courtyard marking International Day of Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia concluding in a minute of noise.

Northampton Pride took place on Sunday 26 June, with a Parade around the town starting and finishing on the Market Square where a full stage programme of performances ran through to 4.30pm. The family friendly event was sponsored by Travis Perkins, Northampton Town Council and RS Components as well as support from GXO, Northampton BID, NLive Radio and Northampton University. The event was organised in partnership with the Northampton Pride committee, a collective of local LGBTQ and partner organisations. Over 40 local organisations and businesses had stalls promoting local LGBTQ services and accessibility to the LGBTQ community and their allies on the day. Promotional materials were placed in car parks and other locations in the public realm with posters being distributed by Pride committee partners. In addition, a web page and social media events were set up to promote the event and shared through the ‘Love Northampton’ socials.

### **Homes for Ukraine**

We currently have just under 300 sponsors across West Northants and we are expecting approximately 600 Ukrainians to arrive, 400 have arrived so far.

Three of the new team of resettlement support workers are now in post. We already have a half post covered within the team and an expectation to have all 6 full time roles filled by the beginning of August (5 full time and 2 part time positions).

There have been seven “Meet and Greet” sessions for sponsors and their guests arranged at libraries in the areas where we have seen most arrivals – these have been held in Brixworth, Brackley, Towcester, Daventry, Northampton Central, Duston and Moulton. These meetings are intended to become focused drop-in sessions for support with the libraries acting as a community hub, where we will build and wrap around support local to that area. We are looking at other libraries that we can expand this to and the new team of support workers will pick these up and start to work closely with the community and voluntary sector in those areas.

Following the request for new sponsors for re-matching, we are building a solid pool of sponsors and we are progressing completing the necessary checks and working with them to understand what sort of family group / individual they are willing and able to support.

### **Afghan Bridging Hotels**

There are currently 250 Afghans across the two hotels. There has been a recent women’s only session delivered at both hotels by the British Red Cross, focusing on subjects like domestic abuse and women’s sexual health. We are now working with Bright Path for Future, which is an Afghan led wellbeing project that provides integration and wellbeing workshops over two days in Dari and Pashto for Afghans staying in bridging hotels. The project also provides English literacy support for those attending. There will be workshops arranged over the summer at both hotels. We are also engaging with youth playworkers to deliver play sessions at the hotels over the summer holidays and looking at the HAF programme that local youth club L2L operate to see if it is possible to arrange for the secondary school-aged children to attend over the summer holidays.

## **Trading Standards**

Xoshawi Kalend t/a UK Monopol, Northampton – on 14/4/22 at Northampton Magistrates Court he pleaded guilty to five offences in relation to a seizure of illicit tobacco.

The charges included: possessing with intent to sell 86 packets of cigarettes carrying false branding, possessing 239 packets and four tobacco pouches that were not labelled with the proper warnings and failing to act with due care to ensure that 36 packets of cigarettes complied with safety requirements (Reduced Ignition Propensity test). Total fines and contribution to prosecution costs £6388.

Further multi-agency visits with HMRC (HM Revenue and Customs) and Police planned for July.

Op June – WNC Trading Standards is joining forces with other Trading Standards Services across the East Midlands to promote ‘Operation June’ which aims to raise awareness about the additional dangers associated with smoking illegal cigarettes.

It is 10 years since 71 year old Lincolnshire resident June Buffham sadly lost her life in a tragic house fire caused by an illegal unsafe cigarette.

Scams Awareness fortnight (13 – 26 June) - This is an annual campaign run by Citizens Advice with the Consumer Protection Partnership (CPP) and supported by Trading Standards. The aim is to create a network of confident, #ScamAware consumers who can recognise a scam, take the right action when dealing with a scam and talk about their experiences to raise awareness and help others. This year’s campaign will focus on scams and the cost-of-living crisis. With many people facing increased financial pressures, there is a high chance that scammers will take advantage of this, so it is of vital importance to equip consumers. Social media posts are being shared throughout the fortnight.

Carried out some cigarette and e-cigs test purchasing. 5 premises visited with 1 selling to the underage volunteer.

Advisory letters sent to 16 Northampton premises in relation to non-compliant disposable e-cigarettes which exceed the permitted 2ml maximum capacity. Further visits to be carried out.

Two illegally landed dogs and one cat – linked to import from the Ukraine. Allowed to be quarantined at home due to the lack of kennel capacity in the country.

Provided business advice in relation to ingredient labelling where sunflower oil replaced by rape seed oil. Russia and the Ukraine are the world's biggest suppliers of sunflower oil so supplies severely affected by the ongoing war.

Allergen samples purchased and sent for testing. Further sampling - Milk allergens in dairy free drinks – Daventry, Brackley and Towcester areas, Allergens at takeaways – including resampling at last year's unsatisfactory premises.

Unsafe telescopic ladders, tested by OPSS (Office for Product Safety and Standards) and failed, trader sold 300 pieces, allocated to West Northants TS to investigate via the Product Safety Database. Enquiries revealed that the importer, brand owner and seller are all linked and are based in Milton Keynes, so the case was passed to Milton Keynes TS.

Complaint from a West Northants business that had purchased 250,000 boxes of blue medical examination gloves after being shown a safety certificate from the Scottish importer. Many complaints received regarding the products sold to a variety of end users and own testing revealed non-compliance. Matter passed to and being investigated by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Continue to progress the disaggregation of the TS database and move on to Cx a cloud based Civica system.

### **Environmental Protection**

The consultation on the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order has attracted a very high level of interest. A total of 1275 responses have been received. Work is progressing on the development of the order and a report will be coming to Cabinet in the Autumn to progress the declaration.

Colleagues from the Environmental Protection team contributed to the recent briefing for Ward members in areas affected by the HS2 project. The team are working closely with the new HS2 marshal.

### **Health Protection**

The Health Protection Service Plan 2022-23 has been drafted and due to go before Cabinet on 12 July. The Plan is required by the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive to illustrate the demands on the service and state how the service will be delivered throughout 2022/23. The service has been hugely affected by the need for officers to engage in the COVID response over recent years, however the Health Protection service is actively recovering and working towards business as usual. Business as usual includes the carrying out of risk based programmed food hygiene inspections covering 3866 food premises, sampling food to ensure that it is safe to eat, providing advice and training to local businesses, carrying out targeted health and safety interventions across in 8601 local businesses, investigating workplace accidents, providing assured and business advice to Primary Authority Partners, investigating infectious diseases such as food poisoning, dealing with complaints and so on.

Business as usual continues to evolve as the Food Safety, Occupational Health & Safety and Infectious Disease services provided by sovereign authorities aggregate and transform within West Northants Council. The active review and harmonisation of procedures, regular full team face-to-face team meetings, the sharing of resources across areas and setting of SMART performance targets are all key tools being used to harmonise the service.

As a founder member of the [West and North Northamptonshire Event Safety Partnership](#), Health Protection has actively managed the development an online event notification form together with associated processes and advice. The Northampton Town Centre Management process the notifications to ensure that all partners are duly notified and can work collectively to ensure the safety of local events.

Health Protection are using available technology to help transform its service. For example, they have developed a web-based central repository using SharePoint for documents, procedures etc. to ensure that officers have easy access to key documents.

The current Student Environmental Health Officer is coming to the end of her fixed-term contract and has recently been offered an Environmental Health Officer position in another Local Authority. Recruitment will be commencing shortly to fill the position.

## **Environmental Crime**

Three new members of staff have joined the Environmental Crime team and the team have refocused their resources to provide response to fly tipping and other environmental crime across the whole area.

In the period from 1 April to 31 May a total of 598 fixed penalty notices have been issued in respect of fly tipping, littering and other environmental crime and 9 prosecutions have been taken for fly tipping and littering offences.

## **Licensing**

The Licensing team have been regularly meeting to progress the development of a uniform service across the area, this has included introducing more online Licensing applications and updating the processes on the Council website to create consistency for the trade where possible. A great deal of work has also been undertaken to improve some of the back office systems functions that will prepare the service for a more streamlined service in the future.

Due to the cost of living increases, there is currently a review being undertaken and a report is being prepared for the Taxi and General Licensing Committee to consider the hackney carriage fares for WNC

Regular meetings have commenced with the Home to School Transport team to look at more collaborative working and to discuss any particular items of concern.

During May the team have processed over;

- 400 taxi and private hire applications (new applications and renewals)
- 170 Alcohol applications
- 50 Miscellaneous applications including gambling, street pavement, tattooists, animal welfare licences etc.

The team have seen a high volume of new private hire driver applications since the start of the year and are currently undertaking checks on around 90 new driver applicants. This has included introducing the new HMRC tax checks and making checks in accordance with the licensed driver national NR3 register. The team have prepared a number of reports for the Taxi and General Licensing Committee which has recently resulted in 3 new driver applications being refused. Staff in the team have undertaken training on the NR3 system in order to ensure that they are familiar with the process for checking the national register and identifying any concerns with taxi/private hire driver applications received going forward.

The team have also received a high number of complaints recorded against drivers with several complex cases that will require detailed investigations and working with multi-agency partners. Following more serious incidents being recorded the team have taken immediate action and revoked 2 driver licences during May and which may now be the subject of the appeals process.

The team have presented 4 Licence Reviews and 3 New/Variation of Premises Licence applications to the Alcohol and Gambling Licensing Sub-Committee since the beginning of the year. This involves a considerable amount of officer time, in collating the necessary documents, liaising with applicants, licence holders, responsible authorities and legal

representatives etc. ensuring that the correct legal process is followed, in order to minimise any challenges which may arise from any technicalities and statutory processes not being followed.

### **Building Control**

Building Control continue to progress with the work to bring the Daventry service into the West Northants team. They have met with the manager of the Warwick / Rugby consortium to discuss staffing, finance and data and will be progressing these workstreams over the coming months in readiness for the combined service starting to operate next April.

Councillor David Smith

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