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Heron on the River Nene - tweet @_nenevalley to give him a name
Steven North has been re-elected un-opposed as Leader of East Northamptonshire Council at the 45th annual meeting in May. He is also leader of the ruling Conservative group and a member for Rushden Sartoris ward.

Councillor Glenn Harwood MBE was elected as deputy leader and pledged his support to Councillor North, to the council and to the district.

At the meeting, Councillor North said:

“I am, once again, honoured to be asked to lead this council and remain as proud of our district as ever.

“Despite challenging local government finances, this council remains well run with one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country. We remain in a reasonably sound financial position and yet again have delivered a balanced budget, without using the reserves to do so.

“We’ve had success with the government approving our efficiency plan and this, coupled with potential changes to local funding including retaining Business Rates at a local level, helps us plan with more certainty.

“We’ve also seen the Joint Core Strategy accepted which supports a sensible approach to the delivery of housing numbers and to delivering homes with an increased minimum plot size. Within this is the Rushden Sustainable Urban Extension and Tresham garden village - both very exciting but different projects which will deliver over 4,000 new properties to the area. The 2,500 for Rushden are part of our commitment as a Council to protect our rural communities. We will be bringing masterplans for these sites to Council within this financial year and will continue our work on a new district local plan, as well as continuing to support neighbourhood plans.

“As well as housing, we also look to deliver higher quality and better job choice in the district. Opportunities across the district will be developed with the help of our new head of commercial development who will focus on the growth agenda and a more commercial approach to service delivery.

“Our support of community projects continues with 50% of the New Homes Bonus funding we receive set aside for projects across the district that improve the health and wellbeing of many of our residents. So far, we have committed over £1m to this work along with £200k of Members Empowerment Funds that benefit communities in need of support.

“These are exciting times for East Northamptonshire with the opening of Rushden Lakes and all of its employment, retail and visitor opportunities; the new contract with freedom leisure who now run our sports centres and healthy and active outreach programme; the Destination Nene Valley project which promotes the Nene Valley as destination of choice for visitors and locals and, finally, a new waste contract which will continue to provide the excellent service that residents value, plus some improvements.”

“None of this can be achieved without the hard work and dedication from staff and members, and I look forward to working with them all in the year ahead.”

Cllr Steven North
Reuniting lost dogs in East Northants

Microchipping is a simple, safe and quick procedure - one that can make all the difference in being reunited with your pet should they stray or go missing.

The microchip is the size of a grain of rice and the procedure, which is usually carried out by a vet, takes only a few minutes but lasts a lifetime.

Microchipping saves a lot of heartache by helping owners be reunited with lost pets faster. In fact, microchipping technology helped our Dog Warden reunite 15 lost dogs with their owners in the last nine months.

Unfortunately, over 50% of the stray dogs picked up in East Northants were not chipped.

We are committed to encouraging responsible pet ownership and would like to remind you that last year a law came into force which makes it mandatory for owners to microchip their four-legged friends. Those who fail to microchip their pets are guilty of a criminal offence and could face a fine of £500.

You can find out more about our dog warden service at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/dogs

Smart meters

Free smart meters for gas and electricity are being rolled out to all homes in Britain and will be completed by 2020. The meters, provided and installed by your energy supplier, will replace the meter you currently have and will provide you with a portable display unit to monitor your real time gas and electricity usage and costs.

The meters will also send your energy readings to your energy supplier, so you will have no more estimated bills and will know how much your gas and electricity is costing on a daily basis, helping you to budget. The meters will only provide your energy supplier with your meter readings over a secure, encrypted system and will not include any of your personal data.

You can refuse a smart meter, but they do have a lot of advantages for you in monitoring and controlling your energy usage, with no more estimated bills. Trained installers will fit your smart meter and will carry identification. Please check ID before inviting them into your property and call your supplier if you have any concerns.

If your dog is already chipped, please make sure your contact details are correct on the database. It is vital that the national database is kept up to date, so remember to let your company know if you move address or change telephone number.

If you want more information about the smart meter roll out, visit www.smartenergygb.org
What does it feel like to be Chairman? Having been a district councillor for many years, I often wondered what it feel like to hold such a high position in local government, well now I will find out. 'Weird' comes to mind immediately, but a sense of excitement and honour is really how I feel.

What makes East Northants special? I believe it is the hidden district within the Northamptonshire county. We have beautiful countryside, idyllic villages and our towns have amenities that provide opportunities for all ages, be it sport or getting involved with local organisations. There are many parts of our district where, if you did not know geographically where you were, it could be Devon or Cornwall. If people took the time to take the country roads around the district they would be amazed at what is there.

What events do you have coming up? I am honoured to have been invited to attend the Queen’s Garden Party. I intend to visit as many organisations as I can and this includes the Brigstock Get-Together, Bake off and Open Day on 17 June 2017. I will be attending the Chelveston 305th Bomb Group Memorial where I will lay a wreath to honour the Bomb squadron of the 40th Combat of the 1st Air Division of the US 8th Air Force who operated out of RAF Chelveston between 1942-45. There are other civic events within neighboring districts and counties which I will be visiting and I will keep you updated during the year via my new Twitter account (@ENCChairman) and Nene Valley News.

What charities are you supporting? The charities I am supporting are The DogsTrust and The Swivel Club. It has come to my attention we have a lot of dog lovers in the district and I want to meet as many dogs, and their owners, as I can. I’m hoping that people will see the good work of this organisation and the fact they never put a dog down unless they really have to.

Being involved in the Swivel Club it would be remiss of me if I did not take this opportunity of highlighting the events they put on to be able to make donations to local people and organisations. Their aim is to ‘turn peoples lives around’ and I’m keen that the charity expands in the district. If I can get more people involved and more events can be put on other towns then there is every chance more people can have their ‘lives turned around’.

What are your aims and what do you hope to achieve within your year of office? My aim is to represent and promote the district and people of East Northamptonshire. I want people to see that the council is there to help those that live and work within the district and all are working to ensure the future is bright. I want to promote business, youth and local organisations that are doing great things in our towns, villages and hamlets. I feel sometimes people cannot see what East Northamptonshire has to offer and my aim is to show them this is a wonderful area in which to live and work. If I can highlight to more people all that this wonderful district has to offer, then I will have achieved my aim.

Cllr Colin Wright

River ‘Neen’ or ‘Nen’? Being born in March, Cambridgeshire, I was brought up knowing the river that passed through the town as the River ‘Neen’. Having been a Northamptonshire person for 44 years I’m now used to hearing it pronounced as ‘Nen’.

Want to have your say on how the council works? Sign up to the Residents’ Panel at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/survey

Some of our residents have been called and offered a refund on their Council Tax. This is a scam and has nothing to do with ENC. Do not give them any personal or bank details.
**£350k for East Northants community projects**

The ENC Leader and Chairman travelled around the district to visit the communities set to receive funding.

Local organisations in East Northamptonshire have been awarded £350,223 of grants as part of our Community Facilities Fund (CFF).

12 groups, including Higham Ferrers Town Council, Denford Church and Benefield Cricket Club will receive donations of up to £50,000 under this year’s CFF.

The grants form part of the community support provided by East Northamptonshire Council (ENC).

Councillor Steven North, Leader of ENC, said:

“It’s been fantastic to see the kind of impact that the CFF funding has made to the various projects we have supported over the last three years so we’re very excited to announce this year’s list of projects to benefit from our financial help.

“By using a proportion of New Homes Bonus, councillors are offering financial help to another 12 groups in the district. Because of CFF, projects like the community pathway in King’s Cliffe and Woodford’s Greenway link are now set to become a reality.

“It was great to meet the communities behind the fourth year applications and we’re looking forward to seeing these new projects come to fruition and be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.”

For more information about the fund, including those who have previously received a grant, please visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/cff

Information correct at time of going to print.
With over 25 years experience across a range of local authorities, Greg has a passion for enterprise and supporting business and employment growth. Greg’s appointment follows the agreement of a new Economic Growth, Tourism and Regeneration Strategy 2017-2020 which has five key aims:

1. Securing investment
2. Generating quality places
3. Nurturing business growth
4. Increasing tourism spend and jobs
5. Boosting the skills base

The key projects that Greg will focus on in his first year to support these aims include:

1. Promoting the district to attract investment and jobs into the local economy
2. Making the case for investment into key physical, social and digital infrastructure to support economic growth
3. Securing employment uses as part of the district’s growth plans
4. Maximising the benefits of new investments such as the Rushden Lakes retail scheme due to open this summer
5. Ensuring that local companies get access to the best possible business support and advice
6. Producing a business charter to align council services behind local economic development
7. Supporting key economic sectors across the district with a particular focus on the visitor economy and the Nene Valley
8. Championing apprenticeships and promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship as core skills for current and future generations
9. Bringing forward a new Enterprise Centre to help businesses start up and grow
10. Developing and delivering plans that will improve and sustain the vitality and viability of our existing town centres

Greg’s role also involves looking at how the council can be more commercial in order to make the best use of resources and generate income all of which will help the council realise its ambition to be self sufficient from Government funding by 2020.

Successful delivery of these projects will require working with a range of local and strategic partners across the public, private and voluntary and community sectors and ensuring effective engagement of local communities. To this end, Greg will be getting out and about over the next few months to promote a new economic vision and set of priorities for the district and to develop the joint working arrangements that will help drive delivery.

In taking up his new role, Greg said: “East Northamptonshire has significant opportunities associated with its prime location at the heart of the Oxford Cambridge Corridor.

“ It is important that the council plays a leading role in galvanising all the necessary partners and resources to unlock the full potential of the local economy to the end of ensuring that local people and businesses are able to thrive and prosper.”
We leaf nothing behind with our Garden Waste Service

For only £53.50 a year, you can sign up to our Garden Waste Service. You’ll get a 240 litre bin (black with a brown lid) that is emptied once a fortnight, normally the same day as your recycling bin is emptied. Occasional gardeners can buy ten 75 litre compostable garden waste sacks for £15.50, to collect and store garden waste in. Use these as and when you choose.

For more information or to sign up to the service, visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Congratulations to the ten local residents (Carl King, Naomi Edwards, Alison Pott, Lynette Tweedale, Jacky Bufton, Rob Drewery, Dorothy Moran, Gill Lee, Lucy North and Tony Swain) who won one of ten 3-month Freedom Leisure memberships in the prize draw in our spring edition of ENCircle – all have now been notified.

Celebrate the Wildlife, Heritage & Culture of the Nene Valley

Enjoy an eclectic programme of outdoor events, art workshops, concerts, foodie events and much more!

@_nenevalley  #nenevalley2017  nenevalley.net

swim with freedom leisure

swim memberships • swimming lessons • free swimming for under 5’s • unlimited swimming for over 75’s*

FREE guest pass

Present this advert to receive a free swim, gym session or exercise class at The Pemberton Centre, The Nene Centre or Splash Leisure Pool.

Terms & conditions apply: The guest pass is for one single day visit, activities cannot be used over multiple days. Users must be aged 16 and above. Centre rules and regulations apply and certain sessions may be excluded. Please check with your local Freedom Leisure centre before your visit.

*£10 registration fee applies.
THE STORY OF A DIRTY DOG OWNER...

I CAN'T BE BOTHERED TO PICK IT UP, NO-ONE WILL SEE ME...

YOU'RE WRONG...

A WITNESS CAN REPORT YOU ONLINE

WE WILL FIND YOU

A £1000 FINE LATER...

IF ONLY YOU PICKED IT UP!

YOU CAN REPORT A DOG FOULER ONLINE AT
www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/dogfouling