Community projects awarded £267k of grants

This financial year, we approved £267,000 worth of grants to help build and improve amenities across the district, using the Community Facilities Fund. In the winter edition of ENCircle we joined councillors as they presented cheques to half of the successful bidders. In February, Leader of the Council, Steven North, and Gill Mercer, Chairman, completed their visits to the remaining projects.

Councillor Steven North, Leader of East Northamptonshire Council said: “Councillors decided to use a proportion of New Homes Bonus funding to invest in community-based projects taking place across East Northamptonshire and with grants of up to £50k available, this is a great way for communities to improve where they live, work and play.

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Message from the Chairman on page 2  2015 elections and how to vote on page 4

customerservices@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk | 01832 742000
Save time - go online www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/doitonline
Message from the Chairman

It has been a busy few months since the last edition of ENCircle. It was really good to see which projects had received ENC’s Community Facilities Fund grants. These are funded by the New Homes Bonus which we receive from central government. East Northants is one of the few councils to spend this money as it was intended, which is to fund infrastructure needed because of new homes being built. These grants allow groups to fund projects that they otherwise could not afford.

The first round of visits to see what is planned took place in November last year. In the first round, we had a skate park in Rushden, extra facilities for the Rushden Historic Transport Museum, sports facilities in King’s Cliffe, gym equipment in Irthlingborough and park equipment in Ringstead. The second round of visits was in February this year which saw two skate parks, one in Raunds and one in Higham Ferrers, a pocket park in King’s Cliffe, changing rooms in Rushden and help for Headway charity in Irthlingborough. There is certainly a great variety of projects happening and they are spread out all over the district.

The above photo shows another very enjoyable event that I took part in, which was the Youth Conference held at the Pemberton Centre in Rushden last year. The theme was the Real X Factor and the aim was to encourage young people to register to vote and get out and vote once they are old enough. The young people from local schools really entered into the spirit of the day which involved lots of activities to get them interested in voting and having their say.

Continuing with the voting theme, as I write this, preparations are underway for a lunch and speaker event I’m hosting for International Women’s Day. I’m looking forward to hearing from Peter Barratt who is from Irthlingborough and the great grandson of suffragette, Alice Hawkins. He will talk to guests about the struggle that women went through to get the vote and how it changed history. I look forward to telling you about it in the next edition of ENCircle.

ENC Chairman, Gill Mercer

Easter closing and opening dates/times

Please note that the Thrapston offices and Customer Service Centres (CSC) at Thrapston, Rushden and Oundle will close for the Easter holidays on Thursday 2 April 2014 and will re-open on Tuesday 7 April 2015. The closing/opening times for each CSC are:

Customer Service Centre | Closes 2/4/15 | Re-opens 7/4/15
Thrapston, Cedar Drive | 5pm | 8:45am
Rushden, Newton Road | 4:30pm | 9am
Oundle, Oundle Library | 1pm | 10am

You can access many of our council services at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk
You can still pay council bills on our payment line (24 hours) on 01832 742259.
If you have an urgent problem which cannot wait, you can call our out of hours service on 01832 733530.
Sign up to eBilling. It’s not such a alien concept.

We can now deliver your Council Tax and Business Rates bills using eBilling, a paperless bill delivery service saving time, money and the environment. Every customer that signs up to eBilling helps us to save paper and postage, money that can be used on local services.

Signing up only takes a couple of minutes and you will have 24 hour access to your most up to date billing information. You will need your Council Tax/Business Rates account number, bank details (if you pay by direct debit) and a valid email address.

For more information about signing up to eBilling, visit
www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/alien

No internet access? Visit one of Customer Service Centres, where we’re happy to help.

Neighbourhood planning update

The following towns and parishes are already preparing their plans:

- Barnwell
- Barrowden and Wakerley – details below
- Chelveston cum Caldecott – 1st draft out for consultation. Have your say on it before Monday 9 March 2015 by contacting Andrew Seaman at chair@ndp.chelveston.org.uk
- Higham Ferrers
- Irthingborough
- Oundle
- Raunds
- Rushden
- Stanwick

The Barrowden and Wakerley Neighbourhood Plan is the first joint, cross boundary plan. It covers two parishes and local authority areas - Barrowden in Rutland and Wakerley in East Northamptonshire.

Barrowden Parish Council is leading on the plan and they are supported by Rutland County Council and East Northamptonshire Council.

Have your say from Friday 13 February to Friday 27 March on the proposed Neighbourhood Area, which covers the whole of the Barrowden and Wakerley parish areas, by emailing localplan@rutland.gov.uk or writing to Planning Policy, Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, LE15 6HP.

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Community projects awarded £267k of grants

“This year, we were able to offer financial support to 10 community groups in the district and as you can see from the photos, improvements have already begun at some of them. I look forward to seeing all of the new facilities being enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.”

£40,000 to improve the clubhouse and changing rooms at Rushden & Higham Rugby Union Football Club.

For more information about the Community Facilities Fund please visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/cff
Am I able to register to vote?
Any British, Commonwealth, Irish or European Union citizen should be included on the register of electors and be able to vote. This includes:

- Anyone who normally lives at an address
- Long-term residents, guests or lodgers, including merchant seamen who live there when they are not at sea
- All people aged 16 and 17 (you can only vote when 18)
- Anyone who will be working away from home for less than six months
- Overseas electors

The following people should not be included on the form:

- Foreign nationals - except for citizens of the Irish Republic, Commonwealth citizens and citizens of the European Union
- People under 16 years old
- Members of HM forces or their wives and husbands if they have made a Service Declaration
- Crown servants and British Council staff who are working abroad or their wives and husbands if they are also living abroad with their partners

Why Register to Vote?
If you are not on the register, you can’t vote and won’t have a say in how the country or your local area is run. Don’t lose your right to vote! There is a General Election in 2015 and there are also elections for East Northamptonshire Council and your town and parish councils.

Being on the register is proof of your identity and is often used by credit reference agencies and mortgage companies. These companies check the register when people apply for credit, in order to counteract fraud. Not only will you not be able to have a say at future elections, but if you don’t respond to requests for information from us, you could be at risk of getting fined.

Register to vote
You must be on the electoral register to vote.
You can register online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).
Or you can request a registration form by email elections@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk or by calling 01832 742119.

The different ways you can vote:

Voting at a polling station
You will receive a polling card with details of your polling station. Please check this carefully as your usual polling station may have changed. You can also check online at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/inmyarea](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/inmyarea). Polling stations open from 7am-10pm on the day of the election.

Voting by post
You can still vote even if you are unable to go to your polling station on election day. You may now receive a postal vote on request. Please note that postal votes are normally sent out approximately one week before polling day.

The deadline for postal vote applications for these elections is Tuesday 21 April 2015. If you think you will need a postal vote for the forthcoming election, you can apply today, as long as you are registered to vote. To apply for postal voting visit [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/voting](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/voting) or call 01832 742119.

Proxy voting
You can appoint someone to vote on your behalf at your usual polling station, but you have to provide a reason to vote by proxy for a single election. You can only vote by proxy on an indefinite basis for the following reasons: physical incapacity, overseas voter, studying at university and certain occupations such as armed forces.

You need to tell your proxy which candidate or candidates you wish to vote for. If you change your mind and wish to vote in person, you can still do so, providing that your proxy has not already voted on your behalf.

The deadline for proxy vote applications for these elections is Tuesday 28 April 2015 at 5pm. To apply for proxy voting visit [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/voting](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/voting) or call 01832 742119.

Who is standing for election?
As we manage the election, we must remain impartial and not promote any candidate or party. We will publish a notice on our website listing the candidates standing for election in district and parish elections across East Northamptonshire after 4pm on Thursday 9 April 2015. You can also find details of who is standing in your local newspapers, on local radio and TV and on social media. We have no say on which political parties choose to put forward a candidate, so if you cannot find a representative for a party you wish to vote for, that party has chosen not to put a candidate forward. Please note that if a ward is not contested (only one person stands), there will not be an election.

Visit [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/councillors) to find out who your current councillor is, their roles within the council and how to contact them.
We’re a business friendly council

Whether you're starting up a dog grooming business or opening a bakery, East Northamptonshire Council has a wide range of services that are of use to someone just getting started.

To help get you on the right path to setting up your business we’ve created a checklist. This includes all the services you need to talk to us about (i.e. Business Rates, planning, food hygiene, licensing), as well as other organisations which can help with things like grants, training and networking opportunities.

You may not need help and advice from all of them but a simple five minute phone conversation will mean you’re sure you have done all you need to in setting up your business.

Find out about our business services, visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/business

When is my bin collected?

Just moved to the area or can’t remember when your bin is emptied? It’s never been easier online, you just need your postcode www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/bincollectiondates

Please note that there is no change to your collection day over the Easter holidays.

Stay connected to your council

East Northamptonshire Council use all sorts of different ways to communicate with you. Here are the different ways you can access and keep informed about our services online.

www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk  @ENCouncil

Reduce Reuse Recycle in East Northamptonshire

Sign up to our eNewsletter at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/encnews

Newton Road car park closed

Newton Road car park in Rushden closed on 11 February 2015. Information about its future use can be found at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/planning using reference number 14/01014/FUL.

Details of all free parking in East Northamptonshire can be found at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/carparking

No internet access? Visit one of Customer Service Centres, where we’re happy to help.
Council meetings
East Northamptonshire Council makes its decisions at council and committee meetings. Most of these are open to the public and start at 7:30pm in the council chamber, Cedar Drive, Thrapston. There are meetings throughout the year.

Visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil to view the full calendar of meetings, agendas, reports and minutes.

Reporting dog fouling
If you see a dog foul in a public place and the owner does not clean it up, please report them to our dog warden. Information such as time/date/location of the incident and description/breed of dog will help identify the offender. Please report this online at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/dogs or call 01832 742026.

Reporting fly tipping
Fly tipping not only blights the countryside, it’s illegal. If you see somebody dumping their waste, please report them to us. Information such as time/date/location of the incident and description of person/vehicle will help identify the offender. Please report this online at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/flytipping or call 01832 742026.

Collection of bulky items
We offer a bulky waste collection service for all households in the district. On request, we’ll collect up to seven items for £25, including beds, sofas and carpets. To arrange a collection, visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/bulkywaste or call 01832 742026.

Ways to pay
Although we no longer accept cash payments, there are still many ways to pay for council services with your card and account details 24/7. To pay online, visit www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/onlinepayments or call 01832 742259.

Our customer service centres at Thrapston, Rushden and Oundle will accept payments by debit and credit card or cheque. Some payments, such as those for Council Tax, can be paid for by direct debit at www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/directdebit or on 01832 742004.

Paying the council using bank giro slips at banks or the Post Office is also an option, as is BACS transfer using the following bank details: Sort code 20-45-77 Account No. 00858846. Please call 01832 742000 if you have any queries.

Do you have skills that could help Northamptonshire prepare for an emergency?

Northamptonshire County Council’s Emergency Planning team is encouraging people across the county to consider becoming a volunteer with Northamptonshire Emergency Response Corps (NERC). NERC’s aims are to make sure people in Northamptonshire are better prepared for an emergency, to test emergency plans through regular training exercises and to encourage more people to volunteer with the various emergency planning and welfare agencies involved.

NERC’s members include the Northamptonshire 4X4 Response Team, the British Red Cross, Northampton Emergency Aid Team and Northants Search and Rescue.

Further details about the Northamptonshire Emergency Response Corps and the volunteer roles available can be found at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/getinvolved.
2014 has been another busy year for the Destination Nene Valley team

The Grand Depart of the first ever Women’s Tour came to Oundle in May and we were fortunate enough to join Oundle’s party to showcase our attractions to residents and visitors. We welcomed hundreds of people to St Osyth’s Lane who enjoyed learning about the Nene Valley and all that it has to offer. We’re looking forward to seeing the tour come through Oundle this year. Find out more at [www.oundle.gov.uk](http://www.oundle.gov.uk)

The Greenway continues to be popular with all walks of life and with the new phases currently being discussed, the route is creating an amazing journey for everyone to enjoy. Find out more about the Greenway at [www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/greenway](http://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/greenway)

The inaugural Nene Valley Festival took place at the end of October last year, with over 20 partners getting involved and a broad programme of 45 events taking place to celebrate the valley’s wildlife, culture and heritage. Our plans have already started for 2015, so put 19-27 September in your diary as festival week.

We have lots more activities planned for 2015 so visit our website and follow us on Twitter to keep up to date. Thank you for supporting the Nene Valley!