

Councillor Community Fund

Since 1 April 2020, a total of £70,324 has been spent by councillors on supporting the delivery of positive outcomes in their wards. A third of this funding, £22,294 has been used directly for COVID-19 support and recovery. This is in addition to the £90,000 COVID specific grant that has already been awarded by councillors to organisations in the Borough.

Northampton Community Resilience Hub

Continue to support those most vulnerable in our communities – 1,355 referrals have been received by our local community resilience hub, individuals and families continue to receive support in getting access to food, with shopping, getting online, picking up prescriptions, support for loneliness, mental health and wellbeing and financial hardship. Food provision/support remains the highest level of need, accounting for 72% of the overall referrals.

Small charities and food banks in Northamptonshire have applied for funds from the “Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies” funded through DEFRA.

The first, second and third round of grants has been awarded by the oversight board made up from representatives from the Hope Centre (leading on the administration and support for applicants) County Council and Districts and Boroughs on the West to support food banks and local charities and build resilience into these areas. A fourth round will launch this month, to close in March, when the allocation is to be spent by.

Furthermore, we continue to support the Local Resilience Forum with engagement activities, to ensure the public health messages are reaching all our communities. Ongoing work to promote the messages with young people, including a graffiti art project with young people and direct social media, targeted messaging. And ongoing engagement activity with our BAME communities, through our extensive engagement network in Northampton, working with our community leaders and community organisations. This has included support with the identification of community leaders to take part in translated videos promoting the vaccination and a Q&A session for the Diverse Communities Forum, being led by a local BAME public health consultant who has had the vaccine.

Forums

Continue planning for the International Women’s Day virtual event on March 6
Inspirational Woman nominations closed – announcement to be made live at the above event.

Events

The council have cancelled all outdoor events on council land until 1st June 2021 to support the current Government lockdown restrictions and slow the spread of the coronavirus.

However, the council have delivered a virtual event for Annual Diwali Celebrations and worked closely with partners to make the virtual day a memorable one.

For fireworks night a virtual fireworks display was available to view on the council’s website and across other social media platforms.

This year saw our first virtual Remembrance Day Service which was filmed live from All Saints Church and included speeches from all our partners.

This year’s Christmas included the four 40’ Christmas trees, around 200 small 5’ business trees, the cross street lights in the town centre, street lampposts Christmas lights along

Wellingborough Road, St Leonards Road, across the town centre including Market Square, Christmas lights on the Abington Park Bandstand, Christmas lights in trees in Abington Street, outside the Guildhall and All Saints Church and Christmas lights in Fish Street.

The council erected two large screens in Abington Street which screened Santa messages, Carol Singers from All Saints Church, Christmas songs, safety covid19 messages, Christmas retail offers, showing highlights of virtual events held throughout 2020 and more.

The council is looking to organise the 2021 weekly Bands in the Park event from early June 2021, but this will be dependent upon the government restrictions and local safeguards in place at that time.

Culture & Heritage

Due to the national Covid-19 situation, Abington Park Museum remains closed. All procedures and equipment are in place and an opening can be affected with one week's notice.

Two online fashion talks looking at the history of female fashions from 1875 to the recent past were delivered by Sharn Matthews in January and February and attracted 85 ticket sales. A further series of Art History lectures delivered by ProArtium and featuring the works of five women artists represented in our collection took place in January and February and attracted 184 ticket sales – feedback from attendees has been extremely positive.

A series of three online Italian cookery workshops led by Italian cook and author, Carmela Sereno Hayes are planned for February, March & April.

Museum Expansion Project

The museum project is in its final stages and final works are underway. The museum will open when Northampton enters Tier 2 or equivalent criteria set by central government. Once the change in restrictions is announced, the museum will open within two weeks of the day restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, the imminent launch of the new museum website will provide an enhanced level of digital access to the museum collections and buildings in the meantime. A 360 degree Virtual Reality tour is currently in production, which will provide virtual access to the museum and galleries.

Customer Services

The Unitary Mail Automated Project (MAP) is going well. We have demonstrated the concept of how the Mail Bot will distribute all emails from the Unitary email address to the correct contact centre. We have received some great feedback, support, buy-in and increased confidence from the other authorities. We are confident that this solution will be available and enable a smooth transition from April, with future opportunities of improvements and efficiencies in the future.

Winter Grant Scheme – We have added an enquiry form on our website and Customer Services are triaging all enquires ensuing that these claims are reviewed and submitted as quickly as possible. In January NBC submitted 58 claims awarding approx. £7000.00 in supermarket vouchers.

Community Safety

Knife Angel has been delayed due to the COVID pandemic – currently exploring the feasibility of December 2021.

Trusted Relationships funding for Year 4 has been confirmed. This will enable Free2Talk to continue to deliver youth work in the Borough. Between October and December 2020, Free2Talk have supported over 55 young people in 47 consistent weekly sessions and 12 young leaders have supported the development of digital youth and community work.

In the current lockdown, from January, they have had over 800 engagements in 15 sessions. Free 2 Talk also offer individual mentoring for young people through True Knowledge, since October 2020 have delivered 336 sessions to 62 vulnerable young people.

Marble Arch PSPO made.

Virtual primary school community safety event being developed, to be available for after Easter.

Work completed on Jeyes Jetty bin storage solution and installation date for the gates is set for early March.

Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

ASB Case Managers are part of a multi-agency problem solving group attending regular meetings to look at ways to resolve the high levels of ASB and issues at a large town centre block of flats. Problems include noise, loud music, fights, aggressive dogs, rubbish, parties and drugs. As part of the action 4 Community Protection Warning Letters (CPW's) were issued to 4 residents.

A Community Protection Notice (CPN) was issued to a male who had breached his CPW by being verbally abusive and threatening to NBC staff in the Customer Contact Centre.

Criminal Behaviour Order, issued against a persistent perpetrator, causing ant-social behaviour in the town centre.

ASB reporting tool has gone live, in 6 weeks, we have received 40 reports from members of the public which have responded to and action being taken.

Councillor Anna King

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Community Safety