

On 1 May 2025, the leadership of our Council changed, and we found ourselves working together for the first time. From the outset, we agreed to work in the best interests of residents across our ward, regardless of political allegiance, and we hope that has been evident over the past year.

On 1 May this year, West Northamptonshire Council marked its fifth anniversary. Created on 1 April 2021 in place of the former district, borough and county councils, the authority is now entering its sixth year with a clear focus on supporting business, growth and prosperity, creating stronger and safer communities, caring for local people, and delivering services more efficiently.

We also made a joint submission to the Local Plan consultation, which we have shared with parish councils. The Plan will shape how our communities develop through to 2043. Villages in our ward remain particularly vulnerable to speculative development, and we will continue to do all we can to protect them.

In February, the Council approved a 4.95% increase in council tax from April. The 2026/27 budget, the first since the elections last May, means the average Band D charge will rise by £92.42 a year to £1,959.40.

In the same month, Cabinet recommended that free car parking should remain in Daventry, something we had both been pressing for. More than 3,000 responses were received to the budget consultation, the highest level of engagement to date. Parking charges had been under consideration as part of the Council's fees and charges proposals for 2026/27, in what has been the toughest budget-setting process the authority has yet faced.

Like councils across the country, West Northamptonshire continues to face rising costs and growing demand for services, particularly in adult and children's social care. The Council began the 2026/27 budget process facing an anticipated £50 million shortfall. This came after £115 million of savings had already been delivered since the authority was formed in 2021. Through the 2026/27 budget process, a further £29 million of efficiencies were identified, bringing total savings since 2021 to £144 million.

A new booking system at the Household Waste Recycling Centres was launched on 3 November. Since then, it has reduced queues and recorded more than 21,000 visits in its first few weeks of operation. The scheme is also helping to improve access for West Northamptonshire residents, while ensuring that traders and residents from outside the area are charged appropriately towards disposal costs.

With plenty of appointments available, and bookings possible up to 30 minutes before arrival, around two-thirds of visits so far have been booked on the same day. Feedback from users has been largely positive, but please do get in touch if we can help or if you think improvements could still be made.

On 11 February, we held our first Woodford & Weedon parish forum on Teams, focusing on planning issues while the Local Plan consultation was in full swing. It was a lively and useful discussion, bringing together the parishes we represent and producing a number of benefits. We intend to hold these forums quarterly, with the next one planned for the end of May and focusing on highways.

West Northamptonshire Council has begun developing a Parish and Town Council Charter to strengthen its relationship with local councils, marked by the first Parish and Town Council Forum last year which brought partners together to shape the approach. The Charter aims to set clear expectations on communication, engagement and accountability, ensuring parishes are involved earlier in planning, policy and local decision-making. It is being co-developed with parish and town councils, with ongoing work focused on turning it into a practical, working framework that moves the relationship from ad hoc consultation to a more structured, collaborative partnership.

Please do let us know if we can help with any service provided by West Northamptonshire Council. We hope you find us easy to contact, and we will continue to do our best to ensure that at least one of us attends all your parish council meetings.

Very best wishes, Charlie and Rupert