

## District Councillors Report – Helpringham Feb 2025

### English Devolution White Paper

The Government has published a [White Paper on English Devolution](#). The White Paper promotes some key policy themes, related to the government's missions, signalling a shift to a preventative model of service delivery, to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation and reduce inequalities in health outcomes. It relates also to the government's aspiration to meet housing needs and to improve economic performance. The government sees a significant role for local government in these areas and is proposing devolution of powers to boost local government capacity by promoting the establishment of Mayoral Combined Authorities across England. Locally the Greater Lincolnshire devolution agreement establishes a Mayoral Combined Authority, with elections for a Mayor due to take place next May.

The White Paper also outlines the government's aspiration to create what it calls 'simpler structures' for local government in England. The White Paper recommends that unitary councils be established across England, with a population threshold of 500,000. This would mean a transition from a structure based on a county council and district councils to one with a smaller number of unitary councils, with an ambition to achieve this by 2028. It is not clear what this means for Lincolnshire at this point.

### NKDC gets a new Chief Executive Officer

On Monday 3 February 2025, North Kesteven District Council welcomed a new Chief Executive, Kath Marriott. Kath joins us at NKDC from Rushcliffe Borough Council in Nottinghamshire, where she has been Chief Executive for six years, building on a previous decade in senior leadership roles.

### LCC and Mayor elections on 1 May

Lincolnshire County Council elections, alongside elections for the first Mayor of Greater Lincolnshire, are taking place on 1 May 2025. North Kesteven delivers the election on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council's Returning Officer with Kath Marriott appointed as Deputy Returning Officer.

NKDC are hosting a briefing to give LCC prospective candidates and agents all the information they need if they are considering standing for election. It takes place on 25 February from 6:30pm - 7:30pm in the District Council Offices, Sleaford.

### Be the first to try the new Flooding Warning Service

Before launching the service, Flood Action are looking for around 1,000 people to test a new Flood Warning Service between February and May 2025. It should only take an hour or so of anybody's time.

They are particularly keen to hear from:

- Partners
- Flood wardens and community groups
- People living in flood risk areas, whether they currently receive flood warnings or not
- Businesses of all sizes operating from locations within England
- Those who might need extra support with digital services
- Over - 65s
- Friends, family or neighbours who live in flood risk areas

Why take part?

- Be among the first to try the new service
- Help ensure it works for partners and communities
- Make flood warnings better for the future
- Directly influence the development

What do I need to do?

Fill in the [Expression of Interest](#) to take part and you will be contacted between February and April with instructions. You'll be asked to register using the new system, and will then receive an admin task and a small number of test warnings and alerts (*between 1 and 3*).

You then provide your feedback and let us know what you think.

### **NK Lottery Grant Scheme**

The NK Lottery Grant Scheme is now open for applications. This scheme is funded by the proceeds from the NK Lottery. For every ticket purchased, 50p goes towards a nominated good cause, and 10p goes into a general good cause fund, or 60p if no specific cause is chosen. It is that general good cause fund that is now available for redistribution to eligible projects.

We are working on this scheme with Lincolnshire Community Foundation and would like to invite local groups to apply for grants of up to £500.

The application process is straightforward and help is available at every step (eligibility, structures, governance etc).

Funds should be used to:

- Ensure the good health and mental wellbeing of residents
- Promote connectivity (digital/peer support)
- Host community/cultural activities and events that bring communities together
- Support youth activities including uniformed groups.

Examples of the type of project costs that can be requested include volunteer expenses, resources and equipment, event costs, premises costs, sessional fees, running costs, insurance and annual subscriptions. The closing date for receipt of applications is on **Friday 28 February 2025**, with decisions notified within 6-8 weeks.

NB: Town and Parish Councils, and Schools (unless PTA group) are not eligible to apply.

To download an application form, please use the link [North Kesteven Lottery Grants Scheme - Lincolnshire Community Foundation](#). Should you have any questions, please contact [hayley@lincolnshirecf.co.uk](mailto:hayley@lincolnshirecf.co.uk), or telephone (01529) 305825.

### **Money's Yard resurfacing complete**

Resurfacing work at Money's Yard Car Park in Sleaford was completed on Thursday after being closed for 33 hours.

Areas of the car park had new tarmac laid, and the road markings have been refreshed.

NB: The Cogglesford Watermill car park will also be closed for one week next month, from Monday February 17 to Sunday February 23, to facilitate resurfacing of nearby footpaths.

### **Free trees for communities across North Kesteven**

Apply now to secure free trees for your community - whether it's a single commemorative tree or a community orchard, you have the opportunity to make a lasting mark on the environment in your neck of the woods. NDKC have dozens of trees to give away, and can offer advice to help you plant the right trees in the right place. This offer is open to groups, charities, businesses, schools and more - anywhere that can accommodate trees!

Find out more and apply at [www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/communitytrees](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/communitytrees)

The deadline for applications has been extended to noon on 17<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Households urged to check eligibility for winter support schemes**

[From 1 November, households in England and Wales receiving certain benefits including Pension Credit could be eligible for extra money to help keep warm during the cold weather until the end of March 2025.](#)

The Department for Work and Pensions' Cold Weather Payments are an automatic bank top-up of £25, triggered to be paid to eligible households when the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below for seven consecutive days at the weather station linked to an eligible person's postcode.

The £25 payments will be paid automatically to households receiving certain benefits including, Pension Credit, Income Support, income-based Job-seeker's Allowance (JSA), income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Universal Credit and Support for Mortgage Interest.

### **Parking machines update**

The option to pay by mobile phone could very soon be available at Council car parks in Sleaford, as part of work to address intermittent but recurring card payment difficulties.

Current signal and connectivity issues caused by reduced availability of the 3G network are at times preventing the Council's car park machines from being able to take card payments. Recognising the inconvenience caused for car park customers, North Kesteven District Council is urgently exploring how parking payments via mobile phone could be put in place. It's hoped that it could be imminent, once a provider and a plan to implement the new system is agreed.

It would likely be via an app along with the ability to pay over the phone. The authority is also due to consider replacing the current machines with new cash and card machines, as a longer-term solution. Any new issues however, such as a machine not taking cash, can be reported by calling the Council offices on 01529 414155. The option to use cash remains and it's still advisable to keep some with you as all parking must be paid for to avoid fines.

Parking charges start from just 50p for two hours (at Grantham Road Car Park) or 70p for up to an hour (at Eastbanks, Cogglesford Watermill, Station Road and Westgate), plus the first hour is free at the Town Council-owned Eastgate Car Park and free evening, Sunday and Bank Holiday parking at all Council-owned car parks.