

NKDC Report  
April / May / June  
Reece, Ian and Carola

### **Two most senior officers to leave NKDC**

North Kesteven District Council's two most senior officers – Chief Executive Ian Fytche and Deputy Chief Executive Phil Roberts – will both be leaving the Council later this year.

The announcement, which you may have seen in yesterday's special edition of Members' Link, comes at a time when they both feel that the Council is in a confident position to move forward positively with clear values, purpose, intent and vision, with a strong leadership team in place, a sound financial footing and a clear direction of travel.

Ian will have completed 19 years with the Council when he leaves at the end of December, and Phil 20 years when he leaves in mid-September. They have reached their decisions independently of each other, concluding that the time is right to explore new directions and personal priorities. Council Leader Cllr Richard Wright has taken the opportunity to thank them both for their decades of dedicated service.

Read more about this important news in yesterday's email or the news story on the website: [HERE](#).

### **Elections Office - contact details**

You will appreciate that it is an extremely busy period for Electoral Services. If calling, please only phone 01529 308352, which is supported by various colleagues in the team, or email [elections@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:elections@n-kesteven.gov.uk). You will receive an acknowledgement email and your query will be responded to as soon as possible.

As Councillors you can help remind electors about registration deadlines including for absent votes and the need to have an accepted form of Voter Photo ID to vote at a polling station. For anyone without an accepted type of ID they can apply for a 'Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

Key deadlines:

- Registering to vote - 18 June 2024, midnight
- Applying for a postal vote - 19 June 2024, 5pm
- Applying for a proxy vote - 26 June 2024, 5pm
- Applying for a Voter Authority Certificate - 26 June 2024, 5pm

Further information about the 'Sleaford and North Hykeham Constituency and those important election key dates can be found at [www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/generalelection24](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/generalelection24)

### **A request from Cllr Head to contact your Parish Councils**

A reminder has been sent out to all Parish Councils that have yet to reply to the Climate Change Member Champion's survey (details previously shared in Members' Link). The survey will provide us with invaluable information about climate action at parish level, along with details of local events and communications channels.

Cllr Head asks that each Member contact the Parish Clerk/s within their ward and request that they complete the survey. It is suggested that the survey request and introductory email from Cllr Head are included in Parish/Town Council meetings as an agenda item. Please encourage the Clerks to do so and/or to complete the survey directly.

The closing date has been extended to 21 June, but will be left open for responses should any meetings fall after this date. Please do contact Cllr Head with any questions. If the Clerk/s have any issues finding the email, the link to the survey is <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/qhc8w6>.

### **Regal new orchard planned for Wilsford**

Working in partnership with the community, North Kesteven District Council has secured £15,100 in funding for a new community orchard to be planted in Wilsford this autumn.

Supporting the newly-formed Wilsford Community Orchard group, the Council submitted an application on their behalf to the King's Coronation Living Heritage Fund and recently found out that it was successful. The funding will enable a 75-tree orchard to be planted.

The Coronation Living Heritage Fund is designed to mark the coronation of King Charles III by creating new spaces for nature, in particular the planting of trees that can be accessed by the community. It is provided by DEFRA.

Read more about the project [HERE](#).

### **Call-out for knitters and crocheters!**

As part of the veterans lunch on 24 June 2024, decorations for the civic chamber will follow the theme of 80 years since the D-Day Normandy landings.

We are calling out to friends within North Kesteven who can follow the attached RBL pattern to knit or crochet poppies for us. The more, the better, as all will be used as part of the display for both this year and next year's Armed Forces veterans event.

You can find a pattern at: [NK - Poppy Knitting Pattern \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Clare Clayton at [clare\\_clayton@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:clare_clayton@n-kesteven.gov.uk), or email [armedforces@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:armedforces@n-kesteven.gov.uk).

### **Local Land and Property Gazetteer improvements - award and a case study**

Our Local Land and Property Gazetteer service has been awarded the **Platinum Standard 2024 Exemplar Award for Address and Street Data** by Geoplace. This is an exceptional achievement and one the team and authority are proud of. Beyond this success, the rapid development/improvement of the service is a case study in how colleagues can grasp a thorny problem and deliver brilliant outcomes. Read on to discover more.

In 2022, NKDC did not have a dedicated role responsible for managing geospatial data, an issue identified by Customer Engagement Manager Hayley Kent-Simpson as presenting challenges in delivering our services. This left us in a position where we weren't meeting national standards in line with the Public Sector Geospatial Agreement

(PSGA) via the Geospatial Commission and could even have been put in special measures.

LLPG data – where people live, assets are located and businesses operating – is vital to many of our services, and inaccurate data has a direct impact on efficiency for all services who use the address data. According to Geoplace, typically around 85% of a council's services rely in some way on this information.

But it's significant for people and systems beyond our own council; the information goes into the national Geoplace database that underpins sat nav and online mapping, systems that our blue light services use to rapidly reach people in need, that utility companies rely on and that is used to get your online orders delivered – and more!

Hayley worked with Development Control Administration Manager Clare Gray to put forward a proposal to recruit a Local Land and Property Gazetteer officer, someone who could tackle all the LLPG work and focus on achieving national standards. The proposal was approved, with Clare taking on management of the role; Andy Canadine started in role in May 2022.

The LLPG was in a poor state and there was a backlog of requests that needed attention. Fast forward to just over a year and Andy had done some incredible work with our data and brought us not only up to the national standard, but consistently sitting at Gold standard. Such has been the progress, we have this year been awarded the Platinum Standard 2024 Exemplar Award for Address and Street Data!

This is an exceptional achievement and one the team and authority are proud of. Clare is keen to credit Andy with making a personal impact due to his enthusiasm and dedication to the role, and his ability to find creative solutions to problems we've had for many years. Thank you Andy.

If you'd like to read more about what Geoplace do and how what we do fits into their bigger picture you can read all about it [here](#).

### **A warm welcome to Citizens Advice Mid-Lincolnshire**

A key Council partner is moving into our Sleaford offices, and we can't wait to give them a warm welcome.

Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire is due to provide advice to clients from dedicated space within the reception area of our offices, from Monday May 20 onwards.

It'll provide these face-to-face services **on Mondays and Wednesdays each week**, with a focus on **drop-in help in the morning** and **by appointment in the afternoon**. It will be moving across from its current Sleaford base at the Advice Centre in Money's Yard.

Its staff and volunteers are publicising the move there and letting clients know where to find them – including via the poster above. It's a really positive move which brings together support from Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire, our Council colleagues and Job Centre Plus all under one roof, meaning customers can access it all easily.

It will be a 'soft launch' to begin with – meaning we'll look at ironing out any teething problems and ensuring continuity of service for its clients **before** promoting it more widely. We'll then publicise the move together with the team in a big joint effort, and promote their amazing work too. When that happens, we'd love your support in doing so!

Customers can also still call the Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire team for help and advice as usual on **08082787942** between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday, or email **[outreach@citizensadvicemidlincs.org.uk](mailto:outreach@citizensadvicemidlincs.org.uk)** The team also currently offer drop-in sessions at Sleaford Community Grocers **from 09.30am to 4.00pm every Tuesday and Thursday**.

Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire is a charity supported by both paid staff and dedicated volunteers. Together they assist people with all sorts of issues including on benefits, debt, housing, employment, immigration and family/relationships.

Their advice is open to everyone, whether someone is considering their options or facing a crisis. Find more about Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire and how to support its work at <https://camidlincs.org.uk/>

### **New Council Chairman and Vice-Chairman announced**

After three consecutive years of acting as consort and Vice-Chairman at North Kesteven District Council, Cllr Andrew Hagues has been handed the Chairman's chains of office for its 50th anniversary year.

Resident of Leasingham for 45 years, one of the villages he represents as district Councillor, he is especially keen to use his year of office to support the entire District and its flourishing communities through representation, promotion, participation and attendance at events and functions.

His chosen charity will be Lincolnshire Rural Support Network.

After 33 years on the District Council Cllr Chris Goldson – a former Leader and its longest serving Member – has been chosen to be Vice-Chairman to Cllr Hagues. He represents Skellingthorpe & Eagle.

For more details, read the news article [HERE](#).

### **Police & Crime Commissioner election results**

Marc Jones has been returned as Lincolnshire's Police & Crime Commissioner for a third successive four-year-term.

In a county-wide election on May 2, the Conservative Party candidate beat off four rivals for the position, which sees him set the overall budget and strategic objectives for the police force in Lincolnshire, working in collaboration with local councils and communities.

He secured a 36.63% share of the overall vote cast across all areas, but saw a greater expression of confidence in his approach locally within North Kesteven where he was the preferred choice of 41.57% of voters. See a table of the overall results [HERE](#).

Turnout for this election across North Kesteven was 18.85%, in line with overall turnout of 19.05% across Lincolnshire given the concurrent operation of other local elections in some areas. A table comparing the voting pattern for North Kesteven vs Lincolnshire as a whole can be found [HERE](#).

This was the first of at least four elections to be held in a 365-day period, with elections for Lincolnshire County Council and the new county mayoral position scheduled for May

1, 2025 and the need to hold a general election before January 28, 2025. And additional by-elections could be called at parish, district or county council level at any time.

With so many electoral events expected, it is important for anyone who is eligible to vote to ensure they are able to; by making sure they are registered to vote and have in place any postal or proxy arrangement they need, or the right types of photo ID in order to do so at a polling station. Further details on all requirements and links to do so can be found at [www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/elections](http://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/elections)

To ensure elections are administered effectively and efficiently more than 350 individuals pull together on the day in North Kesteven alone to run 99 polling stations and the count venue over a period of more than 22 hours.

### **Heckington Parish Council**

A parish council by-election was also held on May 2, 2024 for Heckington Parish Council; won by Jacki Wright polling 419 votes over Andrew Davison's 398.

### **NKDC projects shortlisted for two net zero awards**

We are delighted to report that two of our carbon-cutting projects have been shortlisted for the forthcoming Unlock Net Zero Awards.

In the Building or development of the year – Commercial category, we have been shortlisted for Sleaford Moor Enterprise Park and in the Green homes upgrade of the year – Central and East of England category we have been recognised alongside partners Equans for our decarbonisation of council homes.

The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony in Manchester on 26 June.

The full shortlists and further information about the awards are available at <https://www.unlocknetzero.co.uk/awards-shortlist/shortlist-unzla>

### **Responsive repairs contract - update**

Ian Williams Ltd is already well-established in its new contract with us and undertaking lots of responsive repairs for our Council and Lafford Homes tenants. On the first day of its contract with us (Tuesday 2 April) their team received almost 200 calls, as tenants who had held off during the changeover made contact to report new repairs as well as those tenants who were enquiring about ongoing repairs.

Calls returned to more anticipated levels of between 50-70 per day from Wednesday of that week, with 400 calls in total in the first week. For those reporting a repair, calls took an average of 45 seconds to be answered by an Ian Williams Ltd call handler. A call back option is also available so tenants don't have to hold, with the call returned once their place in the queue is reached, however they must leave their details before hanging up to ensure a call back can be made.

We're monitoring the uptake of the new contract and calls made together with Ian Williams Ltd to help ensure things continue to go smoothly.

How to report a repair: To help streamline things for our tenants and make it easier for them to report a repair, the advice on doing so has changed slightly. If it's a new repair, tenants should call the Ian Williams Ltd phone line on 01529 712554. Their call

will be handled by the Ian Williams Hub call centre and the tenant will be greeted with three options:

- Option one – new and existing repairs.
- Option two – for other heating repairs – this will redirect them to Aaron Services.
- Option three – damp and mould – this will redirect them to our Repairs Team.

Any tenants with an existing repair yet to be addressed should also report it now to Ian Williams, which will help to prioritise it. If tenants are unsure if they previously reported a repair to Kier or not and it is still a fault, they should still report it as a new repair to Ian Williams as soon as possible. Our Repairs Team is continuing to manage a number of jobs that Kier were unable to action during the last six months through alternative contractors. Tenants affected should be aware of the alternative contractor details and we anticipate these outstanding repairs to be completed by no later than the end of June.

Those who have had a contractor visit to undertake a repair but are awaiting further contact from that assigned contractor, or any tenants who would like more information on a repair that's been assigned to a contractor, should still call us on 01529 414155 and speak with our Repairs Team.

If any tenant is unhappy with the work completed by Ian Williams, they can contact the Council's Repairs Team so this can be looked into. They can also make a formal complaint to us if they wish.

### **Funding options for tree planting**

Many groups and councils wish to increase the tree planting in their areas, and we would greatly encourage this. Trees both contribute to carbon reduction and storage, but also offer wonderful benefits for wildlife and amenity value.

There are a number of current funding streams for tree planting; this information may be of interest to local groups, schools, farmers and landowners.

- Woodland Trust Free Trees for Schools and Community Groups: Free tree packs for general planting or hedgerows, in various pack sizes and types. [More info and to apply.](#)
- Woodland Trust MOREwoods scheme/MOREhedges scheme: Includes advice and covers up to 75% of costs, designed for landowners/farmers with larger scales. [More info and to apply.](#)
- Lincolnshire County Council Tree Planting Grant/Hedgerow Scheme: Free trees and hedgerows, including advice. [More info and to apply.](#)
- Lincolnshire County Council Coronation Community Orchard Project: Funding up to 30 community orchards across Lincolnshire, minimum five fruit trees. [More info and to apply.](#)

If you or your contacts do undertake any tree planting activity please do let us know at [Climataction@n-kesteven.gov.uk](mailto:Climataction@n-kesteven.gov.uk)

### **Success for partner scheme issuing warm packs through winter**

Around 1,600 people countywide were kept warmer through winter thanks to a countywide initiative providing warm packs to vulnerable residents.

The scheme supplied over 5,000 items – from heat retaining blankets, radiator foil and draught excluders through to slipper socks and hot water bottles – given as warm packs aimed at helping the most vulnerable stay well during winter last year.

It was funded and initiated together in partnership by district councils including North Kesteven District Council, the county council and NHS colleagues, Tim Strawson the then High Sheriff of Lincolnshire, third sector partners and corporate sponsors. Existing efforts were also drawn in to the scheme and expanded by doing so, and it was all actioned by agreed referral partners across Lincolnshire.

These referral partners ordered items through a brand new system implemented especially, called Restore, and then distributed these to the most vulnerable people in their communities as warm packs tailored to their individual needs. A core of 11 distribution centres prepared items ready for distribution and over 160 referral partners used the system to book items and distribute them as warm packs. You can watch a video [HERE](#) to see how the process worked.

With no time like the present, preparations are underway to continue this successful initiative for winter 2024/25 and numerous centres are already requesting to be distribution centres again.

The warm pack scheme coincided with ongoing support for warm spaces across the county. These community-based places provided warmth and often other benefits which went in-hand with it, including signposting to other health and financial support and a welcome chance to socialise.

Help for people also came via a countywide cost of living leaflet which contained a whole raft of money-saving advice along with other helpful information, and was supported by an extensive range of local partners. It's still available to view [HERE](#).

### **NK List of Annual Achievements**

A summary of the main achievements of North Kesteven District Council over the previous 12 months can be found listed in one document [HERE](#). They are purposefully and factually arranged across the council's priority themes to outline many of the actions the Council has taken through 2023-24 so far to help North Kesteven and its communities continue to flourish.

You may wish to share with local councils in your area particularly for their annual meetings. It can be combined with the NK Plan 2024-2027 found at <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/nkplan> which outlines the direction of the Council's priorities, ambitions and its ongoing work together with partners over the next three years.

