

As we are in the Preelection period, my answers may not be quite as fulsome as I would like but I will try to inform you as best as I can what the council has achieved this past year.

The most important fact is that WNC has delivered a balanced budget for the fourth year. Despite increases in demand from social care, housing and Children's services and despite the fact that at least 20 councils are officially bankrupt and about 30 more on the brink, West Northants has managed the budgets prudently and steadied the ship.

Children's services were failing under the old County council but now fostering and adoption services are rated GOOD by Ofsted and leadership OUTstanding

Social care has moved from Inadequate to requires improvement and we are waiting for the next inspection to chart the onward improvements.

8 SEND units were commissioned attached to existing schools and the new Special Needs school at Tiffield is due to open in September. This will accommodate many children who at the moment have to make long journeys out of the area to attend a special school.

A new initiative called the Family Hub has opened in Towcester and there are 2 more planned for Daventry and Northampton.

Unlike the family centres they will offer help and advice in one place for all age children not just 1-5 year olds.

10 million has been spent on roads and pothole's and 1 extra million in the budget next year for footpaths.

Free parking has been maintained in Brackley and Towcester to keep the high streets vibrant.

The Recycling centres have been kept open and are under new contract at Farthinghoe

Cllr Breese is hot on the trail of fly tipping and protecting our green spaces.

A new tree strategy was adopted and there is an initiative to have more wildflower verges.

The council is there in an emergency. There was a fire in Northampton over the weekend in private flats. Some are too dangerous to go back into so an emergency center was opened up with our staff helping about 40 people with their housing options.

There was also terrible flooding last year which also affected Middleton Cheney. The worst hit was Billing with dozens flooded out. And still the rain came down. Again the council mobilized to help people find shelter.

I have been involved through the LAP getting a home for Men in Sheds based at Evenley Wood and we got HS2 with a lot of arm twisting to supply the concrete base. The council grants funded the shed and it is all now up and running. It has been so successful that a second shed is now on order funded by lottery money.

I am also an appointed Board member for SNVB who you will know best as supplying volunteer drivers and garden buddies.

They were in danger of going under despite the huge success of the Towcester Larder. I lobbied and promoted their cause and they will now have a permanent home at Riverside in Towcester on the site of the larder.

There was a horrible incident recently involving youths with knives and an unacceptable delay in the police response. We wrote to the Crime commissioner and the Chief Inspector who as a result will be visiting the Middleton Cheney area May 1st. This is for him to see first hand the particulars of policing Middleton Cheney and surrounding villages so close to Banbury and the M40.

Rosie Herring 23rd April 2025