

# Rushden Matters

Spring 2024



Rushden Town Council Community Project

## Letters To Heaven

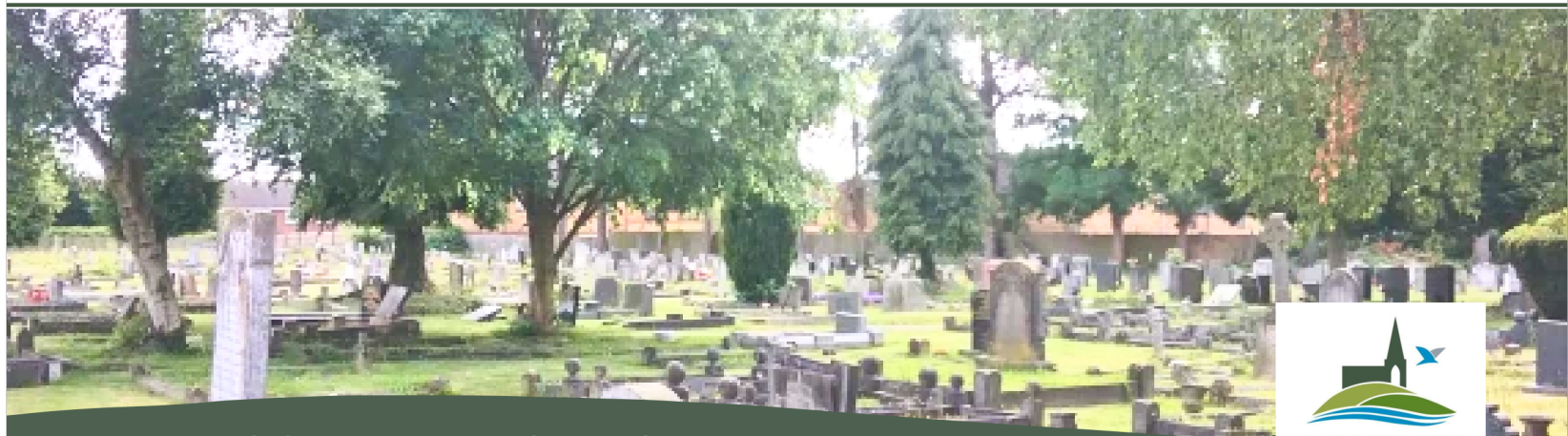
**A 'Letters to Heaven' Post Box which allows children and families to send letters to lost loved ones has been installed in Rushden by Rushden Town Council.**

Located within our Newton Road Cemetery, it will enable people to write letters, cards and messages to those they have lost and post them.





Every letter or card put into the memorial post box is treated with respect and confidentiality. They are stored securely and never opened or read.

The received letters and cards will be mulched before being composted then mixed with Rushden Town Council's Coronation wildflower seeds to form a blend that will contribute to the creation of a wildflower meadow.



[www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)

01933 316216 | [info@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:info@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)    @rushdencouncil







## in Rushden

Northamptonshire Mind are a local mental health charity affiliated to the National Charity Mind.

They work to support people in communities across Northamptonshire with their mental health and wellbeing.

Mental health support is an ever-increasing need across the country and this is representative in the increase in use of their services.

### When was Mind established:

The journey towards becoming Northamptonshire Mind began in 1964 – our 60 year anniversary is this year!

Mind in Rushden became its own charity in 1999 and following a merger in 2020 we joined together with other local Mind's in our county.

This brought together our skills, knowledge and resources to provide a more cohesive county wide service and to provide more stability

### What is special about Mind:

We are passionate about supporting people and dedicated to building the resilience of our community. We celebrate and champion lived experience and hold strong principles and high standards to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health

### Any funny moments?

There is never a dull moment at Mind in Rushden. Because we work in mental health it may sometimes be assumed that everything we do has a serious undertone but we strive to provide services that people can enjoy, make friends and enjoy some comedy moments.

Recently we've held a Christmas party, played boccia with the guys from Freedom Leisure and our Art and Craft group is always loud with laughter.

### Describe your Charity in five words?

- Compassionate
- Person-centred
- Inclusive
- Honest
- Dedicated

### Proudest moments:

One of our proudest moments was our move to our current building, Phoenix House following a devastating fire at our old premises.

A band of dedicated volunteers worked tirelessly to outfit Phoenix House to suit our community needs and provided us with a new base to increase our services and support many new people.

### What's the best thing about being in Rushden?

The people. We feel the support and appreciation from our community in Rushden.

We are passionate about supporting our local community of Rushden and benefit greatly from the people of Rushden helping to keep us running, be this with fundraising activities (for ever needed funds!) or volunteering.

All of the support we get from our community means that we can continue to provide our services.

### Contact details:

[www.northamptonshiremind.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshiremind.org.uk)  
**01933 312800**  
Mind in Rushden, Phoenix House,  
Skinners Hill, Rushden, NN10 9YE

If you would like to help  
fundraise please contact  
Jodie Gardner  
01933 312800





Hello,



November started with the Annual Scouts Bonfire night, with a fantastic display from Titanium Fireworks, at Hall Park. The weather was kind and it was great to see the park was full.

It was a great honour to take part in the Remembrance Parade and Service at War Memorial and it was a privilege to lay a wreath alongside Cadet Cpl Muir-Howie from 858 Squadron Air Cadets.

The weather was kind for the Christmas Lights switch on and as ever Santa's Grotto and his lovely reindeers were popular attractions. Once again the Councillors, staff and volunteers did us proud with the wonderful display of festive lights, which I was very honoured to switch on.

December marked the start of various Civic Christmas concerts in both local and neighbouring areas, with my carol concert entertaining residents and visitors alike.

January welcomed the new year and new beginnings, especially for the newly opened business, Skye's Café on the Wellingborough Road.

In February, my Valentine Civic Dinner was well attended and raised a substantial amount of money for my chosen charities. Thanks to all who paid to attend and then generously supported my raffle as well.

*ery Smith*



Animal Encounters Workshop  
at Rushden Hall



Rushden's Remembrance Parade and Service

## Children's Workshops at Rushden Hall this Summer

Announcing Exciting Summer Workshops for Local Children to include:  
**Circus Skills, African Drumming, Olympic Dance and Birds of Prey**

Rushden Town Council is pleased to announce a variety of free workshops and activities to entertain local children during the summer holidays.

Building on the popularity of last year's events, we are proud to announce that this year's themes will be Circus Skills, African Drumming, Birds of Prey and Olympic Dance.

To book a place and discover more about the upcoming activities, please visit [www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk) or scan the QR code provided.





# A Brief History Of:

A PROMINENT LOCAL FAMILY WITH A FASCINATING STORY TO TELL...

# The Wills Family

## PW Wills Department Store

In 1922, Percy and Helen Wills began their business venture by opening a small shop on Park Road in Rushden. Initially, their shop focused on women's fashion.



Percy soon discovered that his wife had a keen sense of judgement, taste, and a strong interest in fashion. During their early years at Park Road, the couple began the **P.W. Fashion Show**, which quickly became popular. Despite clothing being rationed, the 1948 show held at Windmill Hall attracted a staggering two thousand people.

On 6th February 1954, Actress **Jane Griffiths**, who was filming at Pinewood Studios, arrived to commemorate the 21st anniversary of the shop's opening and presented gifts. Her first leading role in a film, which also starred Gregory Peck, was being screened at the Kettering cinema - 'The Millionaire Pound Note'.



The business was successful and moved to larger premises on the corner of Newton Road and the High Street in Rushden. The fashion side of the business grew very quickly and soon lingerie and hats were added to the shoes, coats, dresses and gloves. In 1936 the Wellingborough shop was opened, followed in 1938 by one in Kettering.

The financial crisis of the late 2000s resulted in the business shutting down in September 2010.

## Skew Bridge Ski Club

The Ski Club was established in 1952 by **John Wills**, the son of **Percy and Helen Wills**. It originated after sand and gravel were extracted from the land to create a lake, which now sits where **Rushden Lakes** shopping centre stands. The gravel from this lake was also utilised in constructing the Post Office Tower in London.

Initially, the club focused on water skiing and would host events to include **The National Water Skiing Championship** and **The Mid-Anglian Boat Show**. In 1965, **John Wills** built a 200 ft. dry ski slope at a cost of approximately £12,000. The slope allowed skiers to practice before embarking on their ski holidays.

People were invited to this new venture and the **Skew Bridge Ski Club** was formed named after the awkward road bridge crossing the main road near the Club



The club house, featuring a bar and restaurant, was a popular destination for music, darts, skittles, and dances.

*Pictures courtesy of Rushden Hearts and Soles and Anne Krueger, nee Wills*



To view project work covering the history of John Wills carried out by pupils at Rushden Primary Academy, Please scan the QR code or visit [www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)





# WEDDINGS AT RUSHDEN HALL

## A Charming Venue for Your Special Day

Rushden Hall dates back to the 14th century and boasts a unique blend of architectural styles. The hall is surrounded by 34 acres of parkland, providing a stunning backdrop for your wedding photos.

The venue offers two rooms that are perfect for wedding ceremonies- the Fletcher Room and the Panelled Room. The Fletcher Room can accommodate up to 50 guests for a seated ceremony or 40 guests seated at tables.

The Panelled Room offers a more intimate setting and can accommodate up to 35 seated guests. Simple ceremony prices start from £495 for 4 hrs for the ground floor suite and kitchen.

For larger receptions, you can take advantage of the Walled Garden, located adjacent to the Hall. Price on application. This is a perfect location for a grand marquee reception.



*Let Rushden Hall provide the perfect setting for your special day.*

Further information, scan the QR code or visit our website at:  
[www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk/weddings-and-civil-partnerships](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk/weddings-and-civil-partnerships)



## Rushden's 3rd Artisan Event

Celebrate St. George's Day with us!

A variety of local, independent bakers, crafters, artists, food producers and more

 Rushden High Street  
 Saturday 20th April  
 10am - 3pm

Come and meet our fearsome dragon and George on his trusty steed.



Join us at

**Rushden's Artisan event, taking place on the High Street for the third consecutive year.**

Rushden Town Council is proud to host its third Artisan Event in the High Street on Saturday 20th April, at 10 am.

Bringing together a variety of local, independent bakers, crafters, artists, food producers and more.







# History of Jubilee Park



Jubilee Park was opened in 1926 as part of the 50 year Jubilee celebrations for Rushden Industrial Co-operative Society. The park opening was pre-empted by the Annual Co-operative Children's Tea with over 1200 children attending, in order to accommodate all these youngsters, the Co-operative Hall, the Alfred-street Council School, and the High-street Independent Wesleyan Schoolrooms had to be used.

When full justice had been done to the excellent tea, a procession was formed and, headed by the Temperance Band, and marched to the new park in Bedford Road, which the society later presented to the town. Jubilee Park, Rushden, was officially opened on 17th November 1926. Jubilee Park was purchased by Rushden Urban District Council and remained in their ownership until 1974 when East Northamptonshire Council was formed and took over Rushden Urban District Council's assets.

During the Second World War Eight acres of land in Jubilee Park was ploughed up in order to increase food production in the county. However, the swings and other amusements in the park were spared. The ploughing had been done at the request of the County War Agricultural Committee and by the following year the land was producing potatoes.

Further land belonging to the Urban District Council was also ploughed up, including a plot in the Hall Grounds, the cemetery field and land surrounding housing estates, as part of the war effort. Another change of ownership took place in 2000, when after a referendum, Rushden formed its own Town Council. As a result of this, a number of assets were devolved from East Northamptonshire Council to the Town Council and Jubilee Park was amongst these.

In 2015, the ageing wooden skate ramp was replaced with a £200,000 modern, concrete ramp complete with a bowl, a plaza and jump ramp sections. This was designed to accommodate all levels and abilities using skateboards, scooters and BMX bikes.

The sports pavilion was also rebuilt in 2015 and a plaque was added in memory of Jim Osborne, who helped form Rushden Sports Ltd to ensure the protection of the football and cricket grounds in Hayden Road. Jim also ran Osbornes Toys and Sports, which continue today supplying sports equipment and a huge range of traditional toys, Jubilee Park now hosts skateboarding events, football, and rugby and continues to offer play and recreational facilities for the people of Rushden.



Two excellent contemporary murals have been undertaken by artist Mark Pacan on the pavilion, to depict the vibrancy and versatility of Jubilee Park as it approaches its hundredth year.



## RUSHDEN'S SOAP BOX DERBY 2024

CALLING ALL SOAP BOX KART ENTHUSIASTS: YOUNG AND OLD!



Rushden Town Council will be hosting its annual SOAP BOX DERBY in Hall Park, Rushden on June 9th. The event, managed by staff, councillors, and volunteers, attracts a large crowd and remains consistently popular.



It also generates interest from local people and businesses eager to build and participate in this exciting and thrilling event.

This year is set to be equally remarkable, as preparations are underway to make this event another unforgettable occasion in the calendar.

Don't miss out – sign up now to participate! Scan the QR code and download an entry form or visit [www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk).

Entry forms also available from The Council Offices in Hall Park, Rushden Library, Rushden Lakes Customer Services and Northamptonshire Discovery Hub.





## WHAT WE DO - RESPONSIBILITIES & SERVICES



▶ Management and maintenance of public parks and open spaces

▶ Planning - consultation and representation



▶ Litter and dog bins under our ownership

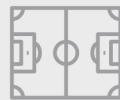
▶ Licensed wedding venue

▶ Cemetery and burials



▶ Community events and Christmas lights

▶ Football, Rugby pitches and Tennis courts



▶ CCTV - High Street, Hall Park & Jubilee Park

▶ Bus shelters under our ownership



▶ Wellibus- Shire Community Services - financially supported by Rushden Town Council Street lighting under our ownership

▶ Floral displays

▶ Public conveniences



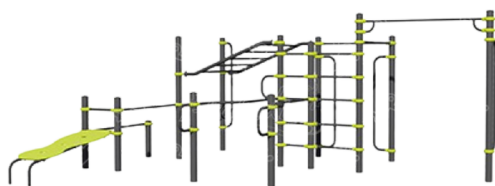
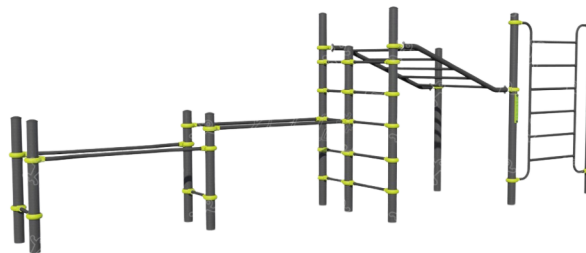
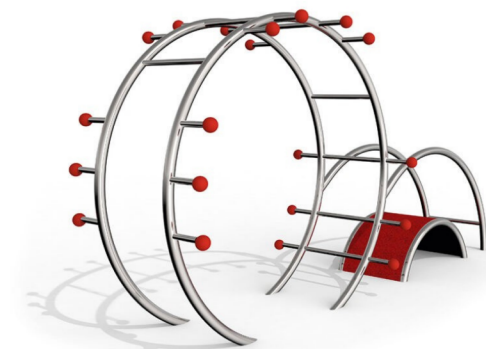
For more information on our services, please contact us on 01933 316216 or visit [www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk).

## Exciting New Play Equipment for the Spring!

New play equipment is scheduled to be installed in Hall Park, Spencer Park, and Melloway Park.

These playgrounds offer diverse facilities to accommodate children of all ages and abilities, with challenges suited to different skill levels.

The designs aim to provide physical challenges while nurturing children's creativity encouraging them to play outdoors and engage their imaginations.



### Rushden Town Council

## Events Diary 2024

### Artisan Market

SATURDAY 20TH April  
Rushden High Street

### D-Day 80

THURSDAY 6TH JUNE  
Hall Park

### Soap Box Derby

SUNDAY 9TH JUNE  
Hall Park

### Party In The Park

SATURDAY 13TH JULY  
Hall Park

### Proms In The Park

SATURDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER  
Hall Park

### Bark In The Park

SUNDAY 8TH SEPTEMBER  
Hall Park

### Heritage Day

SUNDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER  
Rushden Lakes

### Remembrance Day

SUNDAY 10TH NOVEMBER  
Rushden War Memorial

### Christmas Lights

### Switch-On

SATURDAY 30TH NOVEMBER  
Rushden High Street

Additional information and updates will be available on our website:  
[www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)





## Rushden Town Council

Open: 9am - 5pm Monday to Thursday  
9am - 4:30pm Friday

- Management and maintenance of public parks and open spaces
- Planning - consultation and representation
- Litter and dog bins under our ownership
- Licensed wedding venue
- Cemetery and burial administration.
- Community events and Christmas lights
- Football and Rugby pitches hire and maintenance.
- CCTV - High Street, Hall Park & Jubilee Park
- Bus shelters under our ownership
- Street lighting under our ownership
- Floral displays
- Public conveniences
- Wellbeing Bus Service for Rushden and Higham Ferrers (Formerly Rushden Higham Link)

01933 316216

[info@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:info@rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)

[www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.rushdentowncouncil.gov.uk)

## North Northamptonshire Council

Open 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday

- Council Tax
- Benefits
- Roads and Transport including footpaths, dog bins and litter bins located on our land.
- Bin Collections
- Waste Management
- Street cleansing
- Housing
- Rushden Library
- Fix My Street (Reporting complaints for Highways /Footpaths)
- Bus Passes and Blue Badges
- Planning
- Schools & Education
- Adult Social Care
- Children & Families
- Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Public Carparks

0300 126 3000

[www.northnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)

## Homelessness, Rough Sleeping & Housing Advice

**North Northamptonshire Council** - Currently operate an emergency out of hours service within each area of North Northamptonshire.



0300 126 3000

[www.northnorthants.gov.uk](http://www.northnorthants.gov.uk)

If you are concerned about someone sleeping rough in North Northants please contact **NNC's Rough Sleeping team**. Please provide as much detail as you can about their location to help find them.

01536 464630

[roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:roughsleepingteam@northnorthants.gov.uk)

## Food Banks



**Encompass Food Bank** - Open for those in need on Tuesday and Thursdays 9.30am-12.30pm. You don't need a referral, just turn up.

01933 733001

19-21 Church Street, Rushden  
[info@encompasscharity.org.uk](mailto:info@encompasscharity.org.uk)

## Mental Health

**Mind Crisis Cafe** - If you find yourself in crisis or need support with your mental health, Mind are there to listen and help you in your time of need. Check on their website for the latest timetable.



01933 312800

Phoenix House,  
Skinner's Hill,

Rushden, NN10 9YE

[www.northamptonshiremind.org.uk](http://www.northamptonshiremind.org.uk)

**The Mental Health Number** - For local support and services - Mind mental health navigators. Call, anytime of the day or night. Anyone in Northamptonshire is welcome to call.

0800 448 0828

## Police

101

999 (Emergency)

[www.northants.police.uk](http://www.northants.police.uk)

## NHS

111

999 (Emergency)

