



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

PARISH ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

20th May 2024 7.30pm



Contents

Hunsdon Parish Council – Chairs Report	Page 2
Parish Rooms Trust	3
Footpath Wardens	4
Hunsdon, Eastwick, Gilston Neighbourhood Plan	5
County Councillor Report	10
District Councillor Report	15
Hunsdon Recreation Area	16
Cubs and Scouts	17
Clerks Report	18
Hunsdon Community Events	21
Junior Mixed Infants School	
Village Hall	



Hunsdon Parish Council - Chairman's Report - Year 2023/24 (Cllr. Bob Toll - Chair)

After 30 years serving our community as a Parish Councillor, Stella Oliver is standing down. Stella's contribution comes from her wealth of local knowledge and engaging with residents over the years. This has been invaluable to the Parish Council and we are going to miss her sorely. She is known to many of you as the boss of the allotments. I wish to record the thanks of the Parish Council and also on behalf of the community, our gratitude for her commitment and service.

Jon Dunn joined us on the Parish Council in March and brings enthusiasm and energy to the table. I have no doubt Jon will make significant contributions to our work.

The local council elections in May last year saw a significant shift in political power. The Greens are the largest party and now manage the administration in partnership with the Liberal Democrats. We have turned green, so to speak and John Dunlop is now the Hunsdon Ward Councillor. Eric Buckmaster who served us well in East Herts Council did not stand but continues in his County Council role.

When our neighbourhood Plan for the village was drawn up, residents identified a list of actions that they would like to see to benefit and enhance the appearance of the village and improve facilities. These became 'projects' and formed the Task List in the NP appendix. The Parish Council is leading on initiatives to progress the Task List.

Residents have come together and formed teams to progress the Tasks. They have secured funds and this month we will see work start on resurfacing and refurbishing the tennis courts to provide a multi games facility. Improvement to the village centre is also in hand and we have already seen new gates to the recreation ground, footways cleared and the village sign completely refurbished. We will soon see cleaning and repainting of the pump. A study has also been completed on plans to enhance the facilities in the Dell and create more habitats for wildlife. This is something that the community, particularly our youngsters, may wish to be involved with, for example, planting trees, bulbs wildflower seeding. We will be consulting shortly on the proposals and hopefully making a start on site during the year.

Perennial problems still confront us. The speeding traffic in the village centre and on the blind bends in Acorn Street remains a major concern. We turn to Eric Buckmaster and the County Council Highways officers for help. Eric has secured a 20MPH limit past the school which will be installed soon and also further speed and volume surveys to support possible calming measures. We remain plagued by potholes in Church Lane so I ask everyone to keep reporting the defects through the County Council Highways webpage. It works!

Eric has also been instrumental in getting surveys and investigations into the flooding problems in the high Street. The County's Flood Team have kept us in the picture regarding the analysis and modelling they have procured from specialist consultants and are now looking at alternative measures to reduce flooding risk. I am hopeful that we will see some positive proposals for solutions shortly.

On the planning front the Parish Council has consistently and successfully opposed applications for infill housing in Hunsdonbury.

Anthony Bickmore will bring you all up to date on the Gilston housing applications in his report from the joint Neighbourhood Planning Group. We are at an important stage as master planning gets underway and its vital that everyone takes the opportunity to attend the Community Forums and Planning workshops to influence the design and layouts of the new villages.

The County Council's proposal for a quarry at Olives Farm hasn't gone away and I expect we will be seeing further consultation later this summer.



I would like to thank all our parishioners who attend the council meetings and contribute to our work. In particular, huge thanks to Jackie Carthy for bringing the tennis courts project together and securing the funding. Martyn Read and Bud Carthy have continued to watch over our footpath network and deal with any problems. We all appreciate the work they do - particularly those residents with dogs.

I am encouraged by the way the community has come together to run more social events and action the Task List projects. The luncheons and brunches are proving to be very popular and provide an opportunity for residents to meet up and make new friends.

I would also like to thank all my fellow councillors for their support and contributions through the year not forgetting, of course, the support and hard work from our Clerk, Carole, who smooths out the management of our council duties organising all the maintenance chores such as grass cutting and litter removal and efficiently runs our financial affairs.

We continue to ensure the recreation ground and play facilities are well maintained and kept safe. The PC also contributes to the cost of maintaining the lower churchyard cemetery which, all though managed by the Parochial Church Council, is a civil parish facility as well.

As Chair of the Parish Council, I count myself very fortunate to have such a great team on board. Your councillors and Clerk are conscientious and give many hours of their free time caring for the parish, dealing with problems and promoting improvements to our surroundings and facilities.

Bob Toll

Chairman Hunsdon Parish Council

Hunsdon Parish Rooms Trust (Registered Charity 289624) Andrew Pummell (Trust Secretary)

Hunsdon Parish Room Trust was founded in 1921. It was established in its present form with a Charity Commission Scheme in 1984. Under the terms of the Scheme the Trust's income should be applied "for any charitable purposes for the general benefit of the residents of Hunsdon". The Trust will consider applications for grants from any village organization or society who wish to apply for a grant of a charitable nature.

The Trustees in 2023 were :- Mr Tom Whyman (Chairman), Mr David Gibbs, Mrs Esther Nicklin, Mrs Judy Walford, Mr Andrew Pummell (Secretary)

The following grants totalling £3339.85 were made during the year ending 31st December 2023. £219.85 was paid to Hunsdon School to provide a termly book prize awarded for endeavour. £300 was also paid to the School towards the cost of the School Summer Trip. £400 was paid to Hunsdon Scouts as a grant towards the cost of the Scouts' box trailer. A grant of £500 was awarded to the Ducklings to provide outdoor play equipment for the children. £570 was granted to the Village Hall. This amount was to cover the cost of £300 for the treatment of the grass areas of the Village Hall and £270 for the coffee mornings. £350 was paid to Hunsdon Community Events as a grant towards the cost of Hunsdon Summer Festival. £1000 was paid to the Parish Council on behalf of Hunsdon Active as a grant towards the cost of resurfacing the tennis courts on the playing field.

The accounts for the year ending 31st December 2023 have been approved by the Trustees and can be inspected by reference to myself, Andrew Pummell, Trust Secretary.

The Trust held a total of £28822 in its NatWest account at the start of the year and ended the year with a total of £28498, 64.



Report of the Parish Paths Wardens - Bud Carthy and Martyn Reid May 2024

Introduction. For those of you who were not at the meeting last year, or are new to the parish, we want to give you some background as to what the Parish Paths Partnership is all about.

Hunsdon Parish Council has been a member of the Partnership for some 20 years. It involves us working with our partners, Hertfordshire County Council Countryside and Rights of Way Team and landowners to manage and promote the footpath network at a local level, at the same time funding and carrying out rights of way improvement schemes in the parish.

Our primary role as volunteer footpath wardens has been to monitor the condition of the public footpaths paths and carry out any small items of routine maintenance such as cutting back overhanging bushes across paths and replacing damaged waymark discs. HCC use contractors and volunteers to undertake a regular mowing and strimming programme where landowners do not have this responsibility. Numerous waymark posts have been replaced, at our request, by the HCC Rights of Way team. To help with this process a map numbering and showing the position of the posts in the parish has been produced and circulated as necessary.

Footpaths. A continuing theme in the parish is the condition of the paths and the time it takes to re-establish footpaths which run over arable meadows and are cultivated each year.

Significant problem has been experienced at the western end (Acorn Street) of FP 5 associated with flooding. The well-intentioned HCC attempt to address this issue has unfortunately resulted in increased flooding of the path aggravated by the serious wetness of this winter. It appears that the digging of a holding pond at the bottom of the path resulted in a major amount of spoil on the uphill side of the pond. With a result that water is now steered around the pond on to the path and subsequently Acorn Street. It is understood that further plans to address this are in hand.

The paths across the aerodrome have been unwalkable for about 5 months, partly due to the weather and partly due to lack of maintenance. The farmers have marked the paths on three occasions but has not levelled them satisfactorily. HCC have been contacted regarding this on a number of occasions. The crop has now been sown and the paths are more level but require marking. The paths on the far side of aerodrome are all in good order.

Footpath H3

The landowner has applied for the status of this path to be regularised such that all the path/road from the B180 to the junction with H12, Back Lane becomes a Restricted Byway. The Parish Council was consulted on this and raised no objections.

Benches.

A new bench to replace the one at Blackhut Wood is due to be installed later this year.

Broomlands. In our report seven years ago, we outlined negotiations to create a circular walk by the diversion of footpaths in the Broomlands area of Fillets Farm. These plans are still with Hertfordshire County Council for consultation with interested parties.

Fly tipping

Fly tipping continues to be an issue with a significant load of apparently processed waste tipped close to the entrance to the Airfield. This has now been removed, we think funded by Knight Frank. Whoever funded the removal they are to be thanked

Footpath Publications.

Copies of John Ashley's-booklet '**Walking around Hunsdon and Surrounding Parishes**' are still available and can be found in the village shop and the Fox and Hounds. The booklet is also online on the Parish Council website. All the paths in Hertfordshire are available on their website and can also be accessed through Google Maps.



Responsibilities

BC and MR agreed to switch roles this year with MR taking the lead supported by BC.

Thanks.

In conclusion we would like to thank the council for their support in our endeavours and to Nicholas Maddex and the Team at Herts Council, who has helped to sort out many of the issues that we encountered. We would also like to acknowledge the support of Knight Frank, Land Agents for Places for People, concerning issues regarding the airfield footpaths. It is noteworthy that the condition of the paths in the parish compare very favourably with those of adjoining parishes.

Bud Carthy and Martyn Reid

Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group

<https://hegnp.org.uk/>



HEGNPG

Supporting our Community

Annual report to Sponsor Parish Councils

1 Introduction

We are pleased to present our annual report and in doing so to thank you, as our sponsors, for your support for our work, especially your ongoing financial support.

It's been a year of big decisions made by key players – including residents at an administration-changing local election. Developers, Places for People and Taylor Wimpey will now be dealing with a new Green-led East Herts Council, who we hope will ensure the delivery of what has long been promised: the creation of homes of exceptional quality in sustainable communities with infrastructure to match.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group (NPG) has worked with all stakeholders, including local authorities and the media, to best represent and protect the interests of the local communities, and commissioned professional support, where necessary, to help achieve this goal.

We continue to work to ensure that proper regard is given to our Neighbourhood Plan at all key phases of the development, including the creation of a strategic landscape master plan and village master planning, and the creation of bodies and processes for the long-term stewardship of the Gilston Area.

It's been a crucial year with regards to the future of our community, and I am grateful for the staggering amounts of time committed by the members of the NPG, including many who also hold Parish Council or other posts in our community, so are putting in lots of volunteer time to support local residents.

2 Financial

The NPG opened the financial year with a cash balance of **£59,641.01** and closed the year with a balance of **£51,880.27**

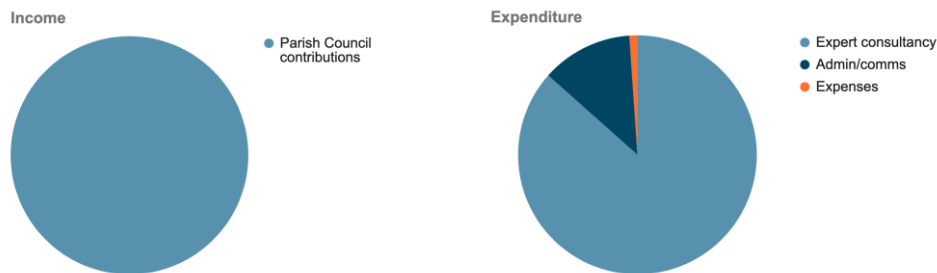
Total income for the year was £4,000

£4,000 was received as annual contributions from sponsor Parish Councils; thank you.

Total expenditure for the year was £11,436.74

£9,900 was spent on expert consultancy to assist the NPG with its responses to the ongoing planning applications and approvals for the new homes, as outline schemes, and infrastructure of Villages 1-7, matters relating to the call-in request, attendance at various meetings regarding the Gilston Area as a whole, including the Strategic Landscape Master planning and Village 1 & 7 master planning workshops, comments on Viability Assessment revisions, and further general support.

£1,412 was for administration and communications costs. **£124.74** was for printing, postage, webspace and other similar expenses.



- 3 Our Report** - We summarise our work and are happy to attend a Council meeting to elaborate on this report and answer questions.

3.0 Key activities and progress over the last year included

- + Resolutions to grant planning consents, the last act of the Conservative led EHC. With planning obligations alias "S106" obligations and over 100 planning conditions
- + Our "Call in" request to Secretary of State to review the planning permissions by a public inquiry
- + Developers and EHC still persist to call us a protest group while not responding to our points and paying scant regard to the Neighbourhood Plan policies
- + Election of new EHC with new political direction and our new local Councillor investing considerable time into helping the Community
- + Create Streets' seminar
- + Master planning
- + Site survey work

The Launching of Community Forums by East Herts as the main means of communication with residents in lieu of dialogue with the Parish Councils and the NPG

3.1 Legacy of Conservative Councils Planning Committee decisions made just before the election purdah.

The former Conservative run EHC made decisions to approve the Places for People's Outline application for Villages 1-6 and Taylor Wimpey's Outline application for V7 at its last Development Management Committee (DMC) meetings before the local election in May 2023. The Community was given a very short period of time to put its views to Councillors and our detailed representations were mainly ignored, Policies in our Neighbourhood Plan were set aside where EHC considered they conflicted with the applicants' proposals. Massive reports by EHC were put to members in the two weeks before the Committee meetings with substantial addendums added the day before the Committee meeting. Many of the critical Section 106 Heads of Terms were left open so not specified and responsibility for agreeing these matters were delegated to Officers. The Applicants, in contrast, were allowed a private briefing session with the Committee before it met to consider the applications. As a Community group representing both Parish Councils, we were very dissatisfied with the way the decisions were made and so a request to have the decisions 'Called In' was made in March 2023.

- 3.2 Our request to the Secretary of State for the applications to be “Called In’ and reviewed at a public inquiry.** This raised important planning policy questions, not least since the Secretary of State commended us from the Despatch box in the House of Commons for producing our Neighbourhood Plan in the face of challenges from the Developers as a formal part of the Local Plan so should have been material matters for consideration when the planning when the decisions were made. Unfortunately our request for a Call In was rejected in the Autumn of 2023 and the decisions left with EHC’s new Green Party-led Council to manage. They have decided to take forward the Conservative administration’s decisions without any review or further reference back to the new DMC as the elected body for taking a decision on the applications.
- 3.3 Current status of the planning ‘Decisions’.** EHC and the developers are working on the infrastructure obligations to be written into a legal agreement with the Developers known as “Section 106 agreement” (S106) which covers very important matters about how the development will be delivered and so the promises of new schools/community facilities/Health care/Affordable Housing/Sewerage/Water/ Transport and Travel infrastructure to be delivered by the developers. We have seen past ‘promises’ from the developers be changed or simply not delivered. This has already happened with the 40% affordable housing requirement to be delivered at Gilston, as a requirement in the Local Plan being downgraded to 23% with the loss of 1,700 affordable housing units. EHC have made it clear that they will not consult on the S106 outcomes but we will have a short period to look at the terms of the agreements which have been under negotiation for over a year. EHC have decided not to refer the final S106 agreement back to its elected DMC but leave it for Officers to make these major decisions and so issue the formal planning Decision Notice(s) unless there is a substantial ‘departure’ from the heads of terms attached to the applications, when considered by the last Conservative administration.
- 3.4 Create Streets summer seminar.** An Urban design consultancy was appointed by an interested party to review the scheme and help the community better understand what the new development could be like given that the Master planning work the developers started had been stopped by them. We were delighted that some 70+ residents attended a three-hour intensive workshop kindly hosted at the Plume of Feathers PH in Pye Corner. Residents expressed clear preferences for the types of housing that might be delivered. We greatly appreciated the number of residents who joined this meeting.
- 3.4 Landscape Master Planning/Village 1 Master Planning and Village 7 Master Planning.** These activities were ‘restarted’ in the autumn of 2023. Good progress has been made on Village 7 with a productive two-way flow of ideas although there are still elements of further work to be clarified. While work on Village 1 and the critically important Landscape master plan (which is meant to proceed any ‘Village’ master planning) has been halted by the Developers, we are told on the instruction of EHC; we hope that they will restart a two-way conversation given their clearly stated high regard of the importance of Community engagement.
- 3.5 Community Forums.** The new Green Party led EHC has decided to change the regular consultation meetings and adopted a policy of holding Community Forums on a regular basis. The first of these was held in February and was well attended by residents. Both developers gave presentations, using up the majority of the allocated time, and there was considerable frustration that questions raised were not dealt with satisfactorily. We were pleased that residents attended and rightly raised lots of questions. We have suggested ways of improving the workings of these forums but EHC have, so far, sidestepped our suggestions. We are concerned that these Community Forums will not serve their purpose of engaging with and informing the Community and its elected parish councillors and the NPG on what is happening or imminently planned as the Development moves forward.

3.6 Stewardship. EHC are about to endorse a Harlow and Gilston-wide policy on Stewardship to govern the public facilities and assets which will not be adopted by EHC. We have given our news but there has been very little engagement by EHC over the last year. The importance of paying for private Stewardship of the infrastructure and public facilities in the eventual scheme has been the subject of national debate led by the Competition and Markets Authority given the problems, and inequity, that often arises through badly conceived regimes that rely heavily on recovering costs through service charges levied on residents. We are ready to participate in the next round of discussions and believe that the structure should be established before development starts and have strong local representation.

3.7 The new ‘Green’ EHC. The May 2023 Local Election resulted in a dramatic change of political leadership of EHC to it being led by a Green Party/Lib Dem coalition. We have met with then new Council Leadership and have welcomed their stated aspirations for better Community engagement and claims that they will be the “Listening Council” but so far there has been insufficient action to justify this. As yet we have seen little planning policy changes and the issues of the shortage of Affordable Housing in East Herts, we suspect will become an issue, especially given that the Gilston project is planned to deliver a shortfall of 1,700 affordable homes, as promised, for local people. The Council has prioritised very costly road infrastructure after the developers presented their financial viability assessments; these have been the subject of professional challenge but EHC is sadly content to put such new information aside. We are grateful to our new District Councillor for the time and energy he has put into championing the Communities’ views and concerns.

4 Looking forward

There are many important issues for both parishes that need resolution and the Community's voice heard. The following key activities we anticipate will require our attention:

Issue	Comment	Likely timescale
Strategic Landscape Master Plan	EHC’s policy states that this should be done in advance of Village master planning in accordance with their own Charter into which we had substantial input. This policy approach is being ignored but we will continue to ask EHC to maintain their adopted policy approach. There are important local interfaces where discussions have yet to be commenced by the Developers (i.e. Gilston Lane or connectivity with existing and proposed settlements)	Sometime this year
Village Master planning	Village 7 have created a climate for sensible discussion and collaboration, there are a number of elements still expected. Village 1 , We are waiting for the follow up meetings from the first session but we understand the Developers are committing all their resources to working on the S106	V7 we hope soon V1 sometime this year
Stewardship	Villages and Airfield/ Eastwick Woods Park management arrangements - we continue to wait for the Developers and EHC to re-engage with us Parish Council Boundary review - we held an initial meeting with EHC and hope to have a further one	Developers/EHC Have not committed to timetable July 24.
Section 106 Planning obligations	We were initially told these would be completed by October 2023, more recently by the end of March 2024. We have not been given a fresh date but always knew that the documentation needs to be precise and will have necessary, and substantial financial commitments, for both developers and Council. Tax payers so be complex and take time.	Mid summer?
Highways Works	We are told that the substantial taxpayer investment in the project, £172 million, has to be completed by March 2026.	



	Works are now starting in Harlow but the new Eastwick signalised junction and A414 works into Harlow or the Church Lane and A414 Junction are at survey stage only and are unlikely to start until 2025-26	
Building and resourcing the NPG team	There are many decisions to be made which will affect the lives of residents of all three parishes and we welcome the interest and engagement of other members of the community joining the NPG. Alongside the 'risks' there are many 'opportunities' to enhance the facilities and services for all residents. The Community needs a voice if it is to fully benefit.	

Anthony Bickmore, Chairman, HEGNPG

DRAFT



1. **County Councillor Report** (Cllr Eric Buckmaster)

Representing the Parishes of Sawbridgeworth, High Wych, Eastwick and Gilston, Stanstead Abbots, Hunsdon, Widford, Wareside.

Cabinet Member for the Environment including Sustainable Hertfordshire, Waste Disposal, Recycling Centres, Lead Local Flood Authority, Countryside Rights of Way. Chair of Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, Chair of Hertfordshire Local Nature Recovery Board. I also attend Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and Anglian Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Key priorities and programmes:

- Delivering the cross-Council Sustainable Hertfordshire Strategy.
- Overview of the local flood risk management strategy and flood risk

Mitigation and sustainable drainage via the planning system.

- The provision of timely, relevant and up-to-date advice related to the historic environment, sustainable drainage and ecology.
- To enhance the physical and natural environment of Hertfordshire through Countryside Management advice and action.
- To deliver volunteering programmes and Rights of Way improvement.
- To rebuild and grow the Health Walks programmes to address improved health and wellbeing for residents
- To ensure the effective management of Hertfordshire's waste
- To mobilise and manage new contracts for the disposal of the county's residual waste.
- Subject to national Government direction/amendments; To develop a response to the Resources & Waste Strategy and work closely with Waste Collection Authorities through the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership to deliver resulting strategies and requirements.
- To manage the considerable pressure on waste services, in particular the provision of the Recycling Centre and future cost of waste disposal through a network of Transfer Stations.
- To develop a suitable network of Recycling Centres that are capable of meeting service demand.

Pishiobury park Countryside Rights of Way works with the Districts and Boroughs in producing Greenspace Action Plans. we have now developed a draft GAP, which is available for download from: [Pishiobury Park GAP 2024-2034 FINAL no maps \(onwebcurl.com\)](https://www.onwebcurl.com) **Vision Statement** This plan will build on the successes of the last twenty years of management, which have brought the parkland into positive conservation management and dramatically improved visitor facilities. Our aspiration is to continue to restore and enhance Pishiobury Park's varied natural habitats and historic landscape, recognising the importance of the site's aging trees and promoting the future maturity of younger trees. Alongside this we will focus on celebrating the site's heritage, providing all visitors with a welcoming and accessible greenspace, and supporting the voluntary Friends of Pishiobury Park.

Local Nature Recovery Partnership I chair the board for the Local Nature Recovery Board for the partnership. A number of agencies have joined the steering group and Board, e.g. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency, Districts and Boroughs, Landowners, and Hertfordshire Association of Parish Councils. The Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership (HNRP or 'the Partnership') has been established by Hertfordshire County Council (the Responsible Authority - [Local nature recovery strategies: areas and responsible authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)) in order to deliver Hertfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). The Partnership includes a wide range of stakeholders from across public, private and charity/voluntary sectors to ensure a diversity of voices are heard and a circumspect approach is followed in creating the LNRS.

- The Partnership will map the most valuable existing areas for nature across Hertfordshire and areas where the greatest opportunities are available for nature recovery and wider environmental benefits.



- Develop nature recovery priorities for Hertfordshire and establish and prioritise practical actions and projects (and their locations) that will help deliver these priorities.
- Carry out engagement with wider stakeholder groups, facilitating a comprehensive and widespread involvement in the LNRS process within Hertfordshire and coordinating with neighbouring LNRS delivery partnerships to ensure a joined-up approach at the county borders.
- Develop the final LNRS and any related outputs including but not limited to documents, webpages and software.
- Review the LNRS when requested by the Secretary of State and map where nature recovery action has been taken.

The Partnership will be comprised of the following groups: a Board, a Steering Group and several Task and Finish groups. Mapping will identify the most valuable existing areas for nature, Nature reserves – SSSIs places with designations, areas of greatest potential for creating valuable habitats through creating or improving habitats – buffer zones to habitats, links between habitats, poorly managed sites. Where creation or improvement of habitat could deliver wider environmental benefits (including air and water quality, flood mitigation, carbon sequestration and renewable siting). – flood plans, any green space.

Through mapping these areas we will also identify areas valuable habitat could be increased and where there is potential for joining up isolated sites. We also hope to map where habitats can deliver health and well-being benefits too for instance improving access to green space. Will integrate with Biodiversity Net Gain work.

Sites of 'strategic significance' will be identified. Developers will be incentivised to deliver BNG in these sites by receiving an uplift for BNG in these zones. To complete this mapping, data will be used from a wide range of stakeholders to ensure we have the accurate and comprehensive view of county.

Engagement will start by spring of next year, then draft mapping, wider engagement, public consultation then publishing.

Your Tree our future-Tree Giveaway

Tree numbers

The original scheme design was to fund 10,000 trees in year 1 and 30,000 in each of the subsequent three years (100,000 total). As a result of financial contributions from partner councils YTOF has delivered significantly more trees than the original targets. Approximately 47,000 trees were collected in year 1 and 75,000 in year 2. The first two years of YTOF has delivered 205% more trees than planned for the period at a cost to the county council of 57% of the budget awarded for the period.

Hertfordshire County Council has an ambition to support the planting of 1.2m new trees – and 100km of hedgerow – in the county by 2030. So far, since declaring a Climate Emergency in 2019, the council had planted – “or enabled the planting of” – 324,647 trees.

Air Quality along with District Councils the County Council has a public health role in air quality. In February we held our annual air quality conference for County and District Councillors. A number of campaigns have focussed on behaviour change especially in discouraging use of wood burning stoves, which produce considerable particulates, and discouraging engine idling. Banners have been produced which can be displayed outside schools.

Recycling Centres. In 2023 Essex County Council formally introduced a residents only policy along with most surrounding Local Authorities. At the same time in Hertfordshire we were receiving a net 20pc of waste from residents across our borders including in Bishops Stortford and Royston. I therefore agreed to consider residents only in Hertfordshire as long as we engaged with neighbouring councils to discuss mutual access. Most of the councils declined however we have agreed arrangements with Essex and Cambridgeshire. We are therefore able to continue to access Harlow Recycling Centre and residents of Essex and Cambridgeshire may access Bishops Stortford and Royston through showing ID or a permit. We opened a new supersite Recycling Centre in Welwyn Garden City and we are starting work on a new waste transfer station in Ware, and there will be investment in existing RCs including Bishops Stortford. For Waste Disposal, what is left after all the Recycling from the Districts and Boroughs are new contracts starting now send everything to Energy Recovery, so nothing to landfill. Hertfordshire has the highest Recycling rate in the region.



Herts Waste Partnership We continue to respond to the Governments Waste and Resources Strategy on elements of the new arrangements for Extended Producer Responsibility, where producers pay for the costs associated with waste disposal and Recycling for the packaging the produce as well as the much-delayed Deposit Return Scheme. I have also lobbied the Sentencing Council for higher and consistent penalties for **fly tipping**. Also to ensure that fines issued in court are at least equivalent to fixed penalty notices issued by the Local Authorities.

Local Flooding. The causes of flooding are various and there is no single agency responsible. The past 12 months has seen heavy rainfall, with various and significant forms of flooding in Sawbridgeworth, Eastwick and Gilston, Hunsdon, and Stanstead Abbots. The causes are all different and I have worked with the Parish Councils and the Agencies responsible for undertaking the work and/or Investigations.

Hunsdon High Street: Flooding has been a problem for many years including into resident's homes. Thames Water and Ringway have undertaken investigations and jetting. Work is underway with County Lead Local Flood Authority officers towards a long-term solution. Funding was secured for mapping and options work. Our Lead Local Flood Authority Officer is talking with the landowner, Places for People, and sharing information about the preferred options following the recent consultants work. The output from the Optioneering has been shared with residents and includes a number of ponds to hold back and slowly release the surface water with supporting infrastructure. The solution would need substantial funding and officers will continue to seek grants from Environment Agency as opportunities arise.

Stanstead Abbots: The village centre at the bottom of a hill (Roydon Road) and near an Environment Agency watercourse makes the village vulnerable to flooding which has occurred on many occasions. Working with the parish council the Environment Agency has responded with providing a number of properties with funding for Property Flood Protection Measures. They also continue to consider possible natural flood management on higher ground in order to hold back water. The Parish feels that the EA should undertake some dredging of the ditch to increase the flow however EA has cited environmental reasons for not wanting to do this.

Eastwick and Gilston. There are a number of places where substantial flooding is occurring in the villages due to what can only be described as poor stewardship of the landowner, notably Places for People. As an example Gilston Lane, where lack of maintenance to Fiddlers Brook and vegetation restricts the flow of water, which floods and degrades the Lane and threatens properties. After much delay and pushing, Places for People have engaged with the Environment Agency for approval to undertake work. I have put carriageway work in my reserve highways list for work in the 2025/26 financial year assuming the maintenance work has been concluded by later this year. Eastwick Hall Lane is also undermined by water running off fields and heavy farm vehicles. Along With District Councillor John Dunlop and the Parish we have been seeking a meeting with relevant parties, including PfP land managers Knight Frank to find a solution.

Sawbridgeworth: The significant and persistent flooding has been along the A1184, by Rowney Gardens, Junction with West Road, Parsonage Lane, and Spellbrook layby. Work has now been undertaken through jetting by Ringway on West Road and Parsonage Lane which have now coped with the recent wet weather. We also worked hard to get Thames Water to clear the surface water drains near Pishiobury Drive which had filled with material and block the water run-off. Likewise the main road has coped with the weather. Spellbrook is flooded through run-off from the fields. I have asked Ringway to take another look. I have also requested more frequent gully clearing owing to the silt that comes off the fields.

Prevention is key in many cases. I have Asked East Herts to consider more frequent street cleansing in areas where flooding has occurred in order to keep gullies clear, and I am asking County to look at a more proactive approach to escalating problems to other agencies such as Thames Water, Landowners, and the Environment Agency where the solution is potentially in their remit.

Speed and 20mph Following the implementation of the 20mph area in central Sawbridgeworth I have responded to residents requests to consider both statutory and advisory reduced speed limits in appropriate areas.

Sawbridgeworth Northeast: Statutory consultation has taken place. I'll discuss responses with officers once work is completed.

Sawbridgeworth West: speed and volumes studies completed. Next Stage Public Engagement to seek views.



Stanstead Abbots and St Margaret: Area wide Statutory consultation concluded. This scheme is centrally funded and in order to include Roydon Road and Hoddesdon Road then traffic calming was included since signage wouldn't be sufficient on its own. Just a few objections received and have tended to focus on the traffic calming. Once the reports are available, I'll discuss options with officers but indications are this scheme will proceed.

Hunsdon: Speed and volume studies have been undertaken and there are further to come. My intention is to introduce an advisory 20mph limit at Hunsdon school and also on Acorn Street with improved signage for safety.

High Wych: An Advisory 20mph sign has been installed at the school operating at school drop off and pick up.

Road and footway condition and resurfacing and parking

£80m will be spent on highways and transport, including the continuation of the two-year £7.9m revenue funding for highways network improvements, with a focus on vegetation clearing, sign cleaning, litter clearance, drainage and footway patching.

£19m of additional capital investment in highways maintenance over the next two years to fix and protect Hertfordshire's roads.

There are various categories of work on the highway. The Highways fault reporting portal is the first port of call for all highways related faults. Potholes are assessed then if requiring action will be programmed. The response time can be up to 20 days. Gullies are cleared on a cyclical maintenance regime to deal with gullies across an area.

I have a **Highways locality budget** of £90k per annum which I can allocate to road and footway resurfacing, Highways schemes such as double yellow line, speed and volume studies, traffic regulation orders such as the No Entry at Sheering Mill Lane, and Double Yellow Lines at parking hotspots on junctions and to deter pavement parking. I have a number of Public Engagement Consultations underway currently around Sawbridgeworth. I am also resurfacing part of West Road following the two housing developments. There are also **Integrated Works** which are longer term planned schemes. The A1184 between Harlow and Brook Road has recently been repaired ahead of resurfacing in a couple of months' time.

Most street works on the Highway are utility companies who as statutory undertakers can work on the roads in an emergency and must notify County Network Management within two hours of starting. This isn't always done on time, and I can report utilities who can send an inspector and can issue fines.

My Locality Grant for the past 3 years every county councillor has had a grant pot to award to local good causes. During the two Covid years this was increased to £15,000. Owing to budget challenges our grant pots for 2024/25 has been reduced to £5,000. During 2023/24 I have awarded over 30 grants to organisations for just under £9,500. The balance will carry over to the next financial year.

Applicant organisation	amount requested	Purpose	amount agreed
High Wych Parochial Parish Council	300	portaloos for community event	£300.00
Hunsdon JMI School, High Street, Hunsdon	300	coronation event	£300.00
Spellbrook school	250	Wormery and Composting area	£250.00
Bobtails Playgroup & Teddyclub	250	equipment	£250.00
309 Sawbridgeworth Air cadets	500	additional uniorms	£500.00
Sawbridgeworth Town Twinning Association	250	towards Commemorative photo book for 50th Anniversary of Town Twinning with Moosburg and Bry sur Marne	£250.00
wellbeing Centre	120	prize giving event for participants in Wellbeing Yellow Book arts project	£120.00
Stanstead Abbots Brownies	550	coach for trip to London	£550.00
Keech hospice care	300	supports children & their families	£300.00

Carers in Herts	300	carers in Herts	£300.00
Herts Inclusive Theatre	300	cultural activities for SEN	£300.00
Essex and Herts air ambulance trust	300	Air Ambulance	£300.00
Sawbridgeworth Local History Society	300	developing website for accessibility	£300.00
<u>Hertfordshire Boat rescue</u>	500	training and rescue on waterways	£500.00
Leventhorpe School all weather pitch contribution	400	towards AstroTurf pitch to a floodlit 3G artificial grass pitch	£400.00
ASPECTS	300	family support for children aged 5-19 who attend our partner schools in Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and nearby villages.	£300.00
Jimmys Toddler Group at High Wych Parish Hall	350	toddler tables and chairs for craft activities and snack time	£350.00
Hunsdon Squirrels (Scouts)	256	flag for events such as Remembrance Sunday & St Georges	£256.00
Sawbridgeworth Town Council on behalf of community groups	200	booklet for local support services	£200.00
Wareside Parish Council	400	contribution to community notice board	£400.00
Bobtails nursery	400	towards replacing floor	£400.00
Hertfordshire Libraries		towards multicultural, participatory dance theatre piece for children and families	£125.00
Hertfordshire CC		speed and volume survey for Cambridge Road Spellbrook	£275.00
Secret Space		yoga classes in Stanstead Abbots.	£250.00
Sawbridgeworth Guides		Tent for young leaders	£200.00
Ore Projects		Mentoring scheme which provided free hands-on classes in metalwork for 16–25-year-olds.	£250.00
CHIPS		playschemes and clubs for children with additional needs (SEN)	£200.00
Isabel Hospice		support for their ongoing work	£300.00
Bishop's Stortford Child Contact Centre		Our Child Contact Centre, supporting families	£300.00
Sawbridgeworth Angling Society		We will build the two platforms which will enable our members with disabilities to fish safely.	£300.00
1st Stanstead Abbots and St Margarets Scout Group	1	Treatment of trees around scouts hut building to keep users safe	£300.00
		Running Total	£9,326.00
		amount remaining	£674.00



District Councillor Report (Cllr John Dunlop)

NHS and ICB update 6th June - Councillors will receive an update from the NHS ICB on 6th June. I will table questions regarding the delayed date for the PAH replacement to 2032 and what changes are intended to support the new population on the Gilston Park Estate.

Eco Hubs - A review of the Eco Hubs is taking place in May. This will be useful to feed into what we can expect at the Hunsdon Village Fete.

Hertford Theatre re-launches as BEAM -

BEAM, a new multi-purpose arts and culture venue in Hertford, will open its doors in August following a £30m redevelopment that has taken place over the last three years.

The venue, now fully accessible, will offer live theatre, dance and music, first-release cinema, and community outreach. Amenities include:

- Three bespoke cinema screens allowing screenings of newly released films
- A main auditorium with seating for 550
- A studio theatre with seating for 150
- A new dance studio
- A riverside café and an additional upstairs bar for cinema goers
- A community rooms

You can visit the BEAM's website here www.beamhertford.co.uk

Upcoming Community Governance Reviews

The Electoral Services team will be writing to all Town and Parish Clerks in the next few weeks to let them know that East Hertfordshire District Council are planning on conducting a Community Governance Review (CGR) starting in July 2024.

CRGs are a legal process under which District Council and Unitary Authorities can:

- Create new parishes
- Change parish boundaries
- Merge or group parishes
- Ward parishes
- Change the number of parish councillors

A report was presented to Council in July 2023 for approval for a CRG in the following areas: Ware, Wareside, Thundridge and the area surrounding the Rush Green roundabout. Before we progress these reviews, we would like to hear from all town/parish councils to see if they would like to be included. A report will be going to Full Council on 24 July 2024 to ask for approval to start the review and once we have a start date, we will formally write to Town and Parish Clerks, District and County Councillors and other stakeholders to let them about the review and how to submit comments and proposals.

Arts in East Herts - Arts in East Herts, an exciting new EHC initiative to boost participation in the arts and cultural activities, was announced last week. Running through September and October 2024, it will showcase the rich artistic and cultural tapestry of East Herts through exhibitions, performances, and workshops. Individual artists and crafts people, along with arts organisations ranging from the visual and performing arts and artisan crafts through to galleries, museums, and heritage sites, are being invited to take part. Participating organisations will be able to apply for financial support of up to £1,000 to help fund either a one-off event or a series of taster sessions, performances, or other activities. These grants are being made available through the UKSPF.



Report on Hunsdon Recreation Area (Jackie Carthy)

Hunsdon Sport Courts

Progress on this has been very good this year. A new committee was formed and we agreed to adapt our plans to reflect likely funding. We now have sufficient money to do almost all that we need to do to create one tennis/pickleball court and one basketball/football court from the 2 derelict tennis courts. Successful bids to the National Lottery, East Herts Community Fund and Stansted Airport Community Fund have made the whole project achievable.

• Currently held (Section 106, fundraising)	£18,352
• Parish Room Trust donation:	£ 2,000
• UKSPF:	£ 6,000
• Donation from a Hunsdon resident:	£ 1,500
• National Lottery:	£10,000
• East Herts Community Fund	£ 3,000
• Stansted Airport CF	£ 5,000
• Quiz Night	£ 1,507
• TOTAL:	£47,359

Costings – updated April 24th 2024. All prices exclusive of VAT

• Surfacing	£22,100
• Lining	£1,552
• Tennis Nets & Posts	£364
• MUGA Goals x 2	£13,295
• Fencing** (see note below)	£ 465 – 1 quote received for labour
• Installation Tennis posts	£1,000 - estimation
• Contingency	£2,500
• Tennis Post sockets	118
• Benches, etc	300 - estimation
• TOTAL	£41,694

We have to take down some of the fencing to allow works to take place. We will then know exactly how much money it will take to refurbish and replace parts of the fencing and the 2 pedestrian gates.

We hope to have the courts finished by the start of the school summer holidays. We were hoping to have a grand opening on the day of the Summer Festival, June 29th. This is now looking unlikely as the surfacing had to be postponed because of the wet weather. This is now due to happen in the week beginning May 7th. The surface then has to dry out for at least 6 weeks before we can put down the court linings and install tennis posts and football/basketball goals. The fencing will be the last item to be completed.

Jackie Carthy



Hunsdon Scout Group Annual Report to Parish Council May 2024

Annual Scouting Census: All Scout Groups are required to submit a census return so that The Scout Association can build a picture of its membership. At the end of January we recorded 71 youths and 22 adults, a total of 93 members, which represents a 45.32% increase on January 2023. We continue to receive 1 or 2 new enquiries every week and we have a waiting list for 3 out of 4 sections; Scouting in Hunsdon is clearly very popular.

Squirrels: Offering twelve places for 4 and 5 year olds, our Squirrel Drey which opened in June 2023 has been a great success and provides a steady flow of new members into the Beaver Colony when the Squirrels reach their 6th birthdays. Unfortunately we cannot accommodate every young person who would like to join in, and we are very keen to find a new Squirrel volunteer to take the place of one of our founder team members who is unable to continue.

District Events: Last September 2023 the Cubs entered the annual Oxley Shield Camping and Skills competition and were delighted to return with the huge winners' shield on display in the trophy cabinet (bettering our 3rd place the previous year). Tigers also came first equal in the Go Karting Competition, recorded the fastest ever Fun Run winner, and Hunsdon's best result in the Swimming Gala - clearly quite a competitive lot. All district and community events have been well attended, and we were particularly pleased that this year's St George's Day parade returned to the familiar format, with a road closure in Ware and a proper parade with Squirrels attending for the first time.

Community: We support community events whenever possible. In December we ran a children's pop-up card-making activity at the Christmas Fair, just for fun, and recruited some more members. We were also pleased to run the Quintessence Panto refreshments and ice creams, which raised approximately £350 for the group.

Nights Away Experiences: The District Camp last year, for all sections, was an absolute scorcher and a great success, with the weather making it possible to run some great water-based activities keeping everyone cool! Beavers held their Lodge Activity Camp, as well as their local sleepovers, and the Scouts joined up with another troop for an autumn activity weekend. I was fortunate to attend the World Scout Jamboree in South Korea; an amazing experience! Coming up in 2024 is 'Roverway', a team hiking trip to Norway for older Scouts, which one of our Scout leaders is supporting, and our Cubs have just returned from a unique sleepover on HMS Belfast where they will have made memories to treasure for life.

Thank you

My personal thanks to everyone who helps our group, the young people and families, members of the community, and our Trustees. Most importantly thank you to the great team of leaders and young leaders for giving their time and energy for Scouting in Hunsdon. Their commitment and enthusiasm are brilliant.

Yours in Scouting,

Karen Osterley
Group Lead Volunteer - Hunsdon Scout Group

Hunsdon Parish Council Revenue Expenditure						Capital Expenditure					
Credit						Credit					
	Budget	To date	Remaining period	Year	Variance		Budget	To date	Remaining period	Year	Variance
B/F General	£6,695.52	£6,726.08		£6,726.08	£30.56	B/F Special Projects	£28,756.72	£28,992.09		£28,992.09	£235.37
Precept	£21,400.00	£21,400.00	£0.00	£21,400.00	£0.00	VAT refund Cap	£650.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£-650.00
Litter Picker	£1,942.12	£2,220.26	£0.00	£2,220.26	£278.14	Village Event	£0.00	£4,587.00	£0.00	£4,587.00	£4,587.00
Allotment rents	£489.00	£488.00	£0.00	£488.00	£-1.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
VAT refund rev	£3,017.83	£2,904.70	£0.00	£2,904.70	£-113.13		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Grant Neighbourhood Plan	£0.00	£1,929.00	£0.00	£1,929.00	£1,929.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Santander Interest	£0.00	£108.29	£0.00	£108.29	£108.29		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Totals	£33,544.47	£35,776.33	£0.00	£35,776.33	£2,231.86	Totals	£29,672.48	£33,579.09	£0.00	£33,579.09	£4,172.37
Debit						Debit					
Administration	£2,325.56	£1,997.30	£0.00	£1,997.30	£-328.26	Playground Equipment	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Litter pickers	£1,600.00	£1,560.00	£0.00	£1,560.00	£-40.00	Inspection for Equipment	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Salary	£5,762.12	£5,762.16	£0.00	£5,762.16	£0.04	MUGA allocation	£16,928.91	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£-16,928.91
General Power of Competence	£720.00	£576.00	£0.00	£576.00	£-144.00	Village Event	£0.00	£3,183.58	£0.00	£3,183.58	£3,183.58
Allotments	£340.00	£375.46	£0.00	£375.46	£35.46		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Playing Field	£700.63	£834.08	£0.00	£834.08	£133.45		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Rest of village	£1,300.00	£671.09	£0.00	£671.09	£-628.91						
Grounds Maintenance	£5,002.00	£6,684.66	£0.00	£6,684.66	£1,682.66						
Neighbourhood Plan	£5,000.00	£6,820.83	£0.00	£6,820.83	£1,820.83						
NP Communicator Co-ordinator	£1,000.00	£340.00	£0.00	£340.00	£-660.00						
Churchyard donation	£500.00	£1,000.00	£500.00	£1,500.00	£1,000.00						
Ukraine donation	£0.00	£500.00	£0.00	£500.00	£500.00						
S111 consultants	£1,000.00	£375.00	£0.00	£375.00	£-625.00						
Defibrillator funding	£365.00	£464.28	£438.00	£902.28	£537.28						
Village Event Funding	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	£0.00						
Totals	£26,615.31	£28,960.86	£938.00	£29,898.86	£3,283.55	Totals	£16,928.91	£3,183.58	£0.00	£3,183.58	£-13,745.33
Surplus	£6,929.16	£6,815.47	£-938.00	£5,877.47	£-1,051.69	Surplus	£12,743.57	£30,395.51	£0.00	£30,395.51	£17,917.70
Totals						Totals					
Revenue Surplus	£6,929.16	£6,815.47	£-938.00	£5,877.47	£-1,051.69	Receipts Check		TRUE			
Capital Surplus	£12,743.57	£30,395.51	£0.00	£30,395.51	£17,917.70	Payments Check		TRUE			
Total Surplus	£19,672.73	£37,210.98	£-938.00	£36,272.98	£16,866.01	Reconciliation Check		TRUE			



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL – VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

There have been a large number of improvement projects progressed in the last year which have been funded either directly from the Parish Council precept or via successful grant applications, fund raising events and from legacy improvement funds (e.g. Section 106 money)

These projects are summarised below

Refurbishment of the village sign - funded from the village precept

The village sign was fully refurbished and the village signpost was completely replaced as it had become rotten. The new sign was in place for the memorial day service in November 2023

Playing Field Gates - funded from the village precept

These gates had had a number of repairs over many years and were no longer fit for purpose and both the side pedestrian gate and vehicle access gates were replaced in 2023 along with clearance of overhanging bushes in the immediate vicinity.

Hunsdon Sports Courts - funded from section 106 money, various grant applications including UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) , the National Lottery fund, Stansted Airport and fundraising events

Previously known as “The Tennis Courts” these are in the process of being refurbished and upgraded. The old tarmac has now been resurfaced and new tennis posts and nets along with a pair of multisport goals will be installed and new line marking added once the tarmac is fully set. This will result in a multisport area containing one tennis court and one set of multiuse goals

The new Hunsdon Sports courts are scheduled to be completed in time for Hunsdon Festival On The Field on Saturday 29th June where there will be organised sports and activities for school age children.

The final stage of making good the fencing and adding in benches will be completed later in the year

Village Gateways - funded from a successful UKSPF grant application

The “Hunsdon” village signs as you enter the village from the entrance points at Rise Cottages, Acorn Street and Ellison Way have been improved with the additional of new wooden gateway fences. It is hoped these will enhance the appearance of the village and help create a greater sense of village identity and may also prompt traffic to slow as it enters the village

Entrance Footpaths - funded from a successful UKSPF grant application

Footpaths on the three entrance roads to the village at Rise Cottages, Acorn Street and Ellison Way have been cleared back to the original footpath widths after years of gradual overgrowth creep. The wider footpaths should improve safety and make it easier for everyone walking into or out of the centre of the village especially those with children’s and/or buggies.



Future and in progress improvement works include

- Refurbishment of the village pump and oil lamp (UKSPF)
- Additional community seating across the village (UKSPF)
- Provision of additional equipment and facilities on Hunsdon playing field using remaining funds from Sports Court refurbishment and additional grant application if required

For all these projects Hunsdon Parish Council would like to thank the numerous members of the community and local businesses for their help and support without which these projects would not have been possible

David Ottolanguì

Report by Hunsdon JMI School Governors - Mike Newman Chair of Governors

Village Hall Report

DRAFT