

WIDFORD

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH ELECTORATE

**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Widford Parish Electorate
Tuesday 4th April 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall**

PRESENT: Parish councillors Mike Allen, nine members of the public, CC Eric Buckmaster.

Cllr Mike Allen, being present and the Parish Council Chairman, presided.

Minutes taken by Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council.

1 The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

2 Apologies for absence

Cllr Babs Edwards; Gilda Deterding

3 Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Electorate, 5th April 2022 (AMPE)

It was **agreed** by those present that the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Electorate held on 5th April 2022 were a true and accurate record.

4 Review of the year 2022/23 by Cllr Mike Allen, Chairman of the Parish Council

The Chairman report that a lot had happened during the year, including the passing of Queen Elizabeth II following her incredibly long reign, and the impending coronation of King Charles III.

The year saw the end of Covid restrictions and most things are back to normal, although the NHS is still feeling the backlog pressure. Repercussions of the war in Ukraine are still being felt. The cost of living crises goes on as prices continue to rise and we all need to be mindful of those who may be experiencing difficulties.

A tree that fell in Nether Street was thankfully dealt with in 24 hours. A verge maintenance programme has been initiated by the Parish Council. Jo English continues doing a great job as the litter picker (now funded by the Parish Council in the absence of EHDC grant support). The Parish Council also continues to support the maintenance of Benningfield Green and the Playing Field as important parish spaces.

Village Hall plans and proposals will be circulated to all residents as they become available. Preparations for the Coronation weekend celebrations are well under way and the weekend is also planned be used to work on the proposed community garden.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Eric Buckmaster for his support during the year and he thanked all councillors for their input during their 4-year term of office that ends in May. He also thanked the Clerk for his work during the year.

5 Parish Groups reports

Village Archive: Archivist Helen Giles made a very interesting power point presentation of the history of the archive from its creation by Bunty Smith to its present position, together with plans for its future. The Parish Council has agreed to make grants as necessary to support the archivist in her endeavours to maintain and improve the archive. Much of the material is being digitised and a new home for the archive is being considered that will make it more accessible and also secure the retention of the bulkier items.

The Chairman thanked Helen for the excellent work she is doing on this important project.

6 Rural Police report

The police did not produce a report for the year, but a report covering March 2023 indicated that no crimes were recorded during the month.

7 County and District Councillors' reports for the Annual Meeting of the Parish

County Councillor report for Town and Parish Annual meetings

April

Hertfordshire has become one of the first regions in the UK to partner with Energy Saving Trust to provide an energy efficiency app to residents and help them make energy savings. A big focus is on how to reduce energy bills at home.

Bus services are set to be improved throughout Hertfordshire thanks to a funding boost of just over £35m. This week, it was announced that Hertfordshire County Council has been successful with its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submission to the Department of Transport and received an indicative £29.7m to deliver new transport schemes and initiatives county-wide.

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May

From Watford to Ware, compassion thrives in Hertfordshire Hertfordshire residents set to welcome Ukrainian arrivals. The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 sparked the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War and in response, the UK Government put in place two schemes to help those fleeing their homeland.

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service donates fire engine and equipment to Ukraine.

Hertfordshire residents invited to share their memories of Her Majesty the Queen for Platinum Jubilee exhibition and archive Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) are inviting residents to share their photographs of jubilee street parties or royal visits for an exhibition chronicling Her Majesty's impact on the county and its residents.

June

Hertfordshire County Council has reinforced its commitment to ensuring that pupils with SEND receive the specialist support they need to get an excellent education. Members of Cabinet agreed plans to consult on proposals to create nine primary specialist resource provisions (SRPs) for children and young people with social communication difficulties, including autism, in addition to children with severe speech disorders and developmental language disorder, spread around the county.

17,000 trees to be planted at Panshanger Park for Queen's Green Canopy celebrations for Platinum Jubilee As reported by [Welwyn and Hatfield Times](#), 17,000 trees are to be planted at Panshanger Park for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Hertfordshire County Council has been awarded a further £2.6m from the Department for Transport to provide additional walking and cycling projects across the county. The recent funding is in addition to the £6.4m the council received in November 2020 to enable residents to live healthier lifestyles by making it easier and safer to walk and cycle. Mainly focussed on the larger towns of Welwyn Garden City, Hemel Hempstead, St. Albans, Stevenage and Watford.

County Show. Residents help to save more than four tonnes of furniture from disposal

More than 500 items – weighing over four tonnes - of second-hand furniture were sold at Hertfordshire County Council's County Show Pop-up Reuse Shop - all items that would have otherwise been broken down and recycled or disposed of

The Pop-Up Reuse Shop welcomed more than 4,000 people through its doors, with high sales resulting in almost £5,000 being raised for charity and proving the council isn't the only one focused on making Hertfordshire a cleaner, greener and healthier place for all.

Hertfordshire's trailblazing Family Safeguarding model highlighted in Government National Review to be extended .Family is at the heart of a three-year pilot scheme which has been approved by Hertfordshire County Council to reunite children in care with their families, where this would be safe, secure and in their best interests.

The £5.4m targeted programme will extend the county council's successful Family Safeguarding model, **East Herts Support during a Crisis. Help to manage the cost of living** With the cost of living on the rise, we have put together a one-stop source of information for local people – from checking what support is available, to finding your cheapest deals - get the help you need to manage the cost of living. If financial stress or other worries are getting on top of you, speak to [HertsHelp](#) or [visit our HealthyHub](#). They can offer advice, or put you in touch with the right people.

July

Minerals and Waste Plan Regulation 18 Consultation. The plan allocates 3 sites for minerals extraction, Briggens, Hatfield Aerodrome, the land adjoining coopers Lane.

Hertfordshire County Council is brightening up Welham Green, Hatfield with a wind and solar street lighting trial. The trial, which is the first of its kind on the public highway in the county, will see two LED lighting units installed on the remote footpath in Corner View, Welham Green, Hatfield,

New contracts to end landfill for Hertfordshire's waste Hertfordshire County Council plans to stop sending waste to landfill sites by 2025 after signing new long-term contracts for disposal of the county's residual waste. Waste that cannot be reused, recycled or composted will be sent to energy recovery facilities where it will be used to generate electricity as a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels.

Meet air pollution targets by 2030, says Hertfordshire Council. As reported by Air Quality News, the English local authority has revealed calls for minimum air quality standards to be met by 2030, a decade ahead of Downing Street's aims. Following the release of a new report by the National Audit Office that the British government is failing to deliver on its air quality standards, Hertfordshire Council wants to meet limits ten years ahead of Westminster's target. This relates specifically to particulates, PM2.5, target of 10ug/m3 to 2030 in line with the WHO's interim guideline

Funding for domestic abuse support services Two vital support services are now available for Hertfordshire residents experiencing 'high-risk' domestic abuse, thanks to funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls

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Partnership.

Services for Young People leads the way in LGBT+ young people's inclusion

Services for Young People's work with LGBT+ young people has been instrumental in Hertfordshire County Council and Herts for Learning being awarded the Stonewall Children and Young People's Services Gold Champion Award.

July/Aug

Heatwave In truly testing circumstances, crews responded to multiple, and at times, an unrelenting stream of large-scale incidents including road traffic collisions, fires close to the M25 and crop and field fires. Due to the quick response and actions of our teams, thankfully no-one was injured, and larger incidents did not escalate into disasters, despite some fires rapidly approaching residential properties

Sunset Studios decision is "superb" for Hertfordshire residents. The prospect of Hertfordshire adding another world-class film, tv and digital production facility to its portfolio moved a step closer last week when Broxbourne Borough Council's Planning and Regulatory Committee granted outline planning permission for Sunset Waltham Cross Studios.

Free holiday fun keeps kids in Hertfordshire HAPPY this summer Hertfordshire County Council-funded free summer holiday camps are proving so popular that they are almost fully booked. More than 3,600 children who, on average, were booked to enjoy 10 days of free activities.

The HAF programme free holiday activity clubs, known locally as HAPpy Camps, started running across Hertfordshire at the start of the holidays. There were over 180 camps funded by Hertfordshire County Council, coordinated by Herts Sports Partnership and the Hertfordshire Community Foundation, and run by over 80 different providers

Hertfordshire residents have helped raise over £55,000 for the Fire Fighters Charity just by donating unwanted clothes, shoes and other textiles. Items can be donated at any one of twenty textile banks located at Hertfordshire Fire Stations. The scheme is supported by Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, made up of county, district and borough councils working together to reduce, reuse and recycle Hertfordshire waste.

Young people from Hertfordshire make lifelong memories on National Citizen Service summer programme Over 200 young people aged 16-17 gained vital life skills and lifelong memories this summer by taking part in the National Citizen Service (NCS) programmes run by Hertfordshire County Council Services for Young People (SfYP).

Hertfordshire County Council – A Financial Update

Like all organisations across the country, the ongoing impact of increasing inflation has added significantly to the pressures on Hertfordshire County Council's budget. The latest forecast of council finances estimates a shortfall of £23.5 million for 2022/23 and ongoing pressures for future years – despite having set a balanced budget for the next two years as recently as February.

It's costing a lot more to simply provide our services at current levels. For example, the bill to keep streetlights on has increased by 60%, that's an extra £2.3 million a year just to keep the lights on after dark. Through making savings and judicious use of reserves the shortfall was reduced and the councils balanced budget was restored

October

100,000 free trees for residents I announced, over 4 yrs.

Hertfordshire's Family Centre Service receives prestigious UNICEF reaccreditation for best practice in their Baby Friendly Initiative Hertfordshire's Family Support Service have recently been assessed by UNICEF and reaccredited for the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI), as continuing to deliver high standards of care to pregnant women and new mothers

Gritters on standby as winter approaches From Saturday 1 October Hertfordshire County Council's fleet of over 58 gritters are on standby, ready to spring into action and salt the county's roads when freezing weather approaches. Gritter crews and decision makers from our highways team will be ready around the clock to cover nearly half of Hertfordshire's entire road network – that's more than 1,500 miles (2,500km), or the equivalent of salting from Hertford to Berlin and back. We send out our gritters when road surface temperatures are forecast to be 0.5°C, or below.

Nov/Dec

Hertfordshire's New Business Waste Service is Now Open Hertfordshire County Council has recently opened its first Business Waste Service. Located at Ware Recycling Centre, the service is designed to allow SME's the opportunity to dispose of waste generated from their trade activities in a transparent and compliant way. Waste including wood, hardcore, green garden and plasterboard, can be disposed of at competitive prices.

Your Tree Our Future' scheme empowers Hertfordshire residents to grow a more sustainable county through tree planting.

Hertfordshire County Council is offered residents the chance to claim free trees as part of its 'Your Tree Our Future' scheme which will see 100,000 trees given away over the next four years. The scheme will help the council to deliver on several of its Sustainable Hertfordshire ambitions as planting trees has a positive impact on air quality, helps reduce the carbon in our atmosphere, supports biodiversity and can help communities adapt to the

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impacts of climate change. In addition, access to natural features has been linked with benefits to physical and mental health.

Construction begins on Hertfordshire's first full net-zero carbon school

The Buntingford First School, which is being funded by Hertfordshire County Council and built by Morgan Sindall Construction, will open for September 2023 and will be operated by the Scholars Education Trust.

This is the first school in the county to be built and operate at net zero carbon, in line with the Hertfordshire County Council's sustainability strategy and ambition to be carbon neutral in its own operations by 2030. It will utilise a Passivhaus design which will improve the school's air quality, reduce carbon emissions and lower its energy running costs.

New 'Warm Spaces' directory launched in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire County Council, and the county's ten district and borough councils, have today, Thursday 27 October, launched a new directory of public spaces and buildings which people can use as warm, welcoming spaces as temperatures drop.

This online directory will let people find libraries, family centres and community spaces near them where they can stay safe and warm. Many will also be running additional activities to provide people with the opportunity to meet others and take part in events such as slipper swaps for older people in libraries and stay and play events in family centres for families with young children.

Hertfordshire County Council launches new campaign to support residents this winter

We want residents to be aware of the help and support that's on offer locally to help them this winter. Our public reassurance campaign - 'here for you this winter' is about sharing our story with them.

The campaign is shining a light on services which will help residents to stay safe and well as temperatures drop, in addition to providing information around services and support to help them manage the rising cost of living.

Carers Strategy for Hertfordshire 2022-25 A new Carers Strategy for Hertfordshire has been published. This strategy aims to support carers' wellbeing to help them to balance caring with their own needs. For the first time a single Strategy for Adult Carers and Young Carers has been developed with carers. The Strategy reaffirms partnership working between carers, health and social care providers and other agencies. There are four objectives, based on carers' own priorities, which are: Be informed; Life beyond caring; Maintaining health and wellbeing; and Receiving consistent, joined up services. View the Carers Strategy at

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/carersstrategy

Jan/Feb 2023

New report details Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's improved performance

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is pleased with its improved performance as detailed in a report published this week by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

HMICFRS visited Hertfordshire early in 2022 to inspect the work of the service under three pillars: Effectiveness, Efficiency, and People. Since the last report in 2018, the service has moved from 'Requires Improvement' in all three pillars to a 'Good' rating in two out of the three areas of inspection.

Hertfordshire County Council is encouraging residents to apply now for street parties to celebrate the King's coronation.

Anyone wanting to close a road for a street party will need to apply to the county council at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/streetparties by 26 March 2023.

Hertfordshire County Council expresses concern over looming ULEZ charges

Hertfordshire County Council has written to the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan advising him to 'go back to the drawing board' with his plans to expand his Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) due to the detrimental financial impact on the county's residents and businesses who cross the border into Greater London.

As a county with many centres, villages and towns, there are often challenges to travelling by public transport in Hertfordshire creating reliance on private car journeys. With so many Hertfordshire residents living on the border with London, travel into the proposed ULEZ by car is for many the only realistic available option for some journeys like visiting to provide care and support for loved ones. The introduction of a £12.50 charge to enter London, particularly at a time when households are struggling and fines of up to £180 for non-compliance are seen as a regressive tax on motorists.

County Budget Proposals Hertfordshire County Council proposes budget to protect vital services. In order to deliver a balanced budget, the county council will be making savings of £27.4m in 2023/24 – the highest level of savings since 2017. And only a small proportion of these savings (£2.9m) will impact on service provision or partners. These savings are in addition to those already made in the autumn to ensure a balanced budget for the remainder of the current financial year.

However these savings alone will not be enough to balance the budget, so in order to protect frontline services, Hertfordshire County Council is also proposing to raise council tax by 4.99% (including 2% specifically for social care). This means a typical Band D household will be paying £1,605.63, an increase of £1.47 per week.

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- £38m to ensure adult care providers can continue to support residents – including a 9.68% wage increase for care staff to help recruitment and retention, matching the increase in the national living wage and continuing to ensure that Hertfordshire care wages are well above both the national and real living wages (supported by the social care precept)
- £15m is expected from the extension of the Household Support Fund to support our most vulnerable residents with the cost of living
- An extra £19m for Childrens' Services, including an extra £5.2m to support the children in our care
- £10m for home-to-school transport for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities to ensure they can get to school easily
- £6.4m to support waste disposal services, alongside new contracts that will mean that no waste in the county will go to landfill from 2024.
- £4.6m of extra funding into highways revenue budgets to cover inflation and ensure we can continue repairs and maintenance work on our roads.
- £36.4m to continue our work to improve recycling centres and make our waste infrastructure fit for the future
- Funding to continue moving forward the Brookfield Riverside and Garden Village developments in Broxbourne
- Continuing to invest in our website to enable more people to carry out transactions online.

The county council is also investing in projects that will ensure future savings. This investment will go into a number of projects that will help residents remain independent for longer, keep families together through early intervention schemes and save taxpayers money by transforming partnership working.

HCC accounts for 75pc of the council tax bill, 60 pc of which goes to adult and childrens services. Out of the remainder goes to services such as Highways, Fire Service, Waste disposal and recycling, Public Health, and Planning, and libraries

EHDC is the Council Tax Collection Authority and pays out benefits. Also responsible for Waste Collection, Parks and Open Spaces. Leisure Centres, Theatre, Cultural services, Environmental health social prescribing, Planning, parking and on street and off street enforcement, licencing, housing options, homelessness support, community engagement, Business support and more.

Gilston Villages 1-6 Outline Application approved and Village 7

This was considered by the committee on 28th February. The Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group were give 12 minutes to address the committee as was I. Residents and other groups had a lesser amount of time. We had a number of concerns around affordable homes, delays in delivering infrastructure that would protect Pye Corner, cumulative impact of traffic, flood risk, air quality, health provision, education and more. Officers responded to all points but it seemed to me that whatever the concerns are that they will be addressed later. It was approved by majority, with two against and one abstention. I still have some strong concerns over the impact of around 25,000 houses across the sub region of Harlow, Gilston, Ware and Hertford and how it will be managed, monitored and enforced. Village 7 Outline was heard on 23rd March and also approved

Strategic migration

The Hertfordshire Strategic Migration Steering Group continues to lead on Hertfordshire's coordinated partnership response to the arrival of and support for refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan and Ukraine. Currently there are 1277 Ukrainians in Hertfordshire on the Homes for Ukraine scheme and work to increase the number of hosts families has been successful in finding a further 58 hosts. A new support package to assist refugees who wish to stay in Hertfordshire to move into the private rental sector is planned. People continue to seek asylum in the UK and there are currently 12 hotels in Hertfordshire being used as temporary accommodation for them. The County Council observed the national minute's silence at 11am on Friday 24 February to mark the one-year anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Recycling Centres, Residents Only. The first is the decision to go for residents only at our recycling Centres. Many of our neighbouring authorities have already gone down this route, the most recent Essex effective from this month. Some of our Recycling Centres are close to our borders and where a substantial proportion of the users are from outside of Hertfordshire. There are of course locations where the reverse is true but the result is a net import of around 20pc of recycling centre waste. Royston, Bishops Stortford, Rickmansworth being the locations where non resident usage is around 50pc or more.

Estimates of potential cost saving are a conservative £450,000.

Proposed Implementation Following a communication plan to widely advertise the policy change, users will be asked to bring proof of address when visiting the RCs. In addition to clear 'advanced warning' signage leading up to any centre, staff will greet cars near the entrance and, if proof of address is not available, can access a simple postcode 'council checker' to ascertain if residents pay their Council Tax to a Hertfordshire authority. It is proposed that additional temporary staff are deployed across the network. This will be prioritised according to the RCs with the highest non-resident usage. Pending a 6 monthly review, permanent staffing levels may be

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amended and/or checking proof of address handed over to RC site operatives to perform ad-hoc spot checks. This will be informed by data collection at the entrance to each RC.

Neighbouring Local Authorities have been sent a letter informing them of the decision. Our decision leaves the way open for us to discuss reciprocal arrangements with neighbouring Authorities so long as they are cost neutral. An example could be with Essex for Bishops Stortford and Harlow, where each has a substantial usage from across the respective borders.

ILACS INSPECTION (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) – OUTSTANDING Following a two week inspection in January the much anticipated **OFSTED** report was published on 10/03/23. **Hertfordshire County Council Children's Services has been rated OUTSTANDING**, placing it amongst the best in the UK. (As at 31 March 2022, only 13% of Local Authorities were judged outstanding).

The new judgement, an improvement on the council's previous Good rating, is wonderful for Hertfordshire's children and families and CS staff, and is the result of much hard work carried out in CS since 2018, including innovation, investment and a drive for continuous improvement; and reflects the excellent leadership of Jo Fisher (EXEC Director Children's Services), and her senior leadership team – El Mayhew, Miranda Gittos, Hero Slinn and Simon Newland.

OFSTED focused on four areas of inspection:

- The Impact of leaders on Social work Practice for Children and Families – **OUTSTANDING**
- The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection – **GOOD**
- The experiences and progress of children in care – **OUTSTANDING**
- The experiences and progress of care leavers - **GOOD**

Some info on Highways

- Hertfordshire has 5,100 km of busy roads and 5,600km of footways and cycleways.
- We spend approx. £90m on maintaining the highways infrastructure, including additional investment in drainage and vegetation cut-back.
- Our approach to maintenance is well regarded nationally, ensuring we receive optimal grant funding from Government.
- Hertfordshire is in the top quartile of Authorities in being successful in bidding for funding for such things as Active Travel schemes.
- The condition of our carriageways continues to compare very well to national averages, i.e. A roads, 2% require maintenance against national 4%, B & Cs 4% against 6%, and Us 7% against 15%, the latter as a result of a specific investment of £29m.
- Two of our recent major projects, namely the New River Bridge in Hoddesdon and the A120 Little Hadham Bypass and Flood Alleviation scheme have been delivered, with the A602 upgrade due to complete by late summer, costing well in excess of £100m in total, and residents are now benefitting from the improvements..

My Locality Grants awarded

Applicant organisation	Purpose	amount
HILS (meals on wheels)	Nutrition & Wellbeing Service for older people	£300
Allens Green Village hall	towards fence repairs at hall	£400
Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust Amwell Nature Reserve	towards replacing a boardwalk	£500
<u>Aspects</u>	Crucial Crew work with schools	£300
<u>Sawbridgeworth School Travel Challenge</u>	character costume to promote Active Travel in the schools	£899
Sawbridgeworth Town Twinning Association	language support for Ukrainian refugees	£350
Sawbridgeworth Town Twinning Association	cost of DBS checks for volunteers offering language skills for Ukrainian refugees	£250
St James Church	towards High Wych Community Scarecrow Festival	£300
Wareside School	Towards school uniform following announced closure Wareside School	£1,800
Reedings School	Sustainable gardening project for children	£300
citizens advice East Herts	recruitment & training costs of volunteers	£500
Bobtails play group Stanstead Abbots	equipment for Kitchen	£450
Hailey Centre		£250
<u>Bishops Wellbeing</u>	equipment for new centre in Sawbridgeworth	£350

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Educational Diversity CIC	Providing Extra Curriculum support in teaching black and diverse history to schools.	£250
sustainable Sawbridgeworth	heat sensor for residents to detect heat loss in homes	£635
Fawbert & Barnard School	Maypole restoration	£450
Herts and Ware Schools Music Association	music festival for schools	£300
Mandeville School	early years equipment	£300
Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club	nets	£300
isabel Hospice	towards community care support	£300
Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational	towards energy costs	£516

East Herts District Council Portfolio

Sports and Leisure. New Grange Paddocks attendances now higher than pre covid. New 3G pitch completed. Hartham Leisure upgrade due to be completed by late summer. Sawbridgeworth Leventhorpe shower refresh to take place.

Arts and Culture. Hertford Theatre expansion well under way with ambition to have a phased opening starting from Summer 2024. Cultural Strategy. Strategic Group and Delivery Group established. Awarded around £260,000 from the UK shared prosperity fund to provide grants for groups wishing to expand accessibility for arts and culture. Specifically includes support for LGBT.

Parks and open spaces. Pishiobury Park was eventually awarded Local Nature Reserve status and currently undergoing a refresh of the Greenspace Action Plan. Also a new GAP for Southern Country Park. Work currently underway via lottery funding to upgrade facilities in Castle Park Bishops Stortford.

Health and Wellbeing. Healthy Hubs Social prescribing is growing the number of people it refers to organisations and partner agencies that can help in a wide variety of health and personal issues. Updated Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being drafted to include reference and linking to all of the community services as described above that contribute to physical and mental wellbeing.

Eric Buckmaster April 2023

8 Open Forum

Parishioners raised concerns about the ongoing situation by Greenacres on Ware Road. This was considered an unacceptable land grab and to date no enforcement action has been taken, despite much lobbying of HCC Highways and EHDC. It was urged that an official complaint be raised relating to breaches of the planning approval, including visibility splays being dangerously breached. It was strongly felt that responses to these concerns being raised with officers by residents has been woefully inadequate.

A parishioner asked why the Parish Council had £40k in the bank and what it is proposing to do with the money. In the light of that it was further questioned why, the precept isn't being frozen? The Chairman replied that the Parish Council considered freezing the precept but decided against it in order to retain adequate reserves for contingencies. These include a commitment to help fund new playground equipment at the playing field, to fund the litter picker now that EHDC will no longer provide a grant, and to ensure tree safety maintenance can be covered where the Parish Council has responsibility. It also has to keep an election reserve since EHDC will now recharge all election costs to the parish.

It was suggested that a village "Tidy Day" could be arranged. It was also commented that the old railway bridge should have a crash barrier installed to deal with the ongoing crashes by vehicles coming from the direction of Wareside.

It was suggested that there is an increase in light pollution and this should be considered when looking at planning applications, including giving full regard to light pollution regulations.

Cllr Ian Collins said he did a speeding survey some time ago that indicated 60% of speeding cars came from neighbouring villages. The Chairman said that if it could be given speed sign information, he would take it forward at a Parish Council Meeting.

There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.02pm.

Signed.....Dated.....