



OUTLOOK

HELP THIS WINTER

HAVE YOUR SAY

CHANGES TO BIN COLLECTIONS

WHAT'S ON

Walk with
The Snowman™ in
Hitchin this Christmas!

Turn to our
back page to
find out more.

THERE'S SNOW PLACE LIKE

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

FROM THE LEADER “ ”

Season’s greetings and welcome to your Winter 2022 Outlook. We’ve been busy at the council working on the Local Plan, setting our vision for Churchgate in Hitchin, and scoping what the future of our recycling and waste service will look like.

We know this winter will be hard for many people as interest rates, inflation and prices continue to rise. If you’re struggling, please know you’re not alone and help is available. Check out our Easing the Squeeze piece on the next page or contact us and we’ll do our best to help.

With darker nights and colder temperatures, our thoughts go to anyone who is concerned about

their housing situation and worried that they may not have a bed for the night. If you or anyone you know is in this situation, please go to page 4 for details of who to contact.

Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg – Leader of the Council

As Elizabeth mentioned, we’ll be starting a new waste and recycling contract in 2025.

Over the summer, councillors from all parties attended workshops to look at changes we could make to bring you better services and reduce our impact on the environment. There’s more about this on pages 10 and 11, along with some handy tips on how you can have a greener, more sustainable Christmas.



Cllr Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg
Photo: Rebecca Stewart

Cllr Ruth Brown

We’re really pleased with the progress we’re making towards our target of being a net zero carbon district by 2040. From expanding our electric vehicle fleet to creating additional wildflower meadows across the district, as you’ll see on pages 12 and 13, we’re making steady progress, and of course, have the ambition to keep doing more.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy Christmas.

Cllr Ruth Brown - Deputy Leader

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CONTACTING NORTH HERTS COUNCIL

Most North Herts Council services can be accessed online. Find out the date of your next waste collection, apply for a licence, report an issue, register to vote or pay a bill, all through our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk



OTHER WAYS TO CONTACT US:

Phone: 01462 474000


 www.facebook.com/northhertsDC

 @NorthHertsDC

 @northhertsdc

- North Herts Council is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our services easy for all residents to use. If English is not your first language or you have difficulty reading this document please contact us to discuss how we may be able to assist you.

- Please call: 01462 474000, or email service@north-herts.gov.uk Textphone (for textphone users) on: 01462 474800

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“ MAKING NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE A VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PROSPER ”

Help this winter

As the cost of living continues to soar, the council is working with partners to see how we can help our communities and lessen the impact on them. We are regularly updating our Easing the squeeze campaign with the latest information, help and advice.

If you are struggling and need help, please contact us, your housing provider or Citizens Advice North Herts. If you are in crisis please call HertsHelp on **0300 123 4044**.



Energy bills support scheme



You should have already seen some credit in your energy account from the government. A non-repayable discount totalling £400 is being given to all households with a domestic electricity connection. £66 should have been applied to your energy bill in October and November, and then £67 from December to March. If not, please contact your energy supplier.

Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire



This independent local charity is working hard to offer free, confidential and impartial information and advice on a range of issues including benefits, debt, budgeting, housing, relationships and employment. They provide face-to-face advice in Letchworth and Royston and are expanding their outreach services in Hitchin as well as villages thanks to some recent council funding. They also provide advice via email, telephone and video call.

Love Food, Hate Waste



If you haven't already, it's time to dust off your slow cooker or take advantage of an air fryer as energy efficient ways of batch cooking and using up what's in your fridge! This campaign from climate action charity WRAP provides lots of tips and recipes to make the most of your food (and money!) including 'Nine ways to save on your food shop'.

Support for older people



Age UK supports older people by delivering services that help make later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience. This includes providing local weekly 10 to 3 lunch clubs with a hot meal and opportunities to socialise. They also offer a reliable handyperson service, carry out winter wellbeing checks, and this winter can provide physical measures to prevent draughts and maximise heat dispersion and efficiency from radiators – these measures are free, funded by Hertfordshire County Council.

Food and milk for young families



If you are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old, and are in receipt of certain benefits, you could be entitled to a NHS Healthy Start prepaid card worth £4.25 per week (£220 a year), to spend on healthy food and milk. If you are entitled to Healthy Start, you will also get free vitamins designed to help pregnant and breastfeeding women and growing children. Apply online at: www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/

Heat the human, not the home



Martin Lewis' Money Saving Expert team has investigated the cheapest ways of keeping yourself warm, rather than your whole home. The guide provides some options and information including a table of heating methods from hot water bottles to electric blankets, their initial cost and the cost per hour.

More information is available on our website:



www.north-herts.gov.uk/squeeze

We are regularly updating our Easing the squeeze campaign with the latest information, help and advice, just visit www.north-herts.gov.uk/squeeze



Helping the homeless this winter

Every year, the council provides advice and assistance to local people who are homeless or who are facing the threat of losing their home. So far this year, we have worked with more than 350 households who have applied for help and provided many more with advice and assistance over the phone. Wherever possible, we will try to help residents to remain in their own homes, working with local organisations such as the Black Squirrel Credit Union, Citizens Advice, Herts Young Homeless and Survivors Against Domestic Abuse.

The council doesn't have its own stock of accommodation and affordable homes in the social and private rented sectors are extremely scarce. We strongly

encourage anyone who is in housing difficulty to approach us as soon as possible so we can try to help them retain their current home or to review potential options.

Sadly, there will be some households who find themselves without a roof over their heads this winter. The council has a legal duty to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families with dependent children and we also work with local specialist organisations including Haven First and Keystage Housing to provide support and emergency accommodation for single homeless people. This service is especially important during the coldest winter months to prevent people sleeping rough in freezing conditions.

If you have any concerns about someone sleeping rough in the district, please report this to StreetLink on their website: www.streetlink.org.uk. They will notify us and our outreach service, so that we can find the individual and support them.

If you are worried that you may not have a bed for the night, or have any other concerns about your housing, please contact us through our online portal or call us on **01462 474000**. More information is also available at: www.north-herts.gov.uk/housing



How you can help the homeless this winter

Did you know that you can play our North Herts Community Lottery and help over 30 local causes, including Feed Up Warm Up and Herts Young Homeless who support the homeless in North Herts?

Feed Up Warm Up, provides a safe, welcoming space for the homeless in our community, one evening a week, where guests can pop by to enjoy a hot meal and a chat, hear some live music, and find practical and emotional help. Shayne Cole, founder, said: "We need your help so we can continue to offer and even expand our service. Thank you for your support and good luck!"

Herts Young Homeless aims to prevent youth homelessness in

the county, providing a number of services including an advice hub, mediation for young people and their families, specialist outreach work and their 'Future Roots' house, a home from home to help vulnerable young people transition from homelessness to independent living. Caroline Neill, Head of Fundraising & Communications, said: "We need your help to be able to continue to provide these services to enable young people to make positive, informed choices and help those in times of crisis and beyond. Thank you for choosing to support us by playing this lottery and we wish you the very best of luck!"

Play today

All you need to do to support Feed Up Warm Up, Herts Young

Homeless or the many other local causes our Community Lottery supports is visit www.northhertscommunitylottery.co.uk. Tickets cost just £1, with 50p going directly to local good causes.

Players have a one in 50 chance of winning a prize, with a jackpot of £25,000.

Know a local cause we can help?

Do you know of a local charity, community group or association in need? Tell them to get in touch and sign up (for free!) as a good cause

www.northhertscommunitylottery.co.uk/good-causes.



HAVE YOUR SAY



We want to hear from you, our residents, more regularly. You know the district best and we want to provide you with as many opportunities as possible to have your say on issues that are important to you.

The feedback you give us enables us to find out what we're doing well, where we could do better and, crucially what is important to you so that we can shape our services in the future.

SHARING THE RESULTS



You've already helped us immensely with your feedback on a number of future initiatives since the last edition of Outlook magazine. These include:

- **The creation of a soft play area at North Herts Leisure centre** – 91% of the 1,191 residents who responded were in favour and work is due to start before Christmas. Find out more on page 7.
- **Telling us about your recycling habits** – 76% of respondents said 'I care about the environment and climate change and do my bit'. 84% of respondents agreed the council should do more to make people recycle more and reduce waste and 74% of residents agreed the council should invest in or change services to reduce its carbon footprint.

Thank you also to those who fed back to us as part of our bi-annual District Wide telephone survey in the spring/summer, with 800 residents taking part. You told us you'd like to be involved, consulted and engaged with more on decisions affecting the district and in particular, your local community in the future. You also told us:

- 94% of those surveyed were satisfied with North Herts as a place to live and 73% satisfied with the council in general. 55% agreed that we provide value for money.
- You'd like to see improvements in: street cleaning, the look of the area, in particular fly-tipping and potholes; and you'd like our communications to be clear and transparent.
- We also need to improve our service when you contact us, as the satisfaction rate of the residents surveyed who had contacted us in the last year has fallen by 4% to 66%.

For more details on all of the above, please visit: www.north-herts.gov.uk/haveyoursay



As you may have seen in the news, we have acquired the Churchgate Shopping Centre in Hitchin and would love to know what you would like to see in Hitchin Town Centre in the future by filling in our quick 2-minute survey which runs until **31 January 2023**. You can access the Churchgate survey by scanning this QR code or visiting www.north-herts.gov.uk/consultations.



We're just at the start of this process and welcome any ideas you have. We can't promise we'll be able to do everything, but your ideas will help us shape the vision for this exciting development for North Herts.

KEEP IN TOUCH



Your feedback is important to us and we'd love to hear your views and keep you informed on the progress of projects and next steps on services. If you'd like to have your say on future decisions for your community and be the first to hear about potential new projects in the district, sign up today at www.north-herts.gov.uk/haveyoursay

Thank you. We look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Slide into winter with SLL

Skate Letchworth is returning to Letchworth Outdoor Pool for the festive season! The covered real ice rink, operated by Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL), returns until Sunday 8 January and promises to be a magical and festive experience for all.

Whether it's your first time on the ice or you're a seasoned pro, it's a fun activity for adults and children to enjoy together. There will also be the chance to indulge in a festive treat with the café serving a range of hot food and drinks. It really is the perfect activity for the whole family to get into the Christmas spirit. Booking online is recommended. For more information visit www.sll.co.uk/skate

James Bliss, Regional Contract Manager for SLL, said: "We are delighted to see the return of the ice rink to Letchworth Outdoor Pool again after a well-received season last year. We can't wait to welcome back families to enjoy the magical experience and celebrate the festive season".

DIVE INTO 2023

It's not all about the frozen ice... North Herts Leisure Centre, Hitchin Swimming Centre and Royston Leisure Centre have a great range of swimming sessions available throughout the week, and if you've got a swim membership it's never been easier to take a dip.

Swimming is a great way to exercise for the whole family and it doesn't matter

what the weather outside is doing! Swimming releases endorphins that help us feel happier and improves our wellbeing. SLL's pools also offer AquaEd swimming lessons for 50 weeks of the year for all ages, from just 6 months to adults.

For the latest offers and information on how to join your local centre visit: www.sll.co.uk/join



Book Now!



SLL

Skate

LETCHWORTH

OPEN UNTIL SUN 8 JAN 23

Get festive at Letchworth Outdoor Pool, the covered real ice rink is back on the terrace this Christmas!

www.sll.co.uk/skate



SWIM MEMBERSHIPS

Not only is swimming great for our physical health, it also benefits our mental health. Swimming releases endorphins that help us feel happier and improves our wellbeing, it's also great for brain health by increasing blood flow to the brain, protecting it from toxins.

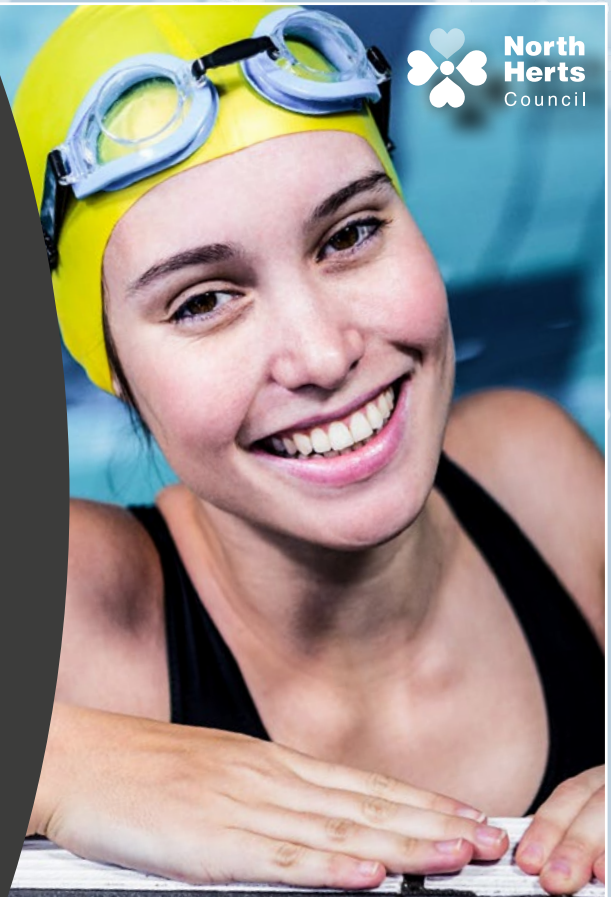
Enjoy the benefits of swimming at Hitchin Swimming Centre, North Herts Leisure Centre or Royston Leisure Centre with a swim membership!



NORTH HERTS
LEISURE CENTRE



www.sll.co.uk/join 



Soft play coming to North Herts Leisure Centre

The council is building a brand new soft play facility at North Herts Leisure Centre on Baldock Road following a public consultation.

The dedicated play space for families with toddlers and young children will enhance the range of leisure facilities on offer, and increase usage at the centre generating additional income for the site.

Over 1,000 people responded to a survey we carried out in August, with overwhelming support for the facility, which will be an extension of the centre and convert two of the four squash courts and changing rooms located in the same area. While we appreciate this will lead to a reduction in the number of squash courts and changing space available, the remaining two squash courts and other changing rooms offer adequate provision based on usage data.

This new play space will enhance the range of leisure facilities on offer



Community wellbeing days

from the North Herts Healthy Hub

INCLUDING FREE REFRESHMENTS

Hitchin

Hitchin Town Hall Brand St, Hitchin SG5 1JE

13 January - Healthy cooking on a budget - **10am**

17 February - Creative crafts with the Creation Station (suitable for children aged 10 and under) - **10am**

10 March - Movement and music for under 5s - **9.30am**

10 March - Low impact physical activity session for adults - **11.30am**



Letchworth

Mrs Howard Memorial Hall

Norton Way South, Letchworth Garden City SG6 1NX

10 January - Movement and music for under 5s - **9.30**

10 January - Building self esteem with Mind in Mid Herts - **11am**

24 January - Fun with food for under 5s - **9.30am or 10.30am**

7 February - Pottery painting for adults **10am**

14 February - Creative crafts with the Creation Station (suitable for children aged 10 and under) - **10am**

7 March - Exquisite cupcake decorating for adults - **10am**

21 March - Movement and music for under 5s - **9.30am**

21 March - Low impact physical activity for adults - **10.30am**



Royston

Market Hill Rooms

Fish Hill, Royston SG8 9DW

4 January - Fun with food for under 5s - **10am**

18 January - Exquisite cupcake decorating for adults - **10am**

25 January - Winter energy saving tips with Citizens Advice North Herts and Green Heat Coop **1pm**

1 February - Adult craft session - **10am**

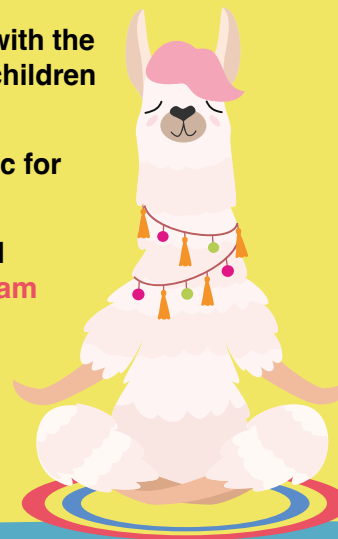
15 February - Creative crafts with the Creation Station (suitable for children aged 10 and under) - **10am**

1 March - Movement and music for under 5s - **10am**

1 March - Low impact physical activity session for adults - **11am**

15 March - Fun with food for under 5s - **10am**

29 March - Pottery painting for adults - **10am**



www.healthyhubnorthherts.co.uk

Numbers are limited so must be pre-booked by emailing healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk or calling 01462 474111

HERTS CARELINE WINS TEAM OF THE YEAR!



Seeing off competition from two police forces, Herts Careline has been awarded Team of the Year at the national Control Room Awards 2022!

The awards recognise the inspiring work of control room teams and individuals as well as the selfless service they provide to the public. More than 170 entries were received from over 40 organisations including the police, ambulance and fire and rescue services, councils and private care providers across the UK. Herts Careline won its category beating teams from Lincolnshire Police and Durham Constabulary.

The judges said: "The Herts Careline team really stood out for the way they handled the additional pressures of call

handling during the pandemic. The control room team performs a vital role supporting thousands of people with medical conditions and vulnerabilities, and delivers outstanding results. The team is clearly dedicated and take great pride in supporting their customers."

Cllr Judi Billing, North Herts Council's Executive Member for Community Engagement, added: "I'm absolutely delighted that the Herts Careline team has been recognised for their dedication to the local community. It is thoroughly deserved and appreciated, and really fitting that they won in their 40th anniversary year. They provide a crucial service, helping people to live more independently in their own homes, and giving them and their families peace of mind."

Herts Careline's community alarm and telecare service provides reassurance and freedom to over 16,000 residents across the county, with support and advice available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from the control room team based at the council in Letchworth who take in the region of 1,500 calls each day. It provides assistive technology such as pendant alarms, fall detectors, door sensors, smoke detectors and epilepsy monitors.

If you or someone you know needs support to live independently at home, please visit www.care-line.co.uk call **0300 999 2 999** or email carelinesupport@north-herts.gov.uk



Are you ready for winter?

From staying well in cold weather to taking care of your family, neighbours and home, the Met Office offers lots of advice on staying safe this winter:

- Check your heating and water pipes, and know where your stop tap is
- Check on vulnerable neighbours
- In the event of a power cut call 105 free of charge
- Before strong winds, secure or store garden furniture, parasols and trampolines
- Have a 'grab bag' of basic supplies to hand
- Plan ahead for flooding and sign up for flood warnings

More information: www.metoffice.gov.uk/weatherready



Changes to bin collections **coming in 2025**

From 2025, we will be collecting your purple bin for general waste every three weeks to help increase recycling and reduce the council's carbon emissions to fight climate change, as well as reduce pressure on our budgets in the current landscape of rising energy and other costs. Food waste will continue to be collected every week and recycling and garden waste every fortnight.

Doing this will reduce the cost of collecting your waste by around £270k per year. It'll also reduce our carbon output by 60 tonnes – that's the same as driving over 100,000 miles in an average car. This will result in better air quality and help us work towards our target to become a carbon-neutral council by 2030.

We know it might seem daunting having to wait longer between purple bin collections, but we'll work with you to help you adapt to this change, and will support larger families. Research and feedback from other areas already on three-weekly collections show that less frequent collections encourages

people to recycle more, so we can also reduce what we send to landfill.

Councillor Amy Allen, Executive Member for Recycling and Waste, said: "An increasing number of councils in England and Wales already have three-weekly collections for general waste, with some in Wales and Scotland having monthly collections. We know some residents might need more support, such as those living in larger households, those with multiple children using disposable nappies, or people with other special waste needs, and we will provide support to those households".

A series of cross-party workshops with local councillors helped shape the service change, as well as the results from our recent public consultation in which residents were asked to tell us their recycling habits – thanks for taking part if you completed the survey. It was particularly encouraging that nearly 80% of respondents said their purple bin was substantially less than full after two weeks – some even said theirs was empty!

The new collection arrangements were agreed by the council's Cabinet on 25 October and will come into effect in 2025 when the current contract with our service provider Urbaser ends.

Plastic film/wrap

From 2025, we will start taking plastic film/wrap also known as soft plastic in your grey recycling bin – at the moment the only option is to use supermarket drop-off points.



Christmas tree recycling

5th-10th JAN

Book your collection by 3rd January, midday.

Register online www.ghhospicecare.org.uk/trees
01462 679540

Sponsor: Vanstone Park GARDEN CENTRE

With thanks to: John O'Conner GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, settle.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATORY
Registered Charity No. 295257



Top tips to reduce the waste in your purple bin during the festive season

Here are some top tips from our recycling team to help you reduce the amount of waste that goes into your purple bin.

Use your food waste caddy

Get into the habit of using your food caddy as this will have the biggest impact.

We collect food waste weekly so there is no need for any food waste to go into your purple bin at all. All your food waste can go into your food caddy including vegetable peelings, turkey, meat bones and much more, reducing what's in your purple bin by up to 22%!

Visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com for tips on how to reduce food waste in the first place and for festive recipes to use up leftovers, including potato peel vegetable curry!

Choose wrapping paper that is recyclable



This can go into your grey recycling bin. Avoid buying paper coated with plastic film (generally sparkly or metallic designs have this coating) as these cannot be recycled. A lot of shops are even selling wrapping paper without the plastic sleeve!

Or to reduce waste completely why not try wrapping gifts in decorative fabric that can be reused (Furoshiki) or gifting in reusable bags?

Look out for products without lots of packaging



It's so tempting when we see offers for chocolate selection packs in supermarkets, but these often come with a lot of plastic packaging compared to the chocolate. For a sweet treat without all the plastic why not opt for a foil wrapped Santa or reindeer? The foil can be easily recycled in your grey bin, and you'll get more chocolate for your money!

Wash, squash and recycle

Recycle as much as you can by using your grey bin to recycle. Don't forget to wash and squash, crush, collapse, squish and flatten plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, cartons and tins, and break cardboard down. You can also recycle a number of items at some supermarkets and local drop-off points such as toiletries, toothpaste tubes, dental items,

roll-on deodorants and makeup – and even Pringles tubes.

If you still have excess waste this Christmas period, please take it to your nearest recycling centre: www.north-herts.gov.uk/recycling-centres

Recycle your real Christmas tree

If you are subscribed to our garden waste service for your brown bin you can place your real Christmas trees beside your brown bin for collection. You can also sign up for the Garden House Hospice scheme – see the previous page for more information.

Christmas collection dates:

Don't forget there are no garden waste collections for two weeks after Christmas so we can prioritise the collections of purple and grey bins.



To check your collection days, look out for your Christmas bin hanger, visit our website: north-herts.gov.uk/binday, or scan the QR code. **Please read carefully and take note of revised collection dates.**

Councils awarded grant to tackle sticky situation caused by chewing gum

North Herts and East Herts councils have been awarded £60k from the Chewing Gum Task Force to tackle chewing gum pollution in our town centres.

The Chewing Gum Task Force, established by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is run by environmental charity, Keep Britain Tidy. Chewing

gum litter wastes millions of pounds of taxpayers' money every year; the annual clean-up cost across the UK is estimated at £7 million.

The funding will enable the council to carry out more deep cleaning to remove chewing gum from pavements, and to install new signage to encourage long-term behaviour change.

Follow us on social media for updates on all-things waste.

 @NorthHertssDC

 northhertsdc

 northhertsdc





FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE



As we come to the end of the year, there is lots we have done and are planning to do to help fight climate change and improve the local environment. We have recently reviewed our Climate Change Strategy to ensure we are doing what we can to reduce our carbon emissions – to become a carbon-neutral council by 2030 – and be more sustainable.

Revving to go electric

New electric vehicle charge points have been installed at the council’s main office in Letchworth for council vehicles, taking the total number of sockets to six. The new chargers, which will also be used by Herts Careline, will enable us to expand our electric vehicle fleet.

Soaking up the sun

Through a county-wide scheme, we were delighted to see just over 13,000 people register their interest to bulk buy solar panels – the more people who signed up, the cheaper it will be. The deadline to register has passed and registered households are being emailed a personal recommendation specific to the details they initially submitted. There is no obligation to go any further if you have changed your mind. Elsewhere the scheme has saved residents 20-35% against the market average.

Flower power

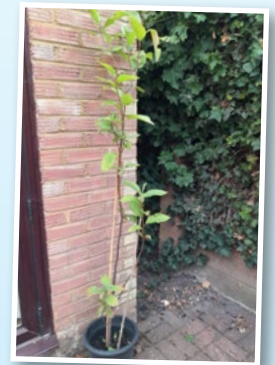
Wildflower meadows and areas have been cultivated throughout the district to increase local biodiversity, our strongest natural defence against climate change.

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth – the more different types of animal, plant, and fungi in a given area, the better. It is the backbone of life itself providing so many things we depend on such as clean air, food and water. Restoring and improving biodiversity is our strongest natural defence against climate change. The different plants in a wildflower meadow provide food and shelter for pollinators such as bees, as well as insects, birds, and small mammals like hedgehogs – all of which form a vital part of our ecosystem. Areas of wildflowers, or any grassland, also help store carbon from the

air which improves air quality and prevents it from being released into the atmosphere.

Tree planting

It’s wonderful to see some of the trees we gave away last year have established and are growing well. Hertfordshire County

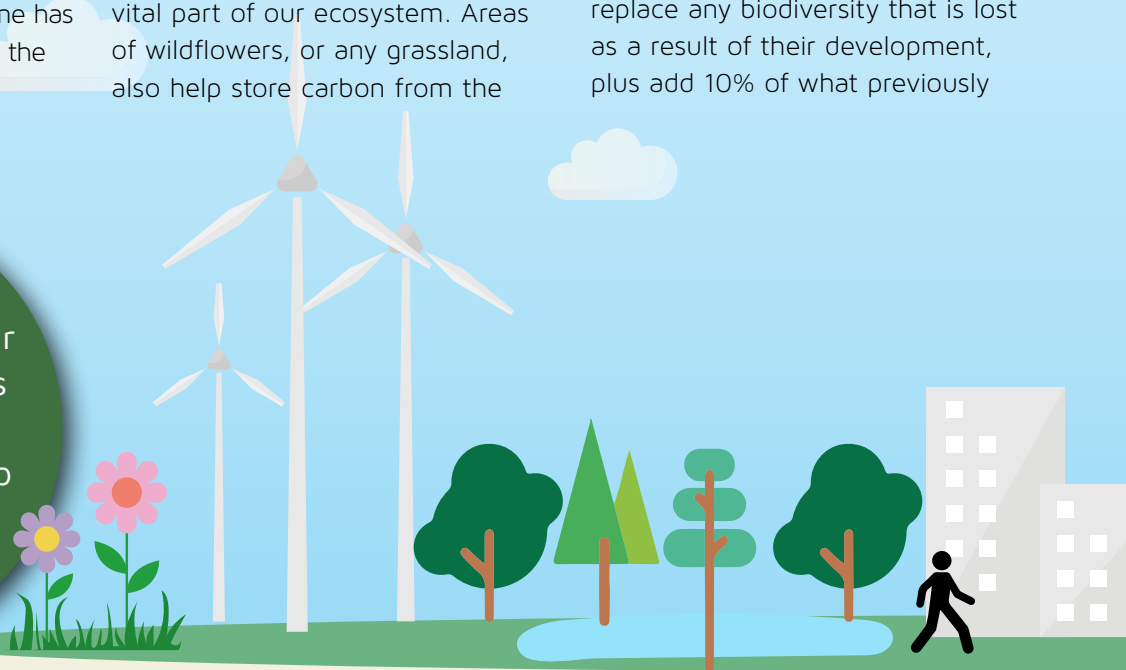


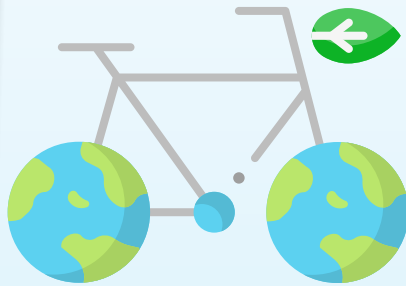
Council also offered trees to residents this year, which were snapped up very quickly!

Greener developments

Reinforced by our recently adopted Local Plan, developers will have to replace any biodiversity that is lost as a result of their development, plus add 10% of what previously

Additional wildflower meadows and areas are being created across the district to help increase local biodiversity





existed on the site (known as a 10% biodiversity net gain). We will also ensure developments are designed to encourage walking and cycling.

Walking and cycling plan

We recently consulted on a walking and cycling plan which set out ideas for creating safer pavements, footpaths, pedestrian crossings and cycle routes to help improve the options for sustainable travel within North Herts. Look out for more news in the new year.

Cleaner air

The council is working with other districts and the county council on a campaign to raise awareness of the effects of poor air quality and encourage behaviour change such as ditching the car and walking and cycling instead, especially for shorter distances, turning off your engine when stationary for more than a couple of minutes and reducing the use of wood-burning stoves.

Happy eco Christmas!

Christmas can be a time for excess – make sure you don't overindulge the planet! See our top tips for having a more sustainable festive season on page 11.

Get involved

The council works with local groups and takes part in sustainability events and we also hold a regular Environment Panel which you can get involved in. Look out for updates on our social media channels or visit our website.

More information:
www.north-herts.gov.uk/climatechange




Reinforced by our recently approved Local Plan, developers will have to replace any biodiversity that is lost as a result of their development



Recent area grants benefit wide range of communities

A number of local groups have been awarded funding as part of the council's community grants programme which is distributed through five area committees.

Imajica Theatre Company – £1,340 towards this year's Christmas community panto at venues across Letchworth.

National Childbirth Trust (NCT) North Herts – £920 towards their local breastfeeding and postnatal support group 'Letchworth Bumps and Babies'.



Nova Wellness – £3,500 for wellbeing therapy events in Letchworth and Baldock.



Kimpton Primary School – £657 towards creating a painting station as part of their playground development for key stage 1 (children aged 5-7).

Offley Parish Council – £500 towards a new noticeboard for the village to display community posters promoting local groups and businesses, as well as communicating important dates such as Parish Council meetings and police surgeries.

Health grants awarded



Three community groups have shared £50k from the council's latest round of Health Protection Board (HPB) funding. Hertfordshire's HPB was established in June 2020 led by the county's Director of Public Health, with rounds of money available to community and voluntary organisations to ensure they remain viable and sustainable during and after the Covid pandemic.

Citizens Advice North Herts (CANH)

CANH was awarded nearly £20k towards a post-Covid rural outreach project which will help them to continue raising awareness of their vital advice service, especially in rural areas of the district which have relatively high levels of vulnerable residents and isolation.

Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre

The day centre in Letchworth which has provided essential companionship and support for lonely and older residents for the last 70 years, received £15,651 to help employ a Centre Manager.

PoetsIN

This creative mental health charity was awarded £15k to deliver a series of wellbeing workshops and mentoring to support people with mental health issues – the majority of funding will go towards helping young people, with a fifth going towards working with older people.



Breachwood Green Charity

Group – £369 to support their work, specifically annual insurance for litter picking, and hall hire and refreshments for two 'pop up' coffee mornings to encourage social interaction and build community resilience.



Make Lunch Royston – £500 towards a cinema trip to take 45 adults and 90 children to the Royston Cinema during October half-term. Make Lunch provides a free of charge, healthy, cooked meal to families in Royston who may struggle to provide this during school holidays.

The deadline for the next round of area grants is **6 January 2023**. For more information on community grants visit www.north-herts.gov.uk/grants, email community@north-herts.gov.uk or call **01462 474000**.

Do you know a North Herts hero?

Do you know someone special in your community who has gone above and beyond and made a real difference to an individual or group? Perhaps an eco-warrior or exceptional young person?

We want to hear from you by 8 January for the 2023 North Herts Heroes.



Find out more: www.north-herts.gov.uk/awards



RURAL spotlight



This new feature sees us throwing a spotlight on the rural areas of our district and the amazing work being carried out by local champions, passionate about improving the lives of their communities.

In this edition, we're focusing on rural climate champions and just three of the many groups making a difference across our district.



Herts CPRE Silver Standard Award winners – for protecting & enhancing Herts countryside and rivers

River Hiz Conservation Group (RHCG)

is a volunteer group, working to a long-term plan set up by the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Ickleford Parish Council, to improve and conserve the fragile ecosystem of The River Hiz (one of only 200 chalk streams in the whole world and North Herts have four) which flows through Ickleford.

RHCG volunteers work on projects to clean up areas of the local rivers to improve and protect the natural habitats and quality of our waterways, and plan activities to raise awareness and knowledge about precious chalk streams, pollution and climate change.

RHCG Coordinator Clare Gooden said, "This precious chalk stream runs through the heart of our community, so we are passionate about our work to both protect and raise awareness of it now and for future generations. If you share the same interests, why not join us? Just email: claregooden@ickleford-pc.gov.uk."

The Breachwood Green Charity Group was set up to protect and enhance the environment of Kings Walden Parish village and hamlets.

They currently have two key climate-related initiatives: To plant more trees in the parish to help with pollution absorption and enhance the Parish's natural habitat. They planted a staggering 250 new trees in the spring. And community-led litter picking to improve their local environment now and for the future. When they first started litter-picking, they were filling 50 bags but thanks to their continued hard work and determination, they're now picking just 20 bags and volunteer numbers have quadrupled!

Trustee Director Joe Graziano said "We're very much a coming together of like-minded people who care. If we stop, what will happen to the natural environment of Kings Walden Parish? We're always looking for new volunteers, so come and be part of our group by emailing contact@breachwood.green."



NHC Chair's 2021 Volunteer Green Achievement Award

The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens

is a voluntary group working alongside the Conservators of Therfield Heath and Greens to promote and encourage the use of, and access to, Therfield Heath. The Heath is a biological Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve on the chalk escarpment north of Therfield, just outside Royston.



Their work includes monthly litter picks to ensure the habitat that the rare flora and fauna thrive in is as undisturbed as possible. They also run events to raise awareness of and increase community engagement in the Heath such as winter wildlife and evening bat walks.

Holly Christie, Chair of The Friends of Therfield Heath and Greens said "We really hope that by conserving, protecting and raising awareness of the Heath we're engaging not only the current community but future generations to come and enjoy it. If you'd like to join us, please become a friend via our website www.friendsoftherfieldheath.org.uk/the-friends."



We know there are many groups carrying out amazing work in their rural communities. If you know of any rural champions deserving their moment in the spotlight, please get in touch by emailing outlook@north-herts.gov.uk.



WHAT'S ON this Winter

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

Running until 29 January
Back to the Drawing Board
'Back to the Drawing Board' is a joint exhibition by two well-known Hitchin-based artists, Carl Laubin & James Willis, who are both fascinated by architecture.

LETCHWORTH

8 - 11 December
Broadway Cinema & Theatre - Cinderella
A rags to riches, heart-warming tale. Packed with spectacular musical numbers, slapstick hilarity and glittering costumes, along with plenty of traditional audience participation.
Book online at www.broadway-letchworth.com

14 - 23 December

Standalone Farm - The Santasaurus Show

Enter the jolly Jurassic and go on a Christmas exploration, meeting lots of fun and friendly dinos on the way.

Tickets available at www.standalonefarm.com

HITCHIN

10 December

Hitchin Market Takeover

Stalls, Santa's Grotto, live music and a bouncy castle are just some of the attractions when the Hitchin Market traders take over the Market Place! 10am-4pm.

17 - 18 December

BIG Weekend

Come and join in a whole host of children's festive activities with the Giant Snow Globe, Land Train and Santa's Grotto, on the Market Place 10am-4pm.



BALDOCK

26 February 2023

The Baldock Beast 1/2 marathon

www.baldockeventsforum.org.uk/baldockbeast



ROYSTON

Royston Arts Festival

Royston Creative are looking for new committee members for the Royston Arts Festival. If you're interested, please contact Carl chair@creativeroyston.org

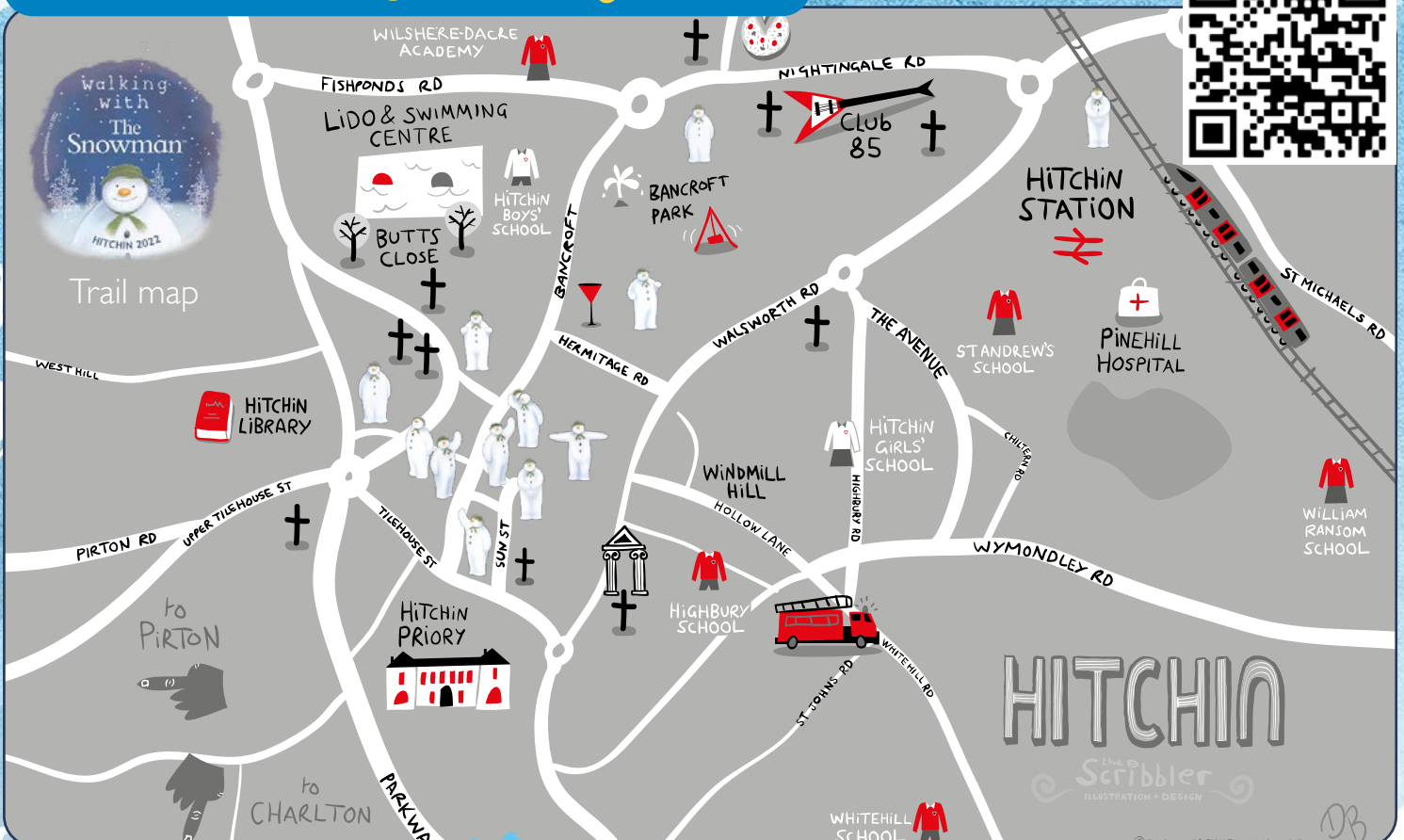


Running until 20 January

Walking with The Snowman™

Based on Raymond Briggs's Christmas classic, The Snowman™ art trail comes to Hitchin thanks to Cala homes. As you can see from the map below, this event will see 12 giant Snowman sculptures decorate Hitchin town centre, creating a trail for families and visitors to the area to follow this winter. Visit www.cala.co.uk/snowmantrailhitchin for details or scan this QR code.

@ Promote your events in our monthly e-newsletter. Just email outlook@north-herts.gov.uk



HITCHIN

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