

COMMUNITY NEWS FROM NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OUTLOOK



YOUR COUNCILLORS

CLIMATE CHANGE

OUTDOOR POOLS

WHAT'S ON



IT'S TIME TO BLOSSOM

IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

Picture credit: Jamie Meek

SUMMER 2021

www.north-herts.gov.uk

FROM THE LEADERS



I want to begin by thanking Martin Stears-Handscomb for all he's done for North Herts, not just as Leader of the Council for the last two years, but his voluntary work, and work with the Black Squirrel Credit Union. He will be missed by us all. It is an honour to be taking over from him as your Leader of North Herts District Council and I will aim to continue the co-operative approach Martin introduced to our Council.

Looking to the future, I'm excited to be working with Paul on a number of projects that will deliver real benefits for us all. You'll see some of the great work we've already started, playing our part to combat climate change – and see how you can make small changes that have a big impact on pages 3, 12 and 13. This includes how we can transition to being

'plastic free'. Carol Stanier, Deputy Executive Member for Recycling & Waste, has led work on this for us and you can find some tricks and tips to help you at home on page 12. And please remember if you enjoy a picnic in one of our green spaces to take your litter home so we can keep our district beautiful.

As your leadership team we're keen to hear your views on all aspects affecting the district, but especially on how we can work together to create a better normal following Covid. Please get in touch with us to share your views, thoughts and suggestions on what's happening in North Herts, and what you'd like to see done differently.

CLLR ELIZABETH DENNIS-HARBURG,
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



Photo: Rebecca Stewart

I am absolutely delighted that we have been able to come to such a positive agreement for the future of North Hertfordshire and look forward to working with Elizabeth. As Liberal Democrats, we always put the community first and this agreement will allow us to do that and deliver some really great projects, to deliver a greener and fairer North Hertfordshire.

CLLR PAUL CLARK,
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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CONTACTING NHDC

Most NHDC 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

- NHDC 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

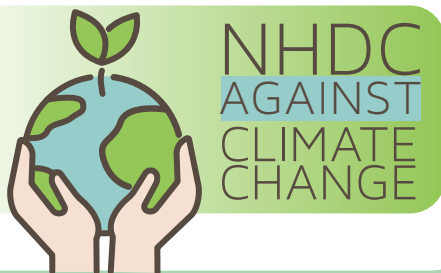


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“ MAKING NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
A VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE,
WORK AND PROSPER ”



We're fighting climate change in North Herts

Since declaring a climate emergency in North Herts in May 2019, we have been developing a Climate Change Strategy, which aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions in the district by 2030.

We have already achieved a number of actions in our fight against climate change, helping us to reduce carbon emissions in the district, including:

- Eliminating the use of single use plastic overshoes for visitors at our swimming centres

- Making changes to our Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy to limit emissions from vehicles
- Engaging with residents, businesses, and partners on clean air, biodiversity and sustainable transport initiatives in the district
- Approving a Council motion to promote renewable energy and support the Government's Local Electricity Bill, which if made law, would make the set up and running costs of selling local

electricity to local customers affordable.

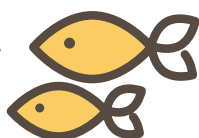
- Converting floodlights on Norton Common in Letchworth from halogen to LED lighting, which will cut energy use by 50%.

Look out in future editions for updates on progress on achieving our climate change objectives.

How can you help fight climate change: *Focus on food*

Sometimes it is difficult to know where to start with what we can do in our daily lives to help tackle the huge issue that is climate change. You can start by making some simple changes to your personal habits. This issue we're focusing on food:

1. Go local and eat what's in season. Did you know that supporting local farmers and buying food sourced locally can be good for the environment too? This is because it reduces the carbon footprint of transporting food from long distances. Why not try to challenge yourself to create a meal entirely out of locally sourced food!



2. Avoid plastic packaging when you shop. Consider keeping shopping bags in your car, coat pocket or handbag so you'll always have them to hand. Buy loose vegetables and try finding food that is not wrapped in plastic where you can to minimise landfill waste.
3. Grow your own food. Home grown food is fresh and nutritious and minimises the carbon footprint from your food being transported... and it's also really fun to grow! If you don't have your own garden, consider a windowsill herb garden, or you could join a local community garden.



4. Cut the waste. Did you know that 30% of all food produced is wasted? Plan ahead, make a shopping list and try buying loose produce so you can choose the exact amount you need. For more hints and tips on reducing your waste, follow www.north-herts.gov.uk/reducingfoodwaste
5. Eat more plants and reduce meals with meat. Did you know that almost 15% of global greenhouse emissions are from meat and dairy production? Consider introducing 'Meat Free Monday' and replace meat with plant proteins like beans, nuts, pulses or meaty mushrooms. If that's too easy, try slowly adding more plant-based meals more often, during the week.



BOOK ONLINE
www.sll.co.uk

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



GET EXCITED FOR SUMMER

Make memories at Hitchin and Letchworth outdoor pools this summer, in our covid secure 50 metre and toddler pools, splash cafes and picnic areas!



swimming memberships available

HITCHIN SWIMMING CENTRE



season tickets available

LETCHWORTH OUTDOOR POOL



Opening times and activities subject to availability based on Government's Covid-19 restrictions.



Fishponds Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1HA
01462 441646 enquiries.hitchin@sll.co.uk



Ikknield Way, Letchworth, Herts, SG6 4UF
01462 684 673 enquiries.letchworth@sll.co.uk



LEISURE CENTRES ARE GO!

“
We hope you will come and enjoy what we have on offer.
”

Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) who manage the North Herts Leisure Centre, Archers Gym, Hitchin Swimming Centre and the Royston Leisure Centre on behalf of the Council, are delighted to be welcoming back the local community after a difficult 12 months and are looking forward to an active summer!

After the Government announced their roadmap out of lockdown, SLL implemented a phased reopening of the leisure centres and introduced a number of robust Covid safety measures, including one way systems, social distancing, continuous cleaning regimes and queuing systems for popular activities.

When the centres opened in April, members had access to the gym and indoor pools, as well as a range of outdoor workout classes including HIIT and circuits. SLL were also delighted to see children returning to their Aqua Ed swimming lessons and weekly sports sessions, including activities such as gymnastics and football.

Extended gym and swimming sessions are now on offer and SLL will be reviewing and adding to their workout class timetable over the coming months.

At the end of May, SLL were thrilled to reopen the outdoor pools at Hitchin and Letchworth for the 2021 season.

Summer activities will be subject to Government guidelines, but plans are in place to offer children Aqua Ed lesson crash courses during the summer holidays, along with the possibility of fun sessions returning to the pools.

Lee Medlock, Regional Contract Manager for SLL said:

“Although some restrictions at the leisure facilities may remain in place over the next few months, the teams are continually reviewing government guidance and working with industry experts to bring back as many activities as possible in a safe and secure way. The latest information on what is available at each centre can be found via www.sll.co.uk. We hope you will come and enjoy what we have on offer.”

CHILDREN'S BOOK EXHIBITION IS SET TO BE A ROARING SUCCESS

North Herts Museum is celebrating the classic children's book, the Tiger Who Came to Tea, with a new free interactive exhibition. This delightful exhibition brings to life a real version of Sophie's kitchen from the book, where children can sit down to have tea with a life-size five foot tiger. Tiger themed activities and story sessions, plus tiger afternoon teas, complete with stripy cakes and Tiger Bread sandwiches, will be sure to keep younger members of the family busy during the school holidays.

The Tiger Who Came to Tea was originally published in 1968, and by the time it reached its 40th anniversary in 2008 it had sold over five million copies and been translated into 11 languages.

Copies of illustrations from the book will be on display and

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This delightful exhibition brings to life a real version of Sophie's kitchen from the book, where children can sit down to have tea with a life-size 5 foot tiger.

”

there is a close up look at the life of the author, Judith Kerr; exploring Judith's childhood and her experiences of having to escape Germany as Hitler came to power, before finally settling in London in 1936.

The exhibition will run from 7 July to 4 September and is on loan from Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books. Tiger afternoon teas must be booked in advance at <https://north-herts-museum.arttickets.org.uk/> For more information visit <https://northhertsmuseum.org/> or call 01462 474554.

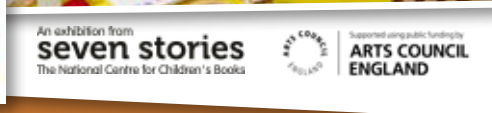


Living lawn-mowers managing NHDC's greenspaces

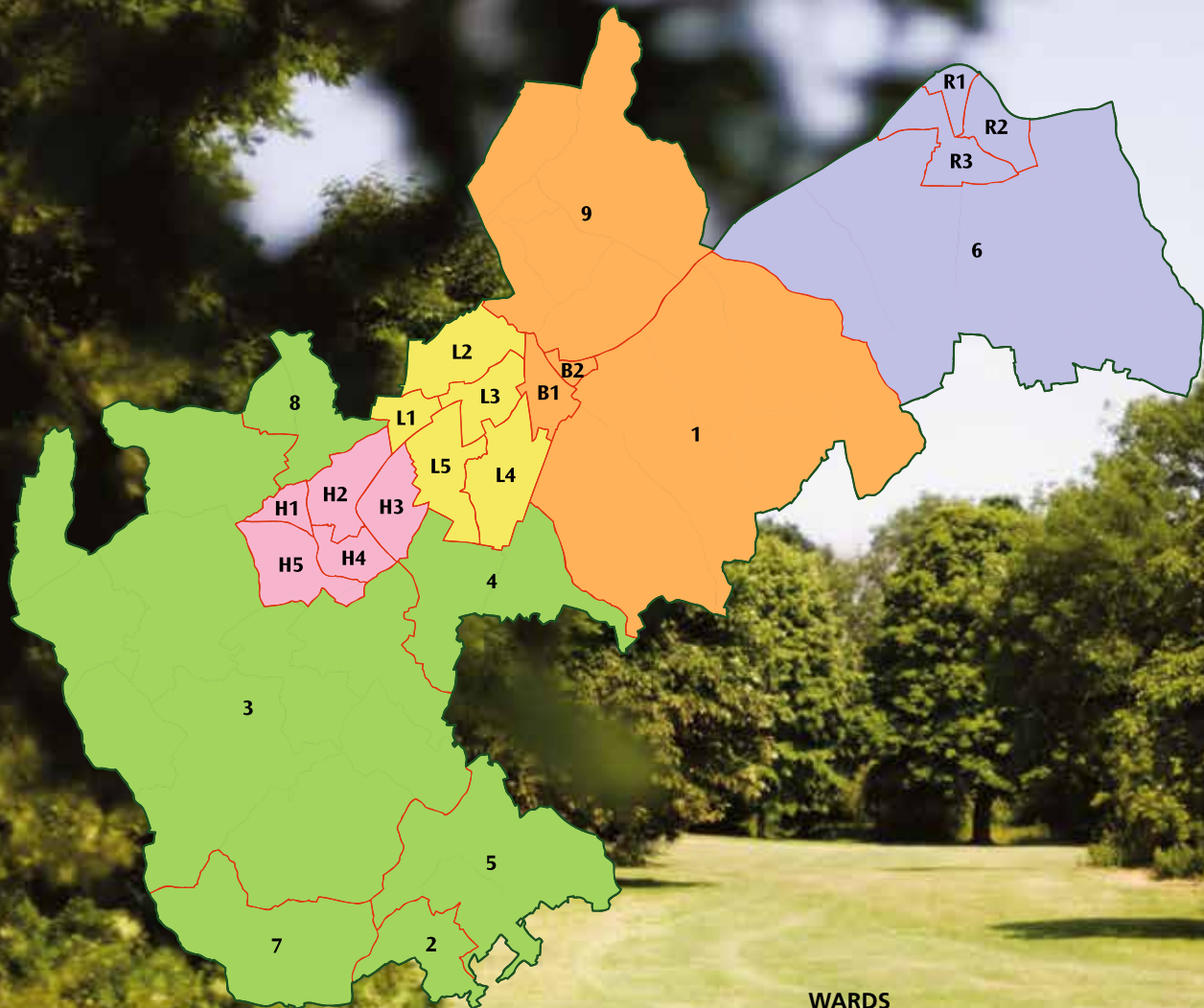


As we move into summer, living lawn-mowers will be helping us manage some of our green spaces. Longhorn cattle graze both Weston Hills and Ivel Springs in Baldock over the summer months, while sheep graze the chalk grassland on Gibbet Hill there too. Having grazing animals manage these sites provides a wide range of benefits for wildlife. Unlike mowing with machinery, grazing is a gradual process which creates a mosaic of habitats with different vegetation heights and structures. This forms different micro habitats for wildlife, allowing insects, small mammals and birds to thrive.

Over at Oughtonhead Common in Hitchin, where longhorn cattle graze year-round, a new cow has recently arrived and is integrating herself into the herd. The main grassland area at Oughtonhead is an ancient medieval grazing common where cattle were grazed by local commoners for many centuries. However, when grazing stopped in the early 20th century, scrub and trees soon grew, threatening the grassland and the wildlife that depended on it. NHDC re-introduced grazing in the 1990s, restoring the historic, traditional management of the Common.



Your North Hertfordshire Councillors 2021/22



At present the District Council comprises

Conservative **23**

Labour and Co-operative **15**

Liberal Democrats **11**

WARDS

Royston & District

- 6 Ermine
- R1 Royston Palace
- R2 Royston Meridian
- R3 Royston Heath

Baldock & District

- 1 Weston & Sandon
- 9 Arbury
- B1 Baldock Town
- B2 Baldock East

Letchworth

- L1 Letchworth Wilbury
- L2 Letchworth Grange
- L3 Letchworth East
- L4 Letchworth South East
- L5 Letchworth South West

Hitchin

- H1 Hitchin Oughton
- H2 Hitchin Bearton
- H3 Hitchin Walsworth
- H4 Hitchin Highbury
- H5 Hitchin Priory

Southern Rural

- 2 Codicote
- 3 Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo
- 4 Chesfield
- 5 Knebworth
- 7 Kimpton
- 8 Cadwell

Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg is Leader of the Council

Councillor Val Bryant is Chair of the Council

Your North Hertfordshire Councillors

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



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Call: 01462 474000

Your Council

Councillors are elected by the registered electors of the local community to represent you in geographical areas known as wards.



At North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), Councillors serve a term of four years before retiring or standing for re-election. NHDC elects in thirds, which means that every year about 1/3 of the 49 Councillors are up for election. On the fourth year there are no district elections, although this is when elections for the County Council take place.

For the civic year 2021/22 the political composition of the Council is 23 Conservative, 15 Labour and Cooperative and 11 Liberal Democrat Councillors.

In England and Wales, elections take place on a 'first past the post' system. This means that the candidate with the highest number of votes is elected to represent the ward they are standing in.

In 2021/22 the Labour and Cooperative and Liberal Democrat joint administration will continue, meaning that the Cabinet is made up of eight members of those parties, including the Leader. The Cabinet develops policy within the framework set out by the Council and has decision-making powers.

NHDC has five area committees: Baldock & District, Hitchin, Letchworth, Royston & District, and Southern Rural. These area committees meet periodically throughout the year and are made up of all Councillors within the designated area. Each deals with community consultation and the allocation of community grants.

The Council also has a Planning Control Committee, which makes decisions on planning applications.

High standards of conduct by Councillors are promoted and maintained by the Standards Committee.

All Council, Cabinet, and committee meetings are held in public and usually take place on weekday evenings at 7.30pm. If you would like further information on any of these committees or dates of meetings for the year, please call the Committee and Member Services Team on 01462 474000 or visit the 'Council and Democracy' section of the website at www.north-herts.gov.uk.



How telecare can help people stay independent in their own homes

During the pandemic, some residents have felt a little more vulnerable, and their families have seen true value in how technology can help to manage a wide range of risks to help them feel more confident in their own home.

Community pendant help alarms and telecare services which include smoke detectors, fall detectors and wellbeing monitors, can provide much needed reassurance. It means the users and their friends, families and carers, know help is on hand if they feel unwell or have a fall, at the press of a button, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from our Hertfordshire based control room.

The Council's telecare service, Herts Careline, has reached a major milestone this summer, as it has been appointed by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as their sole provider for delivery of assistive technology services across Hertfordshire.

This shows a significant level of trust in the service and means HCC's health and social care professionals now make their referrals to the provider. Herts Careline has also begun the successful transfer of over 3,000 of HCC's existing other provider's service users across to their control room.

You can find out more at www.care-line.co.uk or by calling 0300 999 2 999.



SAVE OUR STREAMS



NHDC is supporting Affinity Water's Save Our Streams campaign.

The UK's largest water supplier, which supplies water to more than 450,000 households across Hertfordshire, is calling on residents to reduce their water wastage in the home and garden, in a bid to help protect the UK's precious chalk streams, which Hertfordshire is heavily reliant on for water.

Coined 'Britain's Great Barrier Reef', these beautiful rivers, which boast clear water from underground springs, are more endangered than both the Bengal tiger and black rhino! North Herts is home to several of these iconic natural landmarks, including the River Ivel and the River

Hiz, which are now at risk due to increasing demand for water.

Hertfordshire is located in one of the driest regions of the country and residents use a shocking 9% more water than the national average. If we all play our part, making small changes to our daily lives, from turning the tap off when we brush our teeth, to part-filling the kettle, it will all add up and we can help protect our local environment.

The Save Our Streams campaign aims to save 21 million litres of water per day to help save chalk streams from the brink. This is the equivalent of 140 million cups of tea, 37 million pints of water, 262,500 baths of water and 8.4 Olympic swimming pools.



You can start your water saving journey at SaveOurStreams.co.uk, where you can order free water saving gadgets and book a group or individual video call with an expert to get tailored water saving advice. Affinity Water will also be planting a CO2 absorbing tree for every video call booked.



WASTE & RECYCLING

Plastic FREE



Go plastic free this July

You will no doubt be aware of the impact plastics are having on our environment. If you are concerned, but are not sure where to start, we are encouraging as many people as possible to participate in Plastic Free July - a global movement that helps millions of people come together and be part of the solution to end plastic pollution.

So now is the perfect time to take the challenge and swap unnecessary single-use plastic items for more sustainable options to help reduce the long-term impact this material has on our environment.

We know that cutting plastic out of everyday life can be difficult, but if everyone made some small changes in buying habits and lifestyle tweaks, then together we can make a huge impact!

Tips to help your plastic free journey:

- Be aware of packaging – try to buy unwrapped fruit, salad, vegetables and bread where possible
- Keep your reusable bags handy so you're not caught without one
- If you buy something with a single use container, consider how it can be reused. Wash and save takeaway tubs – great for stackable fridge storage or freezing portions
- Replace clingfilm with beeswax wraps or reusable pots
- Swap plastic balloons for reusable bunting at your next party
- Refuse coat hangers when you go shopping



Have you joined our new Facebook group?

Come take a look at our new Facebook group, created for people who live in North Herts and East Herts.

This is a forum for people to share their waste reduction tips with other members and help us move towards a zero-waste lifestyle, supporting the Council's efforts in addressing climate change. We will be sharing money saving reuse hacks along with Love Food Hate Waste messages and much more, hopefully sparking discussion and sharing ideas. Why not show us something you have upcycled?

To join the group, visit www.facebook.com and search for Reducing Waste Together



Great British Spring Clean 2021



Who doesn't love a good old spring clean? Well, just like our homes, the countryside needs one now and again too. Did you see your neighbours out and about this year or want to get involved in littering picking your local area?

Our fantastic litter picking legends within our communities have done a great job this year, picking litter from Royston to Hitchin, we thank you!



FOOD WASTE

You may be surprised to know that 23% of waste in purple bins across the district is food waste. In North Herts all of your food waste can be placed in your brown caddy for collection on a weekly basis.



Bank Holiday Bins

Don't forget bin collections in North Herts will be one day later than usual after the August Bank holiday.

Check your bin collection day on our website:
www.north-herts.gov.uk/binday

Recycling your food waste is great for the environment. Although food waste will eventually break down in landfill, it will release greenhouse gases as it decomposes, such as methane. By recycling your food waste, the amount of greenhouse gas produced is significantly reduced.

If you need a new kitchen caddy visit www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/waste-and-recycling/request-kitchen-caddy



Get recycling your textiles

In Hertfordshire alone, over 7,000 tonnes of textiles are sent to landfill each year.

Did you know we can collect your unwanted textiles for recycling?

Items should be placed out on your recycling collection day, next to your recycling bin (not inside it) in clear or white bags (items in black sacks will not be taken) and tied securely.

Items accepted: all clothes, rags, belts, handbags, curtains, towels, bed linen and paired shoes.

Items NOT accepted: carpets, quilts or duvets, rugs or any other material that is not clothing/textiles. Some of these items may be accepted at local Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Alternatively, charity shops always welcome good quality clean clothes so consider donating to your local shop.



ADOPT AN AREA

Fancy being a local litter hero? Why not join our new Adopt an Area scheme?

Whether you are a resident, community group, or a business, you can choose a section of street or public land and help us keep it litter free. You can pledge to litter pick it on a frequency to suit and report issues like fly tipping to us. Go to www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/waste-and-recycling/adopt-area to find out more.

Have you registered to use our new online portal?

Registering to view your Council Tax bill is simple - you'll just need your 8-digit Council Tax account reference number to hand. This is shown on your most recent bill.

Once you have registered and linked your Council Tax account, you will be able to:

- view a summary of your Council Tax account
- see payments due and payments made
- make a secure payment or set-up a direct debit
- check any benefits or discounts
- sign up for E-Billing - go paperless and receive your Council Tax bills by email



You can sign up on our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk. Search for Council Tax.

Next time you visit our website check out the new improved 'MyAccount' facility which allows you to view account information personalised to you, including Council Tax, at a time that is convenient for you.

Council Meetings

All meetings are held at 7.30pm unless specified below.

Please check our website for venue details www.north-herts.gov.uk



DATE	COMMITTEE
5 July 2021	Licensing and Appeals Committee
6 July 2021	Cabinet Panel on the Environment
8 July 2021	Council
12 July 2021	Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
13 July 2021	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14 July 2021	Cabinet Panel on Housing, Strategic Planning and Transport
15 July 2021	Planning Control Committee
19 July 2021	Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development
20 July 2021	Cabinet
21 July 2021	Highways Liaison Meeting
22 July 2021	Planning Control Committee
19 August 2021	Planning Control Committee
1 September 2021	Cabinet Panel on Housing, Strategic Planning and Transport
2 September 2021	Planning Control Committee

DATE	COMMITTEE
6 September 2021	Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development
7 September 2021	Cabinet Panel on the Environment
14 September 2021	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
15 September 2021	Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
16 September 2021	Planning Control Committee
21 September 2021	Cabinet
22 September 2021	Joint Staff Consultative Committee (10am)
23 September 2021	Council
4 October 2021	Baldock and District Committee
12 October 2021	Hitchin Committee
13 October 2021	Letchworth Committee
14 October 2021	Planning Control Committee
19 October 2021	Standards Committee
20 October 2021	Royston and District Committee
21 October 2021	Southern Rural Committee



Calling Hertfordshire residents - are you pregnant or do you have a child under four? Did you know you could be missing out on free fruit and vegetables or milk?

If you are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old you could be entitled to Healthy Start Vouchers worth £4.25 per child per week (£8.50 if under 1) to spend on milk, plain fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, and instant formula milk. You can also use them to buy pulses and canned fruit and vegetables as long as they have no fat, salt, sugar or other flavouring added. The vouchers can be redeemed at local retailers.

The vouchers were increased from £3.10 per child to £4.25 from April following lobbying from England footballer Marcus Rashford, who

has now teamed up with TV chef Tom Kerridge to help provide families with recipes to make the most of the vouchers. Visit <https://tomkerridge.com/full-time-meals/> If you are entitled to Healthy Start Vouchers you will also get free vitamins designed to help pregnant and breastfeeding women and growing children.

To be eligible you should be in receipt of certain means-tested benefits. Check your eligibility on www.gov.uk/healthy-start. Pregnant under 18 years olds qualify, whether or not they are entitled to a qualifying benefit.



Application leaflets are available from GP's surgeries or baby clinics. Alternatively you can call 0345 607 6823 or download a form at www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/how-to-apply/

Apprentices enjoy success at NHDC

NHDC has a long tradition of nurturing talent through its apprenticeship scheme.

The combination of workplace training and college study provides apprentices with the opportunity to gain valuable skills and knowledge and gain a nationally recognised qualification on completion. The qualifications apprentices can study for range from Customer Service Specialist and Business Administration courses, to Events Assistant.

We have taken on over 50 apprentices since launching our programme in 2013 and we currently have eight apprentices in post. All apprentices are eligible to apply for permanent roles and approximately half of our apprentices are successful in achieving a permanent role.

We also go out and actively promote our apprenticeship scheme to a number of schools in the area, although this has been on hold since the start of the pandemic.

Apprenticeships are a fantastic opportunity for people living in North Herts who might be taking their first steps on the career ladder, as well as for those looking for a different career and want to develop and broaden their skill set.

Jack Phelps and Emily Gray are among NHDC's success stories:

Jack said: "I'm the Business Administration Apprentice in the IT department working as a Technical Support Officer. When I'm not working, I like to hike, play games and paint. I was really into weightlifting before Covid forced the gyms to shut! I'm enjoying my time at NHDC and I'm looking forward to finally meeting everyone when the office reopens!"



20 year old Emily said: "I am currently doing my apprenticeship

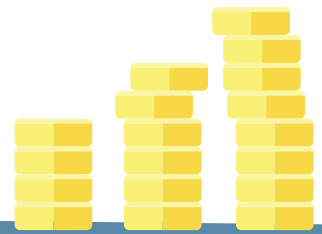
within the Democratic Services department, working with both Electoral and Committee Services. I only started in December, but I am really enjoying my apprenticeship so far; I love being able to learn a new job role and study at the same time. Everyone has been so welcoming, and my team are a really lovely bunch!"

In April this year, some of our apprentices participated in the Local Government Apprentice of the Year Awards, which was a great opportunity to learn, network and showcase their skills, expertise, and initiative. They worked in virtual teams to experience the opportunities, risks, and challenges involved in delivering successful local government services.

Sign up to receive details of all of our vacancies here: www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/jobs-and-careers/job-vacancies



Value for Money



The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on our finances over the last year. We have tried wherever possible to keep existing services running as normal, but have faced loss of income from facilities like our leisure centres having to close. We have also delivered additional activities in response to the pandemic, to try and support residents and businesses.

What we have spent

Extra money we have spent this year and reductions in income that we expected to receive = £5.7million.

This includes:

- Funding so that our leisure centres could open each time when Covid-19 restrictions allowed: £2.1m
- Providing hotel accommodation for people at risk of, or experiencing, rough sleeping: £200,000
- Reduction in parking income: £1.6m
- Extension to garden waste subscription period due to having to stop collections at the start of the pandemic: £200,000
- Lost income from Hitchin Town Hall: £140,000
- Reduced planning fee income: £130,000
- Reduced demand for trade waste and trade recycling collections meaning less income of: £150,000

- Additional costs associated with the collection of waste, extension of garden waste subscriptions and disposal of recyclable materials: £520,000

- Grants to community groups: £90,000

We are expecting to receive £3.7m from Government to help us with the additional money we have spent and as compensation for lost income.

That means that we have had to fund about £2m from our reserves which will leave us less able to cushion the impact from any future changes in funding.

We have continued to deliver the vast majority of our services, which have also had variations in spend that have not been due to Covid-19. This has reduced the impact described above by £0.8m, while £0.7m of planned spend in this year has been deferred to the next financial year.



Achievements

We have still been able to achieve the majority of activities that we planned to complete over the last year.

These include:

- Implementing a Customer Portal for Council Tax
- Refurbishment of the fitness changing rooms at the North Herts Leisure Centre
- Improving the acoustics at Hitchin Town Hall
- Progressing the Local Plan through examination with resumed hearings held between November 2020 and February 2021
- Agreement with Herts County Council to transfer their service users over to our Careline Community Alarm service



New activities and performance



Wherever possible we have tried to keep all our services running as normally as we can. We have also carried out new activities in response to Covid-19.

Examples of new activities include:

- Paid out business grants totalling over £45m (as of mid-May 2021)
- Paid out 308 payments to qualifying individuals for self-isolating (as of mid-May)
- Determined that an additional 10% of residents now qualify for our Council Tax reduction scheme, compared to prior to the pandemic
- Delivered communications and support to residents and businesses on staying safe
- Worked with others to help deliver food and essential supplies, Covid-19 testing sites and identify vaccination sites
- Enabled virtual committee meetings and broadcasting over Youtube, which has resulted in almost over 8,000 views

The pandemic has had an impact on our performance over the last year. Some examples have been:

- Placing 136 households in temporary accommodation, reflecting the rough sleepers that have been provided with hotel rooms
- Just under 93% of invoices owed to the Council have been paid on time (usually over 97%). Less than 95% of Business Rates collected, usually over 97%
- A small proportion of the usual Environmental Health food safety inspections have been completed, due to focusing on impacts of Covid-19
- 181,270 visits to leisure centres by residents – far less than the 1.45m visits in 2019/20
- Significant increase in household waste (from purple bins) collected due to more people spending time at home, 387kg compared with 342kg in 2019/20



Ongoing Covid-19 financial impacts

Leisure: We are budgeting for £2m of additional support for our leisure services in 2021/22. Despite now being open, social distancing restrictions have led to increased costs and reduced income.



Income: It is also expected that the income the Council receives will be affected (e.g. from parking). Up until the end of June, Government will continue to provide compensation for 75% of most income losses.



Budget assumptions for 2021/22:

We have assumed that there could be a risk of an additional £1m impact when setting the budget for 2021/22.

We are also expecting that the funding we get from Council Tax and Business Rates will continue to be affected.

Moving Forward

During 2021/22 we aim to get all our services back to normal. In some areas that normal will look different to pre-pandemic.

We will also support the recovery of our local economy, including Town Centres and villages.

We plan to achieve the following:

- Develop and implement a new Parking Strategy, including electric vehicles
- Continue to deliver actions relating to our Climate Strategy
- Development of new Council website
- Launch a Community lottery to generate funding for Community Groups
- Start work on a new storage facility for our museum collections



WHAT'S ON

this Summer

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

All events are subject to change or cancellation due to Government guidelines at the time

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

Brand Street, Hitchin, SG5 1HX
01462 474554

www.north-herts.gov.uk/museum

Event details can be found at

www.facebook.com/northhertsmuseum

Opening times: Tues – Sat 10.30am to 4.30pm, Sundays 11 am to 3pm
Admission free.

7 July - 4 September

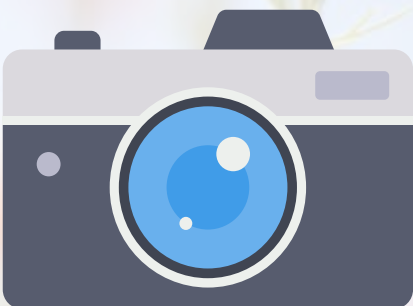
The Tiger Who Came to Tea

This interactive exhibition is based on the classic children's story book by Judith Kerr and brings the story to life. Featuring a real life version of Sophie's kitchen, a reading corner and of course, a friendly five-foot tiger!

Opens on 18 September

Nature in Focus; Brian Sawford's photographs of the landscape and wildlife of North Hertfordshire

Brian Sawford (1940 – 2020) was a gifted local naturalist who contributed much to the natural history of Hertfordshire through his talks, guided walks and publications. The exhibition showcases many of the rare, beautiful wildflowers and endangered birds he photographed locally.



BALDOCK

4 July, Baldock Town Centre

The Big Lunch

This foodie feast will bring a taste sensation to the heart of Baldock. Tables and chairs can be booked for a meal in the open air. Enjoy the best food that Baldock, and beyond, has to offer. For more information and to book seats go to: www.baldockeventsforum.org.uk/big-lunch

12 September Baldock 5k Rat Run

Join others raising money for the Garden House Hospice by running trails in and around Baldock. To register go to: www.baldock5k.com

CODICOTE

18 September Codicote Village Day

This year's theme is 'Kids TV through the decades.' Stalls, refreshments and fun will make this a great day out for all the family. www.codicotevillageday.co.uk

HITCHIN

23 – 24 July, Hitchin Town Hall, Brand Street

Mostly Comedy

'Mostly Comedy' is set to hit the stage for an evening full of much needed belly laughs and chuckling. Book tickets at: www.mostlycomedy.co.uk

24 July Bucklersbury & Sun Street Day

Shops and businesses throw open their doors for an afternoon of fun, music, bargains and entertainment. From 12 noon – 6pm.

3 – 26 August Hitchin Beach

Come visit the seaside with a real sandy beach, music, buckets and spades and deckchairs on the Market Place.

TOWN & VILLAGE EVENTS

4 September

Craft Fair

British Schools Museum, 41/42 Queen Street
Set in the historic schoolroom at the museum, meet lots of local craftspeople with their wares - perfect for that special gift or treat for yourself. Free entry: <https://britishschoolsmuseum.org.uk/discover/whats-on/>

4 – 5 September Hitchin Food Fest

The Hitchin Food Fest weekend is one of the most popular on the foodie calendar. As well as local eateries promoting their gastronomic delights, there will be the best in street food and drink and the ever-popular Taster Tent. Find out more about Hitchin events at www.hitchinherts.com

HOLWELL

3 – 11 July Holwell Scarecrow Festival

There will be scarecrows aplenty in Holwell village. Vote for your favourite, with the most popular winning a prize! Find out more at: www.holwellscarecrows.org

KNEBWORTH

8 August Garden Theatre – Macbeth

Knebworth House
Enjoy Shakespeare in the open air, as The Lord Chamberlain's Men perform their rendition of this gripping play.

25 – 26 August Garden Theatre – The Jungle Book

Knebworth House
A live, open air, musical adaptation of the classic children's book. Join Mowgli and his friends, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the panther, on a madcap jungle adventure!



11 – 12 September
Dog Fest

Knebworth House
Everything and anything to do with dogs can be found here. Buy dog products and bring your dog along to have a go at fun dog activities. For more information on Knebworth House events go to:
www.knebworthhouse.com/events-grid

LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY

16 July
Diva Dismantled

The Settlement, Nevells Road, Letchworth Opera singer Christine Bunning presents an evening of musical theatre, opera and anecdotes. In person or Zoom online tickets available. Find out more at:
www.lethworthsettlement.org.uk/making-music-concert-series/

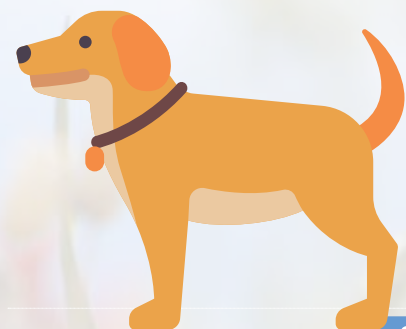
23 July
L.G.C Live!

Letchworth Town Centre
Letchworth's first live music and dance festival! With hip hop and street style dancing and music from British reggae group Aswad, The Soul Man and many local bands and artists. Find out more at the www.lovelethworth.com

PIRTON

10 July
Pirton Summer Fair

From 1pm at Recreation Ground
A variety of stalls, fun events and live music all add up to a fun afternoon out in Pirton. Entry: Adults £4, Children Free. Parking available, £1 per car
www.facebook.com/pirtonfair



12 August
Classic & Vintage Car Rally

3pm – 6pm, Recreation Ground
If you're interested in vintage cars, this is right up your street! A variety of classic cars will be on display so do motor along to this fun afternoon.

5 September
Open Gardens Day

2pm – 6pm
The Friends of Pirton Parish Church invite you to enjoy the gardens of Pirton, as homeowners open up their gardens for visitors to experience the beauty of late summer flowers.

ROYSTON

1 August
Royston Kite Festival

10.30am – 4.30pm
Fun for all the family at Therfield Heath. Marvel at the professional kite flying displays and bring along your own kite to fly in the main arena.
www.roystonkitefestival.com

24 – 26 September
Royston Arts Festival

Indulge your love of arts, crafts, literature, performances and more as the Royston Arts Festival showcases local talent. For more information visit:
www.creativeroyston.org



Cycling Classes for all ages and abilities in North Herts

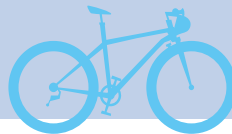


LEARN TO CYCLE CLASSES:

One hour one-to-one lessons aimed at helping children, teenagers and adults gain confidence and learn the necessary skills to ride a pedal bike.

Participants must have a road worthy bike with two working brakes, and a correctly fitting helmet.

If under the age of 16 years old, one parent/carer is required to stay on site for the duration of the lesson.



£20 per session



£50 per course

Two hours per day for five days

CYCLE CONFIDENCE COURSES:

Run over a week, this course is aimed at helping children aged four and older gain confidence on their pedal bike and build on their skills.

These fun two hour sessions per day include games and activities which help improve each child's steering, braking, caution control, navigation and how to use gears (if applicable).

Your child must have a road worthy bike with two working brakes, a correctly fitted helmet and be able to ride for one minute unaided (no stabilisers but a bit wobbly is ok).



BALANCE ABILITY COURSES:

Run over six weeks the course is aimed at helping children (3+) to gain confidence and to learn basic cycling skills, to enabling a smoother transition to pedal bikes.

These fun sessions include games which help to improve each child's gross motor skills, balance, steering and caution control.

Balance bikes and helmets are not provided (pedals can be removed from pedal bikes at the session).



Coming soon, please get in touch for more information

Sessions to be run in Baldock, Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston. Dates will be scheduled as soon as possible. To register your interest and get more information please email healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk or call 01462 474111.

Healthy hub
North Herts

