

COMMUNITY NEWS FROM NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

# OUTLOOK



**SPORTS** **EMERGENCY** **RECYCLING** **SCRUTINY** **WHAT'S ON**

**INSIDE:**  
**ANNUAL  
REVIEW**

**HOW HAVE WE  
BEEN DOING IN  
THE PAST YEAR?**



**AUTUMN 2013**

[www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

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Front Cover: Congratulations to Chris Pieri from Letchworth who won our Outlook Autumn front cover competition for his photo 'Moody Skies over Broadway'



## FROM THE LEADER

“ It seems to have been a packed summer. The introduction of the new waste and recycling was just one of the things keeping us busy.

The new service was introduced to help you recycle more and I want to say a big thank you to everyone for embracing the changes. Early indications are that recycling rates are increasing significantly, with less waste going to landfill – good for the environment and good for the Council taxpayer.

This edition contains our Annual Review of 2012/13 (pg. 4/5) with details of some of the Council's successes and major projects from last year, all achieved as we make further year-on-year savings. It also looks ahead to the next financial year and how we plan to continue providing quality services to residents.

One of those services is, of course, our management of green spaces. This month we are due to see a strategy adopted which sets out our plans for investment in parks and play

areas over the next five years. We recognise the importance that you place on quality green spaces, and we were delighted to see another two of our parks achieve prestigious Green Flag awards this year, making four in total (see pg. 13).

A last word to competition winner Chris Pieri who sent us this edition's front cover photo after we asked people to submit an Autumn-themed picture. It has been such a success we may well do something similar again, so do look out for that if you want one of your photos on the cover of Outlook!

**Councillor Lynda Needham**  
Leader of the Council

## CONTACTING NHDC

**ON OUR WEBSITE:**  
[www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

**BY E-MAIL:**  
[Service@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Service@north-herts.gov.uk)

**BY TELEPHONE:**  
01462 474000

**IN PERSON AT:**  
North Hertfordshire  
District Council Offices,  
Gernon Road,  
Letchworth Garden City,  
Herts SG6 3JF

### ■ DIRECT LINES

**Benefits**  
01462 474597

**Building regulations**  
01462 474355

**Business rates**  
01462 474668

**Careline Community Alarms** 01462 420600

**Car parking** 01462 474631

**Communications and Outlook magazine**  
01462 474552

**Elections and Electoral Roll**  
01462 474000

**Environmental Health**  
01462 474000

**Fraud Reporting (Confidential)**  
01462 474466  
Out of hours:  
01462 474289

**Housing Advice**  
01462 474682

**Housing Register**  
01462 474688

**Noise Control**  
01462 474000

**Parking Permits**  
01462 474631

**Planning Applications/ Services**  
01462 474000

**Recycling Information**  
01462 474000

**Refuse and bulky collection** 0800 3286023

■ **LEISURE CENTRES**  
**Hitchin Swim Centre**  
01462 441646

**Archers Fitness Centre, Hitchin** 01462 437111

**North Herts Leisure Centre, Letchworth Garden City**  
01462 679311

**Royston Leisure Centre**  
01763 255190

### ■ MUSEUMS

**Hitchin**  
01462 434476

**Letchworth**  
01462 685647



## HISTORIC STEP

Clr Lynda Needham hands over the keys to Alison Gentle, chair of the Baldock Town Hall Group as NHDC councillors and BTHG members look on

THE FUTURE OF **BALDOCK TOWN HALL** TOOK A MAJOR STEP FORWARD THIS SUMMER WITH A **HISTORIC AGREEMENT** REACHED BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND A COMMUNITY GROUP.

In June, NHDC transferred the town hall to the Baldock Town Hall Group (BTHG) on a 99 year lease. BTHG plans to use the building for the benefit of people from Baldock and beyond, primarily offering space for the development and performance of the creative and performing arts, and incorporating Baldock Museum.

With Letchworth Town Hall now being used by North Herts College and plans continuing apace to develop Hitchin Town Hall into a new North Hertfordshire

Museum and community facility, it is another example of NHDC working with other organisations to secure the future of its assets for the benefit of local people.

Alison Gentle, Chair of BTHG, said: "BTHG is delighted that we have now signed a 99 year lease and we would like to thank those at NHDC who have supported us throughout this time. We have also gained the support of over 220 'Friends of Baldock Town Hall' since our initial appeal last year. It encourages us greatly to receive such support from our local community who

have affirmed our belief that the town hall needed to be opened again."

BTHG are already presenting a forward programme of events, with others being planned. They are also looking for volunteers who can offer their services or materials to help complete a full refurbishment programme, to which NHDC has committed funds, or who want to take part in any of the upcoming events. **To get involved, visit the BTHG website at [www.bthl.org.uk](http://www.bthl.org.uk).**

## EMERGENCY!

STAFF FROM NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL (NHDC) AND STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL JOINED FORCES IN JUNE TO TEST THEIR **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS** IN A CROSS-BORDER **MAJOR INCIDENT TRAINING EXERCISE**.

A team of emergency response volunteers from each Council were given a fictitious scenario based around a plane crash which covered an area around Knebworth and were asked to put to the test their emergency planning training. Members of the Police, Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Service were also on hand to give their expert advice and knowledge on how they would be responding to such an incident alongside the Councils. The exercise was organised by the Hertfordshire County Council Resilience Team assisted by the Emergency Planning Officers from NHDC

and Stevenage Borough Council.

In particular, both Councils were asked to consider how they could work together in the immediate aftermath of the incident and also in the days and weeks following it, for example in helping residents return to their homes, businesses resume trading and making sure key council services are kept running. Further exercises are planned in the future. To find out more about NHDC's emergency response plans, look on the NHDC website and search for 'emergency planning'.



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2012/2013

## WHAT WE HAVE DELIVERED FOR YOU

OVER THE LAST YEAR THE COUNCIL HAS:

• **Successfully hosted both the Royal visit to Hitchin as part of the Queen's Jubilee celebrations and the Olympic Torch relay in Letchworth.** Both of these events were enjoyed by thousands of people.



Hertfordshire Museum and community facility at Hitchin Town Hall.

• **Joined the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme** to help suitable first-time buyers purchase a property in North Herts by enabling them to apply for a mortgage with a minimum deposit of only 5%.

• **Completed an extension to Great Ashby Community Centre**, including the Circles Café Bar to provide more local facilities.

• **Introduced a national award-winning office recycling scheme** that significantly increased recycling and resulted in two tonnes of waste being recycled instead of sent to landfill.



• **Agreed a lease with North Hertfordshire College** for Letchworth Town Hall that has enabled this historic building to be refurbished and brought back into use.

• **Continued to make savings including £458,000** for the 2013/14 financial year by reviewing staff structures and removing 13 posts. This included the permanent internal appointment of David Scholes as Chief Executive and combining the Chief Executive role with his former post of Director of Planning, Housing and Enterprise.

• **Continued to work in partnership with Hitchin Town Hall Ltd** and signed the Development Agreement for a new North

ON THESE PAGES WE TAKE A LOOK BACK AT OUR **FINANCIAL YEAR APRIL 2012 TO MARCH 2013** TO GIVE YOU A PICTURE OF WHAT SERVICES AND PROJECTS WE HAVE BEEN **DELIVERING** AND HOW WE HAVE BEEN **MANAGING** OUR FINANCES.

### Our priorities in 2012/13

In 2012/13, the Council's priorities for the year were:

- **living within our means to deliver cost effective services**
- **working with local communities**
- **protecting our environment for our communities.**

Our key projects were aligned to these priorities and the sections that follow are intended to give an overview of what we have delivered, and how we have spent your money before looking briefly at the current position for 2013/14.

## THE CURRENT SITUATION 2012/13

### How your Council tax is worked out

NHDC sends out the annual bills and collects council tax on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire police, plus local town and parish councils. Each individual authority decides by how much its part of the final bill will change.

For each £100 that NHDC collects approximately £75 goes to the County Council, £10 to the Police and Crime Commissioner and £15 is retained by NHDC and the Parish and Town Councils.

The Council's net budget for 2013/14 is £16.7 million, with £9.3

million of that (56%) funded directly by local council taxpayers, £5.1 million (31%) from central Government and £2.3 million (13%) from the rates paid by local businesses.

**£15** NHDC & PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

**£75** COUNTY COUNCIL

**£10** POLICE & CRIME

### Our priorities in 2013/14

The Council's priorities remain the same for 2013/14. Projects to support these priorities will continue throughout the year and include:

- Development of a Parks for People lottery bid for the renovation of Bancroft Gardens in Hitchin.
- Developing facilities at Hitchin Swim Centre to convert the existing changing rooms to a changing village and the development of new multi-functional studios.
- Progressing with a lease for Baldock Town Hall to enable the building to be brought back into community use (see update on p.3).
- The introduction of a new waste and recycling collection service.

Developing a new Local Plan for North Herts, the document that will determine where new homes will be built between now and 2031.



- **Paid Jephson Housing Association for the delivery of affordable housing** at the former Ling Dynamics site in Royston and carried out public consultation on potential sites to accommodate future housing need.

- **Delivered a total of £790k of Disabled Facility Grants** enabling people to live independently in their own homes.

- **Introduced an apprenticeship scheme** to provide local people with good quality work experience and an accredited vocational qualification.

- **Improved play areas** at Purwell in Hitchin and The Grange, Letchworth and the multi use games area at Priory Gardens, Royston.



# WHAT WE SPENT IN 2012/13

In 2012/13 the Council managed to achieve ongoing savings of over £600,000. This follows the achievement of ongoing savings of over £1.9million in 2011/12. For the equivalent of £3.78 per household each week, the services provided by the district council include refuse and recycling collections, leisure centres, parks, grounds maintenance, housing and council tax benefits, licensing, planning, car parking and environmental health.

The chart opposite gives a broad outline of the net spend by services (i.e. after allowing for income received) to give a picture of how the money was spent to deliver these services. The largest area was Leisure and Environmental services (39%), followed by Housing and Public Protection services (15%). The Council's net spend in 2012/13 was just over £15million, compared with £15.3million in 2011/12.

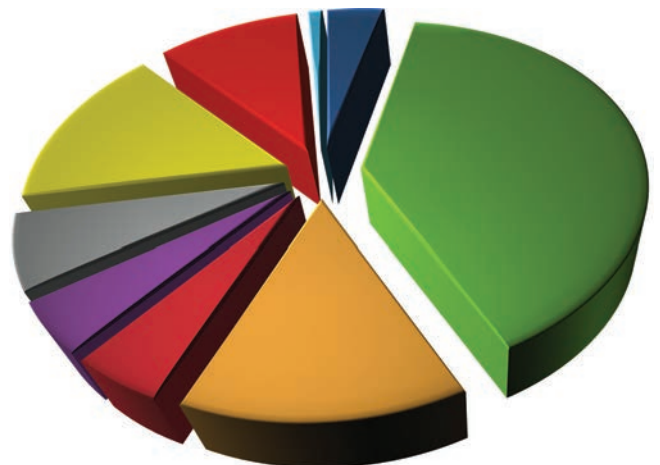
Of the 39% of our budget spent on Leisure and Environmental Services, over half went on services such as refuse collection, recycling and street cleaning, 29% was spent on services such as maintaining our parks and amenity areas with the remaining 15% being spent on the management of our leisure facilities, markets and parking.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

You can find information about the Council's priorities and projects for 2013/14 in our strategic document, 'Priorities for the District 2013/14', located on our website at [www.north-herts.gov.uk/priorities](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/priorities).

On the website you will also find a lot more information about the Council's finances and its performance.

## WHAT THE MONEY WAS SPENT ON IN 2011/12



## Looking ahead – our current and future financial situation

The current national economic situation means that for the financial year 2013/14 we have had to find at least another £850,000 in savings to balance our budget. We have achieved this by finding efficiencies in the services we deliver, reducing staffing costs, and increasing some of our fees and charges to reduce the burden on Council tax payers who may not use those services. We have also found ways to invest in the short

term in order to save money in the longer term while also improving the availability of services to residents. One example is the extension of the Swimming and Leisure Centre in Hitchin. We have tried to ensure that the impact on "front-line" services has been minimal.

We will need to make additional savings in the coming year 2014/15 and we will keep you updated on our financial situation in future editions of Outlook.

# Get **Fit** and **Active** in North Herts



- Gym
- **Swimming**
- **Exercise Classes**
- **Personal Training**
- **Badminton**
- **Squash**
- **Sauna and Steam Room**
- **Birthday Parties**
- **Café and Refreshments**
- **AquaEd Swim School**
- **Junior Activities**
- **Pay as you Go options**

WHY NOT TRY  
**Fearnhill Sports  
Centre**  
Icknield Way West,  
Letchworth SG6 4BA  
**01462 676017\***  
for 5-a-side &  
Badminton

A range of memberships available to suit you. Contact your local centre.

fitness  @ hitchin  
enjoy your health

fitness @ letchworth  
enjoy your health

fitness @ royston  
enjoy your health

## Hitchin Swimming Centre

Fishponds Road, Hitchin,  
Herts SG5 1HA

01462 437111

E. hitchin@stevenage-leisure.co.uk

## North Herts Leisure Centre

Baldock Road, Letchworth,  
Herts SG6 2ER

01462 679311

E. letchworth@stevenage-leisure.co.uk

## Royston Leisure Centre

Woodcock Road, Royston,  
Herts SG8 7XT

01763 255190

E. royston@stevenage-leisure.co.uk

[www.stevenage-leisure.co.uk](http://www.stevenage-leisure.co.uk)

24 hour Customer Information Line: 0300 012 0300

\* Evenings and Weekends



# SPORTS NORTH HERTS ROADSHOW

SPORT NORTH HERTS ARE RUNNING A **COMMUNITY SPORT ROADSHOW ON THURSDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER AT THE HERTS FA GROUND, LETCHWORTH FROM 6.30PM.**

The roadshow is for local sports clubs to find out information about:

- Satellite Clubs, the new Sport England scheme to get local sports clubs working within schools to bridge the gap between school and community sport. Funding is available for clubs joining this scheme.
- Funding opportunities, including grants for talented athletes and coaches and community clubs.
- Training opportunities including coaching courses, child protection and first aid.
- Coachmark and Clubmark support and verification.

The roadshow is free to attend and refreshments will be available.



## PASSPORT FOR EXCELLENCE

NHDC in conjunction with Stevenage Leisure Limited, is offering free use of North Herts Leisure Centre, Hitchin Swim Centre and Archers or Royston Leisure Centre to any athlete that represents England, Wales, Scotland, N. Ireland or Great Britain in a sport recognised by Sport England.

To qualify you must have been



a permanent resident of North Hertfordshire for a minimum of 12 months and be able to provide evidence that you have been selected to represent your country within the next 12 months.

A Passport for Excellence is valid for one financial year (April to March) and up to 30 are issued every year at each facility.

## PASSPORT FOR EXCELLENCE CASE STUDY

SOMEONE WHO HAS BENEFITTED FROM A PASSPORT FOR EXCELLENCE IS RISING **JUDO STAR, EMMA REID**

**What age did you start playing Judo?**

I started playing Judo when I was just six years old.

**What made you get into Judo?**

I got into it because my mum was involved with it. Having hated doing ballet, she changed to Judo and took me down to a few sessions at a local club.

**What is your greatest achievement in Judo so far?**

My greatest achievement so far would be getting a silver medal in my first

proper International competition in Venray, Holland.

**What is your next competition for Great Britain?**

My next International event is the West Midland ranking event in Swindon on the 28 July.

**How has the Passport for Excellence Scheme helped you?**

The Passport for Excellence scheme has helped me very much because if I am unable to get to judo or the performance gym in

Hatfield then it is very easy for me to get to Royston Leisure Centre.

They also have great facilities and workout classes that have helped me with my strength and cardio fitness.

**You can follow Emma on twitter @emmaclareid**



# SPORTS GRANTS

EACH YEAR, A **DEDICATED FUND** FROM NHDC PROVIDES **GRANT ASSISTANCE** TO NORTH HERTS RESIDENTS. DISTRIBUTED BY SPORT NORTH HERTS, THE FUND **SUPPORTS ELITE ATHLETES AND DEVELOPING COACHES.**

Athletes and coaches can apply for funding towards sports equipment, travel expenses within the UK, clothing specific to the sport and training and competition fees. Coaches can also apply for funding towards coaching qualifications at Level 2 and above.

Eligibility criteria for the sports grants can be found on the NHDC website. Applications for sports grants for talented young individuals and coaches open in September.

For more details on all of the above schemes please contact Jess Young, NHDC's Sport Development Officer on 01462 474257 or email [jess.young@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:jess.young@north-herts.gov.uk).



# YOUR NEW WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE

WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY A BIG **THANK YOU** FOR WHOLEHEARTEDLY EMBRACING YOUR **NEW WASTE AND RECYCLING SERVICE** THIS SUMMER. WHILE THE **COLOUR PURPLE** HAS PROVED TO BE A MAJOR TALKING POINT, THE NEW SERVICE HAS RECEIVED A **POSITIVE WELCOME** BY MANY PEOPLE ACROSS THE DISTRICT.



By introducing recycling of plastics, cartons and textiles from your doorstep and providing compostable liners and kitchen caddies to help you recycle your food waste, we wanted to increase your opportunity to recycle and in turn help protect the environment by reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill.

## COMPOSTING AND RECYCLING SUCCESS

Since the introduction of the new service in June, Cumberlow Green composting farm has seen a huge drop in non-compostable items from brown bins being sent there. Strict new regulations mean that cardboard can no longer be composted at the facility and the farm is already seeing the results of removing cardboard from brown bins, with better quality compost than ever before.

Very early figures also indicate that the amount of waste being sent to landfill has decreased drastically and recycling has gone up. Don't forget, if you find you are filling your recycling bin, you can leave extra recycling in containers or bags (not black plastic bags) next to your recycling bin on your collection day.

Cllr Peter Burt with Henry Hodge, Managing Director of Cumberlow Green Composting Farm



To ensure your recycling efforts don't go to waste, here are some top tips about what goes in and what stays out of your recycling bin:

### WHAT'S IN

- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays
- Cartons
- Mixed glass, bottles and jars
- Food tins and drink cans
- Cardboard
- Mixed textiles (bagged at top of bin)

- NB - Paper is still left in the existing paper box



### WHAT'S OUT

- Plastic bags
- Electrical items
- Rigid plastics e.g. children's toys
- Containers with heavy food residue (please rinse)
- Film lids e.g. on ready meals or packets of cooked meats
- Pyrex and drinking glasses





# PLASTIC BAGS

YOUR EFFORTS  
TO WASTE!

**PLASTIC BAGS PLEASE**

...plastic bags may be sent to landfill as we currently can't recycle them

www.north-herts.gov.uk

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



One of the main questions we have been asked is 'can we put plastic bags in the recycling bin, and if not, why not?'

While we accept plastic bottles, tubs and trays, we cannot accept plastic bags in the mixed recycling bin. If plastic bags are placed in recycling bins the contents will be classed as 'contaminated' and the whole vehicle load could be sent to landfill. This is because the machines which sort your recycling can get jammed by plastic bags. The only exception to this is for textiles, which should be placed in bags at the top of your recycling bin. The textiles are then taken for re-use and the plastic bags disposed of separately.

If you do have a supply of plastic bags, most supermarkets provide recycling points for them.



# WORKING FLAT OUT

...to extend recycling services for people in flats

We know that people in flats are just as keen to recycle as much as they can as other households in the district, and therefore starting this week, we will be extending our recycling services. As well as recycling paper, cans, tins and glass, people in flats will now be able to recycle their food waste, plastic bottles, pots, tins and trays and cardboard.

A kitchen caddy and liners will be provided for food waste which will go in a new brown bin.

They will also be able to recycle paper in a 'blue bin' and existing green bins will now be used for plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, cartons, glass, tins, cans and cardboard. Plastic bags will not be accepted in the recycling bin.

The flats recycling service will be rolled out over the next few weeks.



If you live in a flat, you will receive full information on what goes where along with your kitchen caddy and liners once the new service begins for your area. If you have any further questions have a look at our flats recycling web pages by searching for 'flats recycling' on [www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

# FOCUS ON FOOD WASTE

We hope that with your new kitchen caddy and compostable liners you are finding it easier to recycle your food waste. Here are a couple of your most frequently asked food waste questions answered:

## How do I order more compostable liners?

When you get near the end of the roll, you will find a small slip inside the roll with contact details to order your new liners. Please note - supplies of liners are limited. When ordering liners we have assumed that an average household will use three liners a week, or approximately three rolls a year. If you are regularly using more liners that this please do make sure you completely fill a liner before putting it in your brown bin and remember you can still place food waste loose in your brown bin – it doesn't have to go in a liner.

## Why do I have to use the compostable liners provided by the Council?

The regulations about what we can compost from your brown bin are now much stricter. The liners we have provided you with are easily identifiable by the collection crews, so we know they are the correct type of liner that will compost at Cumberlow Green. There are many different types of liners that can be bought in the shops, some of which may reduce the quality of the final compost product.

If you have any questions on the new waste and recycling service, check out our FAQs on the NHDC website.



# HELP SHAPE BANCROFT GARDENS REDEVELOPMENT

THE PROJECT TO **IMPROVE** BANCROFT GARDENS IN HITCHIN IS SOON TO TAKE ITS NEXT STEP AS THE COUNCIL WILL BE SUBMITTING A BID FOR **HERITAGE LOTTERY FUNDING** LATER THIS YEAR.

The aim of the project is to rejuvenate the town centre park by increasing the amount of green space within the Gardens and improving its facilities to attract a wide range of visitors. Following two public consultation exercises in 2010, the Council created a masterplan for the project which includes:

- **Removing the existing old tennis courts and creating a new informal games area to cater for a variety of ball games including basketball, five-a-side football, netball and tennis**
- **Making the privately-managed tennis courts available for the use of the whole community**
- **Landscaping the entrance area of the park to exclude cars so that it is accessible and more attractive for pedestrians**
- **Extending the existing play area to provide better facilities for older children**
- **Improving existing facilities at the bowls club pavilion to potentially house a café and toilet**

In advance of submitting an application for funding, NHDC's partners, Groundwork Hertfordshire have been out and about in the park and the local community over the summer holidays to see what both existing users and non-users of the Gardens think is important in any redevelopment scheme. This latest consultation will then help us come up with more of the detailed design behind the masterplan. We now welcome all residents to have their say through our short online survey.



**If you would like to submit a response to our survey, visit our website and search for Bancroft Gardens Redevelopment. The closing date for survey responses is 1 October 2013.**

## A NEW GARDEN FOR REMEMBERING

THE OLDEST PART OF **ST JOHN'S CEMETERY IN HITCHIN** IS CURRENTLY BEING REDESIGNED TO CREATE A COLOURFUL AND ATTRACTIVE **REMEMBRANCE GARDEN**, OFFERING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY A PLACE FOR QUIET **CONTEMPLATION** OF THOSE THEY HAVE LOST AND A PLACE TO SCATTER ASHES.

The historic north eastern side of the cemetery, characterised by older graves, is being transformed into a relaxing garden which is rich in colourful wild flowers. A selection of feature trees which can be sculpted into topiary shapes will maintain the cemetery's seclusion and peacefulness, and a scheme will be introduced whereby the community can sponsor memorial benches.

Countryside Management Service (CMS) are working in partnership with NHDC to create and evolve the new



remembrance garden over the next few years. If you would like to volunteer to take part in planting the new seasonal wild flowers, contact **Paul Evans at CMS on 01992 588433.**



# KEEPING COOL

RESIDENTS FLOCKED TO **AVENUE PARK IN BALDOCK** DURING THIS SUMMER'S HEAT WAVE TO **COOL OFF** IN THE FUN NEW **INTERACTIVE SPLASH PARK**.



The water play area officially opened to the public just in time for the late May Bank holiday.

The Council's nine month project to rejuvenate Avenue Park's ageing paddling pool and turn it into an exciting new Splash Park, now features fun water activities that both toddlers and older children can enjoy.

Water display specialists SSP Water & Play Limited worked closely with NHDC on the project to create the environmentally friendly water feature, which uses run-off water to irrigate the bowling green and cricket square. The Splash Park has proved to be a huge hit with the local community since its opening.

Sarah Egan, mum to Micah (pictured above) and Baldock resident said: "The Splash Park is a fantastic addition to Avenue Park and a great place to spend a family day out during the Summer months."

## OUTLOOK ON COMMUNITY FUN

# ROYSTON ROCKETS

THIS SUMMER SAW THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF A **BRAND NEW BMX TRACK** IN **BURNS ROAD, ROYSTON**.

The track, home to the Royston Rockets BMX Racing Club for more than 30 years, has been completely rebuilt with funding from Sport England and NHDC.

NHDC councillors, MP Oliver Heald and the Mayor of Royston, Cllr Robert Smith, attended the official launch along with 171 BMXers from clubs throughout the Eastern region. After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, the riders from Royston, Milton Keynes, Peterborough, Ipswich, Norwich, Walpole and Braintree competed on the new track, which now complies to national BMX standards.

Royston Rockets chairman Phil Townsend said: "It is absolutely fantastic. It has been a pretty amazing journey as it's come together so quickly. It is the county's only regional level BMX

track. BMX is a different sport for people to try and we now have fantastic facilities that are up there with the best in the country."

The new BMX track is set to put Royston firmly on the sporting map and will benefit club members and the Royston community for many years to come.

**Royston Rockets has around 100 members. For further information visit [www.roystonrockets.co.uk](http://www.roystonrockets.co.uk) or call the club secretary on 01763 260959.**



# LETCHWORTH STREET FEST

This summer NHDC sponsored the 'big music stage' at Letchworth Street Festival.

The Street Festival, which took place on 8 June, was part of the Town Centre Partnership's fourth Letchworth Festival where a hundred events took place over seventeen days. This year the theme of the festival was celebrating Letchworth Life.

NHDC's big music stage featured a great line-up of live bands playing music from a wide range of genres. As well as entertainment from local bands including Mr Speaker and a debut from Speakeasy, onlookers were treated to a performance from Letchworth's Blonde Louis, who narrowly missed out on a place in the live semi-finals of Britain's Got Talent.

Street Fest took over the town centre with three additional stages which showcased an array of talent from dance to theatre and fashion shows to workshops making sure there was something of interest for all ages and tastes.



## GREENER THAN EVER

Four green spaces in North Herts have now been recognised as being among the best in the country.

Oughtonhead Common in Hitchin and Letchworth's Howard Park and Gardens were both awarded Green Flags for the first time this summer, while Norton Common in Letchworth and Priory Memorial Gardens in Royston were once again awarded the national recognition.

Green Flag Awards are given to the nation's best parks and green spaces and are a sign to visitors that the areas are well maintained with excellent facilities. To mark the prestigious awards, a Green Flag was raised at ceremonies attended by some of the local groups and volunteers who help to keep parks

and other green spaces in North Herts so special.

Thank you to them, to John O'Conner and Countryside Management Service who work with NHDC to maintain and enhance these important areas.

This month, the Council is due to adopt a new Green Space Strategy setting out how it will balance the difficult task of making year on year savings with continuing to make improvements to parks and play areas over the next five years.



## SWITCH YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER AND SAVE MONEY

WOULD YOU LIKE TO **SAVE UP TO £250 A YEAR ON YOUR ENERGY BILLS?** THEN WHY NOT JOIN HERTFORDSHIRE'S 'ENERGY SWITCHING SCHEME' TO SEE HOW MUCH YOU CAN SAVE.

### What is the energy switching scheme?

Hertfordshire County Council has joined a collective energy switching scheme with other councils from around the country. The scheme enables every household in Hertfordshire to join, together with two million others from across the country as a single unit to negotiate cheaper energy bills. The scheme works by means of a reverse auction where energy suppliers will be invited to bid the lowest price to supply the energy to all those signed up for the scheme.

After being informed of this price, residents who registered will then have three weeks to confirm whether they want to go through with the switch or not. There is no obligation to take up the offer to switch.

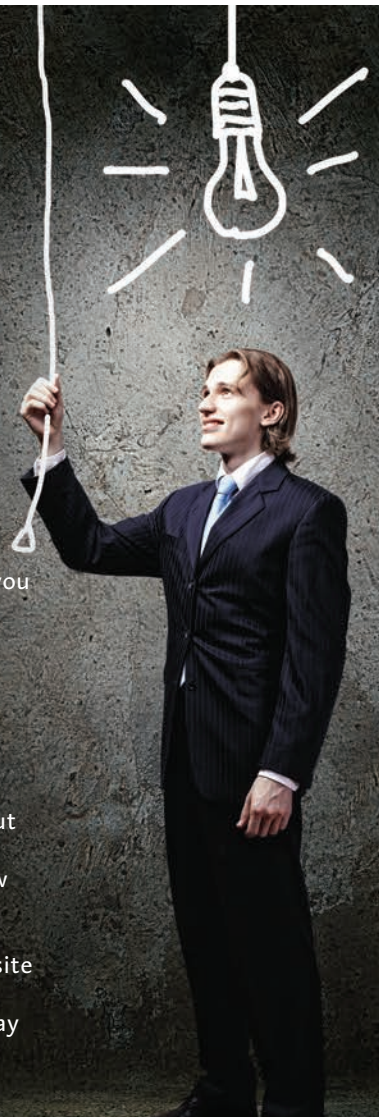
As an added bonus, for every Hertfordshire resident who switches energy supplier, Hertfordshire County Council will receive a referral fee. This money will be put towards the

annual 'Keep Warm, Stay Well' campaign, which supports people who are struggling to keep warm in their homes.

So there are two great reasons to sign up - you can save yourself money while helping to look after our most vulnerable residents.

### How do I sign up?

The first three rounds of switching have now closed and people have been able to save an average of £140, with some being offered savings of over £300 per year. If you missed out on the first rounds and would like to see what savings you could make, the next round is now open for registration and will stay open until Tuesday 15 October 2013. Further details can be found at the website <http://readytoswitch.ichoosr.com> or via a free phone number **0800-0885007** (Monday to Friday from 8am until 5:30pm).





## NEW CREMATORIUM FOR NORTH HERTS?

A **CREMATORIUM** FOR NORTH HERTS COULD BE ON THE CARDS AFTER NHDC'S CABINET AGREED TO PROGRESS A **BUSINESS CASE** FOR A NEW FACILITY AT **WILBURY HILLS, LETCHWORTH**.

The nearest crematoria to North Hertfordshire are currently in Stevenage, Luton or Cambridge. Each of these could be over half an hour away from the four main towns in North Herts given the speed at which a funeral cortege travels. A new crematorium at Wilbury Hills, on the site of the award-winning Council cemetery, is likely to be the preferred option for many people in the area to minimise travel times for mourners and ensure the wishes of families for a local cremation can be complied with.

An initial feasibility study estimates that the site would attract enough cremations a year to make the crematorium profitable, while also allowing for sufficient time

between services to give mourners a sense of space and privacy.

The study indicates the initial investment required to build a new crematorium on the site could be approximately £2.8 million with an estimated annual income of at least £455k a year which means it could ultimately pay for itself. The business case will now be developed in more detail for further consideration by Cabinet later this year.

**The full feasibility study and report to Cabinet are available at [www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk). Click on 'Council meetings' on the left hand side and follow the links for the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 18 June.**

## NEW RURAL COMMUNITY HALLS SCHEME

Following the end of the successful Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Scheme (PACIF) which awarded grants of £1.25M for rural capital improvement projects, the Council has launched a new capital funding scheme to support rural community halls.

The Council's Community Halls Strategy identified issues with the condition of some of the district's village halls, and therefore is making available funding of between £5,000 and £15,000 to help those halls most in need of support. The new scheme will only be open to organisations or facilities that have not already benefited from the PACIF scheme or any of the Council's other capital works grant funding schemes.

Details of the assessment of the rural facilities to be considered for the scheme can be found in the Council's Community Halls Strategy on the NHDC website by searching for 'Community Halls Strategy'.

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Alternatively please contact **Peter Underwood, Community Facilities Manager** for more information on 01462 474669 or email [peter.underwood@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:peter.underwood@north-herts.gov.uk)



# TARGETING RURAL CRIME

Safer Neighbourhood policing teams in Hitchin and Royston are now able to tackle crime in hard to reach areas like woodland and countryside thanks to the introduction of two all terrain quad bikes.

The bright red bikes are equipped with police livery and blue lights as well as safety equipment including a high powered spotlight, first aid kit, maps and tow ropes. This means that they can be used to help find missing people and tackle rural crimes such as hare coursing and theft of tack and farming equipment.



Cllr David Barnard, Chairman of Southern Rural Area Committee with Sgt. Guy Westwood and Inspector Daniel Lawrence from North Herts Safer, Neighbourhood Team, Herts Constabulary

NHDC's Southern Rural Area Committee provided some of the funding towards the running costs of one of the quad bikes. The vehicles will patrol areas which other vehicles find difficult to reach, giving extra reassurance to rural communities.

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## FILM, THEATRE, OPERA & BALLET

<p><b>Henry V</b> Thursday 5 September Shakespeare's Globe on Screen. Recorded live. Starring Brid Brennan, Graham Butler and Nigel Cooke.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Turandot</b> Tuesday 17 September   19:15 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live opera.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Othello</b> Thursday 26 September National Theatre Live broadcast.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Exhibition: Vermeer and Music</b> Thursday 10 October The third show in a new theatrical series, bringing the world's greatest art exhibitions to our screens.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Don Quixote</b> Wednesday 16 October   19:15 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live ballet.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Hamlet</b> Tuesday 22 October Recorded National Theatre Live broadcast.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Frankenstein</b> (Cumberbatch lead) Friday 31 October Recorded National Theatre Live broadcast.</p>	<p><b>Les Vêpres Siciliennes</b> Monday 4 November   17:45 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live opera.</p> <hr/> <p><b>The Habit of Art</b> Thursday 7 November Recorded National Theatre Live broadcast.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Richard II</b> Wednesday 13 November Royal Shakespeare Company. Live broadcast.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Frankenstein</b> (Miller lead) Monday 25 November Recorded National Theatre Live broadcast.</p> <hr/> <p><b>The Nutcracker</b> Thursday 12 December   19:15 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live ballet.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Parsifal</b> Wednesday 18 December   16:45 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live opera.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Giselle</b> Monday 27 January Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live ballet.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Coriolanus</b> Thursday 30 January National Theatre Live broadcast.</p>	<p><b>Don Giovanni</b> Wednesday 12 February   18:45 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live opera.</p> <hr/> <p><b>The Sleeping Beauty</b> Wednesday 19 March   19:15 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live ballet.</p> <hr/> <p><b>The Winter's Tale</b> Monday 28 April   19:15 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live ballet.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Manon Lescaut</b> Tuesday 24 June   18:45 Royal Opera House Cinema broadcast. Live opera.</p>
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**Shows start at 19:00 unless stated.**





**Booking information for broadcasts**  
**Book online:** [www.broadway-cinema.com](http://www.broadway-cinema.com)  
**Book on the phone:** 01462 681088  
**Broadway Cinema, Eastcheap, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3DD**

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## YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS ARE THERE TO HELP

They can offer advice about the council's services like recycling, applying for housing benefit or parking issues. They also listen to and represent the views of the community when making decisions through the council's decision making process and they help to raise awareness of any issues in the community that may need addressing.



This year there have been two changes to the district's ward councillors. Julian Cunningham (Con), pictured left, takes over responsibility for Letchworth South East and Councillor Faye Barnard (Con), below left, represents Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo. Cllr Jane Gray also took over the role of Chairman of the Council in May this year. She will represent the council in this civic role for 12 months.



There are a number of ways you can contact your local councillor; face to face at a community surgery, by email, by telephone or by post. Your ward councillor's contact details are available via the Council's website. If you are unsure who your councillor is, then simply type your postcode into the 'councillor and ward lookup' section of the website at [www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)

## THE ROLE OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to review and scrutinise the decisions and functions of the Council, acting as a check on the decision making process. The committee also encourages public participation in its meetings and in particular is looking for local community groups to play an active role.

As well as holding regular committee meetings, the Committee also sets up 'task and finish groups' which are designed to take a more in-depth look at council decisions. Last year, these in depth groups undertook a review of neighbourhood policing, looked at the Council's grants process and also considered implications of changes to housing legislation brought about by the Localism Act.

The committee has chosen four topics to scrutinise this year. These are:

- **Highways Issues** - Considering highways service standards, the provision of information on highways matters and how best to influence the highways process.
- **The Council's website and IT systems** – looking at how easy it is to use the website and other IT systems.
- **Community rights** – considering community rights given by the Localism Act such as the right to run Council services or purchase community buildings
- **Social inclusion** - considering budgetary and debt advice given to the public by the Council and its partners like Citizens Advice Bureau.

If there is a topic you think the Committee should look at or you want to know how you or your community group can get involved, please contact the Council's Scrutiny officer, **Brendan Sullivan** on 01462 474612 or email [Brendan.sullivan@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Brendan.sullivan@north-herts.gov.uk)

# COUNCIL MEETINGS

2 SEPTEMBER TO 29 NOVEMBER 2013

ALL MEETINGS TAKE PLACE AT **COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY** AT 7.30PM UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Thursday, 5 September<br><b>Council</b>  | Thursday, 26 September<br><b>Southern Rural Committee</b>  |
| Monday, 9 September<br><b>Baldock &amp; District Committee</b><br>Baldock Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock | Thursday, 3 October<br><b>Licensing &amp; Appeals Committee</b>  |
| Tuesday, 10 September<br><b>Hitchin Committee</b><br>The Gurdwara, Wilbury Way, Hitchin                            | Tuesday, 15 October<br><b>Standards Committee</b>  |
| Wednesday, 11 September<br><b>Letchworth Committee</b>   | Thursday, 17 October<br><b>Planning Control Committee</b>  |
| Thursday, 12 September<br><b>Planning Control Committee</b>  | Monday, 11 November<br><b>Baldock &amp; District Committee</b><br>Baldock Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock |
| Tuesday, 17 September<br><b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b>  | Tuesday, 12 November<br><b>Hitchin Committee</b><br>Westmill Community Centre, John Barker Place, Hitchin          |
| Wednesday, 18 September<br><b>Joint Staff Consultative Committee (3.00pm)</b>                                      | Wednesday, 13 November<br><b>Letchworth Committee</b>  |
| Wednesday, 18 September<br><b>Royston &amp; District Committee</b><br>Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston  | Thursday, 14 November<br><b>Planning Control Committee</b>   |
| Thursday, 19 September<br><b>Finance, Audit &amp; Risk Committee</b>   | Wednesday, 20 November<br><b>Royston &amp; District Committee</b><br>Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston   |
| Tuesday, 24 September<br><b>Cabinet</b>  | Thursday, 21 November<br><b>Council</b>  |
|  | Thursday, 28 November<br><b>Southern Rural Committee</b>   |

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](mailto:service@north-herts.gov.uk)  
Textphone (for textphone users) on: 01462 474800



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# WHAT'S ON

## EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS IN YOUR LOCAL MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM TOURS**  
[www.northhertsmuseum.org](http://www.northhertsmuseum.org)  
[www.facebook.com/northhertsmuseums](http://www.facebook.com/northhertsmuseums)

'Behind the Scenes' tours showing how staff are preparing for the new North Hertfordshire Museum, which will incorporate Letchworth Museum and Hitchin Museum. All tours start at 10am and last approximately 40 minutes.

**LETCWORTH MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**  
Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3PF  
10am – 10.40am  
**12 September, 8 October, 12 November**

**HITCHIN MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY**  
Paynes Park, Hitchin, SG5 1EH  
10am – 10.40am  
**13 September, 11 October, 15 November**

All tours are free but places must be booked in advance:

call **01462 685647** for Letchworth Museum and **01462 434476** for Hitchin Museum. Tours without sufficient bookings may be rescheduled.

**ROYSTON MUSEUM**  
5 Lower King Street, Royston, SG8 5AL. 01763 242587  
[www.roystonmuseum.org.uk](http://www.roystonmuseum.org.uk)

### EXHIBITIONS

**26 July - 21 September**  
**Transports of delight**  
A photographic exhibition by Sue and Terry Hartga

**28 September - 9 November**  
**A Small World - schools exhibition**  
An exhibition of art work by pupils at Roysia and Greneway schools to celebrate the Royston Arts Festival.

### EVENTS

**28 / 29 September**  
**A Small World**  
An exciting range of events under the Royston Arts Festival theme "A Small

World". Explore the world inside the museum and make your very own small world souvenir. All activities are free.

### BRITISH SCHOOLS MUSEUM

41/42 Queen Street, Hitchin, SG4 9TS  
01462 420144  
[www.hitchinbritishschools.org.uk](http://www.hitchinbritishschools.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/BritishSchoolsMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/BritishSchoolsMuseum)

### EXHIBITIONS

**6 Aug - 26 Nov**  
**A, B, C: The art and history of the Alphabet**  
Learn about the fascinating history of the alphabet, how it has changed and the beautiful ways in which it has been depicted.

### EVENTS

**21 Oct: 7 for 7.30 pm**  
**The Hertfordshire Constabulary Choir**  
An evening of Song and Laughter.

### Wed 30 Oct: 10am–12 noon

**Dancing for Fun**  
Come and enjoy Maypole Dancing & English Country Dancing for children 6+ and Singing Games for younger ones. Cost £3 per child to include light refreshments. An adult must accompany children.

### Thurs 31 Oct: Drop in between 10.30 am - 12.30 pm

**Halloween Rats & Bats**  
Spooky Halloween fun and games. Cost £4 per child. An adult must accompany children.

### Sat 30 Nov: 10 am to 3 pm

**Christmas Fair**  
A huge range of stalls, food, fun and Christmas cheer.



smock, with long white hair and a kindly smiling face."

North Herts Museum would like to thank everyone who got in touch to offer information about the sitters and the artist's history. They wanted to say a special thanks to Hilda Kidman's and Nellie Noades' relatives, and to Peggy Sherno for sharing their charming memories with us. The two portraits are currently on display at Hitchin Priory but will be displayed in the new North Herts Museum when it opens in 2015.

## MYSTERY SOLVED

The summer edition of Outlook included a plea from the North Herts Museums service to help solve the mystery behind two 20th century portraits of Nellie Noades and Charles Bird. The portraits are the work of Ickleford born artist Hilda Elizabeth Kidman but very little was known about either the artist or her subjects. Several people have since been in touch with information.

Hilda Kidman was born at Ramerick Manor outside Hitchin in 1889. After school she studied art in London including at the famous Slade School. Hilda Kidman specialised in portraits and animal paintings. In 1937 she painted the Queen's twin Bowes-Lyon cousins,

Mary and Patricia, and their brother Fergus the following year.

Nellie Noades was the youngest of eight children. In 1935 she left her home in Therfield, aged 14 to work as a parlour maid for Hilda Kidman. Hilda's portrait of Nellie hung at the Royal Academy in 1941. Towards the end of her life Nellie moved to Royston, where she died in 2004.

Charles Bird was a picture-framer who had a little wooden workshop on Old Park Road in Hitchin. Peggy Sherno, who remembers going into his workshop said: "the workshop was like something out of a fairy tale, dark and dusty, and full of picture frames. Inside, Mr Bird would be dressed in a beige artist's

