



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Monday 17th February 2025 7.30pm – Hunsdon Village Hall

Present: Cllrs F O'Shea (Chair), J. Dann, D. McDonald, D. Ottolangui, B Toll

In attendance: Cllr Buckmaster, Cllr Dunlop, 8 members of the public

25.02.01 To receive and accept apologies for absence. Clerk (Carole Page) sends her apologies due to ill health.

25.02.02 Public Issues

Faye Serlin would like to set up a group to do village litter picking on paved streets only on a regular basis, most likely monthly. Requested the PC to provide appropriate equipment. Faye to provide a list of equipment and work with the Clerk to source the equipment. Some equipment (e.g. grabbers) maybe available free of charge from HCC/EHC

Dog poo bins across the village are not being emptied in a timely fashion and are often overflowing. Residents are encouraged to report full bins, with a picture, if possible, to the Clerk as soon as possible who will chase with EHC to empty

A proposal was approved by a 4-1 majority vote to apply for the shop/PO to be registered an asset of community value to give the opportunity to allow a community group to take over the running of the shop/PO should it come onto the market for sale. Motion was proposed by Cllr McDonald and seconded by Cllr Toll. The clerk will submit the application to EHDC at the earliest possible opportunity. Frank to provide the Clerk with a map showing the shop and associated residential property which needs to be included with the application as they decide on its eligibility under the regulations

25.02.03 Declaration of interest and dispensations

1. To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
 2. To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests, and
 3. To grant any requests for dispensations as appropriate for any of the above
- None for any of the above

25.02.04 Minutes – to confirm the minutes of the Hunsdon Parish council meeting held on 20th January 2025, as an accurate record of proceedings. Minutes of previous meeting approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

25.02.05 Matters Arising

PROW follow up to the meeting held with Places for People (PfP) at the Parish Council meeting on January 20th, 2025. Cllr O'Shea has followed up for updates but responses have been inadequate, saying they are still discussing internally and PfP have said they are still working on a longer-term plan. Cllr O'Shea has also asked Nicolas Maddox (HCC) to enforce the legal obligations to maintain public footpaths as there has been no progress to date. Cllr Buckmaster will follow up with Nicholas Maddox and head of service

Cllr O'Shea to reply to PfP stating that the Parish Council would like to work collaboratively on longer term plans for the airfield to ensure views and opinions of local residents are included in the plans.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

25.02.06 East Herts District Councillor Report – Cllr John Dunlop (Appendix 1)

- New District Plan
Not due to be completed until 2028. Current status as is that the District Plan hasn't started because of the Government's delayed secondary legislation from Sept 24 to late Spring/Summer 2025. Two pieces of public preparation work are being undertaken: the Call for Sites; and village Hierarchy. It is intended to carry out some engagement on the Visioning around Spring of this year which would be a public consultation.
The Development Plan <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/development-plan> has the programme for the District Plan including consultations in outline. It should be on the website by 21st February.
- Village 1-7 update:
Judicial review, if there is a challenge by a private individual there might be a delay to the start of works of between 6 -12 months.
- Call for Site allocations
A number of sites in Hunsdon have been put forward including large sites to the west of Hunsdon bounded by Back lane, Hunsdonbury and Briggens estate.

Process and criteria for filtering is currently unknown so it's not possible for the PC or residents to make valid contributions based on local knowledge prior to formal public consultation which maybe after initial filtering. Cllr Dunlop was asked to try and find out the above. Cllr O'Shea to send Cllr Dunlop the Hierarchy paper the PC submitted last year to EHDC which he could use as the basis of lobbying against further major development in his ward
- Devolution Update
Debates on changes to county and district governing bodies continue with options ranging for Hertfordshire being one single unitary body to a number of smaller units.

25.02.07 County Councillor Report – Cllr Eric Buckmaster (Appendix 2)

Lots of baseline work on speed and volume through the village has been conducted in recent months and will be used to determine if traffic volumes and speed increase once work on the new developments (villages 1-7) begin.

New signage on dangerous bends towards the A414 will be erected by end March. Unfortunately the installation of the first set was delayed last week due to a contractor vehicle breakdown

Councillor Toll asked Cllr Buckmaster to speak to Ringway about taking advantage of the closures of Church Lane to replace broken gully gratings and fill potholes.

Drain investigation as part of the flood risk reduction work is scheduled for 10-21 March as per county councillor report. Road closures will be from 9:30 – 3:30pm. Cllr Buckmaster will request to change this to 3pm to not impact school times.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

There will be requests to move cars on certain dates to be advised via letter in the next week or two. Concern was expressed by impacted residents that there will not be suitable alternative parking. The PC confirmed its unlikely that the playing field will be opened for parking as the ground is likely to be too soft. The village car park could be available for residents but will only accommodate a small number of vehicles. It is unclear whether this limited additional parking will be sufficient until notices detailing the closures for each section/date are known.

Road closures will also be notified on village FB page (Cllr McDonald, Cllr Buckmaster) Cllr Buckmaster also committed to notify residents by FB if work on any given day will not take place to avoid unnecessary removal of cars

25.02.08 Finance – Clerk (Appendix 3)

1. To authorise payments made in accordance with the budget
 2. To note receipt of income
- All approved

25.02.09 Hunsdon Area Planning Applications – Cllr O'Shea

1. Villages 1-7 Development – Cllr O'Shea (**Appendix 4**)

25.02.10 Reports

1. Footpaths – M. Reid – no report this month
2. Police – Clerk – no report this month
3. Village Hall - Cllr O'Shea – no report this month
4. Allotments – Cllr Dann – all outstanding rentals have now been received
5. Sports Court / Playing Field – J. Carthy (**Appendix 5**)
Playground inspection has been completed with no major remedial work.
Quotes for replacing of matting are being progressed
6. Consultations – Cllr O'Shea
Bob to draft report on Stansted abbot's neighbourhood plan
7. Community Activities – Cllr Ottolanguai (**Appendix 6**)
Christmas Fayre was very successful giving away about 60 free presents and broke even on costs
First village lunch had over 50 attendees (diners and volunteers) but despite generous voluntary donation made a loss of £100
8. Communications -nothing to report

25.02.11 Correspondence

Live streaming of Parish Council meetings was not seen as being of value for the PC; Approaches from BEAM and CWOMAP will be followed up by Cllr Ottolanguai and Cllr O'Shea respectively

25.02.12 Date of Next Meeting: 17th March 2025

25.02.13 Close of Meeting:



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 1 – District Councillor Report – Cllr. John Dunlop

1. Gilston Park Estate

I had my monthly update with Officers. I asked questions on behalf of the NPG and have provided answers received from officers to those.

Some highlights:

Main works for Phase 1a and 2a will commence from March 2025 through to spring 2027. Phase 1a and 2a comprises the V1 STC access and V1 All modes access.

Based on current understanding although a JR could change these dates is:

Phase 1b is land south of the district boundary and is currently going through the detailed technical highways approval stage with a proposed commencement date of Spring 2027 to avoid clashing with ECC works on the STC from Burnt Mill Roundabout southwards.

Project 5 which is the internal STC link in V1 and the internal all modes junction will commence summer 2027.

Project 7 V1 primary school commencement summer 2027

Residential commencement in V1 during late 2027

Condition 4 of the V7 permission limits the extent of works in V7 before V1 has made a substantial commencement. There are requirements in the s106 to ensure that linking infrastructure is delivered very early on which TW have to implement. The condition allows enabling works to take place in V7 and those works are reasonably broad such that V7 can get on site and start preparing the site while early works take place in V1. So yes, TW can start preparing the site on the same timetable as V1, they cannot however commence above ground construction of homes before V1 has commenced.

2. Devolution update

The Government has just written to all council leaders in Herts to lay out the timetable for when County and the Districts have to respond to the govt request for proposals for how we would like to see local gov reform in the county - how many unitaries and why... with outline proposals due to Gov by March 21st 2025 and more detailed proposals in November 2025.

There are 2 main competing factors to consider -

1) The proposal is designed to save money, which in theory pushes towards larger unitaries with each one covering more people (hence in theory savings from things like fewer CEOs and senior council officers and more widely shared services should be larger).

2) On the other hand, larger unitaries means the loss of local democratic representation - i.e. fewer councillors per 100,000 residents, with council offices becoming a distant thing.

There are a lot of meetings between leaders and Chief Execs across the County to come up with a proposal which could be agreed.

3. Call for Sites

It is the first piece of work to do in preparation of reviewing the District Plan.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

The Call for Sites responses were published in the East Herts Executive Agenda meeting on 11th February. The paper and Appendices are Item 9 of this - <https://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=119&MId=5383&Ver=4&J=9>.

The video of the meeting for this agenda item starts at 07:00 on this video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Al6VVJWsQT8&t=6193s>

In short summary:

The Call for Sites consultation took place in the 2nd half of 2024.

Submitting a site does not determine that it will be used.

283 sites were submitted - details in Appendices

Next step is the Strategic Land Availability Assessment. Sites are assessed against planning criteria e.g. flood risk, character setting, access, etc.

Also they are assessed against - deliverability, viability and availability of sites

Once this is completed then the Executive Member of Planning and Growth will bring back a report to the Exec Committee.

4. District Plan

The District Plan hasn't started because of the Government's delayed secondary legislation from Sept 24 to late Spring/Summer 2025. Two pieces of public preparation work are being undertaken, the Call for Sites and Visioning. It is intended to carry out some engagement on the Visioning around Spring of this year which would be a public consultation.

The Development Plan <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/development-plan> has the programme for the District Plan including consultations in outline. It should be on the website by 21st Feb. It will run for 15 years from being made.

5. Waste Services changes note

Garden Waste Services

Garden waste subscriptions will look a bit different this year as we transition to bringing payment management in house for all new subscribers and those that pay annually by card. The new system for Direct Debits will be completed in May when we move over to Veolia. The cost of the service has increased to £59.

Three-cycling update (Three weekly collections)

We are currently working on a final draft of a small flyer to accompany residents' council tax bill. The flyer is predominantly to advise residents they will be receiving a purple lidded bin for their non-recyclable waste, a 23l outside food caddy and a 5l kitchen caddy, with instructions that they should not be used until August 2025 as well as details on where to go for more information. We have taken this opportunity now to share the details of the deliveries that will commence at the beginning of May whilst we prepare the communications that will accompany the bin (stickers and an instructional guide) and whilst we create a more detailed service leaflet that is anticipated to go through letter boxes.

The flyer will introduce some residents to our plans, who may not yet have been aware of the changes in August 2025. We are also preparing for an increase in enquiries and will be updating a dedicated webpage with further details and FAQs in anticipation of March, when the council tax bill arrives.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Identifying residents who need alternatives to bins

We recognise that not all households are able to accommodate the full suite of bins required for Three-cycling. We have identified therefore, all the households we believe would require a collection sack, instead of a bin. These would be limited to houses that we know do not have the space to accommodate bins or other operational restrictions (recycling bags are not optional for residents). We would also appreciate your insight into the areas we have identified and using your knowledge of your areas, if there are properties we may have overlooked. We will be providing the current list to your group leaders and urge you to support us and residents by checking it. *(Not received yet)*

Litterbin removals

After further consultations with Cllrs and parishes, we will look to commence the removal of those litter bins identified under the criteria of the project in the coming weeks. We will look for this to be carried out on a town-by-town basis, however, cannot confirm exact dates of when specific towns/villages will start to see the removal of some litter bins. We will be looking to have completed the whole project and removal by the end of April.

Appendix 2 - E Buckmaster County Councillor Report February 2025

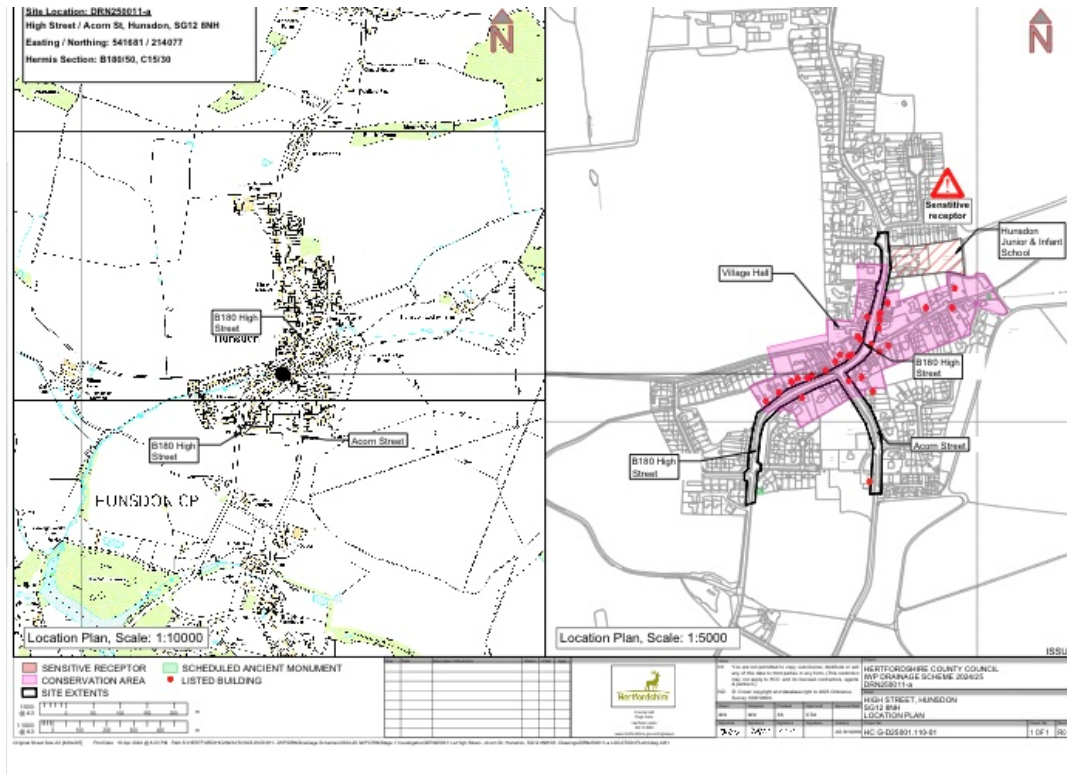
New Signs for Acorn Street and Church Lane

The Acorn Street signs were due 12th February. Disappointingly and annoyingly the Traffic Management Van broke down. Church Lane are due 3rd March. It may be possible to do all of it now under one closure.

Drainage Investigation Works 10th of March to 21st March. Please see the attached plan of proposed area to investigate the surface water drainage system under road closure.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL



We will carry out the road closure in 3 phases

- Acorn Street (from High street to Hempstalls Close)
- High Street (west of Acorn Street)
- High Street (East of Acorn Street)

As states, the dates are 10th of March to 21st March. **This will be Monday to Friday 9:30am to 15:30pm. Road will be opened outside of these hours**

A year of events and activities as Hertfordshire Libraries turn 100

Hertfordshire County Council have announced the first in a series of events set to take place over the next year across all the county's 46 libraries to celebrate 100 years of the libraries service in Hertfordshire.

The programme of events has been created in collaboration with Hertfordshire's residents and library users and includes celebrations of literature and poetry, events for children, young people and families, theatre, comedy and much more. The year-long celebrations have been made possible through a successful funding bid to Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants, for Marking a Milestone: 100 years of reading, discovery and connection.

Celebrations will begin at a launch event on Friday 28 February, marking exactly 100 years since the establishment of the countywide library service. The evening at Welwyn Garden City Library will feature speeches, an interactive session with a local artist, and the unveiling of the touring exhibition exploring the rich history of Hertfordshire libraries.

The events programme has been created in collaboration with residents who were asked what they most wanted to see as part of the celebrations. Responding to feedback from Baby Rhyme Time audiences, 10 libraries will host 'A Tale of Us' in 2025 for new and returning



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

'Rhyme Time' families. 'A Tale of Us' is a new play for parents, carers and their babies which celebrates the wonder, joys, and challenges of becoming a new parent.

Residents who asked for more family theatre events will be pleased that the 'Big Herts Hero Hunt' will tour eight libraries throughout 2025. This interactive theatre show for families explores Hertfordshire's wonderful heritage and invites children to discover the heroes of the future.

And those who wanted to explore the history of Hertfordshire will be able to visit a travelling exhibition from March 2025, alongside screenings of the 'Through the Decades' video commissioned as part of the centenary celebrations which brings 100 years of Hertfordshire's library service to life.

Other events and activities include:

- on Tuesday 4 March
- An evening with comedian and author Robin Ince at Hitchin Library on Thursday 6 March
- A 100-day Poetry Festival launching on Thursday 13 March featuring a poetry competition, interactive poetry workshops and open-mic nights
- A sharing of 'The Tree of Life', a new piece of children's dance theatre by award winning Sanskruti Dance company at Hertford Library on Wednesday 12 March
- In Conversation with John Connolly, multi-bestselling author of the thrilling Charlie Parker series at St Albans Library on Thursday 8 May
- A chance to take part in 'Herts Big Read' where libraries will recommend 10 titles each month to read and vote for your favourite

My Locality Grant applications for past year



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Grants allocated to local organisations from Cllr Eric Buckmaster		£5,974.00
Applicant organisation	Purpose	amount awarded
Hunsdon Scouts	Additional tent to accommodate the increase in youth membership	£300.00
Allens Green Association	improvements to hall	£250.00
Southbrook Allotments	towards planting Orchard	£300.00
Herts Young Mariners base	<u>Purchase ply, fibre glass chop mat, fixing kit and climbing holds.</u>	£150.00
Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard	300th Anniversary of Rivers Nursery and Orchard	£300.00
Sawbridgeworth Sports Association	process for finger posts to highlight sports clubs locations	£414.00
Wareside Parish Council	towards renovating telephone box to house defibrillator + book swap	£500.00
Citizens Advice East Herts	supporting residents in the Division	£300.00
Stanstead Abbotts Brownies	towards coach trip	£250.00
Small Acts of Kindness	Warm in Winter gift bags and Purple Pages information packs	£200.00
Sawbridgeworth Sports Association	costs for implementing finger posts to highlight sports clubs locations	£509.00
st andrews school Stanstead Abbotts	welly racks for primary school	£400.00
Grove Cottage	supporting activities	£250.00
Allsorts Dementia Group	for people with dementia to enjoy activity, entertainment and a hot lunch with trained support	£200.00
Future Living Herts	supporting survivors of Domestic Abuse	£250.00
Sawbridgeworth Town Council	winter road and pathway gritting treatment	£500.00
Bishops Stortford and Sawbridgeworth Breathe Easy	supporting a self help group of people with COPD and breathing issues	£200.00
Air cadets Squadron	towards replacing Squadron Banner	£500.00
Hertfordshire Music Service	Towards Hertfordshire Schools Gala	£201.00
	Running Total	£5,974.00



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

The Reuse Shop

Discover quality bargains

Reuse Shops Dashboard Report

2024 Q3 Date Issued: 29th January 2025

This report provides a snapshot of the Reuse Shops performance and progress in Quarter 3 (October, November and December) 2024-5.

20,939 items reused

132 tonnes diverted

£118,405 gross sales*



Quarter 3 Overview

Stevenage Pop Up Reuse Shop has been closed from mid-November for a refurbishment, reopening in February. We also faced closures across the network due to seasonal staff sickness. Despite these closures, the gross sales and reuse tonnage rose compared to Q3 2023-4.

We have been promoting the Waterdale shop including; promotional posts on Watford area Facebook groups with a 65k reach (amplified by Watford Council) and a new sign on the roundabout at the entrance to Waterdale. With the shop staff's hard work sales have risen by more than £10k in comparison to the same quarter in 2023-4. This spring we will continue promotions with an advert in About Watford magazine, digital billboards on Watford high street, and promoting the Reuse Shops network at Redbourn car boot sale.



Compliments and Complaints

This quarter we received four compliments and one complaint (stage 1 only).

Our compliments included:

"This is exactly how a reuse centre should be run. There's a constant turn around of good quality items. The staff are really friendly." (Harpenden)

"Nice place to pick up a bargain" (Waterdale)

"a perfect place to get a bargain" (WGC)

"Nice man in shop helpful" (WGC)

"Absolutely fantastic. I work for a local charity and get donated lots of arts and crafts materials as well as prizes. These are greatly appreciated by the learning disability community I work with. Thank you so much." (Ware)



* Covers staff and equipment costs, service improvements and building maintenance.

School Composting

In November we added an article to the Hertfordshire Schools Bulletin promoting our free composters and kitchen caddies for schools. We were inundated with requests, with 60 schools eager for items to boost food recycling at their school.

As part of our offer to schools, EnVar, one of our organic waste treatment contractors, have offered free bags of compost to schools in Hertfordshire. We have promoted this throughout the county. So far, they have delivered 14 Bags, and have received orders from 53 schools for a total of over 100 bags of compost!



Community Donations Feedback

This quarter we introduced a feedback form to evaluate our Community Donations scheme, looking firstly at items donated to households in need.

We only have a small sample of feedback so far but the early feedback is positive and correlates with our belief that the Community Donation scheme improves outcomes for residents and addresses furniture poverty.

- 75% of households feel 'very satisfied' with the service.
- 37% of respondents felt that their mental health was improved by having received Community Donation items.
- 37% felt that receiving these items had increased their independence and freedom.

Some other early pieces of feedback:

"The items were given to service users. Feedback from them was they were very grateful and made a big change."

"Staff very helpful at the Reuse shop."

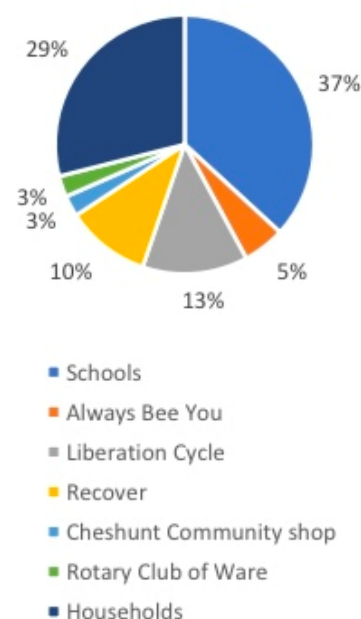
"Much appreciated by a refugee family"

Community Donations

Our Community Donations Scheme donates items from the Reuse Shops to charities, schools, community groups and households in need throughout the county. This allows us to keep even more items out of the waste stream, while providing much needed items.

This quarter we have donated 259 items. This is the share of recipients:

Community Donations Recipients





Hertfordshire County Council Clean air campaign

Hertfordshire County Council has invested £162k in a national 'Clean Air Night' campaign, designed to highlight the risks of burning solid fuels. Log burners and open fires may invoke a sense of cosy evenings-in, in the midst of a chilly winter, for many residents. But the national Clean Air Night campaign – backed by the county council – aims to shine a light on the “uncomfortable truth” about wood burning. Running for the second time this year, the campaign focuses on the impact of wood burning on health and the environment. Burning wood, says the campaign, releases more carbon emissions than oil or gas for the same amount of heat or energy produced. And the smoke, it says, contains fine particle air pollution (PM2.5), which enters the bloodstream when inhaled and can cause heart and lung disease, diabetes, and dementia. Officials at the county council say that in its first year, one in five local authorities across [England](#) disseminated the campaigns messaging. And with pollution not recognising council boundaries, the council points to the impact of enabling the message to spread more widely.

Latest data demonstrating the quality of Hertfordshire's schools and early years provision has shown that educational provision in Hertfordshire is strong, and pupils achieve well.

An annual review of performance and standards in all Hertfordshire's schools and early years settings analysed inspection outcomes of schools along with academic outcomes achieved by Hertfordshire's children and young people.

The 2024 school performance data was presented to county councillors at Hertfordshire County Council's Education, Libraries and Lifelong learning panel on Friday 31 January.

Hertfordshire is rising above the national average in relation **to schools judged to be good or outstanding at their last inspection, with 91.9% of schools achieving this rating compared with the national average of 90.4%.**

Importantly, all schools maintained by the local authority have achieved a good or outstanding rating and no schools in Hertfordshire were judged to be inadequate by Ofsted in the last year.

The data analysis also indicates that, at every key stage, Hertfordshire's children and young people are achieving better educational outcomes than the national average, placing Hertfordshire County Council in the top 40% of all local authorities. The achievements of Hertfordshire's young people, at key stages four (GCSEs) and five (A Levels) are in the top 20% for most headline measures.

Changes to car parking charges and revenues for Sawbridgeworth and Stanstead Abbots as agreed by East Herts Executive



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Bell Street - Annual Income	
Current Charges	
£8,821.00	1 hour
£16,655.00	2 hours
£8,193.50	3 hours
£6,404.00	4 hours
£6,072.00	5 hours
£45,161.00	All day
£91,306.50	Totals
Proposed Charges 25/26	
£15,113.00	1 hour
£27,776.00	2 hours
£12,285.00	3 hours
£8,932.00	4 hours
£7,210.00	5 hours
£37,926.00	All day
£109,242.00	Totals

Stanstead Abbots - Annual Income	
Current Charges	
£ 5,047.00	SUN B/H All day
£ 7,760.00	1 hour
£ 11,096.50	2 hours
£ 4,862.00	3 hours
£ 2,653.00	4 hours
£ 1,721.00	5 hours
£ 6,250.00	All day
£ 39,389.50	Totals
Proposed Charges 25/26	
£ 6,720.00	SUN B/H All day
£ 5,866.00	1 hour
£ 8,960.00	2 hours
£ 4,830.00	3 hours
£ 2,632.00	4 hours
£ 1,540.00	5 hours
£ 5,250.00	All day
£ 35,798.00	Totals



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Hertfordshire County Council Leader statement on local government reform

Like all councils in two-tier areas, Hertfordshire County Council has received a [statutory invitation from the Government](#) to submit proposals for the reorganisation of local government structures in the county. The letter sets out the criteria to be considered and the timescale, including for initial plans to be submitted in March and full proposals in November.

This follows the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December last year which set out the Government's intention for all areas of the country to be covered by an elected Mayor and all two-tier areas like Hertfordshire, to be reorganised into single tier unitary authorities.

Cllr Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, said: "As the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council I am ambitious for our county and our country.

"Hertfordshire is England's county of opportunity and I am determined to make sure it continues to be a great place to live, work and invest.

"My priority remains to ensure that any changes benefit Hertfordshire's residents and businesses, maintains our excellent local government services, and enables strong democratic accountability to our communities.

"The Government's plans represent the biggest transformation of local government and public services for half a century. The impact will be felt for generations to come and the timescales they have set present a significant demand on all councils in Hertfordshire.

"With financial and staffing pressures on every council in the county I am concerned about the need to now balance continuing to provide high-quality services with the significant work required to prepare proposals for new council structures.

"I also recognise there are currently differing views on the future model for local government in Hertfordshire. I am committed to working together with district and borough councils to find the best way to protect and enhance services to our residents, support our businesses to grow, and provide value for money.

"All 11 councils in Hertfordshire, with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, are already collaborating to develop a shared evidence base to inform the options available to our county. We will now carefully consider the Government's request and jointly develop our response.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

"This work is at an early stage and the views of residents, businesses, local government partners, our colleagues, and other stakeholders across the public and private sectors will be essential as it develops. We are also committed to providing updates at every step.

"I have not been actively seeking changes to the structure of local government in Hertfordshire, but the Government is now clear that keeping the status quo is not an option.

"Unlike some areas, Hertfordshire County Council did not ask Government to delay this year's elections nor apply for the fast-track devolution priority programme. This was to allow as much time as possible to gather and analyse the necessary information to develop proposals and build consensus where possible. It was also to ensure that the local democratic cycle was not interrupted at this vital and historic moment for our County. The negotiation of this significant change with the government requires a depth of understanding, engagement and delivery based on an honest electoral mandate and we will uphold that with elections in May 1st

Almost £900,000 confiscated from counterfeit AirPods seller: Seized AirPods cropped

Hertfordshire County Council's Trading Standards service has successfully applied to have £897,841.43 confiscated from Mr Adam Owen, of Oaktree Meadows, Horncastle, the owner of an online retailer offering counterfeit AirPods for sale.

Luton Crown Court ordered the money to be confiscated under proceeds of crime legislation, following Mr Owen's conviction in January 2024.

Following a successful investigation by county council Trading Standards officers, Mr Owen pleaded guilty at St Albans Magistrates Court on 22 November 2023 to offences under the Trademarks Act 1994, namely that his company ARO Commerce Ltd which traded as Geekswag.co.uk had both sold, and also had in their possession for future sale, approximately 10,000 units of counterfeit Apple AirPods.

Mr Owen received a two-year suspended prison sentence and 180 hours community service in January 2024. He now has three months to pay the confiscated sum or serve a default prison sentence of up to seven years.

The majority of the confiscated money will go to the Home Office, but a portion of the funds will go to the county council to offset the cost of the prosecution and compensate six victims for their losses.

Countryside Management Service - 50 Years.

In 2025 the Countryside Management Service (CMS) celebrates 50 years.

Throughout 2025 selected projects and activities will be amplified to draw attention to this significant anniversary.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

The Team plan to use the Investing in Volunteers Celebration planned for the 13th February '25 as a jumping off point for this birthday celebration.

The Countryside Management Service came about at an interesting time for the country. 1949 had seen significant, post-war government initiatives – the NHS, National Insurance and for the environmental sector, the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (the genesis of the Public Rights of Way system and powers to declare Local Nature Reserves). Further forwards came the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1968 giving Local Authorities the power to create Country Parks. It is this backdrop that prompted Hertfordshire County Council in partnership with the Countryside Commission (today Natural England) to experiment with the concept of countryside management. This experiment focussed on the urban fringe of Hertfordshire and Barnet – the “Green Belt Management Project”. The Hertfordshire County Structure Plan was being authored at the time; Hertfordshire was seeing unprecedented growth, Dutch Elm Disease was leading to landscape decline due to widespread tree felling and, with more leisure time and mobility the population sought to explore their local countryside but found Public Rights of Way (PRoW) impassable.

The experiment expanded more widely across Hertfordshire, eventually becoming county wide. The 1st Structure Plan 10 Year Review references the success of this expanding initiative including the creation of recreation sites, clearance of PRoW, woodland management, tree planting and other conservation improvements. It noted also that the promotion of this activity was encouraging others to follow suit. One specific quote highlights the public participation opportunities this new Service presented. “Particularly encouraging has been the large number of volunteers who are willing to help.”

The Service has continued to evolve its model to become a shared service (HCC hosted and part funded by some District and Borough Councils) delivering through discipline-based Teams. More recently merged with the Public Rights of Way service to become Countryside & Rights of Way. This to maximise opportunities for delivering Land Management, Community Engagement, Rights of Way improvement and Walking for Health for Hertfordshire residents. The original objectives have been simplified to “Engaging communities in improving their environment for Wildlife and People”. The outcomes appear more relevant today than they did at the CMS inception 50 years ago.

Youth COP for schools

On 11th February I helped host a Youth COP (Conference of Parties)

We have already been receiving positive feedback and thanks from participants and exhibitors. The enthusiasm from the students continued throughout the day and the careers fair/ seminar was busy with students having worthwhile conversations.

We welcomed:

- 25 secondary schools
- 4 further education colleges
- Approx. 115 students
- 21 exhibitors (businesses, organisations, educational institutions)



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

- Organised in partnership with North Hertfordshire College and University of Hertfordshire

The day included the EnRoads Climate Simulation module that enabled students to see the impacts of decision making by nations, Developed and Developing Countries, big business, and the competing interests that can result in progress being much slower than it needs to be to contain global warming.



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 3 – Clerk's report

Bank Reconciliation			
Date	12/02/2025		
Santander Account		1,656.16	
Unity Trust Current Account		8,713.05	
Unity Trust Business Account		20,494.60	
Opening balance		£ 30,863.81	
Payments agreed but not cleared in bank			
Payee	Detail	Header	Amount
			£ -
Payments to be agreed and included in accounts			
Payee	Detail	Header	Amount
C Page	Salary for February	Salary	£467.59
L Lundy	Litter picking for February	Litter Pickers	£20.00
A Wilkinson	Litter picking for February	Litter Pickers	£20.00
HMRC Cumbernauld	PAYE for Clerk	Salary	£96.00
Sovereign	Re-tensioning of the zip wire	Grounds Maintenance	£538.80
East Herts District Council	Election costs for 2024		
	Returning Officer Fee	Administration	£54.15
Simon Dedman	Playing field hedge cutting	Grounds Maintenance	£300.00
			£ 1,496.54
	Reconciled balance		£ 29,367.27

HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

[illegible]



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 4 - HEGNPG Report to Hunsdon Parish Council on Villages 7 and 1-6

1. Planning Permission finally granted 9th Jan 25. Might be a Judicial Review- not by the Parish Councils but may be private resident-will know soon.
2. 2 public meetings in last month by Taylor Wimpey and Places for People re internal sites and appearance of V7 and V1- some good stuff but lack of detail about look of houses.
3. TW say houses will not appear for 2-3 years in v7; and PfP say 3-5 years in V1- Masterplans to be submitted to EHC for approval in Spring/summer.
4. Work on roads may start in earnest end of this year- Church Lane/A414 junction and the Central Crossing from Eastwick lodge to Station roundabout – major works that will take very many months and cause major disruptions .
5. Next Community Forum for all residents on 27th Feb at Manor of Groves 6:30 to 8:30 pm on Stewardship/ Community assets; after 2 years silence- 2 PCS can nominate 2 reps to sit on Shadow Advisory Board but lack of detail on their roles, responsibilities and workload.

FOS

Appendix 5 - Report on the Recreation Area for Hunsdon Parish Council

There has been little news to report since last month.

Playground

An inspection of the playground took place on February 3rd Nothing major was found, just some minor maintenance issues such as weeds growing through the rubber mulch.

The inspection will need to be extended to include the Sports Courts.

We are currently getting quotes for replacing the grass matting under the swings with rubber mulch. So far, we have only had one quote of £5,560 for rubber mulch under the swings and the play hut (not the zip wire) and it doesn't include a price for labour. Most of the companies I've spoken to don't recommend putting rubber mulch under zip wires – I don't know why – and I don't think I've seen zip wires with rubber mulch under them. Certainly, the new one in Buntingford doesn't.

A response from Kompan regarding the previous inspection's finding that the cableway platform it installed is subsiding is as follows. "Our claims team have investigated this and confirmed that the groundwork is unfortunately out of the 12-month warranty". But the subsidence wasn't mentioned in this month's inspection report.

Hunsdon Sport Courts

Notice boards and some in-court benches are still to be ordered . 2 benches will cost around £175 each , a notice board around £400 and two coat hanging pegs around £55 each .

There is ongoing work needed to keep the vegetation surrounding the courts in check and to make sure that the courts are kept clear and weed free. The overhanging trees by the playground and sports courts need to be cut back. Starting this month there will be a maintenance schedule in place which will address keeping the courts and playground clear and weed free and the brambles cut back.

Jackie Carthy
14th February 2025



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 6 Hunsdon Community Events Report

Confirmed dates for 2025

- Village lunch Thursday 13th February
- Village brunch Sunday 24th April
- Village lunch Thursday 3rd July
- Midsummer Festival Saturday 21st June
- Christmas Fayre Sunday 30th November

The Christmas Fayre was a great success giving out approximately 60-70 gifts free of charge to village children and managed to break even due to good BBQ, mince pie, tea and mulled wine sales. The date for the 2025 Christmas Fayre is confirmed as Sunday 30th November

The first free to attend village lunch took place on Thursday 13th February and was attended by over 40 villagers. The village lunches and brunches are still losing approximately £100 for each event despite generous voluntary donations. Two further dates have been scheduled (see above) and it is hoped to schedule a further three events for the second half of the year

The Summer festival is confirmed for Saturday 21st June and aims to have a more live entertainment than in 2024 but hopes to be able to break even despite increasing costs