

EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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EASTWICK AND GILSTON PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING

Parish Council meeting of Monday 13th July 2026 at 8.00pm, Village Hall, Pye Corner

PRESENT: Cllrs Beazley, Bryant, Harvey, Marx, Orson

In attendance: Christine Law (Parish Clerk), Eric Buckmaster (CC) John Dunlop (DC). 1 member of the public.

Public Participation

- a. A resident was concerned about the non-delivery of post for the last 3 weeks as our regular postman has been on holiday and asked who should be contacted to make a complaint. It was suggested that residents should write to our local MP's on this matter - Josh.dean.mp@parliament.uk and Harlow's MP Chris.vince.mp@parliament.uk.
- b. A resident asked the purpose of the temporary road signs in Gilston Lane by St Mary's church. It is believed that these are for the large vehicles turning to use the new road for work being carried out on the pylons crossing the airfield.
- c. Footpaths – a resident raised concerns that Footpath E6 and Cock Robin Lane have become overgrown and difficult to pass. It is explained in Cllr Orson's July Parish Paths report that HCC Rights of Way have been re-procuring the annual vegetation cutting contract and in doing so ran into some minor delays. The contract is now up and running and it is expected that all works will be completed by mid-August. The late start and the logistics of start-up for cutting 650km of unconnected routes across the county, coupled with reductions from two cuts annually to one had slowed thing up.

15.APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

- a. None

16.RECEIVE COUNCILLOR'S DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- a. Cllr Marx – Item 18.iii (b) and item19.f.

17.MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

- a. Minutes of our Annual Council Meeting of 11th May . proposed by Cllr Bryant and seconded by Cllr Marx (appendix 1)
 - b. Minutes of our Parish Council Business Meeting of 11th May proposed by Cllr Marx and seconded by Cllr Bryant. (appendix 2)
- Both were signed by Cllr Orson as a true record.

18.ACCOUNTS

- a. The Clerk presented the written report of the Council's Accounts summary. No queries raised.

- b. Grant of £600.00 for the maintenance of both our churchyards. This was discussed and Cllr Marx as Treasurer of the PCC was asked for a breakdown of expenses. This will be held over until our September meeting.

This was proposed by Cllr Bryant and seconded by Cllr Harvey.

19. PLANNING AND ASSOCIATED APPLICATIONS

- a. Grassland, Pye Corner – 3/23/1110/FUL – Retrospective change of use of buildings. Amended plans – Awaiting Decision. This is a 2023 planning request with no outcome. The Clerk has written to planning about this application with no result.
- b. The Old Rectory, Gilston – 3/25/1522/FUL. This has been refused by Planning, and the applicant has taken this to appeal. **Planning Inspectorate has dismissed the appeal**
- c. 70 Eastwick Road, Eastwick – 3/26/0260/HH & 3/26/0261/LBC – Single storey rear extension, fenestration alteration, internal layout alterations, addition of partition walls, replacement door and removal of non-original doors, repair work to render, roof and timber work. **Awaiting decision.**
- d. 14 Turvin Crescent, Terlings, Park, Gilston – 3/26/0539/HH – Erection of rear balcony at first floor level; removal of a window and replacement with a new door to provide access to the balcony. **The application has been withdrawn by applicant.**
- e. Hodgson House, 3 Gilston Park, Gilston – 3/26/0593/HH – Single storey rear extension with green roof and alterations to fenestration. **Planning application granted.**
- f. 33 Pye Corner, Gilston – 3/26/0693/HH – Two storey rear extension. **This planning application has been withdrawn by applicant.**
- g. 2 Gilston Park House – 3/26/0646/LBC – Internal works at basement level: removal of internal walls, creation of two new doorways, relocation of utility room, alterations to pipework and drainage and installation of extraction ventilation unit. **Awaiting decision**
- h. Bus Stop – Village Hall, Pye Corner – The Parish Council have been contacted by the HCC Integrated Passenger Transport Unit regarding possible improvements to the bus infrastructure at the Village Hall. Next steps will be for a worked-up proposal / options including the stop opposite the village hall. Decisions on anything proposed for the village hall land are for the village hall management committee to decide and not the PC. There was recognition that improvements to the bus infrastructure are a first step toward improving overall service and a hub for sustainable travel.

Post meeting notes:- "Cllr Beazley shared the results of a short survey of Terlings Park residents re the new bus service

No of responses 23

Before this survey, was your household aware of the 33 bus service between Hoddesdon and Bishops Stortford

- Yes 65.22%
- No 34.78%

Has anyone from your household used the 33 bus?

- Yes 30.43%
- No 69.57%

How often has your household used the 33 bus?

- Every Day 14.29%
- A Few Times a month 7.14%
- Once a Month 14.29%
- Less than once a Month 64.29%

If you have used the 33 bus, which direction have you travelled in?

- Towards Hoddesdon 0%
- Towards Bishops Stortford 100%

If you have used the 33 bus service, which bus stop have you used?

- Opposite Terlings Avenue 41.67%

· Village Hall	16.67%
· 97 – 98 Pye Corner	8.33%
· Plume of Feathers	8.33%
· Other	25%

There was a short discussion re what would be needed to improve use of the bus including dependability, permanent bus stops, and improved schedule."

20. PARISH PATHS

a. Cllr Orson reported that:

Annual Vegetation Cutting – Nicholas Maddex who had been our HCC Rights of Way officer for many years has retired. HCC are currently trying to recruit a replacement Officer for what was Nicholas' area and consequently resources are short. With regards to annual vegetation cutting, they have been re-procuring the contract and in doing so run into some minor delays, The contract is now up and running and it is expected that all works will be complete by mid-August. The late start and the logistics of start-up for cutting 650km of unconnected routes across the county, coupled with reductions from two cuts annually to one has slowed things up.

Maintenance of non-tenanted and uncultivated land. There is a problem with uncultivated PFP land growing a good crop of thistles, ragwort and other vegetation together with being generally left to deteriorate. Clouds of thistledown being blown across Pye Corner / Gilston Lane (and no doubt other areas) from around early July to mid-August has become an annual event. This matter has been raised with PFP and Knight Frank their agents last year and again this year. We are already experiencing quantities of airborne thistledown – Knight Frank assures us that mitigation measures are in hand however we are waiting to be told what action will be taken and when.

Closure of FP22 from Eastwick Hall Lane to Eastwick Hall Farm. National Grid works are needed to facilitate planned overhead line rewiring works and will see the closure of Eastwick and Gilston Footpath 022, near Eastwick Hall Lane and Eastwick Hall Farm. The closure is scheduled for Monday 6 July to Friday 28 August 2026, between the What3Word locations of ///civic.tape.stale and ///bland.filed.cubs.

21. COMMUNITY FORUM/NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Cllr Bryant reported:

Roadworks in and around Gilston C161

Significant excavation and haul road laying has been undertaken either side of the C161 between the Eastwick roundabout and the Dusty Miller.

NATTA, the road construction contractor, deployed traffic lights at various dates & times during the last 2 months; they endeavoured to only put traffic restrictions in place when necessary and were quick to remove them when not needed to minimise disruption for road users.

A414 lane closures between west entrance into / exit from Eastwick and the Eastwick roundabout

A414 lane closures have caused an increase in traffic holdups and made exiting from Eastwick more problematic for residents. Eastwick residents must now turn left when exiting the village and join the traffic to the Eastwick roundabout even when they wish to drive west towards Hertford. Hertfordshire Highways insist on this for safety reasons and to minimise disruption for other road users.

I have concern that the warning signage and speed restrictions approaching the lane closure from the west (Hertford direction) are not sufficient for safety.

NATTA, PFP and Hertfordshire Highways have been asked to review.

Proposed 24/7 road closure of C161 for 7 weeks (between Eastwick roundabout and The Dusty Miller)

NPG, on behalf of the Parish Council, has met several times with PfP, NATTA, EHC planners and Herts Highways to challenge the need for the approx. 7 week closure and get them to investigate whether it is absolutely necessary to close the C161 24/7 for approx. 7 weeks during the autumn. We asked them to explore whether it would be possible to undertake some of the work during the school summer holidays.

From PfP / NATTA “we are unfortunately unable to make this change [split the closure to 2 phases]. Due to the complexity of the works, the number of utility providers involved, and the timeframe the teams have been working under, there is no practical solution that would allow the works to be completed during the summer holidays without either extending the overall programme or causing greater disruption.

We appreciate this will be disappointing news for local residents “

NPG have a further meeting scheduled Tuesday 14th to hear why the 7 week closure is the only option and what assistance / actions PfP will put in place to at least try to mitigate the significant disruption this will cause residents.

[Gilstonparkestate.com /get involved / construction](https://gilstonparkestate.com/get-involved/construction) for occasional updates on the roadworks
Or our community website [News Articles – Eastwick and Gilston Parish Council](#)

PfP have agreed to hold another public event (with presentations and opportunity for Questions & Answers - not simply a drop-in).

They, PfP & NATTA, are not currently able to confirm the exact timing of the Eastwick Road closure and say they remain committed to minimising disruption wherever possible and continue to explore opportunities to reduce the duration of the future road closure. As soon as the programme is finalised they will provide advance notice to residents and stakeholders and will hold a public information event to explain the works, the traffic management arrangements and the support measures that will be in place.

A414 Roadworks / Church Lane Hunsdon junction

Village 7 Amended details of access of the A414/ Church Lane signalised junction, 3/26/0366/NMA, has now been approved by EHC Planning team. Work is likely to commence some time Autumn 2026.

EHC Gilston Area Community Forum meeting 12th May 2026

Focussed on updates from the **Village 7 developer (Taylor Wimpey)** in relation to their programme of development/ highway impacts etc..

Next Community Forum autumn 2026 - date has not been scheduled yet.

All past presentations can be found at

[Gilston Area Community Forum | East Herts District Council](#)

We urge residents to attend these forums and, if possible, submit questions, via email, at least 10 days before to community.forum@eastherts.gov.uk

There is also an opportunity to “drop-in” between 6:30 and 7:00pm for informal discussion with EHC councillors, planning officers and developer representatives.

You can also ask for specific topics you want to learn more about to be included in future meetings.

Neighbourhood Development –

Village 1 Infrastructure Delivery Plan, X/26/0216/CND, in 3 phases has been submitted to EHC for approval.

Villages 5 & 6 Master Planning - Places for People have held 3 workshops with “Stakeholders”. The design of Villages 5 & 6 is needed to position the Strategic Transport Corridor (STC) between Villages 1 & 7. The STC must be constructed, as part of the early development, to enable children from V7 to travel to the proposed new V1 Primary school – or vice versa. **It has not yet been decided whether the 1st new Primary school should be in V1 or V7.**

Submission of the Village 5 and 6 Masterplans to East Herts District Council is anticipated later in 2026.

Useful websites:

All planning documents are on the East Herts Planning website
<https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Villages 1 - 6 OPA 3/19/1045/OUT

Strategic Landscape Masterplan – amended – approved

Village 1 – 6 X/25/0215/CND Discharge condition 6 (Strategic Landscape Masterplan) attached to 3/19/1045/OUT, 15th December 2025

Village 7 - X/25/0225/CND Full Discharge of Condition 10 (Strategic Landscape Masterplan) and Full Discharge of Condition 11 (Strategic Landscape Design Code) Pursuant to Outline Planning Permission 3/19/2124/OUT (Gilston - Village 7), 15th December 2025

Central Stort Crossing (3/19/1046/FUL)

The Eastern Crossing (3/19/1051/FUL)

Eastwick & Gilston Community website

<https://eastwickandgilstonparish.gov.uk>

Estate Management – Reminder

Places for People’s **gilston.info** website demonstrated at the February Community Forum

The website has 3 headings:

Current Works – a map of current and planned works in the Gilston Area.

Report an Issue – a map where any issues, eg tree fallen across a RoW, fly tipping, etc., can be reported

News – construction works and developments for the Gilston Area.

Roadworks updates.

- For information on current and upcoming roadworks go to [Causeway one.network](https://one.network/uk/hertfordshire)
<https://one.network/uk/hertfordshire>
- Places for People gilstonparkestate website NEWS page
<https://www.gilstonparkestate.com/news/enabling-works-for-gilston-underway/>

Village 1 and Strategic Landscape Master Plan

<https://www.gilstonparkestate.com/get-involved/>

Section 106 docs Villages 1 - 6

<https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PRSRKCGL00V00>

Village 7

<https://www.village7.co.uk>

Section 106 docs Villages 7

<https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=PZKRYCGL05I00>

East Herts Community Forums

<https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-and-building/community-forums/gilston-area-community-forum>

East Herts Community Forums

22.HIGHWAYS

a., Cllr Harvey reported:

1.It is well known to the parish council that there are difficult times ahead in regard to the closure of roads and lanes whilst the development of the new villages by PFP requires space to make the necessary adaptations to electricity and water supplies for the development .

Despite overtures to avoid closures nothing has been achieved as the contractors adhere to their requirements for the safety of workers and local traffic users.

As yet there is no firm date for the 7 week closure of the Eastwick Road from the Harlow roundabout to Burnt Mill Lane- other than it is not going to be within the school holidays . Offers have been made in mitigation with regard to school buses.

Already there have been lane closures on the A414 as it approaches the Harlow roundabout past Eastwick. In the first event the access to the opposite carriageway was not blocked - this time it has been . I suspect because of an access requirement to Cat Lane.

Despite overtures the contractors remain adamant that this is because of safety issues. Given that it has been known for many years that this is a dangerous turning I wonder if we should now re approach Highways, with some support from PFP, to ask them what they can do to improve this .

I would suggest _

- 1- A yellow box on both sides of the carriageway.
- 2- Improved signage - it is currently not fit for purpose on either side .
- 3- An extension of the lighting which only goes as far as the farm turning - I have always wondered why ? This would be an ideal time to achieve it whilst the lanes are closed anyway!
4. Dramatic thinning of the hedges on the roadside near Eastwick as it is generally difficult to see on coming traffic even during the day - and impossible in gloom.
5. Could we be advised by the lawyers currently funded for HEGNPG ?
2. As far as I am aware there are no outstanding works due to pot holes either on Gilston Lane or Eastwick Hall Lane.
3. A report has gone in to Highways and PFP about the inappropriate signage onto Eastwick Hall Lane from the A414 which fails to address that there is a 30 mph speed limit and no through way other than to the village.

23.NEW HOMES BONUS / INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Nothing to report.

24.VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Harvey reported:

- 1.As Treasurer I can confirm that we are in a positive balance of 20,432.88
- 2.The new booking system c/o the parish website continues to make monitoring of the halls users easier whilst allowing easier bookings.
- 3.As usual the lawyers are taking rather a long time to sort out the hall deeds.
4. We are continuing to promote the hall and the Facebook page has received an increasing number of followers.
5. We are unfortunately losing a long time booking for Phonic Fox. This is due to falling attendance numbers.

- 6. We are still pursuing a grant that will allow an upgrade to all three toilet facilities. Two quotes have been invited so far.
- 7. The hall lobby will be redecorated this month courtesy of PFP.
- 8. We are going to be approached regarding the site of a new bus stop outside the village hall and will consider when the details are outline

25. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP

- a. Appointment of Chief Operating Officer – Cllr Orson presented the document attached to these minutes. It was agreed that the Parish Council would endorse the proposal to appoint a Chief Operating Officer. Proposed by Cllr Harvey and seconded by Cllr Beazley.

26. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Eric Buckmaster – County Councillor report is with these minutes.
- b. District Councillor John Dunlop report is with these minutes.
- c. Cllr Beazley informed the meeting that he has received a communication from Tom Mullen of Mullens brewery about the opening of The Lion at Eastwick and The Dusty Miller in Gilston. He has said “We continue to review our options at these sites. Part of the reason for the delay has been that we have been awaiting the outcome of a much-delayed planning application elsewhere in the district which, we hoped, would give a positive direction for all parties interested in these pubs. Once the picture becomes clearer we will be back in touch.”

1. ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR INFORMATION ONLY

None.

2. ITEMS COUNCILLOR WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO THE NEXT AGENDA

None.

3. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of our next meeting will be on Monday 14th September at 8.00pm in the Village Hall

Meetings for 2026

9th November – Parish Council Business Meeting

Meetings for 2027

- a. 11th January – Parish Council meeting
- b. 8th March - Annual Parish Meeting followed by Parish Council business meeting
- c. 10th May - Parish Council AGM followed by business meeting
- d. 12th July - Parish Council meeting
- e. 13th September – Parish Council meeting
- f. 8th November – Parish Council meeting

Draft information and formative Business - Case for Review

Appointment of Chief Operating Officer for The Neighbourhood Plan Group

1 Proposal

That the Parish Councils of Hunsdon and Eastwick and Gilston are **asked to note and endorse** the Neighbourhood Plan Group's (NPG) proposal to recruit a Chief Operating Officer (COO) (part time) to take a leading role in the running of the NPG. The NPG has funding to pay for this commitment, as envisaged, for the next two years so this paper is **not** seeking further Parish Council funding. This paper suggests longer term funding options which would be reviewed going forward.

2 Background

With planned retirements of some Parish Councillors and the Chair of the NPG hoping to move, the need to plan for new resources to manage the NPG's work has been examined, please see Annex A. In the absence of new volunteers the NPG conclusion is that it should look to recruit a paid consultant, working part time to support the ongoing actions of the NPG as representing both Parish Councils.

3 Budget implications

The NPG, in its recent report to its Sponsor Parish Councils, has funds to cover this proposed appointment for the next two years. The post holder would be appointed on a contract determinable on a rolling one months notice.

As the new houses are built and occupied so the financial base for precept will mean that potentially there will be additional financial resources so, if the current rate of Parish precept in E&G was maintained, by the time 300 homes are occupied paying at existing precept Band D rate (£38 from EHC report) an income of £ 11,400 would result (In Hunsdon its £55 Band D = £16500 for 300 houses)) and grow as the 7 villages are developed out eventually being quite a large additional income, although commitments will also change.

The NPG will also seek to explore other sources of funding including from the Developers, Homes England for HMG to help establish good community interfaces on a Garden City project where it is investing vast amounts of capital.

4 Options

Secure new Volunteers to run the NPG; the NPG is not aware of a pool of volunteers waiting to support the work of the NPG and its Parish Councils with relevant skills and experience for this massive development in our area.

- Close the NPG: The outline planning consent has been granted so the development now moves into delivery phase. There will be major impacts from the development on the immediate area, the works to the A414 and C161 are recent examples. The Developers are looking at ways they can help the local communities but to do that they ideally need a point of contact with a suitable understanding of the issues. Closing the NPG would not support such initiatives.

- Endorse the NPG Proposal; noting there will be an interface with the emerging Stewardship body but that body will be freestanding from both the Parish Councils and, if appointed, the proposed COO and NPG will be looking after resident' wider interests and continue to give existing residents a voice when construction and traffic issues cause them undue or unwarranted disruption.

5 Recommendations

To accept, and note, the NPG proposed course of action

- To consider if there are any potential candidates within the parishes who might be interested
- To note the likely level of "steady state" precept income resulting from the development and opportunities to champion for additional income streams.

6 Next steps

If approved the NPG will seek candidates through their contacts and local networks, recruitment will take some time as there are no current contenders.

Anthony Bickmore, Chair NPG

30 June 2026

Annex; Draft COO Job Description

NPG Proposed Chief Operating Officer - Job Description

1 Purpose - The Hunsdon, Eastwick & Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group seeks a part time Chief Operating Officer (COO) to lead the Communities response to the development pressures it faces as the construction of the 10,000 house Gilston development gets underway.

2 Background

2.1 The Gilston Project has consent to develop, over a number of decades, 10,000 new homes in 7 villages together with significant open space which will be in community use. See :-

<https://www.gilstonparkestate.com/faqs/project-background/>
<https://hegnp.org.uk>. <https://village7.co.uk>

2.2 The NPG :-

- Jointly represents Hunsdon and Eastwick & Gilston Parish Councils on the Gilston Development
- Is a voice for residents, holding developers accountable for promises to deliver a sustainable, high-quality development
- Aims to shape and influence the Gilston Area development to ensure it aligns with community hopes, values and future needs
- Seeks to coordinate engagement between the developers and local authorities, especially East Herts Council
- Is involved in reviewing planning applications for the proposed villages
- Advocates for high standards in urban design, proper and timely infrastructure, environmental responsibility and community focused planning
- Continues to press for better interface with the existing communities, sustainable transport solutions, and "village master planning" principles

- Actively monitors the agreements related to infrastructure, affordable housing, construction, transport and the long-term governance of community assets.

2.3 Resources - The NPG over its existence has developed a good level of working knowledge of the planning process and complexities of the scheme. We have been supported by a planning consultancy who have provided strategic guidance for a number of years including the period when we created the Neighbourhood Plan;. The NPG has a web site <https://hegnp.org.uk/> maintained by our Secretary who also prepares press releases and supports NPG with its base administration.

3 Current Challenge/workload for NPG and need for part time resource

- The current NPG Members have served for many years and the project will take several decades to be completed. The NPG needs to encourage new members to take an interest in their local environment and help support the positive outcomes while managing the adverse impacts and minimising blight resulting from this massive construction project.
- The Outline Planning application had substantial volumes of information, the S106 agreement was 100's of pages. There are many Reserved Matters applications, each supported by substantial documentation. Much of the documentation will be settled by East Herts Planning Department but there will be some key aspects relevant to the NPG having regard to our central objectives, as set out in 2.2 above.
- Managing the construction impacts on the existing and future Community will require careful attention and stakeholder management
- The integration of the new development with existing community and supporting the creation of a vibrant set of village communities with a potential population of c.35,000 people with the three Parishes directly affected.

4 COO duties/core tasks

Reporting to the NPG to lead the work of the NPG working alongside the Secretary, and any retained advisors

- Overseeing the administration of the NPG to ensure our data is well managed and secure and reflects and operates to the high standards of our two Sponsor Parish Councils
- Support the Chairperson in setting the strategic direction, agendas for meetings
- Help build, and foster, good day to day stakeholder relationships with our District/County Councils (and successor authorities - following reorganisation), relevant other bodies, the Developers and, importantly the soon to be appointed Stewardship body which will manage the maintenance of the new Village environments and allied open spaces within the Developers ownership

5 Skills and experience sought:-

- **Good strategic oversight** so ability to see the bigger picture and anticipate forward looking challenges while avoiding getting deeply involved in detail relating to the development of the individual villages.
- **Good networking skills • Strong communication skills • Sound administration and base business skills** and so ability to 'self manage'

NOTE - The postholder is expected to have some general knowledge of the issues but not necessarily a history of planning, or extensively developed property expertise

6 Terms and conditions

The post is a 'public facing role' reflecting our two Parish Councils public accountability so requiring a good understanding of:-

Conflicts of interest

Transparency and openness

The appointment will be on a rolling contract as an independent contractor for 'consultancy' terminable on 1 months notice

Remuneration - The expectation is that the COO role will take 1 day a week, after a suitable induction period, a day rate of c. [£ 300] is expected. Any out of pocket expenditure reasonably incurred will be reimbursed excluding travel to NPG meetings

The applicant is expected to have their own computer/ipad/mobile phone and reasonable level of IT skills.

7 Application process

Applications will be treated as confidential to the NPG's selection panel and should include:-

- A one page CV
- A single page response to this Brief
- Confirmation that the applicant has the time available to undertake the role
- Provide two referees

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview with the selection panel and an informal presentation/discussion with the NPG.

8 Queries

To The Chairman, Anthony Bickmore;-

anthonybickmore@btinternet.com

07831 666101

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report July 2026

This year's Summer Reading Challenge theme is 'Read to the Beat', and the challenge encourages children and young people to explore the power of reading and music.

In collaboration with The Reading Agency, children can discover new books, complete personal library and reading challenges and participate in free themed activities at their local library.

The challenge launches at all Hertfordshire Libraries on Saturday 4 July, and runs until Saturday 5 September. Children are encouraged to read six books from the library, which includes our eBooks & eAudiobooks on BorrowBox, and will receive exclusive stickers for their achievements. When they finish the challenge, they will receive a certificate, medal and an entry to our prize draw event with author and composer Gareth P. Jones.

Visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/SummerReadingChallenge for more details.

Former Hertfordshire County Council employee has been handed a suspended sentence after being found guilty of stealing funds from a person with learning disabilities that he was supporting.

Callum Lang, 30, was employed in a full-time role as a support worker, responsible for supporting disabled adults and ensuring they were protected. The court found that he abused this position of trust by defrauding an adult in his care.

Concerns were raised when suspicious transactions on the bank account of a vulnerable adult were identified. These concerns were reported to the council's Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS), which subsequently commenced an investigation.

Once Lang was identified, he was immediately suspended pending a disciplinary hearing and were subsequently dismissed. The SAFS investigation identified numerous discrepancies within the vulnerable adult's bank accounts, and as a result, Lang was summonsed to court.

Lang entered a not guilty plea, but on 15 April 2026, following a three-day trial at St Albans Crown Court, he was found guilty of Fraud by Abuse of Position, contrary to Section 4 of the Fraud Act 2006. The offences were committed between August 2019 and September 2021.

On 30 June 2026, LANG returned to St Albans Crown Court for sentencing, where he was sentenced to:

- 1) 22 months imprisonment suspended for 24 months.
- 2) 200hr unpaid work.
- 3) £6858 compensation.
- 4) £1000 costs.
- 5) £187 Victim surcharge.

Citizens Advice-Sawbridgeworth Electoral Division – Statistics 2025/26 Sawbridgeworth,High

Wych,Eastwick and Gilston, Hunsdon,Widford,Wareside,Stanstead Abbots, Stanstead St Margarets

Key Statistics	25/26 Q1	25/26 Q2	25/26 Q3	25/26 Q4	Apr25-Mar26*
Clients helped	109	97	100	93	308
% of population	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	2.3%
Issues	410	468	427	321	1,604
Issues/client	3.8	4.8	4.3	3.5	5.2
Activities	355	328	393	299	1,375
Activities/client	3.3	3.4	3.9	3.2	4.5
Gains	£149,997	£67,933	£130,242	£160,891	£509,063
Gains/client	£1,376.12	£700.34	£1,302.42	£1,730.01	£1,652.80
Housing issues	20	45	24	25	111
Homelessness issues	4	27	6	3	38
Debt & financial issues	123	108	162	65	459
Rent/CT arrears issues	16	20	35	6	77
Fuel debt issues	14	10	5	8	36

	25/26 Q1	25/26 Q2	25/26 Q3	25/26 Q4	Apr25-Mar26	
Age group	Client %	Client %	Client %	Client %	Client %	Popn %
15-19	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%
20-24	3.9%	3.3%	3.1%	2.2%	3.1%	4.3%
25-29	1.9%	3.3%	4.1%	4.4%	3.7%	4.8%
30-34	12.5%	10.9%	7.2%	3.3%	9.2%	5.2%
35-39	11.5%	12.0%	8.3%	6.5%	9.9%	6.7%
40-44	8.7%	10.9%	8.3%	5.4%	8.5%	6.8%
45-49	6.7%	8.7%	8.3%	14.1%	9.2%	7.1%
50-54	12.5%	18.5%	14.4%	19.6%	14.0%	7.6%
55-59	10.6%	7.6%	9.3%	8.7%	10.2%	7.4%
60-64	11.5%	8.7%	16.5%	9.8%	10.9%	6.4%
65-69	6.7%	6.5%	8.3%	12.0%	8.2%	5.5%
70-74	3.9%	4.4%	4.1%	4.4%	4.4%	6.0%
75-79	3.9%	1.1%	5.2%	4.4%	3.7%	4.1%
80-84	2.9%	2.2%	3.1%	4.4%	3.1%	2.6%
85+	2.9%	2.2%	0.0%	1.1%	2.0%	3.1%

Hertfordshire County Council has been awarded £1.064 million from the Department for Transport (DfT) to support the next stage of its assessment into whether bus franchising could improve services for residents across parts of the county.

The funding will enable the council to undertake a detailed Statutory Franchising Assessment, examining how greater local control over bus services could help deliver more reliable, affordable and better-connected public transport for passengers.

Bus franchising would allow Hertfordshire County Council to specify bus routes, fares, timetables and service standards, while operators would be contracted to run services on the council's behalf.

The award follows strong progress on the first phase of work, funded through the Government's Bus Reform and Franchising Pilot Programme. Early findings indicate that North and East Hertfordshire, including Stevenage, could be the most suitable area to test the approach.

The assessment work, which will begin in August 2026, will include detailed analysis, engagement with stakeholders and public consultation before any decisions are made on whether franchising should be introduced.

If implemented, bus franchising could help create a more coordinated and reliable bus network, making it easier for residents to access employment, education, healthcare and leisure opportunities while supporting the county's wider ambitions for sustainable growth.

Councillors recently received an update on the wider bus reform and franchising programme at the Environment, Transport and Growth Panel, where members noted the progress made to date and the potential opportunities for improving bus services across Hertfordshire.

Positive Pathways summer holiday activity programmes

This summer, Services for Young People (SfYP) is running free Positive Pathways activity programmes delivered by their qualified Youth Workers across the whole county. The programmes involve fun activities and interactive workshops that will help young people aged 12-16 to make new friends, build confidence and social skills, stay safe online and in their community, learn about healthy relationships, and identify and achieve their goals in life.

- [Find full details of the Positive Pathways activity programmes and how to book](#)

Exam results support

Young people getting their A-level, T-level or GCSE results this August can get support from SfYP as they decide on their next steps. Whether the results are better or worse than expected, SfYP Advisers offer the latest information and impartial, personalised advice to help young people with their important choices.

- [Find out how to access SfYP's exam results support](#)

Strong partnership working between Hertfordshire Constabulary, Hertfordshire County Council, and other key partners, combined with a preventative approach, is helping reduce the number of children entering the youth justice system in Hertfordshire.

Last year (2025–26) around a quarter (28.8%) fewer children came through the youth justice system than the year before, and the number of children entering the youth justice system for the first time dropped by just under a third (31%).

Hertfordshire's Youth Justice Service has been taking a preventative approach by delivering holistic interventions for children who commit crime. This approach means fewer children are ending up with criminal records, which can have a lasting impact on their future life chances.

Children receive tailored support based on their individual needs, which may include help with education, mental health, substance misuse or family circumstances. It also enables early intervention for children at risk of offending, helping to stop issues escalating.

This preventative approach also generates savings across the wider system, including policing, courts and probation. Youth Justice Board cost-benefit analysis indicates that diversion and early intervention contribute an estimated £113m national saving per year when 1 in 10 children receive diversionary outcomes.

This progress sits alongside wider positive trends. Overall youth offending has fallen significantly, with 596 offences recorded in 2025–26 - a reduction of more than a third compared to the previous year, reflecting the impact of coordinated work across partners.

New Youth Justice Plan for 2026–2028

Building on this progress, Hertfordshire County Council's Children and Families Cabinet Panel has recommended that Cabinet puts forward the Hertfordshire Youth Justice Plan 2026-28 for approval by Full Council on Tuesday 21 July.

The plan, developed with partners across the police, probation and health services, sets out how local services will continue to work together to prevent offending, reduce reoffending, support children, families and victims, and improve outcomes for communities across the county.

At its heart is a continued commitment to a "Child First" approach, recognising children's potential, addressing the underlying causes of behaviour and focusing on early support, prevention and positive outcomes.

The 2026–28 plan focuses on strengthening what is already working, with four key priorities:

- Expanding early intervention and diversion to prevent children entering the justice system wherever appropriate
- Strengthening partnership leadership and accountability to ensure joined-up decision-making

- Improving support for victims, including restorative justice approaches
- Enhancing the use of data and insight to better understand need and improve services

Running throughout the plan are two key themes: ensuring the voices of children, families and victims shape services, and tackling disproportionality and inequality within the youth justice system.

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Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service are reminding residents to have a winning fire safety strategy at home.

Last year over 160 fires were caused by cooking appliances like hobs and ovens - the leading cause of home fires. Yet taking a few simple steps, like completing a home fire safety self-checker and following our top tips, could be your biggest defenders against fire.

Other top causes of a blaze in the home include issues around wiring, cabling and plugs, smoking materials related fires, matches and candles and a naked flame, such as lighting paper or card. And cooking appliances includes everything from a cooker to a microwave to a grill or toaster

Here are some simple steps you can take to prevent fires in your home:

- 1) Smoke alarms – make sure you have working smoke alarms. They're not an early warning, they're your only warning. Read our tips and troubleshooting guides.**
- 2) Free home fire safety self-check – answer some questions and get a personalised fire safety action plan straightaway. It might suggest that you need a home fire safety visit.**
- 3) Fire escape plan – it'll be quicker and easier to escape if you've already thought about it.**
- 4) Rechargeable batteries – take care when using devices with rechargeable lithium ion batteries. Damaged batteries, unsafe or incorrect chargers, poor quality products and unsafe charging practices can quickly cause fires.**
- 5) Cooking – never leave cooking unattended. Turn off the heat or take pans off the hob if you need to leave the kitchen. Keep flammable items such as tea towels and packaging away from the cooker. We'd also like to remind those having BBQs in their gardens to place them on level ground and away from anything flammable, let the BBQ cool for at least 48 hours and never have BBQs on balconies. Once completely cooled and dismantled, ash can go in general rubbish while the metal frame and gas cylinders can be taken to a recycle centre.**
- 6) Overloaded sockets – check for overloaded sockets, damaged plugs and frayed cables. Replace unsafe or counterfeit leads and switch off or unplug appliances when not in use.**
- 7) Fire exits – keep them clear and accessible at all times.**

The home fire safety self-check is a questionnaire which gives you a personalised fire safety action plan at the end and checks whether you need a fire home visit from HFRS. It takes 15 minutes to do and asks questions about your home and lifestyle.

From time to time, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service also call residents more at risk, working closely with Adult Care Services at the county council, to offer home fire visits. If you are ever worried a phone call from HFRS could be a scam, please call our helpline to check the identity of the person, calling 0300 123 4046. Please note, we do not charge for the visit and will never ask for your payment details.

Find out more information home fire safety and do a self-check at <https://bit.ly/4pdjmSC>

Local Government Reorganisation

The expectation is still that we'll hear in July?

Leaders and CEOs may hear an hour before its publicly announced

At moment anticipating shadow elections next May, and continue with District for a year.

Once the Sec of State has decided whether 2,3, or 4 Unitaries the structural changes order is expected to specify :

- The lead implementation arrangements
- The membership of the shadow authorities
- Composition of joint committees of officers and members.
- The timetable for elections and transfer of powers

all 11 Hertfordshire councils submitted a joint response to MHCLG on how it should be drafted.

They supported formal transition arrangements, including joint committees and implementation structures, but sought clearer drafting on how decisions would be made before the new councils formally come into existence

Existing councils will have limitations on what they can spend during the transition eg up to £1m and restricted on sale of assets. Ie need authority from the Shadow Council.

If any members resign from the existing councils then the understanding will be that by elections will be held.

Of the nine councils in the first wave, all nine reached Day One safe and legal. Only three were viable. The other six needed Exceptional Financial Support, around £300m between them.

At the moment MHCLG are saying things will continue as expected regardless of change of PM, but who knows, but it may be better for us in terms of having a Strategic Mayoral Authority rather than a foundation authority without a mayor

Eastwick & Gilston Parish Council - District Councillor report July 26

Cllr. John Dunlop

1. Gilston Park Estate

I have attended various meetings on this. The various roadworks planned for the Autumn, including road closures now look certain and so we need to work with PfP to find mitigations to minimise the considerable disruption. At the same time we should consider what early wins we could ask for, such as sponsorship of events and assistance with projects.

2. District Plan Consultation

The East Herts Local Plan Scoping Consultation closed on 10th July. This is the first stage in preparing our new Local Plan and seeks views to help shape its scope and direction. It invited comments on:

- the issues and priorities the Local Plan should address
- what the new Local Plan should contain
- the draft Vision and key themes
- how we should engage with stakeholders and communities
- the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment Scoping document

3. Sale of Millstream Property Investments Ltd, a housing company wholly owned by East Herts Council.

The proceeds from the sale of Millstream will reduce East Herts borrowing and consequential interest currently being paid. Permission was granted to sell Millstream at Council on 10th June.

4. Local Government Reform (LGR) update

We now expect a decision from Government before the summer recess. In the meantime work has started with Broxbourne and North Herts who we will join with in any scenario. Just as a reminder of the devolution timetable:

- September 25 Consultations
- 13th November - Extraordinary Council meeting

This was held and the outcome was:

2 unitaries - 3 votes
3 unitaries - 10 votes
4 unitaries - 15 votes
Abstentions - 14 votes

- 18th November - EHDC Executive decision on preferred unitary numbers
- 28 Nov 2025 Submit full Local Government Reorganisation Proposal
- Summer 2026, unitary make up decision from Government
- Proposed May 2027 Elections (Shadow authorities)
- Proposed Apr 2028 Vesting day for new unitary councils

5. Bid for an Armed Forces Community Hub for Hertfordshire

Colleagues at Stevenage Borough Council are preparing of a bid for a VALOUR Recognised Centre for Hertfordshire.

This would be an Armed Forces Community Hub that would be the focus for better support for local veterans, serving personnel and those transitioning to civilian life, as well as their families. Stevenage colleagues have recently launched a survey to help understand what facilities and services should be offered, how it should work and how it can complement existing services.

All members and interested parties are invited to take part in the survey. Please feel free to share the link to the questionnaire throughout your networks as well as taking a few minutes to complete the questionnaire yourselves.

Here's the link: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/pfKpAGHKdJ>

If you have any questions about the council's work to support the armed forces community, please contact Cllr Alex Daar alex.daar@eastherts.gov.uk or Jonathan Geall jonathan.geall@eastherts.gov.uk 01992 531594.

6. Five Dinners premium meal-planning service

East Herts Council has partnered with [FiveDinners.com](https://www.fivedinners.com) to offer residents free access to the platform's premium meal-planning service, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The initiative aims to help households plan healthier, more affordable meals, reduce food waste, and simplify shopping and cooking through personalised weekly meal plans and shopping lists.

7. Shared Waste Service Team -Assisted Collections review

We are in the process of getting in touch with all residents who had requested assisted collections for their bin more than six months ago.

This is just to check whether they still require the service or if their situation has now changed. Any residents who requested the service in the last six months will not be contacted as we will assume the service is still needed. Residents will be sent a letter and have the option of posting back a confirmation slip, or contacting Veolia by phone or email (contact details will be on their letters). We expect to have contacted all applicable residents by the end of June, and we will provide a second reminder and follow up with any non-respondents to ensure a smooth continuation of service where it is still needed.

8. Veolia launches Sustainability Fund for 2026

94 Veolia, East and North Herts Councils' recycling and waste partner, have opened up their Sustainability Fund for applications for 2026.

The Sustainability Fund provides individual grants of up to £1,000 to not-for-profit organisations, community groups, or individuals, to support projects meeting at least one of the following criteria:

- Enhances biodiversity.
- Promotes sustainable waste behaviours.
- Protects the environment by using recycled, reused or reclaimed materials.

- Strengthens and connects local communities, including but not limited to employment support programmes, rehabilitation projects and youth development initiatives.

Up to £1,000 in funding is available per project, and applicants can also opt to request in-kind resources or volunteers to help bring their project to life.

Applications can be made via Veolia's website at veolia.co.uk/Sustainability-Fund, and the fund will be open for applications until Wednesday 30 September.

9. BetterPoints East Herts

We have launched a new rewards-based programme this summer to encourage healthier, greener travel choices while supporting local businesses and charities.

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the BetterPoints East Herts scheme aims to inspire residents to swap short car journeys for walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport.

Local people can simply download the free BetterPoints app and use it to record journeys made on foot, by bike, in a wheelchair, by bus or train. Each eligible journey earns BetterPoints, which can be redeemed at participating local businesses, exchanged for major brand vouchers or donated to local charities.

The BetterPoints East Herts scheme is open to anyone who lives, works or studies in the district.

BetterPoints is also inviting local employers, businesses and charities to get involved. By partnering with the scheme, organisations can support transport, health and climate goals while increasing visibility among thousands of active and engaged people in East Herts.

For more information and to download the app, visit <https://eastherts.betterpoints.uk/>

If you know of a charity or business that you think would benefit from getting involved, then please contact Patrick Lynott patrick.lynott@betterpoints.uk

10. Hot weather affecting bin collections

With temperatures set to rise once again next week, we are asking residents to please place their bins out the night before they're due for collection as our crews will be starting their rounds earlier to try and beat the heat.

We hope that this means that all rounds will be completed on their scheduled day, however if residents get in touch to say that their bin has been missed, please advise them to leave it out until the crews have been able to catch up.

Following on from the High-Viz Heroes Day (26 June) we wanted to thank everyone for their comments of support and appreciation for our hard-working frontline crews especially during such extreme weather. The health and safety of our collection teams is of the utmost importance, and as such our contractor Veolia have introduced new lightweight trousers for our teams' comfort, encourage plenty of water breaks as well as the early starts during the hot weather, so providing the best wellbeing support for our crews.

11. Funding opportunity for Artists and Arts Organisations in East Herts

The Arts in East Herts grant scheme is now open for 2026, offering grants of up to £800 to support creative events, workshops, performances, or taster sessions taking place in September–October.

The scheme is open to artists, craftspeople, galleries, museums, heritage sites, and arts organisations looking to run activities that engage the community—ideally free or low-cost.

Application deadline: **12pm, Monday 20 July 2026**. Find out more and apply here: [Arts in East Herts Hub](#)