



HEGNPG

Supporting our Community

Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group

% Channoeks Farm

Gilston

Nr Harlow

CM202RL

<https://hegnp.org.uk/>

Annual report to Sponsor Parish Councils

1 Introduction

We are pleased to present our annual report and in doing so to thank you, as our sponsors, for your support for our work, especially your positive approach to ongoing collaborative working.

It's been a year of significant decisions on the development, the scheme's outline planning consent was formally issued in January 2025. In September the Courts refused permission for a Judicial Review into the granting of the outline Planning consent by East Herts Council. The developers have, subsequently, made many reserve matter applications, see section 3 below.

We have continued to work with all stakeholders, including local authorities and the media, to best represent and protect the interests of the local communities and Parish Councils. We commissioned professional support, where necessary, to help achieve this goal.

We continue to work to ensure that proper regard is given to our Neighbourhood Plan at all key phases of development, including the creation of a strategic landscape master plan and village masterplanning, and the creation of bodies and processes for the long term stewardship of the Gilston Area.

It's been a crucial year with regards to the future of our community, and I am grateful for the staggering amounts of time committed by the members of the NPG, including many who also hold Parish Council or other posts in our community, so are putting in lots of volunteer time to support local residents. There are, and will continue to be, many issues to be addressed as the scheme evolves so representing the interests of residents we believe is important.

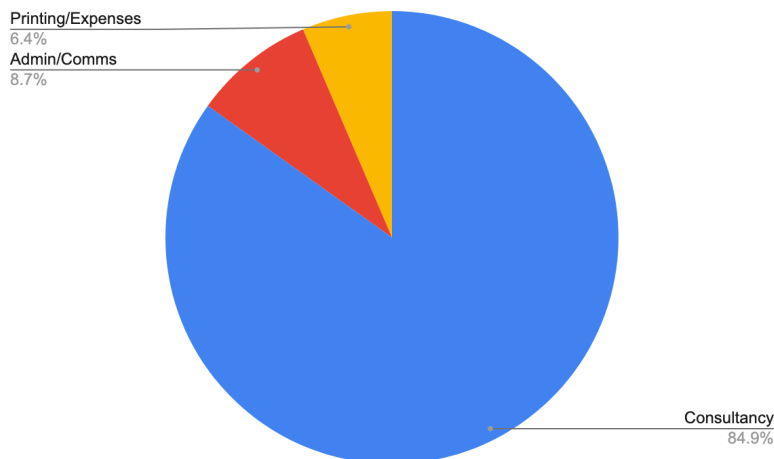
2 Financial

We opened the financial year with a cash balance of **£48,828.41** and closed the year with a balance of: **£41,801.87**. **With a significant closing balance we did not seek further income in the year from you, our principal sponsors., We received £740, being the residual funds of the former Stop Harlow North group, which was graciously received.**

Our expenditure for the year was £7,775 with £6,600 spent on consultancy, with the following key work done:

- Comprehensive review of Strategic Landscape Master Plan documents
- Reviewing the outstanding reserved matter planning applications, and responding where we believe there are matters of concern to residents and or conflicts between what's proposed and the Communities adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- Attendance and assistance at both internal and external meetings and workshops
- Assistance in our dealings with local authorities

£675 was spent on administration and communications costs. **£500** was for printing, postage, webspace and other similar expenses.



3 Our Report - We summarise below our work last year and are happy to attend a Council meeting to elaborate on this report and answer questions.

3.0 Summary of Key issues, activities and progress over the last year include:

- + A request for a **Judicial Review** of EHC's planning decision by a resident, a review to which the NPG was not a party, was rejected, with leave to appeal also denied.
- + During the year, we have attended the **Community Forums** hosted by East Herts Council these forums represent opportunities to better understand some of the strategic issues, like the construction programme/where the water supply will come from etc, and

will continue, possibly for the next 30 or so years. Clearly a construction project of this scale will have its challenges for residents. The forums also create opportunities to shape the development through making the views of residents known to East Herts and the Developers. We have found the opportunity to meet East Herts' Planning team and the developers before the Forums formally starts helpful.

- + The Strategic Landscape Master Plan for the whole development site, which includes land outside of the 'Village Development areas' in PfP's ownership and is due to become an asset in community ownership.

We are grateful to our District and County Councillors for the time and energy they both have put into championing the Community's views and concerns on a regular basis with their respective Officers.

We have also maintained contact with The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Executive team where a new Chief Executive was appointed during the year. While Gilston planning matters are the responsibility of East Herts Council, keeping aware of other developments across the Garden Town is helpful. The highway works between the Harlow station roundabout and the town centre created significant traffic delays so is an example of an impact of the development on residents' day to day lives over extended periods.

4 Looking forward

There are many important issues for both parish councils that need review/resolution and making sure the Community's voice is heard as we try to ensure that a high quality of development is achieved and that the construction over a possibly 20/30 years is managed with sensitivity so as to minimise any adverse impacts on existing residents.

The following key activities/workstreams we anticipate will require our attention and will make an impact on existing residents and our communities:

- The **S106 agreement** is a complex and long legal agreement between the Developers and Councils and developed the conditions agreed to by EHC's Development Management Committee into legal commitments by the Developers. The NPG was not involved in the preparation of this agreement. Both parish councils have experience of developments being approved subject to such S106 agreements where the commitments were not delivered or significantly delayed. The Gilston S106 agreement provides funds for a monitoring Officer at EHC who will produce an annual report on how the Developer obligations are being met/delivered and so, we hope, are not diluted. These Developer obligations and commitments to new schools, health facilities, better public spaces, play areas etc. will deliver improvements for residents who will have to put up with decades of building works.

- **Reserved Matter Applications** (RMA's) are planning applications that develop the principles consented to within the Outline Planning Consent, as endorsed by EHC. The first of these to be endorsed is the Strategic Landscape Master Plan (SLMP) , an important document, which sets out the principles of how the whole site, rather than the 7 Villages, will be developed. For this reason they have a very direct impact on existing residents, especially for delivering the commitment to the open areas which will eventually become community owned assets. They also identify community facilities (such as schools/health/sports facilities) which will be delivered and, while supporting the 7 villages, will also support current residents. The process for agreeing these applications is by delegation Officers rather than decisions by elected Councillors. At the turn of the year there were some 30 RMA's awaiting decision. Many of the applications contain 100's of pages of supporting text and technical information. As a community organisation we are simply not resourced to evaluate such applications and, without advisors, have to rely on EHC to review these details and make sure that decisions are made in line with the Outline Planning consent, the S106 and align with our adopted Neighbourhood Plan which is embodied within EHC's Local Plan.
- **Stewardship** the S106 agreement also sets a timetable for agreeing a draft business plan for the proposed Stewardship body. We have been involved with the early stages of work in preparing the business plan for this new body, it will cover the long term management of not only the 7 villages, but also the spaces between the villages and undeveloped land destined to be passed to the community. The interface between the two Parish Councils and the Stewardship body will have a number of sensitivities as will the funding of community assets alongside the existing work of the Parish Councils.
- **Infrastructure works - Highways** – the major proposals for the two new Stort Crossings are detailed in the consents already granted and will cause significant disruption over the next two years between Eastwick, Pye Corner and Harlow's station roundabout. We are encouraging the Developers to improve the flow of information to residents. Many residents will have experience of the traffic delays arising from the recently completed initial road works on the sustainable transport corridor in Harlow. Substantial infrastructure needs to be delivered before the housing and other important things need to be delivered by 'trigger dates' set out in the S106 agreement (like taking through traffic out of Pye Corner).
- **Key interfaces** – the NPG aims to keep in contact with key influencers and interested parties to ensure that they are aware of the pressures and challenges that might arise from the development. We plan to continue to maintain these contacts.

- **Local Developer interfaces** – We are delighted that the Places for People have, after many requests, reinstated periodic meetings with us to discuss matters of common interest (for example flooding at Hunsdon and in Eastwick and Gilston). We also have championed and continue to champion early works where they might benefit both residents and the Developers to reduce the adverse impacts caused by the deterioration of the land about to be developed.,
- **Ways of working** – We hope to continue our work, as representing both Parish Councils. This has the advantage of pooling expertise and sharing the costs of responding to this development. While one of the Developers initially gave us some funding that has long since been spent. We continue to seek further members of the community to join us to help us with our work, there are many issues which will directly affect residents and the facilities you enjoy, or should have provided by this development.

Anthony Bickmore, Chairman, HEGNPG
11th April 2026