



**Minutes of the High Wych Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Monday 13th January 2025
8pm in High Wych Memorial Hall**

Cllr Tom Payne (TP) Chairman*
Cllr John Andreotti (JA)*
Cllr Jacqueline Jackson*
Cllr Keith Jordan (KJ)*
Cllr Carrie Payne (CP)*
Cllr Liz Faulkner*
** Denotes present*

Present: No members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman opened the meeting at 8pm.

ACTION

25.001 Apologies for absence
1. Councillors: None (all present)
2. Others: Cllr Eric Buckmaster, PC Shelly Marshall

25.002 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations
1. **Interests declared:** None
2. **Dispensation requests:** None received

25.003 Approval of Minutes
RESOLVED: to approve the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 13th November 2024
Clerk
The meeting was not suspended for public comments

25.004 Casual Vacancy
The Clerk reported that no electors had requested an election to fill the vacancy. Therefore a co-option notice was provided to be posted on the notice boards and the website.
Clerk

25.005 Chairman's announcements
The Chairman noted Dave Smith's many years of service to the Parish Council. Ideas were discussed as to the most appropriate way to reflect appreciation for his contribution to the Council and to the parish in general.
TP/LF

25.006 East Herts Rural Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)
PC Shelly Marshall provided a written report as follows:

Neighbourhood Police report, January 2025
High Wych Parish Council meeting 13th January 2025.
Apologies from the local team, we are on rest days so unable to attend.
Crime remains low in High Wych, following the conclusion of our last policing priority we have just set the new priority as reducing reports of retail crime. This follows a slight increase in retail crime, the new priority will allow the neighbourhood policing team time to engage with local businesses and work on problem solving this emerging trend. Policing operations are being planned both covert and overt, we will be working closely with local retailers on how to provide the best evidence to police to assist prosecutions.
Mini Police finished at High Wych Primary School at the end of the autumn term, we received some great feedback from the school and students. During the final lesson the students were visited by our Rural Operational Support Team and were shown the drone which took off from the school playground.
We are continuing to push Herts connected which replaced the OWL messaging system and we are actively encouraging all residents to sign up and stay informed of our events and crime in the area. There is a link to do so on the Herts Police website or Herts connected website, link below.
www.hertsconnected.co.uk

The local team have an engagement planned in the village on 6th February at 9:30. Officers will be in the coffee lounge from 9:30-10:30, please encourage the local community to come along and meet us. Further reminders will follow on Herts connected.

PC Shelly Marshall

It was agreed that the 6th February engagement would be included in The Link (although it might be too late now) and on the Community Facebook page.

TP

25.007 Reports by County and District Councillors

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster's written January report is included in the Minutes as Appendix B.

District Cllr Ian Devonshire: No report received.

25.008 Planning

1. New Applications:

| |
|-------------|
| NONE |
|-------------|

2. Decision Notices. As detailed in Appendix A below – for information only

3. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda:

| | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3/24/2326/HH | 8 Mansfield: Rear extensions. | RESOLVED: No objections |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|

Clerk

25.009 Finance

1. Report of the Council's Accounts 31st December 2024

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Opening cashbook balance 1st November 2024 | 26,876.50 |
| Plus income to 31 st December | 50.00 |
| Minus expenditure to 31 st December | <u>4,416.81</u> |
| Balance available to Council at 31st December (cashbook balance) | 22,509.69 |
| Plus unpresented payments | <u>0.00</u> |
| Reconciled Bank statement/cashbook balance 31st | 22,509.69 |

RESOLVED: That the Accounts Statement to 31st December be approved.

Clerk

2. Accounts Reconciliation at 31st December 2024

| | |
|---|------------|
| Cashbook balance 31 st October | £22,509.69 |
| Bank balance 31 st October | £22,509.69 |

RESOLVED: To agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

3. Performance against 2023/24 budget at 31st December 2024

| | Budget | Actual to 31st Dec |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Income total | 95,925 | 71,556 |
| Section 106 | 49,950 | 49,950 |
| PWLB Loan | <u>25,000</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Income balance without S106 or PWLB | 20,975 | <u>21,606</u> |

£550 HTC insurance refund has yet to be received.

| | Budget | Actual to 31st Dec |
|--|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| Expenditure Net of VAT | 98,862 | 66,992 |
| Play Area redevelopment | 75,000 | 49,500 |
| PWLB Loan servicing | <u>3,000</u> | <u>0</u> |
| Expenditure balance without S106 or PWLB | 20,862 | <u>17,492</u> |

| | |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Budget surplus/deficit | -2,937 |
| Forecast surplus/deficit | -4,273 |

| | |
|---|--------|
| Opening bank balance 1 April 2024 | 17,963 |
| Forecast closing bank balance 31 st March 2025 | 13,690 |

RESOLVED: To agree the performance against budget as presented.

4. Payments for approval: All expenditure to be made under The General Power of Competence

| | | Value | VAT incl |
|---|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Color-Board Ltd | Litter and poo bins December | 120.00 | 20.00 |
| Clerk | Clerk's expenses December/January | 21.80 | |
| High Wych Mem Hall | Car park lights 4 th quarter Oct-Dec | 58.34 | |
| High Wych Mem Hall | Post Office subsidy October-December | 87.50 | |
| Everflow Water | Water 14/2 – 13/3 approx | 20.00 | |
| TP Jones | Payroll October-December | 64.40 | 10.73 |
| TEEC | Hosting etc annual charge 2024 | 194.00 | 32.00 |
| BB&C Fencing | Replacement field gates, play area | 1,479.60 | 246.60 |
| Clerk | Salary January TBC | 498.04 | |
| HMRC | PAYE January TBC | 124.40 | |
| Unity Bank | Monthly service charge | 6.00 | |
| <i>** Grass cutting KGV Field High Wych and Allen's Green village green</i> | | | |
| VAT included To be reclaimed under VAT Act 1994 (1), (3) | | | 309.33 |

Clerk

RESOLVED: to approve all payments as per the Clerk's report

5. Budget and precept, 2025/26

The Clerk's detailed budget and precept for 2025/26, with projections for 2026/27 and 2027/28 was considered and agreed. The forecast deficit for 2024/25 is £-4,273 and the possible deficit for 2025/26 is £-2,269. It is anticipated that the deficit could be further reduced over the following two years. It was agreed to increase the 2025/26 precept by 3% to £20,085, and to anticipate increasing it by a further 3% per annum for 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Clerk

It was again noted that the Government's latest budget would considerably increase the employer's National Insurance Contributions in future years.

RESOLVED: To approve the budget for 2025/26 as drafted by the Clerk.

RESOLVED: To set the 2025/26 precept at £20,085

The Clerk, Chairman, and two councillors signed the EHDC precept form.

Clerk

25.010 1. Highways

1. Overgrown hedges update:
 1. MOG/Bakers Lane. Trimming completed
 2. Other overgrown hedges impeding footways: None noted.
2. Potholes in High Wych Lane: With Cllr Eric Buckmaster, work scheduled for 2025/26. See Cllr Buckmaster's report at Appendix B for Herts Highways potholes data.
3. **1a** Slough Road closure notice: Noted
- 1b** West Road closure notice: Noted
4. Other issues: None raised

2. Footpaths and other Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

1. Modification Order for footpath near Broadfields: No update; delete from future agendas.
2. Footpath Broadfields to High Wych Lane: No update; delete from future agendas.
3. Other issues: None raised.

3. Other Parish Matters

1. **High Wych Memorial Hall and car park**
 1. Issues raised:
 1. One set of car park lights are not working. **RESOLVED: To approve up to £50 to replace the faulty lights.**

JA

2. The entrance door to the Committee Room is too stiff and needs to be adjusted. TP/JA

3. Need for disabled access to Committee Room, with a ramp added and an access gap made in the fence and hedge. Cllr Tom Payne to email request to the HWMH Management Committee. TP

2. Tree cutting update car park and Allen's Green : Completed.

2. Bus shelter litter bin
No action taken. Delete from future agendas. TP

3. Notice Board: retention and refurbishment
No update. JJ

4. Update: Planting of a memorial tree on Allen's Green Village Green
In hand.

5. Report: Gilston Garden Village meeting, 27th November 2024
From Cllr Jacqueline Jackson: JJ
Both Liz and I attended the above meeting at the Manor of Groves on Wednesday evening.
The main subject was drainage, sewage collection and flood prevention.
The irony was that the MoG gym has now been closed for 3 days due to flooding...
The main presenter was from Thames Water who confirmed the Rye treatment works had capacity for the build of 10 thousand houses in the "Garden Village" over the next 10 years
The Contractors were also present who confirmed that instead of "sump holes" ditches and ponds would be placed to assist with water drainage. It was pointed out that ditches needed to be kept clear (they are currently not cleared on a regular basis) It was stated that this is a role for the Local Council.
Lots of discussion re clean water (off the land) entering the drainage pipes (not good as this puts extra pressure on the sewage works.) Lots of reference to "head room" at the treatment works
Flooding in the area was raised
Old pipework structures also discussed
Number of questions that the Thames water person could not answer - another bit of irony - he could not attend the meeting as he was dealing with floods in his local area - so he attended via a very poor "Teams" connection.
The final fun of the evening - there was a complete power outage (which affected the whole of HW) - a few witty people mentioned the pressure on the power stations with so many new builds...
Approx 30 - 40 people attended mainly from Local Parish Councils and Action Groups - number of questions asked - that the Thames Water person could not answer - so he will answer questions in writing as soon as possible.
Liz and I both gave our email contacts so we will share any if that is sent - Next meeting in Feb 2025
Jacqueline
From Cllr Liz Faulkner: LF
Timeline it was said these discussions started a few years ago and each major Utility is consulted along the way, the meeting was specifically foul and clean water. There is a desire to build 10,000 homes over the next 10-20 years , it's not that 10,000 homes will pop up overnight.
I was pleasantly surprised at how informative it was regarding 10,000 extra toilet flushes but I shall endeavor to attend further meetings as I'd like to know more about roads and facilities which would be very important in what is currently an incredibly busy locality.
Liz

6. Coffee shop update

Noted: it is understood that a licence will be applied for (the Parish Council should receive notice of that if and when it is submitted to EHC).

7. High Wych Christmas tree

It was agreed in principle to look at planting a Christmas tree on the triangle. The practicalities are to be explored.

25.011 1. Playing Fields and buildings

1. Harlow Theatre Company: pavilion update

1. Replacing the old tin shed: New shed being installed.
2. Update on 2023 and 2024 unpaid insurance and lease payments: Cllr John Andreotti to take up with HTC.

JA

2. Play area

1. Update: Two new gates into the field. The Clerk confirmed that the order was sent on 9th December and the work is in hand. Manufacture scheduled for w/c 17th February for installation in March.

Clerk/KJ

2. Allotments report

1. No issues reported.
2. The Clerk to follow up with Everflow Water a replacement water meter (at Everflow's expense).

CP

Clerk

25.012 Correspondence: The list of correspondence was noted as it appeared on the Agenda:

- HCC Slough Road closure notice
- HCC West Road closure notice
- Places for people: Invitation to CWG session on the Village 1 Masterplan, 30th Jan (25.008.3.1.1)

25.013 Late items and items for future agendas

1. Late items received: D Smith email 13th January re one set of lights in the car park not working (see 25.010.3.1.1 above)
2. Items for future agendas and other matters: None raised.

25.014 Date and venue of next meeting

1. **Calendar of Meetings 2025:** Approved as drafted

Clerk

2. **Wednesday 12th March, 8pm at Allen's Green Village Hall**

Clerk

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10pm.

Signed.....

APPENDIX A

25.008.2 25.008.2 PLANNING DECISION NOTICES for information only as at 7th January

| | | |
|---------------|--|---------|
| 3/24/0978/HH | Tharbies Farmhouse: Single storey side extension | GRANTED |
| 3/24/1942/LBC | Crumps Farm: Reinstatement of window to east elevation | GRANTED |
| 3/24/1957/FUL | Crumps Farm: Change of land use, agricultural to residential retrospective | REFUSED |
| 3/24/2183/LBC | The Old Church, Slough Rd: Convert into 2-bed dwelling. | Awaited |
| 3/24/0291/FUL | Field off Blounts Lane: Create access for farm machinery. | Awaited |

APPENDIX B

E Buckmaster County Councillor Report January 2025

Hertfordshire's bus network to benefit from further Bus Service Improvement Plan investment

Hertfordshire's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is to benefit from a further £11million following a recent announcement from the Department for Transport (DfT).

Over the last three years the county's BSIP has allowed the bus network, supported through the Intalink Enhanced Partnership, to grow and develop. The original £29.7million fund has resulted in significant improvements including new services, more frequent buses, changes to fares and ticketing, and updates to customer information points and bus shelters.

This has led to a 18% increase in Hertfordshire residents ditching the car and travelling by bus since 2022, according to figures provided by the DfT.

The funding has been used across a variety of projects. These have included new services and increased frequency to routes into and out of Hertford, Stevenage, St Albans, Hemel Hempstead and Watford as well as the surrounding areas. Rural communities in north and east Hertfordshire and Dacorum have also seen the launch of the uber-style on demand bus service HertsLynx.

A reduced travel offer for all ages has been introduced through the Hertfordshire SaverCard and Intalink Connect ticketing scheme, allowing users to benefit from discounted fares.

Customers are now able to stay in touch with real time service information through the Intalink mobile app as well as 150 new real time electronic departure screens that will be in place by March 2025.

A number of community shelters have been designed and delivered around the county working with local communities. Further shelters are being introduced early next year.

Smallford: £1.4m to look at feasibility of site for solar farm

council officials are to investigate a new site for a solar farm in Smallford

– after surveys suggested the original site considered for the project “must be protected at all costs”. Hertfordshire County Council had initially earmarked the former Smallford Pit as a possible site for a proposed 22MW solar farm. But on Monday (2 December) a meeting of the council's cabinet was told that ecological habitats “of extremely high value” have been found there. The council is now looking to develop the solar farm on two smaller council-owned sites, which adjoin the original Smallford Pit site, instead. The proposed solar farm is part of the county council's commitment to become carbon neutral 'in its own operations' by 2030.

Hertfordshire County Council is pleased to announce a landmark achievement in housing development, marking the highest number of new homes built in any year since 2001.

In the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, councils across Hertfordshire delivered 5,387 new homes. This remarkable milestone underscores the County Council's commitment to addressing the housing needs of residents. One of the highlights of this achievement is the focus on affordability. An impressive 30% of the gross new homes are affordable, catering to a range of needs:

864 affordable rent units, 389 shared equity units, 376 social rent units, 16 intermediate units.

Equally noteworthy is Hertfordshire's dedication to sustainable development, with 68% of these new homes constructed on brownfield land, showcasing the County's commitment to regenerating underused areas and minimising impact on green spaces.

Looking ahead, the future of housing in Hertfordshire continues to thrive. There are currently 27,448 homes with planning permission set to be built in the coming years, ensuring that the momentum in housing growth is maintained. Large scale projects include Harlow Gilton Garden Town, Hemel Garden Communities, Growing Baldock town expansion and Brookfield in Cheshunt, and it's these developments that will contribute to the county's target to build 100,000 homes over the next decade. In addition, Hertfordshire Property Partnership (HPP) has secured over £2.6 million in Brownfield Land Release Fund support from the government's One Public Estate programme. These funds will be utilised across seven sites in the county, with two projects already completed and the remaining five expected to deliver approximately 662 homes. All of these projects are integral parts of the ongoing regeneration efforts in Hertfordshire.

Reducing Infant Deaths linked to unsafe sleeping practices

Over the past two years, Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children's Partnership, NHS Trusts, ICS, midwifery, health visitors, children's services, and family centre services have collaborated to reduce unexpected infant deaths due to co-sleeping. Expectant and new parents can have at least 25 interactions with health, social care, and family support professionals during pregnancy and in the first 3 months of pregnancy. Each of these interactions is an opportunity to discuss safer sleeping and inform parents of key safety messages.

A Hertfordshire **Safer Sleeping Framework** has been developed, based on local research that involved nearly 200 professionals. This framework identifies key actions for organisations, services, managers, and frontline staff to ensure the timely and accurate sharing of safer sleeping advice. It highlights simple actions for parents to support safer sleeping practices at home and away.

Hertfordshire's key safe sleeping message is: “***The safest place for a baby to sleep is in their own clear, flat, separate sleep space, such as a cot or Moses basket. If bedsharing, consider all risks: ensure the baby is on their back, in a clear space, and DO NOT co-sleep if you or your partner smoke, drink alcohol, take drugs, or any medication that makes you drowsy.***” A reminder that Hertfordshire's Stop Smoking service has information and support available at [Stop Smoking Service | Hertfordshire County Council](#).

If you would like a copy of the Safer Sleeping Framework, please email

dee.debruin1@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Camera enforcement goes live at the junction of Adderley Road with The Causeway, Bishop's Stortford

Hertfordshire County Council are introducing automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) enforcement cameras at the yellow box junction of Adderley Road with The Causeway, Bishop's Stortford, from Tuesday 10 December at 10am.

Yellow box junctions are put in place at busy junctions to aid the flow of through traffic. New signage has been installed on the approaches to the junction warning road users of the cameras and advising to not enter the yellow box unless the exit is clear.

The changes that have been made to the junction in Bishop's Stortford aim to improve vehicle movement and the flow of traffic around the town. A particular focus is on the reliability of bus services which travel through the centre of Bishop's Stortford and onto, or from, destinations such as the hospital and train station.

Drivers will be issued with a warning letter for the first six months for a first contravention and for subsequent contraventions a penalty charge notice (PCN) will be issued of £70, £35 if paid within 14 days.

The Department for Transport announced in June 2021 that councils would be able to apply for the legal powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions. This is the third of four initial schemes in the unattended camera enforcement programme, meaning that a PCN can be issued to drivers who make banned right turns, fail to observe no entry restrictions, drive in mandatory cycle lanes or occupy yellow box junctions

Hertfordshire roads are in good shape says Department for Transport

A report from the Department for Transport (DfT) published (17 December) into road conditions in England for the year ending March 2024, has shown that Hertfordshire's A, B and C roads are in better condition than the national average.

The DfT statistical release, which has been produced annually since 2007/8, shows that in 2024 the number of roads in England classified as needing maintenance was 4% of 'A' roads, 7% of 'B' and 'C' roads, and 17% of unclassified roads. This compares to figures for Hertfordshire of 3% of 'A' roads, 4% of 'B' and 'C' roads and 18% of unclassified roads needing maintenance. The DfT report acknowledges that data for unclassified roads is less robust than for classified roads and can show greater yearly fluctuations.

Between 2021/22 and 2024/25, an extra £36.9m of funding has been committed to Hertfordshire's Highways above the annual core budget. This funding has been used on projects covering surfacing and potholes, drainage and routine maintenance. In addition, the council's Invest To Improve (i2i) programme committed £29m to improve the unclassified road network.

The wet and cold weather that has been experienced over the last two years has made the task of maintaining the county's roads more challenging. The winter season of 2022/23 was a particularly cold one, with our gritters called out on 78 runs compared to an average of 56, while the twelve months to the end of October 2024 saw 45% more rainfall across Hertfordshire than average, with the Environment Agency deeming this exceptionally high, its highest rating.

Highways performance to October 2024

- 14,809 potholes repaired
- £1.6m spent on drainage issues
- £25.3m spent on surfacing
- £2.2m spent on Enhanced maintenance, to include road marking, vegetation cut-back, litter picking on fast roads, pedestrian guard rails and sign cleaning.

This activity is up to October, and the service anticipates 100% of programmes being completed by the end of the financial year, subject to weather etc.

Hertfordshire Transport and Traffic data 2024

Highlights:

1. Traffic increase: Hertfordshire's roads saw a 2.4% increase in traffic in 2023 compared to the previous year.
2. Recovery from pandemic: Traffic levels in 2023 are just 2.6% below pre-pandemic 2019 levels, with major roads (motorways and A roads) nearly back to normal, showing only a 0.1% decrease.
3. Fewer vans and lorries: The number of vans and lorries on the roads in 2023 decreased by 0.8% and 12.4% respectively, compared to pre-pandemic 2019.
4. Cycling: 10.8% of Hertfordshire residents cycled at least once per week in 2023, higher than the England average of 10.1%.
5. Walking: 32.5% of Hertfordshire residents walked at least five times per week in 2023, surpassing the England average of 31.8%.
6. Traffic concerns: A 2023 survey revealed that 75% of people want to see less traffic in their area.

7. Bus usage up: Bus passenger journeys in Hertfordshire increased by 19% in 2022/23 compared to the previous year.
8. Rail travel rise: Rail passenger journeys in Hertfordshire rose by 33% in 2022/23 compared to the previous year.
9. Petrol car registrations: New petrol car registrations increased by 9% in 2023, reversing the previous downward trend.
10. Electric cars: In Hertfordshire, 2.3% of licensed cars are fully electric, below the UK average of 2.8%.

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service welcomes its newest firefighters Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service welcomed its newest firefighters to the service on Friday 13 December 2024 during a special pass out parade held at Longfield Training and Development Centre.

Six firefighters graduated following an intensive 16 week training course at the parade which was attended by their friends and family, as well as senior leaders and dignitaries. Chief Fire Officer Alex Woodman and Councillor Morris Bright, Executive Member for Public Health & Community Safety at Hertfordshire County Council inspected the trainees on the drill yard, before watching their display drills and presenting certificates to them.

The 16 week training course* included:

- Firecraft (hose running, pump operating, ladder pitching/climbing, knot tying).
- Breathing Apparatus - the most demanding module on the training course (involving irrespirable atmosphere, no visibility, having to use new skills to safely search a room, casualty handling, making rescue from inside compartments).
- Fire Behaviour training (practical branch techniques, theoretical knowledge on fire behaviour – upper and lower limits of flammability, fire phenomenons – backdraft, flashover and fire gas explosions, tactical ventilation).
- Road Traffic Collision – cutting/rescue techniques, safe systems of work, vehicle hazards.
- Immediate Emergency Care – trauma training, basic life support (CPR) haemorrhage control.
- Technical rescue – including safe working at height and water rescue.

Wednesday 22 January 2025 is Clean Air Night, when we will be helping to spark a conversation about the health harms of air pollution from wood burning in Hertfordshire.

Up to now, it's been easy to associate the glow of a fire or wood burner with cosiness, but recent evidence shows that air pollution from wood burning is bad for your health. Wood burning smoke contains fine particle air pollution (PM2.5), which enters your bloodstream when inhaled and causes heart and lung disease, diabetes, and dementia.

Clean Air Night is an opportunity to learn the facts about wood burning and share what you've learned with your friends, family and community to ensure everyone can make informed decisions about how to heat their homes.

We will be taking part in Clean Air Night by sharing messages on social media and starting conversations on wood burning and the health implications, and you can join us!

This Clean Air Night (22 January 2025), get involved by:

- Learning the facts about wood burning and how it harms your health and the planet by visiting the [Clean Air Hub](#) and exploring #CleanAirNight
- Sharing what you learn with your family, friends and community to spark conversations about the harms of wood burning and protect everyone's health

There is some great information on the Clean Air Hub that you may find useful in your role as a councillor when talking to residents. Please see the following website for the common myths that surround wood burning and please do get in touch with us directly on cleaner.air@hertfordshire.gov.uk if you have any questions.

[Clean Air Night FAQ's](#) | [Global Action Plan](#)

Hertfordshire County Council responds to Government's proposals for devolution and local government reform

Hertfordshire County Council responds to Government's proposals for devolution and local government reform: County Hall 2022 1200x657-4

Hertfordshire County Council has set out its initial response to the Government's White Paper on proposals for devolution and local government.

Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, said: "Our top priority will always be ensuring local government in Hertfordshire can provide the best possible services to our residents and support our businesses to grow.

"As an economic powerhouse in its own right, Hertfordshire now needs its own conversation with Government on these important issues.

"Any proposals on devolution and changing local government structures would need to be evidence based, carefully developed, and subject to consultation before being introduced.

“We have not been actively seeking changes to the structure of local government in Hertfordshire, but the Government is now clear it must be explored so it is the responsibility of all local leaders to carefully consider the options available and assess what has the best potential to benefit our residents and businesses.

“Devolution done well can maximise Hertfordshire’s many strengths, enabling our communities and businesses to reach their full potential.

“The devolution of powers and funding to local decision makers could enhance our ability to focus on priority areas such as increasing investment in our roads and public transport, providing better access to education and skills, tackling health inequalities and building new homes while protecting our green spaces. “With an economy worth £46bn and population of 1.2m residents, Hertfordshire is an economic powerhouse bigger than many cities and city regions. We have a track record of innovation and are delivering growth in globally important sectors including biosciences, advanced manufacturing, and film and TV production.

“Irrespective of our structures the essential services provided by local government across Hertfordshire still need to be delivered. It is vital that any changes do not negatively impact the capacity and resilience key service areas such as adults and children’s social care. We need to ensure our residents are kept safe and cared for.

“Any proposals must also ensure that communities retain their voice and continue to have a say on the issues most important to their local areas.

“This is an historic moment for our county. The views of residents, businesses, local government partners, and other stakeholders across the public and private sectors will be essential in shaping our approach and any proposals would be subject to consultation following discussions with Government.”

Devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from the Government in Westminster to local decision makers.

The county council and district and borough councils worked in partnership to develop a formal Expression of Interest in a devolution deal which was submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 18 September 2024.

Local Government Reorganisation is the change of local authority structures. Hertfordshire has a County Council and 10 District and Borough Councils.

The county council has not proposed or discussed any changes to local government structures with the Government.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster

COUNCILLOR ACTIONS ARISING

Cllr Tom Payne

- Allotments (with Cllr Carrie Payne)
- Gilston development

Cllr John Andreotti

- HTC liaison, including chasing outstanding invoice payments
- Car park lights (with DS)

Cllr Keith Jordan

- Liaise with BB&C Fencing for replacement field entrance gate

Cllr Carrie Payne

- Monitor Highways issues, including parking
- Allotments (with Cllr Tom Payne)

Cllr Jacqueline Jackson

- Footpaths, Public Rights of Way and accessibility matters
- Price for notice boards perspex and refurb
- Attend the next Police Cross Border meeting and report back to Council

Clerk

- Set up agreed bank payments
- Planning comments
- Hall booking for next meeting
- Everflow Water re replacement water meter
- Submit 2025/26 precept to EHC

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