

Widford Parish Council

Minutes of the Widford Ordinary Parish Council Meeting
Monday 8th September 2026 at 7.30 in Widford Village Hall



PRESENT: Cllr Mike Allen (MA); Cllr Ian Collins (IC); Cllr Mark Rome (MR)

Seven members of the public

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm

ACTION

26.079 To receive and approve apologies for absence

1. Councillors: Cllr Josh Warren (work); Cllr Andy Djemal (family) **BOTH ACCEPTED**
2. Others: None

26.080 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations

1. Interests

Cllr Mike Allen has a dispensation in re Playing Field matters, being a trustee. Cllr Ian Collins has a dispensation in re the Closed Churchyard, his wife having the Closed Churchyard maintenance contract.

26.081 Approval of Minutes

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 7th July 2026 were a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Clerk/MA

26.082 Police report

1. **Crime Report:** No report was received for July or August.

Clerk's note: A crime report for August was received after the meeting.

2. **East Herts Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team Update and Parish Council Engagement**

PCSO Leon DeBruyn sent the following report:

I wanted to provide an update regarding engagement between the East Herts Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) and our Parish Councils.

*The East Herts Rural NPT currently consists of **nine officers** responsible for policing a predominantly rural area covering more than **180 square miles** and over **40 parishes**. In addition to responding to emergency and non-emergency incidents, the team is responsible for addressing local priorities, community concerns, crime prevention initiatives and problem-solving activity across the district.*

We recognise the value of attending Parish Council meetings and the important opportunity they provide for engagement with local communities. We continue to make every effort to attend as many meetings as possible; however, this has become increasingly challenging due to operational demands, abstractions, training commitments, annual leave and current resource levels.

*To ensure Parish Councils remain informed, we will continue to provide our **monthly Crime Report**, highlighting current crime trends, incidents and policing activity across the rural area. We also encourage Parish Councils and residents to register with **Herts Connected**, our free interactive messaging service, which provides local policing updates, crime prevention advice and opportunities to engage directly with the Neighbourhood Policing Team.*

*Through Herts Connected, residents are also invited to participate in our **four-monthly***

Local Priority Setting Survey, enabling communities to tell us about the issues that matter most to them and helping shape local policing priorities.

From **September 2026**, the monthly crime report will be produced as a single report covering the entire East Herts Rural area. Please note that where a village is not referenced within the report, this will indicate that no crimes were reported within that parish during the relevant calendar month.

As we look ahead to **2027**, I would encourage Parish Councils to provide me with the dates of their scheduled meetings for the year as soon as possible. This will assist us with forward planning and help maximise opportunities for police attendance. Wherever possible, we will endeavour to attend; however, attendance will always remain subject to officer availability, shift patterns and operational commitments at the time.

Where attendance is not possible, we remain keen to support Parish Councils in other ways. If there is a specific issue, concern or question that you would like to raise with the police, please contact me or a member of the team directly and we will ensure the matter is passed to the appropriate officer for consideration and response.

Of course, if the matter relates to criminal activity or requires a police response, it should be reported through the usual channels by contacting the Force Communications Room on **999 in an emergency** or **101 for non-emergency matters**.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement with the East Herts Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team. We greatly value the strong relationships we have built with our Parish Councils and look forward to continuing to work together to help keep our communities safe.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

PCSO Supervisor Leon DE BRUYN
Neighbourhood Team PCSO
NPT East Herts Rural & Buntingford

26.083 Chairman's announcements

An allotment tree fell onto FP18. The tree has been cleared from the footpath but part of it remains over the ditch.

MA/IC

It was agreed to have all the Parish Council's trees surveyed for safety. The Clerk to liaise with Cllr Ian Collins re location and inspection arrangements.

Clerk/IC

The outcome of the recent Sawbridgeworth travellers' site activity over the August Bank Holiday weekend is very encouraging. No one has a problem when the law is being followed, but illegal activity is totally unacceptable. It was noted that community involvement played an important role in getting the illegal works stopped. A parishioner asked if the Parish Council has a contingency plan if a similar situation arose in the parish. The Chairman replied that things in the background could make things happen and suggested that villagers write to Cllr Eric Buckmaster and the MP to find out what contingencies could be put in place for out of hours activity, eg over bank holiday weekends. In the ensuing discussion it was suggested that a protocol could be established to have an outline action plan in place should the need arise. To be discussed further with Cllr Eric Buckmaster upon his arrival at the meeting later in the evening.

MA/IC

26.084 Reports by County and District Councillors

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster's written report is reproduced in the Appendix to these Minutes. It was noted that it contains information relating to the travellers' actions in Sawbridgeworth and the implications of the Local Government Reorganisation review ordered by the government.

District Cllr David Andrews emailed the following report:

I will likely be on EH business Tuesday, but having looked at the agenda, nothing seems to require me other than Ash View Stables.

I will be having a meeting with the Planning Officer this coming week but not in time to report to this PC meeting. I will update you as and when I can.

I have also been made aware of concerns around the thinking of the applicant for the Orangery. If you have any feedback I should welcome it.

1. New Applications:

3/26/0271FUL	Ash View Stables: Change of use of land from existing mixed use for equestrian/residential caravan site with 2 x static caravans/mobile homes to Gypsy/Traveller caravan site accommodating 6 x static caravans/mobile homes utilising extension of existing manege. Erection of screen fencing following demolition of existing stable building and barn. RESOLVED: To object on the following grounds: NPPF 2026 HO12 Travellers Sites Policy 1, section a: Requires a contribution to sustainability which this site does not achieve in any form. There is no directly accessible route for access to public services which are neither nearby or within the location of Widford as a settlement. S5 Principle of development outside settlements Policy 1, section g: Would be against policy as there is no evidence to support the need for additional sites or indeed an unmet need when presented against the Local District Plan 2018 which provides facilities in the district to cover the needs until 2028. East Herts District Plan 2018 HOU9 Policy 1 Site is not listed in the proposed allocated sites for the future. HOU9 Policy 2 a. No sustainable access to public services. b. Sustainable drainage is not included in the application and due to the location and proximity to a local water source this is an important issue to be resolved. d. The development is not well related to the area and would represent an inappropriate development. e. Due to the location of the site there is little to no opportunity to integrate into the community. f. Any development must not cause nuisance to neighbouring properties. The current occupants are causing issues with the neighbours through use of loud vehicles at all hours driving carelessly in an around the site. g. The development would represent a visual disturbance to the amenity and character of the area.
3/26/1032/VAR	Wilmoor: Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) pursuant to planning permission (3/25/0231/FUL) for (Demolition of outbuilding. Erection of dwelling incorporating landscaping and creation of access): Amended scheme with minor changes. RESOLVED: No comments. <i>Clerk's note: EHC Planning portal closed for comments as at 9 Sept</i>
3/26/0825/HH 3/260826/LBC	Priory Farm House: Construction of orangery to rear following demolition of existing conservatory. RESOLVED: No objection, but raise concerns about shading of neighbouring property – recommend a light assessment <i>Clerk's note: EHC Planning portal closed for comments as at 9 Sept</i>

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

2. Decision Notices. For information only, the following were noted:

3/26/0815/VAR	The Croft, Nether Street: Variation to 3/26/0398/HH conditions 2 & 3 approved plans and materials.	GRANTED
3/25/0480/OUT	Land South of Levenage Lane: Outline planning for 8 houses.	GRANTED

E/24/0211/ENF	Youngs Little Acre: ENFORCEMENT APPEAL reference 6008192	Awaited
3/25/0901/OUT	Priory Farm: Outline with all matters reserved except access for the demolition of the Doe Shed and erection of a single self-build dwelling.	Awaited

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

1. Late planning applications received after the agenda was published: *None*
2. Land for sale and Bourne Lane access: *Concerns and action are ongoing.*
3. Noted: the new NPPF was published on 19th August
4. Noted: the next East Herts Gilston Area Community Forum is Wed 9th September

26.086 Finance

1. Report of the Council's finances at 31st August 2026

Finance Summary to 31 st August	£
Opening cashbook balance 1st July	37,775.56
Plus: income to 31 st August	0.00
Minus: expenditure to 31 st August	<u>2,931.58</u>
Balance available to Council at 31st August (cashbook balance)	34,843.98
Plus unrepresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31st August	<u>34,843.98</u>

RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31st August 2026 be approved.

2. Bank reconciliations

The cashbook balance was checked against the bank statement.
Cashbook balance £34,843.98 Unity Bank balance £34,843.98
RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.

Clerk

3. Performance vs budget at 30th June 2026

The Clerk's detailed report on the financial performance vs budget to 31st August was received. There were no untoward transactions to note.

Income: Budget £19,400 To 31st August £9,188 Balance outstanding £10,212
Expenditure: Budget £29,665 To 31st August £8,544 Balance available £21,121

Summary: Opening cashbook balance 01/04/26 £34,366
Cashbook gross income to 31/08/26 £ 9,188
Cashbook gross expenditure to 31/08/26 £ 8,710
Cashbook balance 31/08/26 £34,844

RESOLVED: that the financial performance report to 31st August 2026 be accepted as presented.

Clerk

4. List of payments for approval.

4.1. RESOLVED: to approve the list of payments as presented by the Clerk
All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.

Clerk

		Gross	VAT incl
Sharon Collins	Closed Churchyard 4 of 4	325.00	
Mrs J English	Litter picking August	157.50	
Clerk	Salary August	495.40	
HMRC	PAYE August	124.00	
HMRC	Employer's NIC August	30.36	
R Edwards Tee Services	Closed churchyard tree work	200.00	
Clerk reimburse	Laptop repair	120.00	
Clerk reimburse	Flash drive for computer back-up	12.99	
Mike Allen reimburse	NSP Screen Printing "PC Boardman"	116.34	
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service charge	7.00	
Mrs J English	Litter picking September	157.50	
Clerk	Salary September	1013.66	

HMRC	PAYE September	253.20	
HMRC	Employer's NIC September	127.48	
Clerk	Expenses August September	55.30	
Clerk reimburse	Postage	1.80	
TEEC	Annual website hosting	194.39	32.40
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly service charge TBC	7.00	
Recoverable VAT included			£32.40

5. Audit: Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

The external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, has acknowledged the AGAR report but has not reported any issues. It is therefore presumed that the AGAR has been passed.

Clerk

The Clerk noted the Government's announcement that the proposed LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) has been paused and has thrown budgets into uncertainty. The outcome and impact is unknown, but it is hoped there will be some clarification before the draft 2027/28 budget is considered in November and finalised in January. However, there is little confidence on the timing of a decision. The May 2027 elections will go ahead, probably for a 4-year term.

Clerk

26.087 NALC National pay agreement 2026/27

1. The NALC National pay agreement scale (3.3%) was considered.

RESOLVED: to implement the new pay agreement, backdated to 1st April 2026 as recommended by NALC.

Clerk

2. Review of the Clerk's pay grade: It was noted that the Clerk's pay grade is LC2 SCP23. This at the top of the lowest LC2 range defined as being "below the substantive range". HAPTC's definition of that range is that it is the lower SCP range used for early progression or for roles not yet fully at the benchmark level. The next range is LC2 "substantive benchmark range". HAPTC's definition of that range is that is the *main* SCP range that defines the proper pay band for that mid LC2 grade. It was acknowledged that the Clerk should properly be in the mid LC2 range, being CiLCA qualified since 2017, has 15 years experience, and has been the Widford Parish Clerk for 11 years.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk's grade be uplifted from SCP23 to the top of the mid LC2 range, ie SCP28, with immediate effect and backdated to 1st April 2026. The Chairman to write to the Clerk confirming this decision.

Clerk/MA

26.088 Village Archive

1. **Report for Widford Parish Council meeting, Tuesday 8th September**

Helen Giles has started cataloguing the Widford Archive onto EHive, which is an online collections management software package. To date, she has added 161 records to the database, complete with a digital image of each record. With 100 photographs in each of the 10 albums alone, and all the other items in the collection, it's estimated that about 500 records are likely to be inputted in the allotted three weeks that the council kindly funded. This is a really good start. Anyone can take a look at what's been added so far through Ehive.com and search for The Widford Archive.

2. Archivist Helen Giles also sent the following update:

I'm unable to make the Parish Council meeting but wanted to update you on the Widford Archive cataloguing work I've started on. So, hopefully the attached little update will suffice for the time being? I've put something on Facebook too so that should set the ball rolling. It's quite a long and arduous process, and I reckon I can get to about 500 in the allotted time frame. It would be great to carry on, but this would have to be done in my own time, maybe one or two records a week. I'm wondering that people may start asking for digital copies of photographs (for research/family history) and think a nominal charge could be made for this. I've approached the Friends of Widford Church to see if they could take the payments for this, as they are set up to cope with payments and income and it would be good

to have a little kitty for the continued 'Come in from the Cold' events as well as other expenditure needed, such as the purchase of things for future church open days etc.

I realise that the PC already support the archive for the subs to Find my Past, Ehive and cloud and hard copy storage (and of course paying me for 3 weeks work to catalogue some of the archive) and gather that it would be an admin nightmare to have small amounts of money coming into the council coffers for this? I hope I've done the right thing!

Many thanks

Helen

Helen Giles, AMA

Museums and Heritage Consultant

It was agreed that the suggestion for a nominal fee for copies was a reasonable suggestion and the Chairman said he thought the Friends of Widford Church taking the payments would provide a sensible and practical means of doing this.

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

- HAPTC: Notice of NALC National pay agreement (26.087.1)
- HCC Cllr E Buckmaster: Winter self-help salt application open (26.091.2.4)
- Parishioner: Planning application at Ash View Stables (26.085.1)
- HAPTC: Training bulletin
- East Herts: Gilston Area Community Forum: Next Meeting: Wed 9 Sept (26.085.3.4)
- Police: Invitation to Fire Safety Engagement Event – Dowsetts Farm, Colliers End - 7th September
- Contact enquiry: Police seeking evidence of fly tipping in Wareside

26.090 Village Reports

1. Village Hall

There was nothing to report. There will be a pub night on Friday 25th September.

2. Playing Field

1. Cllr Mike Allen reported that the Equine Boot Sale and Dog Show were both well supported and very successful in raising substantial funds.
2. Use of Section 106 funds: No update to report. MA

3. Allotments

1. Update report: Allotments vacancy enquiry: Cllr Ian Collins to contact the enquirer. IC
2. It was confirmed that Cllr Mike Allen has taken over the allotments portfolio as recorded in the May Minutes, 26.072.4.1 MA

Cllr Ian Collins confirmed that the 2026 allotments rent of £253 has now been paid into the bank. IC

4. Closed Churchyard.

1. Report: The SW corner has been cleared. The necessary tree work has been undertaken and paid for. IC
2. There were no issues to report.

County Cllr Eric Buckmaster arrived at 8.35pm

26.091 Highways, Footpaths and byways

1. Footpaths and PRoW.

1. It was noted that the tree that had fallen across FP18 by the allotments has been cleared.

2. Highways and footways

1. Greenacres enforcement issues: ongoing.
2. Railway bridge wall update: High level chevron signs have been installed and

vegetation obstructing clear visibility has been removed. Road surface measures, such as rumble strips, have yet to be done.

3. B1004 overgrown hedge opposite Rose Cottage update: This has been reported at least twice; Ringway say they have inspected the site and there is no issue with road or sign visibility. Agreed that this should continue to be reported on the Highways Fault website until action is taken. MA
4. TRO30807 Temporary closure of Aerodrome Way, Green Tye/Allen's Green noted.
5. HCC Winter self-help salt application is open: This was noted and will be ordered if necessary.

3. Other parish matters and concerns

1. Nether Street railings repair: Work has been satisfactorily completed.
2. Defibrillator Management: The Chairman reported that he has yet to replace the broken door. MA
3. Other issues
 1. Parking at Chapel House update: No response to the letter sent in June has been received. Cllr Ian Collins agreed to follow up with the householder. It was also agreed that Cllr Collins would speak to a tree surgeon with a view to getting the tree trimmed.

26.092 Benningfield Green

1. Issues reported: It was noted that there has been overnight parking on the Green at weekends, Cllr Mike Allen said he would have a word with the resident.
2. Annual Licence renewal: **RESOLVED: that the 2026/27 Licence fee be ratified at £427.42, being a 3.1% annual increase based on the July RPI as published by the ONS.** It was noted that this has already been invoiced and paid. Clerk

26.093 **Change to .gov.uk domain and email:** Ongoing – Cllrs Josh Warren, Mark Rome and Andy Djemal have yet to set up their new email addresses. JW
MR/Clerk

26.094 **Urgent matters** received too late for inclusion on this agenda: **NONE**

At 9.15pm the meeting was suspended for Public Comments

The unauthorised drop kerb at the bottom of Bourne Lane was raised again, including the strip of highways land that needs reinstating. The risk is for an illegal entry point being used should the field be sold with this as perceived access. Cllr Ian Collins agreed to email County Cllr Eric Buckmaster and the Clerk with details. IC

At 9.16pm the meeting was reconvened

26.095 Items for future agendas

- Draft 2027/28 budget: November meeting Clerk

26.096 Date of next Parish Council Meetings – all in the village Hall at 7.30pm

Tuesday 3rd November; 5th January 2027 Clerk/MA

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.17pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

APPENDIX

E Buckmaster County and District Councillor Report Sept 2026

Local Government Reorganisation

Message from CEO Angie Ridgewell

Dear Members,

The Government has today announced a review of their Local Government Reorganisation decisions in all cases except Surrey, including the decision to create four unitary authorities in Hertfordshire.

As part of this announcement, the Government has confirmed that local elections will continue in line with the current cycle of elections for May 2027. Elections for the new Shadow Authorities will now no longer take place in May 2027.

At this juncture we have little information beyond the Secretary of State's statement and published coverage in the media.

We will continue to work collaboratively across all Hertfordshire Councils and engage constructively with ministers and officials throughout the review. We will also carefully consider any implications arising from its conclusions.

I recognise that this announcement may raise questions which we cannot answer at the moment. Our focus remains firmly on continuing to deliver our high quality services and supporting our communities now and in the future.

Whatever the outcome of the review, we will continue to work together in the best interests of Hertfordshire. We will keep you informed as further information becomes available

Sawbridgeworth

Traveller's destruction of Flood Plain and Green Belt near River Stort/Chalk Stream during Bank Holiday weekend.

Some of you may have heard about the situation in Sawbridgeworth which has been picked up widely by media. This was not just owing to the location but also in the manner in which we dealt with it.

On Friday Residents informed us of activity on the land. Police were called. As Councillors we used the East Herts Emergency Whatsapp to alert senior management on standby.

East Herts Enforcement officers started working on an injunction.

On site Plant and equipment hired by the travellers started arriving and they went about flattening trees and greenery including where Himalayan Balsom was situated, an invasive species spreading seeds.

Trucks from Harlow Fencing arrived. Huge number of Lorries containing hardcore were all waiting in residential streets to take turn in getting on to site (the Livery on the Lorries was Heidelberg a well know international company. Tarmac had been ordered).

Hundreds of residents turned out trying to stop it, some tried putting cars in the way. Police on site were very patient and managed it well. They advised residents against blocking the Highway.

Residents with contacts in Tarmac alerted them to their potential part in illegal development. The supplier of the fencing was also contacted.

Over the 3 days we had 4 Silver Command meetings with Police, Council and Environment Agency. The weakness is that Police have no powers until there is a breach of an injunction. Counsel was appointed and judge located to issue first injunction warning that continuing warning that continuation would be contempt and further action to follow. The activity continued so a second stronger injunction was sought and was delivered just after midnight on Saturday.

Residents worked in shifts throughout the night outside the site, including Town Councillors On Sunday Police videoed the activity for evidence and employed drones. Once they had enough ,they entered the site and advised the workers that they now risked arrest and that they had until Wednesday to remove all plant from the site. It has now been removed. Our own HCC officer Victoria Wilders assisted East Herts as she was a former employee with contacts and experience.

The media interest has been incredible, from TV , Radio, and press owing to the achievement of doing this in 3 days. A fantastic performance by our Enforcement officers

Next steps to talk through best practice and how prevention will be key to deterring this kind of unauthorised development and destruction of nature and wildlife.

The latest update on the NPPF adds slightly greater weight when unauthorised development is deliberate. under the current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), greater weight is specifically given against granting permission for deliberate unauthorised development when a retrospective planning application is being determined. [\[gov.uk\]](https://www.gov.uk), [\[mhclgmedia...log.gov.uk\]](https://www.mhclgmedia.blog.gov.uk)
The key point is that:

If it is concluded, based on evidence, that the unauthorised development was intentional, that fact should be given substantial weight in deciding whether planning permission should be granted.

In practical terms:

- Accidental or mistaken breaches do not attract the same policy objection.
- Deliberate building first and seeking permission later can now carry substantial negative weight.
- The authority must still consider the development plan, Green Belt policy, amenity impacts, highways, heritage issues, and all other material considerations before reaching a decision.

Latest On Gilston Development and Highways Closures

Eastwick Road Closure: 21 September to 8 November 2026 PfP and Barratt Redrow are issuing comms to advise residents and road users that **Eastwick Road (A414) will be closed in both directions for seven weeks from 21 September until 8 November 2026** as part of the Central Stort Crossing project.

During the closure, essential utility diversion and drainage works will be carried out to prepare for the next phase of highway improvements. These works require a full road closure to ensure they can be completed safely.

A signed diversion route will be in place via **High Wych**. Drivers are encouraged to follow the official diversion route, particularly as other roadworks are taking place across the local network.

In addition to the road closure: 24-hour lane closures will remain on the A414 until early November. From 22 September, road users should be prepared for the lane closures to switch from inside lanes to outside lanes to facilitate ongoing works.

For the latest updates: gilstonparkestate.com Causeway one.network

More than 15,371 fly-tipping incidents in Hertfordshire result in just 200 fixed penalty notices

New data presented to the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership shows that 15,371 fly-tipping incidents were recorded across Hertfordshire during 2024/25, while fewer than 200 fixed penalty notices were issued. The report found that Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield recorded the highest number of incidents, with household waste remaining the most commonly fly-tipped material. Hertfordshire Waste Partnership representatives said incident levels have remained relatively stable compared with national trends and continue to support stronger penalties for offenders.

Gilston: First village masterplan approved garden village network

East Herts District Council has approved the masterplan and design code for the first village within the Gilston development, marking a significant milestone in the wider Harlow & Gilston Garden Town project. The plans include up to 1,600 homes, new schools, community facilities, green spaces and sustainable transport links. Hertfordshire County Council welcomed the approval, highlighting the benefits of partnership working and the delivery of infrastructure, active travel routes and greener communities alongside new housing.

20 MPH schemes

Rather than presenting a specific proposal to the community, the consultation now seeks to understand views in the community and among stakeholders on 20mph limits in their area. We will use the feedback to inform the proposed extent of new or expanded 20mph areas. This means we will be better placed to develop a scheme that responds to local factors and preferences in addition to technical and policy considerations.

Some project consultations have been brought forward and the overall consultation programme has been condensed. This will give us more time after consultation to develop a proposed scheme and continue to work with you as the local county councillor and other key

stakeholders to finalise a scheme, where there is community support for it.

The table below shows the **planned start and end date for consultations** for the different areas. Consultations will be open for 4 weeks as standard.

Location	Consultation start	Consultation end
Wareside	28/09/2026	25/10/2026
Hunsdon	28/09/2026	25/10/2026
Sawbridgeworth	05/10/2026	1/11/2026

We will share details of consultation materials for your information ahead of the consultations starting.

Please see www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/20mph for general information on the programme.

The page will be updated with links to engagement pages at the start of the consultation.

Follow the links to see the format of the live consultations.

Leaflets promoting the consultation will be distributed to relevant areas. For larger schemes, we will also promote the consultation through social media and engagement with schools.

Additional community engagement activity is subject to our team's availability.

County council provides nearly 60,000 bags of free salt to communities since 2018

Hertfordshire County Council's Winter Self-Help Scheme will open for applications on 1 September, giving schools, town and parish councils, district and borough councils, residents' associations and community groups the opportunity to receive free salt to help keep local roads and pavements clear during icy conditions.

Since the scheme was introduced in 2018, Hertfordshire County Council has processed almost 2,500 orders and delivered just under 60,000 bags of salt to schools, residents' groups, and parish, town and district councils across the county. That's more than 1.2 million kilograms of salt supplied to support communities during winter weather.

Schools have been among the biggest beneficiaries of the scheme, receiving almost 35,000 bags, around 60 per cent of all salt distributed through the programme. The busiest years for applications were 2019 and 2023, following significant snowfall the previous winter, highlighting the importance of preparing ahead of severe weather.

This year, eligible groups can apply for up to 20 bags of salt to use on public roads and footpaths in their local area.

Alongside the Self-Help Scheme, Hertfordshire County Council maintains almost 1,400 salt bins across the county and will continue its cycleway gritting programme this winter, helping residents travel safely whether walking, cycling or driving.

Applications for the Winter Self-Help Scheme open on 1 September and can be made via the Hertfordshire County Council website at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/winterselfhelp

Hertfordshire secondary school applications for September 2027 now open

The new school year is just about to start so it is already time for parents and carers in Hertfordshire to start planning for next year as the application process for transfer to secondary schools opens today (Tuesday 1 September).

If your child starts secondary or upper school next year, or wishes to apply for a place at a university technical college, do make sure you apply for a place in good time.

The closing date for secondary applications is Saturday 31 October 2026 and it is vital that parents make their applications on time.

The easiest way to apply for a school place for September 2027 is to visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions and complete the online application form.

When you apply online, you will be able to access your school offer and accept your school allocation before allocation letters are received.

Last year over 99% of parents applied this way and found the system quick, easy, and secure.

Information explaining the secondary transfer process will be circulated to families through their child's primary, junior or middle school at the beginning of September.

Before making an application, parents and carers are strongly advised to read the information on our website thoroughly and where possible, attend school open events to help them make their preferences. Information outlining all the secondary and upper open events was distributed in July and is also available on the online school directory

at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolsdirectory

All the information you need to know about the secondary transfer process is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

On Street Electric Vehicle charging scheme

Subject: LEVI - new and replacement sites in your Ward

Dear Councillors,

Thank you for your feedback to the recent LEVI Members Consultation.

Your inclusion in this email means that :

1. a **new site** has been located in your Ward for your consideration, and/or
2. a previously proposed site in your Ward has been excluded based on technical feasibility and/or your consultation feedback and an **alternative site** is now proposed for your consideration

Please submit your feedback, referencing the site address, to the HCC EV Strategy Team via evstrategy@hertfordshire.gov.uk and feel free to copy me in.

Hertfordshire adds 51km to public rights of way network as updated map goes online.

Whether it's following an ancient Roman road, exploring woodland trails or discovering a new route close to home, residents can now access the most up-to-date picture of Hertfordshire's public rights of way network online.

The county has added a net 51km of public rights of way over the last decade, with the newly published Definitive Map and Statement recording almost 500 legal changes since 2015.

The updated online map brings together these additions and improvements, helping walkers, cyclists, horse riders and outdoor enthusiasts explore around 3,200km of routes across Hertfordshire.

Home to approximately 5,600 public rights of way, Hertfordshire's network connects towns, villages and green spaces throughout the county. Some routes follow historic Roman roads and ancient highways, including sections of the Icknield Way, one of Britain's oldest roads. Public rights of way provide valuable opportunities for recreation, active travel and access to nature, supporting Hertfordshire County Council's commitment to helping residents lead active, healthy lives while improving access to the county's natural environment.

Interest in Hertfordshire's countryside network continues to grow, with the county's online rights of way Google map receiving 5.3 million views. The mapping layer can also be downloaded to Google Maps on mobile devices, making it easier for residents and visitors to navigate routes while out and about.

Among the new routes to discover are:

- More than 9km of new and improved rights of way on the Tyttenhanger Estate between Ridge and London Colney, including routes around Willows Activity Farm and Willows Lakes.
- A 3.5km bridleway through Hoddesdon Park Wood and Broxbourne Woods, added following evidence of longstanding public use.
- A network of well-used routes within Park Wood in St Michael Rural.
- The Old Bourne in Ardeley, described by rights of way officers as one of Hertfordshire's most challenging footpaths and a rewarding countryside walk.

The updated publication includes 96 map sheets and more than 5,000 individual path statements covering public rights of way throughout Hertfordshire. Every new or upgraded route included in the Definitive Statement has a recorded width, helping to protect and preserve public access for future generations.

Residents can view the working copy of the Definitive Map and Statement online at:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/row

Interactive mapping is also available through Hertfordshire County Council's Rights of Way mapping service:

<https://webmaps.hertfordshire.gov.uk/row/row.htm>

Ofsted praises Hertfordshire's "relentless ambition" for children and families

Children and young people in Hertfordshire are benefiting from high-quality support and care from Hertfordshire's Children's Social Care services, with Ofsted praising the county council's "relentless ambition" to help children thrive and achieve their potential. Inspectors found that children in the council's care make very good progress, with most receiving the right support at the right time.

Following its latest inspection of Hertfordshire County Council's Children's Services, Ofsted highlighted the council's strong leadership, dedicated workforce and continued focus on

improving outcomes for children and families. The report recognises sustained progress since Hertfordshire's previous Outstanding inspection and praises leaders for their unwavering ambition for children and young people.

Inspectors praised the council's work to help families stay together safely wherever possible and the high-quality care and support provided to children in care. The report highlights services such as Building Bridges, which helps more children return home safely, and recognises the council's success in ensuring more children can live in stable homes close to their families, communities and support networks.

Ofsted also highlighted how children's voices are helping to shape services across the county and commended the positive culture created by leaders, where staff feel valued, supported and able to build lasting relationships with the children and families they work alongside. The report identified a small number of areas where services can be strengthened further, including improving some multi-agency processes and expanding housing options for vulnerable care leavers. Inspectors noted that council leaders had already recognised these issues and were taking action to address them.

Eric Buckmaster September 2026