

# Widford Parish Council

## Minutes of the Widford Parish Council Ordinary Meeting Tuesday 27th January 2026 at 7.30pm in Widford Village Hall



PRESENT: Cllr Mike Allen (MA) Chair; Cllr Ian Collins (IC); Cllr Andy Djemal;  
Cllr Mark Rome (MR); Cllr Josh Warren (JW)

Three members of the public, County Cllr Eric Buckmaster

Clerk: Colin Marks, Clerk to the Parish Council

The Chairman welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7.30pm.

**ACTION**

**26.001 To receive and approve apologies for absence**

1. Councillors: None – all present
2. Others: Neighbourhood police; Gilda Deterding;

**26.002 Declarations of Interest and requests for dispensations**

**1. Interests**

None declared. Noted: Cllr Mike Allen has an interest in Playing Field matters, being a trustee. Noted: Cllr Ian Collins has a DPI because his wife has the Closed Churchyard maintenance contract.

**2. Dispensation requests:**

None

**26.003 Approval of Minutes**

**RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 are a true and accurate record.** The Chairman signed the Minutes

**Clerk/  
MA**

**26.004 Police report**

The police report for December was received and noted for Widford and neighbouring parishes:

WIDFORD: No reported crimes  
WARESIDE: 1 x residential burglary (abandoned property)  
HUNSDON: No reported crimes  
MUCH HADHAM: 1 x theft

**26.005 Chairman's announcements**

The Chairman said he had no announcements to make, but hoped everyone had enjoyed the Christmas season.

**MA**

**26.006 Reports by County and District Councillors**

No District report received.

County Cllr Eris Buckmaster's written report was received and is included as an appendix to these Minutes. Cllr Buckmaster drew attention to items including the Traffic Management Strategy, the HCC budget, road maintenance, the cost of Social Care as a proportion of the County budget, cost constraints affecting SEND, and local Flood Management schemes. He also said that he was supporting increased signage at the old railway bridge where regular accidents continue to be an issue. In response to this, a comment was made that it appears no matter how much indication is given of the dangers posed by the sharp bend, drivers continue to approach the bend at a speed from which they cannot keep control.

Cllr Buckmaster also reported that he had attended the recent Rural Police Forum where fly tipping and hare coursing were recognised as ongoing criminal activity.

26.007 Planning

1. New Applications:

NONE	
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2. Decision Notices. For information only, the following were noted:

3/25/1455/HH	<b>15 Benningfield Road:</b> Two storey side and single storey rear extension, front porch extension, removal of chimney and installation of permeable driveway.	<b>GRANTED</b>
3/25/0231/FUL	<b>Wilmoor:</b> Demolition of outbuilding. Erection of dwelling, landscaping and creation of access.	<b>GRANTED</b>
3/25/0182/FUL	<b>Youngs Little Acre:</b> Retention of a welfare unit and a turkey preparation building. <b>APPEALED</b> <b>Ref 25/00060/REFUSE</b> <i>It was agreed that the Clerk get more information about the enforcement action that is being implemented.</i>	<b>APPEAL DISMISSED</b>
3/24/1495/FUL	<b>Land at Bourne Lane :</b> <b>APPEALED</b> <b>Ref 25/00043/REFUSE</b>	Appeal awaited
3/25/0901/OUT	<b>Priory Farm:</b> Outline application with all matters reserved except access for the demolition of the Doe Shed and erection of single self-build dwelling and associated infrastructure.	Awaited
3/25/0480/OUT	<b>Land South of Levenage Lane:</b> Outline planning for 8 houses.	Awaited
PL/0470/25 (CC0480)	<b>Widford JMI:</b> Replacement roof to modern part of the building in order to remove RAAC and associated alterations to the roof etc	<b>GRANTED</b>

Clerk

1. Other planning matters, including items received too late for the agenda: **NONE**

1. Late applications: NONE
2. Land for sale and Bourne Lane access. Ongoing concerns and action regarding the land and access in question. Keep this as a running agenda item until the matter is resolved.

26.008 Finance

1. Report of the Council's accounts at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

<b>Finance Summary to 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Opening cashbook balance 30<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>44,279.68</b>
Plus: income to 31 <sup>st</sup> December	265.65
Minus: expenditure to 31 <sup>st</sup> December	<u>6,399.97</u>
<b>Balance available to Council at 31<sup>st</sup> December (cashbook balance)</b>	<b>38,145.36</b>
Unpresented cheques/payments	<u>0.00</u>
<b>Bank balance: reconciled with bank statement at 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b><u>38,145.36</u></b>

**RESOLVED: that the Accounts Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025 be approved as presented..**

2. Bank reconciliation 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

Cashbook balance £38,145.36 Unity Bank balance £38,145.36

**RESOLVED: to agree the bank reconciliation as presented.**

3. Performance vs budget at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

The Clerk's detailed report on the performance vs budget to 31<sup>st</sup> December was received.

Income: Budget £18,565 Performance to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec £18,436

Expenditure: Budget £29,962 Performance to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec £15,972

The income/expenditure surplus to 31<sup>st</sup> Dec is £1,614 against -£11,397 deficit budgeted.

Summary: Opening cashbook balance 01/04/25	£35,939
Cashbook Income to 31/12/25 Gross	£18,436
Cashbook Expenditure to 31/12/25 Gross	<u>£16,230</u>
Cashbook balance 31/12/25	<u>£38,145</u>

**RESOLVED: The performance report to 31<sup>st</sup> December be accepted as presented.**

Itemised details of the 2025/26 performance against the budget may be viewed on the Parish Council website, <https://widfordparishcouncil.gov.uk>

#### 4. Budget and Precept 2026/27

The Council considered the budget and precept proposal for 2026/27 that was presented by the Clerk. This also contained a forecast for 2027/28 and 2028/29.

The 2026/27 budget income was agreed at £1,025.

The precept was set at £18,375, which is a 5% increase on the £17,500 for 2025/26.

Therefore the total budget income is £19,400.

The 2026/27 budget expenditure was agreed at £29,665 net of reclaimable VAT

The forecast bank balance at year-end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 is £30,283

The forecast bank balance at year-end 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 is £20,018

The budget includes extraordinary expenditure for purchasing and setting up the new Archive in the church and related set up and ongoing archivist costs totalling c. £7,500

The budget also includes £450 increased audit costs, £7,850 various village maintenance costs, including litter picking and verge maintenance, and £2,400 in grants to parish related causes.

Itemised details of the budget may be viewed on the Parish Council website, <https://widfordparishcouncil.gov.uk>

**RESOLVED: To approve the 2026/27 budget and precept as presented.** The Clerk, Chairman, Clerk and two councillors signed the EHC precept form.

#### 5. List of payments.

**RESOLVED: to approve the list of payments as presented by the Clerk**

*All expenditure made under the General Power of Competence.*

		Gross	VAT incl
Rackline Ltd	Archive cabinets pro forma 50% deposit	<b>2,878.20</b>	
Clerk	Salary December	<b>495.60</b>	
HMRC	PAYE	<b>123.80</b>	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	<b>30.36</b>	
Mrs J English	Litter picking December	<b>150.00</b>	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge December	<b>6.00</b>	
Mrs J English	Litter picking January	<b>150.00</b>	
Clerk reimburse	SLCC Membership 1/3rd	<b>84.33</b>	
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive Find My Past annual subs	<b>169.99</b>	
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive Google Play annual subs	<b>79.99</b>	
Clerk	Expenses December/January	<b>18.65</b>	
Clerk	Salary January	<b>495.40</b>	
HMRC	PAYE	<b>124.00</b>	
HMRC	Employer's NIC	<b>30.36</b>	
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive Preservation Equipment Ltd	<b>111.30</b>	18.55
Helen Giles reimburse	Archive eHive annual subs	<b>92.10</b>	
TEEC Ltd	Hosting website annual fee	<b>194.39</b>	32.40
Widford Village Hall	7 Council meetings 2026	<b>182.00</b>	
Unity Trust Bank	Service charge January	<b>6.00</b>	
<b>Recoverable VAT included</b>			<b>£ 50.95</b>

**26.009 Village Archive**

**1. Rackline order update:** 50% deposit has been paid to secure the quoted price. It is with the PCC to advise Rackline when delivery can be received, anticipated to be sometime in the Spring.

**2. Update on other Archive costs etc from Archivist Helen Giles:**

**1. Archive Event**

The *Back to Skool* event takes place on Saturday, the 7th of February at the Village Hall, featuring panels on the school's history (using information from the archive and the school's archive), tables of photographs, a table of items from Epping Forest District Museum for handling, crafts, activities, and refreshments. I have also recorded memories of former pupils and teachers; these will be available to listen to at the event and will later be added to the Widford Archive as digital files. This event is made possible with funding from the Friends of Widford Church.

**2. Parish Council funding support**

In addition to the annual support from the council, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for providing additional funding for the following to take place this year:

**Cataloguing of the Widford Archive**

**Budget: £4,500, Spent to date: £0**

The archive has never been catalogued fully (only partially digitised). Cataloguing it will ensure we know what we have and where it is. This is really important, especially as the archive moves to its new home in the Church vestry and becomes more accessible to people. This has not started yet, but time has been set aside for this to begin soon.

**Collections Management Software**

**Budget: £90 per year, spent to date: £90**

This is to enable cataloguing. The software is a secure, web-based programme called E-hive, used by museums and galleries worldwide.

**Equipment and materials**

**Budget: £1,430, spent to date: £113**

An Accessions Register and some archival labels have been purchased so far to aid with cataloguing the collection.

The Rackline storage units (for the archive in the church are also on order, although this is being handled by Dinah Findlay, as it relates specifically to the Church project.

**3. Widford News articles**

The archive is used monthly for Widford News magazine articles. This will continue this year, with plans to also share the articles on the Widford Community Group Facebook page for residents who don't receive the magazine.

*Helen Giles, Archivist - January 2026*

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

- Station bridge wall accident
- Places for People invitation to join the Gilston CWG workshop for Villages 5 and 6 (26.007.3.3)
- Letter from Chris Hinchliffe MP re the Government's position on road safety proactive measures (26.012.2.3)

**26.011 Village Reports**

**1. Village Hall**

1. No issues to report. The small hall is currently being redecorated.

**2. Playing Field**

1. The Chairman reported that the annual Boxing Day hockey match was a great success, being very well attended and raised about £175. The recently grass cut provided an excellent playing surface. The Chairman made an appeal for volunteers

**MA**

to step forward to join the Playing Field Management Committee, which is currently reduced to just two members.

**3. Allotments**

1. There were no issues to report.
2. The feasibility laying on of mains water continues to be investigated. The cost of making a formal application for a quote is £213, with the anticipated cost being around £17k. There is no suitable access nearby that would enable a metered spur to be fitted; the pipe would have to be run from Benningfield Road. The Parish Council said it would consider paying for the application, but all other costs would be down to an allotments committee. The ongoing cost of the water supply would also have to be taken into consideration, the Clerk advising that other parish councils typically pay £400-£500 a year for allotments water. Cllr Ian Collins has asked that someone else take on the allotments portfolio in May. IC

**4. Closed Churchyard.**

1. No issues to report. The wall/fence in the south-west corner will need to be tidied. IC/MA

**26.012 Highways, Footpaths and byways**

**1. Footpaths and PRow.**

1. Allotments footpath gate and ditch: Work remains to be done; a working party will be formed when the weather improves in the Spring. Cllr Andy Djemal offered his help. IC

**2. Highways and footways**

1. Update on Enforcement issues by Greenacres: No update on the situation. MA
2. Another accident at the old railway bridge was noted; referred to in 26.006 - Cllr Eric Buckmaster's report above.
3. Noted: The letter from Chris Hinchliffe MP re the Government's position that proactive road safety measures should be considered by the Highways Authority and that the local authorities have the power and the funding to carry out interventions to mitigate accident risk.

The Clerk was asked to write to HCC to press for the illegal access close at Bourne Lane close to the B1004 junction to be addressed and the kerb reinstated. Clerk

**3. Other parish matters and concern**

1. **Defibrillator management.** No issues raised

**26.013 Benningfield Green**

1. Grass maintenance has been agreed. MA
2. No parking issues to report

**26.014 Change to .gov.uk domain and email address.** The Chairman said his new address has been set up. Cllr Ian Collins asked the Clerk to raise a ticket with TEEC on his behalf since he can't get access, having crashed the system. Cllr Josh Warren asked the Clerk to resend him the setting up procedure. ALL  
Clerk  
Clerk

**26.015 Urgent matters and other matters received too late for inclusion on this agenda:**

- The white Nether Street railings have again been damaged, creating an obvious safety risk, and they need to be repaired asap. It was noted that if the railings were steel rather than cast iron, they would be much easier and cheaper to repair. Cllr Eric Buckmaster to be involved in taking this forward with HCC, who own the railings. The railings are unprotected but are identified in the 2011 Conservation Area Appraisal (page 26) as making an important architectural and historic contribution to the street scene. Clerk/  
MA

*The meeting suspended at 8.27pm for public comments.*

*No comments were made and the meeting was restored to order at 8.28pm*

**26.016 Items for future agendas:** None raised Clerk

**26.017 Date of next meetings – all in the Village Hall**

Ordinary Parish Council Meeting Tuesday March 3rd at 7.30pm

April 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Parish Electorate (not a Parish Council meeting); May 5<sup>th</sup>; July 7<sup>th</sup>; September 8<sup>th</sup>; November 3<sup>rd</sup>; January 5<sup>th</sup> 2027

Clerk/  
MA

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.

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

**APPENDIX A**

**E Buckmaster County Councillor Report January 2026**

**Update on Gilston Schools Planning**

20 forms of entry needed

Aim is for development to provide all of its education needs

Education review Panel meets and plans are shared with the Design Review Panel

Expected first primary to be ready for first occupation in village one using HIG money and design work was undertaken. This was assuming Village 1 would be ahead of village 7.

However, Village 1 first occupation currently projected early 2030, while Taylor Wimpey believe they can have first occupations by early 2028, which may be optimistic. However Education Planners need to be flexible and provide whichever comes first so from February requests for capital funding will be going through the relevant panels and cabinet to draw down the S106 funding when required

All of the villages when built will have 3 forms of entry except V5 which will have 2

First Secondary to be as reception reach year 7 so 8 years after opening of first primary

In the interim they have had discussions with John Warner secondary school about taking students as they arrive through the development until the Gilston secondaries start to come through.

**Eastwick Hall Lane**

The programmed works have all been completed. If any resident has issues with the condition of the Highway, it now has to be fault reported through the Fault Reporting system, and then it will be triaged by Ringway as per the normal procedures.

**Speed Management Strategy consultation.**

Please see a link to a survey regarding views on Hertfordshire County Council updating our Speed Management Strategy (SMS) (2020), which provides a consistent approach to setting speed limits in the county.

**Speed Management Strategy | Let’s Talk Transport for Hertfordshire**

The SMS provides the benchmark against which Hertfordshire County Council decide on how new speed limits are set as well as whether physical road calming measures are required and which would be appropriate.

We receive several hundred requests each year from residents and stakeholders to reduce speed limits. Each request is assessed against the SMS to determine whether a reduction is appropriate. It is therefore important to hear from our partners and stakeholders about their views on current speed limits in the county as well as understanding and developing the processes the County Council should follow for setting new speed limits.

This survey is intended for key stakeholders, and we would be grateful if you could help share it with relevant contacts, such as residents’ groups or local businesses.

By completing this survey, you will help shape how Hertfordshire County Council sets future speed limits across the county.

**Hertfordshire launches first Local Nature Recovery Strategy following record-breaking public engagement**

Hertfordshire’s first Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been published marking a

landmark step in our commitment to restoring and enhancing nature across Hertfordshire and playing our part in the restoration of nature across England. A 'nature summit' will be held in January to formally launch the strategy and share plans for the delivery for the strategy. Priorities include improving habitats for species like swift and water vole to increase biodiversity and create a more resilient natural environment for future generations. It will guide projects that benefit both people and wildlife, while supporting efforts to tackle climate change. Developed over two years by the Hertfordshire Nature Recovery Partnership (HNRP), chaired by Hertfordshire County Council, the strategy sets out a shared vision and identifies priority areas for investment and action, including protecting our ancient chalk streams. The partnership brings together organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, working closely with land managers, citizen scientists and local communities. Everyone can play a part in supporting nature's recovery whether they manage acres of land or a small garden, so public engagement has been at the heart of this process. Hertfordshire had over 70 sites put forward by local landowners for inclusion in the LNRS and achieved the highest number of LNRS consultation survey responses nationally with 751 survey responses from residents, organisations and community groups.

**Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27-2028/29**

**Issue**

- On 17 December 2025, the Government published the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 – 2028/29.
- This sets out allocations for local authorities across England for the next three years and incorporates an updated distribution of resources following the conclusion of the Fair Funding Review 2.0.

**Summary**

- The 2026/27 provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is the first multi-year settlement in a decade. It states that £78 billion will be made available for council services in 2026/27 with council's 'core spending power' due to rise to more than £84 billion by 2028-29.
- Council tax rises will continue to be capped at 3% per year with an extra 2% allowed for adult social care.
- Further plans on how the Government intends to manage SEND deficits will be set out in the final settlement, expected in early 2026.
- Implications for Hertfordshire are currently being analysed and we will update Members as soon as possible. Previous modelling had indicated that the Government's new methodology could result in a headline cumulative reduction in our grant of around £50m a year.
- In their response to the provisional Settlement, the County Councils Network recognises that some of its Member councils will receive an increase in government grant funding but others will see a reduction. It also notes that at least 90% of county and unitary councils' increase in 'core spending power' will be derived from the presumption of annual maximum (5%) council tax increases.

**Hertfordshire County Council has published its draft budget for the next financial year which outlines how the council will spend £1.2 billion on services**

**Hertfordshire's residents, businesses and visitors rely on every day.**

Highlights from the proposed 2026/27 budget includes additional funding for key services including:

- £21 million to provide high quality residential and home care to our older and more vulnerable residents, helping to meet the rising demand and costs of care workers' pay (increasing to £42 million and then £62 million by the third year).
- £23 million to meet the needs of the growing number of older people and adults with disabilities who need our support (increasing to £45 million and then £67 million by the third year). This will help to recruit and retain people into the adult care workforce and pay for hundreds of thousands of hours of care and support that residents rely on day in and day out.
- £16 million to support the children in our care and children with disabilities through

adversity by creating stable homes for them to live in and enabling them to build relationships which equip them to thrive into adulthood and achieve their aspirations.

- £1.4 million increase in fostering allowances so children in our care can live in safe, caring homes close to people they know.
- £6.3 million to improve opportunities and outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) by recruiting more Educational Psychologists and staff in teams reviewing children's needs, enabling stronger collaboration with families.
- £1.5 million over two years to make roads safer by rolling out new 20 mph zones in our communities where residents tell us they want them. Together with a new more efficient use of existing resources, this will enable the delivery of nearly 200 new 20 mph zones.

We are among the worst affected by the Government's new funding formula for councils which cuts our funding and takes away over £40 million in grant funding a year by 2028/29.

A further £55m in savings on top of the £42 million delivered this financial year and grow our income by £12 million

Current proposals put forward by the council present a headline budget that requires the use of £5m of reserves in addition to having to raise Council Tax by 2.99 per cent plus 2 per cent to support Adult Social Care in April.

#### **Your Tree Our Future scheme**

Thousands of Hertfordshire residents collected free trees as part of the 'Your Tree Our Future' scheme, helping to make the county greener and more sustainable. This year's scheme saw 94,000 trees claimed across Hertfordshire 25,000 more than last year. The overwhelming response shows just how committed our county is to create a healthier environment for future generations.

#### **County council rolls out award-winning assistive technology**

Hertfordshire County Council is rolling out its award-winning assistive technology for Hertfordshire residents to use at home.

The technology, called Data Inspired Living, has been used by the county council's social care teams since 2024, and won an Innovative Social Care Solution Award last year at the LGC Awards. Now the system is being made available for residents with a presenting need but not known to social care, and their carers to use at home, thanks to a collaboration with Herts Careline.

The cutting-edge assistive technology pulls together data from a range of smart sensors like smart plugs and motion sensors around the home into a dashboard that family or carers can access. If something unusual happens, like missed medication or reduced movement, the smart system promptly alerts family or carers of any changes so action can be taken.

Data Inspired Living is a discreet system that does not record sound or video and is designed to help residents aged 18+ maintain their independence at home whilst providing peace of mind for those who care for them.

The technology costs just £10.50 a week thanks to a subsidy from the county council and includes access to the Herts Careline Telecare Service. The council will assess the presenting needs of the person to decide which aspects of the offer is suitable for installation and agree with them and their carers what will be monitored. The agreed sensors are then installed in the home, and a dashboard is set up to help monitor their routine.

#### **Hertfordshire unitary proposals consultation set for February**

The Government is set to consult on plans to replace Hertfordshire's existing councils with a smaller number of unitary authorities, with the seven-week consultation starting in February. As a reminder the preferences expressed for the number of unitaries across Hertfordshire was: two voted for 2 unitaris, three for 3 unitaries, six for 4 unitaries.

#### **Traffic Management problems caused by utility works**

I wrote to the Cabinet member Hertfordshire Highways as follows....

I understand you are in discussion with utility companies regarding the way traffic management is undertaken and issues arising. The problem is particularly prevalent in Sawbridgeworth which sits in between Harlow and Bishops Stortford on the A1184. The traffic management companies

employed by the Utilities are frequently thoughtless over the timing and positioning of signage and barriers, and often causing confusion to drivers and congestion in the wider network. An example is where Road Ahead Closed signs are placed in locations giving a misleading perspective of which road is actually closed. This can cause town centre businesses to have appointments cancelled and therefore a loss of trade. I know you are familiar with the wider problem of traffic management remaining in place far longer than is required to cure the reinstatement of the surface.

These matters are increasingly visible on social media which serves to multiply the feeling of frustration.

I have a really good working relationship with the Network Management East team. They are always so helpful and responsive, but their job is made so much harder by the inefficiencies of the Utility companies and their contractors. Our local press are picking up on this.....

#### **Flooding and Drainage updates**

**Stanstead Abbots Slowing the Flow at Cappell Lane** Nine new leaky dams have been constructed by our contractors Ground Control at Cappell Lane, Stanstead Abbots. The dams are located in an ordinary watercourse upstream of Cappell Lane, and have been built mostly using material from the surrounding woodlands to reduce the environmental impact of the project.

Leaky dams are structures that can be installed across watercourses to help store more water upstream and 'slow the flow' of water during a heavy rainfall event. Unlike traditional dams, leaky dams are designed to still allow some water through. However, the flow of water is slowed down to help reduce the likelihood of flooding downstream. As well as helping to hold back floodwater, leaky dams also provide new habitats for wildlife.

This project has been led by the FRM team over the past 1.5 years, so we are delighted to see it come to completion. Whilst this particular ordinary watercourse is dry for a lot of the year, it has contributed to property flooding in the past. We are hopeful that this natural flood management scheme will help to reduce the impacts of flooding during future rainfall events.

As part of this project, we will also be monitoring data from the leaky dams to learn more about rainfall in this area, see how rainfall might be impacted by climate change, and assess the performance of the leaky dams. We hope that this information can further our understanding of flooding and be used to support similar projects.

#### **Hunsdon Alleviation Scheme**

The team have found a product we believe could be provided as part of the flood kit to act as a barrier in front of driveways. This product is not currently on the market, but we are working with the providers to ensure we can secure it as soon as possible. We hope that this will be within the next couple of months. waiting on an update from our Highways team on these works.

- Following this, works are planned to bring the culvert to a maintainable condition. This will include any identified civil work that is needed on the ordinary watercourse.
- Finally, it is hoped that work to re-line sections of the watercourse where it is a brick culvert will be carried out next financial year. However, this is dependent on all other works being carried out.
- Clearance works were carried out on the watercourse in December.

**Flood Kits in Communities** Hertfordshire County Council is expanding its Flood Kit pilot scheme Hertfordshire County Council . The second phase of the scheme is still open for communities to sign up. You can register for the scheme here: [Hertfordshire Flood Kit Application form](#)

#### **Bullfields Sawbridgeworth**

Near the Funeral Director there were planned Gully and Vactor Works for 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> January. There will be traffic management signals 09:30 to 15:00, ie outside of school drop off and pick up. This will involve CCTV. I have also seen that Ringway are publishing a further closure which may be for any follow up work. In addition Outside 52 Bullfield Thames Water have:

- Replaced collapsed sewer
- Repaired defects
- Rebuilt a manhole chamber

### **Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service trials body-worn cameras amid rising reports of abuse.**

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service have launched a trial of body-worn cameras to enhance safety and operational effectiveness, following a concerning rise in reports of abuse towards staff.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, the Service recorded 22 reports of violent incidents, including verbal and physical abuse directed at firefighters and support staff. This represents a sharp increase from the previous year, when 12 incidents were reported, a rise of 83%.

As part of the trial, body-worn cameras have been issued to crews at Hemel Hempstead and Stevenage Fire Stations, along with Prevention Officers across the county and the Business Fire Safety Team. The Service plans to introduce body-worn cameras across all Hertfordshire fire stations by early 2026.

As well as acting as a deterrent to abusive behaviour, the devices will capture valuable footage which can be used for:

- post-incident reviews
- providing evidence for investigations
- capturing decision-making during critical incidents
- learning and development across the organisation.

### **Hertfordshire County Council powers ahead with new EV Chargepoint rollout**

Thousands of new electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints will soon be installed across Hertfordshire after the county council appointed three leading chargepoint operators to deliver a major infrastructure programme backed by over £6 million in secured grant funding.

The rollout marks a major step in delivering on Hertfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan commitment to growing a greener Hertfordshire, making EV charging easier, fairer and more reliable for residents and businesses.

Working in close partnership with district and borough councils, the council has already identified priority areas across the county where residents lack off-street parking.

**This year's report, along with new dynamic features built on web powered by ESRI's ArcGIS StoryMaps, makes it easier than ever to provide a deep dive into the latest travel trends and patterns.**

**8.5% of households owned a fully electric vehicle in 2025**

**This is one of many insights in the newly published 2025 Traffic and Transport Data Report (TTDR). In addition to the conventional PDF version, you can now also discover the interactive web version of the full report at:**

**<http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/TTDR>**

### **East Herts District Matters**

**Next steps for setting the council budget for 2026/7** East Herts Council has begun the process of scrutinising and agreeing proposals to set a balanced budget for the year ahead. At a meeting of the Executive on 13 January, councillors considered an initial draft of the budget proposals, which sets out plans for a gross spend of £45 million to deliver vital local services in 2026/27.

To balance the books, the council has had to find savings or generate additional income to close a £890,000 budget gap.

### **Old River Lane Planning Application Available To View Online, Public Comments Encouraged**

Plans submitted by developer Cityheart for the regeneration of Old River Lane in Bishop's Stortford are now available to view online, with comments from the public being encouraged.

The planning application outlines an ambitious redevelopment project that will see the Old River Lane area transformed into a multi-use, town-centre destination. The Old River Lane scheme proposes to provide hundreds of new homes as well as enhanced public spaces and new community facilities in the historic town centre.

The planning application has been submitted following a public consultation that took place in June 2025, which saw local residents and businesses contribute to the outlined masterplan.

Please click the button below to view and comment on the planning application for Old River Lane.

[View and Comment On Old River Lane Plans](#)

**How to borrow a thermal imaging camera for free Borrow a Thermal Imaging Camera for Free This Winter**

East Herts District Council, in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, has launched a new Thermal Imaging Camera Loan Scheme in Winter 2025. The initiative will enable residents to borrow a thermal imaging camera free of charge from their local library. The scheme is designed to help households identify where heat may be escaping from their homes, highlighting insulation gaps, draughts and other areas where energy efficiency improvements could be made.

**A reminder to never bin your batteries Never Bin Batteries**

After Christmas, many of us are clearing away decorations with flat batteries or opening new toys and gadgets. It's important to remember that batteries should never go in household bins.

Loose batteries or batteries hidden inside small electrical items such as vapes, can be crushed in bin lorries, causing sparks and serious fires. Lithium batteries are especially dangerous because they release their own oxygen, making fires harder to extinguish.

Please remember:

Never bin batteries, vapes or small electricals

Always recycle batteries separately from household waste and recycling

Find your nearest battery recycling point by visiting [Recycle Your Electricals](#) and using their online locator.

**Eric Buckmaster January 2026**

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