



HAVE AN 'ICE TIME'

IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

FROM THE LEADER



What a year it's been! As 2023 draws to a close we're getting ready to celebrate the festive season across our district (see page 19 for festive events near you). But the festivities don't end with the close of the year because in 2024 North Herts turns 50! We're asking you to share your memories of the district from the last 50 years to help us celebrate everything that makes our area special (see page 4 for all the details). We can't wait to hear from you.

We're also changing how we elect councillors. From May 2024 you'll be able to vote for all 51 councillors who represent your area every four years – for more on this see page 10. You don't just get to have your say once every four years as we run regular surveys and consultations year-round so you can tell us what you think about

council services and let us know what you want to see in the future. Turn to pages 8 & 9 for how you can shape the future of Churchgate, our Active North Herts leisure survey results, joining our Climate Hive and more!

Cllr Elizabeth Dennis – Leader of the Council

We know the cost of living continues to rise and are committed to helping you Ease the Squeeze this winter. There are social hubs across the district opening their doors to provide warmth, activities and a space to chat. And we've got lots to keep you physically and mentally healthy over the winter months including free outdoor gym equipment and men's clubs at our leisure centres (see pages 12 & 13).

This year we launched our innovative Community Investment Fund,



Cllr Elizabeth Dennis

Cllr Ruth Brown

Photo: Rebecca Stewart

available for local charities and not-for-profit organisations to invest in additional capacity and provide even greater support to our communities. To find out how we can help you, and more on our other grants see page 5. And if you know a local community here, it's time to nominate them for our North Herts Heroes Awards (see page 4). North Herts is brimming with people who do fantastic things to help their communities and these awards are the perfect opportunity for us to recognise and celebrate those who go above and beyond every day in our district.

Cllr Ruth Brown - Deputy Leader

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CONTACTING NORTH HERTS COUNCIL

Most North Herts Council services can be accessed online. Find out the date of your next waste collection, apply for a licence, report an issue, register to vote or pay a bill, all through our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk



OTHER WAYS TO CONTACT US:

Phone: 01462 474000



www.facebook.com/northhertsDC



[@NorthHertsDC](https://twitter.com/NorthHertsDC)



[@northhertsdc](https://www.instagram.com/northhertsdc)



[north-hertfordshire-district-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-hertfordshire-district-council)

- North Herts Council is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our services easy for all residents to use. If English is not your first language or you have difficulty reading this document please contact us to discuss how we may be able to assist you.

Please call: 01462 474000, or email service@north-herts.gov.uk
Textphone (for textphone users) on: 01462 474800



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“ Putting our people first and delivering sustainable services, to enable a brighter future together. ”





Help this winter

Hopefully the cost of energy won't be as high this year as last year, but we know the cost of living is still an issue and affecting lots of our residents.

If you are struggling and need help, please contact us, your housing provider or Citizens Advice North Herts. If you are in crisis, please call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.

Save money on food

If you feel you need access to a food bank you will need to be referred by a frontline professional like a doctor, health visitor, social worker, or Citizens Advice. If they think you need emergency food, they will give you a food bank voucher. There are other food provision services across the district offering 'rescued' food that is perhaps past its best or just surplus to requirements, but still perfectly edible. Please visit www.north-herts.gov.uk/food-providers-north-herts

There are lots of top tips and recipes for saving money and tackling food waste at home via WasteAware's Worth Saving campaign: www.wasteaware.org.uk/worthsaving.



And if you haven't already, it's time to dust off your slow cooker or take advantage of an air fryer as energy efficient ways of batch cooking and using up what's in your fridge! Visit www.north-herts.gov.uk/squeeze for recipe ideas.

Bus travel

The government has extended the bus fare cap to the end of 2024: a single fare – including on HertsLynx, the book-and-ride service – costs no more than £2 on most routes across Hertfordshire (please check with individual operators as some, e.g. in Royston, are not participating in the scheme). Day and season tickets are also cheaper with new SaverCard discounts. HertsLynx is now available until 11:30pm on Fridays and Saturdays. More info at www.intalink.org.uk.



Heat the human, not the home

Martin Lewis' Money Saving Expert team continues to provide the latest information about the cheapest ways of keeping yourself warm,



rather than your whole home. www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/heat-the-human-not-the-home-save-energy. This guide provides all the options from hot water bottles to electric blankets, their initial cost and the cost per hour.

Citizens Advice North Herts

This independent local charity works hard to offer free, confidential and impartial information and advice on a range of issues including benefits, debt, budgeting, housing, relationships and employment. They provide face-to-face advice in Letchworth and Royston and have expanded their outreach services in Hitchin and Baldock as well as some rural villages thanks to some council funding. They also provide advice via email, telephone and video call.



For further information about anything on this page and more, we regularly update our Easing the Squeeze residents campaign at: www.north-herts.gov.uk/squeeze





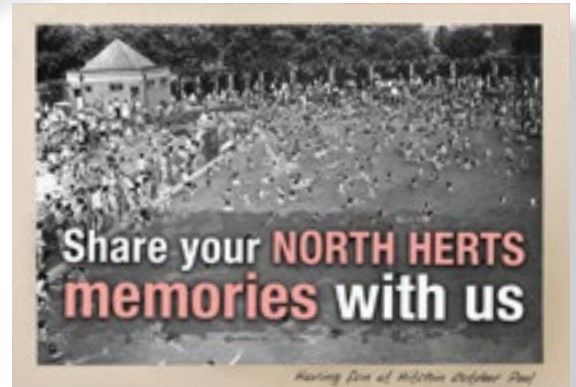
North Herts memories



**Are you, your business or event 50 next year?
Did you move to North Herts in 1974 or have you got a special memory of a particular place, view or building in North Herts from the last 50 years that you love and feel should be celebrated?**

We'd love to hear your stories, see your photographs and old videos so we can showcase 50 years of North Herts across our channels and at North Herts Museum. This campaign forms part of the launch of the North Herts Place Narrative 'bringing communities together', a shared vision of North Herts created by the people of North Herts including residents, businesses, voluntary groups, charities and politicians.

Cllr Elizabeth Dennis, Leader of the Council, said: "It's people that make North Herts and we want to celebrate North Herts Council turning 50 and to 50 years of our communities coming together and making North Herts the special place it is. We can't wait to hear people's 50th memories!"



How to share a memory:

Use the special form on our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk/memories or pop into North Herts Museum, Brand Street, Hitchin – we've set aside every Thursday morning in December, 10.30am-12.30pm for you to share your memories with us. We look forward to hearing your memories.

Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January



Holocaust Memorial Day takes place internationally every year on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp.

It's a time for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

Ahead of next year's memorial, we're inviting local people to submit poems of a maximum of 200 words,

inspired by this year's theme – Fragility of Freedom – **by 12 January.**

The writer of the winning poem will receive a book voucher and be invited to read their poem at our event on 26 January.

Get involved

If you would like to enter a poem or have any queries, please email community@north-herts.gov.uk

You can watch a live stream of our event on 26 January on our YouTube channel from 1pm.



Recognising local people in our community

Do you know a North Herts hero?

Is there someone special you know that has made a real difference in your local community? Perhaps an eco-warrior or exceptional young person?

We want to hear from you by 7 January for the 2024 North Herts Heroes.

Find out more: www.north-herts.gov.uk/awards



Council grants help communities grow



Over **£12,000** has been awarded to more than **10** community groups across North Herts so far this financial year, helping to keep residents of all ages entertained, healthy, fit and safe.



Offley Parish Council

£610 towards two much-needed benches to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III

Headway Hertfordshire

£1,000 towards running peer support group sessions for those over 18 affected by an acquired brain injury

North Herts 50 Plus

£884 to help advertise for new members and pay for minibus hire for outings

Kimpton Parish Council

£1,000 towards refurbishing Kimpton Pavilion

Strathmore Fun Club

£1,100 for additional equipment including toys and art and craft materials

Christchurch Baldock

£1,325 towards their holiday club, toddler and baby groups and Body & Soul weekly classes



Therfield, Reed & Kelshall Sports Association

£1,500 towards rainwater harvesting equipment and resurfacing of car park

The Sadie Centre

(formerly The Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living)

£1,700 for a defibrillator

Holwell Parish Council

£1,928 towards the cost of tables and chairs for the new Holwell Pavilion



Friends of Brandles

£1,950 to buy gardening equipment for an outdoor adventure classroom at Brandles School in Baldock

North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum

£2,000 to help fund a multicultural event to celebrate their 25th anniversary

Small community grants are available from our five area forums.

For more information visit: www.north-herts.gov.uk/grants





Low impact physical activity

Royston – Mondays 1.30-2.30pm
at St Marys Church Hall

Starting 15 January 2024:
Knebworth – Mondays 2.15-3.15pm
at St. Martins Parish Centre

Fun and friendly lower impact physical activity sessions. No booking required, just turn up!

For more information contact
healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474111

£2 per session
cash on the day



Healthy Hub

Wednesdays 10-11am
at Market Hill Rooms, Royston.
Book via www.ticketsource.co.uk/north-herts-district-council
or email
healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474111

Sessions to include cooking, crafts, music, dance and play



Fun cooking for pre-schoolers with Creative Chefs

Hitchin free monthly taster sessions
Friday 19 Jan, Friday 16 Feb, Friday 15 March
9.30-10.15am at Christchurch Hall
Book via www.ticketsource.co.uk/north-herts-district-council
or email healthyhub@north-herts.gov.uk / 01462 474111

Letchworth weekly sessions
Thursdays 9.15-9.45am
at Mrs Howard Memorial Hall - £6.50 per child book via
angie@childrenscreativechefs.co.uk / 07887 573798

Knebworth weekly sessions
Wednesdays 2.15-2.45pm
at St. Martins Parish Centre. £6.50 per child book via
angie@childrenscreativechefs.co.uk / 07887 573798



Take a brain break

Baldock weekly creative wellbeing group
Wednesdays 2-3.30pm – Free session

Royston weekly creative wellbeing group
Wednesdays 2-3.30pm – Free session

A weekly craft session with drop in artists who offer activities like pottery and memory book making.

For more information contact
zoe.mckeating@mindinmidherts.org.uk
carlie.leete@mindinmidherts.org.uk
03303 208100



Herts Careline
Because independence is important

Did you know that we have an award-winning community alarm, telecare monitoring and response service across Hertfordshire which is called Herts Careline? Herts Careline support thousands of residents to live more independently and safely in their own homes by providing community alarms, pendants and telecare services 24/7, 365 days a year.

Our recent Customer Satisfaction Survey results are a testament to the team's dedication and commitment. It's heartening that many customers are finding the service such a positive help and source of support in their lives. Here are some of the highlights:

Peace of mind for my family

I feel safer when home alone

What do you value the most about your assistive technology service?

They answer quickly when I need help

Knowing if I fall, I can get help

Peace of mind, especially at night



Find out how Herts Careline can help you by calling 0300 999 2 999 today

Help on hand, 365 days of the year including Christmas

Herts Careline supports over 16,000 residents across the county, with emergency support and advice available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including Christmas Day and New Years Day.

help by providing pendant alarms, temperature sensors, fall detectors, door sensors, smoke detectors and epilepsy monitors to help you or your loved one live more independently in their own homes.

As the cold and wet weather approaches, we often find older relatives and even ourselves more susceptible to illness and vulnerabilities and Herts Careline can

Get in touch today www.care-line.co.uk 0300 999 2 999 to see how we can help you.

Join in December and receive an early Christmas present from us to put on your tree.



We have recently joined forces with The British Red Cross to support our mobile response service.

Our technician's vans are now also equipped with defibrillators for use in an emergency under the instruction of 999.



Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to give us their feedback since the last edition of Outlook magazine. Your feedback is important to us, and we really appreciate your views.

Here's what you've told us in the last few months regarding being more active, combating climate change and your thoughts on the future of the Churchgate shopping area of Hitchin.

Earlier this year, we launched a consultation to find out how we can better support you to move more and enjoy being active for life. We wanted to find out how often you use council sports, leisure and physical activity facilities, the types of opportunities you would like to see in the future and what support you needed to become more active.



87% of the 574 residents who responded told us that they wanted to be more physically active and the remaining 13% told us that they were classified as 'inactive' (doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week).

You told us that:

Activities that you would like to participate in to increase your levels of physical activity are:

Walking (55%), swimming (47%), exercise classes (43%) and yoga/Pilates (40%).

The main things that would help you become more physically active are:

Lower-cost activities (47%), improved walking and cycling routes (46%), more locally based facilities & activities (45%), and a broader range of activities (41%).

The three main barriers to being more physically active are:

Difficult to find the time (46%), it's too expensive (36%), and a lack of suitable activities (33%).

The council's priorities in supporting you to become more active should be:

- To support more opportunities for residents to be active in local places such as parks, community centres and village halls (48%).
- To help increase awareness of what activities and facilities are available (42%).

Cllr Steve Jarvis, Executive Member for Environment & Leisure, said: "Thank you to everyone who responded. We've used your valuable feedback to create an Active North Herts Strategy and are currently working alongside our leisure partner and other providers across the district to create a vision and action plan. We'll share this with you in 2024."

Churchgate Regeneration



Project Update



Illustration: Katie Duffett

Thank you for participating in our survey earlier this year. Your feedback has been instrumental in guiding the progress of the Churchgate regeneration project and will really help us transform the area into a vibrant and thriving hub for our community.

Visit our new online Churchgate Hub

We are excited to announce the launch of the Churchgate Hub, an online platform for all things Churchgate. Keep up to date with our latest survey results, project milestones and progress updates and make sure you have your say in the future of Churchgate. Subscribe today at www.north-herts.gov.uk/churchgate

Maintenance updates

While we continue to work on the Churchgate regeneration, we are pleased to report that essential maintenance work is being carried out on the existing premises within the shopping centre. We are working alongside managing agent, Brown & Lee, to carry out essential roof and pavement repairs, as well as upgrading the walkway lighting. These improvements aim to enhance safety, accessibility, and the overall aesthetics of the Churchgate area.

Christmas at Churchgate

Experience the charm of Churchgate and discover a range of local businesses to make your festive season truly special.

Visit the new Shop Small Pop Up at 37 Churchyard Walk this Christmas. Open for six weeks only, it will be packed with small independent creatives ready for all your Christmas shopping needs!



Have you joined yet?

We take climate change really seriously and know you feel passionately about climate-related issues too, so we've created a space where we can share ideas and learn from what others are doing to combat climate change in North Herts. It's called the North Herts Climate Hive and many of you have joined the conversation already.

Since we launched it earlier this year, you've already told us:

- 60% of you are interested in helping Nature – and we've shared details of the 'Nextdoor Nature Hub' on the Climate Hive, a great resource for ideas on helping nature and wildlife in your community.
- You already have many Climate-related events organised. From tree & hedgerow planting, to local litter picking and larger events such as Royston's Sustain-Ability.
- You're using reusable water bottles/coffee cups and making use of water fountains, recycling, using active travel, planting trees and organic gardening to live more sustainably.
- Your thoughts on how we can be a Net Zero district by 2040, including management of precious water sources and the North Herts chalk streams, investing in renewable energy initiatives and improving the active travel networks.

As we enter the Winter season, we'd like to know:

- **What measures have worked best for you in terms of saving energy at home?**

Has using different types of curtains, heating your home at certain times of the day and using electric heaters helped you?

- **How you plan to make your Christmas more sustainable?**

Do you use recyclable wrapping paper, a re-plantable Christmas tree, take unwanted gifts to your local charity? We'd love to know where you buy your sustainable Christmas items from!

Just go to www.north-herts.gov.uk/climatechange to join our Hive and share your ideas. We look forward to continuing to work together for a Net Zero North Herts by 2040.



North Herts May 2024 Elections



On Thursday 2 May 2024, elections are taking place in all wards of North Herts Council.

At these elections, you will need to bring photo ID to be able to vote at a polling station. A wide range of photo ID will be accepted, including passports, driving licences and cards with a PASS Mark.

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID, you can apply for a free voter ID document known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

Visit electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID, call **0800 328 0280**, or scan the QR code to find out more.

- You may have a change to your local polling station, as we have recently conducted a review of polling districts and places and some have changed.
- Your Poll Card will detail your polling station, and we also have a polling station finder tool on our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk/polling-stations
- If you are unable to vote in person at your polling station, you can apply to vote by post.
- You can now apply to vote by post online, please visit: www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote
- Alternatively, you may apply to vote by proxy (appoint somebody to vote on your behalf). Please visit www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote



Please visit: www.north-herts.gov.uk/voting or follow our social media channels for Election updates between now and the 2 May 2024.



Council meetings

Please check our website for details of upcoming council meetings: www.north-herts.gov.uk/meetings

You can also find out more by:



Calling: Customer Services on **01462 474000**

Visiting: your local library to use their computer



Monthly Community surgeries

Come and meet your local councillors at our monthly community surgeries. Ask for advice, tell us your views and enquire about local authority services.

Hitchin:

10.30 – 12noon, first Saturday, Town Square, Hitchin.

Royston:

10-11.30am, second Saturday, every other month, Market Hill.

Letchworth:

10.30 – 12noon, third Saturday, Garden Square Shopping Centre.

Baldock:

10.30 – 12noon, last Saturday, Tesco, High Street, Baldock.



Filming boost for North Herts

North Herts Council has joined forces with experienced location managers at Fame Pro to provide a one-stop-shop for all filming opportunities in North Herts.



On our behalf and at no cost to ourselves, Fame Pro will attract filmmakers, production companies and the creative support industries to North Herts and encourage them to use our range of fantastic locations.

Fame Pro will provide a one-stop-shop to all filming requirements, working with ourselves, partnering authorities, locations and suppliers

TV and film generate huge exposure often giving locations and destinations further publicity creating more visitor interest.

to ensure the correct permits are in place and that the production runs as smoothly as possible. Their extensive experience and contacts within the sector will provide us with new opportunities for TV & Film production companies to use our many assets for filming.

Visit England have released data which demonstrates that one in five people decide where they are going on holiday based on a film, TV location or because of screen based marketing. We hope by increasing filming in the area, it will increase our profile as a visitor destination and follow in the footsteps of other destinations in the UK benefitting from film tourism.

We've already had a wealth of filming taking place across the district – My Policeman, Dr Foster, Tell Me Everything and of course the Worlds End. We want to

expand on this even further and encourage more potential film and television productions to come here and put North Herts firmly on the map!

Filming brings economic and tourism benefits, and can create jobs for local crews, as well as local businesses across the supply chain.

This is something we don't want North Herts to miss out on.

We have also published a Code of Practice, which outlines the general requirements and the protocols expected from production companies to ensure that standards and consideration by all parties is a priority in order to keep any potential disruption to a minimum.

To enquire about filming in the district and browse our locations, visit: www.north-herts.gov.uk/filming

TELL ME EVERYTHING



Film crews descend on Hitchin and Letchworth for the second series of Tell Me Everything

You may have spotted film crews descending on Hitchin and Letchworth back in August and September, to shoot scenes for the second series of Tell me Everything, a popular ITV teen series, set to air sometime next year.

Tell Me Everything is set in Welwyn Garden City, and the first series premiered on ITVX in December last year.

Locations included Windmill Hill, Hitchin Town Hall, Broadway Gardens and Mooboo Bubble Tea in Letchworth.

Broadway Gardens featured in the first series. Carla Woodcock, who played Zia, said at the time: "There was a day where we had to run into the fountain. That was fun until we got into the fountain. I didn't realise quite how cold it was going to be. It was freezing! Luckily we only needed a few takes."



Book
Now!



Skate

LETCHWORTH

OPEN UNTIL SUN 7 JAN 24

Glide on the ice this festive season at Letchworth Outdoor Pool! Our real ice rink is back for Christmas, the perfect way to celebrate with family and friends.

www.sll.co.uk/skate



Soft Play

Get ready to Play Wild with our jungle themed soft play! We run sessions for children under 10 years, to swing, slide and climb across three floors, with dedicated areas for under 3's and under 5's.

North Herts Leisure Centre

Sessions bookable in-centre and on the app!

www.sll.co.uk/north-herts/soft-play



SLL

COUNCIL ROLLS OUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COURSES



North Herts Council has launched a series of free and low-cost physical activity courses across the district in a bid to improve residents' health and activity levels.

The sessions will take place at our leisure centres and local parks.

Take a look at the list below and see what takes your fancy. More details available at: www.sll.co.uk/active-communities



| North Herts Leisure Centre, Letchworth | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Activity | Description | Cost | Dates |
| Mens Club  | Improve your physical and mental health in a friendly, supportive environment. | Free | 12 & 19 December 7pm-9pm 13 & 27 February 7pm-9pm 16, 23 & 30 April 7pm-9pm |
| Walking netball  | A slower version of the game; it is netball, but at a walking pace. | £4 per session | Every Thursday 1-2pm |
| Walking Football  | A fun and safe way for players to enjoy football and socialise together. | £4 per session | Every Thursday 2-3pm |
| Archers Gym, Hitchin | | | |
| Activity | Description | Cost | Dates |
| Outdoor yoga  | Strengthening and stretching with a peaceful meditation. Bring your own mat. | Free | 7, 14, 21, 28 March 4, 11 April 1.30 – 2.30pm |
| Super Seniors Outdoor Fitness  | Low impact circuits session with the use of free weights and your own body weight. | £2 per session | 8, 15, 22 March 5, 12, 19 April 10.30 – 11.30am |
| Royston Leisure Centre | | | |
| Activity | Description | Cost | Dates |
| Men's Club  | Improve your physical and mental health in a friendly, supportive environment. | Free | 9 Dec 11.30am to 1.30pm 13 Jan, 20 Jan and 27 Jan 11.30am-1.30pm |
| Outdoor Blast  | Brand new outdoor multi-station fitness class. | Free for members, £2 to non-members | Monday's 12.15pm-1pm Friday's 9.30-10.15am |
| Winter Wellbeing Walk  | Suitable for everyone and if you complete all 8 walks in your walking passport you can earn one FREE swim at Royston Leisure centre. Short or long walk available. | Free | 8 weeks from 18 January 1.15pm |
| Buggy Blast  | A fun and effective outdoor class designed for mother and baby to exercise together. | £2 per session | 5,12,19,26 March 2,9,16,23 April 10.30-11.15am |



Check your Christmas collection days and help us maximise our festive recycling!

The Festive period is nearly upon us so time to check your all-important collection days. Look out for your Christmas bin hanger, visit our website: www.north-herts.gov.uk, or scan the QR code with your phone's camera:

Don't forget there will be no garden waste collections for two weeks after Christmas so we can prioritise the collections of your refuse and recycling bins.



New Year's recycling resolutions

The beginning of a new year is a time when many of us set goals or intentions for the year ahead, so what better time to make some resolutions around recycling! Recycling saves 18 million tonnes of CO₂ a year, and there are lots more great reasons to recycle as well. If you're drawing up your New Year's Resolutions for 2024, here are a few to add to your list...

1. I will... get to know the recycling symbols



Take some time to get to know the different recycling symbols this January and you're all set for recycling through the year ahead! For the full list, visit: <https://bit.ly/3SD3Pgx>

2. I will... recycle one more material



You're probably already doing a great job with your recycling, but there's always one more material you can recycle! Foil, for example, is one of those things a lot of people aren't sure whether they can recycle – but the good news is that you

can in North Herts. Just check it's clean, scrunch it into a ball and pop it in your recycling bin.

3. I will... start a compost heap



Recycling food waste via your kerbside food waste collection is one way, but if you have a garden, you can make your food waste go even further.

You'd be surprised just how much you can compost: veg peelings, banana skins, teabags, loo roll tubes... the list goes on! Don't put cooked food, meat or fish in your home compost though – these however can go in your food waste caddy.

4. I will... put the right things in my recycling bin



You could be the most eager recycler in the world, but if the stuff you're recycling ends up in the wrong bin, it will all have been in vain! It also needs to be clean, dry and loose for it to be recycled.

5. I will... recycle materials from all over my home



Recycling is easy enough to do when it involves simply putting something into a different container at home. But what about the things that can't be included in your regular kerbside recycling? This year, take your recycling to the next level by resolving to recycle the hard-to-recycle stuff as well. For example many supermarkets will accept plastic bags and wrappings that cannot be included with your mixed recycling. or donate unwanted textiles to your local charity shop.

If you're ever not sure whether something can be recycled, check out our handy A-Z guide. www.north-herts.gov.uk/what-goes-each-bin

Recycling saves 18 million tonnes of CO₂ a year, and there are lots more great reasons to recycle as well.



Plastic bag and wrapping recycling trial in Knebworth

Around 2,200 households in Knebworth are part of a pilot project to recycle plastic bags and wrapping from the kerbside, also known as flexible plastic packaging or soft plastics.

The council has been chosen to take part in a fully funded project to test the collection of plastic bags, confectionery wrappers, foil lined packaging, plastic film and bubble wrap, as part of our current fortnightly recycling collections.

At present, the only way to recycle plastic bags and wrapping is at supermarket collection points.

Cllr Amy Allen, Executive Member for Recycling & Waste, said: **"We are delighted to be part of this exciting pilot to extend what we collect from the kerbside. All being well with this initial trial, we hope to expand to more properties next year, and eventually the whole district."**

Please recycle your paper in the blue box

Did you know you could help keep the costs of the recycling and waste service down by filling up your blue box with paper?

Unfortunately paper is regularly being thrown away in non-recyclable waste (purple) bins or in mixed recycling (grey) bins. But if the paper has been kept separately from other recycling in the blue box, and free from contamination

such as food waste residues, it is considered higher in quality and worth considerably more money.

Paper is one of the easiest things to recycle, everything from magazines, brochures, junk mail, catalogues and newspapers, to printer paper and white envelopes (even with windows).

Please recycle brown envelopes (even with windows) with your cardboard.

Council campaign supports residents in saving up to **£720 a year**

We're supporting the #WorthSaving initiative from Hertfordshire's WasteAware Partnership which aims to tackle the issue of avoidable food waste by encouraging residents to follow a 'four steps to save' food waste journey to develop better habits.

The 'four steps to save' plan provides advice and guidance on planning, shopping, storing and eating which will give those wanting to cut down on their food waste the information and tools needed to do so.

By signing up to receive hints and tips on making the most of your food via email for five weeks and taking part in two quick surveys, you could win a cooking experience and meal out, courtesy of WasteAware.

To find out more and enter the prize draw, visit: www.wasteaware.org.uk/worthsaving



Christmas treerecycling



5th - 10th JAN

Book your collection by 2nd January, midnight.



Register online

www.ghhospicecare.org.uk/trees
01462 679540

Sponsor:



Registered Charity No. 295257

If you pay for your garden waste collections, you can place your real Christmas tree next to your brown bin on the first scheduled collection in the new year.

Christmas

IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree...

How lovely are thy branches! While local towns usually arrange their own Christmas lights, the council helps fund Christmas trees across the district.

We provide grants for all four main towns – Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock and Royston – towards a Christmas tree. We also donate a Christmas tree to Garden House Hospice which is on display in their Lights of Life garden in Letchworth.

When you're finished with your real Christmas tree please recycle it – details of the Garden House Hospice treecycling scheme are on page 15.



Do you wanna build a snowman?

Unfortunately we can't make it snow this Christmas, but you can see our special snowman Lord Sugar, painted by local artist Sarah Graham (pictured above), in Market Square in Hitchin, next to the Christmas tree.

The giant sculpture was part of last year's Snowman trail produced by Wild in Art in collaboration with Penguin Random House Children's and sponsored by local developer Cala Homes. There were 12 snowmen across the town each based on a line from 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', with Lord Sugar depicting '10 lords a-leaping' and adorned with sweets, Sarah's trademark subject matter.

Shop local this Christmas



If you haven't done all your Christmas shopping yet, have you thought about shopping local?

There are many benefits, with research revealing that for every £1 spent with a local independent business, between 50p-70p circulates back into the local economy.

So, by heading to your local high street or town centre at any time of year, and supporting local businesses and markets, you'll be contributing to a better community.

Benefits include:

- Unique local produce
- Personal shopping experience
- Boosting the local economy
- Reducing our carbon footprint
- Preserving the heart and soul of your community

Read about Christmas at Churchgate in Hitchin on page 9!



New chef at Hitchin Town Hall & Museum



Developing event catering at Hitchin Town Hall, along with driving sustainability initiatives at the museum café and Bancroft Kiosk, will be top of the menu for our newly appointed Catering Manager, Bela Kocsis.

Bela has a wealth of experience from a host of UK restaurants and chains, along with a stint at a five-star hotel in Budapest. Originally from Hungary, he has since settled in Hertfordshire and is very excited about his new position.

Bela said: "I really like the variety of this role, being in the kitchen as well as managing and dealing with customers. We're looking at doing more catering for big events and functions in-house, which includes weddings and Christmas parties, cooking for 100-plus people instead of using external caterers as much as we have done previously."

Bela still likes to cook at home and has shared his goulash recipe with us!

Winter warmer Hungarian goulash

A stew of meat and vegetables seasoned with paprika

Serves approx. 4-5 people

- 750g beef shank or neck or stew meat
- 3-4 Spanish onions
- 1 tomato
- 1 sweet (yellow) pepper
- 2-3 tablespoons of Hungarian sweet paprika powder
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon of black ground pepper
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsnip or parsley root
- 2 medium potatoes
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground caraway seeds

- Salt to taste
 - 2 tablespoon of vegetable, canola or sunflower oil (you can also use lard instead of oil)
1. In a large pot, sauté the onions in vegetable oil or lard over low heat, stirring frequently, until translucent. Do not let them burn. Salt lightly to help tenderize them. The onions should be cut into very, very small pieces. This is essential to achieve the "stew consistency". Add a small amount of water if necessary, to keep them from sticking to the pan.
 2. Remove the pot from the heat, add 2 tablespoons of sweet paprika and stir. The onions should be red (not orange), so if needed add more paprika. Return to heat but do not burn the paprika, or it will become bitter. Add the tomatoes, the sweet pepper and the meat, and stir again.
 3. Add the bay leaves, the pepper, and about 6 cups of water. Salt to taste. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until meat is tender, adding water as necessary. It takes about 1.5-2 hours.
 4. Add the peeled, sliced carrots and parsnip, the ground caraway seeds, and the minced garlic. Salt to taste. Cover, bring back to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer. Add the potatoes when the vegetables are half tender and cook until the vegetables (including the potatoes) are tender.



Hitchin sparkles thanks to council grant

Christmas lights are shining bright in Hitchin thanks to a one-off grant of £2,000 from the council's Area Forum.

The money will go towards the cost of replacing the Christmas lights to improve the festive display in 2023 and beyond.

Tom Hardy, Hitchin BID Manager, said: "We are pleased that North Herts Council has recognised the importance of our Christmas lights in the town centre. They play an important part in the vibrancy of the area during the festive season and this grant will go a long way to ensure the lights are enjoyed for years to come."

Cllr Ian Albert, Hitchin Area Forum Chair, added: "This grant will provide a much-improved light display which, in turn, will support the retail and hospitality sector during what is one of their most important trading periods."



Think council, think bins? Then think again!

North Herts Council is full of people who have chosen to work in local government because we want to help others and make a difference to our local community.

As you'll see in this magazine, we're at the heart of the places we live, work, shop and exercise in and are responsible for shaping and maintaining the services and facilities the North Herts community use every day.

Whether you're just starting out after college or looking for a change in career, we have a huge range of roles here at the council, with great pension benefits, flexible working, ongoing development, an active Inclusion Group and a friendly social club.



Make a difference to your local community today: visit www.north-herts.gov.uk/jobs

Thinking about a career change?

We're recruiting:

- Police officers
- Police Community Support Officers
- Staff roles

In retail, hospitality, out of education or coming back to work after a break?

You've got skills we need.



Find out more and apply now:
www.herts.police.uk/workforus
Follow us @hertspolice



HERTFORDSHIRE
CONSTABULARY

Prevention First

HITCHIN TOWN HALL

Christmas Fair
Sunday 10 December,
12pm-4pm

Join us for a family-friendly afternoon full of Christmas spirit, with more than 30 craft stalls selling all kinds of beautiful, handmade gifts. Santa will be paying a visit for the kids and there'll be a bar for refreshments and café open for snacks.

Entry is free but donations to Garden House Hospice Care are warmly welcome.

Kids Christmas Disco
16 December, 12-2pm and 3-5pm

Bring your little elves along to our snow-tastic Christmas Disco! Get your costumes at the ready for an afternoon filled with fun and games!
www.hitchintownhallevents.com/whats-on

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

Secrets of the Stores - Christmas Toys and other items from our collections
Saturday 9 December, 11-12pm

See some toys gifted to children over 100 years ago, handle classic toys and flick through items from our archive. No need to book, it's free, just drop in and find us in the galleries.

ARTIST ROOMS
Diane Arbus Exhibition
Running until
25 February 2024

A rare opportunity to see the work of Diane Arbus (1923-1971) one of the great figures of 20th century photography.
Admission free.

A Taste of Christmas Past – Food Talk (please book)
20 December, 7.30pm

Throw the turkey out the window and step back in time to discover Christmas dinner. Tasting samples included.
www.northhertsmuseum.org/event

LETCHWORTH

Christmas Market at Standalone Farm
9 and 10 December

A fun-filled festive market complete with music, food and shopping perfect for all the family. Book tickets:
www.standalonefarm.com

Aladdin at Broadway Cinema & Theatre
Thursday 14 to
Sunday 17 December

This year's pantomime includes song, dance, laughs, slapstick comedy and an outrageous surprise or two... A magical ride for all the family. Book tickets:
www.broadway-lechworth.com

The Nutcracker – The Royal Ballet, Broadway Cinema & Theatre
Sunday 17 December, 2pm

Discover the enchantment of ballet with this sparkling festive treat for the whole family. Book tickets:
www.broadway-lechworth.com

Reindeer in the Wynd
Sunday 23 December,
11am – 3pm

An exciting opportunity to meet Santa's reindeer in the Wynd!

HITCHIN

Christmas at Woodside
8, 9 and 10 December

Hitchin Thespians' traditional Christmas concert, with Christmas carols, familiar favourites and festive songs. Enjoy a complimentary mince pie and glass of mulled wine during the interval.
www.hitchinthespians.org.uk/events

Hitchin Ghost Walk
Wednesday 13 and
20 December, 7pm

Meet at the Hitchin Information Centre for a spooky look into the ghosts of Hitchin's past! Discover many chilling tales on this 75-minute, mile-long atmospheric and nocturnal exploration of Hitchin's historic town centre.
www.hitchinherts.shop for tickets.

ROYSTON

Nutcracker Christmas trail
Running until 17 December

Find the 12 festive nutcrackers hidden in the town's shop windows for the chance to win some amazing prizes!

Saturday 16 December Christmas Market

Royston's regular Saturday market but with some Christmas cheer! Mulled wine, free cakes and a raffle prize draw, with prizes donated by traders.

BALDOCK

The North Pole Elves, Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre
Sunday 10 December,
11am-noon and 1.30pm – 2.30pm

Imajica Theatre Company present a magical interactive children's show: Elves, Sparkle and Tinsel, work for Mrs Claus. Their job is to collect as much Christmas Cheer as they can as this is what powers the magical toy making machines!
Tickets £8: www.ticketsource.co.uk/baldockartsandheritagecentre

WHAT'S ON

2024 Edition

EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

To book tickets visit:

northhertsmuseum.org

ARTIST ROOMS

Diane Arbus Exhibition

Running until 25 February 2024

A rare opportunity to see the work of Diane Arbus (1923-1971) one of the great figures of 20th century photography. **Admission free.**

Strange happenings in Hertfordshire: Over a century of unusual stories

31 January, 7.30pm

Our collection of local newspapers record many a strange tale, from an escaped wolf shot near Hitchin to a Baldock man's plan to raise the Titanic.

Tour of Museum

15 February, 10-11am

Book today and join us for an exclusive tour of our galleries, with just a small group on each tour, you will be able to get an in depth look at the history of our district.

Tudor Life in Britain: The good, the bad and the ugly

28 February, 7.30pm

What was life like in Tudor Britain? This talk will look at clothing, food and furniture for clues to how they lived their lives.

Royston Country Market
Every Wednesday and Friday,
8am the Corn Exchange

Baldock Beast Multi-terrain half marathon.

Sunday 24 February. Visit

www.baldockeventsforum.org.uk
for details

HITCHIN TOWN HALL

Soul Brunch

21 January, 11.30am-3.30pm

Grab a glass of prosecco and your choice of food from our buffet before enjoying uplifting music from the Soul Music Collective, a five piece band. Over 18s only.

Drag Brunch

11 February, 11.30am-3.30pm

Grab a glass of prosecco and your choice of food from our buffet before enjoying a fun-fuelled afternoon with plenty of comedy and entertainment from Flick the Drag Queen, including musical bingo! DJing by MKFsounds. Over 18's only.

80s vs 90s Disco

23 February, 7.30pm-1am

Our popular 80s VS 90s disco is back once again to battle it out! Party all night long to classic anthems from some of music's best decades. Over 18s only.

Kids Easter Disco

Saturday 6 April

Join us this Easter holiday for Hitchin Town Hall's egg-citing Kids Easter Disco. Hop on down with your baby bunnies and enjoy a fun-packed afternoon filled with music and games.

To book for tickets Hitchin Town Hall events visit:

hitchintownhallevents.com

LETCHWORTH

Letchworth's Lives and Landscapes exhibition at Broadway Gallery

Running throughout January

Bringing together the best of the Garden City Collection's art works to tell some of the most interesting stories surrounding Letchworth's unique heritage.



Leonard
Cheshire

Meet and greet open mornings at Symonds House, Lucas Lane, Hitchin. 11am to 1pm, second Thursday of every month from 11 January onwards.

Contact: 01462 452460 / sally.brett@leonardcheshire.org

BROADWAY CINEMA & THEATRE

-book tickets at

www.broadway-lethworth.com

Dear England – National Theatre Live

Thursday 25 January,
Thursday 1 February and
Saturday 17 February

Joseph Fiennes (The Handmaid's Tale) plays Gareth Southgate in James Graham's (Sherwood) gripping examination of nation and game.



Vanya – National Theatre Live Thursday 22 and 29 February

Andrew Scott (Fleabag) brings multiple characters to life in Simon Stephens' radical new version of Chekhov's Uncle Vanya.

Cool Marble! The Art Society North Herts presents an essential Guide to Greek Sculpture

Thursday 1 February,
11am to 12.20pm

£7, no need to book, www.theartsocietynorthherts.org.uk
for more information.

