District Council Notes

## Letchworth Update

The work of the council does not stop over the summer, although it does slow down a bit. I have now attended sessions of each of the committees on which I sit: Southern Rural, Overview and Scrutiny, as well the first meeting of the full council in this, its fortieth year civic year. I have also undertaken various sessions of training and induction, and am now inducted into the mysteries of everything from governance, to planning to IT. The planning training was of great interest, as it is very relevant for understanding the implications of the long-awaited Local Plan. Although I am not a member of any of the committees at the District Council concerned with planning, I take a close interest in all applications which may affect Knebworth and continue to be a member of the Planning Committee on the Parish Council.

## Knebworth Fun Day

Knebworth residents, being British, were not deterred by the wet weather over the final weekend of the Knebworth Festival. The Fancy Dress Competition took place with only slightly reduced (and slightly damp) numbers. Rosemary Conybeare and I were called to judge the entries. Years 2, 3 and 4, which had succeeded in forming the biggest group by the tactic of combining their members into a single entry, were clear winners from a strong field which had, inevitably, a World Cup inspired theme.

## Solar Farm Application

An application is currently being considered to build a solar farm on Swangley's Farm, to the East of Knebworth. This will cover fifty acres and have a peak generating capacity of around 10 MW. There will, undoubtedly be a great deal of discussion about this in the village between now and October of November when a decision will have to be made by the planning authority on whether to approve the application. Full details of the application are available on the NHDC Planning Portal.

## KPIG

It is hoped that the Knebworth Parking Initiative Group (KPIG) will spring back into life in the next month or so. The first issue that we will tackle is the lack of parking in Pondcroft Road and Milestone Road, which have been particularly affected by commuter and other parking displaced from Park Lane, Lytton Fields, Deanscroft and other areas to the west of the railway line, as well as from the St Martins Road car park. I have received a number of communications about various traffic issues in the village, including Gun Lane, Station Approach, Park Lane to the west of the A1(M), as well as Pondcroft Road/Milestone Road.

'Knebworth High St.' - i.e. the shopping area at the northern end of London Road is a particular source of concern, both because traffic can be dangerously fast, and because congestion is so bad that ambulances and other emergency vehicles may be held up unacceptably.

There is an unused lot in Gun Road Gardens which may be suitable as a place where some extra parking spaces can be found. This has been suggested by some members of the Knebworth Community Group on Facebook. If you are a Facebook user, I urge you to join the group, as it provides a valuable forum to discuss issues affecting the village.

## Knebworth Village Trust

As a District Councillor in Knebworth I am, *ex-officio*, a trustee of Knebworth Village Trust . This charity supports community groups based within the parish of Knebworth. In our meeting on the 10th July we decided to support a youth group run by the Trinity Church and the (newly amalgamated) Knebworth Football Club. To find out whether your community group could benefit from a grant from the Trust, please contact the Hon. Secretary at info@knebworthtrust.com. The application form for grants is available on their website: www.knebworthtrust.com.

## Norton Green Subcommittee

The Norton Green Sub-Committee of the Planning and Environment Committee of the Parish Council had its inaugural meeting on Independence Day, 4th July. We had a detailed discussion about the legal ownership and status of the common, which is a key issue.

This was a very useful forum in which the interlocking issues affecting the Common were identified. Members of the committee are: Rosemary Conybeare, Rosemary Pateman, Karen Robinson, James Orme-Kirby and myself, with the Clerk of the Parish Council, Claire Graham providing much-needed support.

The Parish Council would like to acquire title to the Common, which is currently held by Stevenage Borough Council. Once this is achieved, it is hoped that the management of this valuable resource, which includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest, will be improved.