**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – SEPTEMBER UPDATE**

**NHDC – In the Summer time**

NHDC full council meetings are not scheduled during school holidays to make it easier for those with school age children to stand as councillors. There are some exceptions, with the Standards Committee meeting in August (see below), and planning applications continue to be considered because of strict deadlines on the time allowed for the council to process these. Generally, the routine work of the council via the officers and staff continues ensuring that services are not interrupted, while a range of extra activities, particularly aimed at children, are run at the leisure centres and other venues through the district.

**NHDC Planning Code of Conduct**

A draft of an updated Code of Conduct for Councillors was reviewed on 12th August by the Standards Committee of which I am a member. The code makes it clear that it is essential for all members to avoid any suggestion of bias in respect of local planning applications. Many decisions are taken by the Planning Control Committee, while in some circumstances the case may be decided by a full Council Meeting, or on rare occasions be referred to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. This will not affect my ability, as District Councillor for Knebworth ward, to speak as member advocate for matters that affect Knebworth.

**Three Houses Lane Solar Farm “Called In”**

The Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government has “called in” the application for a solar farm in Three Houses Lane and confirmed that an inquiry will be held under Section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The situation is analogous to that of the application at Swangleys Lane and it is to be expected that the decision on the latter will be very significant for the Three Houses Lane application. Knebworth Parish Council is involved in the inquiry and neighbouring parish councils are also involved.

**Neighbourhood Plan Working Party – Any more volunteers?**

I have one additional offer of help towards producing a Neighbourhood Plan for all (or part of) Knebworth Parish so we are still on track to convene an inaugural meeting in the Autumn. If you would like to get involved, especially if you have any professional expertise or involvement with Planning legislation, then please get in touch with me using the contact details below.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss these or any other matters: **Steve Hemingway, Councillor for Knebworth on NHDC: steve@stevehemingway.com or phone 01438 940594 (please include STD code when dialling).**

Please contact Steve if you need his help or to share your comments, or be in touch directly with your County Councillor Richard Thake or your Member of Parliament Stephen McPartland:

* Richard Thake, Herts County Council: richard.thake@hertfordshire.gov.uk, 07973 157605
* Stephen McPartland MP: stephen@stephenmcpartland.co.uk, Stephen McPartland MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA

You can find contact details of your MEPs here: http://www.europarl.org.uk/en/your-meps/uk\_meps/eastern\_region.html