**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – JANUARY UPDATE**

# NHDC Local Plan - Preferred Options Consultation

The submissions made by members of the public to the Preferred Options Consultation, undertaken as part of the development of a new Local Plan, are now available on NHDC’s website. Every written response is available to read online - go to the page you get to by searching for '"Planning Policy Online Consultations" north-herts'.

# NHDC’s Grants Policy

A report on Grants Policy is due to be discussed at the meeting of Cabinet on the 15th December. This will be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the end of February 2016.

Grants represent a modest, but important part of North Herts District Council’s cost base, and have to be reviewed just as we review all our spending commitments. Knebworth has to pay for the upkeep of its village hall, pavilion and recreation grounds through the precept levied by Knebworth Parish Council. Voters in the towns in the District have the equivalent expenditure paid for directly by the District Council, ie through the Council Tax paid by all householders in the District. Rural grants, to a degree, compensate villages for this anomaly. For this reason, the review of grants policy is very important to us, and I will continue to argue for a fair deal for the 'parished' areas.

Under the current system, grant decisions are principally made by the various area committees of the District Council: for Knebworth this means the Southern Rural Committee, which met on 3 Dec. and awarded grants approaching £20,000 to community groups in Codicote, St Ippolyts, Kings Walden, Kimpton and Great Ashby. On this occasion, Knebworth's grants were relatively modest, a few hundreds of pounds going towards training for coaches for Knebworth Football Club, and a contribution to the cost of tree clearance on Norton Green Common.

The long-awaited Neighbourhood Plan working party is likely to hold its first meeting in the New Year. Interest in examining the feasibility of developing such a plan is growing, and we have a viable group who are interested, but if you would like to get involved, please contact me directly at the address below.

I would like to take a moment to reflect on the passing year. 2015 was a notable year with a number of major proposals put forward, most now decided, but others, most notably the development of the draft Local Plan, that will continue into 2016. Some of these could have significant impact on the village, and I hope you will continue to make your views known, and I will continue to try to reflect these in discussions with NHDC as your elected councillor.

There will be changes to your representation on NHDC as my fellow councillor, Alan Bardett, will be retiring at the end of his term in May 2016 when local elections will be held for some of the wards within NHDC including, this time, Knebworth.

I look forward to the year ahead and wish you all a Happy New Year.

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 157 605
* Stephen McPartland MP: stephen@stephenmcpartland.co.uk, Stephen McPartland MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA