# Post Office Opening

I was honoured to represent the District Council at the opening of the refurbished Post Office in St Martin's Road, Knebworth. I was delighted to be at the official opening of the open the new-look Post Office and store. This represents a major upgrade of the old post office, which has remained largely unchanged from a time before I moved to Knebworth in 1985.

Mr Mohammad Miah is the new Postmaster, taking over from Mrs Nicola Low, who had held the position for the last thirty years. She was in attendance to wish Mr Miah well and retains a keen interest in the business. Her hard work in providing such good service to the customers in Knebworth and beyond over such a long period has given her successor the best possible chance of a prosperous future.

Mr Miah has invested in this local facility, and has thereby demonstrated a real commitment to the residents of the village. Whatever happens to other shops in the village, it seems likely that residents will have the use of a local postoffice for many years to come.

Not only has the Knebworth Post Office had a physical makeover, it now opens until 6pm on weekday evenings, and until 5:30pm on Saturdays, thereby extending significantly the window of opportunity available to residents to pick up un-delivered parcels, and generally carry out their business without the need to go to Stevenage or Welwyn Garden City. By opening longer hours, other businesses in Knebworth will get the benefit of extra footfall, particularly on a Saturday.

# Notes from Gernon Road

Although July is traditionally a quiet month, the Council Meeting on 21 July covered a range of important issues, many of which will continue to affect North Herts Residents long after the current Civic Year:

* The Council is preparing to respond to recent legislation to take into account Social Value in its tendering processes. This should make it much easier for local businesses to sell goods and services to the Council,
* A report was accepted on the refurbishment of the North Herts Leisure Centre at Letchworth, costing in excess of three million pounds, which should result in significantly improved facilities there,
* the 'Corporate Objectives' which sets goals and priorities for the district until 2021, centred around *Promoting Sustainable Growth*, *Working with Communities* and *Living Within Our Means*,
* Updates to the Council Constitution, as well as:
* Reports on projects such as Churchgate, Hitchin, and the North Herts Museum and Community Facility at Hitchin Town Hall, and from the Finance Officers.

# Local Plan Updates

Various announcements were made as part of the Emergency Budget to increase the pace of housebuilding in England. This was as part of a wider strategy to improve productivity in the UK. These conceivably might have an impact on the Local Plan. Currently the Planning Strategy team at District are working very hard indeed to meet the tight timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme, but it is possible that this will slip.

# Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

I have had a small number of volunteers to get involved in examining the feasibility of developing a Neighbourhood Plan for all (or part of) Knebworth Parish. 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. If there is sufficient support I hope to convene an inaugural meeting in the Autumn. I plan to work extremely closely with the Parish Council on this.