**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – OCTOBER UPDATE**

**Swangley's Solar Farm:** I have just received notice from lawyers representing the developers of the Swangleys Lane solar PV application that they are withdrawing the application, and so the public enquiry will no longer go ahead. It is not clear why they have withdrawn, but it is possible that changes to the support for PV will have affected the viability of the scheme.

**Barclays Bank:** the Knebworth branch will close on Wednesday 16th December. The nearest Barclays branch is in Town Square, Stevenage. Many banking transactions can be carried out at the Post Office, in St. Martin's Road. It is a loss to the village to no longer have a bank branch.

**Local Plan Update:** the 8,400 responses to the consultation on the Preferred Options for the Local Plan are now available on the NHDC website. This is almost certainly the highest number of responses that NHDC has received ever. The next stage is to produce a draft Local Plan, will be done with these responses taken into account. The portfolio holder for Planning, and the Planning Policy officers are going to be extremely busy over the next few months.

**Grants:** Knebworth is a rural parish, and as such groups within it, including the Parish Council, may apply for various grants awarded by NHDC.

These include moneys from the:

* Refurbishment Fund - small to medium size improvement projects, available to Parish Councils,
* Playground Fund - grants for playground improvement projects, and the
* Environmental Improvement Fund - grants for environmental enhancement, cleansing, litter picking and the purchase of associated equipment, eg grass strimmers.

In addition, groups which mainly serve Knebworth residents may apply to the Knebworth Village Trust for a grant. There are various restrictions on all these grants. Very often a group is expected to raise 50% of the funds from its own resources, or other sources. Note that, generally, Knebworth Parish Council does not award grants, as this would duplicate the function of the Village Trust.

For grants from NHDC, contact one of the Community Development officers there (01462 474000). For the Village Trust, email the Hon Sec. at info@knebworthtrust.com.

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