**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – MAY UPDATE**

**NHDC Emerging Local Plan**

The process of producing the new Local Plan for the North Herts District is progressing. The record number of over 8,000 responses to the Preferred Options consultation last year has meant that, despite long hours of work from the Planning Policy Officers, the consideration of the comments will take until the summer and Consultation on the Proposed Submission to the Secretary of State will follow thereafter. The formal submission is expected to be made in March 2017 according to the current timetable (Local Development Scheme).

There have been some suggestions that there will be a substantial increase in the housing allocation numbers in the Emerging Local Plan. It is the case that recent revised ONS figures suggest an increase, and it is also the case that the National Planning Policy Framework suggests that sites are identified in excess of the actual need to allow for some flexibility. It is expected that there will be more clarity on this in the next weeks.

As part of the Consultation, a number of new sites have been put forward for review by the officers. They are in the process of being evaluated against exactly the same criteria that were used to select the sites that were included in the Preferred Options consultation. In Knebworth itself, three additional sites have been put forward for consideration for inclusion in the Local Plan – see http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-emerging-policy/draft-local-plan-2011-2031/local-plan-preferred (click on the text which reads "[New sites 2015 (additional sites submitted since 2013)](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/sites/northherts-cms/files/Composite%20document%202.pdf)"). All are currently in the Green Belt, so this is, essentially, a suggestion that they be taken out of the Green Belt. On the document titled "NHDC Local Plan - New Sites 2015" these sites are numbered 334, 335 and 336. They are Cnebba's Field, Old Knebworth, the land to the rear of Redwoods in Deards End Lane, and land east of Old Knebworth lane. The three sites would comprise 79 potential dwellings in all, but *only* if the sites are found to have met the criteria for inclusion. No decision on this have yet been made.

**Knebworth GP Surgery**

I am regularly asked about the status of the new GP surgery. As I understand it, a planning application is due to be made this month, assuming that the new arrangements for the Library are confirmed by HCC in a cabinet meeting scheduled for 28th April. I understand the impatience that people feel about this, but emphasise that NHDC is not responsible for the delays.

**Thank you to retiring Councillor Alan Bardett**

After serving as a District Councillor for over 14 years, Alan Bardett has decided to retire and therefore not seek re-election in this year’s elections. I would like to offer my great thanks to Alan for showing me the ropes and giving me advice when I was a new councillor only two years ago, as well as for all his efforts on behalf of our village over the many years of service.

**Annual Parish Meeting – Wednesday, 4th May**

I will be attending the Annual Parish Meeting on 4th May. Please see the article from the Parish Council for more details.

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