**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – DECEMBER UPDATE**

## **Rail Services from Knebworth - Timetable Consultation**

The consultation for the timetable for Govia Thameslink Railways is on-going but will close at 17:00 on 8th December. The proposals represent a significant change to the current service for Knebworth as the stopping trains will now all come from Cambridge (rather than alternately Cambridge and Peterborough), and become Thameslink services going into St Pancras. Most significantly, this would mean Knebworth would not benefit from the fast services as present, although there are some suggestions that GTR have already had second thoughts about this. Evenings and Saturday services may be significantly reduced and proposals also suggest that Knebworth goes back to having only one train per hour throughout the day on Sundays.

Our MP, Stephen McPartland, has made a formal response, available on his website, and the Parish Council is actively preparing one, which should be available on their website also. Full details on the proposals and how to respond are on the Great Northern Thameslink website: <http://www.thameslinkrailway.com/your-journey/timetable-consultation>

**North Herts Leisure Centre and Council Offices Refurbishment**

Work is progressing on refurbishing the North Herts Leisure Centre in Letchworth. Much of this work was essential to keep the facility functioning safely, but a new pool and cafe are included in the works. This centre, which is operated by Stevenage Leisure Ltd on behalf of the council, produces revenue for the Council, which will go up under the agreed contractual arrangements once the work is complete.

The project to refurbish the Council Offices will soon be underway. It is expected that the work will start in the next month or so, and that staff will be relocated to other offices around the area. The work is being project managed by local firm, Wilmott Dixon. All staff will be 'decanted' from the existing District Council Offices to Town Lodge over the course of this month. Town Lodge is also in Gernon Road, but opposite the Broadway Cinema.

**NHDC Planning Portal**

The council's planning portal is being upgraded, to a more functional system. This will continue to be supplied by Idox PLC., the current operator. A number of you have noticed how unsatisfactory the current system is. I encourage you to try the new one and send your feed back to me or to NHDC at service@north-herts.gov.uk.

**NHDC Parking Strategy Consultation**

The District parking strategy consultation is getting started. Town centre managers have been invited to give their views to the executive member for Policy, Transport and Green Issues. The consultation is expected to go on for several months and I will update you when I have more details.

Please contact your NHDC councillors if you would like to discuss these or any other matters:

**Steve Hemingway, steve@stevehemingway.com or phone 01438 940594 (please include STD code when dialling)**

**Steve Deakin-Davies, stevedeakindavies@gmail.com or phone 07949 435435**

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, phone 07973 157605
* Stephen McPartland MP: stephen@stephenmcpartland.co.uk, Stephen McPartland MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA