**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – APRIL UPDATE**

**NHDC Planning Matters**

We have now started the extension building season. In some cases the "building a new dwelling in one's garden" season. I have written a lot in past issues about Planning Policy, and in particular the long process of developing a new Local Plan. In this issue, I turn to the equally important topic of Planning Control.

Some residents feel inclined to object to their neighbour's planning application. This is their democratic right. Fortunately, the NHDC Planning Portal: [pa.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications](http://pa.north-herts.gov.uk/online-applications) makes this quick and easy to do. To object, you should do so via the website. An alternative is to contact Planning Policy ([[planningpolicy@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@north-herts.gov.uk)](mailto:planningpolicy@north-herts.gov.uk)) by email or letter. Please make sure you quote the reference number if you do not use the portal.

The portal has a great deal of detail about the application. It names the planning officer responsible. Note that it is the officer's job is to assess the application against the applicable planning policy. In this he will have to examine it in terms of:

* the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance: both of these can be found at: [planningguidance.communities.gov.uk](http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk)
* the current North Herts Local Plan (which including all policies which make it up, such as the Design Supplementary Planning Document, which has a section on the character of Knebworth): <http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/planning/planning-policy/local-plan-current-policy>

If you are considering building an extension, you may obtain pre-planning guidance from the officers. This is not free, but will help to avoid submitting an application which has to be refused permission.

The Parish Council is a 'statutory consultee' and examines all planning applications within the parish (and on the parish boundary) at the start of each full Parish Council meeting. If you are an applicant, or you wish to object, it is well worth going to the meeting where the application is reviewed. The agenda for each meeting is available from the Parish Council website: [www.knebworthparishcouncil.gov.uk](file:///C:\Users\Kathie_2\Documents\Kathie%20stuff\Conservatives\Campaign\Knebworth\Councillor\KPN\www.knebworthparishcouncil.gov.uk)

In the vast majority of cases applications are decided by planning officers under 'delegated authority'. There is a mechanism by which they may be decided on my elected members. If the local ward member is persuaded that there are valid planning grounds to object to an application then I can 'call it in'. It will then be reviewed by the NHDC Planning Control Committee. I am unlikely to do this if the Parish Council has no objections to it.

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