ISSUE 74 – MAR 2022

UPDATE

THE NORTHAW AND CUFFLEY PARISH COUNCIL MAGAZINE

Chairman's Welcome

Cllr Barry Knichel

At last some good news: The council have voted on a Local Plan that will not sacrifice swathes of high harm green belt land in order to meet its housing target. For the last 6 years our community have been united in their opposition to two developments along Northaw Road East and, for the moment anyway, there are no plans for these to go ahead. This is a great result and fantastic achievement for everyone who has been involved.

However, it has come at a cost.

We have had to invest in technical and legal resources to defend our position at Planning Enquiries, which normally we would absorb.

Unfortunately, with the ongoing consequences of Covid, we have lost significant revenue from our car parks forcing us to increase the precept for 2022/23 by some 50p per household per week.

Although we are always reluctant to increase this (last year there was no increase) we felt we had no choice. There are some hugely significant projects such as the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan that we need to get right and to do this we need to invest in the right resource. Given what is at stake during 2022 and beyond, we think 50p per week is worth it.

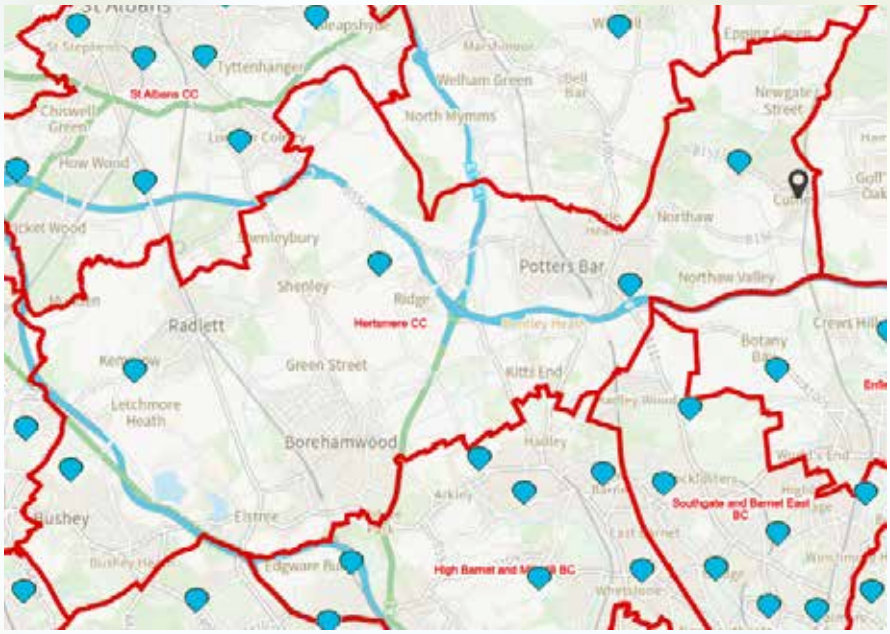

Image courtesy of Boundary Commission for England

Boundary Commission for England Public Consultation

Sally Griffiths

Consultations are currently underway relating to proposals to amend the current parliamentary constituencies, as part of the 2023 Boundary Review. The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) is undertaking a review of all constituencies in England, to make the number of electors in each constituency roughly the same by increasing the number of constituencies to 543.

Full information can be viewed at their website: **https://boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/2023-review/**

The secondary stage of this consultation is currently underway and, while the public hearings are now finished, you can still have your say until Monday, 4th April.

These can be submitted online at **www.bcereviews.org.uk/,** by email to **information@boundarycommissionengland.gov.uk**, or by letter to Boundary Commission for England, 35 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BQ.

Their recommendation is that, rather than remaining as part of the Broxbourne Constituency, Northaw and Cuffley will become part of the Hertsmere Constituency, which will also expand to include Newgate Street Village.

This change will only affect your voting district. It will not change the administrative Councils who provide your local services.

Recordings of the 32 public hearings held can be viewed at the Boundary Commission for England on their channel at YouTube **www.youtube.com/channel/UCU_kn6sSoiesdRZq9fZkhSA/**

Local Plan Update

Cllr Barry Knichel

Plan? What Plan?

The Local Plan was first published for public consultation in August 2016. Those of you who attended the early meetings at Cuffley Hall will remember that residents were very forthright on their opinion towards the proposals. Concerns about the loss of Greenbelt and overdevelopment putting further strain on roads, rail and other services pretty much fell on deaf ears. Or did they?

It's fair to say that for the next 4 years the evolution of the plan went from bad to worse.

- Housing targets (already inexplicably high) increased by 33% from 12,000 to 16,000
- Targets for towns and villages were based on a housing population basis regardless of their local restrictions and capacity
- Local consultations on the proposals failed to achieve any refinement of the proposals
- Pressure on Cuffley from developments in nearby Goffs Oak and West Cheshunt were largely diluted or ignored
- There were few Brownfield sites included so the proposals would have seen huge loss of the Green Belt

The response from Cuffley & Northaw residents was emphatic. For one of the Local Plan consultations in 2019 there were some 10,000 objections – approx 40% of these came from our 2 villages. But still the plan rolled on without any deviation or adjustment.

Then, in late 2020, the council had a change of direction. They voted to remove all 'high harm green belt' (land that was considered to contribute most to the openness of the countryside) but that also meant they couldn't meet the targets of 16,000.

What happened next was quite bizarre: several sites were removed (including 2 in Cuffley) but they still promoted a target of 16,000 homes. Eventually the gap between the target and what were considered to be appropriate sites, was narrowed to 15,200 but this still left a shortfall of some 1,000 and no sites to meet it.

The Inspector made it clear he wanted a target of 15,200 and it was up to the council to identify the appropriate locations that would accommodate it. This wasn't a negotiation this was the final number. He pretty much didn't care about the loss of green belt, his objective was to approve a plan that met the target.

Timeline for the OAN for WHBC Local Plan

Cllr Barry Knichel

2016 and the Draft Local Plan is first published. The housing target (OAN) for the borough is calculated at 12,000. The council decide to apportion this target based on current housing population. Sites that are allocated are shown in red: the Meadway 30 units, land next to Greenfields 120 units, Land on Northaw Road East 150 units. Fears grow that if the NRE sites are approved it will open up development for an additional 600 units plus loss of valuable Green Belt land.

2019 and the OAN is raised to 16,000. Its not clear why WHBC has the highest OAN per head of population in the whole of Hertfordshire but a "call for sites" goes out with the sites (in pink) put forward for selection. This adds up to some 7,000 potential units which shows just what is at stake here.

We now have a plan that is some 2,000 homes light of the Inspectors expectations at 13,277. Most observers and stakeholders would consider this to be more proportionate than the 16,000 that was for so long the councils target but popular or not it's not what the Inspector is looking for. It was never going to be accepted – the councillors acknowledged this and understand the consequences which are

- Some sites could be developed, even though they were removed from the plan, because of the lack of a 5-year housing target
- It would mean starting again and using the latest housing algorithm which would suggest a target in excess of 16,000 – perhaps even 17,000. This is currently being reviewed by central government so it may not be an issue

At the time of writing, we have just heard the Inspectors response. He is not moving from his position of expecting sites to be made available for 15,200 but is prepared to sanction, subject to a variety of conditions, a 10-year plan with a review to examine if the balance of housing would still be necessary. The really bad news is that Wells Farm and land next to it must be included as they were part of the originally submitted plan and he is not allowing the council to remove them. The decision to accept this and other conditions, still sit with the council – they can continue to hold firm or we could be the sacrificial lamb.

For those of us who have lived through this, it has been a tortuous process and its still not over. Apparently, it has cost close to £10million and had been subject to the longest running Local Plan Inquiry in the country. WHBC are blaming the Inspector who in turn, has often expressed his frustration with WHBC. In reality everyone should shoulder some responsibility – too much has gone wrong over such a long period to be the fault of just one party.

Our hope now is that the council come good on their determination to have a Local Plan that works for local people. We support this position 100% and will do whatever we can to achieve this – we always have. There are bound to be choppy waters ahead, but we have to hope that we can all work together to shape the future and continue to resist any attempts to impose unreasonable or unjustified developments.

November 2020 and January 2022 the council votes to protect the Green Belt and reduce the OAN. This means that the two contentious sites on NRE are removed and the OAN has been agreed by WHBC to be 13,277. However, the Inspector has other ideas and insisted they stay in with a housing target of 15,200. The Meadway has increased its allocation from 30 to 60 following a discovery that the road is wide enough to support a bigger development. The Local Plan could now be found unsound as it has failed to deliver what the Inspector has asked for. Its now with WHBC to decide.

Another site added to the list. Of the sites put forward the council selects the land around KGV playing fields to add to the others (170 units). The total target for Cuffley is now close to 500 homes when you take in to account smaller developments and those completed in the last 5 years. The Local Plan Inquiry is presented with the real impact of developments in Goffs Oak and West Cheshunt which have been grossly underestimated and plans to deal with traffic increases were proven to be unworkable. These are generally ignored.

Colesdale Farm gets outline planning approval for 38 homes
At the end of February, the Planning Inspector (not the Local Plan Inspector but another one) approved the building of 34 new homes on what is currently the part of Colesdale Farm that is occupied by storage units and old farm buildings. Although Welwyn & Hatfield had rejected the original application because of its green belt credentials, the inspector felt that it was better to have houses than light industrial units on the site. He also thought that there was a frequent bus route serving the site with Cuffley and beyond. He also believed the site was within walking distance of the "nearby" shops and station of Cuffley. Seems like the development will be attractive to a variety of athletes.

Neighbourhood Plan Update

Cllr Bob Stubbs

The draft Neighbourhood Plan was subject to community consultation last Autumn. Public meetings were held and the full document was made available on the Parish Council website.

The Parish Council received 43 representations, this included statutory response from public organisations as well as individual residents and local organisations. Each representation was considered in detail and some changes have been made to the draft Neighbourhood Plan as a result.

In the view of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which is made up of both residents and Councillors, the recent consultation taken together with the comprehensive community consultation exercise undertaken in the spring of 2021 indicates there is wide community support for the policies and ambitions set out in the draft Plan.

The next step is for the draft Neighbourhood Plan to be formally submitted to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, WHBC, who will put the document out to a six-week public consultation plus appoint an independent expert to review the document to ensure it is fit for purpose. WHBC do not in any sense approve the plan and have no veto over any of its content. All local organisations and residents will be entitled to make further representation during the six-week local consultation. These representations will be independently assessed by the expert appointed by WHBC and may result in changes being required in the draft Plan prior to sign off by the independent expert.

Once the independent expert assesses the plan as being fit for purpose there will a local referendum with all adult residents being entitled to vote. We are hoping that the referendum can take place on the same day as the Local Council Elections in May. The referendum will be simple yes or no vote, similar in style to the Brexit vote. A simple majority of those voting is required for the Plan to be approved.

Once approved via a local referendum then it will come into force allowing the local community and the Parish Council to have far more say over planning applications, approval will also secure additional significant funding for investment in local community projects. It may sound obvious but if we don't have a Neighbourhood Plan then the reverse is true – the Borough Council will have more say in planning and we would lose out on some significant funds that would otherwise be spent on our community

The Parish Council will update its website on a regular basis, particularly in relation to additional public consultation and the referendum.

If you care about our local community and environment and wish to avoid the type of overdevelopment currently taking place in Goffs Oak, a Neighbourhood Plan provides a clear coherent community view which WHBC are required to recognise in particular in relation to inappropriate and over development.

The referendum will be your chance to have your say.

Northaw and Cuffley Residents Association

Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic we have continued to provide the services for which we are the reason we exist. We have monitored the never-ending flow of planning applications, objecting where these are in the Green Belt or are otherwise inappropriate for example due to their location, overbearing size or completely out of character with the proposed surroundings. We opposed strongly the potentially very damaging inclusion of the two sites opposite the KGV playing fields in the emerging Local Plan. At the time of writing we do not yet know the final Plan. We also made submissions to the Parish Council about the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

We have also passed out to members for whom we have email addresses news likely to be of interest for example local road closures, news about the closed library and miscellaneous items which may be interest to some but not all.

We have provided advice to a number of residents when they have problems which they are not sure how to resolve. In some cases we have taken up issues on behalf of one or more residents with whichever authority was involved.

I take this opportunity to appeal to residents with a little time to spare to consider joining our Committee. We currently have five vacancies which continues to put more strain on the smaller number of Committee members who are all volunteers. If you are interested in giving something back to your local community why not contact us.

Full details of how to do this are on our web site **www.ncragb.uk**
MICHAEL GREEN, CHAIR.

Time to get walking again!

At this time of year we start to think about the mud drying up and getting out to walk in the beautiful English Countryside again, but where to find new and interesting walks?

Walking in Hertfordshire https://www.walkinginengland.co.uk/herts has hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, details of all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John Harris (the custodian of the website) said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Herefordshire (part of the Walking in England website) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris
www.walkinginengland.co.uk
john@walkinginengland.co.uk

A message from your local Sergeant

My name is Sergeant Dan Bales and I lead your local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), covering Cuffley and Northaw. The SNT are your traditional 'bobbies on the beat', tasked with tackling local neighbourhood issues that affect you.

One of the key issues we're focusing on at the moment is the theft of keyless vehicles. Criminals are able to do this by using a signal boosting device to detect and boost the signal from a vehicle's vicinity key. This tricks the internal computer into thinking that the vicinity key is present when it is not. The crime can be committed without the thief even entering the property, simply by detecting the key's signal from outside.

Thankfully, there is a quick and simply way you can prevent this from happening to your vehicle. By putting your keys in a screened or signal-blocking pouch, such as a Faraday Bag, you will eliminate the risk of your keyless vehicle being stolen. As well at this, when you're at home, keep your car key (and the spare) well away from the car. Remember to also turn off wireless signals on your fob when it's not being used.

Crime prevention tips like these are regularly shared on our Neighbourhood Watch service, OWL at **owl.co.uk/herts**.

We've also just introduced an OWL app which sends important updates straight to your phone, see the advert for more information.

OWL Crime & Safety Alerts

HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Prevention First

You can receive instant police alerts about local crime, scams and crime prevention advice in Hertfordshire on the new OWL app.

No registration is needed. To get the app, search the App Store or Google Play for 'OWL crime alerts' or use the links below:

Google Play

App Store

Residents will receive alerts based on their postcode or current location.

The most important alerts such as a burglary, car crime, robbery or missing person appeal will be an instant notification and anything less urgent will be inside the app to be read more leisurely.

Users will also be able to see contact details for their local policing team, join other watches and contact police online or via the web chat facility.

Residents can also sign up to receive OWL messages by email via the website **owl.co.uk/herts**

GoVolHerts

"Volunteering is good for your mind and body. It can really make a difference on an individual level and to others. Volunteering helps us to be and feel part of community"
Adriana, Herts volunteer

'GoVolHerts' is a brand-new website which makes it easier than ever to volunteer in Hertfordshire. Since March 2020, **#THV** have been working hard to develop a platform that works and which supports the whole of the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE) across our county. This new platform is incredibly user-friendly for both volunteers and organisations.

NORTHAW COMMUNITY ORCHARD
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Do you enjoy working outdoors?

Looking for local volunteer opportunities?

The Northaw Community Orchard would love to see you at their monthly help-out sessions, which take place every first Saturday of the month from 10.30 – 13.00.

The Community Orchard, a volunteer managed public green space in the heart of Northaw, contains a living collection of heritage fruit varieties from Hertfordshire. The Orchard is home to around 80 fruit and nut trees, along with hedgerows, wildflower meadows and woodland.

The Orchard is open to visitors 24/7 and can be accessed between No. 47 and 49 Northaw Road West (access road to the Scouts) or via an entrance in Church Lane (by the bungalows)

The Orchard is working with the CultureWood Family Forest School, to offer outdoor activities for children 3 to 11yrs. Join them for an Easter Taster Session (booking essential) on Wed 6 April (10am - 2pm), then sessions will be 11am -12.30pm on May 7, June 18, and every second Saturday following.

Save the Date for the Annual Orchard Fayre, to be held on Sunday 24th July 1-5pm.

Email **northaworchard@gmail.com** for further details or visit their website at **www.northaworchard.com**

CUFFLEY FC

Cuffley FC Soccer School

Developing children through sport

Be part of our club every Saturday morning between 9:30-11am for kids aged 4-7

07584 063831 | soccerschool@cuffleyfc.co.uk

£40 BLOCK OF 6 WEEKS

Cuffley FC Teams Looking for Players from U8 - U18

Contact: youthsecretary@cuffleyfc.co.uk

King George V Playing Fields, Northaw Road East, Cuffley, Herts. EN6 4RD

The Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations – 2-5th June 2022

If you are planning to have a street party or event on a public road, remember that you will need to get permission to close the road from Hertfordshire County Council, and applications need to be made by 21 April to allow processing time.

Applications can be made online at: **www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/changes-to-your-road/street-parties-and-special-events.aspx**

Don't forget to add your event to the Platinum Jubilee website **https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/**, or use it to find out about related events across the UK.

We would love to hear from you if you are arranging an event within the Parish.

Image courtesy of Together Coalition

5th June - National Thank You Day 2022

If the Queens Platinum Jubilee isn't a reason for you to arrange a party with your friends and neighbours, then how about joining with them for National Thank you Day on Sunday, 5th June?

The campaign for Thank You Day was started by a small group of people from across the UK, and millions of people came together to say thank you on the first National Thank You Day in 2021.

From Neighbours to Nurses, Best Mates to Mum and Dad, we all have someone we want to say thank you to. So join with friends, families and neighbours for a Big Jubilee Lunch, raise a glass to the Queen for her 70 years of outstanding service, and say a great big thank you to each other as well.

Find out more information at: **https://thankyouday.org.uk/**

How to get in touch with us

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council, 7 Maynard Place, Cuffley, EN6 4JA

Dependant on current government guidelines, the Parish Offices will be open for enquiries Mon/Thurs 1pm – 5pm, and Tues/Wed/Fri 10am – 2pm. However, these hours are dependent on staff availability, so please see notices in the office window for weekly updates.

Councillors can be contacted using the Council Members page on our website: **https://northawcuffleypc.org.uk/council-members/**

Our Office Manager, Sally Griffiths, will be happy to assist with any general enquiries and can be contacted on **01707 875 825** or **officemanager@northawcuffleypc.org.uk.**

Our Clerk, Lisa Chaplin, can be reached on **07375 962 772** or **parish.clerk@northawcuffleypc.org.uk**

You can also find useful information, both on the Council and on Local Resources, at our website **www.northawcuffleypc.org.uk**

If you would like to keep up to date with regular news from the Parish Council, including general items of local interest, please go to our website and sign up for our newsletter. You can unsubscribe anytime. **www.northawcuffleypc.org.uk/newsletter/**

Contact details for the Borough and County Councils are listed below with details of responsibilities for each council.

Your other local councils and their responsibilities

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk
email: **contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk**
Tel: **0300 123 4040**

Responsibilities:

- Highways and Transport *(Street lights, traffic lights, potholes)*
- Household Waste Recycling Centres
- Adult and Children's Social Care
- School admissions, school meals and transport
- Children's Centres
- Fostering and adoption
- Disability support services
- Disabled parking *(Blue badges)*
- Libraries
- Trading standards
- Fire and rescue

WELWYN AND HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

www.welhat.gov.uk
Email: **contact-whc@welhat.gov.uk**
Tel: **01707 357 000**

Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council deals with issues relating to:

- Waste and recycling collections
- Fly tipping, litter and graffiti
- Allotments, woodlands and green spaces
- Anti-social behaviour
- Council Tax
- Parking and council car parks
- Council housing
- Homelessness
- Cemetery Services
- Benefits
- Public health and protection *(Air and noise pollution, food inspections, H&S at work, licensing)*
- Planning and building