

17 LEADER AND LEAD MEMBER REPORTS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council

First of all I want to express my deep sorrow for the awful loss of life and hardship caused by the earthquake that has hit southern Türkiye and Syria. The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) is coordinating the appeal for aid for those effected. <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal>

I was deeply disturbed to see that targets for water companies to stop pumping sewage in to our rivers has been extended, allowing them to continue for at least 15 more years. Many residents have approached me about this, and like me, they are upset that two of our MPs supported this. Parliament and the Environment Agency need to act to ensure water companies clean up their act much quicker than that.

This year marks 20 years since Section 28, the law which banned the promotion of homosexuality, was repealed. In LGBT+ History Month I'm glad to see a Pride Flag on Three Rivers House. I am delighted that as I council we are recognising the month, working with the Three Rivers Museum on recording the experiences of our LGBT+ residents. We are continuing to sponsor this year's Herts Pride event which brings together huge numbers of people in celebration and recognition.

Residents near the HS2 site are reporting more issues with noise and officers from County and TRDC are working with AlignJV to find a solution. I visited the site last week to get assurance from them that action would be taken to mitigate the problem.

Last month I attended a deeply moving Holocaust Memorial Day event. Many thanks to Cllr Morris and the excellent speakers for the work done to bring to the forefront of our minds the horrors ordinary people were involved in. We must never forget and need to call out when we hear hateful rhetoric about any part of our communities, for that is where it starts.

I will be attending the District Councils Network where one of the key topics to be discussed is what Districts can do to support our residents in troubled time. Many of our residents are really are suffering troubled times at the moment, many of them those public service workers who are so key. The nurses, the carers, the local govt officers. With food inflation at over 16% and fuel prices going through the roof some are having to make impossible choices between food and bills. Continuing below inflation pay rises are hitting the very people we termed 'key workers' during the pandemic, I support their ask for fair pay. We continue to offer up to 100% Council Tax Reduction for those suffering the most hardship and will support all our residents as much as we can. <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/page/costofliving>

Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development

Officers are currently prioritising the delivery of a number of parking schemes. These include the Locally Important Parking Improvements at:

- High Street, Bedmond
- Lemonfield Drive area, Leavesden (including Avalon Close, part of Bucknalls Lane, Chichester Way, Coates Way, Cranefield Drive, Lemonfield Drive, Mutchetts Close and Tudor Manor Gardens)
- Oxhey Drive, South Oxhey
- Rickmansworth West and the Croxley Green Review scheme.

In the absence of a Senior Transport Planner, we are using our Traffic Engineer capacity at Hertsmere Borough Council to progress the Traffic Order for these schemes.

In addition, the Harefield Road, Sandy Lodge Way and Primrose Hill parking schemes are being prepared for discussions with external consultants.

Other current parking schemes, which are at an earlier stage than mentioned above, including the Chorleywood Area Wide review, High Elms Lane, Croxley Green Supplementary, and Gosforth Lane are also being reviewed to determine the appropriate progress route.

Verge Hardening

Works are due to start in coming weeks on 2 schemes in South Oxhey.

Resurfacing

Works are due to start in the coming weeks on the Ebury Way and the Canal Towpath at Kings Langley.

Bus Stops

A replacement bus shelter is scheduled to be installed this spring at Downings Wood, Maple Cross as well as a new bus shelter at a new bus stop in South Oxhey.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure (LCWIP)

Hertfordshire County Council have provided their initial draft for consultation. Receipt of the final consultation documents and date will govern issue of consultation timing.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

Local Plan

The additional Regulation 18 is now out to consultation on the agreed 6 additional sites that the Council is seeking residents' views on.

The results of this consultation along with the earlier Regulation 18 will be considered as the Council draws up its new Local Plan (as agreed at Council in December) for a lower housing number for Three Rivers than one previously imposed by the Government.

Additional publicity on the Local Plan will also go out with the Council Tax billing.

The government consultation on some potential changes to the Leveling Up and Regeneration Bill closes on the 2 March. A report on the Councils response to this will go to the Local Plan Sub Committee on 28 February. I note that the consultation and responses has been called in by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee chaired by a Conservative who has expressed unease at the proposed changes. This is likely to delay any changes, if any and thus restrict the ability of the Council to make final decisions.

Planning

With regards to the Warner Bros application, the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission, in December, subject to conditions and the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement following referral to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has since confirmed that they are not calling-in the application and it is therefore with TRDC to issue the Decision Notice following the completion of the Section 106. The Section 106 is being progressed and the Decision Notice will be issued upon its completion.

Planning Enforcement have recently issued:

- 4 x Planning Contravention Notices served at the Mulberry Bush to ascertain more information regarding suspected breaches of planning control

- Enforcement Notice served at 12 Claremont Crescent, Croxley Green following an unauthorised hairdressers operating from an outbuilding
- Enforcement Notice served at Land to the rear of Ebury Road, Rickmansworth following unauthorised engineering operations

Other issues

Officers have meet with the LEP on screen and media opportunities and their desire to push information out to schools and colleges about job opportunities. The Watford Chamber of Commerce is also engaging with TRDC and local business to help revitalise the Chambers activities in Three Rivers.

I have attended a further meeting of the Rickmansworth High Street Recovery Board and chaired a number meetings of the Shareholder and Commercial Venture Scrutiny Panel, items of which are reported to Council in PART II.

Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing

Firstly, I would like to thank all officers in the Housing team for all they do regarding Housing issues.

There are currently 57 households in temporary accommodation that has been provided by the Council. This figure includes four households that are currently in refuge accommodation, two households that are in contractual lets with a registered provider located in Watford and two households in self-contained nightly lets. The nightly lets that are in use are sensitive lets, one individual has restrictions and cannot reside in our District therefore has been placed in Kingston upon Thames. Another household has been placed in a disabled unit in Ealing.

To ensure the Council's compliance in duties to the residents of Mobile Home sites in the district, a Fit and Proper Person Assessment Policy and a Fit and Proper Fees Policy was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 January 2023. Decisions taken with reference to these policies will enable the creation of a Fit and Proper Person Register to be maintained by the Council and will ensure the Council complies with relevant legislation.

In December 2022, the UK Government announced an update to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, specifically the £350 monthly 'thank you' payments to any hosts on the Scheme was extended from 12 months to a period of 2 years. Once a family has been with a host for 12 months and if they continue to stay with the host beyond this period, these £350 payments will be increased to £500 per month.

As of 6 February, Three Rivers have had 159 Homes for Ukraine guests arrive in the District (121 Adults and 38 Children). It is worth noting that Hertfordshire County Council have reported to Officers that the number of guests moving to the County under this Scheme have slowed down significantly, however this may increase once again should there be an escalation in the conflict as the cold weather begins to warm.

Figures provided by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) indicate that as of 3 January 2023, 459 Ukrainian nationals who were placed within Hertfordshire have now moved on from their host's accommodation. This represents 25.21% of all Homes for Ukraine guests that have arrived in the County. Most have moved into privately rented accommodation within the District (12.36%) and a small amount have moved out of Hertfordshire, however a 9.39% of these individuals have stated that they have returned to Ukraine. To cope with an increase in homelessness across the district from this cohort, HCC have recently announced a proposal for a program to assist Homes for Ukraine guests into privately rented accommodation. This Scheme involves providing the guests with financial assistance that can be put

towards any deposit that may be required to secure accommodation. HCC are hoping to launch this program in the coming weeks, and this intervention should lessen the numbers of Homes for Ukraine guests that may present to the Council as homeless.

Due to the lack of an application from a suitably qualified candidate, the Service was not successful in the recruitment of a Senior Housing Enforcement Officer. Discussions are underway between Strategic Housing Manager and Human Resources with regards to the appropriate way to proceed to attract a suitable candidate. The Service are soon interviewing candidates for a vacant Housing Options Officer position, following significant interest in the advertised role.

The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme properties (5 x one-bedroom properties in district, purchased in association with Watford Community Housing, using grant funding from Homes England and £100,000 of S106 funding from the Council) have all been tenanted, with the final of these properties being filled on 6 February 2023.

Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure

Watersmeet

- Building Fixed wiring work phase one to be completed by end March. Phase two delayed until next financial year due to contractor availability and scheduling around events.
- The Watersmeet loyalty scheme due to launch in February 2023. £30 single, £50 couple. The scheme includes:
 - 3 free films per year
 - 10% discount on refreshments
 - 10% discounts on selected shows
 - Double discount days (20% off)
 - A birthday offer
 - Ticket to the VIP night of panto (panto ticket not included)
- The panto run went well and received good positive feedback from many patrons. Compared to Snow White in 2018 the panto was 600 tickets down, which equates to £4k net income for Watersmeet. Total sales were 14,075. This is likely to be a result from the cost of living and long-term impact of Covid on audiences. Merchandise and bar sales were up by £700 overall compared to 2018.

Leisure

- Temporary bridge closure over River Colne (Pedestrian near the Play Area) – commencing Monday 20 February for a period of up to 4 weeks. Advance notices have gone up and communications to Stakeholders in progress.
- First meeting with Stakeholders of Aquadrome Project in March
- Maple Cross play area in progress

Health

The new Healthy Hub model is establishing well with footfall increasing and new services beginning from January 2023. In 21/22 we had 120 people. We have already had over 300. New model started in September.

Tackling Obesity - Beezee Bodies family workshop is taking place in Carpenters Park Jan – March 2023 to provide advice, healthy lunchbox ideas etc. The next South Oxhey Tackling Obesity Steering Group is on 14 February 2023

Community Event planned for Saturday 18 February 2023 at Mill End Community Centre – focus on health, cost of living and community groups.

Cllr Phil Williams. *Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability*

Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

- Regular briefings and meetings with officers, partners and outside bodies have continued

Enable and engage:

- The TRDC Greener Living e-newsletter continues to be sent to residents and businesses to give updates on campaigns and Green news items. If you haven't signed up, please do
- Three Rivers DC in conjunction with others are staging a Sustainable Fashion catwalk show on March 25 at the Memorial Hall in Chorleywood. Please ask for further details.
- The Sustainability team are more than happy to speak and present to community groups in your area, please contact them.
- The pilot scheme, being run by WasteAware and Sustainable Hertfordshire, to reduce avoidable food waste in Three Rivers is now in full swing with visits to schools planned, community events attended, social media posts across our channels, and lots more to come. Posters are going out across our notice boards, we have more events booked in, leaflets will go to targeted street with tips on our 4 steps to save, the campaign is headlining the living greener leaflet due to go out with Council Tax letters this Spring, and artwork is currently being developed to be printed and displayed on a number of our waste vehicles. The campaign is due to go County-wide later this year following analysis of the pilot and a waste compositional analysis in Three Rivers.

#WorthSaving <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/worth-saving.aspx>

Energy:

- Local Authority Delivery schemes finished and we installed fully funded retrofit measures to 117 homes in Three Rivers. These schemes saved Three Rivers homes a total of 161 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, which equates to carbon savings of 1.4TCO2 per home upgraded per year
- The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) funding to retrofit 82 Thrive Homes are due to commence installs imminently.
- TRDC have applied for Wave 2 of SHDF funding and are hoping to win a grant to deep retrofit 139 Thrive homes and 20 neighbouring private homes in South Oxhey, we should find out soon if we were successful.
- Utilising the recently agreed utility funding (ECO4) we have commenced a dedicated scheme in South Oxhey plus a through a Home Energy Support Service all eligible residents have a clear route on how to access these funds for deep retrofit of their properties.
- Further E-learning training is being made available for all staff.
- On the biodiversity side we have planted 700 trees on council land and given away to residents over 2500 trees,

- Three Rivers House retrofit has commenced which will reduce 38 tonnes of carbon annually from our emissions

Waste

- Awaiting Defra to publish the final recycling figures for 2021/22
- Annual garden subscription renewals underway
- Introduced a new process to allow to keep POPs separate
- We'll be giving the fly tipping campaign another push throughout March, as we do every year. Our officers will be sending out reminders to all Hertfordshire Districts and Boroughs. It is 5 years since the campaign was launched.

Environment

- As Lead Member for environmental services I have contacted both of our Conservative MPs and asked them not to follow their party's whip on the continued dumping of untreated sewage into, not only our own internationally important streams and rivers but also into other rivers and onto beaches throughout the country. I asked them to stand up for the residents of Three Rivers and persuade their ministers to end this disgusting practice immediately.

Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

I have continued to have meetings with officers, partners, colleagues from other Districts and the Police and Crime Commissioner's office.

A very successful ASB workshop partnership day was held recently with over 55 representatives of our partners present and the recent meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Partnership were combined to hold a workshop to help develop our new Community Strategy.

There is a popular misconception that "that there is a lot of burglary about". There is not. Our residents have experienced a higher number of burglaries over the last year, but this has come down over the last month. The police are proactively addressing the issue. They are aware of a gang operating in this and other areas of the country, but their ability to apprehend these criminals is made more difficult by the gang frequently focusing on empty properties and the police not knowing that there has even been an offence committed until sometime after the event and then not knowing exactly when, possibly even which day, the crime was committed.

The Police are requesting additional resources from headquarters as and when required. Residential burglary is a priority for the CSP and Burglary and Fraud was the focus of the Community Safety Coordinating Group (JAG) held recently.

Fear and the possible misconception is probably heightened amongst residents due to the cocooning response, where police will go door to door to all neighbours following a burglary to encourage residents to be vigilant and share crime prevention advice, as well as an OWL message going out to residents in the area within a couple of days after a burglary.

The influence of social media cannot be underestimated. As well as the OWL notifications, it is very common for people on the Nextdoor social media site to post if they have been burgled. While this might be a good thing to encourage residents to be safety conscious and vigilant, it does create the impression of having much more burglary than there actually is. Pre social media, it was likely fewer people would

have been aware if there had been a domestic burglary in their area or even in their own street

Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

No written report as all reportable issues are covered by the budget items on the summons.