

Merry Christmas Everyone 

A pdf version will be on the village website at www.hempstead-essex.org.uk and a hard copy is available on the Parish Council Noticeboard.

Parish Council

Local Plan

The draft Local Plan is now out for consultation and a leaflet from UDC should be arriving with household's shortly providing details on the plan. As you will recall we have no Plan in place at present which has led to some developments being imposed on the district by government. Hempstead is not proposed to have any development other than our own organic growth, but responding to the consultation is recommended to ensure we have a secure plan in place for the district long term.

Highways

Our County Councillor, Martin Foley is meeting with Highways this week to progress our ongoing list of requested works around the village.

Two footbridges have been constructed and installed replacing old, damaged ones. Our thanks go to Friends of Flitch Way for their volunteer work on our behalf.

Planning

Proposed housing developments of agricultural buildings at Conifers and Little Smith's Green Farm which have permitted development rights were reviewed for comment.

See a separate note in this Newsletter regarding Church Farm.

SpeedWatch

A new volunteer has stepped forward who, it is hoped, will lead the SpeedWatch team in 2024.

Discussions and training will take place over the winter.

Christmas Tree

A lit tree will be erected by the bus shelter in early December.

Thank you for all your support for the Council in 2023 and we wish you a peaceful and happy Christmas and New Year.

Nick Turkentine, Chairman

Next meeting: Thurs 18th January, 7.30pm, Village Hall. Members of the public are welcome to speak before the formal proceedings. The agenda is published on the Parish Council noticeboard one week previous.

PARISH
COUNCIL

Church Farm

Michael Sills of Church Farm, Church Hill is holding an open public meeting in the village hall on **Wed 13th December** at 8pm to share revised plans for the development of the farmyard. All are welcome.

Salt

Salt bins are available on the brow of Church Hill, opposite the church, and in the village hall car park if you need them. Shovels should be inside.

Nine Lessons & Carols at St. Andrew's

Our favourite service of Nine Lessons & Carols will be held at St. Andrew's church at **6pm** (not 6.30pm as in previous years) on **Sunday 24th December**. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served at the back of the church after the service. If you wish to kindly donate red wine for this purpose, please leave it at Pippins, on Church Hill. And feel free to bring a lantern to light your way on the evening.

Other services on Christmas Eve are:

3.30pm Radwinter Crib Service

3.30pm Thaxted Open Doors Procession to the Crib

8.00pm Thaxted Roman Catholic Vigil Mass

9.00pm Radwinter First Eucharist of Christmas

11.30pm Thaxted Midnight Mass

And on Christmas Day:

9.30am Gt Sampford Holy Eucharist and 10.00am Thaxted Sung Mass



Christmas Card Exchange

The Christmas card exchange will take place at St. Andrew's church on **Saturday 9th December** from 10am to 12noon and you will find the church decorated in all its Christmas splendour. Many thanks to all those who gave their time freely to make it so.



There are two options on offer at the Exchange this year. Firstly, the traditional way is to write and address your cards to individuals in the village, bring them to the church and lay them on the alphabetically laid out pews for collection by other villagers.

The second option is a new introduction, for those who want a 'greener' Christmas. You bring one card only to the church with your message addressed to all your friends in the village, thereby sharing one greeting only with everyone. These will be placed on a separate tree and will remain in the church throughout Christmas.

Refreshments are provided and please note the following:

This is intended for cards to Hempstead addresses only.

It is an exchange, not a delivery service, so we do ask you to take away any cards that are addressed to you. The church will remain open until 3pm if you wish to return later to collect your cards. We will try to deliver any Hempstead cards that are left over, but this may not be immediate.

We ask everyone who is leaving cards to make an appropriate donation, thank you. *The PCC.*

ROBINN drinks

If enough people have said they'll attend, the ROBINN group will be holding drinks in the village hall for an end of year catch up on **Sunday 17th December 4-7pm**.

Mobile library

The next visit of the Mobile library is on **Friday 15th December**. There are no dates for 2024 yet.

Stansted Airport - Local resident discount

If you live within a 10-mile radius of Stansted Airport, you can apply for Express Set Down Local Resident Discount Scheme, which reduces the charge as follows:

- Residents living within 5 miles of the airport pay £0.50 for up to 10 minutes.
- Residents living within 10 miles of the airport pay £1.00 for up to 10 minutes.

Normal charges apply if you stay longer than 10 minutes, as does the £20.00 fee if you return within half an hour. Apply online at: [Local Resident Discount Scheme \(office.com\)](https://www.localresidentdiscountscheme.com)

White Crosses

The white crosses at the War Memorial have now been removed but not before a villager with a small white dog allowed their dog to wee on one of the crosses. This was an act of disrespect and very inappropriate, distressing others.



Pollarding

The weeping willow to the right of the War Memorial will be pollarded on the 19th December. If you are using the bus shelter that day, please be aware of the work in progress.



Village Hall

The first meeting for 2024 of the Village Hall Management Committee will take place on **Thursday the 11th January** at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. There is always maintenance work to do in and around the hall and we would be very grateful for some additional people to volunteer to assist intermittently with various jobs including, sweeping and tidying outside, painting, joinery, and general maintenance as things get worn and need replacing. You don't have to join the committee or attend meetings but a few more pairs of hands to call on would be much appreciated. Come along to speak to us on the 11th.



Help with Council Tax

A financial assistance scheme is available to help those who are struggling to pay their 2023/2024 Council Tax bill due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the scheme runs until 31 March 2024, so there is still time to apply for help.

This is an online application-based scheme and if you do not have online access, you should contact 01799 510510 or visit the Council Offices in Saffron Walden. Some supporting documents will need to

be provided demonstrating that the household has been affected adversely by the Cost of Living crisis. This can include (but is not limited to); Household income and expenditure, copies of the last two months Bank Statements and Utility bills. Get full details and the online application form on this link: [Cost of living support fund - Uttlesford District Council](#)

Our 320 Bus Service – Did you know?

Currently, Hempstead benefits from a 320-bus service of 5 buses a day, running on Monday to Saturday from the village bus shelter (opposite the Bluebell) to Saffron Walden / Audley End.



We also have 5 return buses that can be picked up from Audley End, Saffron Walden High Street or Common Hill and end their journey outside the Bluebell. It is just £2 for a single ticket unless you have a free travel pass. The bus route also goes via Tesco.

This vital rural service helps to connect our village to all the amenities we enjoy in Saffron Walden and connects us to Audley End station for rail transport to Cambridge or London. There are those in our village who rely on our local bus for shopping, health, education, employment, social, leisure and many other reasons.

Essex Country Council have been consulting on the future use of buses across the county and our local bus the 320 from Haverhill to Saffron Walden / Audley End is noted to be “at risk” and one where passenger numbers need to increase. This means that our bus service will be continued for 2 years, during which time the contract will be reviewed, and consideration may be given to re-design it based on the level of passenger numbers over this period. For example, reducing frequency of days or times of operation, changing of routes, merging of services, replacing with an alternative service, implementing a devolution pilot, or withdrawing the service.

If you have not tried it out yet, why not try a car-free day out in Saffron Walden or catch a train to Cambridge or London and save yourself the drive and parking, as well as help to increase our passenger numbers and contribute to much needed evidence that our bus service is valued and supported.

The full timetable can be accessed here: [319320321new.pdf \(centralconnect.info\)](#)

(Note: This also includes times of the less frequent 321 service that also serves Hempstead and includes the School Bus service).

Health and Wellbeing – NHS Charges

A reminder - you might be able to get help paying for NHS charges if you are on a low income, this includes the following:

- ☑ prescriptions
- ☑ dental treatment
- ☑ sight tests, glasses and contact lenses
- ☑ travel to NHS treatment
- ☑ wigs and fabric supports



You may be able to get help with NHS costs through the NHS “Low Income Scheme” (LIS). You can apply for the scheme as long as your savings, investments or property (not including where you live) do not exceed the capital limit. In England, the limit is:

£23,250 for people who live permanently in a care home (from October 2025 the limit will rise to £100,000) and £16,000 for everyone else.

Any help you’re entitled to is also available to your partner and any dependant young people.

More information on the scheme and the application form can be found on the link below. If you need help making your claim or have questions about the LIS, call 0300 330 1343. Telephone lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm, and Saturday 9am to 3pm.

T&C: Newsletter entries must be received by diana_frost@lineone.net by the 24th of each month. Only village events will be promoted. No advertisements or personal profit promotions will be featured. To unsubscribe, email Diana Frost.