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**FULL COUNCIL**  
Tuesday, 20 February 2024

**LEADER AND LEAD MEMBER REPORTS**

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**Report from the Leader, Councillor Sarah Nelmes**

Three Rivers District will be turning 50 on 1 April and in celebration of this officers and The Museum are working on ways to celebrate. Watch this space!

Our Corporate Framework states our aim to make Three Rivers a great place to live work and visit and our annual survey is currently out to residents to see how we are doing towards that aim.

Our voluntary sector in Three Rivers is definitely to be applauded and I had the great pleasure of attending the opening of The Lord Lieutenants new charities hub in Leavesden, a place for voluntary organisations big and small to work together and thrive. Many thanks are due to Robert Voss for this great initiative.

At Full Council Members were appointed by their party to the Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Scrutiny Panel, the panel that oversees our commercial investments. The Chair's report on this panel is in his report. It is disappointing to note that the representative from the Conservative Group has not been to any of those meetings. In a Committee system with proportionate membership of Committees for the good of residents it would be better if there was full representation of a range of opinions.

We have just recently reflected on Race Equality Week, many thanks to the Strategy & Partnerships Team for the Daily Worksheets they produced. They were thought provoking and powerful. I, unlike our Sec of State, do not think that work on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion is wasted.

In the same month we had Holocaust Memorial Day where we reflected that genocides in history have started with the erosion of freedom of religion or self-identity, freedom of reproduction, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, and freedom to live. We should all defend those rights for all.

I note that on 8 February Simon Hoare (Minister for Local Govt) issued a consultation on a proposal for a solution to the ludicrous delays on the auditing of Council accounts. I wonder if he and colleagues have reflected on the 2010 decision by Eric Pickles (a previous Minister for Local Govt) to abolish the Audit Commission and move Audit to the private sector. This privatisation malarkey doesn't seem to have shown much of a benefit in any sector it's been tried in.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst**

### **LOCAL PLAN**

Officers are still working through the individual comments submitted in writing or by email and comments on specific sites following the consultation on the Revised Local Plan (Regulation 18) but we have results for the three crucial questions according to early analysis of the online survey responses. These may be subject to change as a further 200 plus written or email replies have been received and have to be checked. Some of the replies have therefore not been included in the figures below but it's clear that even excluding the statutory consultees there have been over 1,000 replies on the consultation, which is a significant number, and shows clear support for our approach.

The figures below are the online replies and excludes those who did not answer these questions

Q1 Do you agree with the Council's proposed stance of not complying with the government's standard method?

Yes: 729 (90%) No 85 (10%)

Q2 Do you agree that the Council's preferred 'Low Growth and Green Belt Restraint' option is the best growth strategy for the District?

Yes: 706 (88%) No: 98 (12%)

Q3 Do you agree with the sites detailed in Appendix 1 that TRDC are not proposing for development?

Yes: 669 (87%) No: 98 (13%)

I may be able to give a further update at Council but the on-line result showed support for every site included in the local plan as allocated for potential development. Again, I would like to stress this was not a referendum but a consultation and all factors including comments from statutory bodies must be taken into account with any final Local Plan. A full report will be made in due course.

Once again I thank the **Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association** for their support and that this Three Rivers has adopted the right approach and the right number for our area.

### **A revised Local Plan Time table (LDS)**

I have discussed with officers and due to concerns that I have that an Autumn (November or October) General Election could de-rail our proposed time line of finalising and consulting on the final Local Plan Regulation 10 I have agreed and secured additional funding in our budget (due to the excellent way we have managed our resources) to engage expert staff to assist Marko Kalik and his team. A report will come to the 11<sup>th</sup> March Policy and Resources Committee to enable a Special Council by early September with consultation starting by mid-September and then a formal submission of the Regulation 19 plan by June 2025 instead of the end of 2025.

An October/November GE would have prevented a consultation starting during that period as previously set out in LDS.

This is also in line with the requirement from the government those transitional arrangements for the old-style local plans comes to an end. From July 2025 Local Plans will need to be done through the new system which the Government plans to work through in tranches, selected by them. Clearly, it's in no one's interest for us to start all over again!

### **NPPF Changes**

These have been published but according to officers they mean no real change to our approach and indeed could now be considered supportive of the radical approach this authority has taken. We will have to wait and see how Inspectors interpret the new wording at future Local Plan examinations.

This was reinforced by Housing and planning minister Lee Rowley in a House of Commons debate on 23rd January when he said that he expects more cases for exceptional circumstances to be put forward in the future, following the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) .

He said: *“Logically, I would then expect more cases for exceptional circumstances to be accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, although that will also be for the inspectorate to determine on a case-by-case basis.”*

In other words, ... you can try to go for a lower number, and the government will deny any responsibility when it turns out that you do in fact still have to meet the government target after all” is what commentary said. I just hope they are wrong!

Indeed, in his speech, Michael Gove also reinforced the standard method of assessing housing need as the way that housing numbers should be calculated, with an emphasis that this remains an advisory starting figure.

### **Article 4 direction – Agreement at last.**

The Article 4 Direction made by the Council in 2022 has now been agreed by the Secretary of State. At the time of writing this is yet to be published, however we have received confirmation from DLUHC that the Article 4 has been agreed subject to minor amendments to town centre boundaries. The process for agreeing Article 4 Directions has become far more arduous than it was in the past, so I am pleased that nearly all of what the Council had agreed to include in the Article 4 Direction has been supported by the Government. This means that we have more control over planning matters in our employment areas and town centres. Officers will be bringing a report to the 11<sup>th</sup> March Policy & Resources Committee setting out all the detail.

### **Other planning issues:**

The planning appeal decision for the Saratt housing led scheme is still awaited.

An application (ref. 23/0576/FUL) for 18 flats at Cedar House, Sandy Lane was refused under delegated powers. An appeal has been validated but there is currently no start date so no submissions made.

An application (ref. 22/2025/FUL) for 36 flats at Alpine Press, Kings Langley, which was refused at committee (overturn), has had an appeal lodged but not yet validated.

Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for major applications come into force on 12 February and BNG will be a consideration on major planning applications. For other applications BNG will be a requirement from 2 April 2024.

I have pressed officers on the need to move forward with updates to Conservation Area Appraisals and although officers were already planning to undertake two by the end of the next financial year I have secured in our budget additional funds to bring this forward by using consultants.

## **Infrastructure and Economic Development**

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

The current CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) bidding process closes on the 12 February (after this report is written). An application is expected for the Beryl Bike scheme and other strategic infrastructure projects across the District. Applications will be assessed through an agreed governance process.

The next submission round is 1 June to 15 July 2024. I have asked officers to recirculate to all Councillors the criteria for the CIL application/bidding process for Three Rivers. I would also point out that Parish Councils also have their own CIL allocations.

### **EV charging (on and off street)**

A detailed report will come to the next General Public Services and Economic Development Committee on 19 March 2024. It is proposed to use the budgeted allocated money (CIL) to progress EV in our car parks that would not secure Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding or other government funding.

The LEVI funding is being allocated to Herts County Council and I have discussed with County Offices. The County Council has been allocated £6m capital funding for Phase 2 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding that it is then required to allocate to Districts/ Boroughs and assist with installations and agree sites.

The County has been working with each of the districts and boroughs to identify locations for additional chargers (both on and off street) so that they have a prioritised list of locations. They are appointing 2 district liaison officers to assist districts with the EV process and hope to have people in place in February. However, the County process is unlikely to see monies or sites allocated until 2025 so, subject to the GPSED committee, this council proposes to progress at least with some new EV charges in car parks this year rather than wait.

### **Rickmansworth High Street Project Board (Council member)**

I have expressed several times my disappointment at the snail pace progress of our agreed (unanimous) October decision to re-open the High St on weekdays. Herts County Council, the lead and highway authority, only got round to advertising their changed Traffic Regulation Order on 2 February and now tell me that it's unlikely that the changes will take place before the end of March (Easter). Officers and I are in touch with HCC Officers.

## **Bery Bikes to come to Three Rivers**

I am personally delighted that cyclists will soon be able to hire e-bikes in Croxley Green following our decision to support an expansion of the popular Watford scheme over the next two years.

I was present at the photo launch of this agreement. This is great news and is something I and the council have pushed for over three years. Now, with joint agreement with Watford and funding from Three Rivers, this is a reality.

The council has always been and remains committed to sustainable travel in order to reduce the number of private vehicles used for short journeys and to cut air pollution. This is a two-year pilot with five sites in Croxley Green. The council will monitor how successful this scheme is until 2026. I hope that this can be rolled out across the district so all of our residents outside Croxley Green can have easy access to a Beryl Bike and get all of the benefits of cycling.

## **Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Scrutiny Panel (Chairman)**

This Council continues to bid to central government for funding under the Local Authority Housing Fund and has been awarded £4.5m so far to enable the provision of 24 new homes, including purchasing existing market stock. We have submitted a further short notice bid too DLUHC for more LAHF for a further 5 potential units. It is intended to seek Full Council authority on a bulk purchase of 12 units in South Oxhey with these and outstanding funds to enable settled accommodation for families in need.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Public Services, Councillor Paul Rainbow**

### **Parking Schemes**

#### Croxley Green Review

Amendments to the Controlled Parking Zone including introduction of P&D parking in key locations around the station have been implemented. The P&D parking machines and enforcement went live 29 January 2024.

#### Rickmansworth West

Following a public consultation exercise some minor modifications have been made in response to public comments. A revised scheme has been consulted upon via public notice which runs to 16 February.

#### Primrose Hill

A final design has been agreed following public consultation. The final statutory consultation on a Traffic Regulation Order is due to commence in February.

#### Chorleywood

Following public consultation and review detailed designs are due to be consulted upon in early February.

#### Harefield Road

Officers are waiting for Hertfordshire County Council confirmation to proceed with the proposals. Formal consultation is due late February.

#### Sandy Lodge Way

Officers are awaiting a final consultant's report and recommendations following the last public consultation. Once received the Officers will proceed with final statutory processes to implement a new Traffic Regulation Order.

#### High Elms Lane

Consultants have been engaged for the next phase of developing proposals for this locality.

#### Skidmore Way

Once other schemes above are completed a review will commence.

#### Gosforth Lane

Officers to liaise with Local Ward Councillors early February on a proposed scheme

#### Henbury Way

The use of this car park is currently being reviewed to support market trader parking for a proposed market. A report is to follow.

### **EV Chargers**

A further report is to be presented at Committee in March 2024.

## **Transport Planner Role**

Role and responsibilities of the two person TPP team, including the Senior Transport Planner role, are being re-examined following the failure to recruit in 2023 despite repeated attempts. There will be a focus on sustainable travel responsibilities in accordance with the Council's priorities and the implementation of the Parking Management Programme. Job profiles are being finalised and evaluated; recruitment is likely to commence later in February.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Andrew Scarth**

### **Housing report**

There are currently 71 households in temporary accommodation that has been provided by the Council. This figure includes one household that is currently in refuge accommodation, three households that are in contractual lets with registered providers (2 based in Watford and 1 in Three Rivers). This also included 14 households that are in nightly let accommodation outside of the District. These households are in various locations however some are as close as neighbouring areas such as Northwood and Hemel Hempstead. All households will be brought back to District as soon as suitable accommodation becomes available and Officers are making enquiries daily.

The role of Housing Advisor has been filled by Nanjiba Choudhury who started with us on 8 January 2024. The role of Housing Options Officer has been filled with Zoe Cole, who will start with us on 5 February 2024. The role of Community Liaison Officer has been filled by an internal candidate: Jay Williams.

Since the launch of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and as of 22 January 2024, Three Rivers have had 200 Homes for Ukraine guests arrive in the District (159 Adults and 41 Children). Currently, 69 guests (58 Adults and 11 children) remain with sponsors within the District. Since my last report to Full Council at the beginning of December 2023, the Service has had no further homeless applications from households who have moved to the UK via this scheme, and one currently in temporary accommodation.

### **Public Health and Wellbeing report**

Healthy Hubs in Quarter 3 had 555 engagements and 7 Healthy Hub Pop Up events were delivered. In January we have held a further 2 Pop Up events. The Hub has met its targets to deliver the Stop Smoking service. The Stop Smoking Clinic hours have been increased at the Healthy Hub with the Health Partnerships Officer now providing Stop Smoking sessions.

Partner services are continuing at the Hub, this includes NHS Health Checks and Compassionate Cafes. Three Rivers Customer Service Centre are based at the Hub every week, and Housing Advice are based at the Hub the first week of the month.

Positive feedback has been received from a GP in South Oxhey about the Lung Cancer Prevention work, and an expression for the partnership to continue beyond the end of March. The working relationship with GPs in the district continues to improve.

Approximately 30% of people contacted for lung cancer prevention project are undertaking the health and wellbeing survey, of which 32% of people undertaking the health and wellbeing survey are asking for a referral to stop smoking services.

The Health and Wellbeing Partnership have approved the action plan for 2024 – 2025, which will address the following priorities; long term health conditions, frailty and older people, cancer, healthy weight & mental health.

Getting external funding is a challenge in the current climate of limited resources, but we work closely with our partners, and take opportunities to draw in funding as much as we can when appropriate.



## **Report from the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd**

### **Watersmeet**

#### **Panto:**

- The Sleeping Beauty pantomime was the first with Paul Holman associates (PHA) since retendering. It was positively received by the audiences. I attended on the Civic night.
- PHA were a pleasure to work with, proactive and the show was delivered to a high standard.
- Ticket sales finished at 13,499 with last year's total sales being 14,075 which means sales were down 576 tickets compared to previous year.
- The 2024 pantomime of Jack and the Beanstalk is now on sale. We currently have 3214 reserved tickets by local schools and 154 sold tickets. This is comparable to previous years.

#### **Christmas Market:**

- The venues first Christmas market was well received and there has been high demand for a return by stall holders and patrons, with plans in place for one in November 2024.
- Over 400 people attended.
- 170 children visited the Santa's grotto.
- There was a treasure hunt at Watersmeet and linked to the Market in the High Street.

#### **Box office/Marketing:**

- The Membership scheme that launched in April 2023 has sold 44 memberships to date. These are: 20 joint and 24 singles and there has been positive feedback from patrons who use this and enjoy the benefits.
- The membership scheme is continuing to be promoted at events including the Friends of Watersmeet coffee mornings.
- Membership is available at <https://www.watersmeet.co.uk/watersmeet.co.uk/membership>

#### **Other**

- The Watersmeet Team will be attending the senior's forum this month to speak about the upcoming events, hand out flyers and speak about volunteering opportunities at the venue.
- The venue's new business plan will be going to the Climate Change Leisure Community committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024.
- Link to the website - <https://www.watersmeet.co.uk/>
- 2025 will be the 50th anniversary of Watersmeet.

## **Leisure and Natural Infrastructure**

### **Playscheme/Play Rangers**

- Playscheme - Playscheme planned for Easter.
- Play rangers - On winter break from mid-December until after February half term.

### **Sports Development**

Active Local (HSP) Number of new classes are being created through Active Local partnership work in South Oxhey. Clock Cricket will take place monthly at Clitheroe Club. A countywide funding bid will be written (by HSP) to extend these sessions to a regular basis. Balance bike training for Early Years Practitioners is taking place at South Oxhey leisure centre in February.

Junior Parkrun Email has gone out to schools in January to raise awareness and a call out for volunteers to help support the event. When I was volunteering at the George V Junior Parkrun (opposite William Penn Leisure Centre) several people were there for the first time because of the email. I have also volunteered at the Junior Parkrun at Leavesden.

Parkrun – Rickmansworth – I have given a grant for cones (from HCC locality budget). I have volunteered since last Full Council at all 3 5km Parkruns on a Saturday . I am happy to walk, run or jog with any Councillor who would like to come see the health benefits of Parkrun first hand. I will be doing my 250<sup>th</sup> Parkrun on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024. If you want to join me on this day, it will be at Leavesden Country Park. If you have never been to the Park before, come and use the café and explore the park.

### **Arts Development**

#### **Artistsmeet**

- Rickmansworth Arts Society event took place on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January from 5pm – 7pm when you could see the Artists. The Exhibition will finish on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

### **Leavesden County Park\_(A Green Flag location)**

#### **Entrance Widening**

Planning Committee Meeting: 22 February

Commence works on site, February / March 2024

The Christmas Trail installed in Leavesden Country Park throughout December proved to be hugely successful. A total of **1,725** families took part in the trail whilst enjoying the beauty of the park. The busiest day for the trail was Friday 22 December.

### **Rickmansworth Aquadrome (A Green Flag location)**

- Pedestrian Bridge: There will be a CIL application. Sustrans have had their funding reduced by the Government.

- National Lottery Heritage Fund main application- Work continues on the development stage bid but awaited change in guidance from HLF. Anticipated bid submission in early Autumn 2024  
**Hydrological Study**- Procurement is progressing well on this work which will be undertaken in Spring-Summer 2024.
- **Steering Group meeting** – the second meeting happened in late January which will bring together significant community partners in the project for an update. The focus of the meeting was to look at the narrative of the project. I was unwell and unable to attend.

## Open Spaces

### The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project

21 people responded to the consultation, with most people stating that they visit the Bury Grounds to walk. Officers are working with Affinity Water on developing a project delivery plan.

### Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA) delivery - (overlap with Cllr Tankard)

- The majority of planting of replacement and new trees for the current season has been completed including Woodland Creation at Barton Way Playing Fields and Cheshire Drive. A small number of additional and memorial trees will be planted by ground maintenance over the next few weeks.
- A summary of the BOA and AGM for the year April 2023 - March 2024 will be presented to members via the Members Information Bulletin in Spring along with any proposed amendments.

### Chorleywood House Estate – Orchard Sheep Grazing project (overlap with Cllr Tankard) - (A Green Flag location))

- As part of the new management plan the area of the community orchard was suggested as a location to consider sheep grazing.
- Officers have identified grant funding to support the introduction of this scheme which will cover the costs of the fencing, interpretation, and grassland enhancements.
- Following a period of public consultation officers have taken the decision to pause to allow time for further investigation to ensure the appropriate sheep are selected for grazing and the orchard trees are at minimal risk of harm from the sheep.
- At this time, we will not be applying for the grant funding but may take the opportunity to apply in the future if appropriate.

### Chorleywood House Estate – Chorleywood Chilterns Chalk Stream Project: (overlap with Cllr Tankard) - (A Green Flag location))

- The Chilterns Conservation Board are currently liaising with all landowners involved (approximately 6).
- This would be a 1.1km river restoration project along the river Chess boosting significant biodiversity value, protecting, and enhancing a globally rare habitat.

- The project will be lead and coordinated by the Chilterns Conservation Board, TRDC are supporting it particularly regarding assisting with the public consultation and engagement elements.
- In 2023 Jon Tankard and I meet Chiltern Conservation Board at Latimer to see work they had already done further up the Chess in Latimer.

**South Oxhey Playing Fields:** Snagging list and defects period, - 6 months defect inspection due on 9 Feb 24.

### **Management Plans**

- South Oxhey Playing Fields, Carpenters Wood, Croxley Hall Woods and Pheasants and Solomons Woods Plan (new plan) being updated for 2024 – 2029. Drafts will then go out for public consultation in the Spring/Summer.

### **Footpaths**

- When I am running or walking in the District, I continue to look for improvements or maintenance (working with HCC) required on footpath network, either meeting them on site or sending photos.

### **Thank you**

- I would like to thank Officers for all the work they have done this Council year.
- I would like to thank Everyone Active on their partnership with TRDC.
- I would like to thank all the friend's groups for the work they have done and continue to do.
- I would like to congratulate Charlotte Gomes who has been appointed Head of Leisure and Natural Infrastructure as of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.
- I would like to challenge all of us to have a physical activity target for 2024. We need to encourage our District to be more physically active. We need to see lifestyle used as medicine.

## Report from the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate, Councillor Jon Tankard

### INTRODUCTION

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This month we have focused on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

#### What is Biodiversity Net Gain?

- The aim of Biodiversity Net Gain in the UK is to ensure that development projects contribute positively to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, thereby helping to reverse the decline in wildlife populations and habitats.
- In England, BNG is becoming mandatory under [Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 \(as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021\)](#).
- Developers must now demonstrate their development has improved biodiversity by at least 10%

#### What does this mean?

- Under this policy, developers are required to assess the biodiversity value of a site before any development begins and to demonstrate how they will achieve a net gain in biodiversity once the project is completed. (There is a standardised biodiversity metric used for this which accounts for factors such as habitat type, species richness, and ecosystem services).
- This means that any biodiversity lost due to development activities must be compensated for by creating or enhancing habitats elsewhere to achieve an equivalent or greater gain in biodiversity overall.
- Local planning authorities require developers to demonstrate how they will achieve a net gain in biodiversity as part of the planning permission process. Projects that fail to meet Biodiversity Net Gain requirements may be rejected or required to make revisions.
- The Government stipulates that developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

#### How does it work?

There is a statutory (official) biodiversity metric, which is a way of measuring:

- how many units a habitat contains before development.
- how many units are needed to replace the units of habitat lost and to achieve 10% BNG

So, if an arbitrary development site has a biodiversity score of 50 units and all of this is to be effectively destroyed with the development, then the developer is legally bound to replace those 50 units, with a 10% uplift, therefore he must replace 55 units of biodiversity.

The question is how he can do this, particularly as he must also provide a profitable return on investment. The government\* states that there are 3 ways a developer can achieve 10% BNG:

1. They can enhance and restore biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
2. If developers can only achieve part of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site, or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
3. If developers cannot achieve on-site or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This must be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

So, let's say our developer allows a border meadow flower area around the edge of his site, which gains 5 units, they are now 50 units adrift, so now they have to turn to finding another piece of land, capable of generating those outstanding 50 credits. These pieces of land are registered as Land Banks and it is up to each developer to seek them out, negotiate and purchase them from the landowner.

### **Deliver 10% BNG for at least 30 years**

For significant on-site gains, and all off-site gains, the BNG must be maintained for at least 30 years. Responsibilities will be set out in a [legal agreement](#).

Any off-site units purchased must be recorded and a 'biodiversity gain plan' submitted to the Local Planning Authority. The off-site units will require the land manager of those units is legally responsible for creating or enhancing that habitat for 30 years and delivering the BNG.

### **Issues to consider:**

- Where are the off-set units located – maybe nowhere near Three Rivers? Could we be creating deserts of development with no off-site units of biodiversity within the local area (i.e all 3 Rivers off-set biodiversity units are located over 300 miles away, with 3 rivers left lacking in biodiversity)
- Who 'polices' the land bank off-sets? (i.e – who checks that the off-site units are genuinely being managed as expected to provide the BNG or that they even exist at all?)
- A lot can change in 30 years? (i.e if land value rockets, what stops the off-set landowner selling the land on, what if any obligations are enforceable on the new land owner/manager?)

### **Conclusion:**

At the outset this looks to be a well intentioned policy, but appears that there could be multiple problems with implementing effectively and ensuring that the intentions of the policy come to fruition. It would be prudent for Three Rivers to keep a watchful eye on how the BNG policy pans out across the district in the coming months and years.

\* <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain#measuring-biodiversity->

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**SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE AD ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

**Sustainability strategy updates**

- The Action Plan 2024 – 2027 will be going to JLT and CMT this month. Subject to approval, the report will be presented to CCLC in March '24 which includes a summary of the 2021-2023 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan.
- SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) Wave 2: Thrive are progressing contracts to appoint OVO as the managing agent, works on-site are dependent on this contract being signed. Currently, work is expected to start in mid-February and run throughout 2024.
- ECO4 scheme with E.ON launched marketing in Mill End and Maple Cross in January. E.ON and a representative of TRDC will also attend the Healthy Hub in Mill End once per month to help residents find out if they are eligible and apply in-person.
- To-date under the ECO4 scheme with E.ON: 12 properties have had installations completed (a total of 26 individual measures installed), typically improving properties by at least 1 EPC band. The delivery of this scheme is constrained by Ofgem-set scoring matrixes which are severely limiting the number of eligible properties obligated energy companies are able to fund measures to. E.ON and others are currently lobbying Ofgem/DESNZ on this issue, and TRDC may wish to convene Herts LAs to lobby on this issue also.

### **Fast Followers project(s)**

- Transition Street programme - Townfield (Rickmansworth) group ongoing 3/7 sessions completed. New applications have been received from residents in WD3. Looking to get a new street started before the current one completes.
- **Community Energy:** Considering how to best re-engage HCC on the issue of community-funded Solar PV for schools. Awaiting outcome of Community Energy Fund application which should be known by March.
- **The Retrofit One Stop Shop:** 83 residents have registered an interest in the service and the Superhomes Three Rivers team are currently coordinating free home surveys for the first 100 residents who sign up to the service. These surveys will take place over January-March.
- **Green Finance:** A building action has been created for all core buildings, with dates to progress each item. This is a major piece of work involving several teams and will be ongoing.
- TRDC are working with the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to organise a “green skills” career fair to highlight employment and training opportunities in the sustainability and green economy sectors to local young people. Currently seeking confirmation of attendance from potential exhibitors, with a deadline of 12<sup>th</sup> February. If insufficient exhibitors confirm, we may have to reconsider the event or widen its scope to non-sustainability related careers. If event is progressed date is 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at Watersmeet

### **Behaviour Change: Waste**

- ‘Sustainable Families’ is coming soon – this will be tying together the confident continence, sustainable periods, and reusable nappy schemes.

- 3 blocks in South Oxhey have been picked for a trial to increase food waste recycling collection. An enforcement officer will be working with the crews to capture more data on the current collections before the pilot begins later this year.

## **WOODLAND AND TREE PROTECTION**

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### **TRDC Tree Management**

- Ash Die Back – Following inspection of high-risk locations, quotes for works have been obtained, an action plan has been prepared and officers are looking into means of funding identified works. ADB works were completed at Three Rivers House last week to remove trees in poor condition overhanging the Metropolitan rail line. Officers will now consider appropriate replanting.
- Oak processionary moth – A joint policy on OPM is being developed with other Councils in Hertfordshire, CMS are leading on the project. HCC aim to confirm a timescale and funding for this by March next year. Officers are working closely with the Tree Council to input into national guidance on dealing with OPM.
- The majority of planting of replacement and new trees for the current season has been completed. A small number of additional and memorial trees will be planted by ground maintenance over the next few weeks.

## **BIODIVERSITY**

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### **Chorleywood House Estate – River Chess:**

The Chilterns Conservation Board are currently liaising with all landowners involved (approximately 6). This would be a 1.1km river restoration project along the river Chess boosting significant biodiversity value, protecting and enhancing a globally rare habitat. The project will be lead and coordinated by the Chilterns Conservation Board, TRDC are supporting it particularly regarding assisting with the public consultation and engagement elements.

Project timeline:

- June 2024 – complete options appraisal to create detailed ideas
- November 2024 – tender for a designer to complete detailed designs, complete permits and gain all permissions
- March 2025 – designs complete and permits successful. Project is shovel-ready. At this point, funding opportunities will be reassessed.

### **Chorleywood House Estate – Orchard Grazing project**

As part of the new management plan the area of the community orchard was suggested as a location to consider sheep grazing. Officers have identified grant funding to support the introduction of this scheme which will cover the costs of the fencing, interpretation and grassland enhancements. Officers from CMS and TRDC met with the Friends of Chorleywood Community Orchard to hear their concerns and queries on the project. Following a period of public consultation officers have taken the decision to further



investigate the project to ensure the appropriate sheep are selected for grazing and the orchard trees are at minimal risk of harm from the sheep. At this time, we will not be applying for the grant funding but may take the opportunity to apply in the future if appropriate.

### **Biodiversity Duty**

In December 2023, the council's first consideration was published online complying with biodiversity duty and can be found at this page:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/environment-climate-emergency/biodiversity#Biodiversity%20Duty>

As discussed at JLT on 29 January, Officers intend to take a paper to committee in June with a broad biodiversity policy to incorporate all biodiversity themed initiatives taking place. An all member briefing will be organised prior to the publication of the committee papers.

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

Officers within the Leisure & Nature Infrastructure team are working with both Planning colleagues and colleagues at Herts County Council to prepare for this. In addition, the Council are assessing opportunities to receive off-site BNG units on Council owned greenspace. A certain level of investment is first required to understand a baseline for Council owned sites and if the land can be committed to the BNG management for a minimum of 30 years. Approval of these sites would need to go through the committee process in due course – further updates on this work will be provided as it progresses. Update – Commencement date for BNG for major developments has been set as 12<sup>th</sup> February and for minor developments is the 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

### **Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA) delivery**

- A summary of the BOA and AGM for the year April 2023 - March 2024 will be presented to members via the Members Information Bulletin in Spring along with any proposed amendments.

### **Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project**

- **AMP funding** – despite persistent requests to the AMP Panel, we are still waiting formal grant offer paperwork so still under embargo. A press release has been drafted in anticipation.
- **Recovery and Resilience funding (National Lottery)**- in late December we were notified of a successful bid and have been awarded a £161,691.00. This funding award is still embargoed until the National Lottery have their governance in place. A press release, following the Lottery's template, is being drafted. Work has commenced on delivery of the project which will run for 7 months.
- **NLHF main application**- Work continues on the development stage bid but still awaited change in guidance from HLF which was due in mid-January. Anticipated bid submission now in Autumn 2024
- **Hydrological Study**- Procurement is due for completion in February.

- **Pedestrian Bridge** – as discussed at JLT a revised CIL application is being prepared following confirmation from Sustrans that active travel funding for this project is not forthcoming in the short- medium term.
- **Steering Group meeting** – A successful meeting took place in January focusing on funding updates and the development of a communications strategy for the Aquadrome development programme.

### **Landscape Recovery Bid**

- Colne Valley submitted a wider bid. TRDC were part of this. Funding was focused on ongoing maintenance work. Bid was unsuccessful.

### **AIR AND NOISE POLLUTION**

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- No significant issues at present

### **CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUMS**

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#### **Memorial Testing**

- Works took place in January 2024 and testing is now completed
- Of the 7,417 memorials which were assessed, only 17 were found to be significantly hazardous and a further 27 were found to be potentially hazardous.
- Works are being planned and implemented to address this issue liaising where appropriate with memorial owners.
- All of the cemeteries were assessed to be in good overall condition, well maintained and clearly laid out. As with all cemeteries many of the kerbsets provide trip hazards and there is very little that can be done to remedy this (except perhaps general safety signage).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM AND WATER PARTNERSHIP**

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- Our work to support ColneCAN continues to focus on protocols to respond to pollution incidents with Thames Water and the Environment Agency and are currently working to get Building Regulations involved.
- We sit on the Steering group and the newly formed Water Quality Group and Invasive Species groups.

<b>Future Reports</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>
Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan 2024 - 2027	CCLC	March 2024

<b>Key Meetings</b>	<b>Date of Meeting</b>
Full Council	20/02/2024

## **Report from the Lead Member for Community Safety, Councillor Steve Drury**

### **Community Safety**

The police have started late evening patrols in Rickmansworth High St. and surrounding area, this has been welcomed by residents and local Publicans and has led to a reduction in ASB in and around the High St.

Just recently a cannabis factory was discovered in our district. This is part of an ongoing operation around eliminating this practice wherever it goes on. If residents have any concerns about this sort of thing in their area, they should get in touch with the Police who will pursue the enquiry. In this particular case the factory was closed down and a suspect arrested.

At the latest briefing by the Police and District Council Community safety officers, we were informed that our CCTV cameras across the District- there are currently 6- were getting towards the end of their life and at some point, we are going to have to renew them. The "tech" has improved immensely since we purchased them, and we are now looking at ways of funding replacements.

This week was an exciting one with the year 6 event for our local schools, in Three Rivers, who came along to our Empower and Educate Workshop at Watersmeet Theatre. With over 193 children attending to the event. It covered educating on knife crime, grooming and exploitation. Conflict resolution and introduction into Mental health. The day before we held a Professionals and Adults Youth and Violent Crime Awareness evening with a great turnout again of 60 people. We worked in Partnership with the Police, Hate Crime Officers, BTP, the No More Service, Homestart, Services for young people, MIND and the Ollie Foundation. With two key speakers Russell Symonds from Impressionable Minds and Alison Cope who lost her son to knife crime.

We are working alongside the Fire and Rescue Service with an event celebrating International Women's Day on 8th March at the Aquadrome.

The team continue to form part of "walk with a cop" as part of the VAWG work- Violence against Women and Girls.

We have been successful in funding from the PCC office for 6 sessions of self-defence classes for professionals and victims and we are supporting a Scam Prevent Drop in, at Oxhey Library on 22nd February

Lastly, for those of us who travel down Scots Hilland have noticed the camera is missing, may (or may not!) be pleased to know that it is due to be replaced shortly. It is a County Council matter, and, thanks to CC Chris Lloyd has pushed the council to replace it.

Partnerships

Last week was Race equality week, members of staff and councillors were sent a set of statements on a day by day basis, which could be answered, we will await outcomes.

At the end of January, we would have all had an email letting us know what was happening with our "Healthy Hub's" over the coming month. This is an outreach program to try and include those of our residents who are harder to reach. For those without on line access, we supply flyers so everyone can join in. If you have any questions or ideas to improve this project, contact Alice Tomkins, who is the Hub coordinator.

22nd of January the Leaded and I had our monthly partnerships briefing, to bring us up to date with what had, and what had not worked, in January and this led on to the Local Strategic Partnership meeting on 24th.

It was well attended by most of the local partners such as, CAB, Fire, Police, local Housing Associations amongst others. We, as TRDC are hoping to start a type of lottery, to obtain

some funding to target some smaller projects across our district. This is still in its infancy, but when it starts I would encourage all Councillors to support this strategy.