

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



24 February 2025

Our Ref Hitchin Community Forum 4 March 2025
Contact. Community and Partnerships Team
Direct Dial. 01462 474274
Email. community@north-herts.gov.uk

To: Members of the Area Forum: Councillors Ian Albert (Chair), Clare Billing (Vice-Chair), Val Bryant, Jon Clayden, Sam Collins, Elizabeth Dennis, Keith Hoskins MBE, Chris Lucas, Nigel Mason, Dave Winstanley, Daniel Wright-Mason and Donna Wright

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE HITCHIN COMMUNITY FORUM

to be held in the

HITCHIN TOWN HALL, BRAND STREET, HITCHIN, SG5 1HX

On

TUESDAY, 4TH MARCH, 2025 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda **Part I**

Item		Page
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
3.	HITCHIN BID TOWN CENTRE UPDATE To receive a verbal update from the Hitchin BID on their work in Hitchin town centre.	
4.	PUBLIC PRESENTATION - GRANT APPLICATION To consider a community grant application for recommendation to the Executive Member for Community and Partnerships.	(Pages 5 - 12)
5.	PRESENTATION - POLICE UPDATE Presentation by North Herts Safer Neighbourhood Team.	
6.	TOWN TALK - TRANSPORT UPDATE FROM HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL Update from Jeff Clayton, Strategy & Programme Manager for Highways Implementation, Hertfordshire County Council, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) infrastructure for Queen Street bus stops• Recap on 20mph zoning in 2024-25• Volumes and safe travel routes at junctions	
7.	INFORMATION NOTE ON NEW BIN DELIVERIES Information about the new bin deliveries starting in May, ready for the new collection service in August.	(Pages 13 - 14)

- 8. INFORMATION NOTE ON ECO FLEX SCHEME** (Pages 15 - 16)
Information about the Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility (ECO Flex) scheme.
- 9. COMMUNITY UPDATE** (Pages 17 - 18)
To provide the Forum with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community and Partnerships Team.
- 10. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**
To receive any verbal reports from Members and members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.

Will include short written updates, read out by the Forum Chair on Churchgate, Charnwood House and Riverside Walk.
- 11. FUTURE COMMUNITY FORUMS**
To discuss topics for future meetings.

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REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

HITCHIN COMMUNITY FORUM
DATE 4 MARCH 2025

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: LEGAL & COMMUNITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Community Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To bring to the Forum's attention details of recent requests received for Community grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To enable Forum Members to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on grant applications.
- 1.4 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT THE COMMUNITY FORUM:

- 2.1 Considers and notes the information within this report.
- 2.2 Makes recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3 Resolve - **£1,500** towards the costs of a Key Worker who runs the Group Therapy and Key Work Sessions.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Hitchin Community Forum 2024/25 is **£18,147**.
- 3.2 Community grant payments totalling **£15,595** have been made to date, as itemised in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The remaining budget available for community grants for the Hitchin area for 2024/25 therefore stands at **£2,552**.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 18 April 2023, a Community Forum shall consider applications for community grants in its area and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships on them. The Executive Member has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.8(b)((ii)A 5 of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Legal & Community. That decision will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period,

following publication in the Members Information Service (MIS) and on the Council's website.

- 4.2 Other issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 and under item 3.3 the remaining Community Grant budget available is **£2,552**.

- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£1,500**.

- 5.3 If the application outlined in Appendix 2 is recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Community & Partnerships, there would be **£1,052** available to carry forward into the 2025/26 budget, subject to approval from Cabinet.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

- 6.2 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk Management, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 7.2 Community Grant funds are awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Terms of Reference for Community Forums, Section 9 of the Council Constitution updated April 2024.
- 11.2 Community Grants Criteria Policy May 2023.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1. Hitchin Community Grant Budget 24-25
- 12.2 Appendix 2. Resolve
- 12.3 Appendix 3. Community Updates

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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HITCHIN COMMUNITY FORUM

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION 2024/25

<u>Original Budget</u> <u>2024/25</u>	<u>Carry Forward</u> <u>Budget 2023/24</u>	<u>Total Funding</u> <u>2024/25</u>	<u>Grants</u> <u>Allocated</u>	<u>Unallocated</u> <u>Budget</u>
£16,000	£2,147	£18,147	£15,595	£2,552

FUNDED PROJECTS

<u>Project</u>	<u>Forum Date</u>	<u>Grant Allocated</u>
Rotary Club of Hitchin Tilehouse - Youth support	11-Jun-24	£550
Hitchin Community Gardens - Bushcraft for Wellbeing sessions	11-Jun-24	£1,612
Herts Vision Loss - establish Sight Life Social Group in Hitchin	11-Jun-24	£2,000
The Sadie Centre - Positive Movement technique training	09-Sep-24	£1,500
Angels Support Group Hitchin - online support groups and workshops	09-Sep-24	£1,940
Groundwork East - 'Grow It, Cook it, Share It' course	09-Sep-24	£2,367
Carers in Hertfordshire - setting up and running a support hub	10-Dec-24	£1,393
The British Schools Museum - updating display room for exhibitions	10-Dec-24	£1,133
Hitchin Town Youth Football Club - Two sets of goal posts	10-Dec-24	£1,300
Caudwell Youth - Youth Support Coordinator salary	10-Dec-24	£1,800
TOTAL HITCHIN COMMUNITY FORUM		£15,595

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Appendix 2: Resolve

=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	6104			
Name of Organisation	Resolve			
Organisation Type	Registered Charity			
Ward	Various			
Project Type	Support for substance / alcohol misuse			
Green option considered?	N/A			
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	None known			
Previous financial support within six years	<p>In January 2024 the below was awarded towards running costs:</p> <p>£1,500 Hitchin Area Forum £1,500 Baldock Area Forum £1,500 Letchworth Area Forum £915 Royston Area Forum £500 Southern Rural Area Forum</p> <p>In October 2019 the Letchworth Committee awarded £5,000 towards setting up utilities in the new premises in Letchworth.</p>			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	Yes	Accounts	Yes
	Demonstrates clear governance	Yes		
Total applied for	£1,500	Total project cost	£132,000 (Running costs for one year)	

Officer Summary

[Resolve](#) supports the treatment and rehabilitation of people suffering from substance and alcohol misuse problems. Resolve’s primary aim is to assist clients to move to a manageable positive lifestyle, contributing to and enhancing the communities within which they live.

Funding is being requested towards the costs of key workers who run the Group Therapy and Key Work Sessions, which will include supporting Hitchin clients.

Overall running costs for Resolve for one year is £132,000. £116,400 has been raised so far and they have recently recruited a new Fundraising Manager who will be strategically raising funds. Being awarded this funding also makes applications to other funders stronger, as it enables them to seek additional ‘match funding’ as they did during 2024 from the National Lottery and Henry Smith Charity.

Currently there are no statutory or community drug and alcohol treatment day services in North Herts, north of Stevenage, other than Resolve. Geographically, 33% of their clients come from Welwyn Garden City, 13% from Letchworth, 12% from Hitchin, and 12% from Stevenage.

*Funding will only be released on receipt and approval of all supporting documentation

Analysis of their client data demonstrates significant outcomes where 78% reported improved psychological health, 75% improved physical health and 68% experienced enhanced overall quality of life. Additionally, 83% reported improved family relationships and 75% increased volunteering days. Furthermore, 24% successfully completed treatment substance / alcohol free. 59% of all clients were abstinent.

Research by the Institute of Alcohol Studies in 2024 indicates that £27 billion is spent annually in England on the health and social harms of alcohol. According to the Black Independent Report into Drugs 2020, the total cost to society of illegal drugs is around £20 billion per year, but only £600 million is spent on treatment and prevention. This represents a huge social cost and demonstrates the value for money of Resolve.

March 2025 Community Forums Briefing: New bin deliveries in May, ready for the new collection service in August

1. New arrivals: 240-litre blue-lidded cardboard and paper bins, from May

From early May, new 240-litre blue-lidded bins will be delivered to North Herts households, ready to use for cardboard and paper recycling when the new service starts on 4 August 2025. The new bin will be taped up with a note attached advising residents not to use it until that date.

Residents should continue to use their blue paper boxes until the new service begins. We will not be collecting the old paper boxes. We recommend that residents use them for storage, or for putting out additional recycling or cardboard and paper side waste for collection. If unwanted, these can also be recycled at local recycling centres.

The introduction of a separate cardboard and paper waste stream meets the Government’s ‘Simpler Recycling’ requirement, to reduce cross-contamination and increase the quality of cardboard and paper recycling. Annual increases in home shopping deliveries, and manufacturers and retailers moving from plastic to cardboard packaging, is resulting in a greater amount of cardboard arriving in households. This bin helps residents process that. The cardboard and paper that we collect goes to Edwards Recycling. Income from it is used towards the costs of waste collection.

2. Expanding food waste recycling to the majority of flats/communal bin stores

Food waste recycling collections will be reintroduced to flats and areas with communal bins that do not currently have this service.

3. Further changes to the bin collection service in North Herts

The new three-weekly collection cycle for non-recyclable waste, mixed recycling and the new cardboard and paper bin will start from 4 August 2025. Most flats and households with communal bins will stay on fortnightly collections. Food waste collections remain a weekly, with subscription garden waste collections continuing fortnightly. Revised bin collection days will be promoted and circulated nearer the time.

From 4 August, residents can put loose plastics in their mixed recycling bin, in line with the Government’s Simpler Recycling requirement for recycling ‘soft plastics’ from home¹.

Further information

A Waste Department representative has requested to present to the Community Forums across North Herts on the new bin collection service in June, to go through the changes.

In the meantime, the Council webpage covers the key points and offers FAQs: www.north-herts.gov.uk/bin-collection-service-changes.

¹Trailblazers Knebworth, Royston, & Sawbridgeworth should continue using their current system for soft plastics recycling, then switch on 4 August to adding these loose their mixed recycling bin

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March 2025 Community Forums Briefing: The Energy Company Obligation Flexible Eligibility

(ECO Flex) scheme

North Herts Council is working in partnership with the charity National Energy Foundation to offer the ECO4 and Great British Insulation Flexible Eligibility schemes.

The ECO and Great British Insulation Schemes (sometimes referred to as GBIS) require energy suppliers to deliver insulation and heating measures to homes with the aim of reducing home heating costs for fuel poor households.

By introducing the flexible eligibility scheme at North Herts, known as ECO Flex, more residents may be eligible for funding for insulation and heating measures.

For residents living in hard to heat, poorly insulated homes, there's three routes to qualify which relate to household income, having a medical referral or proof of having someone vulnerable to the cold living at the house.

For further information or check if you qualify, go to www.north-herts.gov.uk/energy-efficiency-schemes-and-advice or contact the Better Housing Better Health helpline on 0800 107 0044, an independent service delivered by the National Energy Foundation.

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Further detail on eligibility:

To qualify, residents must be living in hard to heat, poorly insulated homes (with EPC rating of D-G for owner occupied and EPC E-G for rented) and then follow one of the routes to qualify:

Route 1: Having gross household income less than £31,000

Route 2: a combination of two proxies such as proof of council tax reduction due to low income, someone at the house being vulnerable to the cold, such as ages 65 and over or under 5, a child at the house qualifying for free school meals or having a referral from Citizen's Advice

Route 3: Having a medical referral from a doctor or other NHS health provider

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Districtwide Community Updates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since launching the 2025 North Herts Heroes Awards, the winners have all been contacted and filming is underway. The Awards ceremony will take place at the Chair's Civic event on Friday 28 February. Films about the winners will be available on the Council's YouTube channel. • Holocaust Memorial Day was on 27th January and to commemorate this we created a short film, with readings from Councillors and Community Faith Leaders. It can be watched through this link Holocaust Memorial Day 2025 • Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group. • Coordinating voluntary support response to Asylum Seekers based in North Herts. • Continuing to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries. • Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
Area Community Updates
<p>The Community Partnerships Officer Update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • met with local organisations to build connections and support, this includes Resolve, Crossroads Caring for Life and Settle. • continues to co-ordinate the Westmill network group. • supported and attended the North Herts Interfaith Forum AGM, where North Herts Council's Safeguarding Lead delivered a presentation. <p>Green Spaces Update in Hitchin</p> <p><u>Walsworth Common</u></p> <p>Following the recent flooding in Hitchin along the River Purwell NHC has been working with the Environment Agency to undertake works that will improve water flow through the common. The works have consisted of cleaning up the riverbanks and removing a number of self-set trees that could present future problems. This work on site is now nearing completion while the more detailed investigations into the flooding event continue.</p> <p><u>St Mary's Balancing Tanks</u></p> <p>These are drained annually to remove any silt and rubbish that collects in them through the course of a year. NHC try to do the works at this time of year to catch the recent leaf fall and to try to keep the area outside St Mary's looking clean and tidy for the summer. In the past we have found shopping trolleys, bicycles and a surprising number of mobile phones. This task usually takes about a week to complete which entails the tanks being fully drained.</p> <p>Please email green.space@north-herts.gov.uk for any further questions.</p>

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