

**North Herts Council  
SOUTHERN RURAL COMMUNITY FORUM**

**Meeting held both online and in-person at the Council Offices  
On Thursday 5 June 2025 at 7.30pm**

The recording of the Southern Rural Community Forum is available on the North Herts YouTube channel: [Southern Rural Community Forum](#)

**NOTES**

**Present:** Cllr Joe Graziano (JG) (Chair), Cllr David Barnard (DB), Cllr Dominic Griffiths (DG), Cllr Caroline McDonnell (CM), Cllr Ralph Muncer (RM), Cllr Steven Patmore (SP), Cllr Louise Peace (LP), Cllr Vijaiya Poopalasingham (VP), Cllr Claire Strong (CS), Cllr Paul Ward (PW) and Cllr Laura Williams (LW).

**In attendance:**  
Laura Hartley (Community and Partnerships Officer) (LH) and Cllr Amy Allen (Exec Member for Environment) (AA)

**Also present:**  
At the commencement of the meeting there were around 6 members of the public (MOP), including registered speakers.

Meeting Started at **19:30**

At the start of the meeting DG was not present.

**1. ELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR CIVIC YEAR 2025/26**

**Chair vote**

RM proposed JG  
SP seconded

LP proposed DG  
PW seconded

5 voted in favour of JG  
5 voted in favour of DG

As the vote was tied, the vote will carry over to the next community forum on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

As no Chair for the civic year 25/26 was elected, the forum voted in a Chair for the meeting.

RM proposed JG

SP seconded

There were no further proposals for Chair for the meeting.

JG was elected chair for the Community Forum meeting for 6<sup>th</sup> June.

*DG entered the meeting.*

## **2. ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIR FOR CIVIC YEAR 2025/26**

JG deferred this item until the next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025.

## **3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Lisa Nash

## **4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

JG welcomed everyone in attendance.

Highlighted that the Forum is an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.

Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item they may wish to abstain from voting if they have an interest, but they are merely making recommendations and not decisions.

## **5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN RELATION TO GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Community Partnerships officer informed those present that there is £15,000 available in the Southern Rural grant budget. The total amount of funding requested for the meeting was £2,198. If all grants are recommended and subsequently approved, there will be £12,802 remaining in the budget for the remainder of the financial year 25/26.

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

**Kate Wyatt and Beryl Whiting** presented the **Pirton Community Choir** application.

Members enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- Approaching their local Parish Council for support
- Looking into other funding streams to support the choir

### **Pirton Community Choir vote**

JG proposed to recommend £1,073.

SP seconded.

DB abstained from voting due to Pirton Community Choir County Council Locality budget application.

CS declared an interest as a member of Pirton Community Choir and abstained from voting.

*8 cllrs voted in favour of recommending Pirton Community Choir application for £1,073 towards the purchase of a piano stool, microphone boom, keyboard in addition to a case and stand.*

**Gary Ewington** presented the **Whitwell 25 FC** application.

Members enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- How many games they are planning to play throughout the season.
- What other avenues of funding have been looked into.
- The hire of the pavilion.
- The potential for youth teams, a reserve team and a women's team

DB absented from voting due to a County Council Locality Budget application.

#### **Whitwell 25 FC vote**

JG proposed.

SP seconded.

*10 cllrs voted in favour of recommending Whitwell 25 FC application for £1,125 towards the hire of the Recreation ground and pavilion.*

## **6. PRESENTATION – BIN COLLECTION: WHAT'S CHANGING**

Available to view at approx. 42:30 in the meeting [Southern Rural Community Forum](#)

**Verbal presentation from Cllr Amy Allen, Exec Member for Environment.**

[Bin collection service changes | North Herts Council](#)  
[Bin collection service changes FAQs | North Herts Council](#)

Topics covered in the Q&A:

- What to do about missing stickers.
- New Comms Officer post has been filled.
- As part of the comms plan there are/will be leaflets, literature, digital comms, emails, social media and information shared to residents around the new bins and collection changes.
- The transition and handover of the service going live in August and around potential disruptions between moving IT platforms for service users.
- Councillors have direct contact with the Waste team if there is anything that needs to be raised/flagged. Cllr Allen is also happy to be contacted around any issues.

- How will areas, streets or residents know if they have missed the delivery of their bins.
- If residents haven't received their bins by mid July then please get in contact with the Council.
- Letters attached to the new bins being delivered with information on and weatherproof sticker.
- The work being carried out between the Waste, Comms and Customer Services team, particularly around the high volume of calls being received.
- People who have refused to accept and use the new bins and concern around littering and fly tipping.
- Enforcement on putting the incorrect waste in bins and the contamination of waste being collected.
- There is the option to request a larger, providing the home fits into the specified categories - [Request a new, replacement or larger bin | North Herts Council](#)
- How the bins are delivered and how to know if a home hasn't claimed the newly delivered bin.
- Councillors to help promote information on changes and signpost within their wards.

## **7. COMMUNITY UPDATE**

The Community and Partnerships Officer highlighted:

- GoVolHerts Volunteer Fair taking place on 6<sup>th</sup> June at Market Place, Hitchin between 10am - 3pm

## **9. WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

PW informed that there was vandalism and graffiti on the Knebworth Pavilion and a local window cleaner took the time to volunteer their time to clear this up.

VP - Great Ashby Community Centre hosting the first walk-in market this Saturday that has taken place in a number of years

DB celebrated the local residents in villages who arrange community litter picks.

RM updated on The Luton Airport expansion and LADACAN's crowd funding efforts.

JG promoted 'Breach on the Green' taking place on the Saturday including a dog show, bouncy castle, and fully stocked bar. In addition, Whitfest is taking place on 21<sup>st</sup> June.

JG is involved and supporting 'Stop Wandon End'. Attending the enquiry which begins on 16<sup>th</sup> June.

CM promoted Great Wymondley Annual Summer Fate on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

## **10. TOPICS FOR FUTURE FORUMS**

- Planning enforcement and to explain the process
- ICB or Hitchin GP partnership to talk about health care and what's being done to access primary care provision
- Police update
- Invite past grant recipients to present on how the grant has been used and its impact
- September: forum agreed to focus on Health Care provision as first option and to look at planning enforcement as a second option.  
To look at taking place at Great Ashby Community Centre.

**MEETING CLOSED 21:05**