

North Herts Council
ROYSTON & VILLAGES COMMUNITY FORUM

Meeting held at Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7DA
On Wednesday, 18 June 2025 at 7.30pm

Actions from this meeting:

BE to contact **KJ** regarding various Everyone Active questions.

NOTES

Present: Councillor Ruth Brown (RB) (Chair), Councillor Bryony May (BM) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Matt Barnes (MB), Councillor Martin Prescott (MP), Councillor Tim Johnson (TJ), Councillor Sarah Lucas (SL)

In Attendance: Becca Edwards (BE) (Community Partnerships Officer), Cllr Amy Allen (AA) (Executive Member for Environment), Louise Overington (LO) (Service Development and Support Manager – Waste)

Also present: At the commencement of the meeting there were 13 members of the public.

Meeting started at **7.34pm**

1. Apologies for absence

Councillor Ruth Clifton (RC)

2. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Johnson welcomed everyone in attendance.

3. Public Participation – Grant Applications

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

Amanda Hourmand (AH) from Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambs

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- Previous financial support
- Whether families get support from elsewhere if this money is not granted
- Increase in need of the family support service

RB spoke in favour

Proposer **TJ**

Seconder **MB**

Majority vote in favour of recommending Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambs receive £1,567 towards family support service.

BE gave an overview of the Barley Parish Council application.

Including detail in addition to the report:

Barley Parish Council have explained that the need to replace the tables arose after they had set their precept for 2025/2026.

They had already raised their precept to accommodate the ongoing costs of the speed cameras which, in partnership with the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioners Office, they have had in the village for the past three years. Until April this year they have not had to bear the cost of operating these cameras but are now having to do so. To keep the increase within reasonable bounds they had to make savings elsewhere and their budget for this year is tight.

Since the precept was set for this year, the Parish Council have been advised by both Royal Society of Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), who undertake annual children's playground facilities safety inspections and Broadfield Leisure, that despite regular and costly maintenance of the table tops and seats over time, they are no longer serviceable and need to be removed and replacements sourced.

The Parish Council fundraise as much as they can within the village to avoid raising the precept unnecessarily. However, on this occasion, given the urgency and as the precept had already been set, it was suggested that they apply for a community grant.

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- Location of the benches
- How much the current tables are used.
- The total cost of the picnic tables.

MP spoke in favour of the new tables being made of recycled plastic.

TJ proposed that Barley Parish Council receive £1,512 - the full cost of the two new picnic tables.

Seconder **MP**

Majority vote in favour of recommending Barley Parish Council receives £1,512 to purchase two picnic benches.

Sharon Redrup from Royston Day Centre

Cllrs Brown and May declared an interest – they are on the Day Centre Committee as Council Reps for Hertfordshire County Council and North Herts Council respectively.

BE advised that they can take part in discussion but cannot vote.

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- The number of people who receive support from the Day Centre
- How the Day Centre is funded
- How the Centre is staffed

AA, BM & AA commented on the positive work the Centre does.

Proposer **MP**

Seconder **SL**

Unanimous vote in favour of recommending Royston Day Centre receives £1,424 towards kitchen items and a laptop.

4. Presentation – Waste Collections: What’s Changing

AA presented.

Recycling Scheme Update – Key Points

New Bins & Materials

- All residents should now have received their new blue-lidded recycling bins for cardboard and paper.
- Starting 4 August, soft plastics can go in the recycling bin that is currently used for mixed recycling.
- Recycling collections will now follow a three-weekly cycle, meaning one bin will go out every week.
- The changes allow for more capacity for recycling.

Logistics & Deliveries

LO If you haven’t received your new bin, please let us know.

- Some blue-lidded bins were mistakenly delivered to blocks of flats; this may have been due to crews working quickly.
- Flats may be brought into the scheme at a later stage. Communication will follow.
- Some confusion noted among bin crews who handle both house and flat recycling.

Targets & Performance

LO No formal targets yet, but aim is to reach 60%+ recycling and be among the *top 10 districts* (currently at 58% and ranked 27th).

Financial Aspects

- Recycling cost structure includes a gate fee and cost per tonne.
- Revenue depends on material type:

- Aluminium, glass, and mixed paper have variable returns.
- Sometimes there's a small profit after costs.

Other Material Guidance

- Vacuum bag contents: Purple bin.
- Expanded polystyrene: Being phased out, but still present.
- Soft plastics: Remove non-recyclable parts like sandwich wrapper linings.
- Black bags: Considered general waste.

Questions & Feedback

- Concern about plastic left inside cardboard.
LO acknowledged it's a behaviour issue and education is ongoing.
- Better publicity about tearing down cardboard was suggested.
- Asked about space taken up in bins by cardboard from large items like wardrobes.
AA confirmed some cardboard can be left beside the bin if necessary.
- Raised issue of 'recyclable' cups.
LO advised compostable cups shouldn't be composted at home. No conclusion was reached on these cups as it depends on the materials used.
- Requested more website guidance on recycling everyday items.
LO encouraged feedback on missing examples.
- Noted that some detergent soft plastics are not currently recyclable.
AA confirmed flexible plastics are generally okay, and **LO** noted *updates are coming in August*.

5. Everyone Active Communities Team – Update from Kirsty Jones

Team Overview & Scope

- The *Everyone Active (EA) Communities Team* supports underserved communities in North Hertfordshire, promoting health and wellbeing.
- The EA contract covers the entire North Herts district.
- A new GP Referral Coordinator has joined the team.
- Contact: northhertsactivecommunities@everyoneactive.com

Current Programmes & Initiatives

- [Sporting Champions Scheme](#): Four champions at Royston Leisure Centre.
- [Community Champions](#): Local groups can apply for support of *up to £1,000 per year*.
- [Colleague Champions](#): Residents can nominate EA staff for recognition.
- [Parkinson's Support](#): Includes new Pickleball sessions and other resources.
- [Support for Care-Experienced Young People](#): Access to programmes and facilities.
- [Exercise Referral Scheme](#): Supporting physical activity through GP referrals.

- Men's Support Group: Focused on physical and mental wellbeing.
- Annual Health Action Day: Held at Royston Leisure Centre – next expected in *March 2026*.
- [Everyone is Family](#) Summer Campaign: £2 swims and other activities offered throughout the summer.
- Other activities the team deliver/support:
 - Outdoor Activities
 - Buggy workout classes
 - Outdoor gym sessions

The team have recently helped support the local basketball club to grow.

Engagement & Feedback

- EA is happy to consult with residents and groups for ideas and feedback.
- **KJ** can provide posters and handouts upon request.

Questions & Community Concerns

- **Swimming in Schools:** RB raised concern about rising costs and accessibility for schools. Fears that some will have to stop taking students swimming. This is of grave concern. Increased pressure due to cost of transport. Are EA in contact with/ supporting schools?
- **Royston Leisure Centre Closures:** Dates to be confirmed by Willmott Dixon. North Herts Council / EA will publicise when the dates are confirmed.
- **Facility Access & Affordability:** Concerns over hall booking prices for clubs. Rates vary across EA sites based on contract terms. Feedback noted about *concession gaps* affecting low-income residents not on benefits; **KJ** will raise this with relevant teams.

KJ noted that her team offers support with funding applications.

6. **BE** presented the Community Update.

7. Royston Town Council – Mayor Luke Haugh

Have had staffing issues, but have now hired a Chief Officer, who will be leading new initiatives. Leading the hunt for a replacement cinema, and looking at planters.

8. Hertfordshire County Council – Cllr Steve Jarvis

Since the new CC got elected. One of the issues is recurring potholes, launched a trial today that will fix all potholes in an area in a single visit. It will then spread across the County if it is successful.

There was a plan by the previous administration to make people book before going to the recycling centre, this has been scrapped.

National SEND issues, there are complexities around addressing this. It is planned to set up a session for schools and parents to talk about some of the issues and discuss possible solutions.

The Council has something called the Speed Management Strategy – if you think there's an issue of traffic going too fast. HCC says they can't lower speed limits because the traffic is going too fast. There is going to be a review of this and the 20mph speed limits. They are looking to make changes more efficiently.

Trying to get some changes at the bottom of Sun Hill to make it easier to cross the road and stop people turning the wrong way.

Redrow have finished the roadworks on Baldock road

MP potholes. The pothole issues in my ward are that the verges are getting eroded causing issues to the roads. What is being done about this?

SJ agreed. Been talking about filling some of these holes and how we restore verges. Issues with putting kerbs in places. It varies from place to place but we are reviewing.

AA regarding highways – anything that is more of a preventative measure. Will there be consideration for preventative measures rather than reactive measures? What flexibility for that in future?

SJ there is no one size that fits all. It's very much a case-by-case basis.

AA based on individual merits?

SJ yes. Don't have enough to spend on everything we want to.

MP You can't put a lot of speed mitigation in the villages because of the street lighting.

9. Ward Members Activities

MP Noted that the Barley Flower Show is on 12 July – free to attend

DA North Herts Council are looking for people to get involved in a project on 28 June.

10. Open Discussion Highlights

MOP5 Expressed appreciation to councillors who visited the *plantation to inspect the trees*.

TJ Extended thanks to *Elizabeth Freeman* and the *Town Council Biodiversity Working Party* for their ongoing efforts.

MOP Enquired whether senior police officers would attend future meetings again. Noted that, according to the *crime data website*, overall crime has remained stable, but serious assaults have increased.

MOP4 Raised concerns about sports and recreation provision in Royston given the growing population. Asked how infrastructure will scale to meet future demand.

TJ Invited David to present on the matter at a future meeting.

TJ The next meeting is scheduled for 24 September. Expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to host and thanked Cllr Brown for her previous service as Chair.

Closed 21:13

Idea for a Future Forum: how does the council(s) help people with litter collection?