



## The risk of unwanted large scale developments

In our previous Newsletter\* we explained why it is important for Hart to have an up-to-date Local Plan. This is vital if we are to prevent developers from choosing which bit of our local town's rural fringe they will concrete over next.

Hart currently *has* a Local Plan. This is great because it affords us protection for a time, although it came too late to prevent loss of Grove Farm and Watery Lane.

But our Plan will be made invalid if the Conservative Government increases our target 'housing supply', which is a very real threat. If that were to happen, Hart would need to revise the Local Plan very quickly to accommodate the new housing numbers, perhaps by thousands, or be forced by planning inspectors to allow new inappropriate housing development.

### Too little Brownfield

While it would be great to limit development to previously developed 'brownfield land', local studies show that realistically there is only the capacity for around 200 new homes on available brownfield sites. This is nowhere near the scale that we may need.

Consequently, Hart's new Local Plan must include robust evidence to defend a residents' favoured choice between our only three potential options:

- Urban Intensification
- Urban Expansion
- A New Settlement

While none of these options are attractive, it is one of the statutory duties of Hart as the Local Planning Authority to prepare forward looking planning policies. Without up-to-date evidence, Hart loses planning control and the developers can build where they like.

### Funded studies

Benefitting from a government offer of additional funding to evaluate the pros and cons of a 'Garden Village', Hart District Council has now completed

the process of gathering the evidence for a possible **New Settlement**. Hart is now in the process of conducting a similar exercise with regards to **Urban Intensification** and will then do the same evaluation for **Urban Expansion**. In this way, Hart will be able to demonstrate which options are more or less suitable.

Your Community Campaign hopes that Hart's housing allocation will remain as it is, with NO further increase in house building required. However, it would be negligent and reckless not to do this ground work to produce robust supporting evidence for whichever difficult decision we may be forced to make. ■

We are lucky to live in such a special area.  
Let's work together to make the best of it



### NEW TO THE AREA? WELCOME!

The Community Campaign (Hart) is an established local residents' association with 10 elected District Councillors covering the Fleet, Crookham & Ewshot area, including your own neighbourhood. We are currently jointly running the administration at Hart.

We are locals with professional backgrounds but no political or personal ambitions, other than to do our best to help Hart residents and get things done.

We are approachable and put our best energies into maintaining your quality of life, with no time or inclination for playing party politics on social media...

Local supporters of a national political party achieve remarkably little, but work tirelessly to denigrate our efforts and our local town with lies and exaggeration. So please take them with a pinch of salt. Occasionally we have to publicly put the record straight, but we prefer to concentrate on looking after you! ■

\* To review our previous Local Plan article, scan this QR code or go to [cchart.org.uk](http://cchart.org.uk) and find Newsletter 24



# Protecting Hart's Finances

As part of the administration at Hart, members of the Community Campaign help with setting its budget.

Just like every household, business and organisation in the country, Hart District Council is exposed to the recent rise in inflation.

Although the critical funding we receive from UK government is effectively unchanged from last year, it is decreasing in real terms due to inflation. And beyond this year, this funding is set to decrease.

**Despite these challenges, we are able to bring in a balanced budget for 2023/24 which does NOT require an inflation matching increase in Council Tax, nor a reduction in any front-line services.**

Hart has no desire to increase our portion of the Council Tax in line with inflation, because we know that people are struggling as it is. Hart is limiting our increase to **just 3%**, or around £5.60 per annum for an average household (band D property).

## Rising costs

As you know, the lion's share of our Council Tax bills goes to other services and unfortunately, some of the other charges will not be pegged at 3%. For example, the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) has indicated an over **6% increase** of £15 for a band D. Let's hope that the PCC uses this extra money fairly to increase the number of Police officers deployed in Hart.

The cost of heating the swimming pools in the Hart Leisure Centre has skyrocketed, but luckily by working closely with our partners, Everyone Active, we have been able to keep the pools open.

In contrast, many council owned swimming pools around the country have been forced to close. This has, however, put an extra burden on Hart's finances as we are in effect subsidising the pool heating cost.

## Savings and priorities

Along with our colleagues in the administration, the Liberal Democrats, we have made some hard decisions that have resulted in **savings of over £500k** in the past year. This has involved some restructuring, including at a senior level, with the reduction of both a Chief Executive and a Head of Service post.

We have also managed to save money by closing a financial arrangement to fund a prohibitively expensive contract with Capita which the previous Conservative administration had saddled us with.

We do not intend to raise the existing car parking

by James Radley



All appropriate measures: Hart has installed solar panels on the civic offices

charges in Fleet and shall continue to make grants to the Fleet Food Bank and Citizens Advice Bureau.

We shall also continue to invest in measures to reduce Hart's carbon footprint and in January, installed solar panels on the roof of the civic offices; a move which not only reduces our CO2 emissions but will also help reduce costs in future.

The current financial storm is not yet over and we cannot say what the next year will bring, BUT we shall continue to work diligently to try and ensure that Hart will continue to deliver our key services within our budgetary means. ■



## Photo ID needed to Vote

Many of you may be aware that a new 'Elections Bill' was passed last year, which now means that from this May, voters voting at a polling station will have to show photographic ID in order to vote in person. So this doesn't affect postal voters.

There will be a public awareness campaign and for those who don't already have qualifying photo ID, a 'voter authority certificate' can be obtained from Hart's Electoral Services. The deadline to obtain this will be 5:00pm, six working days before polling day.

The format of the poll cards will also be changing. Instead of cards; these will now be A4 letters sent to electors in envelopes, which will set out your ID requirements for polling stations, as well as the usual information about the polls. ■ by Gill Butler

# Tackling 'Anti-Social Behaviour' at grass roots level

You may have seen on social media the constant claims by some Hart Conservative councillors who attempt to paint Fleet as a youth crime capital.

But is this justified? Rather than accept this assertion, your Community Campaign investigated to establish the facts from the people who know – The Police and Hart's own Community Safety Team.

Between September and November 2022 when many of these claims were being made, the Police confirmed there was a 29% reduction in reported youth crime incidents over the same period in 2021.

**The facts show that Hart has the lowest crime rate in Hampshire – and this district is NOT seeing any up-tick in youth crime.**

## We get involved to help

The Community Campaign aim to prevent 'ASB', not just talk about it. Taking **Elvetham Heath** as an example; your CCH Councillors took steps to team up with the Parish Council, the Police and Hart's **Community Safety Team**. This resulted in talking to young people, making them aware of what's expected from them, advising them who they can talk to if they have any concerns. All simple communication, but **very effective**. This resulted in a dramatic drop in reported incidents in that area.

We are delighted to report a similar success in collaborative working between Hart District Council, The Police, The Parish Council, Hampshire County Council and residents in an area of **Zebon Copse**, between **Crookham Village** and Church Crookham.

## Planning respite for Elvetham Heath Park & Ride

Many residents were worried about the potential detrimental impacts of the planning application for both a Lidl store and a drive-thru coffee shop at the vacant Elvetham Heath park & ride site.

Local Community Campaign Hart Councillors **Ange Delaney** and **Sara Kinnell** worked closely with Hart's Countryside and Planning Officers to put a Tree Protection Order (TPO) onto the valuable amenity and ecological area surrounding the site.

This action was seen to be instrumental in the withdrawal of the Lidl planning application.



by Ange Delaney and Wendy Makepeace Browne

Helpfully, residents there raised the issue through the correct channels, allowing the relevant District and County Councillors to liaise with the Police and the Hart Community Safety Team.

This resulted in ground maintenance improvements and extra **police visibility**, which discouraged further activity. A successful team effort and your Community Campaign was delighted to help.

## Report crime to the Police

If you have concerns that crimes are being committed in your area, then please report them to the Police. You can log calls on the Police **101** call line, online at **hampshire.police.uk**, also with Hart's Community Safety Team. Please do not put your own safety at risk by trying to tackle incidents yourself.

Your Community Campaign councillors are elected to represent you, our fellow residents and we are always proactive in dealing with issues. You won't see us incessantly posting on facebook, but we are happy to help you, wherever we can make a difference. ■



Trees at the site are now formally protected, so any future plans must respect this

# Do Hart residents deserve more for the £10m we pay for Policing?

Amazingly, there is no permanently active Police Station within Hart district. Since the decision was taken to close Fleet Police Station in 2011, our closest are in Aldershot or Basingstoke.

Since then, areas like Fleet and Crookham have experienced huge growth and Hart's population has now reached 100,000.

## Give us a visible Police presence

According to Hampshire Constabulary data, Hart is one of the safest areas in Hampshire, where Police have said that 'fear of crime' is greater than reality. However, following years of cuts, lack of Police presence is of increasing concern to Hart residents.

We are lucky to have a hard working small Police team serving us, but they are under resourced and under immense pressure. Officers are frequently pulled away from Hart to support neighbouring areas, often just when we need them most.

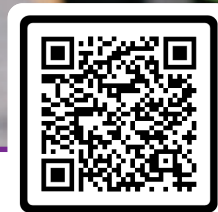
## We are paying for it

Decisions on Police resourcing and the location of Police Stations falls to Hampshire's Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), Donna Jones, who was elected two years ago.

This year alone, £10m of Hart residents' Council Tax went to the PCC (rising to £10.6m for 2023/24). Put mildly, we do not believe Hart receives adequate Police resourcing to justify this contribution.

On her PCC website, Donna says: *"I am committed to increasing the number of Police on our streets and increasing Police visibility in order to reduce crime. I will be looking to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour and knife crime and helping victims to the get the justice and support they deserve."*

by Katie Davies



SCAN ME

Sign this petition asking for a properly resourced team of local Police officers

## Let's see action

We think it is time we called on our PCC to stay true to her pledge and deliver for the people of Hart, by committing to a visible new Police Station for Hart. The district deserves a modern local facility with a properly resourced team of local Police officers.

## Please sign and share our Petition

If you want to see more Police officers on local streets and the return of a Police Station to Fleet, sign the petition to PCC, Donna Jones and our local MP, Ranil Jayawardena. Go to [change.org](https://change.org) and search: 'police station hart', or scan the QR code above. ■

## Contact your local ward Councillor

### For Fleet Central

Katie Davies                      KatieD@cchart.org.uk  
Alan Oliver                        AlanO@cchart.org.uk

### For Crookham East

Chris Aham                        ChrisA@cchart.org.uk  
Gill Butler                         GillB@cchart.org.uk  
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### For Fleet West

Sara Kinnell                        SaraK@cchart.org.uk  
Ange Delaney                      AngeD@cchart.org.uk

### For Crookham West & Ewshot

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