

The Harpenden Society supports a new Neighbourhood Health Centre for Harpenden.

What is a Neighbourhood Health Centre?

The Government's 10 year plan supports the launch of a neighbourhood health service, which will see pioneering teams, some based entirely under one roof, set up in local communities across the country, to dramatically improve access to the NHS. As part of the government's aim to shift care out of hospitals and into the community, they will free up overstrained hospitals from perpetual firefighting so they can focus on delivering only the best, most cutting-edge and personalised care.

These neighbourhood health centres will provide easier, more convenient access to a full range of healthcare services right on people's doorsteps - stopping them from having to make lengthy trips to hospitals. Neighbourhood teams will include staff such as nurses, doctors, social care workers, pharmacists, health visitors, palliative care staff and paramedics. Community health workers and volunteers will play a pivotal role in these teams.

Does Harpenden 'deserve' a NHC?

Harpenden & District's current population of 44,000 will grow by at least 5000 based on the predicted occupation of 1300 new houses in North Harpenden. In addition, the probable new builds behind the Harpenden Road at Woollams and the Hemel Garden Community

add in approximately 12,000 new properties over the next 15 years.

It is vital that the supporting health infrastructure is put in place before these new builds are substantially completed.

The ideal population size of a NHC is 30-50,000. Around Harpenden, St Albans is well served by the Urgent Care Hub and new diagnostic services. The Luton and Dunstable Hospital has excellent facilities for its area, and Hemel Hempstead has an Urgent Care Centre and evolving plans for a new Health Campus in the town centre.



A Harpenden NHC, based in the town, would provide good access for those living in Harpenden, Wheathampstead, Redbourn, and the surrounding villages,

What needs to happen for a Harpenden NHC to be achieved?

All these new housing developments require the developer(s) to pay substantial sums to support the expansion of the necessary infrastructure, including Health Services, to initially St Albans District Council. They then direct the monies to the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board.

Article continues overleaf.

The ICB has overall strategic responsibility for the planning of our health services. The current ICB's geographical boundaries are due to change in the next two years, with Hertfordshire likely to join Bedfordshire, Cambridge and Peterborough in a merged organisation.

Although the ICB response to the Cooters End Lane application states that the ICB 'proposes to allocate the monies to the Harpenden PCN practices, this is by no means a firm commitment. Indeed, in general, the monies from the levy on developers do not necessarily go to provide new GP facilities in the heart of the new housing estates, but may go into a 'pot' at the ICB, where the health priorities of the whole ICB area are decided.

It is therefore vital that a strong case is put together to support the Harpenden NHC.

The Harpenden PCN and the NHC

All the Harpenden GP practices need more space to see patients and provide the best care available. Our practices now employ a wide range of health care professionals, all of whom would work much more efficiently in a single premises

Harpenden also needs an Urgent Care Hub, which would be staffed by emergency care specialist practitioners.

The Harpenden Society supports our primary care teams in wishing to get this project moving, and welcomes the commitment of our local Councillors and our MP, Victoria Collins.

NEXT STEPS

Politician/Public Engagement on the Neighbourhood Health Centre and a new model of care.

Possible work between Harpenden PCN/ New ICB/New Unitary Authority(replacing Herts District Councils)

1. Review of services considered for inclusion in the Harpenden Neighbourhood Health Centre
2. High level planning to integrate with new/modified existing infrastructure- particularly transport/access/ sustainability
3. Source(es) of funding
4. Delivery model in central Harpenden
5. Identification of possible sites and option appraisal.

Victoria Collins MP says "Shop local this Christmas"



"We are so lucky to have fantastic local businesses on Harpenden's high streets. From shops, restaurants, salons and beyond - I know times haven't been easy which is why it's all the more important to shop local!"

"Growing up on the shop floor of my mum's gift shop, I remember how key Christmas was. It's also such a lovely time buying gifts from our independent retailers, and celebrating in local bars and restaurants, who put their heart and soul into serving our community."



Ron's Xmas Shopping Spectacular

All you need for Christmas here in Harpenden

All you need for Ladies & Men's Fashion

Cache, Crew Clothing, Mint Velvet,
Oui, Swann Boutique,
Harpenden Menswear. MISTR.

All you need for Home Interiors

Cotswold Furniture,
Higgildy House Interiors,
Lister Interiors,
1 to 1 Flooring, Ripples

All you need for Beauty & Nails

Harpenden Nails & Beauty. Jolie Nails
& Beauty, LaBelle, Rebecca Jade,
SPACE NK, Total Looks.
Tropical Salon

All you need for Jewellery

B. J. Copestick Jewellers.
Glynn Griffiths, Loveweds Jewellers

All you need for Good Health

Healthy & Wise, Manor Pharmacy,
Springfield Pharmacy,
Topkins Pharmacy

All you need for Gifts, Flowers & Books

Harpenden Books, News 4U,
Perry Florist, Serena Hart,
Stephanie Randall Flower Studio,
TGJones, Threads
Thorn's Confectionery

All you need from Art Galleries

Clarendon Fine Art
Molasses House

All you need for your Eyes & Ears

Alders
Harpenden Eye Centre
Skye Optometrists
Specsavers

All you need for Wine, Beer & Spirits

Majestic, Wines Beers Spirits,

And why not pop in for coffee and snacks at our wonderful choice of
cafe's. Brew & Cru, Brad & Dills, Cafe Nero, Costa. H + H.
Nonna's Cafe. OKKA, Thompson's Close Cafe & Unmatched Club



Ron's Xmas Shopping Spectacular

All you need for Christmas here in Harpenden

All you need from Bakery, Butchers & Deli

Artichoke Bake & More, Gail's,
R&M Butchers, Silver Palate Deli,
Simmons, Wenzels,

All you need for Phones & Tech

Fonehouse, The Fone Store,
Unique Computer & Mobile

All you need for Stylish Hair

Browns, Capelli,
C Y Hair, Dickens,
Daniel Craig Hair Salon
Friends Hair Design,
Ian Kelly Organic Hairdressing,
Jonathan Blythe,
Main Hair Gallery
Open,
The Cutting Room

Bars, Pubs, Restaurants and Take Aways in Harpenden offer a huge range of food styles, themes and services. Perfect places to enjoy seasonal drinks, Christmas and New Year festive celebrations.

All you need for Christmas at the Southdown Shops

All you need for Food and Drinks

Co-op
Harpenden Food and Wine,
Jelley's Meats.
Skippers

All you need for Beauty, Hair & Nails

Cove, IMPERIUM'S.
Wise Guys Barbers,
Studio 117,
Krystals Nails.

All you need for your Party

Party Box

All you need for your Home, your Car & your Bikes

Southdown Hardware. Milehams,
Harpenden Cycles

All you need for Good Health

Manor Pharmacy

Why not not pop in for coffee and snacks at Cafe Aroma, LAZY BEAR, Simmons.
AND enjoy hospitality at one of our many Bars. Pubs, Restaurants & Take Aways.

Victoria Collins MP's address to the Harpenden Society public meeting Oct 16 2025

In front to a lively audience at the Katherine Warington School, Victoria outlined her activities over her first year in the House of Commons.

In summary, she is one of the 20 most active members in the House, and in just over a year, she and her small team have been involved in over 10,000 personal and political issues with residents and others. She has attended over 600 debates, questions and speeches in the House, and asked 4 questions of the Prime Minister, and held over 300 advice surgeries, meetings and other local visits

One small anecdote from her early days in the House was that she walked into a cupboard thinking it was the door to the ladies toilet!

The key subjects she focussed on include social care (especially dementia and mental health), special education needs, the cost of living and holding the Environmental Protection Agency/Water Companies to account for the appalling levels of raw sewage discharge into our river systems and streams.

As leader for the LibDems on Science, Innovation and Technology, she is a highly vocal campaigner for online safety, and is promoting ethical AI innovation, not least pushing for a standard for age for data consent, which is supported by Bernardo's and Mumsnet.

In answering questions from the audience, she was asked what influence, as the third party in the House, the LibDems had on the Government. No hesitation in her reply – plenty – soft influence through collaboration with all parties, and hard influence through membership of select committees,

parliamentary questions and through national media.

She was then asked where the LibDems are re Europe, and her answer was an unequivocal yes to entering a customs union with the EU, given the economic disaster that Brexit had always been expected to deliver. Moving on to the question of ID cards, she was generally supportive, but they should not be mandatory, and when asked about the move to unitary local authorities, she was concerned that the efficiencies might be difficult to achieve, and that we may lose the local connection between residents and the decision makers.

On more local issues, she was asked why the Local Plan for St Albans was taking so long? In reply, when the LibDems came into power in 2022, there was no plan, as the previous Conservative prepared Plan had been rejected by the Planning Inspectors, with no attempt to revisit it. The new LibDem group had to start from scratch, and given the complexity of the issues of the plan, it was always going to be a lengthy process.

The concern now is that the Plan has been prepared in accordance with the former Government's targets, and there is now the likelihood that the Labour Government will specify a higher level of housebuilding.

In thanking Victoria for her address and her answers to questions, Jeff Phillips, the chair of the Society, quoted from a Hansard booklet of advice to new MPs – 'you'll never get any thanks.....' – a quote that Victoria recalled reading!



YOUR VIEWS ON...

The Society Newsletters have been published quarterly for the last decade under the successful editorship of Alan Bunting. Now that Alan has stepped down from that role a review of future editorial content seemed appropriate and who better to guide us than you, our loyal readers.

Please take some time to think about the type of content you would like to see being featured. This to be in addition to important issues about the Local Plan and Housing development; the Airport expansion; Traffic issues and our Health Service.

Public Meetings

We'd also like to know what subjects you would like us to consider for 2026.

Future Newsletters

Additional Editorial content:

Entertainment
Events
High Street Shopping
Hospitality
Schools
Sports
Other content.

Speakers and subjects for Public Meetings

Send us an email with your views to:
secretary@harpendensociety.org

We will review the suggestions and include the new ideas into our plans for 2026.

**Next Public Meeting:
January 22nd The High St.
Methodist Church. 7.30pm**

The Local Plan update and implications of further government planning legislation changes with Paul de Kort, Leader SADC and Paul Zukowskyj, HCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Growth

Controversial parking charges on the Harpenden High Street.

Research surveys for the retail sector.

The Harpenden Society has already conducted 2 previous surveys to ascertain the impact on businesses since the inception of charges last February. A third and final survey covering trading performance from August - October will be presented to SADC in November along with feed back from the Spring and Summer surveys as hard evidence from the retail sector with their views.

The response from SADC will be featured on our web site later in the year.



Lawyer Mayor weighs Town Council's changing future role

When it comes to navigating her way around the legal as well as the administrative niceties of local government, Harpenden's new Town Mayor Cllr Beth Fisher, who took office in May, is eminently well qualified. She has been a lawyer for 25 years and is a member of the Bar Council, the recognised 'voice of the barrister profession in England and Wales.'

As an aside, her husband Richard is also a lawyer, a KC no less. And, perhaps appropriately, they were married in the chapel of Lincoln's Inn – one of London's four historic Inns of Court. It is nevertheless perhaps too soon to determine whether their 15-year-old twin daughters and 13-year-old son might follow in their parents' unimpeachable legal footsteps.

Beth – definitely not an abbreviation of Elizabeth, she is keen to point out – has been a Harpenden resident for 17 years, following a 10 year barrister 'tenancy' in Cambridge. As one of the majority Liberal Democrat members of the Town Council she represents North Harpenden ward. She took over the mayoralty from her fellow Lib Dem councillor Pip Liver, who was profiled in these pages in our Summer 2024 newsletter.

One of the hot topics on all local council agendas is the mooted restructuring of local government which would mean, for Hertfordshire, the establishment of just one, or even up to five, so-called 'unitary authorities', largely supplanting the powers currently held by Herts County Council and – for the Harpenden area – St Albans District Council.

As Beth Fisher points out, the role of Harpenden Town Council would inevitably be affected if such a major county-wide administrative change, from a three-level to a two-level structure, were implemented. Whether the effect would be beneficial or otherwise for Harpenden's council tax payers is obviously a matter of paramount concern to our elected town councillors.

Accordingly an HTC working party has been established, to discuss the pros and cons of such a radical local government shake-up, especially the possibility for example, of the Town Council taking over, from a disbanded SADC, the 'ownership' of assets in the Town; a notable example being the Eric Morecambe Centre in Rothamsted Park (the ownership of the park itself having been successfully transferred some three years ago).

As ever in these matters the devil will be in the financial detail, with vital questions surrounding the Town Council's post-reorganisation budget allocation from one upper-tier authority. Squeezed council budgets are, in 2025, the norm and the new mayor concedes that HTC's existing financial constraints have regrettably delayed a number of civic projects, including the proposed new sport pavilion development in

Rothamsted Park.

Mention should also be made of the 2025/26 Town Mayor's nominated charities: the Kings Pantry Food Bank, run by volunteers in collaboration with the Bethany Church and the Harpenden branch of the Salvation Army; and the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline, which supports direct or indirect victims of domestic abuse.

When Beth Fisher is not concerning herself with Town Council affairs, she endeavours to maintain her physical wellbeing as a keen golfer and an enthusiast for Padel, which, for those unfamiliar with what is a relatively new sport, is effectively a cross between tennis and squash. Meanwhile regular dog-walking and her Peleton exercise bike are there to ensure that, closer to home, her fitness for her demanding mayoral role is not neglected!

A more unexpected leisure activity of the new mayor which she is apt to downplay is that of a now fully-qualified helicopter pilot, enabling her to appreciate the widely-acknowledged attractions of Harpenden as a thriving county town from what is surely a unique perspective.



Harpenden Society

AWARDS

2025

Developments & Buildings

Time to think about who you would like to nominate for an award for 2025.

The Awards presentations for 2024 were recently completed with presentations to: Katherine Warrington School's All Weather Pitch. The Lea Grange Care Home in Coldharbour Lane and The Harpenden History Museum at the Eric Morecambe Centre, to name just three.

Remember the Awards are for Buildings and Developments completed by the end of 2025, so there may well be some nearing completion soon.

Details on how to nominate will be published on the Society web site in early Jan 2026.



School Arts Competition to celebrate 80 Years of the UN is now live in St George's School and The King's School.

UNA (United Nations Association) Harpenden in conjunction with the Harpenden Society are holding an arts competition for senior school students in Harpenden. The purpose is for students to express their views on what they want the future of the UN to look like.

Entries can be in the form of art, photography, videos, music, creative writing, craft work or any other work of a creative and original nature.

Prizes will be awarded across all categories in two age groups with gift tokens from Harpenden Books.

Closing date for entries will be Jan 15 2026 after which a panel of judges will select the winners. Updated information will be announced in late January 2026.

School Arts Competition

What do you want the future of the UN to look like?



Ron's Autumn Retail Round-Up

Several new businesses have opened in recent months demonstrating the unique attraction of our High Street, unlike many other towns. This, despite the imposition of parking charges from SADC. Sadly, the Pudding Stop closed in September. But a big welcome to all the newcomers...AND some new owners PLUS refurbishments.



Above L2R: YEATEI, a far eastern restaurant & bar. KARINA'S Barber Shop; UNIQUE, Mobiles & Laptops, TGJones, the new owners of WHSmith inc the POST OFFICE.



Above L2R: ARTICHOKE BAKE & MORE; HIGGILDY HOUSE Interior Design. UNMATCHED CLUB Coffee Bar



Above L2R:Left: HARPENDEN NAILS & BEAUTY; The refurbished WHEATSHEAF Bar; The INN ON THE GREEN undergoing refurbishment



Harpenden's Cancer Research UK Charity shop has been voted the best in the East of England by customers, who praised its friendly staff, community events and constantly updated stock.



Eight Things You May Not Know About Luton Airport

The Harpenden Society has long campaigned—alongside organisations such as LADACAN—against the proposed expansion of Luton Airport. While that process continues, we thought it might be helpful to step back and share some key facts and background information.

Here are eight things you may not know about Luton Airport:

Runway Orientation

Luton Airport's single runway runs east–west, with around 70% of aircraft taking off westward toward Slip End.

Flight Routes

Westerly departures use three routes:

- 25 Olney (west then north)
- 25 Rodni (west)
- 25 Match (south then east, serving most flights to central and northern Europe). The corridor passes west and south of Harpenden; aircraft should remain within it until crossing the railway line at 4,000 feet. However, deviations occur due to weather, congestion, or pilot error.

Local Benefits

The Society recognises that many Harpenden residents appreciate the convenience of nearby air travel. However, unlike Luton residents—who receive discounts on rail travel—Harpenden residents always pay full fares.

Airspace Conflicts

Efforts to establish a new westbound route avoiding Harpenden failed due to conflicts with Heathrow and Northolt flight paths. In March 2025, UK airspace management—including proposals to redesign routes—has passed to UK Airspace Design Service (UKADS), which is not expected to become fully operational until January 2026.

Noise Management

The airport incentivizes the use of quieter aircraft such as the Airbus A320neo and Boeing 737 MAX, while charging higher fees for noisier models which do result in contravention of legal limits.

Noise Surveys

Harpenden has been the subject of two previous noise surveys—automated (Oct–Dec 2017) and manual (May–July 2023)—with a third underway (July–Sept 2025).

Environmental Mitigation

The airport operators claim that expansion impacts will be offset through new technology and

mitigation measures. LADACAN disputes these claims, arguing that:

- Tree planting does not meaningfully offset carbon emissions.
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is impractical at large scale.
- Electric and hydrogen aircraft are not viable in the near term.

Submitting Complaints

The airport is required to respond to complaints about aircraft noise. To report one, email noise@ltn.aero, including the date, time, location, and a short description of how the noise affected you.

Be aware that repeated, identical complaints from the same few residents may be considered vexatious and ignored.

Technology can help: free websites and apps such as Travis LTN allow you to identify specific aircraft responsible for disturbance.



The Harpenden Society believes that Luton Airport is a valuable local asset which brings employment to the area and convenience for travelers. However, because of the environmental impacts and stresses it places on local roads we have consistently campaigned—alongside groups such as LADACAN—against its expansion.

At the time of writing, LADACAN is pursuing a judicial review against the Secretary of State, challenging the process by which approval for expansion was granted.

If you wish to contribute to the crowdfunding that supports this legal challenge, or to learn more about how you can help, please visit www.ladacan.org.

Eric Midwinter

Eric Midwinter, who sadly passed away last month aged 93, was an enthusiastic member of the Harpenden Society and was for many years, up until 2016, editor of the Society's quarterly newsletter. On the wider stage he was a co-founder in 1980 of what was declared to be the University of the Third Age, a movement which soon came to be known simply as the U3A, with its Harpenden branch, under Eric's influence, one of the first to be formed and which thrives to this day.

Born at Sale, within the environs of Greater Manchester, the son of a fireman, he became a working class grammar school boy, destined to make his mark in the world of academia. Eric and his wife Margaret were long-time Harpenden residents and members of the Harpenden Society whose quarterly newsletter he edited until 2016.

He described himself as an author, educationalist, gerontologist and social historian, with a specialisms in Victorian social history, sport and light entertainment. Both football and cricket were among his abiding interests, the latter receiving arguably disproportionate attention in his lengthy obituary in the Times, which made reference to his 1981 biography of WG Grace. He once wrote 'that if the Church of England is the Conservative

Party at prayer, cricket is the Church of England at play'.

Under the 'light entertainment' heading Eric was an acknowledged authority on the history of the Music

Hall, notably across the North of England, from Victorian times onwards. Among the 50 or so books he wrote were profiles of famous comedians, among whom he counted Ken Dodd as a particular friend, visiting him at his home in Knotty Ash, on the outskirts of Liverpool.



It is hard to identify a talent he lacked. One however was that of never being a driver. 'I've never sat behind a steering wheel' he proclaimed unapologetically to someone who picked him up from his home in Bloomfield Road to attend a U3A meeting at the other end of Harpenden.

Eric's career landmarks include those of: Doctor of Philosophy and Lifetime Scholar of St Catharine's College, Cambridge; Director of the Liverpool Educational Priority Area Project; Head of the National Consumer Council's Public Affairs Unit; Director of the Centre for Policy on Ageing; Chairman of the Open University's Health and Social Welfare Board.

Christmas events for everyone to enjoy



Follow this link to find out more and register:

[https://
www.eventbrite.com/.../
harpenden-town-council...](https://www.eventbrite.com/.../harpenden-town-council...)



PANTO at the EMC
Dec 6 - 30

Please send comments on articles or any other issues raised in this edition to Editor Emeritus: Alan Bunting
editor@harpendensociety.org.
Sub-editor Harry Downie

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