



November edition

Introduction

Welcome to *Spreading the Word*; a quick and simple update of the latest news and events in and around the District from your Local Strategic Partnership members.

I hope you are able to take five minutes to update yourselves with all the latest LSP news and information, and to forward this newsletter to any colleagues who may also be interested.

Contents

[Annual Community Conference 2009](#)
[Targeting Change Fund launched](#)
[DisabledGo-Health – PCT signs up](#)
[New Housing Strategy](#)
[Future of Hemel Birth Unit \(Consultation\)](#)
[New Herts Virtual House](#)
[Get back into sport](#)
[Big Sleepout for charity](#)
[Getting the Hump helps](#)
[Hightown complete new affordable homes](#)
[Info Digest for the third sector](#)

Key dates for your diary – December & January

Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Meeting

Speaker: Daniel Goodwin, CEO, ST Albans City & District Council

Tuesday 1st December 2009, 7.30am – 9.30am

Thistle St Albans,
Watford Road, Chiswell Green,
St Albans, Herts AL2 3DS

<http://www.stalbans-chamber.co.uk/events/>

Targeting Change Fund – application deadline

Applications to be sent by Wednesday 23rd December 2009

To Jane Pearce, LSP Coordinator, St Albans City & District Council
01727 819349

Email jane.pearce@stalbans.gov.uk

Future of Hemel Birth Unit – Consultation

16 October 2009 to 12 January 2010



Annual Community Conference 2009

“Aiming high – caring for our future” was the topic for the LSP’s community conference on 20th October which focused on outlining the Sustainable Community Strategy’s ambitions for the district and how to make them a reality. A particular emphasis was placed on engaging young people in the day through commissioning students from Oaklands College to film and produce an annual report DVD and getting youth council members to run one of the afternoon workshops.

Andrew Cawthorpe, a local Harpenden resident but also Regional Partnership Manager for the East of England Prince’s Trust’s, gave the keynote speech along with Tarkan Ahmet, a Young Ambassador for the Prince’s Trust, who gave an inspirational account to delegate’s of his own experience of juggling full time caring responsibilities with achieving his ambition to set up his own company.

Delegates took part in a choice of workshops in the afternoon:-

- Stronger neighbourhoods
 - Economic sustainability
 - Today’s youth, tomorrow’s future
- Throughout the day networking opportunities allowed delegates to engage in discussions about delivery of the community strategy and to give feedback on the delivery framework and emerging action plans which were on display.

The launch of the ‘Targeting Change Fund’ and associated bidding process

enabled delegates to take away a pack of information which would help them put ideas, stimulated through the days activities/discussions, into practice by accessing funding for relevant projects (see more detail below).

Feedback on the day included the following comments:-

- worthwhile and informative
- well run and at times very inspiring
- well worth giving a day to!
- thought provoking but look forward to some action
- a great networking opportunity
- essential for understanding local priorities

The conference report and presentations are available on the LSP website

<http://www.stalbanslsp.org.uk/aboutus/acc.aspx>



Targeting Change Fund launched

The Targeting Change Fund announced at the community conference invites bids from local organisations and groups who want to work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver projects which address the gap areas in the Community Strategy and will make a real difference for local communities. Guidance & applications forms are available through the LSP website: <http://www.stalbanslsp.org.uk/> or can be obtained by emailing: info@stalbanlsp.org.uk. Applications are invited for amounts between £2000

and £10,000 and the deadline for bids is Wednesday 23rd December 2009.

For further information please contact
Jane Pearce
LSP Coordinator, Policy & Partnerships
Direct Line 01727 819349
Email jane.pearce@stalbans.gov.uk



DisabledGo-Health - UK's first online national disabled access guide to healthcare services

'West, East and North Hertfordshire PCT – the first PCT to sign up to DisabledGo-Health'

DisabledGo, the UK's foremost provider of disabled access information, has launched a new initiative aimed at transforming patient satisfaction amongst disabled people. DisabledGo-Health is the UK's first comprehensive online national disabled-access guide to healthcare services providing free, detailed access information to, for example, local hospitals, dentists and GPs. This new online guide comes after years of research that documents how difficult it is for the UK's 11 million disabled people to find access to healthcare that is appropriate to their specific requirements. How to find a dentist with step free access or a GP surgery with a hearing loop are among many of the features that the service offers on www.disabledgo.com, helping to benefit the estimated 258,000 disabled people and those with a direct link to disability in Hertfordshire.

The aim is to empower disabled people to make an informed choice about where they go for their healthcare, with

anticipated results including a better patient experience, enhanced clinical outcomes, reduced waste and higher patient satisfaction levels.

Developed by disabled people for disabled people, DisabledGo-Health provides a cost effective, highly targeted service for NHS Trusts. Once signed up, surveyors trained in evaluating accessibility compile detailed guides to every patient service within the listed Trusts, including GP practices, dental surgeries, opticians, pharmacies, walk-in centres and hospital departments. Access information is then collected, collated and published online at www.disabledgo.com. All information provided on the site is developed with the continual involvement of disabled people across the UK, ensuring the most useful, comprehensive and up-to-date service.

For further information on DisabledGo, please contact:

Anna Borthwick, Head of Business Development and Marketing
DisabledGo

Email:

Anna.Borthwick@disabledgo.com

Tel: 01438 842 716



St Albans Housing Strategy 2009-2012

This strategy sets out the priority housing issues we have identified in the short and longer term in partnership with residents and stakeholders in the District and how we will address these by working together.

Our housing service is currently faced with many challenges and is reflected in our four priorities which are about making the best use of current housing, increasing the number of affordable homes, preventing homelessness and creating thriving and cohesive communities.

Furthermore these housing objectives have to be set in the context of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Emerging Core Strategy priorities which stress the critical importance of safeguarding the unique heritage, environment and character of St Albans District and the critical need to preserve the Green Belt that separates us from the capital and prevents us becoming just another part of Greater London.

These are challenging priorities and coupled with the challenging economic climate means that we will have to be innovative and creative in order to deliver and provide a service that meets our customers' expectations.

The strategy starts by setting the strategic context we work in and shows how we work with partners nationally, regionally, sub-regionally and locally. Our Housing Strategy supports the Council's Corporate priorities and feeds into our Sustainable Community Strategy and LDF Core Strategy.

The strategy also highlights some of our achievements since the production of the 2004 - 2007 Housing Strategy and includes: meeting the Decent Homes standard, implementing a Choice Based Lettings Scheme, improving energy efficiency within both private and public housing and achieving 281 new affordable homes completed in the District.

The ageing population and their housing requirements are a very important issue for us and we have started work on transforming our whole sheltered housing stock on a programmed basis. This will

improve accommodation for older people across the District and enable greater choice and flexibility to meet different case needs at different stages of old age in appropriately designed housing. This will allow for more self contained accommodation than at present, independent living in flats or bungalows and extra care schemes for the very frail elderly.

Our Action Plan in Appendix 3 sets out how we will be working to ensure that our priorities are delivered and this will be updated over the life of the strategy to show the progress that we have made.

St Albans Housing Strategy 2009-2012 has now been signed off and is available on the SADC website:

<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/housingoptions/Homelessness-strategy/>



The future of Hemel Birth Unit

A consultation paper on the Hemel Birth Unit (HBU) has been prepared by NHS West Hertfordshire - the Primary Care Trust (PCT) for west Hertfordshire. The PCT has the responsibility for commissioning health services in the area, with other bodies, such as hospitals, providing the actual services. This means that the PCT is responsible for commissioning safe, high quality maternity services for women and their families.

The consultation document has been written to inform public consultation on the future of the Hemel Birth Unit following its closure on a temporary

basis in 2005, in particular whether or not to re-commission this unit.

The paper also seeks to broaden out the information and cover some wider issues concerning maternity services in west Hertfordshire as a whole, to help inform discussions.

You can express your views by

- Completing and returning the questionnaire on pages 23 and 24 (back pages) by 12 January 2010 to the Consultation Co-ordinator
- Completing the same questionnaire online at www.wherts-pct.nhs.uk
- Emailing your comments to the Consultation Co-ordinator:
- consult@herts-pcts.nhs.uk
- Attending a consultation event

Full details of how you can have your say can be found in section 9 on page 19. Visit: www.wherts-pct.nhs.uk for a copy of the consultation document or write to/email the Consultation Co-ordinator at

Freepost 145
NHS West Hertfordshire
Charter House
Parkway
Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6BR

The consultation period runs from 16 October 2009 to 12 January 2010.



New Herts 'Virtual House'

Hertfordshire Constabulary and Hertfordshire County Council have launched a new way to help the public

obtain crime prevention and home safety advice with an interactive online 'house'.

Forming part of the Operation Guardian burglary reduction and prevention campaign, the virtual 'house' and its garden are available on the Hertfordshire Constabulary website (www.herts.police.uk) for people to explore. There are 25 hidden crime prevention and home safety tips to prevent and reduce burglary across the whole county over the coming months. Click on the Operation Guardian logo on www.herts.police.uk to access the online house.

Stuart Nagler, Chair of Hertfordshire Police Authority, said: "The Constabulary are already doing a great job in working to bring down the number of burglary offences committed in the county. The introduction of the virtual 'house' is a unique and innovative way to ensure that the people of Hertfordshire can learn about crime prevention techniques to protect their homes."

Operation Guardian is Hertfordshire Constabulary's burglary reduction and prevention campaign. It includes road-shows to help people register and mark their property, a new range of advice leaflets and increased enforcement across Hertfordshire - and with this new initiative the county is primed to take on burglars and help deal with any increases in burglary levels, should they occur, over the autumn and winter months.



‘Get Back Into’ - Getting More Local Adults Active!

Want to try an activity you haven't played for years, or tried before?

Is it time to lead a more active lifestyle?

Want to play in a fun, relaxed and sociable environment with like-minded people?

If you answered YES to any of the above then you'll be interested in a new programme being organised by *Active St Albans* (the Community Sports and Physical Activity Network for the City and District of St Albans) to encourage local adults to lead a more active lifestyle.

The programme, entitled *Get Back Into*, offers local adults the chance to take part in regular, structured physical activity but within a fun and sociable environment. Whether you join on your own, or with family & friends, there's something for everyone. It doesn't matter when you join the activity, you'll be warmly welcomed and integrated into the group. And if you do decide to go along and have a go the first session is FREE – so you can try before you buy!!

From 'Badminton' to 'Bowls' and 'Netball' to 'Nordic Walking' there's an activity to suit everyone within the full programme. All you need to do is visit the website – www.activestalbans.com – to view all the activities being run and find out more about the one/s you'd like to try.

Should you not have access to the internet give us a call on 01727 827667

and we can let you know about any of the activities.



The Big “Sleepout” for charity

The Mayor Cllr Chris Oxley, the Mayoress and the Deputy Mayor will be taking part in the annual sponsored Sleepout at St Albans Abbey, which will take place on Friday 4th December from 9pm until 7am.

They will join hundreds of people in the Abbey precinct, to experience first hand what it is like to sleep out in the cold, whilst raising sponsorship money for homeless charities.

Last years' Sleepout raised £36,000 bringing the total raised for all 15 sleepouts to £293,000.

The charities being supported this year include two local charities, the first is Open Door, which opened in 1993 and has provided emergency shelter for over 7,000 vulnerable, homeless people in St Albans. Plans are now in place to redevelop and refurbish the old Victorian building that Open Door uses, so as to provide single bedrooms with wash facilities, rather than the existing dormitory accommodation. This will provide a much better environment for homeless people that will boost self-esteem and support them to change their lives. For further information visit the website: <http://www.opendoorstalbans-district.org/>

The second local charity is Centre 33, which is run entirely by a dedicated group of volunteers, Centre 33 is a drop-in centre where homeless and socially or materially disadvantaged people in the St Albans community can come to relax, be social, and enjoy a free meal and a drink in a friendly, welcoming environment. For further information visit the website: <http://www.centre33.org/>

Other charities benefiting from the Sleepout are Dacorum Emergency Night Shelter, Watford New Hope Trust, Luton Accommodation and Move-On Project and Leighton Linslade Homeless Service.

For further information and to book your place, please visit the website: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/Mission/Poverty-and-Homelessness/Sleepout> or if you have any queries contact Val Geldard on 01727 851748 or email sleepout@stalbins.anglican.org.



Getting the Hump helps

Members of the St Albans District Access group found that **getting the hump** enabled them to progress a difficult goal to win benefits for less able residents and young families alike.

Their hump is the Harrington Hump that has been built on the Abbey Station platform in St Albans. The hump has raised the level of the platform over a short length so that climbing into the train is no longer similar to climbing Everest. A number of volunteers tried to board the train from the non-elevated

section of the platform and found it impossible because of the height difference between the platform and the carriage floor.

Using the hump enabled every member of the test group to board the train confidently and without undue physical exertion. An additional advantage for customers with impaired sight was the contrast between the black hump and the white platform edge which defined the edge of the platform far better than along the rest of the platform.

Suggestions from the test group to further improve a travellers experience was to erect suitable signage to direct occasional passengers to the correct section of the platform to use the hump, to install a seat adjacent to the new hump as the current seating is situated quite a distance away and some shelter from the elements as winter approaches.



Hightown complete new affordable homes

Residents are settling into their new homes in Ellis House, Charrington Place off Victoria Street following the recent completion of 67 apartments for Hightown Praetorian & Churches Housing Association (Hightown).

The site, previously occupied by the St Albans City Station overflow car park, has been developed by Hightown at a cost of £18 million, with £5.7 million support from St Albans City and District Council and the Homes and Communities Agency.

The new development, known as Ellis House, comprises a mix of one and two-bedroom apartments. 44 homes are being rented to residents nominated by St Albans District Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme. Thirteen apartments have been let specifically to Key Workers at intermediate rents, to help public service employers such as schools, hospitals, the police and fire services to recruit and retain people locally. A further ten apartments have been made available to people with learning disabilities.

In a popular area within walking distance of the city centre and the mainline station, the development provides much needed affordable housing on a brown field site – so significantly contributing to St Albans' Housing Strategy.

The development was built by Linden Homes.

For more information please contact Emma Crump, Communications Manager, on 01442 292391 or email emma.crump@hpcha.org.uk



Info Digest for the third sector

The November Info Digest is now available – a monthly news round up of strategic information and policy development affecting the third sector.

The Info Digest is managed by St Albans CVS on behalf of the Herts CVS group, a network of nine CVS agencies

covering all districts in Hertfordshire. The information in this digest helps CVS keep up to date more easily and increases our capacity to support local organisations. The digest has been well received and significantly enhances our service. The digest is funded by the HCC strategic leadership contract

We hope that the Info Digest will, similarly, help you to keep up to date with changes and inform your partnership working with the third sector in St Albans.

For the November edition please use the following link:-

http://www.cvsstalbans.org.uk/cvsstalbans/documents/Info_Digest_November_2009.pdf

For more information about your local third sector contact us or visit www.cvsstalbans.org.uk or www.hertscvs.org.uk

* * *

To find out more about the information within this document, to give us feedback or to send information for the next issue, please contact:

Jane Pearce
Policy & Partnerships
Tel: 01727 819349
Email: jane.pearce@stalbans.gov.uk

