St Albans City & District Council is to build what is set to be the District’s principal leisure facility at a site adjoining the current Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre off Holywell Hill, St Albans. The new centre will offer a wide range of opportunities in swimming, dry sport and physical activities and is due to open in 2012.

The Council has planning permission to build the new leisure centre which will include three swimming pools, a large gym, exercise studios, sports hall, full scale spa, bistro and a range of facilities for young people.

**Young people**
The long awaited youth facilities will include a climbing wall and a youth gym with a chill-out zone.

There will also be a crèche, soft play area and confidence water with play features for younger residents to enjoy.

**Sports and leisure facilities**
The new centre will offer far better sports facilities than are currently provided, with a new four-court sports hall, 2 exercise studios, a spinning room and a 180 station gym.

Continued on page 2...

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**Westminster Lodge – what happens next?**

**Award of construction contract – Dec 2010**

**Work starts on site – Jan 2011**

**Centre opens – Summer 2012**

To find out more about the new Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre visit [www.stalbans.gov.uk/new-westminster-lodge](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/new-westminster-lodge)
A superb new leisure centre for the District

More than just a pool...

Continued from page 1...

**Swimming pools**
Both the new 25m x 8 lane main swimming pool and the 17m x 10m training pool will have a depth of up to 2m with moveable floors allowing for greater programme flexibility. In addition there will be a new confidence water area for toddlers (0-5 years). This means that residents will have improved access to their local pool as public swimming can run at the same time as swimming lessons, aqua aerobics or school swimming. In the main pool hall there will be a poolside health suite comprising sauna, steam room and spa pool.

**The spa**
In addition to the pool-side health suite, the Council will also be developing a high quality, but affordable spa as part of the new leisure centre.

Facilities include hydro water, an aroma steam room, 5 treatment rooms, kelo sauna, hot and cool rooms, heated relaxation beds, lounge area and an external terrace overlooking Verulamium Park and the Abbey.

**Disability access**
The entire leisure centre, particularly the main swimming pool (which includes a pool access lift), and the changing facilities, exceed current standards of accessibility. The moveable floors in both pools will also make wheelchair access easier.

**Quality, value for money and environmental efficiency**
Quality, value for money and high environmental standards are key requirements. The buildings themselves will be built to a high specification with the latest environmental materials and systems to maximise energy efficiency and low CO2 emissions. Energy control and recovery systems, water saving devices and other new technology designed to protect the environment and keep running costs down have also been included.

**Why the district needs a new leisure centre**
The existing leisure facility has reached the end of its economic life. It is in poor repair, is not energy-efficient and has only limited access for people with disabilities. All in all, it no longer meets the needs of our local community and significant investment is needed just to maintain the facilities in their current condition. It therefore makes good economic and environmental sense to develop a new centre with improved facilities as soon as possible. The Council has already secured the necessary funding for this project and aims to deliver it in 2012.

**Why the council is providing this mix of facilities**
This is a project close to the hearts of many local people and lots of ideas have emerged as part of the consultation process with residents, sports clubs, existing users and other stakeholders. Many of these have been incorporated into the final design. A number of other options, including the development of a 50m Olympic-sized swimming pool were considered in detail. The Council has weighed up the benefits and costs of the various options and carefully considered the needs of local people, taking into account proposed developments in neighbouring districts. The 25m x 8 lane main pool which is now to be built, is of regional competition size and this, together with the substantial additional training pool (both with moveable floors) and a third children’s confidence area with water-play features, will provide extra flexibility and increased swimming capacity for the whole community both now and with future population growth in mind. This combination means that we can include the sports and leisure facilities that the District needs, including those for young people.

The Council recognises that further water space will be needed in years to come in other areas around the District, and is keen that these facilities should be situated close to the local communities they will serve.

New multi-sport outdoor gym for Verulamium Park

**Verulamium Park is to be site of a new multi-sport outdoor gym known as an adiZone.**

Free to use, and open 365 days a year, the adiZone is a joint partnership between St Albans City & District Council and Adidas who have put up half the funding for the project as part of their celebration as official sportswear partner of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A basketball, football and tennis area, a climbing wall and an outdoor gym are all planned. Work on the adiZone is currently underway and is due to be completed in October.
Conservation area consultation

Views are being sought on a draft document which defines the character and appearance of St Albans Conservation Area. The document – The Conservation Area Character Statement for St Albans – can be found at www.stalbans.gov.uk. Hard copies can be viewed at St Albans central library and the Council offices. To have your say, submit your comments by 29th October via the Council’s website, by letter or by returning a comments sheet, available online or from the Council’s reception desk.

For more information, please contact the Conservation and Design Team on 01727 866100, stalbansconservationarea@stalbans.gov.uk.

Council prepares for budget cuts

The Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review is expected to mean cuts of between 25 and 40%, possibly more, to the Council’s future funding from government, leading to big reductions in its overall budget.

Cllr Roger Axworthy, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Efficiencies said: “The Council is concerned to protect frontline jobs and services for the most vulnerable through careful reduction in management costs and further efficiency savings. These hard decisions need to be made by April next year and then for the foreseeable future we must continue to adapt to achieve further savings. To achieve this we will be working in consultation with Unison.

“In the last 2 years the Council has delivered efficiencies and improvements for our residents and a zero council tax rise whilst maintaining quality services. Faced with the size of the government cuts, the Council’s focus will continue to be to maintain priority services to residents and minimise the impact of reduced finances on the stability and success of the District.”

Know your local district councillor

If you would like to find out who your councillor is or how to contact them please visit www.stalbans.gov.uk (see Council and Democracy) or call 01727 866100.

SmartWater theft deterrent launched

A fendish theft deterrent known as SmartWater is being used in the District.

SmartWater contains a unique DNA-style forensic code which is simply dabbed onto the nooks and crannies of your valuables. Inspector Ruth Dodsworth, Neighbourhood Inspector for St Albans, said: “Anyone who is brought into custody will be scanned for traces of SmartWater which remains on clothes and skin for a considerable time. I hope this sends a clear message to would-be criminals.”

Kits have been issued to repeat victims of burglary, and to vulnerable residents.

Crime down by 15%

The number of criminal offences in the District is down by 15% compared to the same period last year. The Council and police have together worked on a number of new initiatives in the District. These include a taxi marshalling scheme, activities for young people, CCTV and enforcement action where necessary to protect communities from anti-social behaviour.

The Community Safety team at the Council is calling for ideas and suggestions for low cost ways to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour further in the area. Call them with your ideas on 01727 866100.

The Council’s 20 wards

- Ashmore
- Batchwood
- Clarence
- Colney
- Cunningham
- Harpenden East
- Harpenden Heath
- Harpenden South
- Harpenden West
- London Colney
- Marshalswick North
- Marshalswick South
- Park Street
- Redbourn
- Sandridge
- Sopwell
- St Peters
- St Stephen
- Wheathampstead

Note: The number of criminals in the District is down by 15% compared to the same period last year. The Council and police have worked together on new initiatives in the District. These include a taxi marshalling scheme, activities for young people, CCTV and enforcement action where necessary to protect communities from anti-social behaviour. The Community Safety team at the Council is calling for ideas and suggestions for low cost ways to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour further in the area. Call them with your ideas on 01727 866100.
Community conference

The Bishop of St Albans will be speaking at the District's annual Community Conference at Rothamstead on 13th October.

The focus of the conference, which is run by the Local Strategic Partnership, a group of key local agencies (councils, police, health, voluntary sector etc.) is Targeting Change – Local Solutions to Local Issues. See www.stalbanslsp.org.uk for more details.

New country park east of St Albans

Developers of the former aerodrome site near Hatfield are putting final touches to Ellenbrook Fields, 400 acres of grass and woodlands to be opened to the public later this year on land to the west of Hatfield.

Plans for the development of Ellenbrook Fields date back to 2000 when the land between Smallford and Hatfield was earmarked for the creation of the park as part of a planning agreement associated with the development of Hatfield Business Park.

The plans include the retention of the taxiway for heritage and access and installation of information panels and benches. The remaining land will be used for cattle grazing, hay meadows, footpaths, a bridleway and woodland.

Make-over for historic station

Dedicated volunteers have pulled together to refurbish the historic Wheathampstead railway station platform once serving a 150 year old disused railway line which at one time ran between Hatfield and Dunstable.

Owned and managed by Wheathampstead Parish Council, the station will form one of the sites on the new Wheathampstead Heritage Trail that has received funding from the Local Strategic Partnership. When completed, the Wheathampstead Trail will include other historic attractions such as Devil's Dyke and Wheathampstead Mill.

The big Christmas switch on

A special Christmas market, stage show and children’s fun fair and the big Christmas lights switch on will take place in St Peter’s Street, St Albans on Sunday 21st November from 2.30pm. It will be an afternoon of entertainment and family fun with special guest Father Christmas. The lights will be switched on at 5.30pm.

St Albans
City & District Council

Have your say... We welcome anything you have to say about our services. Contact us at:

St Albans City & District Council
Website: www.stalbans.gov.uk
Email: contactus@stalbans.gov.uk

District Council Offices, St Peter’s Street, St Albans, Herts AL1 3JE
Switchboard: 01727 866100
Textphone: 01727 819570
Opening hours: Mon - Thurs 8.45am-5.15pm, Fri 8.45am-4.45pm
Customer Service Centre Opening hours: Mon - Thurs 8.45am-5pm, Fri 8.45am-4.30pm

Harpenden Town Council
Information Point, Town Hall, Leyton Road, Harpenden
Telephone: 01582 768278
Opening hours: Mon - Fri 10am-4pm

Alternative formats
If you would like to receive this newsletter in an alternative format, such as Braille, or in another language, please call 01727 814605. See www.disabledgo.com for information about access to local facilities.