

Community NEWS



SPRING 2021



Important local elections are due to take place on Thursday 6 May with measures in place to make polling stations COVID-secure.

Last year's District Council elections were postponed because of the pandemic but will now go ahead.

There will be elections for one seat in each of the 20 wards apart from Colney Heath and Sandridge. Altogether, 18 of the Council's 58 seats will be contested.

Taking place on the same day are elections for all seats on Hertfordshire County Council and an election for the county's Police and Crime Commissioner.

This is a chance for residents to have their say on major local issues that impact their day to day lives.

The Council's elections team will ensure social distancing is observed at polling

stations with floor markings installed to help with this.

Hand sanitiser will be available and voters will be requested to wear face masks unless they are exempt on medical grounds.

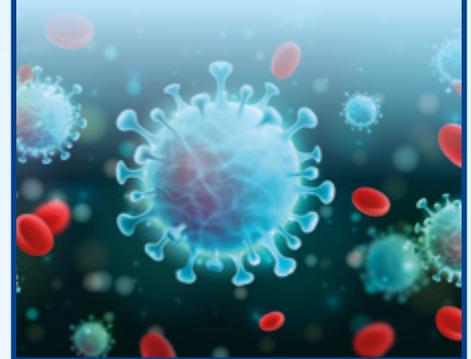
Of course if people are concerned about voting in person, they can apply for a postal vote. Application forms can be downloaded from the Electoral Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk.

Alternatively, people can contact the Council's elections team at elections@stalbans.gov.uk or 01727 819294.

Completed applications must be received by 5pm on Tuesday 20 April. For further information about the elections, go to www.stalbans.gov.uk/voting-and-elections.

COVID

Find out what the Council has been doing to help the District's recovery from the pandemic. [Page 2.](#)



Council Tax

All you need to know about your Council Tax payments for 2021/22 that come into force on Thursday 1 April. [Pages 4-5.](#)



SustFest

Details of the District's Sustainability Festival 2021. [Page 3.](#)



Community News is published by St Albans City & District Council

www.stalbans.gov.uk





Action On COVID

The Council has been working with the NHS and other partners to help the District recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, we worked with the NHS and 1Life, our leisure contractor, to provide coronavirus vaccination centres in St Albans and Harpenden.

One venue, Batchwood Hall, was ideal, being large, well located, and with ample parking space.

It had been leased to a nightclub so lots of speedy work had to be undertaken to transform it into a vaccination centre.

Since opening in December, more than 12,000 vaccinations have been administered at the site.

We also helped the NHS to set up a testing centre at Westminster Lodge car park for people with symptoms of the illness.

The Council has been supporting local businesses, distributing £27 million in grants to around 1,800 local organisations.

Council staff have been redeployed to help with the pandemic response, supporting vulnerable people, helping administer the massive volunteer effort, and assisting at the crematorium.

For COVID-19 information and details of local support services please see our website at www.stalbans.gov.uk

Why vaccination is safe and important

Be aware that anti-vaccine stories are spread online through social media. They may not be based on scientific evidence and could put people at risk of a serious illness. For our Vaccine Myth Buster information see: www.stalbans.gov.uk/covid-19-coronavirus.



Top Housing Award

The Council's housing department has won a major national award for its repairs and maintenance work.

They were selected ahead of other local authorities and housing associations for the title of Most Improved Asset Management Service 2021.

The award was won jointly with contractor Morgan Sindall Property Services and presented by the National Housing Maintenance Forum, the sector's leading promoter of good practice.

The Council made a major change in its approach to the maintenance of its 5,000 houses and flats two years ago when it formed its partnership with Morgan Sindall.

Market Depot Plans

New much-needed social housing will be created with the redevelopment of the Council's Charter Market depot.

It is planned to construct a new four-storey building at the site in Drovers Way with commercial space, nine flats for social rent and 15 flats for rent at market rate to help pay for the project.

The redevelopment, which will require planning permission, will also enhance the look of a City Centre area where some other buildings have been improved recently.



Harpenden Leisure Centre

The opening of the new Harpenden Leisure Centre scheduled for Monday 4 January was postponed because of the COVID-19 lockdown.

The centre includes a refurbished main pool, a learner pool, sports hall, gym, exercise studios, changing village and café.

More information and notification of the new opening date will appear on the centre's website: www.1life.co.uk/Harpenden-Leisure-Centre.



Eco Issues



The COVID-safe 2021 Sustainability Festival For St Albans, Harpenden And The Villages Sunday 23 May to Sunday 6 June #SustFest21

The St Albans Sustainability Festival returns for its 6th year with COVID-safe activities to encourage everyone to think about sustainable living and connecting with nature.

Community groups, businesses and faith groups across St Albans, Harpenden and the villages are being asked to organise activities and events.

SustFest21 will be flexible with an easy-to-change online events programme, so groups can adapt their plans to suit the regulations at the time.

From May, you can visit www.sustfest.org to see all the events in your part of the District.

This year, there is a particular focus on mental and physical health. Many of the activities will invite residents to get outside and discover the District's

wildlife in a COVID-safe manner with organised trails, scavenger hunts and photography.

Talks, films, meetings, quizzes and workshops will be online with lots of opportunities for young and old to learn new skills.

Residents can also get together, online or in person, with a group of friends or neighbours to explore "Climate Conversations", a new two-hour session to get people thinking about the environment.

Dozens of District schools will learn together during SustFest21 Schools Week from 24-28 May.

You can also keep up to date with the festival on social media:

- @SustFest21
- @sustainablesta
- @SustainableStAlbans



Recycling Rate Up

The recycling rate for St Albans District – as measured by weight – for 2019/20 is 63%, up from the previous year's 62.1%.

We are among the top 10 recycling areas in England. To help us improve further, residents are reminded they can recycle small electricals, batteries and textiles.

They are collected weekly and should be placed in separate bags beside your bins on collection days.

Stop Press: Litter is a growing problem in the District, especially in hot weather. Please dispose of your litter at home, and recycle what you can.



A £250,000 Green Homes grant has been obtained to make up to 50 homes in the District carbon neutral.

The Council gained the money from a Government fund to help finance a pilot scheme to improve its social rent properties.

The works, to be completed by the end of September, will include a number of eco-friendly measures.

Air source heat pumps – which absorb heat from the outside air - will be installed as a renewable energy source to provide heating and warm water.

Loft, cavity wall and other forms of insulation as well as LED lighting may also be fitted.

The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to turning the District carbon neutral by 2030.

New Charging Points

Fast charging points for electric vehicles have been installed at Westminster Lodge car park to help motorists switch from fossil fuels.

The initiative is part of the Council's commitment to cut harmful carbon emissions and tackle the climate emergency.

The three dual charging points, which can be used by up to six vehicles at time, are part of a pilot scheme.

It is intended to install further points across the District, including Harpenden, once the outcome of the trial has been evaluated.

Electric Blue, which is based in St Albans, was appointed to install, maintain and operate the chargers.



Your Council Tax explained

Your total bill includes Council Tax for:

- Herts County Council • St Albans City and District Council
- Herts Police and Crime Commissioner • Town and Parish Councils

For every £1 you pay in Council Tax

Hertfordshire County Council will get **76p Total £90.6m**

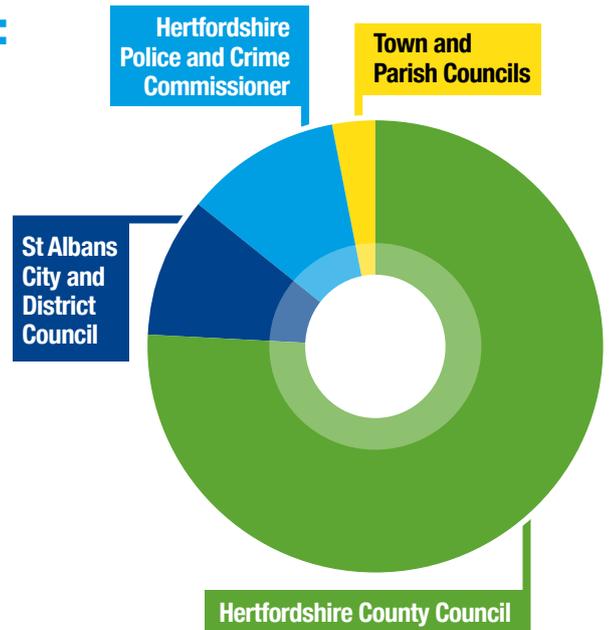
St Albans City and District Council will get **10p Total £11.4m**

Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner will get **11p Total £13.1m**

Town and Parish Councils will get **3p Total £3m**

On average, you will pay just £3.57 a week for all the services provided by your District Council including:

- Parks, play areas, sports activities
- Street cleaning
- Markets
- Tackling crime and nuisances like fly-tipping, noise and dog mess
- Refuse and recycling services
- Special events and festivals
- Museums
- Elections
- Planning and enforcement
- Parking control
- Housing and benefit advice
- Sustainability initiatives
- Food, health and safety inspectors



Our work is focused on achieving four key results for the District:

- A thriving community
- A great place to live and work
- A vibrant economy
- A cost effective council

For details of our five year work plan, including our priority projects for the coming year, see our Corporate Plan at www.stalbans.gov.uk/performance-vision-policies-strategies-and-plans.

How Council Tax is calculated

The Council's funding comes from a number of sources including Council Tax. The Council's gross expenditure of £32.6m is the main determinant of the level of Council Tax after allowing for expected income.

Expenditure and Income Summary	2020/21		2021/22	
	£m	Council Tax Band (D) £	£m	Council Tax Band (D) £
St Albans City and District Council budget expenditure	£34.0m	£540.78	£32.6m	£528.95
LESS contribution from reserves	-£0.5m	-£7.15	-£0.9m	-£14.51
Total Gross Expenditure for Council Activities	£33.5m	£533.63	£31.7m	£514.44
LESS income from fees, charges, sales, rent, grants	-£18.9m	-£301.23	-£15.7m	-£254.45
St Albans City & District Council net budget	£14.6m	£232.40	£16.0m	£259.99
LESS funding from elsewhere				
Central Government and Business Rates	-£3.1m	-£48.92	-£4.6m	-£74.58
Balance transferred from Collection Fund	-£0.1m	-£1.59	Nil	Nil
Total funding from elsewhere	£-3.2m	-£50.51	-£4.6m	-£74.58
Council Tax – St Albans City & District Council	£11.4m	£181.89	£11.4m	£185.41
PLUS				
Parish Precepts	£2.9m	£45.88	£3.0m	£49.28
Hertfordshire County Council Precept	£88.8m	£1,414.20	£90.6m	£1,470.63
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	£12.4m	£198.00	£13.1m	£213.00
Total Council Tax	£115.50m	£1,839.97	£118.1m	£1,918.32[†]

[†] The charge will vary between areas. See box on page 5.

What you pay

PARISH	BAND	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
St Albans City		£1,257.73	£1,467.35	£1,676.96	£1,886.59	£2,305.83	£2,725.08	£3,144.32	£3,773.18
Colney Heath		£1,287.66	£1,502.26	£1,716.87	£1,931.48	£2,360.70	£2,789.92	£3,219.14	£3,862.96
Harpenden Rural		£1,247.23	£1,455.10	£1,662.96	£1,870.84	£2,286.58	£2,702.33	£3,118.07	£3,741.68
Harpenden Town		£1,291.81	£1,507.12	£1,722.41	£1,937.72	£2,368.32	£2,798.93	£3,229.53	£3,875.44
London Colney		£1,295.14	£1,510.98	£1,726.84	£1,942.70	£2,374.42	£2,806.12	£3,237.84	£3,885.40
Redbourn		£1,308.83	£1,526.97	£1,745.10	£1,963.25	£2,399.53	£2,835.81	£3,272.08	£3,926.50
St Michael		£1,245.04	£1,452.54	£1,660.04	£1,867.55	£2,282.56	£2,697.57	£3,112.59	£3,735.10
St Stephen		£1,298.58	£1,515.01	£1,731.43	£1,947.87	£2,380.73	£2,813.59	£3,246.45	£3,895.74
Sandridge		£1,285.38	£1,499.60	£1,713.82	£1,928.06	£2,356.52	£2,784.98	£3,213.44	£3,856.12
Wheathampstead		£1,301.52	£1,518.44	£1,735.36	£1,952.28	£2,386.12	£2,819.96	£3,253.80	£3,904.56

% Change from last year

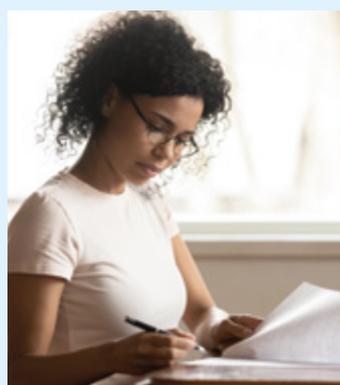
PARISH	St Albans City & District Council	Special Expenses (see box at bottom of page)	Hertfordshire County Council*	Hertfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner	Town & Parish Councils
St Albans City	2.75%	2.75%	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	-
Colney Heath	2.75%	-	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	5.66%
Harpenden Rural	2.75%	-	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	5.33%
Harpenden Town	2.75%	-60.19%**	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	12.92%**
London Colney	2.75%	2.75%	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	8.68%
Redbourn	2.75%	2.75%	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	2.26%
St Michael	2.75%	-	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	0.00%
St Stephen	2.75%	2.75%	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	3.21%
Sandridge	2.75%	2.75%	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	3.23%
Wheathampstead	2.75%	2.75%	1.99% (+2%)*	7.58%	3.00%

The County Council precept includes a levy on behalf of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and the Environment Agency. Details of the levy are available on their website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk.

* For adult social care authorities, council tax bills show two percentage changes: one for the part of the overall change attributable to the adult social care precept (2.00%), and one for the part attributable to general expenditure (1.99%). The percentage change is applied to the full 2020/21 council tax for the County Council (General expenditure + Adult Social Care precept). Information about spending by the County Council is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/counciltax; email contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk; telephone 0300 123 4040 or by writing to Hertfordshire County Council, PO Box 153, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2GH

** Due mainly to the planned transfer of Rothamsted Park from St Albans City & District Council to Harpenden Town Council.

Further information about Council Tax and how it is calculated is available at www.stalbans.gov.uk/council-tax



Charges, and why they vary between areas

St Albans City and District Council also collects Council Tax on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Town and Parish Councils in the District.

The actual charge for each band varies from area to area. This is because certain services are provided by the District Council in some areas, but by the Town or Parish Council in others.

District, Town and Parish Councils all make different charges (known as special expenses or precepts). The amount you pay depends on where you live.

For more information, please see:

www.stalbans.gov.uk/where-your-council-tax-goes.



Knife Crime

Operation Sceptre is an anti-knife crime campaign which takes place twice a year in Hertfordshire and around the country.

Two week-long campaigns are focused on taking knives off our streets and reducing the number of people involved in knife crime.

There are also activities to engage with young people about the dangers and consequences of carrying knives.

Early intervention can steer young people away from knife crime and tackling the root causes is vital.

The police also want to raise awareness amongst local businesses that selling certain knives to anyone under the age of 18 is illegal.

Look out for the next campaign which is scheduled for April with the precise dates yet to be finalised.



Neighbourhood Watch Online

Sign up to OWL to receive email updates from the local police and Neighbourhood Watch officers about crime and anti-social behaviour in your area.

The updates are free and include crime prevention advice. Go to owl.co.uk/herts.

Hertfordshire has one of the best Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the country with over a third of households already signed up to the scheme.

Residents are not required to do more than read and act on the local messages sent via email which also include missing people and details about local community events. From time to time, we will also let you know about countywide fraud offences and scams.

Old People's Trust

St Albans Old People's Trust helps those aged 60 or over across the District who are in need, hardship or distress.

Last year, the Trust spent almost £200,000 on goods and services including reclining chairs, cookers,

fridges, beds, regular cleaning, utility bills, meals on wheels and funerals.

If you, or someone you know, are 60 or over, live in the District and could do with some support please call 07541 659442, email grants.admin@staopt.org or go to www.staopt.org.



Herts Careline Service

The Herts Careline community alarm service is supporting people to live independently at home.

The service offers 24/7 monitoring for medical emergencies by providing residents with equipment they can activate if they feel unwell or have a fall.

A control room takes thousands of calls from elderly and vulnerable people every week, providing assistance for those in need.

During the pandemic, up to 200 new customers have been joining the service every month.

For more information visit www.care-line.co.uk or call 0300 999 2 9999.

WHAT'S ON at the museums

St Albans Museum + Gallery, St Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3DH
Verulamium Museum, St Michael's Street, St Albans, AL3 4SW

St Albans Museum + Gallery

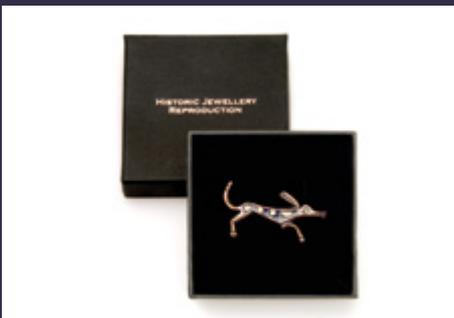
Museums due to reopen in May – more information will appear on the website www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk.

Museum Online Shop

While the museums are closed, you can browse our online shop.

Treat yourself to a variety of items and collections-inspired gifts like a mug with a St Albans map designed by local calligrapher Jen Roffe; a St Albans historical tea towel from local artist Hannah Sessions; or a brooch inspired by Verulamium's archaeological treasures. There are many books, prints and souvenirs and postage is free for orders over £30.

shop.stalbansmuseums.org.uk



Over The Fence At Handley Page And Radlett Aerodrome

Wednesday 7 April, 7.30pm

Join Chris Scivyer, chairman of the Handley Page Association, to explore the fascinating and unknown histories of Handley Page and Radlett Aerodrome. Chris grew up in Frogmore near St Albans, spending many happy hours in the backyard overlooking Radlett Aerodrome, watching Victor bombers at the bottom of his garden! Chris's talk will expand upon the current St Albans Museum online exhibition: A brief history of Handley Page and Radlett Aerodrome. To buy a £5 ticket and register for this Zoom talk go to the **what's on** section of the museums website.

Online Exhibitions

Available anytime

On our website, you'll find archives of all our past exhibitions for you to explore in your own time. Click Explore on the museum's website to find out more.



Cabaret Mechanical Marvels At St Albans Museum + Gallery

Reopening in May (Date TBC) until 27 June 2021.

We hope our museums will be able to reopen soon so you can visit our latest exhibition. Displaying a range of mechanical masterpieces, this touring exhibition from Cabaret Mechanical Theatre showcases work by some of the UK's finest contemporary automata makers. Visitors can press a button or turn a crank to make hand-carved wooden characters come to life. Every child visiting the exhibition gets an automata kit to make and take away.

Please visit our website for opening times, ticket prices and how to book.

New City Centre Landmark

Planning permission has been given to a landmark £60 million development in a prime St Albans City Centre site.

The Council is developing the area near the Alban Arena, on the site of the City's former police station and an NHS clinic.

Work on the new buildings, on the corner of Victoria Street and Bricket Road, is scheduled to begin by the late spring.

There will be a residential block adjacent to a commercial building

with a pedestrian walkway running through the site.

Altogether, there will be 93 new homes including 60 for sale at market price and 33 for social rent. There will also be around 6,000 square metres of business space and 100 car parking spaces.





Mosaic Lettings – Landlords Wanted

Mosaic Lettings is a Council service with additional benefits for landlords.

It provides good homes in the private-rented sector for local people and wants to hear from landlords.

Extra benefits available to landlords include no tenant search fees, no monthly charges and no set-up costs.

There is a £200 bonus for letting a property through us, free tenant background checks, a free inventory, free regular inspections and a free clean at the end of tenancy.

We also provide a bond deposit of two months' rent and will cover an additional two months' rent if the property is vacant and re-let.

Interested landlords should contact the team at mosaic.lettings@stalbans.gov.uk or 01727 814674.

If you have registered with the Council as facing homelessness or are a Council tenant looking to move, you can register for a property with us. You should contact your Housing Options Advisor at housingoptions@stalbans.gov.uk or on 01727 819335.



Fleetville Community Centre

Plans to redevelop an ageing St Albans community centre into an outstanding eco-friendly facility have been given the go ahead.

Fleetville Community Centre, in Royal Road, was built in the 1940s as a “temporary” structure.

Although well maintained by the charitable trust that runs it, it is in a poor structural condition and is also expensive and inefficient to heat.

The Council, which owns the site, has been in talks with the trust and centre users about building a new centre. The next phase is the drawing up of concept designs and costs.

The plan is to create a more energy-efficient building including a main hall, meeting rooms and outdoor space. Climate control features will include solar panels, heat pumps and green walls or roofing.



Garden Waste Service

The Council is introducing charges for all garden waste collections from Monday 5 July.

Most councils in England charge for this service and with the pandemic adversely affecting our finances, we can no longer continue to offer it free of charge.

Our last free garden waste collection will be on the fortnight ending Friday 2 July.

A letter explaining the changes is included with your Council Tax pack.

Further information can be found at www.stalbans.gov.uk/garden-waste-subscription-service.



Have your say... we welcome anything you want to say about our services.

We hope you enjoy reading Community News. If you can spare a moment, please email communications@stalbans.gov.uk and let us know your views on this edition.

St Albans City & District Council,
Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3LD

Website: www.stalbans.gov.uk **Email:** contactus@stalbans.gov.uk

The Civic Centre, our main office, is currently closed due to the pandemic. For service updates and enquiries, please go to the Council's website.

Telephone: 01727 866100.

Alternative formats: If you want to receive this newsletter in an alternative format, such as Braille, please call 01727 819572. See www.disabledgo.com for information about access to local facilities.

Twitter: @StAlbansCouncil.

Facebook: St Albans Council.

Facebook: Recycle for St Albans District.