

Community NEWS



SPRING 2023

New voter ID rule comes into force at May elections

Local elections are happening on Thursday 4 May – with voters required to show photographic ID at polling stations for the first time.

Around one third of seats at St Albans City and District Council are up for election this year.

There are also full elections for the District's nine Parish and Town Councils – Colney Heath, Harpenden, Harpenden Rural, London Colney, Redbourn, St Michael, St Stephen, Sandridge and Wheathampstead.

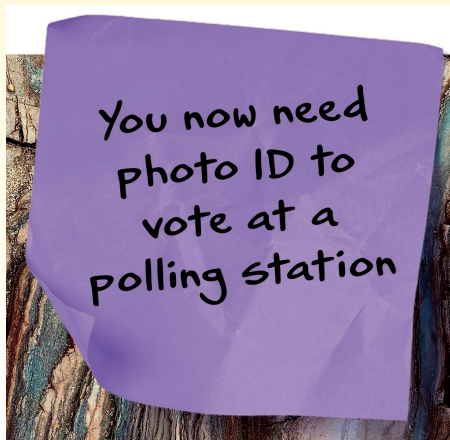
The new legislation means that you need to present an accepted form of ID to vote at a polling station. This includes a UK passport or driver's licence.

Anyone who does not have one of the accepted forms of ID will be able to apply for free ID online.

If you cannot present accepted ID, you will not be able to vote on the day.

The District Council has important responsibilities for a wide range of public services including social housing, recycling, planning, parks, car parking and leisure centres.

Town and Parish Councils also have powers over many local matters including some open spaces and community buildings.



So, it is important for residents not to lose their say in May.

You should also note that the deadline to register to vote if you are not already registered is Monday 17 April.

Details of how to register along with information about accepted ID and how to apply for free ID is available on our website. Use the QR code or go to www.stalbans.gov.uk/voting-and-elections.



If you still require help with any of these issues, you can contact our electoral services team at elections@stalbands.gov.uk or 01727 819294.

What's On At The Museums

Page 7



Council Tax

See [pages 4-5](#) for all you need to know about this year's Council Tax.

Look out for a leaflet on the Community Lottery with this publication.



Community News is published by **St Albans City & District Council**

www.stalbans.gov.uk





Picture by Stephen Boffey: Violinist Nicola Benedetti performs at St Albans Cathedral at the 2021 Festival.

Get your Community News emailed to you every month

You can keep up to date with what is happening across St Albans District by signing up to a monthly edition of Community News.

This free publication is emailed to subscribers and has updates on the Council's activities and news.

It will also keep you informed of many other important local issues and events.

To subscribe to these monthly bulletins, use the QR code opposite or this web link: bit.ly/3Ejt3rs.



St Albans International Organ Festival celebrates its 60th birthday

The St Albans International Organ Festival and Competitions which started 60 years ago will take place between Saturday 3 and Saturday 15 July.

This biennial festival of performances by internationally-renowned musicians was founded in 1963 by the St Albans musician Peter Hurford.

This year's programme will include organ recitals, of course, as well as other musical entertainment.

The full programme will be available on the festival website, www.organfestival.com, on social media, @organ_festival, or you can send an email to communications@organfestival.com to sign up for monthly updates.

Parish Council boundary changes

We have concluded a Community Governance review of the nine Parish and Town Councils within our area.

The review considered what, if any, changes were needed to Parish and Town Council wards and boundaries. During 2022, two public consultations were held during which residents were encouraged to give their views.

Changes to some boundaries will come into effect in time for the Parish and Town Council elections on Thursday 4 May.

For Council Tax purposes, these changes are effective from the 1 April 2023.

For full details of the review, see: www.stalbans.gov.uk/community-governance-review. Alternatively, contact Electoral Services for further information: elections@stalbands.gov.uk / 01727 819294.



Photo: new Council houses in Harpenden.

Housing strategy published

A housing strategy for St Albans District – including commitments to improve energy efficiency and build more homes for social rent – has been published.

The strategy provides a guide for the Council's future housing activities and policies over the next three years.

It includes key commitments to tackle the issues of housing need and demand.

These include delivering new social housing, promoting sustainability, ensuring an efficient supply of temporary accommodation and meeting the needs of vulnerable people.

The Council is the biggest provider of social housing in the District having over 4,500 properties. You can still comment on the strategy which will be reviewed later this year when all feedback will be considered: bit.ly/3DKznJj.

Eco Issues



Car parking strategy

We have adopted a new eco-friendly car parking strategy following a public consultation.

As well as tackling climate change, the strategy aims to improve accessibility, make best use of digital technology and ensure efficient enforcement.

There are a series of projects to achieve the main goals such as measures to reduce carbon emissions and encourage eco-friendly transport.

These include the introduction of paperless permits and the promotion of car clubs.

We operate 15 fee-paying car parks providing almost 3,000 spaces including more than 100 disabled bays. In addition, we are responsible for on-street parking. You can view the strategy at: bit.ly/3HNwdFw.



SustFest2023 from Saturday 10 to Sunday 18 June

Sustfest is an award-winning community festival centred on sustainable living and protecting the environment.

The SustFest team invites community groups, businesses, schools and faith groups to organise environmentally-sustainable events and activities for their communities during the festival period.

To register your event in time for Sustfest please complete their online form before Wednesday 31 May.

The full programme of events and all information is on the website: <https://sustainablestalbans.org/sustfest/>.

There will be talks, films, meetings and workshops with lots of opportunities for people to learn new skills such as growing their own vegetables or vegan cooking. Events for all ages will be held across St Albans, Harpenden and the villages.

Energy hotline

Residents can improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce bills with advice from the St Albans Home Energy Support Service.

You can call a free helpline and be put in touch with experts from the National Energy Foundation's Better Housing, Better Health (BHBH) team.

They can advise on how to save energy at home and whether you are eligible for funding to make energy efficiency enhancements to your home.

The service is available to all households, regardless of income, by calling **0800 107 0044** on weekdays from 9am to 5pm, by emailing bhbh@nef.org.uk or by going online at www.bhbh.org.uk.

Emissions free parks equipment

Eco-friendly equipment is being used to maintain our parks and green spaces across the District.

John O'Conner – our grounds maintenance contractor – is ditching petrol-driven machines for battery-powered ones.

The switch is in keeping with our commitment to tackling climate change by cutting emissions to net zero across the District by 2030.

Among the all-electric equipment now being used are an all-terrain vehicle for park patrols, two vans and a JCB excavator for digging and heavy-lifting work.

A range of battery-powered hand-held equipment is also being used including strimmers, leaf blowers and hedge cutters.



Cllr Helen Campbell,
Chair of the Public Realm
Committee, tries out the
all-electric digger.

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 **77p Total £102.3m**

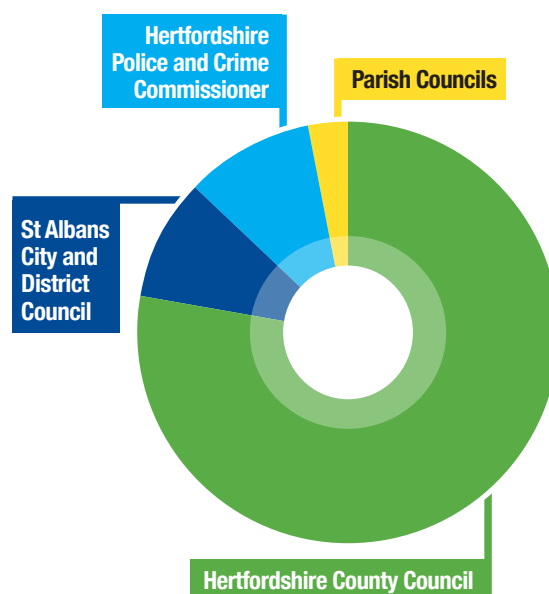
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner will get **11p Total £15.2m**

St Albans City and District Council will get **9p Total £12.6m**

Parish Councils will get **3p Total £3.5m**

On average, you will pay just £3.77 a week for all the services provided by your District Council including:

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



Our five key priorities, designed to deliver a viable, happy, inclusive and sustainable community, are to:

- Combat the climate emergency,
- Deliver more social housing,
- Support our local economy,
- Enhance the District's cultural offer,
- Promote equality, inclusion and fairness.

How Council Tax is calculated

The Council's funding comes from a number of sources including Council Tax. The Council's gross expenditure of £39.7m is the main determinant of the level of Council Tax after allowing for expected income.

Expenditure and Income Summary	2022-2023		2023-2024	
	£m	Council Tax Band (D) £	£m	Council Tax Band (D) £
St Albans City and District Council budget expenditure	£38.0m	£598.91	£39.7m	£622.63
LESS contribution from reserves	-£0.1m	-£1.29	-£0.1m	-£1.52
Total Gross Expenditure for Council Activities	£37.9m	£597.62	£39.6m	£621.11
LESS income from fees, charges, sales, rent, grants	-£20.3m	-£321.01	-£21.0m	-£330.30
St Albans City & District Council net budget	£17.6m	£276.61	£18.6m	£290.81
LESS funding from elsewhere				
Central Government and Business Rates	-£5.3m	-£83.45	-£6.0m	-£94.71
Balance transferred from Collection Fund	-£0.2m	-£2.75	-	-
Total funding from elsewhere	-£5.5m	-£86.20	-£6.0m	-£94.71
Council Tax – St Albans City & District Council	£12.1m	£190.41	£12.6m	£196.10
PLUS				
Parish Precepts	£3.3m	£51.34	£3.5m	£54.26
Hertfordshire County Council Precept	£96.9m	£1,529.31	£102.3m	£1,605.63
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	£14.1m	£223.00	£15.2m	£238.00
Total Council Tax	£126.4m	£1,994.06*	£133.6m	£2,093.99*

*This is the average rate of Council Tax across the District. The actual 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		1,370.34	1,598.73	1,827.12	2,055.51	2,512.29	2,969.08	3,425.85	4,111.02
Colney Heath		1,451.51	1,693.43	1,935.35	2,177.27	2,661.11	3,144.96	3,628.78	4,354.54
Harpenden Rural		1,373.20	1,602.06	1,830.93	2,059.79	2,517.52	2,975.26	3,432.99	4,119.58
Harpenden Town		1,415.28	1,651.16	1,887.05	2,122.92	2,594.68	3,066.45	3,538.20	4,245.84
London Colney		1,411.12	1,646.31	1,881.50	2,116.68	2,587.05	3,057.44	3,527.80	4,233.36
Redbourn		1,424.10	1,661.44	1,898.80	2,136.14	2,610.84	3,085.55	3,560.24	4,272.28
St Michael		1,358.83	1,585.30	1,811.77	2,038.24	2,491.18	2,944.14	3,397.07	4,076.48
St Stephen		1,417.63	1,653.89	1,890.18	2,126.44	2,598.99	3,071.53	3,544.07	4,252.88
Sandridge		1,398.00	1,631.00	1,864.00	2,097.00	2,563.00	3,029.01	3,495.00	4,194.00
Wheathampstead		1,427.60	1,665.53	1,903.47	2,141.40	2,617.27	3,093.14	3,569.00	4,282.80

% 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	2.89%	-4.60%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	-
Colney Heath	2.89%	N/A	2.99% +2%	6.73%	85.32%
Harpenden Rural	2.89%	-	2.99% +2%	6.73%	55.91%
Harpenden Town	2.89%	10.20%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	8.95%
London Colney	2.89%	28.31%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	3.07%
Redbourn	2.89%	13.43%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	-0.10%
St Michael	2.89%	-	2.99% +2%	6.73%	1.65%
St Stephen	2.89%	42.04%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	4.99%
Sandridge	2.89%	8.71%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	1.80%
Wheathampstead	2.89%	18.58%	2.99% +2%	6.73%	14.70%

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.

[#] The percentage change on the combined total of General and Special Expenses for St Albans City and District Council is 2.99%.

^{*} 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 (2.99%). The percentage change is applied to the full 2022/23 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

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.

Town and Parish Councils have the freedom to set their own precepts. The amount you pay depends on where you live.

For more information, please see:

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



Help prevent crime by joining OWL

You can help the police solve crime and take steps to prevent it happening to you by joining OWL (Online Watch Link) at www.owl.co.uk/herts.

By signing up, you will receive messages, usually via email, about issues affecting your local area including neighbourhood burglaries with relevant crime prevention advice.



Penny Brown from Hertfordshire Police Community Safety Unit said: "It's so quick and simple to sign up and you just need to read the messages and act on any crime prevention advice."

You can also download the OWL crime alerts app and receive pop-up notifications for important messages like high risk missing people or emergencies.

Penny added: "Over 20,000 households in St Albans District are already signed up to OWL – over a third – but we are keen to make sure more residents benefit from our messages to help prevent and detect crime and keep our communities safer."

Make sure you don't get dipped



Purse dipping continues to be one of the neighbourhood priorities for St Albans District.

Plain-clothed and high-visibility police officers regularly carry out patrols to help prevent and detect purse dippers operating in the City Centre shops and market stalls.

In February, police arrested five dippers in just two days thanks to Safer Neighbourhood Team officers working with the Council's CCTV operators.

To help reduce the chances of your possessions being stolen, you should keep your bag zipped up with the zip facing you.

Try not to withdraw large sums of cash, don't leave your mobile phone in your back pocket and keep an eye on elderly or vulnerable people.

For further crime prevention advice, visit bit.ly/3YEBzK6.



Coronation street parties deadline

The deadline for applying for a road closure for a Coronation party is Sunday 26 March.

Hertfordshire County Council has decided to waive the usual fees to encourage as many people as possible to celebrate the historic occasion on Saturday 6 May.

You can find out more information and how to apply for a road closure at: bit.ly/3x6LRHo.

You can invite the Mayor of St Albans, Councillor Geoff Harrison, or an Honorary Alderman to your event by contacting mayoralty@stalbens.gov.uk.

Updates on what is happening around the District on the Coronation weekend will be posted at: www.enjoystalbens.com/coronation.



Healthy Hub is here to help

You're not alone. Taking that first step to change a habit or ask for help isn't always easy.

St Albans Healthy Hub is your free one-stop-shop for health and wellbeing information, advice and support.

Whether you'd like to quit smoking, get money advice or simply try a new activity to get out and about more, your local hub can help you every step of the way.

The organisations involved include Citizens Advice, Communities 1st, Mind in Mid Herts and many more.

You can find more information at bit.ly/3I84ZLj, or use the QR code.



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

For detailed information about the events programme, go to: www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk.
Make sure you visit regularly to catch all these must-see exhibitions.



Exhibition: The Forgotten Battle of St Albans

Friday 24 March to Wednesday
28 June, Keeper's Galleries,
Museum + Gallery, Free

This is the first exhibition to cover this War of the Roses battle. Fought in St Albans over 500 years ago, on 17 February 1461, it was one of the largest battles of the conflict.

The exhibition delves into the location as well as the motives, tactics and aftermath of the battle. The story unfolds through a range of exhibits, replicas revealing the nature of medieval warfare and artefacts including England's second oldest cannonball.



Image: Second Battle of St Albans
by Graham Turner (c) A5

Tots Tales

Verulamium Museum, the last
Friday of every month, 10.30-
11.30am and 1.15-2.15pm, £5

Join us for a story, craft activity
and museum hunt. Suitable for
2-4-year-olds, accompanied by
an adult.

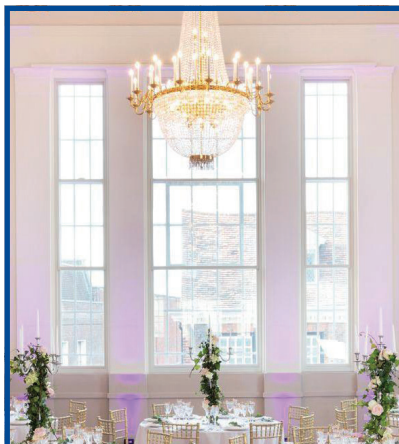


Exhibition: Time for Tea

Friday 19 May 2023, Weston Gallery,
Museum + Gallery, Free

A cup of tea is an enjoyable
moment in many peoples' lives. In
this exhibition, we will explore tea
from leaf to cup, everything from
how you should boil your water to
the best kind of cup or mug to use.

Discover the tea houses and cafes
that St Albans has been home to
in the past and travel across the
Atlantic to a sugar plantation run by
a St Albans landowner.



Celebrate in style at St Albans Museum + Gallery

Are you looking for a unique
place to host a celebration?

St Albans Museum + Gallery
is a fantastic venue for an
event such as a wedding,
birthday celebration or
corporate function. Choose
the grandeur of our Assembly
Room or the quirky nature of
our Courtroom.

Contact us at
museumevents@stalbans.gov.uk
to make your
booking today.

Museum Talk, Museum + Gallery

£6 on Zoom or £10 in person.
A series of monthly history
talks covering a range of topics
and inspired by our current
exhibitions, local history or
seasonal events.

**Talk: Battlefield Queens:
The Women Who Shaped the
Wars of the Roses, Thursday
20 April, 7pm**

Linked to our exhibition The
Forgotten Battle of St Albans, we
explore how key women, including
three Queens of England, used
their power and influence to turn
the tide of this war and ultimately
decided who won.

**Talk: A Roman Palace at
Verulamium and Other Stories,
Tuesday 16 May, 7pm**

Archaeologist Kris Lockyear will
show methods used to uncover
the archaeology of Verulamium
since 2013. He will speak about
recent finds that have been
unearthed, including a Roman
palace discovered last year.



Museum + Gallery lit up in support of Ukraine

Our Museum + Gallery was lit up in Ukraine's national colours to mark the anniversary of the invasion by Russia.

Dozens of residents showed their solidarity with the Ukrainian people by turning out to look at the landmark building as it was illuminated in blue and yellow on Friday 24 February.

Our staff also took part in a national minute's silence at 11am at the Civic Centre and the Ukrainian flag was flown from the Alban Arena.

The District has been highly active in supporting Ukraine with more than 100 residents offering to take in a refugee fleeing the war.



Picture: Colin Jackson (left) and Harry Redknapp at Harpenden Leisure Centre

Stars turn out for leisure centre open days

Football legend Harry Redknapp and Olympic hero Colin Jackson were among the sporting celebrities who attended open days at our four leisure centres.

Our leisure contractor Everyone Active organised the events to allow residents to view the facilities and take part in some of the activities on offer.

More than 1,000 people turned up to the open day at Harpenden Leisure Centre which was recently rebuilt as part of a £20 million project.

More than 3,000 people went to Batchwood and Westminster Lodge, where former world champion swimmer Mark Foster made an appearance, and there was a high attendance too at Cotlandswick.

Former England striker Alan Shearer, now a BBC TV football pundit, was also guest of honour at another event, the opening of the FORTIS gym at Harpenden Leisure Centre.

FORTIS is a new high-intensity workout which is suitable for people of all fitness levels and ages.



Netball and tennis courts open

Our new all-weather netball and tennis courts have opened at Verulamium Park in St Albans.

The courts – which are floodlit – can be booked by individuals as well as community sports clubs.

There are two courts marked out for tennis and netball with the playing area secured by a 10 foot tall fence.

The courts replace a similar but much lower grade facility that had reached the end of its life and is now the location of a children's play area. You can contact Everyone Active for bookings at: bit.ly/3RSijXp.



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

For latest service information, updates and general 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.accessable.co.uk for information about access to local facilities.

Twitter: @StAlbansCouncil.

Facebook: St Albans Council.

Instagram: @sadccomms.