



# HARPENDEN Q TOWN COUNCIL

QUALITY  
TOWN  
COUNCIL

*C L O S E R   T O   T H E   C O M M U N I T Y*

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

**2008/2009**



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## POLICY STATEMENT 2008/2009

### THE COUNCIL

#### **Mission Statement:**

To promote the area as a place to live, a place to work, a place to visit and a place to invest.

### POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#### **Corporate Objectives**

- P&F 1. The Council's Corporate Objectives are:
- To promote and represent the community's views and aspirations at local, county, regional and national level.
  - To serve those who live in the Town, work in the Town and visit the Town.
  - To promote growth of Council activities where new services can be taken on effectively and efficiently.
  - To strive to improve the quality of life for all residents of the Town.
  - To work in partnership at local, county, regional and national level to promote and provide for the well being of the Town.
- P&F 2. The Town Council is committed to continuous improvement through review, consultation and implementation throughout the range of services and functions that the Council delivers.
- P&F 3. The Town Council will continue to strive for maximum efficiency of service through effective and economic delivery.
- P&F 4. The Town Council will target to keep Council Tax below inflation year on year, seek to set a budget accordingly and will closely monitor expenditure and income to keep within targets.
- P&F 5. A stable and robust reserve will be maintained to protect the Council's assets against unexpected liabilities.

## **Grants**

- P&F 6. General Grants will be awarded throughout the year by the Policy and Finance Committee.
- P&F 7. The Town Council will seek to identify groups who have previously not applied for General Grant funding to increase awareness of the service and develop a database of eligible groups.
- P&F 8. The Town Council will allocate General Grants in accordance with agreed criteria reviewed by the Policy and Finance Committee from time to time.
- P&F 9. The Town Council will develop a strong audit trail to monitor Grant money.
- P&F 10. Service Funding Agreements will be provided where appropriate to assist groups and organisations with sustainable service provision.
- P&F 11. The Town Council will actively seek other possible sources of grant funding which might be attracted through 'pump priming', other Government bodies or lottery funding.

## **Harpenden Memorial Hospital**

- P&F 12. The Town Council is committed to seeking solutions to retain the Memorial Hospital as a functioning health facility.
- P&F 13. The Council will work with partners in the provision of Health Services to seek opportunities to develop and enhance the range of services provided at the Memorial Hospital and locally.

## **Modernisation of Local Government**

- P&F 14. The Town Council recognises there is continuing change in Local Government processes and powers and whilst appropriate will maintain quality status as a Quality Town Council.
- P&F 15. The Town Council will ensure that its procedures provide the environment for effective decision making on all activities of the Council and can respond to new initiatives and legislation introduced by the Government.
- P&F 16. As the first tier of local government the Town Council will pursue the extension of its powers, to allow for the delivery of services and activities which can be best dealt with at a local level. The Town Council will seek to work in partnership with other Councils in order to achieve this objective being mindful not to disadvantage local residents and the need to avoid double taxation.

P&F 17. The Town Council will always take a position representing the best interests of residents and the Council, as a corporate body, seeking an equal working partnership with all other agencies without compromising the values and ambitions of the Council.

P&F 18. The Town Council will continue to lobby Hertfordshire Highways to make improvements to roads in the Town.

### **East of England Regional Assembly, Government Office (East) and the Regional Development Agency**

P&F 19. The Town Council will consider all consultation documents upon which it is invited to comment and seek a consensus amongst elected Members, after seeking views of residents, as to the best response. In particular the Council will:

- protect the Green Belt around the Town,
- contest the expansion of Luton Airport
- object to further inappropriate allocation of sites for gypsy and travellers accommodation whilst there is no evidence to support need above that already provided in the District.

### **Community Safety**

P&F 20. The Town Council seeks to work with the St Albans Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council and the Police Authority to promote safer communities and keep Harpenden a safe place to live.

P&F 21. The Town Council recognises the valuable contribution to the community by Neighbourhood Watch.

P&F 22. The Town Council support the provision of CCTV cameras in Harpenden Town Centre, Southdown and Batford as an aid to deter crime and encourage a safer community.

P&F 23. The Town Council supports the provision of a Restricted Alcohol Zone (Designated Public Place Order – DPPO) and will work with the Police Authority to progress the review of the area as appropriate and necessary.

### **Land and Estate Management**

P&F 24. The Town Council will investigate community use for the land formally used as allotments and if appropriate seek to provide affordable accommodation to the benefit of local residents.

P&F 25. The Town Council will consider opportunities for the devolution of land and estate management, referring all recommendations to Council for final consideration

P&F 26. The Town Council will review any land availability with a view to acquisition.

### **Town Council Website**

P&F 27. The Town Council will maintain an independent website to ensure the Town has a high quality presence on the Internet. Aims for the website should include:

- To provide information on the activities and services of the Town Council
- Ensure that information is up to date
- To market the Town to potential visitors
- Promote events and activities
- Provide 'hotlinks' to associated sites of benefit to the Council and visitors to the Council's web address.

### **Fairtrade**

P&F 28. The Town Council supports the principles of Fairtrade and thus;

- Promotes the awareness of Fairtrade issues amongst its employees and the residents of Harpenden.
- Uses Fairtrade goods whenever possible at Town Council meetings and events.

### **Park Hall**

P&F 29. The Town Council will promote and market the use of Park Hall as a function room in order to:

- Provide a facility at a competitive hire charge for use by residents
- Attract business to the Town
- Maximise income generation through the hire

### **Information Point**

P&F 30. The Town Council will provide an Information Point in conjunction with the District and County Councils to deliver a range of services provided by all three tiers of local government. The Information Point will seek to develop a 'one-stop-shop' facility to serve all the residents and visitors of the Town.

P&F 31. The Town Council will provide a facility for residents to view planning applications and plans concerning properties/developments within the Town.

## **The Youth Town Council**

- P&F 32. The Town Council will support a Youth Town Council to promote the ideas and ambitions of the youth resident in the town.

## **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Commons and Greens**

- EC 1. The Town Council is committed to promoting sustainable policies that strive to improve and make a safer environment for the community and visitors of Harpenden. These will meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations.
- EC 2. The Town Council will protect and preserve the Common and Green Spaces in the Town, the purpose of which is:
- To provide an amenity open space that can be enjoyed by the community and visitors for 'air and exercise', and ensure the Common is a living part of community life.
  - To regulate uses of Common land for community enjoyment whilst preserving its character.
  - To implement, as far as possible, maintenance and planting programmes that will promote sustainable living.
  - To work in partnership with professional organisations (such as the Countryside Management Service, Hertfordshire Biological Records and the District Council) as advisory bodies for the Town Council.
  - To monitor the performance of the Town Council's contractors in providing these services.
  - To monitor the tenants on the Common and any wayleaves, in accordance with their Agreements, the Management Plan and Pesticide Policy.
  - To provide and maintain the Public Footpaths to be enjoyed by the community.
  - To work for a cleaner and greener Harpenden.
  - To maintain and protect the ecological balance of the area whilst enabling its use for 'air and exercise' by the community.
- EC 3. The Town Council will seek grant funding and subsidies from national and local organisations as appropriate and necessary, such as DEFRA, the Forestry Commission and other sources.

## **Allotments**

- EC 4. The Town Council wants to promote the widest possible use of the allotments by residents. In so doing it will;
- Facilitate, assist and provide sustainability for allotment holders.
  - Strengthen links and work in partnership with the Allotment Clubs (SHAGS and EHGC) in such ways as to improve site security, ensuring sites are maintained to a high standard and support Allotment Competitions.
  - Work with the Allotment Clubs to keep vacant plots tidy and the surrounding areas in good order to attract new plot holders.

## **Public Toilets**

- EC 5. The Town Council will work in partnership to provide and maintain the public conveniences to a high standard and ensuring compliance with Health and Safety Regulations.
- EC 6. The Town Council will continue to lobby the District Council to provide Public Toilets in Rothamsted Park.
- EC 7. The Town Council will work with the District Council to provide disabled access to the public conveniences in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

## **Lydekker Park and Car Park**

- EC 8. The Town Council will maintain and manage both areas to a high standard.
- EC 9. The Town Council will provide and promote the use of a formal Park and accessible open space, including the provision of seats, and look to increase awareness of its location.
- EC 10. The Town Council will promote and organise the Teddy Bears' Picnic in order to make use of the facilities.
- EC 11. The Town Council will seek the devolution of the Park and Car Park from the District Council.

## **Southdown Ponds**

- EC 12. The Town Council will manage the Ponds and surrounding area and implement maintenance and planting programmes that will promote sustainable living.

## **Porters Hill**

- EC 13. The Town Council will develop, seek external funding and implement a playground area on the unused Allotment site released by the Secretary of State.

EC 14. The Town Council will work in partnership with the Batford Community Action Group in order to achieve the best facilities for the benefits of the local residents.

EC 15. The Town Council will continue to negotiate with the District Council for the devolvement of Porters Hill Recreation Ground to the Town Council, seeking the commensurate expenditure to follow in the process.

### **Batford Spring Local Nature Reserve**

EC 16. The Town Council will negotiate for the devolvement of the management of Batford Springs Local Nature Reserve to the Town Council, seeking the commensurate expenditure to follow in the process.

### **Harpenden in Bloom**

EC 17. The Town Council will enhance the appearance of the Town throughout the year and enter the Anglia in Bloom competition annually with the intention of promoting civic pride, engaging the community and enhancing the environment through colourful floral displays.

### **Nickey Line**

EC 18. The Town Council will maintain and manage the cycle and footpath.

EC 19. The Town Council will provide and promote the awareness and use of the cycle way and footpath.

### **Town Approaches**

EC 20. The Town Council will maintain the approaches to the Town identifying distinctive and attractive features such as the Town Twinning, Fairtrade and safety messages.

EC 21. The Town Council will provide extensive planting to enhance the views at the approaches to the Town.

### **Tourism**

EC 22. The Town Council will produce a Town Guide aimed at promoting the Town and providing information for residents and visitors.

### **Farmers' Market**

EC 23. The Town Council will operate a monthly market in order to provide a wide variety of locally produced goods and attract visitors to the Town.

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- PL 1. The Town Council will provide an accessible point of reference for all Harpenden, Redbourn and Wheathampstead planning applications.
- PL 2. The Town Council will closely monitor the preparation of policies of the Government, District and County Councils and:
- be responsive to community aspirations, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness;
  - seek to create safe and accessible environments in accordance with section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
  - promote visually attractive development as a result of good architecture, sustainability and appropriate design and landscaping;
  - promote appropriate mix of uses and support for local facilities and transport networks.
- PL 3. The Town Council will promote good design and sustainable developments in all aspects of planning and development management in Harpenden.
- PL 4. The Town Council will provide an efficient and informed service to residents on the status of all applications North of the District Council.
- PL 5. The Town Council will liaise with the District Council concerning residents concerns on planning applications, increase the community's awareness of the Planning Information Service provided and offer impartial advice on all planning matters.
- PL 6. The Town Council will defend the character of the Town, oppose inappropriate developments, promote Affordable Housing, support good ideas and preserve the Green Belt and Conservation Area.
- PL 7. The Town Council will provide an open forum for residents to come and speak for or against applications at Town Council Planning meetings, ensuring responses are forwarded to the District Council within the designated consultation periods.
- PL 8. The Town Council will monitor all Planning Appeals, Premises and Variations Licences and Tree Application Licences.
- PL 9. The Town Council will represent the Town at the St Albans District Council Planning (Development Control) Committee North.

- PL 10. The Town Council will respond to consultations (such as East of England Plan, Government Planning Policy Guidance, London Luton Airport expansion and its infrastructure) and input into the District Councils Local Development Framework documents to protect the interests of the Town and ensure the best possible outcome for the community.
- PL 11. The Town Council will continue the development of a Plans database, which will assist with the efficiency of the planning service.
- PL 12. The Town Council will seek to implement a computerised real time “live” link to the Plans North database at the District Council.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **Employment Policies and Procedures**

- HR 1. The Town Council values its staff and will regularly review all Employment Policies and Procedures and ensure that they are current with all legislative requirements, are timely and appropriate.
- HR 2. The Town Council will regularly review its staffing levels and ensure that these are appropriate to the level of function and duty required of the Council’s administration.
- HR 3. The Town Council will give sympathetic consideration where employees have genuine medical problems and will provide support and security of employment during such periods of absence. However, the Town Council needs and expects regular attendance from all employees for the delivery of services to the community and visitors and will monitor absences.

### **Equality and Diversity Policy**

- HR 4. The Town Council will maintain an Equality and Diversity Policy which will regularly be reviewed.

### **Employee Development**

- HR 5. The Town Council is committed to providing continual professional development for all its employees and to this end, through the Staff Appraisal process will prepare annual workforce training and skills improvement schedule.

### **Health and Safety**

- HR 6. The Town Council will maintain a Health and Safety Policy and Accident Reporting Procedure. These documents will regularly be reviewed and updated.