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News and Features from Harborough District Council - August 2020

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**Councillor Phil King
Leader of Harborough
District Council**

Starting to return to normal

As you will see in this month's edition of our residents' newsletter we are announcing the reopening of our leisure centres after a lengthy period of closure.

This is fantastic news and I am delighted that the council has been able to work in partnership with Everyone Active to help get people active again.

We have also reopened all our play areas and skate parks. This, alongside the reopening of more shops, businesses, restaurants, and pubs in our town and retail centres – plus village halls and community centres now reopening – shows a positive transition to a sense of normality. It is great to see the confidence of shoppers returning as they head back to our high streets.

Face coverings are now compulsory which will hopefully increase confidence further; however it is, of course, important that we continue to follow health advice on social distancing and regular hand washing.

The recent lockdown in Leicester is a reminder that we all need to remain vigilant, whilst enjoying this steady return to normality.

Finally, I hope people help mark VJ Day; it's

Help mark VJ Day



This year marks 75 years since VJ Day (Victory over Japan Day) – which marks the end of World War II – and on **Saturday 15 August 2020** we want you to share your World War II stories, photos, family histories and messages of remembrance on social media using the hashtags #VJDay75 and #Harborough..

Find out [how to get involved here](#)

We will be sharing a special video message from our Armed Forces Champion Cllr Rani Mahal on VJ Day so make sure you look out for it.

a hugely poignant and significant date in our history so please share your images and stories on social media.

Cllr Phil King



Leisure centres ready to reopen after funding gets the green light

Leisure centres in the Harborough district are set to reopen on Saturday (1 Aug 2020) after additional funding was agreed by councillors.

Harborough District Council has agreed to provide additional investment to leisure operator Everyone Active which means that Market Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre (*pictured*) can reopen following the huge challenges of the recent national lockdown introduced due to the coronavirus pandemic.

From Saturday, the gyms and group exercise classes will reopen at Harborough Leisure Centre and Lutterworth Sports Centre, and the bookable lane swimming sessions will restart from 20 August, with swimming lessons recommencing on 22 August 2020.



Play areas and skate parks now open with safety measures in place

All Harborough District Council-owned play areas and skate parks have been reopened - with site guidance and social distancing signage installed.

Welland Park in Market Harborough has also benefited from enhancements including new play sand, surfacing and fencing.

Residents are urged to use the play areas



responsibly, by observing the site guidance, including social distancing and good hygiene (eg. using personal hand sanitisers).

Sites will also be patrolled to ensure they are being used correctly.

Key area of housing in Lutterworth set to bring £50m benefits to area

Approved plans for 2,750 new homes, community facilities and employment space to the east of Lutterworth will bring approximately £50m of community enhancements to the area. Councillors voted 5 to 4 to approve Leicestershire County Council's planning application on Tuesday 28 July 2020.

The site is identified in the Harborough Local Plan as a key area to accommodate new housing in the District, known as Lutterworth East Strategic Development Area (SDA).

The 550-acre development will be on land east of the town and the M1, and would include over 100 hectares of green space – approximately half of the site – two new primary schools and employment space to create around 2,500 jobs.

It will also provide 40 per cent affordable housing – approximately 1,100 homes – to help those struggling to find a place to live. Sport and recreational facilities in the wider area will also benefit.

Indications from traffic modelling suggests that the new spine road, which forms part of the development, could result in a significant reduction in traffic through Lutterworth town centre.



Switch and Save is saving you money and helping save the planet too!



Nearly 190 people in the district agreed to switch to a cheaper energy supplier in the latest round of our money-saving Switch and Save scheme.

This is three times as many people as in the previous auction and follows additional promotion of the scheme with a leaflet included with the Council Tax mailing.

The average saving for those on standard variable tariff was £269.

In addition, as all of the auction winners were offering renewable electricity, there is a saving of 55 tonnes of

carbon per year.

And iChoosr - the company which is working with us to deliver the scheme - has announced that all future auctions will be renewable electricity and are working to reduce their own emissions.

iChoosr have also supported councils over the coronavirus pandemic, by offering a dedicated phone line for those who are not able to switch on line. This has been very helpful and they will maintain the service for the next auction.

The next round opens on **4 August 2020** and the auction will take place on 6 October. We will be sending out letters to all residents in the district to let them know about it.

If you can inspire and motivate you could become a 'local champion'

Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport (LRS) are looking for local champions (families and individuals) to inspire and motivate others to become more physically active.

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted on us all, in different ways, but many people have adapted to find new opportunities to be active at home and in our local areas.

Entrants to the competition are invited to share their story about how they have stayed active throughout lockdown, including what has motivated them and how they have overcome any barriers that might have stopped them from being active.

Regular exercise can have a profoundly positive impact on your physical and mental health and well-being. It relieves stress, helps you sleep better, improves memory, and boosts your overall mood. You don't have to be a fitness fanatic to reap these benefits.

So, whether you have been enjoying bike rides and nature walks, online virtual exercise classes, playing games in the garden or taking up a new, active hobby, LRS want to hear all about it.

If you, your family, or someone you know, have a story to tell that you think would inspire and motivate others to become more physically active, please visit www.lrspport.org/news/2020/07/local-champion-search to complete your entry and return via email to: info@LRSport.org with the subject title 'Local Champion'.



Overseeing and scrutinising council decisions throughout the year

Making important decisions, which can often be very complex, contentious or challenging, is something councillors are elected to do on behalf of their communities.

To ensure every council decision is made in the best



interests of residents, each local authority has a function which looks to scrutinise decisions made by council committees.

On 27 July 2020, Cllr Rosita Page (*pictured*), the chairman of Harborough District Council's Scrutiny Commission, delivered her annual report to Council describing a "rewarding year" for Scrutiny and its work on behalf of the community.

The Scrutiny Commission is made up of 10 councillors, appointed annually, and meets up to four times a year to suggest and approve topics for discussion.

Issues under the Scrutiny spotlight this year have included air quality management, promoting the vibrancy of towns, section 106 obligations (developer contributions to local facilities), neighbourhood plans progress, Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan, powers of public bodies to carry out surveillance, bringing empty properties back into use, Christmas lights and electric vehicle charging points.

Cllr Rosita Page, who represents the Ullesthorpe ward in the Harborough district, said: "I am proud to lead Scrutiny; the critical friend of the internal decision-making body and of our external stakeholders. Despite being limited by the pandemic this year, we have considered 33 reports across the board and we had 24 hours of public debate ensuring some positive outcomes. I am looking forward to another year with no doubt many challenges."

The Scrutiny Commission appoints two Scrutiny Panels for 'Communities' and 'Performance'. These panels are made up of seven councillors who are not on the Council's Cabinet and, whilst they are not 'decision making' bodies, they monitor decisions made by the Cabinet and Council and provide a critical overview.

Involvement by residents and outside representatives is actively encouraged by the panels which help them make recommendations to feedback to Cabinet or Council. Panels may also set up time-limited working groups to look at particular subjects in more detail, often with the support of the public.

Scrutiny allows residents to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public inquiries into matters of local concern – for example on the Strategic Growth Plan which involved feedback from the public and CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of Rural England), as well as local pressure groups. Only one meeting had to be cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic as remote meetings were arranged with an ambitious plan to reclaim time lost due to the pandemic.

[Find out more about committees on the Council's website.](#)

Set to go 'al fresco'

We are delighted to say that the Council is waiving the fee for

Serving time on louts

We are pleased to report that there has been good behaviour

Disability hate crime

Whilst it is now compulsory to wear a face covering in shops

pubs, cafes and restaurants to apply to put tables and chairs outside their premises.

The scheme is aimed at helping the hospitality sector during the Coronavirus pandemic and will make socialising safely outdoors easier.

No charge will be made for applications for the next six months to help struggling businesses make the most of the good weather by attracting more customers who are keen to sit outside.

The new £750k [Leicestershire Business Recovery Fund](#) could also provide an opportunity for eateries, cafés and pubs etc to seek funding to enhance their outdoor seating spaces.

from the public in town centres in recent weeks as part of our work to support the night-time economy.

There has been great partnership working with the police, licensing officers, community safety and volunteers to create a safe environment following the reopening of pubs and restaurants last month.

Council officers have been working with police and other organisations to promote safety, gather intelligence and give advice to members of the public during the weekend evenings.

Remember to plan your nights out; check whether you need to book, always have a designated driver, and observe signage.

and supermarkets, many disabled people are exempt from wearing one which has raised serious concerns about the rising tide of coronavirus-related [disability hate crime](#).

We should all take notice and ensure that disabled people are not bullied out of any normal life.

Any disabled person who is victim of hate crime should report it to the police by either calling 999 (in an emergency) or 101.

You can report hate crime online at True Vision (report-it.org.uk). True Vision also contains helpful information and guidance materials on disability hate crime and COVID-19.

Poignant 'living' tribute to fallen village WWII heroes thanks to support



A poignant project to create a living memorial with the planting of oak trees dedicated to the 45 men of Hallaton who died in both World Wars is being made possible – thanks in part to funding from Harborough Council.

To commemorate VE Day 75 on 8 May 2020, Harborough District Council agreed to provide £500 to parish councils to help them mark VE Day or fund a similar tribute.

To pay for the trees and necessary guards, money was also raised within the village along with some welcome grants from the Parish Council and village charities – with support also from landowners.

Denis Kenyon, Chairman of Hallaton in the Great War Research Group said: "I would just like to acknowledge how grateful we are to receive this grant of £500. It will be immensely helpful in helping us to complete the project of The 45 Sentinels – oak trees in key locations round the village, one commemorating each man who died in the Second World War and the Great War. We will possibly use the grant specifically (with an acknowledgement to HDC) for a DiBond metal printed map showing where each tree is located with a key of names alongside."

As part of the group's commemoration of the centenary of the Great War a three volume book was produced called 'Hallaton in the Great War – Service and Sacrifice' being the biographies of the 225 men and women who served and chapters about the village before, during and after the war, Belgian refugees, war memorials and the local military tribunals. The group found many wonderful lives and action in war theatres in so many different places.

During the research, it was discovered that there were an additional 10 men from the Great War and one from the Second World War whose names were not on our War Memorial. This was corrected.

Each tree, which will have a stainless-steel metal plaque with a soldier's name, unit and date of death, naturally needed to have proper guards, some metal park guards, others strong timber. However; the erection of these timber guards was cancelled due to the sodden state of the ground earlier this year.

21 trees have been planted so far and the remainder will be planted this autumn.

A dedication ceremony will take place later this year, at a convenient location, with some descendants of those who died in attendance.

River project creating new habitat for wildlife with help of volunteers

Two exciting new river restoration projects in Lubenham are being led by the Welland Rivers Trust with specialist contractors Five Rivers Environmental Contractors Ltd, and local volunteers.

The first involves the creation of a half-acre wetland in a meander of the River Welland at Thorpe Lubenham Hall and the erection of new fencing to remove damaging livestock from the river.

The purpose of this is to restore a degraded section of the river and create new places for wildlife to flourish, improve water quality and store floodwater upstream of the village.

Volunteers from the village will be involved with planting wetland plant species and trees once the main works have been completed. This project is funded by the Environment Agency and Anglian Water.

The second project will take place in the newly planted Fox Wood off Church Walk in Lubenham village. Steep banks will be regraded to provide safe access down to the river for the local community and habitat improvement works in the channel and on the banks will improve the space for wildlife. This project is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Harborough District Council has contributed to the fundraising and planning of these projects through its participation in the Welland Valley Partnership.

Find out more at www.wellandriverstrust.org.uk



Harborough Lifeline

For anyone who feels vulnerable or alone, whatever their age or needs

Visit www.harborough.gov.uk/harboroughlifeline



"A wonderful service. I wouldn't be without it for the world."

CORONAVIRUS AND CAR SHARING



DO:

- Keep windows open
- Clean the car between journeys – especially areas people may touch
- Touch as few surfaces as possible
- Keep to one person per row if possible
- Consider cycling or walking instead
- Consider a 'travel buddy' system
- Face coverings are advised

DON'T:

- Talk loudly, shout or sing
- Face each other
- Share with lots of different people on different days



REMEMBER: Coronavirus spreads faster in enclosed spaces, including cars and other vehicles, than it does outdoors.



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