

Dear Residents,

The year has passed so quickly. It's October already and we're into autumn, though it's difficult to judge these days from the weather. Apparently, September was the warmest month of the year so far. Rains that seem to be more like the tropical storms of the Caribbean, than the drizzle of my childhood, are now commonplace.

I continue to have regular meetings with the Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and I understand that we need to prepare for more flood events in the future. It seems that we are going to be prone to both flooding and drought in this area.

The answer may be that a lot of small things can add up to a big thing in terms of flood and drought prevention. Creating small ponds and wetland areas that hold up run-off water and prevent drought could be the answer. A report has been commissioned to provide advice – I will monitor and report back, but for biodiversity reasons creating a small pond or wet section of your garden is likely to be a good idea.

[New Cycleway Between Brampton, Buckden and Onward to Hinchbrook School, Hospital and Huntingdon](#)

I'm starting to get reports from residents who are using the new cycleway to Brampton. The traffic lights are now working so it's now properly open. Feedback from residents has been largely positive, though I am concerned about school children crossing the busy Brampton to Huntingdon Road. I think that it's a huge step forward and again I thank all those who have helped, donated and lobbied for this change over many years.



It's disappointing that we have to make massive compromises in order to get any footway / cycleway improvements made at all. I think that we have made some wins with the cycle way improvements, but it is far from a panacea. That said, we need to celebrate our successes and hard work on this occasion.

Happy to listen to interest and continued observations from residents on all areas of active travel. I will continue to push for improvements and to get Buckden's Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) implemented.

[Free business support and grant funding competition launched via UKSPF](#)

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) is pleased to announce a new business support programme utilising UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF).

The council's Economic Development team are working in partnership with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Business and IP Centre (BIPC) to launch a dedicated programme of support. This includes the return of the BIPC Jumpstart, a ground-breaking initiative aimed at supporting entrepreneurship and innovation locally. The scheme includes £75,000 of advice, and tools to help

new businesses and has been made possible through substantial funding provided by HDC via the UKSPF.

The Jumpstart competition is now open to all Huntingdonshire-based businesses and entrepreneurs with £25,000 of grant funding available.

The winners, set to be announced in early 2024, will be determined following a live “Dragon’s Den” style pitch event, where each business will present to a panel of judges. The grants will be available for capital expenditure, with several prizes available across four different tiers:

With a commitment to nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit by providing practical resources, support and guidance to help new businesses overcome early-stage challenges, Jumpstart aims to help start-up businesses move forward with confidence, while also acknowledging that funding is often crucial to early onset businesses.

Further information about the application criteria and process can be found online:
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/BIPCjumpstart>

Connect with the HDC Economic Development team:
economic.development@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Government to delay new environmental building rules – impact to HDC

You may have seen in the news that the government is delaying its promised implementation with regard to biodiversity net gain. Not only is this disappointing, but it has significant effects on local authorities.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-66927242>

The uncertainty of the government’s position is likely to impact HDC in the following ways:

- In anticipation HDC are already in the process of recruiting both ecologists and planning officers with ecology experience – this creates uncertainty in our recruitment processes.
- Ecologists and planning officers with ecology experience are valuable in their own right, but one of their main roles was to help us prepare for the November implementation of this law.
- Biodiversity net gain cannot be truly scrapped unless the environment act is amended. The government's announcement simply delays implementation, but this does not rule out a future amendment of the act, which creates uncertainty.
- Now planning authorities are essentially in limbo. Much like national laws on food waste, the law stands but the government delays guidance effectively stopping implementation by local authorities.
- One approach we could take is to build a local plan that includes many of the aspects which were due to come into force this November. I think this would be wise regardless of what happens with any amendments to the environment act.
- As a baseline, our current local plan expects planning applications to demonstrate no net harm to biodiversity. This is our current fallback position.
- We may even see a flurry of applications from developers who wish to take advantage of this grey area, submitting applications that have no net harm to biodiversity, but would not meet the biodiversity increase requirements that were due to come into effect in November.

Pledge to Fight Food Waste and win!

In Huntingdonshire, around a third of the waste put into black bins is food. The Fight Food Waste campaign supports people to adopt simple habits that help to save food from the bin. Each month from now until December you can pledge to fight food waste in a different way and receive weekly support and tips to help you stick to it.

There will be a monthly prize draw for one participant to win £60 (the amount that an average family wastes each month on food that goes in the bin) of vouchers to spend on food.

Find out more and make your pledge at www.recap.co.uk/pledge-to-fight-food-waste

Wishing you well,

Martin

Martin Hassall

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