



# INDEPENDENCE

FOUNDED 1929



ANNUAL REPORT  
SPRING 2019



**Batchworth Lock**

*Janet Potton*

**JANET POTTON**  
F.A.M.U.

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## FROM THE TILLER



We have now changed from two copies of **Independence** a year to one "Annual Report", which will still be delivered through your letterbox, and six newsletters (i.e. about one every two months) delivered by e-mail – we plan to send these out after each Committee meeting.

We sent out the first of these in January but have discovered that many were sent to members' "junk mail" folder so, if we have your e-mail address and you have not seen it then please check your junk-mail or spam folder to see if it is there. There is a way to get it to go to your "in" box but I am not that clever so I will just say that it can be done!

If you have not given us your e-mail address then please let us have it. It will enable you to receive the Newsletters and, of course, we can contact our members in an emergency.

The best way to do this is to send an e-mail to our Membership Secretary, Anne Littlejohn, and she can add you to our list.

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We are trying to get our membership onto e-mail delivery of newsletters and Standing Order payments for subs. If you have not changed to either or both of these, please fill in the form in this magazine.

### Call for sites.

You will be aware that the District Council, in common with all District Councils throughout the country, have sent out for sites which can be used to build residential property to increase the housing stock.

Your Committee have spent much time considering the list of sites. We are aware that the District Council are being forced into this action and, where possible, we have tried to be helpful but many sites, in our view, are unacceptable. As an example some suggested locations are in the Green Belt and are in an area with a high flood risk! We have responded in general terms and have also commented in respect of each site. We await further developments but what is clear is that many new houses are planned to be built over the next ten years.

Sara Bedford, Leader of Three Rivers District Council, has kindly agreed to contribute to this edition of **Independence** on the subject.

In the interim, all the Residents' Associations in Three Rivers are meeting on a regular basis to discuss developments in this respect and also other matters within the Three Rivers area.

The one strong view is that TRDC should consider a new village to be built somewhere in the Three Rivers area which would cater for the whole target set by the Civil Service for our district. Such a village would need to have good road access and, if possible, rail access.

We understand that the Civil Service are calling for just over 600 new dwellings a year but the system used to work out how many are needed indicates just over 400. Perhaps they are working on the basis that, if a target is not reached, there will still be enough homes built across the country.

## Chairman's Notes

In Hemel Hempstead they are proposing a new "Garden Village" which will solve their problems with the target and it seems that the Government likes the idea. Hemel are not the only town to come back with this idea and are receiving Government funding to kick start the project.

Another option Three Rivers could consider is house boats. The number of lakes formed by old workings along the Chess Valley could house a number of developments like the one at Taggs Island on the Thames. Both Three Rivers and Hillingdon could consider such a proposal.

### Community Hall

Following the loss of our Community Hall in the Bury, we have asked the District Council for a replacement but they point out that this is now the responsibility of the Community Council. We have asked the Community Council and they have said that they would like to provide one but where? RDRA have made some suggestions but all but perhaps one, it seems, are not feasible. If you can think of a site close to Rickmansworth centre please let us know.

### Road Reps

We still need Road Reps – please see the list later in this issue.

The job of Road Rep is becoming easier. Only one delivery of **Independence** every year and no more collecting money.

There is the short term task of getting members to sign a Standing Order as not all our members have signed up yet. Ongoing will be the signing up of new members.

Longer roads are split into two or even three so the task is not great. One evening a year should now do it.

*continued P.2*

#### GDPR (DATA PROTECTION LAW MAY 2018)

Under the above Act we are required to inform our members that their name, address and road representative will be kept on a computer record. This information will be used solely for the benefit of the Association and will not be disclosed to a third party. Any members who object to their details being recorded in this way should contact the Secretary.



*continued from P.1*

**Can you help?**

**M25 Service Station.**

Plans are being drawn up for a new Service Station on the M25, either one by Junction 17 and one by Junction 20.

Not sure how either would affect us in Rickmansworth, apart from a source of employment, and the money is on Junction 20 in any case as it is close to the M1 and A41 so both would benefit whereas J17 is a bit close to the Service Station at Junction 2 on the M40.

I do wonder why folk buy petrol and diesel on a motorway – on average it is 20p a litre more than a petrol station

in, say, Rickmansworth and 25p more than a supermarket.

**New Hospital**

We reported about two years ago about a proposal to build a new hospital at Junction 20 on the M25 to provide faster access to emergency vehicles rather than fight the traffic in Watford. The costs did sound high but the cost of upkeep of the existing hospital, at what is now called Watford General, set against it plus sale of the land would be about the same. The main problem your committee could see was the lack of public transport to the site and, at the time, the MLX, which has now died,

would have had a station at the existing site.

It is now understood that the group have found four other potential sites for this proposed new mega hospital.

In the interim it seems that a hospital in Watford, either the existing one or the new one, would be the only hospital offering A&E in the whole County although other plans include A&E at St Albans or Hemel.

We await further developments with interest.

**Michael Stimpson**

**Community News and Updates**

**RDRA Committee Activity**

Our Chairman Michael Stimpson has invited me to write something about our activities over the last year. We are glad to report that, following the departure of a number of our committee members last year, on account of having moved out of the district or because of work commitments, we now have a return to near normal numbers.

However, as always, would welcome any of our members who might like to join us. If you have any particular expertise that is always extremely welcome but, even if you haven't, your opinions and input would be valued at our meetings.

We currently meet at the Royal British Legion hall in Ebury Road every other month on the third Monday evening of the month and our meetings last for no more than two hours. We have an Agenda and usually receive brief reports from the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary before moving on to matters such as planning applications, environmental matters, as well as such matters as

transport, health and education in so far as these impact on residents of Rickmansworth and the surrounding area.

We liaise with various other local organisations and try to ensure that we are represented at such bodies as the Local Area Forum and FOMLUC which represents Metropolitan Line users. More recently we have been represented at joint meetings with other Residents' Associations within the Three Rivers area. This has been with a particular view to presenting a united front on matters of housing planning and possible new locations in response to the obligation placed by central government on local authorities to identify sites for future housing development.

As you know, one of our particular matters of concern over the past year has been the decision of the council to build a "temporary" hostel for the homeless in the middle of the Rickmansworth conservation area and the building of which is now going ahead. While we all recognise the need for such temporary accommodation for the homeless, we have to recognise that this is a battle that

we have fought valiantly on behalf of local residents but regret that this was, of all the potential locations, the one finally chosen by our local authority.

Other matters which we have covered in recent meetings have included moving towards getting an up-to-date website, the successful opening of the new Reach School at its new location in Mill End and the development of the new education centre by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust at Batchworth Lock.

On the financial front we have decided to encourage our members to pay their membership subs by standing order as this will hopefully lessen the work for our much-valued team of road representatives and also provide a guaranteed income stream for funding our activities in future years. Also we wish to reduce our printing costs by only publishing one printed issue of **Independence** each year with the second issue being made available on-line and supplemented by periodic newsletters.

**Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz**  
**Treasurer**

**Bury Fete cancelled?**

Again, as we go to press, there is some doubt if the Fete held each year by the Sea Scouts in Bury Gardens has been cancelled.

It seems that the District Council asked the Sea Scouts to hold it at another site for one year due to landscaping work at the new building being constructed

on the site of our Community Hall. The Council offered alternative sites but none were suitable for the event. The Sea Scouts asked for use of a car park but this was turned down.

Having cancelled the event, the Sea Scouts have now discovered that, as the work which would exclude the use of Bury Gardens has been delayed so there would not be a problem after all.

It is not clear if it is now too late to reverse the decision or if Rickmansworth will lose this annual event for 2019 which, sadly, sounds as though will be the case.

It remains to be discovered how this will affect the start of Ricky Week. The Carnival will now have to find somewhere else to finish.

**Michael Stimpson**

## Peter Waters



Peter Waters has been “Mr Rickmansworth” for many a long year. He is now cutting back on the work load he has taken on over the years.

Before he became our President he was our Chairman but has also, for many years, has served on many committees serving the Community. Fortunately, he seems happy to continue in that position.

There are other Societies in Rickmansworth where Peter has served for some time including three from which he has, sadly, decided to stand down.

He has, for example, been Treasurer of the Rickmansworth Society, a Director

of both the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust and the Rickmansworth Town Team. He has decided to stand down from all of these positions.

These are just three examples of his public service – there are many more.

He feels that he has served long enough in these voluntary positions. The residents of Rickmansworth should be made aware of the sterling service he has given over the years and, we hope, in a more limited nature, will continue to do for many years to come.

**Michael Stimpson**

## Community and District Council Elections

Elections for both District and Community Councils are being held on the 2nd of May

Sadly we have to report that Nina Hosking has decided not to continue on the Community Council for health reasons.

Nina put such a lot of work into the first two years of the Community Council and was the only person elected from

Rickmansworth to regularly attend all the Council meetings.

She was also able to put the views of this Association to the Community Council. She stood as an Independent which meant that she did not have to leave the RDRA Committee.

Nina was instrumental in getting our library in Rickmansworth listed as an asset of Community value.

It is a great shame that not more independent candidates stand for seats although, it has to be said, that the

position on any of our three Councils (County, District and Community) involves a large amount of unpaid work.

We are grateful to Nina for her hard work in setting the Community Council up and her work as a Councillor during its first two years. This was all in addition to her work for this Association and the Rickmansworth Town Team – her work for both organisations will, of course, continue.

**Michael Stimpson**

## Ebury Roundabout.

Your Committee were not convinced by the plans put forward by Herts County Council for the re-design of Ebury Roundabout.

The idea was to make the area safer for cyclists but they do seem to have got the lane layout wrong. Perhaps the money could have been better spent on the cycleway on Riverside Drive which is a bit bumpy and no doubt this is the

reason why so many cyclists use the road.

The view seems to be that most drivers will ignore the strange lane layout which could result in minor accidents until the white lines have worn away. Some close calls have already been reported.

The view is that the layout was drawn up by someone who does not drive! It seems that Hertfordshire Highways are responsible for the design

of the lanes.

The idea was good to make crossing safer for all traffic but this seems to be a case of a waste of our money.

The new railings are nice though!

**Michael Stimpson**

## STOP PRESS

Just as we were going to print we have heard from various comments on Facebook that the small Ambulance station in Rickmansworth has closed. It now seems we are being provided with emergency vehicles which means adding 15 – 20 minutes to answer a call to Rickmansworth and longer for Mill End, Maple Cross and Chorleywood.

It seems that there were only two vehicles located at Rickmansworth – an

ambulance and a fast response car – but, for Residents living in or needing a paramedic in the area, it could be the difference between life and death.

With the recent increase in accidents on the M25 this withdrawal of services does not just affect residents in our area.

One lady reported having to wait an hour for an ambulance to attend from Welwyn and another report says an ambulance attended from Slough, in both cases there being no vehicles available from Watford.

Could this be an NHS cost saving plan or has it something to do with the future closure of our fire station as well?

We have been in touch with the Chorleywood Residents’ Association and have written to TRDC to ask if they can throw any light on the matter.

We were able to report this in the last newsletter and will update you in the next issue at the end of May.

**Michael Stimpson**

## PETER'S PADDOCK



..... We don't organise charity balls or wave banners, yet we make our presence felt .....

### Mind the (narrow) Gap

Although Croxley Green has never been part of this Association's bailiwick, having its own residents' association and other equivalent bodies corresponding to those in Rickmansworth, I am sure enough of our members and other Rickmansworth residents drive regularly to and from Watford along the A412 to warrant a suggestion to the authorities responsible. Something should be done about the risk to drivers caused by unrestricted parking on both sides of the Watford Road approaching Croxley Met station, namely the stretch between The Crescent and the pedestrian crossing by the car park next to the Red House pub.

The road is simply not wide enough at this point to allow heavy vehicles (of which there are still many in spite of the M25, the A4145 Moor Lane and other routes) to pass freely in both directions without having to slow down if not stop altogether. This even applies, as I know from my own regular experience, to just one such and an ordinary motor car. How there are not more accidents (or even instances of "scrapes") along here beats me. I have been told by a lifelong resident of Croxley Green that this particular issue has been a bone of contention for the last thirty years at least, but nothing has been done. One solution could be, as elsewhere, to have parking daily along one side only until, say, 1.30 pm, and along the other side after that time.

### What do you think?

### The Chamber of Trade and Commerce

The **Independence** for February 1959, under the heading "A Diamond Jubilee", stated: "We congratulate Rickmansworth Chamber of Commerce [as it was called then] on completing their first 60 years. A Thanksgiving

Service at the Parish Church on 18th January was followed a few days later by a Banquet and Ball in London. A 'Jubilee old people's outing' is planned for the summer."

I am not aware that the present Chamber have planned or done any celebrations to this extent to mark their 'double diamond' jubilee, but it would seem churlish not to congratulate them on keeping going for so long. Let us hope that Rickmansworth's viability in this sphere long justified their continuing for another sixty years and more.

### Taking an independent view

The above was an editorial title in the **Independence** for the spring and summer of 1969, or exactly fifty years ago. Newer members may not know that the title of our magazine is taken from a sentence in Edward Gibbon's autobiography: "The first of earthly blessings, independence."

The editorial went on to voice sentiments that still hold good to-day, as the following extracts attest (with allowances for changes over time, such as in our annual subscription, which I hope readers agree continues to be well worth it!):

"Are you getting value for your half-crown [sic]? Everyone confronted by his street steward [as road representatives were once called] must have asked himself that, and no doubt many cough up out of sympathy with the poor chap [we are equally grateful to those of the fair sex who also undertake this task, two of them, Mrs Butler in the Old Chorleywood Road and Mrs Childerhouse in Swallow Close, for over forty years now], and many more because they feel it is the sort of thing One Ought to Do. But hang it all, one should get fair value, and we are inclined to think you do.

[And the more members complete standing orders for payment as now requested, the less any will have to worry about "confrontation"!]

In the minutes for the three committee meetings held since the AGM, no fewer than 28 separate matters are entered, quite apart from procedural items and those carried forward from meeting to meeting. This may be some answer to those who miss any overt sign of Association activity. We don't organise charity balls or wave banners, yet we make our presence felt and from time to time reach the headlines of the local press. Without your money this could not happen, because a working reserve is vital to cope with the unexpected and because, owing to members' reluctance to participate in such meetings as are held, the magazine forms our only feedback channel. If you look at the annual balance sheets, you will see that the greatest expenditure by far is on producing "**Independence**". This is surely sensible, since this little journal is the only tangible return for your money, and it does form a point of contact (hitherto one-way) between the committee of the Residents' Association and the general membership. [Even this is changing, as read elsewhere.]

Other important items are the hire of the Ebury Room [next to the Conservative Club in Bury Lane and the predecessor in function of Watersmeet] for the annual general meeting, and postage and stationery. These underline what else you are getting for the cost of your subscription. Every winter the AGM .... draws a mere 10% of our membership [would that it still did!]. Those who .... are tempted to feel that they are being coerced into something not very worthwhile, might reflect on two facts.

The first is that the AGM is held, whatever the weather and whatever



the support, and if you don't attend it, that is not the committee's fault, though it is their cause for regret. The second fact is that the Association's committee, elected at this AGM, meet regularly every six weeks [now two months, though always specially convenable in an emergency] throughout the year to decide upon action and policy on your behalf. They don't always enjoy doing so – sometimes it is downright inconvenient – but the important thing is that a working viable body exists, ready to take up the cudgels in the best interests of Rickmanworth.

A surprisingly large amount of business is carried through, as has been pointed out, and the Urban District [now of course Three Rivers] Council's officers are on the receiving end of quite a lot of it. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, the Association enjoys a measure of respect from the

Council [with luck this is still so], and attempts to repay this by being constructive whenever possible. You, dear member, are buying your share in this public voice with your half-crown [now three pounds, as above], and if you don't like what it says, attend the AGM and say so. Better still get yourself elected to the committee.

The committee is emphatically not a clique. It welcomes candidates for election so that a steady turnover can be maintained, and it relies utterly [not quite so much these days, with more and varied channels of communication open to members] upon its corps of street stewards [road representatives] for the house-to-house contacts ... If you feel that YOU would like to put a little more into the thing than your annual sub, there are open arms waiting for you as a steward or a nominee for next year's committee.

Think about it."

We have had a fair turnover of committee members since the turn of the century. I have served on the committee in various capacities for almost forty years, and Bob Templeman for almost twenty, but otherwise our current colleagues have all joined us within the last ten. At the time of writing there are still some vacancies, as you can see from the list at the back of this issue, and some roads lack road representatives. So as the above editorial had it half-a-century ago, do "think about it" and bring new blood to our Association, which will celebrate (I hope, rather than merely mark) its centenary in just ten years' time. You will find it a useful and stimulating way to serve our local community. Go on!

**Peter Waters.**

## Batchworth Bridge

For many years now the RDRA has been concerned by the number of accidents on Batchworth Bridge and have repeatedly asked our County Councillors to try and get the Herts County Council Highways Officers to improve the situation but without success.

### There are two problems.

In both cases the situation is not helped by the crossing being on top of a canal bridge which provides a slight hump thus it relies on the beacons to tell drivers it is there.

At night the little neon flashing lights around the beacons draw a driver's attention away from the side of the road where a pedestrian in dark clothes might be hiding behind the railings. If they did not flash it might help!

Other crossings in the area have lights shining down on the spot where folk wait to cross the road but, it seems, the bridge over the canal is not strong enough to take the weight of such lighting – at least that is what our County Councillors are told by the Highways Staff.

A bigger problem is during the day. Heading north toward Rickmansworth there is often a traffic jam on the inside lane waiting to get into Riverside Drive. Traffic on the outside lane drives through

not realising that a pedestrian is crossing and hits them – this has happened on a number of occasions and can happen south bound as well.

We have suggested moving the crossing or replacing it with a Pelican crossing but such ideas have been turned



down by the Highways staff. A Pelican crossing would, in our opinion, solve the problem and this could either be on the existing crossing site or perhaps be moved to outside the White Bear and operate in connection with the lights at the junction of Harefield Road.

We have suggested that speed of traffic on this stretch of road plays some part in the problem with drivers being in a 30, then 40 then 30 and back to 40 speed limit heading south from the Uxbridge Road (reverse heading north) and have suggested that a 30 mph speed limit should apply all along this route but the real need is for traffic lights to allow people to cross the road – very few cars will drive through a red light!

What is clear is that our County Councillors have been taking our suggestions to the Highways Staff at County Hall for some years now and each suggestion is rejected for one reason or another. It is their job to come up with an answer and perhaps a crossing with lights just off the bridge to the south is the answer if the bridges (there are two) cannot take the weight of the lights.

We will keep on fighting this battle.

**Michael Stimpson**



## Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

The story of a building project  
If you have been anywhere near Batchworth Lock over the last 9 months you may have noticed a little bit of work going on and a few changes alongside the canal.....

This is the story of the construction of the Batchworth Lock Education Centre, the new home for the Heritage Education work of the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust, or to give it its full address - 101, Church Street, Rickmansworth WD3 1JJ.

Prior to McDonald Construction starting work on the site Mark Saxon and our volunteers were busy ensuring everything was ready for them to start. The old shipping container used as our external store was sorted through, emptied and anything we needed to retain stored in the workshop. The elements of the Little Union Canal that we wanted to keep were also safely removed.

On July 2nd McDonald Construction fenced the site securely and the first of many skips arrived. Then the task of removing the Little Union Canal started. One thing we had all forgotten, or those who were around when it was initially built failed to tell us, was just how much concrete was used in the base. Breaking up the canal bed proved very hard work! After completing the breakup of the concrete the rubble was taken away by grab lorry and levelling the ground for the foundations began. The builder had to prepare the surface to very exact tolerances ready for the piling contractor so many tons of crushed concrete were compressed and rolled onto the prepared surface.

The piling contractor arrived and started to position a total of 20 steel tubes each to a depth of 15m. Each of these were then filled with steel reinforcing and concrete to form the 20 legs that the building foundation slab would be supported on. Once the piling was in place a supporting concrete slab was laid around the piles and then a removable void former was placed on top of this slab to support the steel



*View From the Canal*

reinforced slab that the building would sit on. This ensured the base of the building was 10% above the 1 in 100 year flood risk level.

During early September the building, which had been long in the planning, started to arrive. Think Ikea flat pack but with thousands of components! The lorries were offloaded in Skidmore Way and the packages brought down to the canal side by fork lift truck. After two articulated lorry loads of timber had been delivered the whole area was filled with black plastic wrapped packages. This cued loads of jokes from passers-by and our volunteers about finding which one contained the allen key.

In mid September the team from the building suppliers, Keops, arrived to make sense of all the packages and start to assemble our building and watching the rapid assembly of the building became a spectator sport. The speed of assembly was remarkable to see and within a few days the building had taken shape. The largest timbers supported the roof and once these had all been bolted together a crane was brought in to lift the central roof truss into place. Scaffolding was erected around the building to allow the Keops team to work on the highest parts of the building. A large amount of Kingspan insulation was delivered which

was to go under the floor, under the roof and also between the inner and outer timber walls of the building.

Progress continued at a rapid pace and before very long the roof was completed, the pile of insulation had disappeared and the roof was being tiled. With the outside just about finished the Keops team started to build the interior walls inside the outer walls and the cavity filled with more Kingspan insulation. While the team from Keops were working to assemble the massive jigsaw the electricians and plumbers from McDonald construction were working on the roof, under the floor and in the walls to fit the first fix cabling and plumbing into the structure. Having a cavity wall meant that the majority of the wiring could be hidden and the plumbing laid under the floor.

Within just three weeks the team from Keops turned a massive pile of logs into a building. Watching them work was very impressive, they do seem to have done this a few times before..... and although this was one of the bigger buildings they completed in 2018 it is not the biggest they have ever done. Once Keops completed the roof they handed back the building to McDonald Construction to continue the fit out. The sanitary ware and kitchen units were



delivered by Travis Perkins and the plumbers got to work installing the toilets and kitchen. All the lighting, heating and fire alarms were installed and tested.

While all this was going on inside the building and the scaffolding was still up around the outside of the building we took the opportunity to apply preservative and paint to the outside. A total of 16 of our Trust volunteers worked as a team to paint the building. The whole of the outside was coated with a clear wood preservative. Next the end nearest the workshop was treated with "HR Prof" which is a fire retardant to inhibit any fire spreading from the workshop to our building. Finally the whole of the outside had two coats of white Sadolin Superdec applied which is about the best wood preservative money can buy, and we bought a lot of it! I think you will agree the resulting finish is amazing and a testament to the hard work of this excellent team of volunteers.



*View from the canal 2*

We will need to apply further coats during the building's life but only at about 5-7 year intervals!

Once the building was complete inside some of the same painting team took on the task of applying preservative to all the interior walls and floors. We did make the decision to spray the higher areas to ensure good coverage and Mark Saxon and I did this using full face masks and other PPE. Finally the scaffolding came down and the external drainage, power and water connections could be made. Affinity Water did have 3 goes at trying to find the water main..... but eventually all service connections were complete. McDonald Construction



### **Teaching Hall**

completed their external works and built the steps, ramp and also the block paving to the front of the steps. We then cleared the internal areas of surplus timber and cleaned the floors ready to lay 600 0.5x0.5m carpet tiles. I can safely say this is the most carpet tiles I have ever laid....

By mid November the building was ready and we started to move everything that had been safely stored away into the new Education Centre. The notice was given on our rented office in Mencap, garages and stores were emptied into a Box Luton and more volunteer effort helped shift all of our furniture into place. By end of January 2019 we had finished everything to satisfy Building Control requirements the building was complete. Fencing to the two sides of the building was generously sponsored by Rickmansworth Company Blenheim Construction and we also completed the gravel landscaping to the front of the building. Our first school visits started in early March 2019 and all our visiting schools have been very impressed with the new facility. We still have more we would like to do, such as some decking to the rear of the building, but this will have to wait until we have funding.

We have had many positive comments on how the building looks and how it seems just right for the canal side location amongst the Heritage buildings at Batchworth. It does not seem very long since we had the bad news that we had lost our classroom of 20+ years and it just shows how sometimes a challenge opens up opportunities. Thank you to everyone who helped make this vision

of having our own building a reality. So many people have helped fundraise, donated funds, volunteered at various times during the project it would be impossible to name everyone. I would like to give my personal thanks to Mark Saxon who has gone above and beyond to work alongside the Trustees to make sure everything possible to keep the project on track was done. Although an employee of the Trust Mark has the dedication of our most loyal volunteers!

The building when not being used for our Education Programmes is also available for local groups to hire and details on how to do this can be found on our website.

<http://www.rwt.org.uk/education/education-centre-hall-hire>

I will leave you with two pictures of the completed building, showing the view from the canal and the main teaching hall. We hope you can come and see it for yourselves during the Rickmansworth Festival, which is on the 18th and 19th May 2019, when we hope to host an art exhibition in the centre!

**Dr David Montague,  
Chairman,  
Rickmansworth Waterways Trust.**



## Batchworth Community Council - The First Two Years

A momentous occasion in 2017 saw the creation of a Parish Council in the Three Rivers District. This was the first since Croxley Green Parish Council was created in 1986. I felt truly honoured to be elected the only Independent Councillor to the Council – but, having been a campaigner for its creation – knew that there was a great deal of work to do. The first few months were taken up with lots of administration in making sure that the Council was set running on a solid foundation of good and robust policies and administration. We had much assistance from the National Association of Local Councils via the Hertfordshire Association of Parish & Town Councils, and from Three Rivers District Council, guiding us through the myriad of powers and duties of a Community Council. Even setting up the bank account was not straight forward, then came the website and the email addresses, finding office premises, employing a permanent Clerk and getting to grips with the processes and legalities of running a council and council meetings - a steep learning curve.



However, we are now a fully functioning council and I am proud of the achievements that I have been involved with here in Rickmansworth. I would like to thank Rickmansworth & District Residents' Association for giving me the opportunity to summarise some of these achievements here:

### **Designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and the installation of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.**

This group is a community led group – made up of residents, Councillors and some experts. We are currently in the process of drawing up an Invitation to Tender which will be put out to several Planning Consultants. Once appointed the Consultants will help us in the setting up of Focus Groups, create consultation events and will, following these consultations, draw up the policies that will make up the Batchworth Community Council Neighbourhood Plan. If you are interested in joining us, please let the Clerk know.

### **More and better Christmas Lights**

You may have noticed these! Not only has the display been improved, but each year we have expanded, in 2018 we made sure that Money Hill Parade was included in the display.

### **Flags & Displays**

It is always good to be able to show that we are part of a wider community and flags certainly fit the bill: St Georges' Day, the Royal

Wedding and Remembrance & the WW1 Centenary Commemorations were all marked with the relevant flag display. There is now an annual programme for the town, which again includes Money Hill Parade. BCC also purchased a Tommy Statue. Affectionately known as 'Reg', he appeared at the Rickmansworth Festival, many venues, schools, events



and of course the Act of Remembrance too. The Tommy statues are made by Veterans and all the proceeds from the purchases go to The Remembered Charities – having Reg visit so many different areas helped spread the message of *Remembered – to Educate, Commemorate & Heal*.

### **Anglia in Bloom and the Northway Triangle**

No, this isn't the same thing as the Bermuda Triangle, but is a piece of land on Northway, that, after the builders of Penn Place left the site, was unclaimed and left to run wild. This will become one of the first displays for the Anglia in Bloom competition.



But.... We need volunteers to help on this one! Batchworth Community Council (BCC) has cleared the area with the help of Three Rivers District Council depot staff, but we now need people to help design and plant. Any volunteers – please contact the Clerk.



**The BT Kiosk on Church St**

When this phone box was decommissioned earlier this year, BCC adopted it. We have a paint kit so we can give it an overhaul (given to us by BT in proper colours) – but again, we need volunteers to help us spruce it up and come up with some ideas for displays.... Ideas such as book exchange, notice board for local organisations have been put forward – would you like to help us, or do you have any ideas that you would be prepared to help with?

**Awarding of Grants to Local Groups and Organisations**

Through the Grant Awarding Policy and the Community Projects & Events Budget, we have been able to help many groups, organisations and schools to deliver new or continue their services and events in and around Rickmansworth. Groups that have benefitted include:  
 9 Lives Furniture  
 Bury Lake Young Mariners  
 Rickmansworth Society  
 Rickmansworth Waterways Trust  
 Rickmansworth Town Team CIC

St Mary’s C of E Primary School  
 Wm Penn Tri Centenary Group  
 Full details of BCCs grant awarding policy can be found on our website: [www.batchworth-ecc.gov.uk](http://www.batchworth-ecc.gov.uk)

**Planning**

BCC became a Statutory Consultee for all planning applications for the BCC area. This means we can effectively represent concerns over planning applications. We have successfully accomplished this in several applications of concern to residents and businesses.

**The Bury Gardens**

BCC has put forward a proposal to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC), who own The Bury Gardens, to restore and rejuvenate the area. Currently we are awaiting a topographical survey so that a full business plan can be put forward to TRDC for their approval. The proposal includes ideas such as a Community Garden, a band stand and restoring the sunken garden.

**CCTV on the High Street**

BCC has approved the installation of a new CCTV camera at the West End of the High Street. The final quotation has yet to be received, but if this approved the camera will be installed very soon.



**Defibrillator**

A new Defib unit has been installed on the outside wall of Marks & Spencer’s at the West End of the High Street. This unit is available 24/7 and makes a much-welcomed addition to the one recently installed by the

local Rotary Club on the outside of the CAB behind the library. If anyone would like training on how to use the de-fib, please let the Clerk know.



**Noticeboard**

Early in 2019 we obtained planning permission for the erection of the new BCC noticeboard – it is in a prominent position outside the library. I hope you will agree that the Council has proved to be a real asset to the residents, businesses and organisations in the town ward during its short life, and it will remain committed to increase its presence over the coming years. If you have any suggestions of what you would like to put to BCC, please do let us know.

**CLlr Nina Hosking,  
 Batchworth Community Council**

**You can contact the Clerk on 01923 590201, [clerk@batchworth-ecc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@batchworth-ecc.gov.uk), Room 10 Basing House, High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1HP.**





## The right homes in the right places



The issue of how many new homes we need for our communities and where they should go is probably the biggest issue facing the Three Rivers area at present. It's certainly both the most important and the most difficult to solve issue that the council needs to solve.

We are on average living longer, in smaller households than ever before and we continue to have children – a good thing as we need to pay taxes and keep the economy and public services going into the future. So we need to provide more homes.

But we don't just need any homes. I am quite clear that we need the right homes in the right places. That means that new homes cannot be concentrated into any one area, size or tenure. We need fewer flats and executive homes and more of the two- and three-bedroomed homes that many of our family and friends aspire to live in. We need homes for sale, for shared ownership and social housing to rent.

The Local Plan is the key planning document for the District, it guides the delivery of not just new homes, but also land for employment, leisure, retail and associated infrastructure for services such as education and health.

The council must by law update its Local Plan regularly. This ensures that we are keeping up with the changing needs of our communities and also changes to the Government's planning policies expressed through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Because of rapid changes to the NPPF, the number of homes the Government instructs us to find room for each year has increased from 180 to 620 – over a threefold increase.

I use the word 'instructed' without any hyperbole. Not to come up with the

sites in line with the agreed timetable leaves the council open to Government intervention, with ultimately the council's planning department, policy and decisions being run by Whitehall. However hard this task is, none of us are prepared to cede control of local matters to civil servants in central London who may not even have visited Three Rivers. In the meantime it would leave all sites open to developers, as we would not have the required supply of land. Such land would almost certainly be entirely within the Green Belt and would be favourably considered by the Government's Planning Inspectors if we did not have an approved plan in place..

The number of homes required is somewhat of a sore point for me. The Government has recently introduced a new method of calculating the number of homes 'needed' in the area which gives a number not only substantially higher than our current total of 180 pa but is also 20% above that suggested using the most recent figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) which yields a figure of 496 pa. This leaves us being forced to use out of date numbers to build around 1500 more homes than we actually need.

In the last eight weeks of 2018 the council undertook an informal consultation on the potential sites received from developers. It is important to note two things. Firstly, the council was not required to undertake this consultation. Almost all councils go straight from the Issues and Options and Call for Sites that Three Rivers carried out in 2017 & 2018, to the draft Local Plan (which we will publish this coming September). I requested that the officers carry out this additional consultation in the name of transparency and openness. I am quite clear that as much as possible should be available to residents. The second point is that these sites have been put forward by landowners and NOT the council. No sites have been agreed or discarded and all must be considered against the same set of criteria.

Our first priority when allocating land will be to accommodate as much as possible on brownfield sites. This is not as easy as it sounds, as the council's statutory Brownfield Register holds

enough land for fewer than 2,000 homes. Most of this land is in current use for employment and contains the small and medium sized businesses that are vital in the local economy.

Given that Green Belt land had to be released for development in the last Local Plan to meet the much lower housing target of 180 dwellings per year and that there is insufficient brownfield land, we are therefore in a position where we have to look at Green Belt land. This is accepted by all the political parties represented on the council. National policy states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in 'exceptional circumstances' and these have to be fully evidenced and justified. We need to demonstrate that we have considered all other 'reasonable options' for meeting development needs.

At this point, the NPPF makes it clear that the council must look first at existing towns and villages, land at the edges of settlements and other locations well served by public transport. The council also needs to seek to build at higher densities than has previously been the case, in some cases much higher.

I and my colleagues take no delight in needing to build on our open spaces. We all live in Three Rivers and know what makes each of our communities special. But to retain some degree of local control and prevent Government intervention, we need to find room for around 120 new homes in each of our settlements every year. We want to do this in partnership with the residents who we represent across the District. But I need to be honest and state that we will not be able to just say; 'no' to sites which would have been ruled out in the past.

I will continue to insist on transparency and to be open to any resident who wishes to discuss these issues with me. I hope that you will be willing to join with councillors in agreeing what Three Rivers will look like over the next 15-20 years.

**Cllr Sara Bedford  
Leader of TRDC  
March 2019**

## Enough School Places for Rickmansworth?

As I write, children and parents across the country are accepting secondary school places and deciding whether to stay on waiting lists for higher preference schools. In this area, parents have four preferences on their Secondary Transfer Application, and traditionally a high proportion of children have been allocated a "Non Ranked" school on National Offer Day.

School place shortages in Three Rivers District have been well documented. The situation was so dire that myself, Mark Sutton and 3 teachers applied to open a new local school under the Free School programme in the west of the District, and subsequently Hertfordshire County Council asked St Clement Danes to open a new free school in the east. The Reach Free School is now established on the Rickmansworth/Maple Cross border, and Croxley Danes is currently operating out of its temporary site in Tolpits Lane before moving to their permanent home in Baldwins Lane next year.

Between the 2 schools, we have added 300 places per year to the secondary school supply. St Clement Danes have also added an additional class in each year, as has Rickmansworth, Watford Boys and, slightly further afield, Dr Challoner's in Little Chalfont. A total of 420 new places in our area, in a mix of selective and partially selective schools. Hertfordshire County Council have responsibility for school place planning. In reality, as all local secondary schools



are academies, this involves discussing projected pupil numbers with existing schools and supporting expansion or contraction to meet demand, and when forecasted pupil numbers are high, inviting academy providers to build a new school.

In the combined areas of Rickmansworth, Maple Cross, Croxley Green and Chorleywood this year, 545 pupils were allocated a place at secondary school, and only 15 of those were allocated a school not on their list of 4 preferences. In a partially selective area, also served by good private schools, there can be several reasons why a child has a non-ranked allocation (NRA). Digging a little deeper, 1 child attending

Christchurch, 1 attending Arnett Hills and 2 attending Rickmansworth Park schools received an NRA. 100% of pupils at Croxley primary schools were allocated a school on their list. The other 11 NRAs may be children already in the private school sector who are automatically allocated a school even if they do not complete the paperwork.

Finally, we can interrogate the non-selective catchment areas for our local schools, ie for pupils not qualifying under academic or musical aptitude, or as a sibling place. Distance is measured "as the crow flies", and therefore forms a radius around the school. This year, Rickmansworth School's distance places extend as far as Field Way.

The Reach Free School's catchment encompasses West Hyde, Heronsgate and Rickmansworth to the bottom of Scots Hill. St Clement Danes School covers Chorleywood and the upper Berry Lane estate.

From this, we can conclude that this year we had sufficient school places in the Rickmansworth area. No child will have found themselves without a school, or be expected to attend a school the opposite side of Watford as in previous years. However, the expectations on the area for housing growth make it unlikely that we will be in this fortunate position for long.

**Carolyn Venn**



## Dates for Your Diary

**Friends of Watersmeet Coffee Morning, 10.30 - 12 noon at Watersmeet**

Fri. 10th May.

**Ricky Carnival and start of Ricky Week**

Sat 11th May.

**Phoenix Morris dancing at the Coach & Horses in the High Street**

Weds. 15th May.

**Rickmansworth (Canal) Festival, in the Aquadrome**

Weekend 18th & 19th May.

**Friends of Watersmeet Coffe Morning, 10.30 - 12 noon at Watersmeet**

Fri. 12th July.

**Rickmansworth Folk Festival – 11 –12 Morris in the High Street.**

Sat. 13th July

**Singing at the lock, 11 - 4 the Feathers and the Conservative Club.**

Sat. 13th July.

## Community/Diary Dates

**Friends of Watersmeet Coffee Morning 10.30 – 12 noon at Watersmeet**

Fri 13th September.

**French Market, Rickmansworth High Street, 9-5**

Sat. 28th September.

**Rickmansworth Society Market, Watersmeet, 10 am - 1 pm**

Sat. 12th October.

**Friends of Watersmeet Coffee Morning 10.30 – 12 noon at Watersmeet**

Fri. 8th November.

**p.m. Rickmansworth Remembrance Parade, Procession from our Lady's to St Marys followed by service**

Sun. 10th November.

**Rickmansworth Town Team Winter Fair, 5 – 9 Rickmansworth High Street.**

Fri. 29th November.

## PLANNING



***New Hotel Being Built***

At the time of writing, there are a number of applications awaiting outcomes, including the planned construction of a roundabout by the entrance to the Reach Free School, which is currently subject to review and the long-awaited future of the site owned by Lidl.

On a brighter note, the construction of the long awaited new hotel on the former Travis Perkins site by the Batchworth roundabout has commenced with planned completion in December.

Planning applications, for extensions, solar roof panels and/or ornamental railings and gates continue to cause irritation between some neighbours. In the case of the former, the unintended consequence is to reduce the housing stock of smaller family homes within the district and all that it entails.

Rickmansworth, once renowned for both its brewers and excessive numbers of public houses, has been blessed by planning consent recently given for the change of use for an existing disused agricultural building (a dairy parlour) on Woodoaks Farm, into a craft micro brewery (Use Class B2 - General Industrial) with ancillary tap room and retail unit.

Any member, with concerns with future planning applications, can contact me, or indeed any member of the Committee, for advice as to how to either support or the grounds by which to make a valid objection.

**Bob Templeman**



# Three Rivers Museum of Local Industry

## Local History

*There are still many who are unaware that there is a vibrant local history museum in Rickmansworth covering the entire Three Rivers area.*

*Situated between the library and Watersmeet in Basing House, once the home of William Penn, Three Rivers Museum Trust last year celebrated its 30th anniversary in the presence of local MP, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor, David Gauke, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Will Hobhouse, and the Chairman of TRDC, Diana Barber.*



The Trust is independent and run entirely by volunteers. The Museum has much to offer for the visitor with its extensive range of artefacts, photographs and literature ranging from the Iron Age to modern times and taking the history of the town from its origins as a Saxon farm as recorded in the Domesday Book to the current vibrant town Rickmansworth has become.



When you are in the town and have a few spare minutes, do call in to Basing House where you will be given a warm welcome and be able to enjoy the experience of learning the history of the town and its surrounding areas.

Recent temporary exhibitions include a wonderful wall of poppies, made by local schoolchildren, commemorating those who died in WW1, an exhibition of local industry and a continuing display of recent acquisitions. A new display in Ricky Week will feature well-known residents of Rickmansworth.

On the second Saturday of Ricky Week, 18 May, the old council chamber at Basing House will be open from 11am to 2pm for children to come and handle artefacts, such as a large ammonite and some Roman pottery, as well as flint tools and fossils. There will also be a range of craft activities.

Have you visited Croxley Great Barn yet? One of Hertfordshire's oldest timber-framed buildings, Croxley Barn dates from about 1397 and is Grade 2\* Listed.

Three Rivers Museum organises tours on the last Saturday of the month between April and October. Meet at St Joan of Arc School car park in the High Street by 10.45am; a steward will then take you to the Barn (10-15 minute walk) for an 11am start. Groups are particularly welcome, but we would appreciate prior notice if you are thinking of bringing several people.

If you have any photographs of local scenes, particularly from times gone by, which you think could be of historic interest to Museum visitors, do let us know. We can scan them and return them to you very quickly. We are also hoping to create a database of servicemen from Rickmansworth in WW1 on our website and would be keen to hear from anyone who would like to help.

Volunteers are vital to our Museum especially to help with stewarding for which there is a minimum commitment of two hours at least once a month. Introductory training and guidance is

available and there will always be an experienced person on hand to answer your questions. We are also particularly keen to hear from anyone with good IT skills to help with the website and our equipment in Basing House. If you think



you can help or would just like to find out more, email [info@trmt.org.uk](mailto:info@trmt.org.uk) or telephone Ann Vernau on 01923 775882.

The Museum is open between 2pm and 4pm during the week and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays. Admission is free.

Further information is available on the website [www.trmt.org.uk](http://www.trmt.org.uk).

We look forward to welcoming you.

**Ann Vernau**



## Rickmansworth Town Team Working For Your Community



Rickmansworth Town Team CIC was set up in 2014 primarily with the aim to run events for Rickmansworth to create a greater community spirit and to encourage additional footfall to our town centre. We run a number of events every year, and are definitely willing to try out new things. If you would like to join the team – please feel free to contact us.

### Photograph

RTT Directors: L to R; Steve Mander, David Montague, Nina Hosking, Michael Stimpson and Peter Waters who is being presented with a retirement gift.

## FOLK IN RICKMANSWORTH

Ricky Folk has expanded from one night a month to two. For many years now, on the second Tuesday of every month, the group have gathered for an acoustic sing around where each person present sings a song or plays a tune, normally going round about four times.

From May this year the evenings are being expanded to two a month with the fourth Tuesday being devoted to “session” music which is where every musician present joins in with a tune.

Both events are held in the back bar of the Conservative Club in Bury Lane at 8.15 and you can come to either or both to play, sing or just listen.

**For further details, ring Mike Stimpson on 01923 770425**

## Advice column from your local CAB



**I bought a pair of trainers from a private seller on an online marketplace. The advert said they were Asics but when they arrived the branding said Basics. They are clearly not what was advertised, are terrible quality and not fit for purpose. Do I have any rights? What can I do?**

A) If you're shopping online from an individual seller, the principle of “buyer beware” applies - which means you are purchasing subject to all defects, and the seller does not have to declare problems.

However, the seller must not misrepresent the goods, for example, by claiming they're a certain popular brand when they are not.

Because your trainers are not as described in the advert, you may have grounds to ask for your money back.

First, try to fix the issue by contacting the seller to explain the problem, let them know your rights and that you would like your money back.

Should this get you nowhere, check to see if the online marketplace has its own protection and disputes resolution system.

Finally, if neither of these work for you, consider making a claim to the court, known as a small claim. There is guidance on how to do this on the Citizens Advice website at [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

**For further help and advice, please contact your local CAB or please email your enquiry to us via our website: [threeriverscab.org.uk](http://threeriverscab.org.uk)**

Rickmansworth CAB,  
Northway House (behind the library),  
High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1EH.  
New Telephone number -  
0344 245 1296

Monday	} 10.00am - 3.30pm	Wednesday	10.00am - 12.30pm
Tuesday		Thursday	10.00am - 12.30pm

**Our 3 CABs need you! (Abbots Langley, Rickmansworth and South Oxhey). If you can spare 2 half days a week and are interested in finding out more about training as a volunteer CAB adviser, please get in touch:**

**Email: [training@castr.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:training@castr.cabnet.org.uk)  
or please drop in during opening hours.**



## Information

In company with other areas, Rickmansworth has been the subject of an increase in crime. It seems this is not just in our area and many blame the Government for the cut back in funding to the Police.

The start of the year saw a number of break-in thefts from houses off the Harefield Road.

Alan Waller, a local PC, commented "We have seen an increase in burglaries in the Harefield Road area in January but the last reported break in in that area was on the 5th of February (7 in total)."

"Patrols have been stepped up and it is thought that a team may be operating from London using Harefield as a route. Most of the houses targeted were empty where the occupant was out and the house was in darkness."

"It is unusual to get this many burglaries in a concentrated area and you would not expect this many in such a short period."

It is something the Police are concerned about and we have been targeting houses with the "dark house" leaflet drops and promoting this on OWL"

"There have been concentrated efforts to catch the offenders when the Police have been called."

In an emergency you should dial 999 or, if you are hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, you can text 18000

You should, however, only use these numbers if a crime is happening right now, someone is in immediate danger or there is a risk of serious damage to property, a suspect for a serious crime is nearby or there is a traffic collision involving injury or where there is danger to other road users.

In all other cases you should ring 101 and ask for Hertfordshire Police. Such calls cost 15p from mobiles or landlines but are free from payphones. The text number is **18001 101**

It is important to ask for **HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE** not the Met. Sgt Neil Canning says "To reassure you, and other residents of Rickmansworth, all residential burglaries are investigated by detectives from our local crime units

and, as you would expect, we amend our patrol plans and strategy to increase the policing numbers / presence in particular areas where we start to see a series of offences. This is in addition to normal policing patrols."

"We also use a range of different tactics in our efforts to reassure and inform residents and to disrupt, catch and convict offenders and we naturally link with the Metropolitan Police who border us, sharing information and working with them."

"Whilst each and every burglary is of concern to me, and the residents involved, our staff are doing their best to disrupt and deter offenders and to catch those responsible and we have seen offenders detained in 2018 for offences in this area."

Break-ins are not the only things to worry about and OWL recently advised of the problem of traders going door to door. Do not talk to them if they ring your bell and ring 101 at once.

Do this if you see something you think looks out of place. The Police would rather get a report which turns out to be a genuine person than not get a report and find out later that, had you phoned them, they could have done something to prevent a crime.

TRDC also have warned about con-men saying that they are from TRDC. These fraudsters always seem genuine – that is how they get away with it!

Callers are one thing – these people also use the telephone or e-mails. If someone phones you and asks you to check that they are who they say they are that sounds good but **USE A DIFFERENT PHONE** to do this.

So, what can you do to protect yourself?

There are lots of things.

Do not go out leaving a door or window open – sounds silly but this DOES happen.

Put your house and car keys in a drawer – and NOT by the front door.

Get a door bell you can answer from your mobile phone – not that expensive and you can be in when you are out!

Leave a couple of lights on – but not

ones which light up your house to show that you are not in! Even better, get a timer so that different lights go on and off at different times.

In my road we have set up a WhatsApp group – and it works. If one resident sees something then we all know about it. We have had two break-ins in our road so we now do what we should have been doing all along.

Do NOT get involved yourself but call either 999 or 101 (see above) – let the Police deal with it.

Our local police will be pleased to give you advice on crime protection but keep your eyes open for those who live near you as well as you own home.

Let us all fight back against crime.

In the interim, the number of knife and shooting deaths and injuries in London is on the increase and is creeping in our direction. A man was stabbed to death in Pinner in March and in the same month Police arrested two teenagers in Rickmansworth carrying knives which had been used to steal mobile phones.

Whilst not all these incidents involve teenagers the majority of them do and the question is why is this happening and how is it to be stopped? I do not think that there is any one answer but a number of factors must come into play.

**Michael Stimpson**

Further crime prevention advice can be found on the following website:

**<https://www.herts.police.uk/Information-and-services/Advice/Crime-prevention/Protect-your-home/> or contact;**

**Abigail Watson**  
**Police Community Support Officer**  
**Neighbourhood Watch**  
**Email: [abigail.watson@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:abigail.watson@herts.pnn.police.uk)**  
**uk**  
**Tel: 01923 472483**



## William Penn Sports Hall Saved

I would like to extend a big THANK YOU to all residents who supported the campaign to prevent the destruction of the sports hall at William Penn. Our attendance at council meetings, discussion on local Facebook groups, contacting local councillors and keeping the press aware of our predicament was a fabulous example of a community coming together. We heard about the decision to overturn the destruction of the hall whilst collecting signatures for our petition during the Rickmansworth Christmas Evening. It was fantastic news, especially as we were speaking to more and more locals who had no idea of the council's plans for our Sports Hall.

After we discovered the proposals in June 2018, Three Rivers District Council agreed to review leisure use across the district and reconsider the terms of the contract with SLM to manage the centre. Disappointingly, user numbers continued to be under recorded, and I was present when netballers were turned away from a session as "the hall was full" with 22 adults. Private groups such as Taekwondo were not asked to register their usage, and the uncertainty over the hall's future led to such groups seeking new premises elsewhere. The council's questionnaire about leisure usage was targeted at primary school parents, asking whether they would use a soft play centre at William Penn, and the campaign group felt TRDC were not collecting objective data about current or future use.

We turned to Sport England to provide assistance, both to support our campaign to maintain a local accessible sports hall, but also to seek guidance on the assumption that the council could justify the destruction of our asset by suggesting residents could use facilities at local schools as an alternative, as presented by council officers at July's full council meeting. We discovered Sport England had awarded TRDC £1,088,500 towards the cost of building William Penn Leisure Centre in 1994 and we had high hopes they maintained an interest in the centre. Unfortunately, their interest in the site as an "asset liability" ended in 2016, so were unable to overturn TRDC's plans, but they were keen to stress that councils cannot expect schools to provide local leisure provision, as their responsibility is first and foremost to their pupils.

Jan Dowman, a member of the very popular Over 50s Active Life group had contacted the BBC, and they were



*William Penn Sports Hall*

also keen to follow our campaign. We had coverage through the Watford Observer, My Ricky News, social media, on the local BBC radio network, and in October a news TV crew were planning to interview users at the hall as our campaign progressed. We began a petition, and I must extend my sincere thanks to the supportive local shopkeepers, particularly on Moneyhill Parade, who raised the issue with their customers and helped spread the word. Residents contacted us daily as they were unaware of the online TRDC consultation into leisure usage, and we continued to be concerned over the council's approach.

We knew from the outset, this was all about money. TRDC needed to re-budget circa £70k for the next 20 years to retain the hall. As the current leisure budget is £1.8m, this did not seem to be an impossibility, and therefore we needed to demonstrate public support. We distributed hard copies of the petition across the area, but were incredibly disappointed to discover that Watersmeet, often quoted by the council as "Rickmansworth's community hall" (!!!), had been instructed not to display the forms as it is council property.

Volunteers offered to collect signatures at Christmas events throughout the district, and we had reached 1,700 signatures when we heard the news that

TRDC had reversed their decision on the hall. Unfortunately, users do not come away unscathed – one question asked on the consultation was whether users would be willing to pay more to use the hall. Unsurprisingly, they answered in the affirmative, keen to save the hall. In the Watford Observer announcement about the decision to retain the hall, TRDC leader Cllr Sara Bedford said "Many sports hall users have told us that they would be prepared to pay a little more each week to retain the facilities, so we have agreed a plan which will do exactly that."

So, a successful outcome, but not without cost to local residents. The leisure management contract should have never included the destruction of our hall, and therefore finding additional funds to overturn the poor decision should not have been necessary. However, I am hopeful that an increase in user charges will support a full programme of activities for local people of all ages and abilities. Check out <https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/william-penn-leisure-centre/#activities> for Netball, Active Life, Football, Basketball and more. We're a friendly bunch and would love to see you!

**Carolyn Venn**



## 89th Annual General Meeting 17th June 2019

The 89th Annual General Meeting of the Rickmansworth & District Residents Association is to be held on Monday the 17th June at 8 p.m. in the Committee Room, The Royal British Legion, Ebury Road, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1BN

**Please note change of venue this year**

### Agenda:

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. To consider and if thought fit, approve the minutes of the 88th AGM held on 16th July 2018.
3. To consider and if thought fit, adopt the Honorary Treasurer's Statement of Accounts
4. To appoint an Honorary Examiner.
5. To receive and, if thought fit, to adopt the Chairman's Annual report.
6. To elect the President of the Association.
7. To elect the Vice Presidents of the Association – maximum three.
8. To elect the officers of the Association (Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer).
9. To elect the Association Committee for 2018/2019.

The Association for 2018/2019 comprised, in alphabetical order, Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz, Chris Evans, Frank Evans, Nina Hosking, Laurie Irvine, Richard Lawman, Anne Littlejohn, David Montague, Michael Stimpson, Bob Templeman and Carolyn Venn .

Peter Waters, who is President of the Association, also serves in a non-executive role.

There are three Committee vacancies to be filled.

10. Any other business for which advance notice has been given.

At the end of the evening tea/coffee and biscuits will be available.

### RICKMANSWORTH & DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

<b>President</b>	Peter Waters	
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Tony Berry and Peter Crispin	
<b>Chairman</b>	Michael Stimpson	
<b>Secretary</b>	Christina Evans	
<b>Treasurer</b>	Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz	
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Anne Littlejohn	
<b>Planning Officer</b>	Bob Templeman	
<b>Advertisement Manager</b>	Frank Evans	
<b>Social Media</b>	Position Vacant	
<b>Publicity Officer</b>	Position Vacant	
	Carolyn Venn	Laurie Irvine
	David Montague	Richard Lawman
	Nina Hosking	



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The winter and spring passed well for Phoenix Morris. We were unusually busy for that time of year.

We held a successful open evening in late October and recruited seven new members – five of them have decided to join us.

Our AGM at the end of the month with Rowena Beckett-Park taking over as Bag (secretary) from Pauline Lawson who had been in post for almost twenty years. Pauline was made an honorary Life member.

Toward the end of 2018 we danced at the Rickmansworth Winter Fair evening in Rickmansworth High Street always a good crowd. We held our normal Christmas party on our last practice night (Wednesday) of the year, always a fun festive evening.

Into 2019, our first dance out of the year was on Croxley Green for the annual Croxley Wassail. This was followed by a private event, a wedding dancing in the snow for the arrival of the guests. This was held at the Royal Standard of England in Forty Green near Beaconsfield. Our last event in January was our Annual Dinner at the Coach and Horses in Rickmansworth where 30 of us spent a sociable evening with excellent food, music and dance.

Since then we have held two all day practice events in Mill End to help to prepare us for a busy season ahead. We performed a show spot in the interval at a Ceilidh and have given a talk to U3A Rickmansworth Branch on Morris in England with a slide show and some display dances to illustrate the talk.

Phoenix Morris dance throughout the year (except August) and dance at both Local Events, Weekends of Dance and Folk Festivals throughout the country.

We practice most Wednesday evenings in the Scout Hall in Ebury Road, Rickmansworth.

The Morris is an excellent way to keep fit, have some great fun with a friendly bunch of people as well as keeping an old tradition alive and supporting local charities.



**Sue Stimpson**

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

We have built the Committee back up to 12 over the past year but still have four spaces to fill.

### Are you able to help?

The Committee meet every other month in the Committee room at the Royal British Legion on the third Monday of the month and also we hold our AGM on a Monday evening. We need an Editor for **Independence** and a Publicity Officer.

The Residents' Association monitors planning, transport, education and environmental matters in Rickmansworth, Batchworth and Mill End and keeps in touch with other Residents' Associations in the area.

We contact the County, District and Community Councils as required and where something important comes up we organise public meetings to discuss the issue.

**Please ring me on 01923 770425 any afternoon or early evening if you would like to know more.**

## Road Reps.

The Association cannot run without our small army of Road Reps.

Our thanks to all those who assist us in this way.

As always, we are short of members who can spare an evening or two a year and this involves delivering **Independence** every spring and trying to get other residents in their road (or part of their road) to join up.

We are transferring to Standing Orders so, with the short term job of getting members to fill in such a form, that is all there is to it.

Are you able to help? There are, as always a list of roads where we do not have a Road Rep. If you live in one of them or close by, please can you let us know if you are prepared to deliver **Independence** to between 12 and 24 houses in one of these roads and get the members to complete the Standing Order.

The roads we need help in are as follows.

Ashleigh Court	Barn Lea	Batchworth Hill (South)	Berry Lane
Bury Lane	Bury Meadows	Clarkfield	Chiltern Drive
Church Street	Colne Avenue	Coombe Hill Road	Curtis Close
Eastwick Crescent	Goral Mead	Harriet Walker Way	Jordans Road
Juniper Gate	Kenwood Drive	Long Lane	Maxwell Close
Middleton Road	Salters Close	Shepherds Way (Part)	Springwell Avenue
Stockers Park Road	St Peters Close	The Greenway	The Queens Drive
The Willows	Thellusson Way	Thompson Way	Uxbridge Road (Part)
Vine Tree Court	Woodcock Hill	Woodman House	

Please contact Anne, Leslie or me and we will be very pleased to hear from you.

**Michael Stimpson**



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gwarren@savills.com



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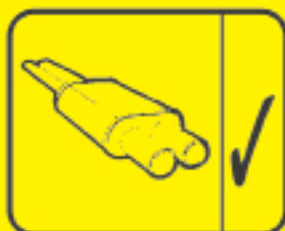
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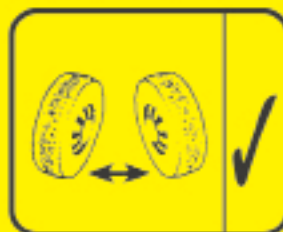
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