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IMPORTANT NOTICE – PLEASE READ !!!!

As you may know from past copies of **Independence** we are trying to transfer to e-mail for the distribution of the magazine.

We have since decided that one copy, the Spring Edition, will be available both in paper format and on line but we still want to issue the Autumn edition from next year by e-mail and perhaps increase the number of issues to three or even four a year.

IN ORDER TO DO THIS WE NEED YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS

Please could you go on to the Associations web site <http://www.rickmansworthresidents.org/home> and “join” the Association using this system



FROM THE TILLER

Future of RVS Hall.

Perhaps the most important thing to start with is the future of the RVS site which, at the time of writing, is far from certain.

There are two issues involved. The first is the use of such units for housing homeless people and this is a good idea, although the number of people it is proposed to squash into the units (up to 6 in two rooms) and is supported by the RDRA. In suitable locations these units

would be a good idea.

The second is more dark and sinister. The lack of consultation with local residents or, indeed, our elected representatives – the District Councillors elected by local residents to represent us all, is beyond belief.

We accept that such units should be used to house those local residents who, for whatever reason, have found themselves in the position of suddenly being homeless and, indeed, the cost to local ratepayers will be reduced if the plan goes ahead somewhere in the area.

We understand that the District Council is, under pressure from many sources including the RDRA, looking for alternative sites in the local area to site such units – at least that is what they say.

What we are unable to grasp is why the project has been undertaken in total secrecy, even being kept from the local District Councillors, and launched just before Christmas – a time when all local societies would (as we did) have difficulty in mustering their members to mount any sort of opposition.

With the loss of the RVS hall, which was closed in the middle of last year, Rickmansworth no longer has an affordable community hall. Whilst it is accepted that there are many faith halls in the area, other parts of Three Rivers, such as Abbots Langley, have splendid Community Halls.

So, the two issues are 1) lack of consultation regarding the future use of the RVS site and 2) should this site be used for the siting of housing for the homeless.

The latter was originally proposed using temporary planning permission but we understand that the plan is now for a permanent structure.

I again stress that the RDRA Committee have agreed that such units are

an ideal solution to the problem of low cost housing and we can only hope that the District Council are looking for more suitable alternative sites in the area.

Renewed appeal for help.

As always we are in need of both Committee members and Road Reps.

Such a large organisation as RDRA is bound to have a turnover of both.

Mike and Ruth Ede, having joined the Committee and taken on the role of Advertising Manager for this magazine and Secretary, have recently decided to move north and thus can no longer continue to play a role. Are you prepared to help with either of these Committee posts?

At any given time we need to replace road reps who have given sterling service to the Association by delivering **Independence** and collecting subscriptions. Whilst we are normally able to find members who are able to give your Association an hour in the Autumn and two hours in the Spring (the extra time is used collecting the subscriptions) we always need members to either take on their road (or part of it) or the road next to them. Are you able to give us three hours a year?

Batchworth Parish Council

This May we will have a new Parish Council in Rickmansworth Town. The new Council, Batchworth Parish Council, will cover the two wards of Eastbury & Moor Park and Rickmansworth Town. There will be a total of 8 Councillors – four from each of the two wards.

This follows a vote last year of residents in the only four wards left in Three Rivers which are unparished. The remaining two, Maple Cross voted against and whilst Mill End voted for, but only by a small minority, so the District Councillors decided that Mill End would not be involved.

Chairman's Notes

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Town Team Events for 2017: **Folk Festival**

Saturday 22nd July - Morris Dancing and Folk singing around the town during the day AND

JULIE FELIX supported by Polly Morris -
in Concert in the evening

Winter Fair

Friday 24th November - 5pm till 9pm

Want to help with any of our events?
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This will mean that those who live in the relevant area will now have three Councils covering the area.

At our AGM we have invited a Councillor from Croxley Parish Council to explain the responsibilities of the relevant bodies and to explain the relationship between them.

Your Association hopes that the new Parish Council, like Croxley Parish Council, will be non-political but that depends on how you vote which, of course, is up to you. There are four Independent Candidates standing in Rickmansworth Town Ward, who all live in the Ward and are members of RDRA, as there are for Eastbury & Moor Park (two each from the two relevant Residents Associations).

There is a meeting at 7pm on Tuesday the 2nd of May in the back meeting room of the Royal British Legion in Ebury Road where you can meet the Candidates for this election which takes place on Thursday the 4th.

Please also see the article later in this magazine.

Other Planning Matters

Most of the planning matters are standard applications for minor alterations to buildings in our area. There are a few we are keeping our eye on and responding as required.

In addition to the future of the RVS site there are only two applications where there has been any movement in the past few months.

The four storey office block that was planned for Beesons Yard has been withdrawn following overwhelming objections from many including RDRA. This proposed development would have blocked light from the dwellings in Ebury Road.

RDRA has supported the proposal for a hotel to be built on the Travis Perkins site. This has yet to go before the District Councils Planning Committee. There is some concern about the small number of parking spaces but, in general, the project will go a long way to replace the Victoria / Long Island Hotel. It is a great shame that this Company could not have purchased the hotel.

Waste

If you have waste to dispose of be careful what arrangements you make for the disposal. The whole Nation is, rightly, cracking down on Fly Tippers and recently a householder in South Oxhey was prosecuted by Three Rivers District Council because his building rubble was found dumped on a road.

The householder was fined £1,201.75 (a funny amount!) which could have been avoided if he had checked to see if the contractor had a waste carriers licence.

There have been over 14,000 incidents of fly tipping in the County since this time last year.

In most cases you can take household waste to a Council tip for free disposal.

If you have any queries about rubbish disposal or have information about anyone dumping rubbish, please ring the **District Council on 01923 776611**.

Michael Stimpson

Secretary's Notes

Spring is the time of year when, after a winter of rain and freezing conditions, the condition of the roads is always at its worst as they are usually studded and pitted with potholes. This past winter has not been as cold or wet as some and yet the state of local roads is the worst I can remember. The condition of Homestead Rd from the railway bridge to the junction with the A412 is very bad as is that of many roads within Rickmansworth and in the surrounding district too. I am aware that Berry Lane, from Arnett Hills school to Dog Kennel Lane is within the boundary of Chorleywood but many Rickmansworth Residents use that stretch of road daily. Along there the road appears to be a series of potholes connected by strips of tarmac! The road from the traffic lights at Maple Cross leading to the entrance of Maple Lodge Nature sanctuary and Thames Water premises too is in a very bad state of repair as are many local pavements which pedestrians need to use.

TRDC is to introduce parking charges in Rickmansworth short stay car parks, although the first hour will remain free. Parking in the town is difficult and I feel a great deal of sympathy for the council on this, given the number of cars requiring parking and the number of spaces available at peak times although personally I have never failed to find

parking in one or another of the local car parks. We are all reluctant to give up the convenience of car use even when public transport is a viable alternative. The bus is easy for some-one in my position, still relatively fit, with a bus pass and a house just a short walk from the stop, but for parents with one or two school age children the fare from Mill End to Rickmansworth is much more expensive than using the car, even if parking charges are introduced.

The roads around Rickmansworth and District are becoming clogged with parked cars, as the station car park is not large enough to cope with demand (it is usually full before 8 a.m.) and many commuters are reluctant to pay for parking in the car park anyway. One's property ends at the boundary with the pavement so that unless there are restrictions such as yellow lines, permit holder parking only or other sign-posted restrictions, any driver is free to park on the public highway outside of houses in the suburbs, however much the householder may object. Parking on double yellow lines and switching on the car hazard lights, as is common practice outside the Tesco Express in Berry Lane and in the High Street at the corner with Church Street, does not make a parked car any less of a hazard.

The freedom to park on the public

highway does not extend to parking on the pavements, restricting passage for pedestrians and forcing them out into the road. This has been brought very much to the forefront of my mind, as I have a friend who is wheelchair bound. She lives in an area where the pavement is usually obstructed by parked cars, meaning that she is unable to go shopping unless accompanied by an able-bodied companion to act as look out when she needs to leave the safety of the pavement and use the road. The problem of having to share the road with motorcars instead of being able to walk along the pavement must also beset mums with a baby buggy and a toddler to control. Fellow motorists please consider others before simply parking your vehicle where it is convenient for you and then walking away with a sigh of relief.

This was to have been a swan song article as I had given notice to the Committee of my wish to step down. Unfortunately, it is proving difficult to find a replacement so I may have to write one more column in the Autumn. Is there any-one out there who would like to take on the role of Secretary of RDRA? If so, please make yourself known to the Chairman. I wish you all a lovely summer.

Dianne Passmore.

PETER'S PADDOCK



Peter discusses a room without a view, a bridge too far, and of course updates us on those lights again.

Ricky Week

The 63rd Ricky Week starts on Saturday, 13th May and as usual is an 8-day week, with the second week-end featuring the Canal Festival (I always refer to it as the Rickmansworth Canal Festival as I have often found that some people easily confuse just "Rickmansworth Festival" with "Rickmansworth Week", which is unhelpful.). This should attract the usual thousands of visitors, although as a trustee of the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust I pray for fine weather, on which its success greatly depends.

Do support what events you can in and around the Week, details of which you will find in the programme for the Week, which I am compiling and producing for the last time this year after twenty years (in addition to having been the Society Treasurer for the last 31 years). I did give notice of this in the last programme and invited a successor to take it on but none has come forward. Unless somebody comes forward by December, the Rickmansworth Society will probably revert to the original printed sheet with the bare details of the Week (and of course no advertisements). But there is still time!

Sixty Years Ago

Quarrying my complete run of Independences, I find several references in those for 1957 which will no doubt stir older readers' memories. The "unsatisfactory water levels of the Ebury Road swimming bath" (where Goral Mead is now) meant that "consideration is being given to the provision of a new swimming bath in Rickmansworth", and ultimately the William Penn Leisure Centre in Shepherds Lane enshrined this. The "closing of the Odeon Cinema [in the High Street] after nearly twenty-one years of life has no doubt been regretted by many. It is probably another victim of television. The building occupies a fine central position [now occupied by the dental practice next to Dickins'] and with some internal alteration might be suitable for the

Rickmansworth Hall which has been talked about so much in recent years and which is so badly needed". The latter, however, was what eventually became Watersmeet across the road, and of course current attempts to preserve a hall on the RVS site off Bury Lane show to many a continuing need for such an amenity.

In February 1957 it was stated : "The Church School at Parsonage Road [where I sat my 11+ exam!] has been overcrowded for a number of years. It has been necessary for one of its classes to be transferred to the Bury Restaurant to relieve the pressure at Parsonage Road, but it is not satisfactory for a section of the school to be cut off from the life of the school as a whole." Indeed not, the eventual solution being the present St Mary's School in Stockers Farm Road.

The same issue also stated that "in regard to this very necessary improvement [the widening of Berry Lane in Mill End] the Ministry of Transport & Civil Aviation are prepared to recommend the Ministry of Housing & Local Government to grant [a] loan sanction for these works", and the July issue confirmed that a "tender amounting to £14,800 has been accepted to cover the cost ..."

Traffic Flows

Every so often I have contacted the Highways Team at Hertfordshire C.C. for data relating to the principal roads in Rickmansworth (the A404, A412 and A4145). The latest figures from 2016, rounded up or down to the nearest whole number, may be of interest. In each case the data are of total vehicle flows (viz. in both directions) collected over periods of 24 and 16 hours, with 7-day and 5-day (Mon-Fri) averages, and are given in order of volume of traffic :

- a) A404 (Chorleywood Road) :** 21,372 (24hr) / 20,157 (16hr) (7-day average) ; 22,631 (24hr) / 21,965 (16hr) (5-day average) ;
b) A404 (London Road) : 21,056 (24hr)

- / 19,847 (16hr) (7-day average) ; 22360 (24hr) / 21,211 (16hr) (5-day average) ;
c) A412 (Park Road) : 21,025 (24hr) / 19,784 (16hr) (7-day average) ; 22,705 (24hr) / 21,520 (16hr) (5-day average) ;
d) A412 (Uxbridge Road) : 16,946 (24hr) / 15,936 (16hr) (7-day average) ; 18,730 (24hr) / 17,252 (16hr) (5-day average) ;
e) A4145 (Moor Lane) : 10,801 (24hr) / 10,286 (16hr) (7-day average) ; 12,207 (24hr) / 11,704 (16hr) (5-day average).

The A404 now appears busier overall than the A412, which was not the case before the opening of the M25 and the easier and faster accessibility of Rickmansworth from junction 18. The signs for the A412 need updating to take account of the M25 : for example, traffic should no longer be directed from Rickmansworth along the A412 to Slough, but only to Maple Cross or perhaps Denham at most. Slough should be reached via the M25 and M4.

Interestingly, there are no data for Rectory Road, which carries the joint traffic of the A404 and A412, or Riverside Drive, probably the two busiest stretches of road in Rickmansworth!

A room without a view

Living at the bottom of Nightingale Place since 1979, I have enjoyed a decent view with plenty of light from my kitchen window of the Long Island Exchange and its car park, Rectory Road and Station Road, with Moor Park and the Northwood NATO base in the distance. Now all that is gone thanks to the developers who have erected several blocks called "The Exchange" on the LIE site, with the nearest "in my face", as they say, just a matter of feet away and with a significant loss of light as a result. It seems that kitchen windows are not viewed as an amenity in the way bedroom and living-room ones are, so that objections on that ground would have proved fruitless.

A bridge too far?

So the road bridge over Park Road near its junction with the High Street is, according to the Watford Observer, to be renovated at a cost of nearly a quarter-of-a-million pounds (work has already begun at the time of writing). How many readers remember that it was already second-hand when erected here many years ago? It had previously spanned the North Orbital (A405) in Garston when the latter was a single carriageway, but was not broad enough to remain when the road was dualled. It would be interesting to know how this expenditure was reached. Word has it that the footbridge further up near the station roundabout is to be similarly treated – at the same cost? But the County Council may be rolling in funds, if the following is anything to go by

Those lights yet again

Regular readers will know that I have inveighed against those lights on Batchworth Heath Hill burning on uselessly for several issues now. (As you drive towards Rickmansworth, you pass them shortly after the Greene Man P.H. and the turning on the right to Park Close.) I took the matter up several times with local County Councillor Ralph Sangster, who eventually assured me that the matter “was in hand”. And what did I see in mid-January returning from Ruislip one evening? Something had happened! Had the posts and lights been removed? No, they were now illuminating two large speed derestriction signs, even though the following section to Batchworth Hill has been limited to 40 m.p.h for several years now!

Somebody must have woken up somewhere, however, for within a few

days the derestriction signs had gone – but the posts and lights remained, now illuminating on the other side two large and utterly unnecessary 40 m.p.h. signs, unnecessary because the London Road both sides of these posts has been subject to a 40 m.p.h. limit for years now, as indicated by the ordinary miniature 40 m.p.h. roundels on lamp standards accordingly.

At the time of writing this is still the case. Cllr Sangster has told me that the County Council wants to keep them but has not said why. Certain uncomplimentary monosyllables come to mind. How does one penetrate the cranium of officialdom? The message is quite simple : remove these posts, lights and signs. They are not needed. Perhaps capital letters would help : GET RID OF THEM! How long will it take the County Council to understand?

Peter Waters

Government Funding

School Funding

We have received a letter from the Hertfordshire Association of Secondary School Head Teachers which has been sent to the parents of all children in the County.

It is too long to publish in full in this magazine but the basis of it is that, whilst the Government say that they have ring fenced school funding. It seems however that the cost of running a school is increasing the amount being paid for each 11 – 16 year old has remained the same for a number of years.

The Association feels that the lack of funding in real terms (i.e. the money has stayed the same whilst costs have gone up) will result in a withdrawal of some services in our Secondary Schools and they say that they have serious concerns about the future of education for 11 – 16 year olds.

They further say that the impact of continued underfunding will result in a lack of ability to provide 11 – 16 year olds with many services.

They urge that parents lobby MPs and County Councillors.

It may be that you have a child or grandchild under 11 so you will not have seen the letter (or if over 11 they may have forgotten to give it to you!) and, if so, you should contact the Head of your local school and ask for a copy.

The NHS

In addition to this we hear that Watford General Hospital is in serious need of repair.

There is a group who are saying that a new hospital should be built at the junction of the M25 and A41 on the north side of the motorway part funded by sale of part of the site in Vicarage Road. The meetings were attended by three members of your Committee.

Watford Central now provides most of the NHS services required by local residents and provides A&E for quite a wide area. The new site would be easier for Ambulances to reach by fast roads rather than fighting traffic in west Watford.

There are two problems with the proposal. The site is not close to a railway station and, whilst it would provide faster access for Ambulance drivers, will be difficult to access for those without cars. This, of course, could be resolved by a bus service from Abbots Langley station to another station in the south but there is a second problem.

The cost of such a new Hospital would be £430 million and if you take away the fact that repairs to Watford General would be saved and there would be income from part (not all) of the site at Vicarage Road, the cost of the provision of such a new building would exceed the income by £2-3 million!

The group had not done their

homework and it was a poor presentation.

The Vicarage road site may be close to an Underground station.

The Metropolitan Line

I say MAY as there is still a big question over the future of the extension of the Metropolitan to Watford Junction which would include a station giving access to both the hospital and the football ground.

Such a station would provide a great benefit to residents in the area, especially on match days.

It seems that there is a massive shortfall of funding for the project in the region of £40 million. TFL and LU say that they do expect the project to go ahead and are continuing with relevant planning but the major cost will be the provision of a viaduct at Two Bridges between West Watford and Croxley. The rest of the line is already there as it was the old Croxley branch from Watford High Street.

I think this is a case of “watch this space” as we hear of yet another funding problem.

This all reminds me of being at Speakers Corner in the late 60s hearing a speaker on his soap box outlining wonderful plans. He finished his talk with words I will never forget.

“And who will pay for all this I hear you ask? Should the tax payer pay? – No. Should the ratepayer pay? – No. The Exchequer should pay.”

Michael Stimpson

EVENTS IN RICKMANSWORTH

We are heading into the *fun* period for Rickmansworth residents.



The Rickmansworth Society organises Ricky Week which starts on Saturday the 13th of May with the annual Carnival. This ends at the Rickmansworth Sea Scouts Fete in the Bury. During the parade a collection will be held in aid of local charity.

Pick up a Ricky Week programme to see what is being organised by Local Organisations who belong to the Rickmansworth Society.

The following weekend the annual Rickmansworth Waterways Festival, organised by the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust, an offshoot of RDRA set up in 1992, and this event goes from strength to strength each year with all sorts of events taking place in the Aquadrome and along the Grand Union Canal. This event takes place on Saturday the 20th and Sunday the 21st of May. This event is free although collections are taken to help defray the cost of the event. Full details can be found on the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust web site.



The 4th Rickmansworth Folk Festival is being held on Saturday the 22nd of July with Morris Dancing and Folk singing in pubs and other locations in central Rickmansworth between 11am and 4pm with a concert in the evening with local resident Julie Felix supported by Polly Morris at St Mary's Church. Tickets are available in advance for the evening concert with the day time events being provided free of charge. See details in this magazine.

There are many organisations in Rickmansworth who are always looking for local residents to help put on such events – if you have some spare time why not get involved?



Phoenix Morris at Watersmeet



Information

What is Neighbourhood Watch?

It is one of the biggest voluntary organisations in the country. Residents work closely with the police and other agencies to ensure that their community is kept safe and secure.

It helps to disrupt burglary and other crime by acting as a deterrent to would be criminals.

How does Neighbourhood Watch work with the Police?

By setting up good lines of communication with the local Safer Neighbourhood Police team [SNT], Neighbourhood Watch members can reduce the opportunities for crime in their area by:

- sharing information about local crime.
- reporting suspicious incidents.
- assisting in the detection and apprehension of criminals through members providing information to

the police.

- working closely together to eradicate anti – social behaviour in the community.

How can residents help reduce crime?

- reporting any crime incident or suspicious activity or behaviour to the Police as quickly as possible by **telephoning 999 for urgent matters or 101 for less urgent matters**
- being on the lookout for bogus callers under the guise of Water Board officials etc.
- giving SNT as much information as possible about the suspected people
- keeping your Road Co-ordinator informed of any crime incidents in the road
- displaying the NhW roundel sticker on your door or window
- taking common sense security precautions

- Keeping an eye on the property of your neighbours, particularly when on holiday

One way the Police keep in contact with you is via Online Watch Link [OWL]. You get reports of crimes, security advice and warnings about trends and threats, via your Inbox. Your e-mail address details are totally secure.

If you would like to sign up to get OWL messages please e-mail me **aliandscarth@btinternet.com**; **Name, house name or number, name of road, post code telephone number, email address.**

Andrew Scarth
Deputy District Co-ordinator
Neighbourhood Watch
Three Rivers.

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Neighbourhood Watch does not mean acting as vigilantes or taking direct action against would be criminals or risking personal injury.

It is rather a matter of awareness in the community and reporting suspicious activity to the Police as a matter of urgency.

DATA PROTECTION ACT 1984

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.

SOC West Herts Services



Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for the transformation of acute services in West Herts as part of “Your Care, Your Future” programme begun in 2014.

I begin this with a caveat that this is very much a thumbnail resume of a complicated business case which ran to 169 A4 word processed pages.

The current services, buildings and health care capacity in West Herts are inadequate and many of the buildings in daily use are in very poor repair. There is a compelling case for change for acute health services in West Herts Hospital Trust (WHHT). At the Board meeting on 02/02/2017 the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) setting out the current options for change and development were presented to the Board and members of the public in attendance. Members of the public were allowed 15 minutes at the end during which to ask questions.

WHHT is the only acute hospital trust in West Hertfordshire and currently provides acute services to over 500,000 people on 3 hospital sites – Watford General hospital (WGH), which is the largest site and provides emergency and specialist care, St Albans City Hospital (SACH) which is the WHHT elective care site and Hemel Hempstead Hospital (HHH). A decision was made by the “Your Care, Your Future” programme to develop HHH as a local care facility and this is now not within the scope of this SOC.

The intention of the development of so-called Sustainability & Transformation plans (STPs), backed by government and NHS England, is to ensure that more people are able to access care and support within local communities rather than travelling to hospital. In the past few years WHHT has developed SACH as a dedicated centre for elective surgery and emergency care has been centralised

at WGH with A & E and inpatient services transferred from HHH. This has enabled the development of the new acute Admissions Unit (AAU) at WGH.

Modest investment was made in temporary buildings to provide capacity, with the intention of making further investment. This investment was not made and is now urgently required.

The case for change is:

- A rapidly ageing population, an even faster growing younger population and increasing cultural diversity. Many people now live with one or more chronic, long term health conditions
- Quality: Increasing A&E attendance & emergency admission rates place pressure on acute services. Many patients stay in hospital for longer than the national average and this makes it difficult to maintain services and achieve required clinical standards.
- Sustainability: The WHHT financial deficit grows at an increasing rate and staff work under constant pressure.

The scale of population growth in SW Herts and changing needs mean that acute services in West Herts will need additional capacity over the next 20 years to meet demand. WGH does not meet current NHS building standards e.g. the neo natal unit is only about 30% of required size, only 10% of beds are in single rooms (standard is 50%), delivery suite rooms are only about 44% of required standard.

There is a single underground service corridor connecting the main clinical buildings and a single lift. Patients being moved from the Women’s and Children’s services building to and from theatres share the corridor with domestic and clinical waste, stores deliveries and catering services. Should the lift break

down, scheduled operations must be cancelled.

Pathology department space and facilities are absolutely inadequate.

The very high bed occupancy rate of 97% leaves no spare capacity in times of peak demand. This means that during the busiest times the corridors around the emergency department have to be used as clinical areas with patients waiting on trolleys.

Many of the buildings have reached the end of useful life and are no longer fit for purpose. They are not suitable even for refurbishment.

A list of options is presented in the SOC. It ranges from all services to be delivered by a new build on a single greenfield site, through a combination of rebuild and refurbishment on the sites at WGH and SACH, to refurbishment only on both sites. This latter is the cheapest option but also the very worst.

At the end of the presentation and questions, the Board voted for a combination of option 6 and 10 and work on refining these options will begin.

Option 6 sees WGH remaining as the WHHT centre for emergency and acute care and SACH being the centre for planned care. There should be diagnostic services available on both sites as this will shorten waiting times and improve patient experience.

There will be a combination of new build (WGH) and refurbishment (SACH).

Financing will be by a mix of private and public finance. (PFI 2)

There is still much work to go into refining and delivering this option and the time scale sees building starting in 2020 and completion 2023/4.

Dianne Passmore

Chamber News



The Chamber is flourishing under its new guise at the Three Rivers Chamber of Trade & Commerce. As a not for profit, Community Interest Company, the board of directors are committed to supporting business interests across the district.

We have already delivered three successful networking events this year and are pleased to welcome our newest member:

Alison Smith, Sunshine Health & Fitness, www.sunshine-hf.com, Personal trainer, Running & Triathlon Coach, Nordic Walking instructor – Tel: 07800 995906

A full list of members can be seen on our brand new website www.threeriverschamber.co.uk.

We continue to support the concerns of the Rickmansworth town centre businesses over the proposed increase in parking charges. Whilst it appears there will be a consultation

BATCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

The new Batchworth Parish Council was formally constituted on 4th April 2017 and is being run in the interim by Three Rivers District Council until such time as Parish Councillors are appointed.

Batchworth Parish Council will be the first tier of local government for the Wards of Rickmansworth & Moor Park and Eastbury and putting these wards on the same status as the remaining threequarters of Three Rivers District Council. Only Mill End and Maple Cross will thereafter remain unparished within the Three Rivers District.

The activities of the new Parish Council will be defined by the elected Councillors but will generally fall into three main categories:

1. Represent local communities.
2. Delivery of services to meet local

period – this increase is proposed only for the Rickmansworth car parks. We will be asking for a footfall survey to take place before the installing of the new parking meters, and for a trial period to be considered with a footfall survey after 3 months. There was a High Street Innovation Fund grant made to Three Rivers District Council in 2012, and whilst this was allocated for the whole district, it seems to make sense to use this money to conduct a benchmark survey of footfall so a sensible measure can be made of the impact of an increase in parking charges.

NNDR (Business Rates) also seems to be a concern, but it has to be said that the concern appears to be from the media perspective rather than the businesses. In 2009 the Chamber conducted a review of NNDR with the Valuations Office (VO) of HMRC – at the time most rateable values for retail outlets across the District, were

needs.

3. Improving quality of life and community well-being.

In practice, in the long term this may mean maintenance of parks and open spaces, provision of dog bins, bus shelters, seats etc., social forums and activities, provision of community halls.

The Parish Council will become a statutory consultee on planning applications submitted to the District Council.

In the short term, however, and most importantly for Rickmansworth, it is about improving communication with residents and the wider community, with the aim of the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the town. This plan will form the basis of the community's vision for Rickmansworth both in the short term and the long term. Creating this plan will mean a great deal of community engagement to create a sustainable plan that reflects the visions

Business/News

reduced. It must be remembered that rateable values (RV) are geared to the amount of rent that businesses pay. Calculations become more difficult for owner occupiers, but this is the basic premise by which the VO calculate the RV. From our enquiries regarding the 2017 changes – a majority who have contacted us, have had a reduction or neutral position in their RV.

We will however be continuing our talks with the VO as Rickmansworth town centre RVs appear to be far in excess of those payable in Pinner or Amersham. Again, it is worth noting that the success of negotiations will be totally geared to how much rent the business owners are paying.

**Nina Hosking
Chairman**

and aspirations of its residents and businesses.

What is your vision for Rickmansworth? You will have your chance to say!

Four independent candidates have been nominated for the elections on the 4th May. All four of these candidates live in the Ward of Rickmansworth Town and have a keen interest in the wellbeing of the residents and the community as a whole.

This is the first Parish Council to be created in the Three Rivers District for over 30 years. We do urge you to vote on May 4th so that we are represented by people who live in the area and genuinely care and are committed to the future prosperity and wellbeing of its residents.

Nina Hosking

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Rickmansworth's Secret Sanctuary



Both photos were taken by one of our members, Steve Carter.

Rickmansworth's residents are fortunate in having so many interesting and attractive locations in which to pass their leisure hours. Stockers Lake and the Aquadrome are well known and much appreciated, but how many of their visitors know that tucked away at the end of a cul-de-sac in Maple Cross is the quiet haven for people and wildlife that is Maple Lodge Nature Reserve?

The 40 acre site is owned by Thames Water but leased to and managed by the members of Maple Lodge Conservation Society. Membership of the Society is open to anyone with an interest in wildlife and conservation. So, come with me on a stroll around this delightful spot.

We enter via the Society's clubhouse; within the clubhouse is a hide overlooking the first lake. The lake is popular with a variety of waterfowl; Grey Herons come down from Stockers Lake to fish here, Mallards and Tufted Duck raise families here and Common Terns have used the breeding rafts installed by the Society's work party. A strategically placed branch invites Kingfishers to perch while they wait for an unwary fish to swim within their reach. There is also a feeding site for the more familiar garden birds, giving visitors really close views of their antics.

Leaving the clubhouse we walk down the path passing some old ivy covered trees, a favourite roosting place

for Tawny Owls. We follow the path round to three hides, one of which is a "double decker", all the hides giving excellent views over Marsh Lake. The last hide overlooks a marshy area, full of Southern Marsh Orchids in the Summer and in the Winter a good place to see migrant waders such as Sandpipers and Snipe. Returning to the main path we come to the newest hide on the reserve, Teal Hide. This hide gives a different view of Marsh Lake and more of the wildfowl including Teal, Gadwall, Little Grebes, Moorhens and Coots.

After Teal Hide we carry on down the path and turning right we wander past the very old and interesting Long Hedge with its wide variety of trees and shrubs. All the planting done on the reserve is of native species, which provide flowers and berries for insects and birds. The Society has created a

the wildfowl with shelter for breeding, but the scrub has to be controlled to prevent it taking over too much of the open water.

The last hide, Shell Hide, looks over the last part of the lake and its wildlife. There is always the possibility that a Sparrowhawk will dash down the hedge looking for some unwary small bird and on rare occasions you may be lucky to see a visiting Osprey swooping for fish in the lake.

Returning along the Long Hedge path we just have time to visit the Paddock, another area managed for butterflies and insects. It is a peaceful spot to sit and enjoy the pleasant surroundings before wandering back to the clubhouse for a welcome cup of tea!

For further details about Maple Lodge



wild flower meadow which has been fenced against hungry rabbits and which attracts a variety of butterflies and dragonflies during Spring and Summer.

Before arriving at Long Hedge Hide we pass an ancient oak tree, estimated to be about 250 years old – older than the United States of America! Long Hedge Hide has excellent views of the next part of Marsh Lake. Willow scrub provides

Conservation Society and the nature reserve, see below:

Website: www.maplelodge.org

Telephone: 07580 535986

Gwyneth Bellis

Dates for Your Diary

63rd Ricky Week

(full details in the Ricky Week programme)

Saturday 13th –
Sunday 21st May
(including the **Rickmansworth Canal Festival**, 20th-21st
May)

St Joan of Arc Catholic School Party in the Park (fête)

Saturday, 1st July, 3-6 pm

Rickmansworth Folk Festival

Saturday 22nd July

11am – 4 pm in central Rickmansworth at various locations.
Concert in St Mary's Church in the evening featuring Julie
Felix supported by Polly Morris.

Ricky Society Market

Saturday, 14th October
(in Watersmeet, 10 am – 1 pm)

Friends of Watersmeet

Coffee Mornings

(in the **Colne Suite (N.B.)**
at Watersmeet, on Fridays, 10.30 – 12 noon)

12th May

7th July

15th September

Friends of Watersmeet

Film Society

10th A.G.M.

Tuesday 13th June at 7.30 pm
(in *St Augustine's Hall, Our Lady's, Park Road*)

Showings (Thursdays at 2 and 7.45 pm)

25th May :

La La Land (cert 12A, 128 mins)

15th June :

Lion (cert PG13, 118 mins)

20th July :

Viceroy's House (cert 12A, 106 mins)

17th August :

Denial (cert PG13, 109 mins)

21st September :

Gifted (cert PG13, running time tba)

19th October :

Their Finest (cert 15, 117 mins)

Community/Diary Dates



Ricky Week 2017



THE 24th RICKMANSWORTH WATERWAYS FESTIVAL

Saturday 20th and
Sunday 21st May 2017



RICKMANSWORTH IT



Town Team Events for 2017: Folk Festival

**Saturday 22nd July - Morris Dancing and Folk
singing around the town during the day AND**

**JULIE FELIX supported by Polly Morris -
in Concert in the evening**

Winter Fair

Friday 24th November - 5pm till 9pm

Want to help with any of our events?

**We are looking for people who want to help us organise
and fund raise for events for Rickmansworth**

- if you are interested please contact us at

info@rickmansworthtown.co.uk

www.rickmansworthtown.co.uk

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Advice column from your local CAB

Q) Our circumstances recently changed and my spouse and I are considering re-writing our will. We're 55 and looking into my plans for retirement. I want to cash-in part of my defined contribution pension pot worth £60,000 but I'm confused about tax. How much can I take out of my pension pot tax-free and how much tax will I pay on the rest?

A) Pensions are taxable income, however special rules mean you can usually take up to 25% of your pension pot tax-free.

You can take your 25% tax-free lump sum out of your pension in one go. For your pension pot of £60,000, if you take a 25% tax-free lump sum you'll get £15,000 tax-free. For the other £45,000, you'll need to buy an annuity or drawdown product, which is subject to tax.

If you don't want to take your 25% tax-free lump sum in one go, another option is to take multiple cash lump sums (UFPLS), rather than buying an annuity or a drawdown product. If you do this, you will get 25% tax-free of each lump sum. For example, if you were to take £1,000 per month out of your pension, £250 would be tax-free. The remaining £750 is taxable.

How much tax you pay on the rest of your pension will depend on how much you "earn" in any one tax year. This includes your state pension and some earnings from investments, such as property or savings. If your total income is less than your personal allowance of £11,000, you won't pay any tax. If it is above £11,000 you'll be taxed at 20, 40 or 45% as usual.

For further information, please contact your local CAB



Rickmansworth CAB,
Northway House (behind the library),
High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1EH.
New Telephone number -
0844 245 1296

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Tuesday } 10.00am - 3.30pm
Thursday

Wednesday 10.00am - 12.30pm
Friday 10.00am - 12.30pm

Saturday
By appointment 10.00am - 11.30pm
only

If you would like to train as a volunteer CAB adviser, please call us on the telephone number in the contact details.

The Citizens Advice Service in Three Rivers receives funding support from Three Rivers District Council

The logo for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) consists of the letters 'AGM' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed and set against a light blue rectangular background.

87th Annual General Meeting June 2017

The 87th Annual General Meeting of the Rickmansworth & District Residents Association is to be held on Tuesday 6th June at 8p.m. in St Augustine's Hall, Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church, Park Road, Rickmansworth.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence:
2. To consider, and if thought fit, approve the minutes of the 85th AGM held on 6th June 2016.
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.
8. To elect the officers of the Association (Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer).
9. To elect the Association Committee for 2017/2018.

The Association for 2016/2017 comprised, in alphabetical order, Helen Burdis (Retired), Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz, Rachel Clarke, Mike Ede, Nina Hosking, Laurie Irvine, Richard Mitchell, June Mitchell, Dianne Passmore (Retiring), Michael Stimpson, Bob Templeman, Carolyn Venn and Peter Waters who is Life President of the Association. There are three Committee vacancies still to be filled.

10. Any other business for which advance notice has been given.
11. An address by Cllr Dudley Edmunds of Croxley Parish Council on the workings of a Parish Council and the relationship between it, the District Council and the County Council.

There will be an interval during which tea/coffee and biscuits will be available. This will be followed by an opportunity to ask questions of the speaker and after this by an open discussion on matters of local interest.

RICKMANSWORTH & DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**rickmansworthresidents.org****COMMITTEE**

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| President | Peter Waters |
| Vice-Presidents | Tony Berry and Peter Crispin |
| Chairman | Mike Stimpson |
| Secretary | Mrs Dianne Passmore |
| Treasurer | Richard Mitchell |
| Membership Secretary | Leslie Chrol-Frolowicz |
| Planning Officer | Bob Templeman |
| Advertisement Manager | Michael Ede |

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| Ruth Ede | June Mitchell |
| Carolyn Venn | Laurie Irvine |
| Rachel Clarke | Nina Hosking |

Are you prepared to be a road rep for one of these roads which involves delivering Independence and collecting subscriptions in the Spring of each year?

We desperately need to have someone to service these roads which contain between 6 and 24 members.

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|-------------------------------|--------------------|
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| Clarkfield | Moor Lane (Part) |
| Church Lane | Nightingale Road |
| Eastwick Crescent | The Queen's Drive |
| Goral Mead | Springwell Avenue |
| Jordan's Road | Stockers Farm Road |
| Juniper Close | Thompson Way |
| Juniper Gate | Uxbridge Road |
| London Road (Batchworth Hill) | The Willows |
| Part | |
| Long Lane | |



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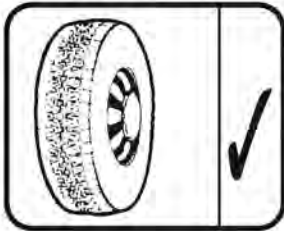
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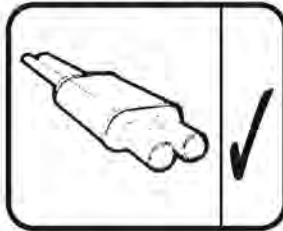
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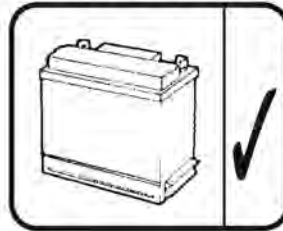
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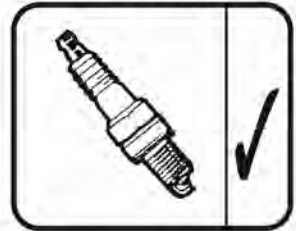
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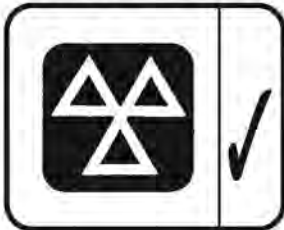
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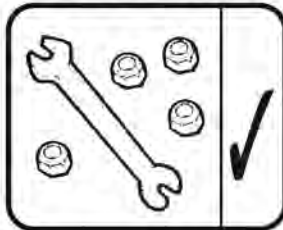
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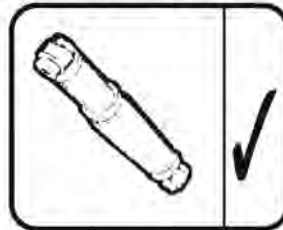
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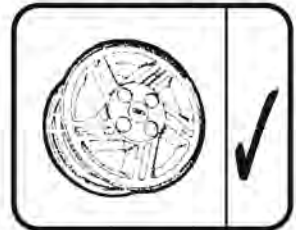
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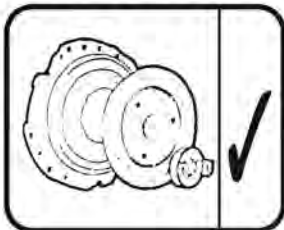
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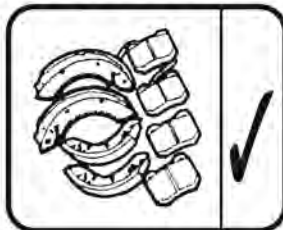
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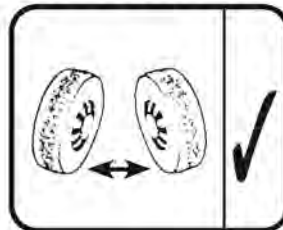
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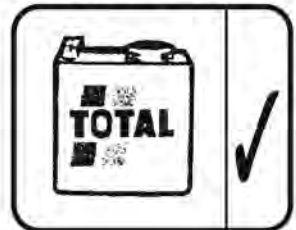
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