

**Northchurch Newsletter Update**  
**County Councillor Caroline Smith-Wright**  
**Monday 11th May 2026**

**1 Highways**

**Northchurch 20mph Scheme & Road Safety Updates**

- I continue to have ongoing discussions with Hertfordshire County Council Highways regarding the introduction of a 20mph scheme in Northchurch, particularly around St Mary's School, where road safety for children travelling to and from school remains a priority. A speed and traffic volume survey, which I funded, has now been completed and approved as meeting the criteria for a 20mph scheme. The current challenge is securing funding for the project. I am continuing to press Highways officers to ensure Northchurch is included within the county's 20mph programme, as unfortunately the area was previously omitted from the list of schemes under consideration.
- Alongside this, discussions are continuing around wider road safety improvements within Northchurch, including measures to help reduce speeding and the potential introduction of safer pedestrian crossing points. There has also been positive progress through the HCC *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Programme (LCWIP)*, which has identified the need for a pedestrian crossing near the recreation ground. This is encouraging news, as suitable projects like this will be considered when future funding for safer crossings becomes available.
- Concerns have also been raised regarding HGVs using **Darrs Lane** as a through route. At present, there is no Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in place to restrict HGV access along this road. Introducing a TRO would require support from residents and road users who may be affected by any future restrictions. Unfortunately, neither Hertfordshire County Council nor my current Highways Locality Budget are able to fund this type of scheme at present. However, the issue has been formally noted as an area of concern and may be considered for future funding opportunities should they arise.
- Following concerns raised regarding visibility and maintenance, the verge on the S-bend at New Road has now been added to Dacorum Borough Council's Clean, Safe & Green grass cutting routine. This should help improve visibility and ongoing maintenance of the area for road users and pedestrians.

**2 New SEND Strategy for Hertfordshire**

Hertfordshire County Council and NHS partners are preparing to launch a new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy designed to improve support and outcomes for children and young people over the next three years.

The new strategy focuses on six key priorities, including early identification and support, improved local provision, stronger communication with families, inclusion within local communities and helping young people prepare for adulthood and future opportunities.

### [SEND Services](#)

#### **3 Increased Fly-Tipping Penalties**

The Council has announced tougher penalties for fly-tipping offences across the borough. Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) issued by council officers can now reach up to £1,000 — the maximum amount permitted under Government legislation.

The council's environmental enforcement team investigates all reported fly-tipping incidents and gathers evidence where further legal action may be appropriate. Areas experiencing repeated incidents may also be designated as "fly-tipping hotspots", allowing for additional clean-up operations, signage, patrols and CCTV monitoring.

The changes are intended to act as a stronger deterrent and help protect local neighbourhoods, rural lanes and public spaces from environmental damage.

### [Report Fly Tipping here](#)

#### **4 Winter Highways Service Update**

As the winter season ends, Hertfordshire County Council has thanked highways teams who worked throughout one of the coldest winters in recent years to keep roads safe and accessible. Between October and April, 34 gritting runs were completed using nearly 10,000 tonnes of salt, with around 1,400 salt bins refilled twice during the season. Despite freezing temperatures and snowfall in January, teams responded quickly to keep key routes open. The county also trialled an electric gritter, helping reduce carbon emissions, and introduced 41 new gritters as part of a modernised fleet for the 2025/26 season. Around 150 highways staff remained on standby throughout the winter to support residents and respond to severe weather conditions.

### [Gritting Routes for Winter 26/27](#)

#### **5. Highways Issues**

Residents and councillors are reminded that issues such as potholes, damaged road signs and overgrown trees, damaged paths should be reported directly to **Hertfordshire County Council** using the highways fault reporting system.

[.Hertfordshire Highways Fault Reporting](#) This is the easiest and quickest way for fixes to happen, it also logs the fault with a case reference number, which allows the customers and me, your councillor to follow up.

For concerns relating to overgrown highway verges or grass affecting visibility for road users, residents should contact **Dacorum Borough Council's** Clean, Safe & Green Team at: [cleansafegreen@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:cleansafegreen@dacorum.gov.uk)

Thought this would be helpful to understand how repairs are prioritised.

## 6. How HCC prioritise Highway repairs

HCC can't guarantee all the faults that are reported will get repaired. They prioritise repairs based on:

- whether the fault is a safety hazard (as determined by our inspection manual)
- the type of road
- budget availability
- any upcoming work we've got planned in the same area.

### Timescales for road repairs

When a fault is reported, HCC respond to each fault depending on its priority.

- Emergency or urgent works – dealt within 2–24 hours.
- Permanent pothole repair – within 1-4 weeks if the pothole meets intervention levels.
- Street lighting defects – repaired within 4 weeks if the fault is not on an A, B or C road.
- Non-emergency works – logged and assessed to be included in regular maintenance works, if possible. We try to group these together to be as efficient as possible.

If there's severe weather there may be a delay in these timescales.

## 6 Resident Feedback on Hertfordshire County Council Services

Recent figures presented to Hertfordshire County Council show that residents are continuing to engage positively with council services. During 2024/25, the council received 2,649 compliments compared to 1,966 complaints — an increase in

compliments of 200 on the previous year and 683 more compliments than complaints overall.

The highest number of compliments and complaints related to children's services and adult care services. Council officers advised that feedback from residents continues to play an important role in monitoring service performance and driving continuous improvement across departments.

The quickest way to complain, give a compliment or comment about a county council issue is using this service below:

### [Make a Complaint or Compliment](#)

#### **7 Herts Lynx**

We want to hear from you! Help us choose new bus stop locations in Hertfordshire. The survey only takes a few minutes and your feedback is important to us.

Take part here: [Herts Lynx Survey](#)

## **8. Members' Locality Budget 2026/27 – Applications Open**

As you know as a County Councillor I receive a £5,000 Locality Budget each year to support projects that benefit the local community and promote social, economic or environmental wellbeing.

Funding can support a wide range of initiatives, provided they are lawful and align with county council policies. Previous grants supported:

- Community and non-profit events
- Crime prevention initiatives
- Health and wellbeing projects
- Educational activities and resources

Please do share with the community and your parish councillors. If there is an organisation, charity, school or community group that would like to apply for funding, please contact me first to discuss your project and obtain my agreement before submitting an application.

[Apply Here](#)