



Hertsmere Liberal Democrats

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 8 December 2022 at 7.30 pm
Porters Park Golf Club, Shenley Hill, Radlett WD7 7AZ
and online via Google Meet

Attendees:

In person – Sophie Aldridge, Maxie Allen, Saif Al-Saadoon, Richard Archer, Susan Barrett, Hilary Brass, Laurence Brass, Ben Denton-Cardew, Jeffrey Gruder, Holly Gunning, Mia Handley, Susie Hendy, Mariama Ifode-Blease, Adam Knight, Roger Kutchinsky, David Lewis, Emma Matanle, Alan Matthews, Louise Nicolas, Miles Ponder, Mamta Ram, Paul Richards, Theresa Smith, Sue Whiting
Via Google Meet – Jerry Evans, Andy Lewis

1. Apologies

Fiona Adamson, Marc Amron, Sue Gil, Benita Plax, Alison Rosen

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

No matters were raised. The minutes were approved. Proposed by Paul Richards.
Seconded by Roger Kutchinsky.

3. Message from the Chair

Jeffrey Gruder gave a summary of his report. Please refer to the attached Chairman's Report.

4. Discussion on our Local Manifesto for May 2023 Borough Elections

Maxie Allen initiated a discussion on the prospective manifesto via a presentation. Please refer to the attached 2023 Borough Elections Manifesto presentation.

Campaigning ideas that were voiced during this discussion were:

- Prioritise social and affordable housing,
- Energy efficiency, solar panels,
- Brown field sites,
- Empty properties,
- Electric hook-up in street lamps,
- Cameras to stop fly tipping,
- A portion of the Development levy to be provided to food banks,
- Utilisation of the Bushey Country Club.

5. Forthcoming PPC Election

Jeffrey Gruder reminded the meeting that information about the upcoming PPC selection process had been sent to all members, together with the candidates' manifestos and CVs. The Virtual Hustings will be on 5 January 2023 with the electronic ballot opening shortly afterwards.

6. Adoption of new constitution for Hertsmere Lib Dems

Jeffrey Gruder reminded the meeting that the new constitution was available to view with the AGM documents. No points were raised and the new constitution was adopted.

7. Organiser's Report

Holly Gunning provided a summary of her report. Please refer to the attached Organiser's Report.

8. Treasurer's Report

Roger Kutchinsky provided a summary of his report. Please refer to the attached Financial Report.

JG asked if large donations usually given to the central party would be best given to the local party? RK agreed, stating that real change can be made at a local level.

Alan Matthews asked if our local party receives any financial support from the central party? RK stated this was the case but the amount is very small and the calculation method was very complicated.

Saif Al-Saadoon asked if RK was involved in all financial decisions? RK stated that he wasn't and was usually left to sort out issues after the event.

Emma Matanle asked if an Events Officer could be appointed to the Executive Committee to work on raising funds. HG stated that this was being considered.

9. Membership Report

Holly Gunning reported that Richard Goorney had stepped down as Membership Officer and that a replacement was desperately needed to welcome new members and build our membership.

10. Report from the County Council

Laurence Brass reported that he had been the County Councillor for Bushey North for 19 months and sits on the Education Committee and Scrutiny Committee. LB gave a few examples of how being a councillor you can make a difference. He felt there was currently no accountability on the Hertfordshire County Council and wanted to win more Liberal Democrat seats to show that the country can be run with integrity, professionalism and accountability.

11. Report from the Borough Council

Paul Richards, leader of the Liberal Democrats Hertsmere Borough Councillors, gave a summary of his report. Please refer to the Hertsmere Borough Councillor AGM Report 2022.

12. Election of Officers and Executive Committee Members

The following roles were appointed.

Role		Proposed	Seconded
Chair	Jeffrey Gruder	Saif Al-Saadoon	Holly Gunning
Vice-chair	Maxie Allen	Saif Al-Saadoon	Susan Barrett
Treasurer	Roger Kutchinsky	Laurence Brass	Susan Barrett
Secretary	Susan Barrett	Theresa Smith	Saif Al-Saadoon
Membership Officer	Susanna Hendy	Maxie Allen	Paul Richards
Diversity Officer	Sophie Aldridge	Alan Matthews	Jeffrey Gruder
Ordinary members	Richard Archer	Jeffrey Gruder	Holly Gunning
	Saif Al-Saadoon	Laurence Brass	Holly Gunning
	Theresa Smith	Holly Gunning	Susan Barrett

SB stated that the elected Executive Committee will be responsible for appointing the Organiser, currently Holly Gunning, the Media Officer, currently Maxie Allen, and the Data Officer, currently Richard Archer.

13. Any Other Business

No matters were raised.

Meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Hertsmere Liberal Democrats

Chairman's Report

I will seek to emphasise in bullet point form some of the most important activities in which the local party has been engaged.

Opposition to the Local Plan

In Autumn 2021, Hertsmere put out a local plan for consultation with a closing date of early December 2021. If implemented, this would have subjected much of the Green Belt to housing and irretrievably altered the character of the borough. The plan was also ill thought out, with little consideration given to the infrastructure necessary to support the increase in population or the pressure on the road system. It was excessively developer friendly.

Liberal Democrats were in the forefront of opposition, both overtly as a party in e.g., Bushey but also as members of local action groups (e.g., Save Radlett organised by Holly and where I spoke in a public meeting). The response to the consultation was overwhelming (over 20,000) with the consequence that the Tory majority was forced to shelve the plan, while seeking to save some face by pretending that they had always been against it.

Local Elections May 2023

These are crucial and provide us with a first rate chance to exponentially increase our representation on the local council from 3 to 9 or even into double figures. If this increase can be achieved and Labour win some of their target wards, it may be that the Tories will lose overall control and the Council may be governed by a Labour/Lib Dem coalition. In view of the incompetence and unpopularity of the Tories nationally and locally, this is a golden opportunity. At present, we have an increasing number of excellent candidates. We encourage any members who wish to stand to contact Holly or me.

National Elections PPC

In the light of the dysfunctional Tory government providing us with 3 prime ministers in the space of a few months (a bit like Rome after Nero in AD 69-an apt comparison) and the dire economic and inflationary environment, it is likely that Rishi Sunak will emulate Mr Mikawber

in David Copperfield and hope that something will come up to mitigate the defeat that is staring him in the face. He is likely to wait until late 2024 until calling a General Election. This seat is, on paper, a safe Tory seat but, in present circumstances, there is no such thing and Oliver Dowden is not a popular MP. He certainly seems to be acquiring some lucrative consultancies, as reported in the Guardian on 28 November 2022.

As members know, we have three excellent candidates to be our Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (“PPC”):

- Ben Denton-Cardew
- Adam Knight
- Emma Matanle

Members in the Hertsmere constituency will have the opportunity to hear from the candidates and ask questions at a meeting held virtually via Google Meet on Thursday January 5th, 2023, at 7:00pm.

Shortly after the hustings meeting an electronic ballot of all eligible voting members will open for a period of two weeks.

Hopefully all or some of the candidates will be present at the AGM so members can meet, and chat with, them

Garden Party

A very successful garden party was held in Bushey in July 2022. The attendance was excellent. The weather perfect and the food and drink plentiful. It gave members and the executive a chance to socialise in a less formal setting.

Jeffrey Gruder KC

Chair

Hertsmere Lib Dems

Hertsmere Lib Dems

2023 borough elections
manifesto

Hertsmere borough includes:

Borehamwood, Bushey, Potters Bar, Radlett and Shenley.

We have two layers of council, elected separately, with different powers.

- . Hertfordshire County Council
- . Hertsmere Borough Council

The Hertsmere BC elections are 4th May 2023 - so borough issues are our focus.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

- Economic strategy
- Highways - roads, pavements, trees, streetlights, cycling lanes
- Public transport (inc buses)
- Parking - safety
- Schools
- Childrens' services
- Libraries
- Social care
- Recycling (processing)

Hertsmere Borough Council (HBC)

- Planning / the Local Plan
- Housing
- Revenues and benefits
- Parking - commuter / CPZs / enforcement / safety (overlap)
- Parks and leisure
- Refuse collection (inc for recycling)
- Cycle hire schemes

We also believe HBC should:

- Lead the community
- Be ambassadors
- Make us feel proud to live here
- Promote inclusivity
- Lead on social justice / environment
- Promote democracy and integrity

HBC does not do highways - residents generally unaware of this.

In Bushey North county division, we have the councillor responsible for highways.

Elsewhere, including Bushey Park, we don't - and won't, whatever happens in May.

So, highways needs careful framing - can't ignore, as residents' biggest issue, but can't mislead.

We'll need to be careful about any highways issues in the campaign.

Election aims

Target resources to seats we can win.

Primary targets:

Bushey North - retain - **Bushey St James** - gain -
Bushey Park - gain

Secondary wards:

Bushey Heath - **Aldenham East** - **Aldenham West**

Elsewhere: paper candidates.

Outcome?

HBC has 39 seats. 20 needed for majority.

Currently: **Con 29***, **Lab 7**, **LD 3**.

If we gain 6, and so do Labour, it becomes:

Con 17, **Lab 13**, **LD 9**.

Cons lose control, giving us much more influence.

So our manifesto really matters.

Our manifesto

A specific document? Unlikely to be widely read.

Largely, presented in headline form in our leaflets.

Candidates must have final say.

Careful what we promise.

Councils have no money (nationally, £2.4bn shortfall this year).

Mostly, best to say what we'll campaign for, or support / oppose.

Values: our messaging has been - to make the borough a **fairer, greener, and more democratic** place to live.

Wary of NIMBYism.

Macro (borough-wide issues)

Micro (ward-specific)

Greenbelt / Local Plan

- Original plan proposed 12,000 new homes, and commercial units, removing 3,000 acres of greenbelt.
- We led opposition to plan, which will now be redrawn.
- The new plan will dominate the council agenda after the elections.

So far, we've said:

- We're against building on greenfield sites except in exceptional circumstances.
- This is mainly on environmental grounds.

- New plan must be based on principle of protecting as much greenbelt as possible - not maximising economic growth.
- Proactively seek brownfield / infill; using empty homes; repurposing office premises.
- Council must fight government housing targets: 40% above UK average.
- Homes built must be genuinely affordable social housing, not executive homes ('50 at 50'?)
- Could push for firm goals on how many homes Hertsmere will build itself (so it's less developer-led).

Challenges

- Whatever happens, many homes must be built.
- Ultimately, councillors will vote on the new plan as a whole, not site-by-site.
- No plan at all? Might be worse for greenbelt.

Housing

- Fair allocation of social housing vacancies (Alan's 'Task and Finish group')

WHAT ELSE HERE?

Environment

We're already saying:

- Improve recycling rates (HBC's 45% ranks 137th in UK).

Adopt Three Rivers' methods (64%/1st):

- Green/brown easier / black harder.
- Textiles
- Hand-sorting street bins
- Education / commitment
- Rooftop solar power JERRY - WHAT HAVE WE DONE / COULD DO?
- Sustainability criteria for new builds JERRY - PLEASE EXPLAIN!

- Fly-tipping: more signs / cameras; made a priority issue.

WHAT ELSE CAN WE SAY?

Ideas

- More streetside EV charging points.
- Cycle lane campaign.

Social justice

We're already saying:

- Cost of living grants for 3,000 households below poverty line.
- Help for food banks.
- Anti-poverty strategy.
- Fair Tax Declaration.

Developers' levies

HBC have hoarded around £20 million.

Almost none used in last xx years. PAUL -
CAN YOU REMIND ME OF THE
DETAILS?

We could campaign to use it now for
infrastructure / communing projects.

Local democracy

Our track record of community action and working with residents.

Ideas:

- Make HBC more accessible and accountable.
- Pop-up council clinics (eg on high streets / libraries / leisure centres).
- Council leader's question time.
- Funding transparency (local parties to publish donors / ban on developer donations).

Bushey North

We're already talking about:

- Dozens of neighbourhood issues
- Bushey Mill Lane fields
- Bushey Hall Golf Club
- Three Valleys / Aldenham Rd parking
- BGR / Greatham Rd traffic calming

Ideas

New park / upgrade Park Avenue play area

Bus services from Bushey Mill Lane

Bushey St James

We're already talking about:

- Land north of Farm Way
- Road safety at schools (technically mainly HCC)
- Anti-social behaviour in Harcourt Rd area: provide youth facilities / outreach work.
- Bushey Village parking consultation
- What else?

Bushey Park

More work needed here - and need to process survey responses

- Harts Farm
- Bushey Country Club
- A number of DYL requests
- Merry Hill parking

Other wards

We can develop manifestos if we have candidates prepared to take the initiative

What happens next

- Finalise core pledges by late January
- Now till May: intense campaigning.
- Numbers game: voter contact and literature

How you can play a part

- Become a candidate
- Join campaign team
- Meeting residents (done in teams, we provide training)
- Back-office roles
- Help spread the word (eg Facebook)
- Donate

Organiser Report

By Holly Gunning

Leaflets

One of my main tasks through the year is to help councillors and campaigners produce literature for delivery. I artwork the text supplied by Maxie Allen (vice chair & press officer), distribute drafts to the councillors and candidates involved and collaborate on the finished product. Our Focus leaflets are printed by Lazar Print in Watford. We've used online printers for our surveys. Street letters can be printed on a cheaper RISO printer, and we have been able to use the facilities of our neighbouring Lib Dem local parties in Watford and Hatfield.

Once leaflets are printed I bundle them into walks and then distribute these to deliverers, except in Bushey North borough ward where Theresa Smith is our wholesaler. Where we don't have a large enough deliverer network we have used the services of End2End Marketing Ltd - a company set up by Hatfield Lib Dem councillor Paul Zukowskyj.

March	Bushey North Focus	3300
	Bushey St James and Bushey Park Focus	6600
	Belmont street Letter	80
	Bushey Grove Road street letter	320
	Vale Road street letter	110
	Homefield Road	70
April	Patchett Green street letter	175
May	Arthur & William street letter	140
	Three Valleys street letter	250
June	Knock and Drop surveys	2500
July	Harts Farm letter to 3/4 of Bushey St James	2800
	Harts Farm letter to 2/3 of Bushey Park	1850
August	Bushey North Focus	3400
	Bushey Grove Road street letter	280
	Three Valleys street letter	230
September	Bushey St James Focus enveloped with addressed letter (not village)	2165
October	Bushey Park Focus enveloped with addressed letter	3000
	Bushey St James village Focus enveloped with addressed letter	2500
November	Bushey North Focus	3500
	Belmont street letter	80
	Bushey Grove Road street letter	325

Approximately 33,500 pieces of literature.

Other Media

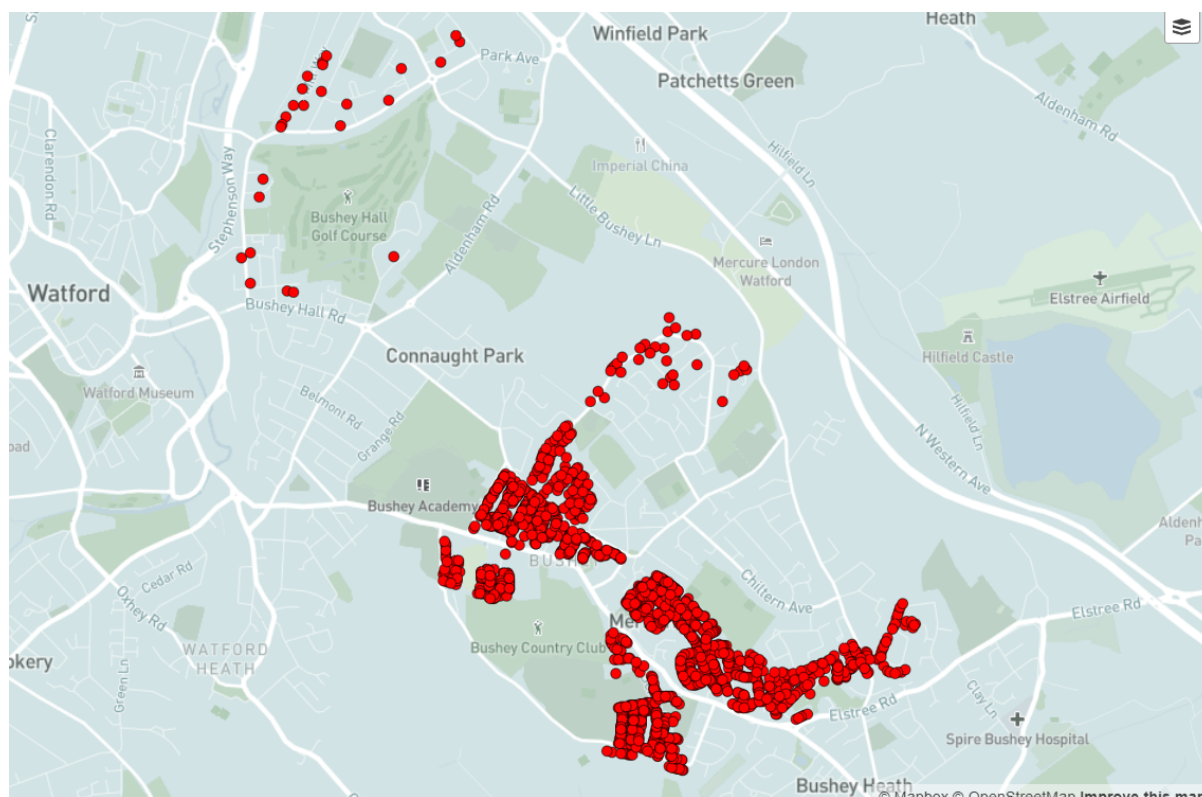
I help supply graphics for our Facebook pages and website, while Maxie Allen writes most of the text. Posts on the Bushey Lib Dem Councilor page regularly achieve a reach of between 1000 and 4,000. The most successful post this year (on Cllr Laurence Brass' efforts to resolve the traffic problems around Costco) received 17,000+ impressions. The bulk of these views come when posts are shared into Facebook residents groups.

We do less work with our Hertsmere Lib Dem Facebook page. Having a parliamentary candidate will give this page much more of a focus.

Hertsmere wide content from our Facebook pages is manually transferred to our website. Hertfordshire Lib Dem content is automatically shared into our website news feed.

Maxie Allen has been very effective as a press officer, achieving good coverage in the Watford Observer (which covers Bushey) - Nathan Louis, the senior reporter has on occasion based his articles simply on our Facebook posts. We now also get two articles a month in My Bushey News: one written by county councillor Laurence Brass, the other written by Maxie, but uncredited.

Door Knocking



This is a map of the 1550 doors we have knocked on this year (2700 people).

We have been running one door knocking session a week, on a Sunday afternoon / evening. This will increase as we get closer to May.

Primarily voter contact has been with our “knock and drop” survey in Bushey st James and Bushey Park wards, which we began in the summer and will continue until we move on to full canvassing for the May 2023 elections. Susie Hendy has been recording the survey responses and this data will form the basis of our ward campaigns next year.

The map includes the smaller number of residents who we have spoken to as part of our volunteer recruitment campaign, where we are primarily looking for more deliverers for our literature.

I prepare for door knocking by making lists in Connect for MiniVAN, and advertising the sessions on our local campaigner WhatsApp groups. New canvassers are buddied up with experienced campaigners and trained in how to effectively approach voters on the doorstep and how to record any data collected appropriately in MiniVAN.

Members

I prepared the Hertsmere specific parts of the East of England newsletter which is sent to all members.

In July we held a Picnic with Daisy event. I coordinated the delivery of invitations to members plus a phonebank. Sadly I had Covid on the day of the picnic so was not able to attend.

In order to open the selection process for Hertsmere local party to choose a parliamentary candidate, some work was needed to make sure our membership database was as accurate as possible with a minimal number of members requiring postal rather than electronic ballots.

A phonebank was also set up to encourage members to attend our AGM. Theresa Smith, in particular, deserves much credit for making sure we were able to reach out to as many members as possible

Candidates

I have helped recruit candidates for Hertsmere Borough Council's all up elections due in May next year and coordinated their approval panels. There is still much work to be done to ensure we have as full a slate as possible.

For our present parliamentary candidate selection process I have coordinated with Jon James the returning officer allocated to us by the party. All members have received either an email with information about the process and the candidates or they have received a paper version.

Hertsmere Liberal Democrats

Financial Report December 2022

Accounts for the year to 31st December 2021 are attached. However, since our AGM is held near to the end of the calendar year these might be seen as being somewhat out of date.

Income: £5,777. The vast bulk of our income derives from donations by members. In the year under review, we received £5,440. This was supplemented by £333 of membership rebates from central and regional Liberal Democrats sources.

Expenses: £13,442. Campaign Costs for the County and Borough elections in May 2021 form by far the largest part of the £12,483 listed under this heading though regular newsletters and other political literature are included in this sum. We donated £500 to HC3 and had administrative expenses amounting to £459.

Deficit: £7,655.

Balance Sheet: We started the year with total funds of £15,459. Having incurred a deficit of £7,655 we therefore ended the Year with reserves of £7,794.

Update

Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2022 cannot yet be produced but donations and other income for the 11 months to 30th November total £7,385. Expenditure on regular circulars, newsletters and other general campaigning literature amount to £3,797. This results in a surplus of income over expenditure of £3,588 for the period thereby boosting our reserves to £11,382.

Future

Hertsmere Borough Council is due to hold elections in May 2023 for all seats. We calculate that the cost of fighting each ward effectively might be as high as £5,000. In order to win our four target wards without taking the constituency party deep into debt we thus need a war chest of at least £20,000. The only way of achieving this will be by a well-directed fund-raising campaign alongside our political campaigning for the May local elections. We should not forget that the most probable date for a general election is the last quarter of 2024.

Roger Kutchinsky

HBC Lib Dem group Leaders Report 2022:

In the last full year before local elections in May 2023, it has been quite a tumultuous period, both at the national as well as local political level. While we are three borough councillors currently, it is my firm belief that we have continued to exert a higher amount of influence than would otherwise be expected. Our focus this year has evolved on pressing council leadership to aid residents further with cost-of-living assistance, as well as fighting for a fairer, greener, and healthier recovery from the covid pandemic.

January:

The year started with perhaps our greatest achievement yet as a local group in the current term of office. At full council Jan 2022, during a member question on, Cllr Bright suddenly announced that the Hertsmere draft local development plan was to be “put to one side” (debate is ongoing as to what that technically means) But as a local party we had campaigned over scale of loss of Our position was consistent and clear prior to the public consultation, it was not fit for purpose – we would rather public money (some estimates up to several hundred thousand pounds) had not been wasted in the first place, but were relieved over the re-think. We continue to push council leaders on bringing number of new houses/ flats planned to be more in line with population trends.

February:

Saw the inaugural meeting of the [Hertsmere Shareholders and Investment Committee](#)– in which we were given a seat at the table to scrutinise the Council’s functions as a shareholder and investor in the wholly-owned subsidiaries of the Elstree Film Studios and Hertsmere Development Ltd (later in the year a new joint venture was announced for the purpose of providing social housing – HLL – Hertsmere Living Limited

May: Annual meeting of the council to assign committee places (leadership of the group changed from Jerry to Paul)

– current positions:

- Alan: [Operations review scrutiny committee](#); [Personnel Committee](#)
- Jerry – [Planning Committee](#) and Asset Management Panel
- Paul: [member planning panel](#); [policy review scrutiny](#); [Licensing committee](#) and [HBC Shareholders and Investment Committee](#)

June: Attended the flag raising for the start of Pride month; Princes Trust community project at Queen’s school; in conjunction with Cllr Brass, instigated a meeting of key stakeholders to start to map a solution to the parking and driving management issues at Queens school and Bushey Metropolitan club

July: seconded the adoption of a new council member code of conduct (a model set out by the Local Government Authority) this came into effect in October. After refreshed training for all councillors group leaders, plan to co-sign and enact a pledge for fairer election campaigning with additional training in January 2023.

Alan successfully initiated a scrutiny review into housing allocation implementation to run in 2023, when council officer support can be assigned.

August – successful supporting of the community of Bushey Grove Road – acting as a community advocate to help forge a compromise in the use of a care home – though a new medical centre application now needs renewed focus to mitigate the impact of on street parking and any activity outside of office hours.

September:

Official mourning period for the queen, signed HBC book of condolences, laid flowers and attended commemoration service. All council meetings postponed for the period

Attended HBC proclamation for the new monarch.

October:

Supported the council's Black History month events, including the flag raising and attended Diversity festival in Borehamwood.

Attended Hertsmere Civic service in Radlett

November:

Seconded an opposition motion to increase council's focus on addressing the cost-of-living crisis in Hertsmere, conservatives did not support, and the motion failed.

Attended the Remembrance Day commemoration at Holy Trinity church, North Bushey, armistice day flag raising at the civic offices and Cllrs Matthews and Brass attended the Bushey Remembrance Day event at the war memorial on Sparrows Herne,

December:

Due to attend Hanukkah events in Bushey

In addition – throughout the year, was part of two focus groups (task and finish) looking at 1 CCTV provision in Hertsmere and 2 Income Generation