

WELCOME TO AMERSHAM NEWS

EDITION 48: NEWSLETTER FROM AMERSHAM TOWN COUNCIL



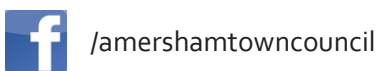
Hervines Park in November

Welcome to the new look 2019 autumn edition of the Town Council Newsletter. We hope that you enjoy catching up with our news.

Turn the page to discover the incredible bloom initiatives that have taken place this year to enhance our environmental responsibility while improving our town. Read the latest about the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre plus an update on step-free access at Amersham Station. Town Mayor, Mark Flys, provides his highlights of the year plus we have some upcoming Christmas events to put in your diary!

We would like to thank Hamptons International for sponsoring this newsletter.

Keep up to date with all our news, projects and civic events by finding us on Facebook or by visiting our website.



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BLOOM CONTINUES TO ... BLOOM

Bloom continues to galvanise improvements while bolstering environmental responsibility and resource management

Amersham in Bloom has grown in effort and impact as we continue to build on the momentum of the past few years. The year began with the airing of BBC Two's Britain in Bloom programme in April, showcasing the dedication of our bloom volunteers and community, and culminated in a haul of accolades at both the regional and national awards. We are delighted with the feedback received following the BBC programme and the way that it has encouraged and inspired people to get their hands dirty and do their bit for the town and environment.

Bloom is so much more than flowers or blooms alone. Through our efforts, we have galvanised environment and horticultural improvements, with conservation and resource management at the core, all while attempting to engage residents of all ages within the community.

Bloom helps to bolster the town's environmental responsibility, enables the Council to raise over £15,000 a

year in sponsorship, and creates civic pride and community cohesion. There is no doubt that bloom does beautify Amersham, *but* it helps us to achieve so much more.

Britain in Bloom is recognised across the United Kingdom as a symbol of excellence in community gardening. Here in Amersham, we have demonstrated how it can lead to strong community spirit, engagement and a deep sense of pride.

Our efforts over the last year have seen many improvements including a more colourful and inviting Sycamore corner, additional recycling and litter bins in our parks and gardens, a water harvesting system in Pondwicks (to automatically water the fruit trees), additional bug hotels, new red kite sculpture on the roundabout at the bottom of Stanley Hill and the planting of an additional 1000 native trees beside Willow Wood, off Stanley Hill. However, it is the following new initiatives we wish to highlight:

New Cherry Trees in Sycamore Road

Trees in urban areas have been known to provide a wide range of environmental and social benefits. Trees play a crucial role in increasing urban biodiversity, providing habitat, food and protection for plants and animals. They have also been scientifically proven to reduce urban heat and pollution, so have a positive

long-term impact on health. Of course, trees are also very aesthetically pleasing, so we are delighted with the new trees in Sycamore Road and their lasting legacy for future generations.

Thanks to Serco, Amersham Action Group and Rotary Club of Amersham for helping to fund the trees and planters.



Resource Management: Water harvesting

Community Orchard

In December 2018, over 30 heritage fruit trees - comprising many old apple, cherry, and plum varieties found local to Amersham - were planted to create the Hervines Park Community Orchard. The varieties planted include; *Bazeley*, a rare and historic Buckinghamshire variety of apple, now only found around 'The Lee' and *Nimble Dick*, another old variety from the lost cherry orchards of Prestwood, which was thought to be extinct.

Orchards have a long history and are



Working in partnership with Stony Dean School



Community Tree Plant at Willow Wood

an integral part of our rural heritage as well as our ecosystem. Old orchards still contain ancient varieties which have otherwise died out elsewhere. They provide the right conditions for mosses and lichens to grow, which in turn offers a diverse habitat to attract a wide variety of birds, bugs, pollinators and other wildlife.

60% of orchards are believed to have disappeared from the UK since the 1950s, primarily due to intensive farming and construction. Many veteran species have been removed, significantly reducing or eradicating heritage tree populations as well as much needed wildlife habitat.

By creating new orchards, we can help to recreate the wealth of biodiversity provided by those ancient orchards. By maintaining and enriching the environment now, we can leave a positive legacy for future generations - wildlife and humans alike.

We encourage you to pick and eat the fruit from the Community Orchard, so long as it is fully ripe and everyone gets their fair share!

The Community Orchard is sponsored by Tesco 'Bags for Help', Amersham in



40% more wildflowers than in 2018

Bloom Volunteers and the Rotary Club of Amersham in collaboration with Amersham Town Council.

More Wildflowers

Over the past year, the Town Council has made a conscious effort to increase the number of wildflower areas throughout town. Wildflowers are crucial to our ecosystem, providing an abundance of nectar for pollinators such as bees, wasps and butterflies and creating a diverse environment for birds and insects.

Sowing wildflower seeds in your garden is a small yet significant way to pro-actively reverse ecological decline. As you start to clear your garden ahead of winter, reserve a patch for rewilding in spring – leave part of the garden unmown and sow other types of grass and suitable wildflowers for the soil.

Composting

With the help of pupils from Stony Dean, we have added another compost bin at Pondwicks. The partnership between Amersham Town Council and Stony Dean School is a prime example of how we engage within the community.

Building the bin with the pupils taught them not only practical skills but also valuable life skills such as ownership, responsibility and contribution.

Composting is a great way to reduce and re-purpose waste. Home composting is the most environmentally friendly way of dealing with kitchen and garden waste, plus it produces compost that can be used as an excellent soil improver. Composting is done all year; however, now is the peak time for making compost!

Garden compost can take between six months and two years to reach maturity. But do you know what to throw in the compost bin? Here are some of the items that can be composted:

- wooden ice-cream/ice-lolly sticks
- fabric (natural fibres only)
- stale bread and toast crusts
- pencil shavings
- hair (and pet fur)
- clumps of dust
- cardboard business cards
- fingernail and toenail clippings
- old shoelaces (natural fibre with plastic and metal tips cut off)
- paper and napkins
- used matches
- after-dinner plate scrapings (no meat or dairy)

When we send organic waste to landfill, it emits methane, a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide, so let's compost instead!

PEACE GARDEN – COMPLETE WITH LIVING WALL

Following last year’s commemorative display, we wanted to create something very different that was innovative, interactive and educational. The Peace Garden includes a waterfall, bridge, planted wall, areas of wildflowers and pollinator bed and perfectly reflects how ecosystems can be enhanced and created with minimal space.

The Town Council would like to thank Andy Honour and the committed leaders from the 1st Chesham Bois Scout Group, and the bloom volunteers who have collaborated with the Town Council to create this innovative garden from design through to completion.

Immense gratitude to Gary Grant and The Entertainer for sponsoring the ‘mini’ garden which we intend to keep for the foreseeable future.



The Peace Garden- from construction to completion (left to right)

LAWN BOWLS – THE SPORT FOR ALL

Have you ever fancied trying to play bowls? This is a game that can be played by people of almost any age and ability.

Amersham Bowls Club, established over 80 years ago, has an excellent 6-rink green situated in the beautiful setting of Hervines Park. The club has a friendly membership and a warm welcome is given to new and prospective members as well as experienced players.

Matches against other clubs, as well as internal competitions, are held frequently but those who want to play less competitively are also welcomed. The playing season is from April – September but an active social committee arranges monthly events throughout the year to encourage a friendly atmosphere and an inclusive approach.



Hervines Park is the home of Amersham Bowls Club

A free trial is offered to anyone interested in trying the game. All you need is a pair of trainer type shoes with minimal treads. All other equipment will be provided.

The club chairman, David Balderson, will be pleased to arrange a trial and answer any questions about the club. Email: david.balderson@btinternet.com; Tel 01494 722069 or visit: www.amershambowlsclub.org.uk.

High Speed (HS2) Update

Residents may be aware from recent media coverage that Government has announced an independent review into the costs and benefits of the HS2 programme. The Chairman of HS2, Allan Cook, had questioned the current timetable and budget for HS2, believing that neither are realistic.

The Transport Secretary has said that the review will be used by the Government to inform a “go or no-go” decision by the end of 2019. The Town Council has written to the local MP Cheryl Gillan, who in turn has requested that Phase 1 work, including the ‘haul’ road off the A413 towards Great Missenden, is halted until the Review has submitted its conclusions.

Meanwhile, the Town Council, in conjunction with the HS2 Amersham Action Group, continues to hold quarterly meetings with HS2 Ltd and its sub-contractors regarding ongoing local issues and concerns.



NEWS FROM CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

We are delighted to confirm that after years of research, consultations and planning, work on the new Chiltern Lifestyle Centre is finally set to begin.

This exciting new community and leisure centre is replacing the existing Chiltern Pools in Amersham, which is over 50 years old and in urgent need of repair.

Building a new centre represents better value for money than refurbishing Chiltern Pools and it is a fantastic opportunity to design a modern facility that meets the needs of current and future generations.

Facilities at the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre will include an 8-lane swimming pool, a diving/teaching pool, children's splash pad area, sports hall, squash courts, soft play, climbing wall, library, café, exercise studios (fitness, hot yoga and spinning), gym, spa, community centre and more.

At the same time, we will be investing significantly in the Chalfont St Peter and Chesham leisure centres improving the range of facilities and services available.

The new centre is due to open by the end of 2021 and work on site will begin in November this year. Preparations have already begun; you may have noticed that Amersham Library has been temporarily relocated as the building will be demolished and the library will be in the new centre.

So that residents still have access to a library during the building works, the council offices, which are just

across the road from Chiltern Pools, are hosting the library temporarily. Most of the facilities, including the Thursday Amersham Registration Office, are still available.

The outdoor facilities on the Chiltern Pools site are also changing; a new skatepark will be built and the outdoor gym, street snooker and table tennis will be located at the rear of the new centre, along with a new play area.

There will be a short period when these outdoor facilities are unavailable during winter 2019-20; colder months when they're typically less used.

Discussions are ongoing with the Town Council regarding a

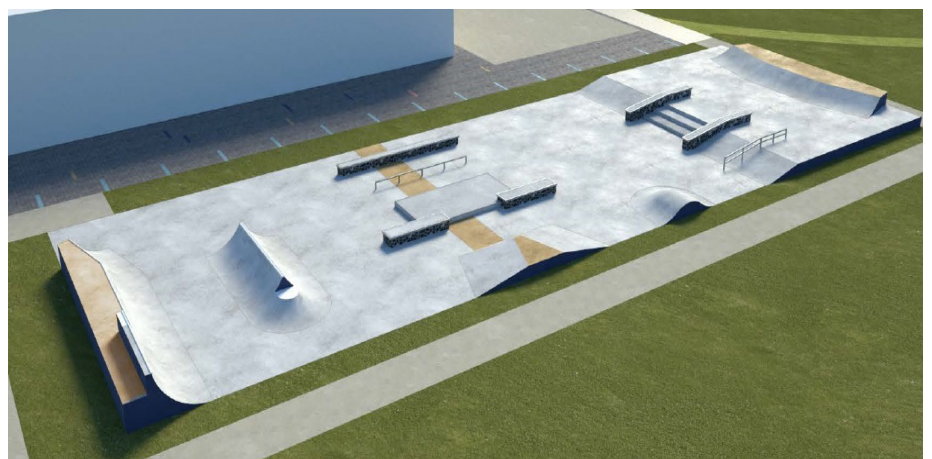
new timber play area which will open in Spring 2020.

Another outdoor play area will open at the front of the site after the new centre is built. The intention is to reuse the newer play equipment which was provided in 2015 and replace the older equipment.

This is a major development, and our priority is to ensure minimal impact on residents, Chiltern Pools users and staff.

Exact dates and details of some arrangements during the development are being finalised, and we will update you as soon as possible. For the latest information you can follow Chiltern District Council on Twitter or Facebook, or visit the Chiltern Lifestyle Centre website.

This is a really exciting development which will benefit local people for generations to come.



A new skatepark will open in spring 2020

SUCCESS IN THE BLOOM COMPETITION

We are pleased to report that this year's Amersham in Bloom efforts have paid dividends with the town scooping numerous awards at the recent regional and national award ceremonies.

In addition to earning a sought-after **GOLD** in the regional competition and being named best town the **Amersham in Bloom team** were also

presented with the highly coveted outstanding achievement award and a certificate of national distinction for the Memorial Gardens.

A prestigious gold award in the national competition means that Amersham has become the first Town in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire (the Thames & Chilterns Region) to have been awarded gold

on two separate occasions- Quite a feat.

Thank you to everyone who contributed, whether through litter picking, weeding, planting a tree, entering our competitions, watering, sponsorship and every action, however small, that made our success possible. It truly is a collaborative effort for which our town should be proud.

In Remembrance

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of two of our dedicated and much-loved bloom volunteers – Barbara Simpson and Doug Mace. Both brought such joy to our bloom community and are greatly missed. You can spot Doug's wood crafting skills throughout the town – the sign in Pondwicks and the bug hotel on Sycamore corner.



Members of the Bloom Team join Town Council staff at the regional awards ceremony in Woodley.

TOWN COUNCIL INVESTS IN ELECTRIC MACHINERY

As part of our effort to improve efficiency, reduce costs and increase our environmental responsibility, the town council has invested in the following electrical machinery: the 'Mean Green Machine' ride-on mower, one strimmer, one chain saw, one pole saw, and two hedge cutters.

Electrical machinery has a number of environmental benefits including the reduction of noise and fume pollution.

Electric mowers are lighter and easier to operate than petrol powered mowers so reduce mowing time. Electric mowers are virtually silent and reduce the hazard of fuel spills, with millions of gallons of gas spilled from lawn equipment each year. Not only are gas costs eliminated by switching to electric, but upkeep and maintenance costs are lower too.



The Town Council Depot Team working within the Community

LED Street-lighting Upgrade

The LED street lighting upgrade is near completion. Over 95% of the town's residential street lights have now been converted to energy efficient LED lanterns. The programme commenced in spring 2019.

As with any upgrade of this kind it is inevitable that the odd street light will require additional work. With this in mind please be patient if there is a light in your street that isn't working or has yet to be converted.

Christmas Lights

With Halloween over for another year, and the shops selling mince pies already, it's almost time to dust down last year's Christmas decorations for another airing!

At the Town Council our preparations started early, with the Town Council approving a new Christmas lighting contract ready for Christmas 2019, which will include all new cross-street icicle illuminations on the two main shopping streets in Amersham-on-the-Hill, as well as festoons and pole-mounted lights in Old Amersham, plus a new display on Market Hall and tree lights in both town centres. So who needs the London lights? Come and enjoy the Amersham displays and support your local shops while you sort out your Christmas shopping!

 www.facebook.com/amershamtowncouncil

STEP-FREE ACCESS - AMERSHAM STATION

by Transport for London

A key priority of the Mayor's Transport Strategy is to improve access and enable more people to comfortably use the London transport network. In order to achieve this, in 2016 the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan announced a £200million programme aimed at increasing the number of London Underground stations with step free access. As well as assisting those with mobility problems, this is also, of course, beneficial for others such as parents with buggies or anyone carrying heavy luggage.

By 2024, an additional 22 stations will have been made step free and, fulfilling Transport for London's commitment, 15 of these will have been completed by 2020.

Preparatory works at Amersham have progressed well. We appreciate that the current lack of taxi bays and pick up/drop off points may cause some inconvenience, but we hope that the provision of step free access at Amersham will enhance the travelling experiences for all customers and is worth the temporary inconvenience. The pick-up and drop-off facilities and the taxi bays will be fully reinstated after the project is completed.

You will soon notice more intensive work happening at the station, as

we move into the main phase of the project during the autumn. We will be excavating pits for the two new lifts at the station, one serving the island platform for platforms one and two and one serving platform three. The two new lift towers will be linked by a new overbridge, to allow step free access to all the platforms. We will also require a small number of overnight road closures in Station Approach later in the autumn, as we will need to deliver the new lift components by crane.

Every effort will be made to minimise inconvenience and affected residents will receive details of this nearer the time. None of the existing station buildings will be impacted by the new structures, however some existing light columns and planters will need to be relocated.

We have taken care to ensure that the

new lift towers and overbridge are as unobtrusive as possible and have tried as far as we can to ensure they are sympathetic to the style of the existing station building's design and appearance.

The project to deliver step-free access at Amersham station will be completed by May 2020.

In addition the materials used will be as low maintenance as possible to minimise any future need for disruptive works to the new structures. We have liaised with the local district and town councils on all aspects of the project and we hope that customers and local people will be pleased with the finished product of their newly accessible station.



MEMORIAL GARDENS ARE NOW PLASTIC FREE

Reducing the impact of plastic on the environment is a priority of the Town Council. As part of our efforts we no longer offer water or soft drinks in plastic bottles from the tea hut in the Memorial Gardens. A drinking water tap has been installed on the side of the hut which can be used to fill water bottles.

Buckinghamshire Council

The new Buckinghamshire Council will be launched from 1 April 2020 and will replace the existing County and four District Councils in Buckinghamshire. The new Council's responsibilities will include waste collections, roads, education, social care and planning.

The new Council wants to know your views on what it should focus on in its first year. The survey is available at shadow.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/budget2020



Refreshments are served from the Tea Hut in the Memorial Gardens during the band concerts and on Heritage Day



MARK FLYS EMBRACING HIS ROLE AS MAYOR

I was delighted to be elected Mayor of Amersham in May along with deputy Councillor Mrs Julie Cook.

Having lived in Amersham all my life I've witnessed first hand the transformation and growth of the town over the years. I feel incredibly honoured to represent Amersham as Mayor and have thoroughly enjoyed the past five months in this role. I've met and reconnected with so many individuals and groups who help to make Amersham such a wonderful place to live.

The Town Council, as ever, is committed to delivering an efficient, cost-effective, yet high-quality service that benefits the whole town and brings the community together.

We have held some fantastic events over the summer. The band concerts proved as popular as ever, most notably the children's concert – rest assured the Princesses will return in 2020! Amersham in Bloom continues to build momentum with the group's effort rewarded at the award ceremonies. With this in mind, I would like to offer my thanks to the Town Council staff, bloom volunteers and 1st Chesham Bois Scout Leaders in particular for their dedication and efforts.

Heritage Day was the highlight of the year - indeed, a highlight of my term, thus far - with a record number of

visitors joining in the fun.

I wholeheartedly believe that the Council's commitment to putting the community at the forefront of our efforts has enabled us to maintain the high standards of work that is carried out. It is a privilege to lead such a formidable and dedicated team.



Town Mayor Councillor Mark Flys attending the summer events: Bloom judging (top) and the Children's Concert (above)

SAVE THE DATES – COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS EVENTS

The [Amersham Community Carol Service](#) will take place in St. Michael and All Angels church on Tuesday 3rd December. Local school children will take centre stage, with the evening open to all residents.

The [Old Amersham Christmas shopping evening](#) takes place on 6 December. The Old Amersham

Business Association will be transforming the Market Square and Broadway into a wonderful Christmas wonderland with attractions including a skating rink, festive carols and Christmas tree switch on by a special guest!

Amersham Action Group is hosting their popular [Christmas Festival](#) on

Saturday 7 December. There will be lots of wonderful attractions on offer from 12pm including children's funfair, Santa's grotto, live entertainment, Christmas market in St. Michael and All Angels Church, and the fantastic Christmas tree light switch on at 4.30pm. It promises to be a wonderful family event.

A huge thank you to Stony Dean School for helping to distribute this newsletter