

Nash Mills Parish Council - Borough Councillor Report - September 2020

It has been a very busy month and I have been working on many different local matters. This report will highlight some of what I have been working on, but please feel free to ask for information on any other matters.

Nash House

I was delighted to report that BOTH the planning applications for Nash House were refused by DBC. My thanks to the parish council, residents and everyone who commented on the application. This was such a clear case of over development that the planning officer refused it without the need for it to go to Development Management committee. This leaves the developer with a 'community space' to decide what to do with. I made my feelings VERY clear to the planning officer that this MUST be kept as a community space. Now the application to convert it to a flat has been refused, the owner will need to decide what community use this space can be used for.

Gade Tower – Bins Store

The doors on the bins store at Gade Tower have been hanging off / missing for months. I had been told they were fixed, but this is clearly not the case, so I have been in contact with DBC. Work is starting to repair the brickwork this week, followed soon after by new doors being installed. The bins were upside down on Friday, so I have reported this to Clean, Safe and Green at DBC.

The Denes

- CCTV - I have been in discussion with DBC about installing a second CCTV camera at the opposite end of The Denes car park, by the recycling bins, which can also capture activity up the alley at the side of Amy's. I have received a quote from DBC but have asked them for a further quote using a reconditioned camera. This will be brought to the parish council at the October meeting.
- Parking Restrictions – I had a meeting with the Leader of the Council, who said that we are 'in the queue' for parking restrictions at The Denes, but there is a huge backlog.
- Empty unit – I am hoping to be able to offer a verbal update on this unit at the September parish meeting.

Parish Notice Board

I was approached by DBC last week, who told me that they have a pot of S106 money from Nash Mills Wharf developers, which is ringfenced for a noticeboard. The DBC officer asked if we would be using the fund as if we don't claim it, the developer will receive the money back. I said that we will definitely be able to use it as our noticeboard has recently fallen apart, but have asked them to check whether the siting of the board is to be within the development or if it can be at The Denes.

Covid – Local Outbreak Plan Webinar

Last Friday (4.9.20), I attended a webinar, held by Hertfordshire County Council's Director of Public Health, that explained the current situation across the county and what will happen if the situation deteriorates further. At the moment, the number of cases across Dacorum is rising, with outbreaks in Tring, Berkhamsted and most of all, Hemel Hempstead. With all these county-wide meetings we are not allowed to be parochial when asking questions, so after the webinar I contacted the Director of Public Health and asked some questions that are specific to Dacorum and Hemel Hempstead. I will share this information as I receive it. Meanwhile, I have attached my notes from the webinar that will hopefully be helpful.

Nash Mills Wharf

There are several issues in Nash Mills Wharf currently, most have been ongoing for several months and I am trying to assist the residents in finding a resolution. There appear to be two outstanding Enforcement notices regarding the construction of the watercourse (weir, redirection of the River Gade etc), and I have Enforcement looking into these at the moment. These outstanding issues are being picked up on solicitors' searches and making selling and re-mortgaging properties difficult, so DBC is chasing the developer to resolve them. There is also an outstanding resolution regarding cladding on the blocks of flats and many other issues with the developer. I have spoken to Sir Mike Penning MP about several matters relating to Nash Mills Wharf and he is fully on board to help where he can.

Health in Dacorum

At the Health in Dacorum meeting last Wednesday (2.9.20), the West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust gave a briefing on the situation regarding the capital investment for a new hospital. They have once again eliminated any options for a new build on a greenfield site, but this is being challenged by DHAG, Sir Mike Penning MP and DBC. The Judicial Review will take place in October so there will be more to report after that.

Planning Session on Recent Permitted Development Changes

On Thursday (3.9.20), the Development Management Committee meeting was cancelled, so instead the committee attended a presentation by the Planning Group Manager, Sara Whelan, on the recent changes in permitted development rules. The presentation was very detailed, so I would suggest that we put it as an agenda item for October and I would be happy to talk the parish councillors through the headlines. I will hopefully be permitted to share some of the slides to summarise this exciting new direction. Until the presentation I was very concerned, having seen the news headlines in the summer, but in fact there are such strict criteria that need to be met, planning officers will still have a right to turn down PD requests if they are not reasonable.

The other part of the presentation is that all the planning use classes have been changed and simplified. This is great news for our local businesses, and I am confident that our parishioners will see the positive outcomes of these changes in the near future.

More information regarding the change of usage class can be found here:

https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use

Team Nash Mills – Covid Support Network

Since the last meeting we have only received one call for help by a local resident, who needed a prescription picking up. This is great news, but Team Nash Mills is ready and waiting should there be a further outbreak or local lockdown.

Summary

The last few months have been extraordinarily busy, and at times it has been a challenge to keep ahead of the many, many local matters that I have been asked to get involved with. If I have not responded to any emails please do contact me again – I think I have dealt with everything but Covid has put added pressure on all of us, so if I have missed something please do get in touch!

Jan Maddern

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Next Page – Notes from Covid – Local Outbreak Plan Webinar.

JKM - Notes from councillors' webinar with Herts County Council Director of Public Health on Friday 4.9.20, on the current Covid situation locally:

Hertfordshire has seen an increase in cases across parts of the county, and Dacorum is a particular concern, with sharp rises in Tring, Berkhamsted and *particularly Hemel Hempstead*.

Herts County Council have launched a 'Play Your Part' campaign – more information is here (including 'back to school' information regarding Play Your Part), along with downloads of posters, leaflets, pictures to use on social media etc:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/coronavirus/play-your-part-campaign.aspx>

For further information please contact Herts CC:

corporate.communications@hertfordshire.gov.uk

If community groups want copies of existing video material in community languages they can contact press.office@hertfordshire.gov.uk

If you need to book a test call 119 rather than booking online – although the 119 number is a national agency, many call centres are local and we have one in Hertfordshire so it is likely to be directed there. If you do get directed to a centre many miles away let me know and I can intervene and almost certainly could get this changed, our three main testing centres in Hertfordshire are NOT overloaded and if people are directed too far away it is likely to be due to a lack of geographical knowledge by the operator.

Hertfordshire's Director of Public Health is outstanding and we are able to contact him directly if there is a major issue booking a test that cannot be resolved by speaking to 119, or any other serious needs.

Jan Maddern

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