

ABOUT



WATFORD



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Summer 2021



SUMMER OF FUN

W ABOUT ATFORD



Peter Taylor
Elected Mayor of
Watford

www.watford.gov.uk/electedmayor

Welcome to this summer edition of About Watford. I hope lots of you have been enjoying going out and socialising again since restrictions started lifting. While Covid-19 may not yet be behind us, there has been lots of work going on to keep the virus under control in Watford and keep us on our road to recovery. This magazine will hopefully give you a taste of some of the new projects that are ongoing and the exciting things we have planned for Watford's Summer of Fun.

I have recently appointed three new members of my Cabinet: Cllrs Aga Dychton, Jenny Pattinson and Ian Stotesbury, who have portfolios focused around community, wellbeing and the environment. These new Portfolio Holders have a very important role to play in the Council with a lot of our current and upcoming projects focusing on these themes as we ensure the future health and sustainability of our town.

We have a number of brilliant projects coming up, focusing on maintaining and improving our green spaces and biodiversity. We have recently begun a 'rewilding' project in Cassiobury Park and work is due to start shortly to restore the wetlands in the park's Nature Reserve (see p6). These projects will enhance the area for residents to enjoy and allow nature to thrive once again in this unique habitat.

Similarly, recognising the importance of leisure and recreational facilities to our mental health, we have also been working closely with a number of partners to expand the offers we have available for our residents, including a new boxing gym (p10) and outdoor ping pong tables (p11). There will be a number of events taking place over the summer months to enable you to meet up safely with friends and family, from our very popular Summer of Fun (p15) to Imagine Watford which makes its comeback as 'Reimagined Watford' (p17) after having to be cancelled last year.

We have also been working hard to support our local businesses both big and small, through offering financial support, advice services and new commercial opportunities (p22). As we move further into the recovery phase, it is vital that we use this time to support local retailers and entrepreneurs, while helping even the smallest businesses to lead sustainable projects and initiatives.

Finally, I would like to say a huge congratulations to Watford Football Club for their promotion back to the Premier League - it just goes to show how resilient Watford are, and like them we will soon be back on our feet and thriving!

If you have an issue that you think I might be able to help with, please get in touch at themayor@watford.gov.uk or call my office number on **01923 278371**.

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Focusing on development

Why can't the council just say no?

Elected Mayor Peter Taylor reflects on the challenges faced by the council in the face of the high new homes target set by central government for Watford, which are similar to those of our much larger neighbouring boroughs.



Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor

In the three years since I've been in office, the issue that is raised with me time and again is development in the town. People are concerned about the number of new developments that they see and the developments in the pipeline that have been granted planning permission. People are worried about high rise homes and whether our current infrastructure like transport, schools, roads and other facilities can support the rising population in the town.

No town stands still. Places evolve and that is the natural order of things. However, the rapid growth in Watford is a concern that I share and one which as a council we have very little control over.

How the system works

Undoubtedly the UK has a chronic housing shortage. The government is under pressure to deliver new homes for people across the country. Watford residents want their adult children to have options to stay living in the town in the future, and I'd like to think that one day my own children will have that option too.

In light of the demand for homes, each council in the UK is set a housing target by central government.

There are two key factors that play a role in setting these targets: the average salary of residents and the average house price in a given area. If the house prices are deemed unaffordable when viewed against the average salary then that area is required to build more homes. The theory is that the cost of new homes will reduce once more are available.

This makes sense but what the calculation doesn't consider is the space available in the area. Watford is one of the smallest boroughs in the UK at just 8m² (21km²). We have so little land available to us for development. Most of the sites that developers invest in are small scale

and this drives the developer to build at volume - which means high rise homes.

Our neighbouring councils Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere and St Albans have similar housing targets to us but a lot more land available to them. This is primarily green belt which can only be built on in exceptional circumstances - they also have protected Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which we all want to preserve for future generations.

All councils have a duty to cooperate when it comes to housing, so we have asked all our neighbouring authorities to take some of our housing growth because of our limited size and high housing target. So far, they have all said it's not possible but I will continue raise the issue and put forward Watford's case.

The calculation also fails to consider the demand for homes from outside of the town. In our case we are just outside premium property price territory London, and many people look to move from the city to Watford because we have so much to offer: commuter transport options, some of the best schools in

the country, brilliant facilities like our award-winning parks and theatres, employment options... I could go on. So there will always be demand for Watford homes, no matter how many we build.

Watford's target

Our target is currently set at 14,000 new homes over 18 years. Our planning team have evaluated all the sites in the town that have the potential for development - these are included in our draft Local Plan which sets out how development will be delivered in Watford up to 2036. The plan will be sent for independent assessment in the summer and we hope to have it approved next year.

Consequences of not delivering against the target

Failure to deliver the target that's been set through an up-to-date Local Plan results in our planning powers being limited. Most of the councils in Hertfordshire do not have an updated Local Plan and so are having to approve almost all housing developments - in fact, the majority of them have approved more new homes than Watford over the last year.

What can the council do?

While our planning powers are already limited, once we have a

ratified Local Plan in place (we hope early next year), a number of key local issues have to be considered by a developer when a project is put forward, including:

- Is it a high-quality design?
- Does it improve the natural environment?
- Does it promote sustainable travel?
- Does it boost health and wellbeing?
- Are local historic buildings protected?
- Does it create vibrancy?

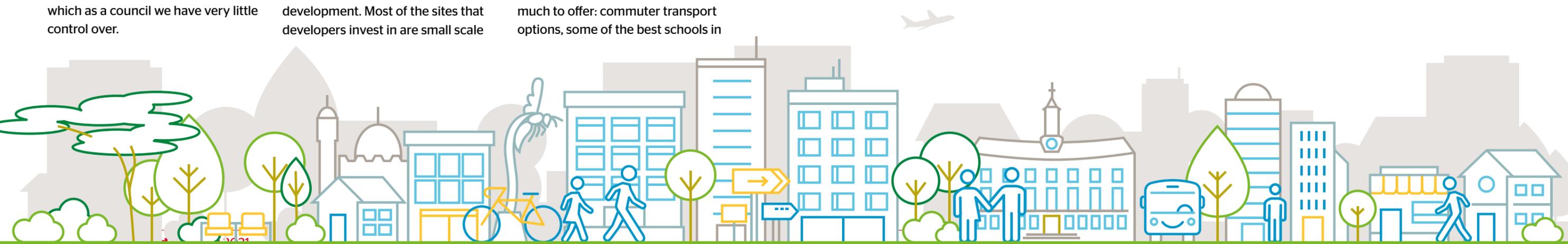
In conclusion, while I believe the target for Watford is excessive for a small borough, we have little choice but to try and deliver against it in the best possible way - promoting quality and sustainability and ensuring the right supporting infrastructure is put in place. We must not lose our ability to positively influence the growth of our town.

Councils have limited powers

Central government implemented a National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012. If a proposed development meets the requirements of the NPPF then local councils and councillors should pass it - if they don't the developer can appeal. Councils who fail to deliver their housing targets struggle to win these appeals and can be left paying the developers' costs which can quickly mount to millions of pounds.

How does Watford's housing annual housing target compare with other boroughs?

Borough	Population	Housing target
Watford	100,000 Size 8m ²	787 pa
Three Rivers	94,000 Size 34m ²	624 pa
St Albans	147,000 Size 62m ²	893 pa
Decorum	155,000 Size 78m ²	1,023 pa



Restoring Cassiobury's wetlands

Work starts this summer on the new wetlands restoration project in Cassiobury Park Nature Reserve. Its aim is to transform the area's former watercress beds into a wildlife sanctuary complete with reeds, ponds and scrapes.

The main watercress beds went out of use in the 1970s and in the early 1980s the area was fenced off as a nature reserve, which has sadly declined. The restoration will return the watercress beds to an excellent wetland habitat for birds, like the snipe and the green sandpiper, and for insects and mammals too. The project will increase the reserve's biodiversity and provide people with a large and accessible site for observing and learning about nature.

Works will include the removal of silt from the beds themselves, re-opening the river inlet and clearing the flow channel and exit into the river. There will be viewing screens at intervals along the edge. The project will be led by Watford



Borough Council, with support from Friends of Cassiobury Park, Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Community Connection Projects CIC.

Elected Mayor of Watford Peter Taylor said: "This new wetland in Cassiobury Park will provide a much-needed home for wildlife and will bring back a large unused

open space for everyone to view and enjoy. The restoration will also provide educational opportunities at the reserve and will relieve flooding elsewhere in the park by restoring part of the flood plain that has been missing for some time. Projects like these help make our town a greener and more sustainable place for residents to live."

The council is working with the Hertfordshire & Middlesex Butterfly Conservation Trust and Friends of Cassiobury Park, using their extensive knowledge to plant appropriate wildflower seeds for butterflies and insects. The species that will be planted include: Tufted Vetch, which attracts bumblebees, Garlic Mustard, an important food plant for caterpillar species and also the Sweet Vernal Grass and Crested Dogstails, both of which are a good source of food for the larvae of Brown and Skipper butterflies.



Tufted Vetch



Garlic Mustard



Sweet Vernal Grass



Crested Dogtails

Many of these projects would not be possible without the help and dedication of community groups and volunteers. If you would like to get involved or for information on future projects, contact the park management team at Cassiobury, at cassiobury@watford.gov.uk

Putting the wild back into Cassiobury Park

Watford Borough Council is embracing biodiversity with a new rewilding programme that will create beautiful wildflower meadows throughout Cassiobury Park next year.

The stunning wildflower displays, which will support our native pollinators, will take a year to establish, and by spring 2022 park-users and wildlife will be able to fully enjoy these new habitats. They will be planted with native wildflower species and managed sensitively by reducing mowing for a more naturalised landscape and to help bring the countryside back into Cassiobury Park.

Wildflower-rich meadows and grasslands are precious places for wildlife. A lifeline for bumblebees, butterflies and other pollinating insects, meadows are also a food source for seed-eating birds, offer shelter for small mammals and provide hunting grounds for bats and insect-eating birds. Sadly,

traditional wildflower meadows have vanished from much of our countryside. Nationwide, a staggering 97% of flower-rich grasslands have been lost since the 1930s.

The rewilding project is also a key part of the council's new Sustainability Strategy, with the ambitious goal to make the borough carbon neutral by 2030. The plan focuses on promoting natural solutions to climate challenges. Find out more at www.watford.gov.uk/sustainablewatford.

The meadows will also provide opportunities for education and community involvement through activities such as seed bombing, a method of sowing wildflowers and helping us nurture these important habitats. If you would like to get involved, visit www.watford.gov.uk/cassioburypark.



Watford's beautiful heritage buildings get a green makeover

Watford Borough Council has been awarded £3.7million of government funding to help secure the sustainable long-term future of Watford Colosseum and the Town Hall.



The money will support the installation of a range of energy efficiency measures in the 1930s Grade II listed buildings and will make an important contribution to the council's carbon neutral commitment for Watford by 2030.

The Green Grant Funding, awarded by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, is also a significant boost to the council's Town Hall Quarter programme.

This major improvement scheme has identified the protection and enhancement of Watford's

heritage and cultural assets, which includes the Colosseum and Town Hall, as one of its top priorities.

Peter Taylor, Elected Mayor of Watford, said: "The funding we have secured will support two of our ambitions for Watford. We are committed to being a



vibrant, diverse and creative town with a range of cultural venues and performances for all our community. We also recognise the vital importance of tackling climate change, protecting the environment for generations to come by achieving carbon neutral in the next decade."

Saving residents' money whilst saving the planet

Watford Borough Council is helping residents in Leavesden Road and the Kingswood Estate to lower their bills and make a difference to carbon emissions.

By securing £2million of funding from government, the council has been able to target areas of Watford with a high proportion of energy inefficient homes compared to Watford's average. Grants go towards installing energy saving measures such as external wall, underfloor and roof insulation, as well as smart heating controls.

The project has been well received by residents in the area, with residents now starting to reap the benefits. Diana Tembo had external wall insulation installed: "It's already noticeably warmer and the heating hasn't come on at all since during the colder nights. The work has smartened up the house, replicating the brick finish to match the look of the surrounding houses. It's lovely and cosy and once it's warmed up it stays warm for a long time."

The project aims to raise EPC levels to at least a C rating for those households which have incomes of below £30,000, where improvement upgrade work will be free. The project will have a significant benefit to residents in terms of cost savings. The average utility cost over a three year period for a home with an EPC rating of C is around £2,000. This compares with an E rated home which would cost £3,500, increasing to £4,875 for an F rated property.



This project works towards our climate net-zero reduction target (where emissions from homes account for around a third of Watford's emissions). You can find out more at www.watford.gov.uk/sustainablewatford.

To enquire about applying for funding, or for advice on

lowering your energy bills or switching provider/tariffs, you can contact the council's partner, Better Housing Better Health.

Contact the free helpline today on **0800 038 6030** (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm) or email at greenhomesgrant@nef.org.uk.



Former pro boxer Saud Hafiz on opening a new boxing gym

Saud Hafiz is a well-known boxer, competing for England and winning two national amateur titles before turning pro, going undefeated. Saud spoke to us about opening West Herts ABC at 263 St Albans Road, sharing his views on local talent and how his boxing gym is set to make a difference.

What sort of help did you receive getting the project up and running?

We were lucky in that we received some money from the Mayor's Small Grants Fund. Watford Borough Council have been present since the start. They have been tremendous in helping us print flyers, supporting us on social media and just giving us general guidance throughout the journey. Also, other external agencies were a massive help, like Watford Community Housing and Watford and Three Rivers Trust. We are very grateful for all the

help we have received, and hope the relationship can continue long into the future to make Watford a better place.

Does Watford have its next Anthony Joshua or Shannon Courtenay waiting in the wings?

In every session we've run, I kid you not, there are two to three kids that I see potential in and I think could go a long way. I do see myself producing champions out of West Herts ABC but for me, a champion isn't just someone who goes on to win a world title, it ain't about how hard you hit, it's how hard you can

get hit and keep moving forward. That's a champion - somebody who sets themselves a target and reaches it. I want to make a difference and have the parents come to me and tell me it worked and they are benefitting from the sessions. This is the making of a champion.

You were once a pro fighter yourself. How did boxing help you in your life?

In terms of myself, life was hard. I lost my father when I was very young, I had no role model and I would often get bullied. It was really difficult and I just wanted a sense of belonging. I played a good standard of cricket and a good standard of football when I was younger, but boxing was just something else for me. You have to respect the sport of boxing, it's an art.

With that comes you looking after your health - you don't smoke, you don't drink and you don't hang around the streets as much. To divert myself away from all of this I focused on my boxing and that helped me in a positive way. It gave me self-discipline and helped me understand to be respected you need to respect others.

What do you think it is that makes boxing clubs like West Herts ABC such a positive place to help young people?

At West Herts ABC it's different to just your standard gyms with just a ring and some bags. We have so much engaging equipment to help people get fit that has nothing to do with punching anything! When you climb through those ropes and get in that ring, it doesn't matter who you are, you're on your own in there. The courage it takes for somebody to do that is something else. Remember, fortune favours the brave!



For more information, contact info@westhertsabc.com or visit www.westhertsabc.com. To be entered into a prize draw for

free membership of one month, please follow [@westhertsabc](https://www.instagram.com/westhertsabc) on Instagram and Facebook and comment with 'WHABC'



Become the King Ping of Watford!

Watford Borough Council has installed two new outdoor table tennis tables in the town centre to encourage local people to take up the sport, have fun and bring an unused area of the town back to life!

The new tables installed next to Watford Central Library and Watford Mencap's Café in the Library will make table tennis more accessible and give local residents more opportunity to be active, by giving people a place to meet, relax and enjoy a quick game, all for free. People are being encouraged to bring their own bats and balls to help stop the spread of Covid-19, with the council working to have equipment available from Café in the Library free of charge in the future.

Following the success of similar facilities at Oxhey Activity Park and Cassiobury Park, this project is part of the Watford Get Active initiative led by the council to create healthier, stronger and more sustainable communities through physical activity and sport. Enabling inactive residents to increase their physical activity not only benefits their physical health, but their mental wellbeing too.

Nick, from Nicholas Li Table Tennis Academy, said: "It really doesn't matter how experienced you are - get a paddle in hand and we promise you will have a blast. This is a fantastic opportunity for people to get together, have fun and play some table tennis! Whatever your experience, skills, abilities

or background, everyone can get involved in this amazing activity."

For more information about other table tennis facilities in Watford, visit www.watford.gov.uk



Watford Borough Council supports Mental Health Awareness Week

Watford Borough Council supported a national campaign for Mental Health Awareness Week from 10 to 16 May.



Led by the Mental Health Foundation, this year's campaign focused on the benefits that being in nature has on your wellbeing.

Elected Mayor of Watford Peter Taylor led two walks in local parks with residents while discussing the many health benefits of being in nature for mental health.

He said: "It has been a tough year for everyone dealing with the impact that Covid-19 has had on our lives. Not being able to get out

and about, travel or spend time with loved ones and friends, it has taken its toll.

"Our beautiful award-winning parks have proved invaluable for so many of us over the past 12 months. Spending time outside and being surrounded by nature can have huge benefits on your mental health - improving your mood and reducing feelings of stress. I was pleased that we could support this campaign. Thanks to Maria and Nicky at Cathartic for helping us arrange the

walks. There is help available for residents who are struggling via our Healthy Hub. Please check on your family and friends, as mental health can affect anyone at any time."

For information on the support that's available, please visit www.watford.gov.uk/info/20288/watford_healthy_hub_and_safeguarding

Find out more information on Mental Health Awareness Week at www.mentalhealth.org.uk

New contactless donation points to help raise funds for local charities

Watford residents and visitors who want to support the charities that have been helping local people survive the coronavirus pandemic now have a quick and easy way to show their support.

Watford Borough Council and Watford and Three Rivers Trust have set up two contactless tap points in the town. This includes Daisy in the Park Café in Cassiobury Park and inside Metrobank on Watford High Street, offering people a quick way to donate £3 to the Watford Covid Appeal.

The Watford Covid Appeal has already raised £170k from the generosity of residents and local businesses, with the funding distributed to over 50 local frontline charities who have been unable to undertake their normal fundraising efforts. This includes getting emergency food to those in need, supporting victims of domestic abuse and those with mental health issues, providing shelter for the homeless, care to those bereaved, advice and guidance to those who have lost their jobs and practical help to young families facing the strain of isolation.

The tap point is a pilot and, if successful, more contact points could be rolled out across other



town locations and include other fundraising efforts, such as homelessness support.

Lynne Misner CEO of Small Acts of Kindness, a charity who received funding from the appeal said: "For older people, the pandemic and particularly during lockdown has been a really lonely time. The funding we have received

has helped us reach out to some of the most vulnerable older people locally and provide them with essential keep warm items. But most importantly, this hand-delivered gift says someone cares and is thinking about you."

People can find out more and also support the campaign by donating online at watfordcovidappeal.org.

Watford's incredible vaccination effort

The efforts of Watford's local GP practices and surgeries, medical centres and the team at Watford General Hospital leading the Covid-19 vaccination programme, are all supporting the town's most vulnerable people and helping pave the way for a safer future.



According to Department of Health Data, as of 3 June 2021, a total of 55,220 (63%) people across Watford have received their first dose of a Covid-19 vaccine and a total of 33,864 (38%) people across Watford have received their second dose of a Covid-19 vaccine.

The Covid vaccine programme is the largest vaccination campaign in NHS history. Peter Taylor, Elected Mayor of Watford, pays tribute to Watford's vaccination team: "Practice teams across Watford have been working

tirelessly to ensure Watford's response to the vaccination programme has been a success. On top of the vaccinations, they have been undertaking their usual service to ensure that patients get the advice, tests, treatment or surgery they need.

"The vaccine rollout is instrumental in the fight against Covid-19 and there has been a great deal of coordination of manufacturing, logistics, rapid training of vaccination administration personnel and cooperation of patients. I would

like to thank the health and care workers in Watford for going above and beyond during the pandemic and encourage everyone to take up the call for the vaccine when their turn arrives."

Dr Ketan Bhatt, GP Partner at Manor View Practice, added: "I would urge everyone to book an appointment when invited. But remember - even when you are vaccinated, it's vitally important to continue to break the chain of infection by washing our hands, using a face covering and keeping our distance from others."



Watford's SUMMER OF FUN

Watford is opening back up and it's throwing a party! Our Summer of Fun is all about making the most of those sunny vibes and getting Watford back to its buzzing old self. We have some much-loved events returning, plus some new ones to really make this a summer to remember.

WATFORDSUMMEROFFUN.COM



Big Bandstand June - September

Throughout the Sundays in summer, there will be free live performances, from a range of bands and musicians, covering everything from ukulele, jazz to big band brass. The likes of Swanvesta Social Club and Tony Oliver Jazz Days will be filling this year's line-up.



Big Dance 26 June

A comeback for event not seen for a few years, Big Dance is a day put together by dancers for everyone to enjoy and get dancing. Put together this year by Jiveswing this event will take place at the top of the parade, on the events space. Bring your dancing shoes!



ReImagined Watford 3 July - 8 August

Now in its 11th year, Imagine Watford is one of the town's biggest events. It pulls in acts from across the globe to perform in Watford for residents and visitors alike. Due to the pandemic they had to cancel last year's run.



Big Jiveswing 25 July

The Big JiveSwing Festival is one of the UK's largest FREE Jazz Festivals, featuring some of the best internationally acclaimed Jazz musicians, bands and dancers within the UK. It's a great family day out, with live cabarets, dance classes for children and adults and a vintage photo booth, all for FREE!



Stage In The Park July - August

Throughout weekends in July and August, there will be performances across some of Watford's parks including a brand new stage in Cassiobury Park.



Colourscape 19 - 28 August

New to Watford, Colourscape is a large labyrinth of colour and light. Don a coloured cape to become part of the colour experience and enter into a new world where you can freely explore the potentials of light, colour and space.



Big Screen 26 July - 22 August

A firm favourite in Watford, the Big Screen is returning! To help everyone enjoy this year's event in a safe way, the screening will take place in Knutsford and Woodside again, just like last year. Big Screen will be held Monday 26 July to Sunday 1 August at Woodside Playing Fields, and then Monday 2 August to Sunday 8 August at Knutsford Playing Fields.



Big Beach 9 - 22 August

Don't worry if you can't get away to the beach this year, we're bringing one to Watford. Another golden oldie for the town, Big Beach is returning to the events space at the top of The Parade. So come along, recline on one of our beach chairs and enjoy the summer sun.



Now we can all get free rapid Covid-19 tests to help protect each other.

Around 1 in 3 people who have Covid-19 have no symptoms and are spreading it without knowing. That could be a relative. It could even be you.

Tests show results within 30 minutes. They also show you're doing what you can to protect your loved ones.

Let's take this next step safely.



FREE, RAPID COVID-19 TESTS  **NHS.UK /GET-TESTED**

Welcome Back Watford! Eat, Shop and Enjoy all the town has to offer!

After a three and a half month period of closure, the town centre and Watford's other diverse shopping and retail areas threw open their doors to the public back in April.



Eager customers were able to get their much-needed haircuts, quench their thirst at local pubs, enjoy a shopping trip and take part in an intense workout at the gym (if that's your thing).

To help local businesses and our community on the road to recovery, Elected Mayor Peter Taylor launched a borough-wide campaign Shop Local, Shop Watford earlier this year, to highlight the wealth of excellent businesses we have to offer.

From well-loved local independent traders, vibrant start-ups at Watford Market and some of the biggest businesses in the region, Watford has something for everyone! The town is also listed as one of the top 20 UK retail destinations by CACI,

so the campaign is a reminder to residents to check out all the amazing things on offer right on our doorstep!

Putting the buzz back into Watford

Watford Borough Council is doing all sorts of things to get Watford back to its lively self!

- Using £85,636 from the government's Welcome Back Fund, we're giving the town a boost - including improving green spaces, providing more outdoor seating areas and maintaining Covid safety measures.
- Our events programme is back with some new additions! Enjoy one of our free live music sessions, get lit up by

Colourscape or enjoy some of the old firm favourites - Big Dance, Big Screen and Big Beach.

- We're supporting a number of initiatives run by Watford BID to entice people into the town centre and make our town beautiful - including Food and Drink Week and the return of the wonderful flower display as part of Watford in Bloom.
- Improvements to key shopping destinations Market Street, Queens Road and St Albans Road, as well as the renovation of Watford Market, will give these areas an attractive facelift.

On top of administering the rollout of government grants for businesses, we've launched our own series of grants and support programmes for local businesses (see p22 for more info). Not only are these businesses crucial for our local economy but they are a huge part of Watford's character.

Leila Simpson from the LP Café said: "It is so wonderful to be back, the local support during all lockdowns has been amazing, and it's such a pleasure to open our doors to the community again! We are looking forward to seeing familiar faces and meeting new ones."

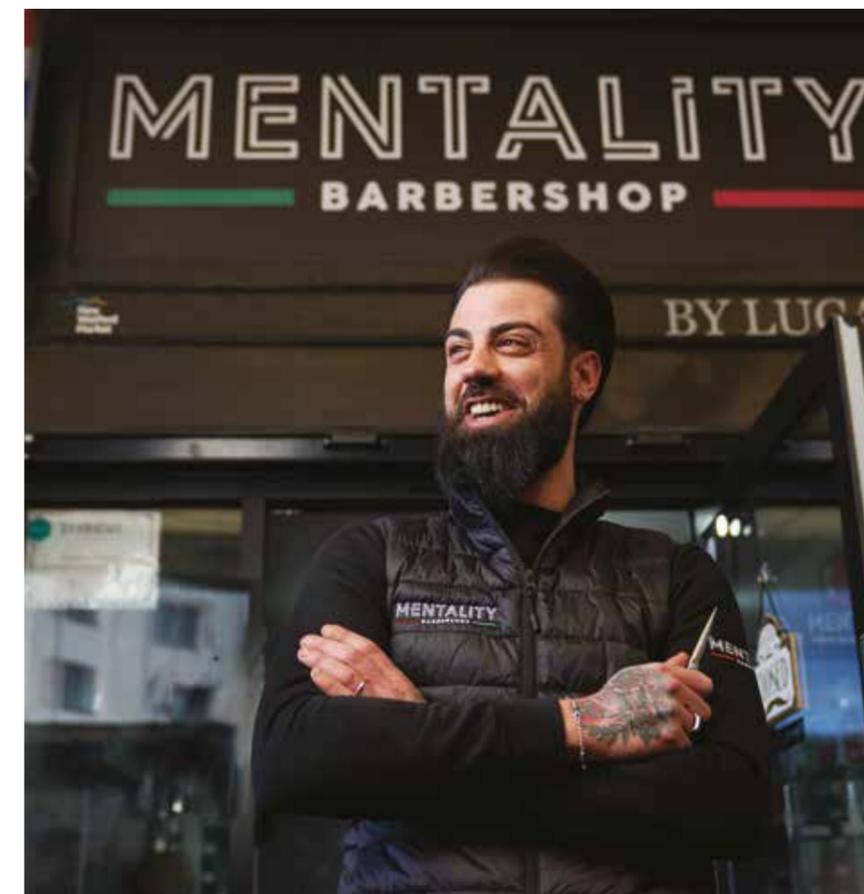
Watford Market welcomes new businesses!

It's a feast for the senses down at Watford Market as we welcome on board new businesses during an exciting time for the area, with a range of new goods on offer and dynamic improvements taking place led by Watford Borough Council.

An established part of the local community, the market sells everything from fruit, vegetables and fresh fish, to the finest watches and clothing. Now showcasing an expanding range of goods, local punters can savour traditional Neapolitan pizza (Ogy's Pizza), artisan savoury jams (Rudi's Chilli Jam), fresh homemade baked goods (Rustic Bakehouse), unique flavoursome imported candy (Rock Pop Candy) or buy eco-friendly beauty products (Trade and Retail) and beautiful hand-knitted clothing (Vera).

The improvements small businesses are benefitting from include new signage and branding, enhanced entrances, an overhaul of the indoor market and a new planting scheme to make the market greener, more inviting, and to bring a unique character to the space. The £250,000 investment by Watford Borough Council will also include the creation of a community café and seating area, and pop-up shops where a range of different traders can temporarily sell their goods.

Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor said: "These new businesses, along with our brilliant current traders, will



further enhance our vibrant town and also represent an important contributor to our local economy. As well as the improvements being made to the market, it is exciting to see these new traders adding to the market's offering, and I would encourage everyone to pop down and experience something new while supporting local businesses."

If you are looking to try out a new business idea or diversify your existing business, Watford

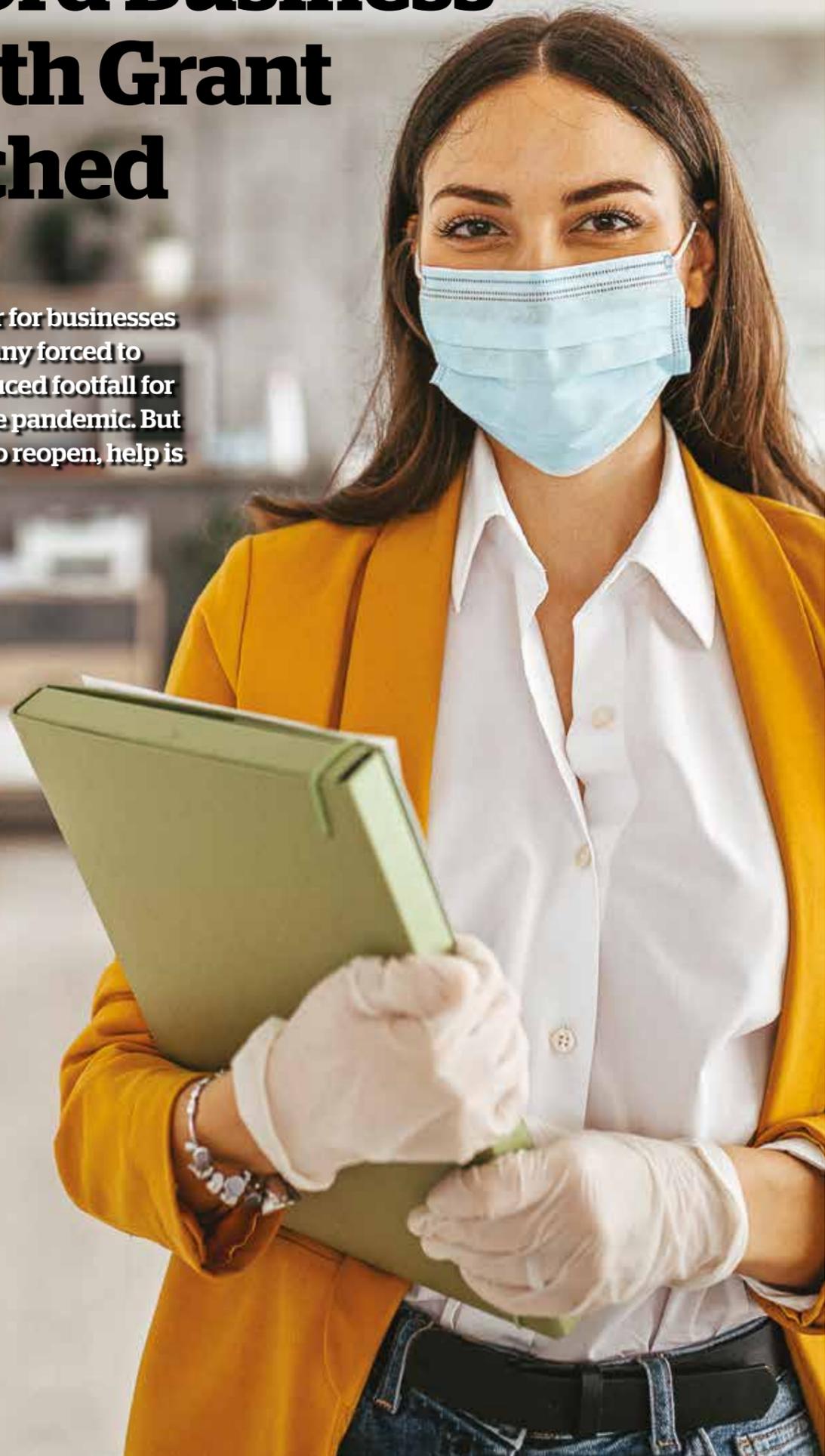
market provides an affordable option without the hassle of high start-up costs. Your local market could help provide the perfect platform to showcase your product within the local community with rents from £75 per week.

For more information, visit www.watfordmarket.co.uk, follow on [facebook.com/watfordtownmarket](https://www.facebook.com/watfordtownmarket) and [instagram.com/watfordtownmarket](https://www.instagram.com/watfordtownmarket).



Watford Business Growth Grant launched

It's been a hard year for businesses in Watford, with many forced to close or seeing reduced footfall for long stretches of the pandemic. But as Watford begins to reopen, help is on the horizon.



The Watford Business Growth Grant is a new programme from Watford Borough Council and the Hertfordshire Growth Hub, designed to support local small businesses and help them bounce back from a bad year. To be eligible, a business simply needs to have between five and ten employees, be based in Watford, and to have been adversely affected by the pandemic.

Once a business has expressed interest in the scheme, Growth Account Managers from Hertfordshire Growth Hub work closely with them to determine their business needs and offer free, bespoke advice and support. If the business is a suitable candidate, the Growth Account Manager will also assist them in applying for a grant of between £2,000 and £5,000 to help improve operating performance and drive innovation and growth.

Grant money can be spent on consultancy services, software and important equipment, or even be used as match funding to unlock larger grants. Elected Mayor Peter Taylor hopes that the expertise and financial aid supplied by the program will be a lifeline for businesses trying to get back on their feet.

Launching the programme at Watford-based tech company Wirebox, the Mayor said; "Watford's business community is so important to the town, providing employment opportunities to residents and helping us to prosper. The past year has been



so tough for so many small companies. The Watford Business Growth Grant Scheme is our way of investing in local businesses so that they can get the support they need to succeed in the future."

The programme will remain open until all the existing funds have been allocated, or until 31 March 2022, whichever is sooner. Since launching at the end of March a large number of businesses have already applied, so it's worth applying soon if you think you might be eligible.

Find out more at www.watfordbusiness.com/business-growth-grant

"We're delighted to be working in partnership with Watford Borough Council to deliver this grant scheme, aimed at providing support to local businesses. Driving targeted impact through this scheme, as well as providing these businesses with a comprehensive range of advice, resources, support and events through the Growth Hub, will help to boost the local economy."

Sian Ryan
Head of Service at the Hertfordshire Growth Hub

Watford Business Growth Grant Investing for future success



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GROWTH HUB**



A Watford Borough Council initiative delivered by Hertfordshire Growth Hub

RefillAbell - a new plastic-free shop coming to Watford

RefillAbell is a Zero Waste Shop that aims to eliminate plastic packaging from food and household products. The store is situated at 4 Haydon Road, Oxhey Village and will be opening in June 2021. Here, RefillAbell tell us their story...

RefillAbell is a Zero Waste Shop that aims to eliminate plastic packaging from food and household products. The store is situated at 4 Haydon Road, Oxhey Village and will be opening in June 2021. Here, they tell us their story.

The idea for RefillAbell grew out of the first lockdown, when Sameer, manager of Abell Chemist, shared his vision for a plastic free shop with Jane Hopkins. Hopkins had been helping deliver NHS prescriptions for the chemist as a volunteer. Three pop ups, countless meetings and an entire year later, RefillAbell is nearing its grand opening and our ethos of 're-use, re-purpose, reduce and upcycle' are at the core of what we are about.



Mary Hennessey Photography

At RefillAbell you will be able to bring your own containers to refill with dried food goods, such as rice, pasta, nuts, seeds, oils and a range of snacks and sweets. RefillAbell has a peanut butter machine that makes fresh, wholesome peanut butter at the press of a button.

There will also be household liquids such as laundry liquid and washing up liquid, toiletries such as shampoo, toothpaste and reusable period products. RefillAbell supports local, UK businesses and aims to have high quality products that are sustainable, fairtrade, often organic and cater for dietary requirements such as gluten free and vegans.

Rinse out your empty containers and jars, get your Tupperware ready and place them by the door, we look forward to welcoming you into Watford's First Zero Waste Store!

Follow our progress on Facebook: [RefillAbellWatford](#), on Instagram: [RefillAbell_Watford](#) and on the website: www.refillabell.co.uk



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Visit www.watford.gov.uk/gardenwaste for details and to sign up.



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Beautiful Victorian street signs restored

To help preserve the original Victorian style of the town, Oxhey Village's Victorian cast iron street signs have been lovingly repaired and restored by Murill Construction Ltd and the council.

The restored plates reflect the history of the town and the works focused on Capell Road, Upper Paddock Road, Villiers Road, Grover Road, Aldenham and Oxhey Avenue.

- **Capell Road** - named after The Earls of Essex and William Capell, the original owner of Cassiobury House. The plate listed as Capel Road was restored to Capell Road to reflect its origins.

- **Villiers Road** - commemorates the relationship by marriage of the Earls of Essex and Earls of Clarendon. The family are the former owners of the land and manor house at The Grove Hotel.

- **Grover Road** - the Grover family owned the land on which this road was built in the 1880s, and at that date they were wine merchants in the town. Their son Henry Grover - founder of Watford FC - set up the club when he and a group of fellow teenagers were given permission by the Earl of Essex to kick a football around in Cassiobury Park.



New entrance sign of Watford FC's 1919-20 squad installed

To highlight the heritage of the town and the importance of Watford FC within the community, new commemorative artwork featuring the club's players from the 1919-1920 season has been installed at the entrance to King George V Playing Fields.

The memorial - created in partnership with the football club, Watford Borough Council and Watford Museum - features most of the Watford FC players



Photocaption: Mayor Peter Taylor, Mat Robinson from Watford FC, Cllr Tim Williams and Sarah Priestley from Watford Museum

from that season, and was chosen as it was the team from the early years of George V's reign. The park's name originates from Britain's 60th monarch King George V, who ruled from 1910 to 1936.

The artwork also highlights the squad that played and trained across many of the town's parks and open spaces, supported by King George V and the Fields in Trust, before the club found their current home at Vicarage Road Stadium in 1922.

Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor said: "Watford Football Club has played an enormous part in our community for many years and the new entrance honours the club, the players from the 1919-1920 season and also the work of King George V in protecting parks across the UK."

For more information about Watford's 12 Green Flag award-winning parks, please visit www.watford.gov.uk/parks.

Woodside Playing Fields improvements



Check out some of these amazing artist impressions for the first phase of the Woodside Playing Fields improvements. This phase will focus on creating the Woodside Community Sports Village, with a range of developments to improve the sports facilities on site, and help support local clubs including Watford Town Cricket Club and Watford Amateur Boxing Club.

A community café, improved parking, and a new toddler and junior adventurous play area will also be built.

The new facilities will promote an active lifestyle and encourage greater use of the park by residents and visitors - by putting in place the fun and fantastic facilities that you want.

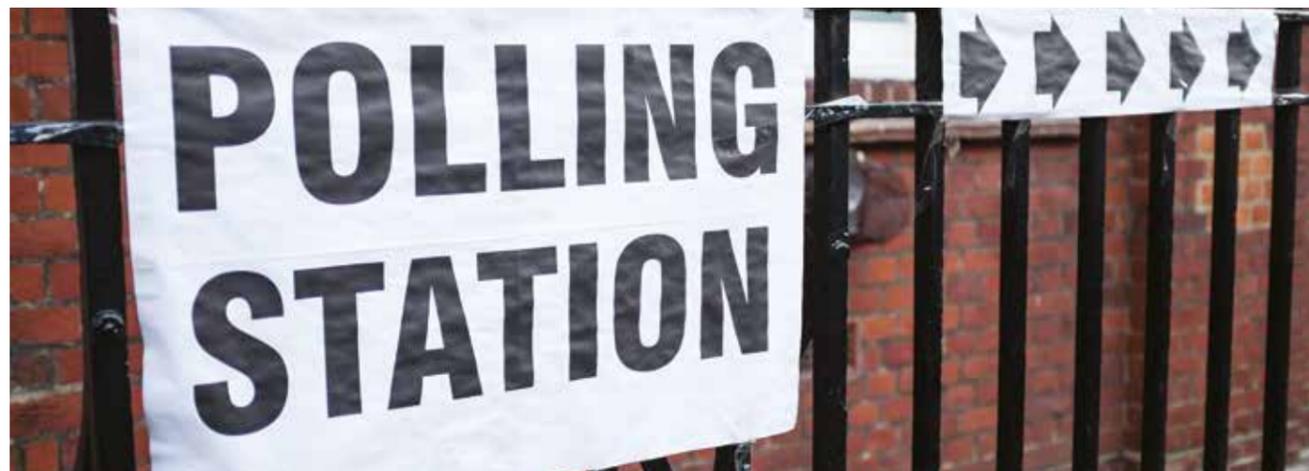
Construction works are planned to start in early 2022 and it is anticipated that the development will be completed and the Community Sports Hub opened to visitors in early 2023. For more information about the project, visit www.yourwoodside.co.uk

These computer generated images (CGI's) are conceptual and indicative proposals.



Watford residents elect new local and county councillors

On Thursday 6 May residents of Watford went to the polls for the Borough, County and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.



Residents of Watford have voted for councillors to represent them in each of the 12 wards of Watford Borough Council and at Hertfordshire County Council.

Each ward - or area of town - is represented by three councillors. Residents in Watford voted for one councillor for each of the wards, with the exception of Nascot ward which also included a by-election for a vacant seat.

The councillors elected this year are as follows:

- Callowland - **Cllr Dennis Watling** (LAB - HOLD)
- Central - **Cllr Marilyn Devonish** (LD - HOLD)
- Holywell - **Cllr Nigel Bell** (LAB - HOLD)
- Leggatts - **Cllr Richard Smith** (LAB - HOLD)
- Meriden - **Cllr Pete Hannon** (LD - HOLD)
- Nascot - **Cllr Mark Watkin**, **Cllr Tom Osborn** (LD - HOLD)
- Oxhey - **Cllr Karen Clarke-Taylor** (LD - HOLD)
- Park - **Cllr Peter Jeffree** (LD - HOLD)
- Stanborough - **Cllr Simon Feldman** (LD - HOLD)
- Tudor - **Cllr Darren Walford** (LD - HOLD)
- Vicarage - **Cllr Sara Jane Trebar** (LAB - HOLD)
- Woodside - **Cllr Ann Saffery** (LD - HOLD)

Six seats were also contested under the Herts County Council election with the following councillors elected:

- Central Watford and Oxhey: **Cllr Stephen Giles Medhurst** (LD - HOLD)
- Meriden/Tudor: **Stephen Cavinder** (LD - HOLD)
- Nascot: **Cllr Mark Watkin** (LD - HOLD)
- North Watford: **Cllr Asif Khan** (LAB - HOLD)
- Stanborough/Woodside: **Cllr Tim Williams** (LD - HOLD)
- West Watford: **Cllr Nigel Bell** (LAB - HOLD)

For a full break-down of the election results, visit www.watford.gov.uk/electionresults

The Chairman of the Council for 2021/22 is Cllr Bilqees Mauthoor who represents Leggatts ward.

Cllr Mauthoor has been a councillor for over seven years and has served on a number of committees including Licensing Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She is a registered nurse by profession and currently works as a Clinical Nurse Manager.

Cllr Amanda Grimston (Meriden) has been named as Vice Chair.

How your council lines up



In Watford we have an Elected Mayor, Peter Taylor, who was elected for a four-year term on 3 May 2018. You can contact the Mayor if you wish to raise an issue with him directly.

Watford Borough is divided into 12 wards. Each ward has three councillors whom you elect to represent you for a four-year term. Councillors can be contacted on the phone numbers shown or by email and are there for you to discuss any issues or concerns you have about your neighbourhood or the town.

Peter Taylor
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themayor@watford.gov.uk

Callowland



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Holywell



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Matt Turmaine (Lab)
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Leggatts



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Nascot



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Oxhey



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Park



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Tudor



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Bill Stanton (LD)
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Darren Walford (LD)
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Vicarage



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Nasreen Shah (Lab)
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Woodside



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Ann Saffery (LD)
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(IDG) = Independent Democrats Group (Lab) = Labour (LD) = Liberal Democrats

* Denotes Hertfordshire County Councillor (plus Stephen Giles-Medhurst, County Councillor for Central Oxhey, and Stephen Cavinder for Meriden Tudor)

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