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## **Foreword – Bryan Vincent – Chairman**

I hope you are all well and possibly looking forward to your Covid19 vaccination if you have not already had it.

Some of you may be wondering what happened to the delivery of January **Focus**.

Having considered whether we should ask our deliverers to deliver or not in the current lockdown (we were requested not to deliver leaflets or canvass by the Director of Public Health) the Association took the decision to suspend delivery for everyone's safety.

Once the Covid19 situation shows signs of improvement we plan to deliver the (January?) Focus albeit somewhat late. I hope you understand the dilemma we faced.

Consequently, the February edition of the Focus (which you are now reading) is being published on-line only, via our website [www.hxra.org](http://www.hxra.org) in the **e-Edition tab**. Hopefully, if the Covid19 situation has improved by end February we plan to publish the March edition for delivery to all members.

Another victim of the current situation is our annual **AGM** that we usually hold in March each year where all members are invited to attend. Regretfully, this will have to be delayed until later in the year. Again, I hope you will understand.

Remember, it is always darkest before the dawn, stay safe.

Bryan Vincent

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The Boundary Commission received a large number of complaints in response to their Draft Report 2020 and they have produced a further draft which is open for consultation until 8 March 2021. We would be very grateful if you could find the time to comment on this final draft. The Boundary Commission appears to have listened to the people and not changed ward boundaries for no other apparent reason than a political one.

<https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/havering>

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Havering Astronomical Society are launching a new and improved **Young Astronomers** section. Initially with online meetings, they will move to in person sessions as well when it is safe. They will be held regularly on the 4th Thursday of each month, with the first one on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm. Ages 8-16 are welcome to join. If your children have ever wondered about the night sky, black holes, astronauts, or anything space related this is the place to find answers and spark their curiosity. Meetings will be fun and inclusive with the opportunity to carry out observing in the future. For details or to register an interest please visit the website: [havastro.co.uk](http://havastro.co.uk) or email: [enquiries@havastro.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@havastro.co.uk)

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**Covid 19**

With the new strain of the virus taking hold more and more of our friends and family are reporting that they now know people who have contracted the virus. This was not the case when the initial outbreak happened early last year. It is noticeably clear that the new virus is having a greater impact on our borough and is getting much closer to home.

The following web link provides the number of new cases and deaths by postcode. Once on the website you can enter your postcode to get the figures for your area.

<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/search?postcode=rm11+1ey>

On a more positive note, with the rollout of the vaccines underway there is light at the end of the tunnel but for all our sakes, please keep following the Government guidelines and stay safe.

**Rubbish and Excrement!**

I was contacted by a resident of Glanville Drive who reported that a lot of rubbish was being left at the top of the road near the junction of Upminster Road. There are some indications that the rubbish could be being left by private hire car drivers. On top of this some inconsiderate person decided to defecate in the same area leaving tissues and other items all over the footpath and in the gutter.

I contacted street care and I am incredibly pleased to report they came almost immediately and cleaned the area up.

**Inskip Drive**

A resident phoned me to report that a can of paint had been spilled on the pavement and road in Inskip Drive. Once again, I contacted Street Care who carried out the appropriate cleaning. In fact, the resident commented that the road has not looked that clean in a long time.

As with Glanville Drive, we sometimes forget the great work our Street Care workers do on our behalf. Well done to all concerned.

**Ravenscourt Grove**

I am pleased to report that after many emails to the council the footpath from Ravenscourt Grove to the cemetery (Dell) has now been properly repaired. It only goes to show that persistence does get things done in Havering.

**Appleton Way on street Parking Area**

For those of you who use this area regularly when shopping in Hornchurch, you will have noticed that the parking meter has not worked for several months. I contacted the Parking Enforcement Team at the end of November 2020 to find out when the machine would be repaired. I have recently been informed that the machine cannot be repaired and a replacement machine will be needed. I understand that the replacement machine will be available in the new financial year 2021/22.

**Wayside Avenue**

The saga of the missing lamp post in Wayside Avenue is still ongoing. I have made several inquiries over the last few months to find out when the lamp post is going to be returned. Unfortunately, the only response I am



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getting is that the lamp post is still on order. I will of course keep chasing this to be resolved as soon as possible. If we are lucky it could be replaced just as summer arrives!!!

**Abbs Cross Lane**

Over several years, residents living in Abbs Cross Lane adjacent to the District Line railway bridge have suffered flooding on what now seems to be a more regular basis. I have been speaking with the Council, Thames Water, TFL, and Network Rail to arrange an onsite meeting to try to resolve this problem once and for all. When I have more information, I will provide an update.

Hylands Ward Update

Jody Ganly



**Lime Green Water at Harrow Lodge Park** - It was reported to me that the water in the silt lagoon was a lime green colour and residents were concerned that it may be toxic and harmful to all the birds on the lake. For those of you that have visited lately, you will have seen how many birds are using the lake as their winter home, lots of swans, geese, ducks and cormorants.

This was reported to Havering Council and the following reply was received:

*"The green look to the lake was reported to the Environment Agency yesterday (20th January) and they are investigating but believe it to be non-toxic marking dye used by organisations, such as the water companies, to trace where drains lead to. The Environment Agency had in fact already received reports about the water colour from higher upstream the day before. This does not affect the wildlife and will wash*

*through in a few days."*

Councillor Nunn and I visited the following day and noted the lake and silt lagoon had returned to its normal colour.

**Police Crime figures** - Damien, our PCSO very kindly sent through the crime figures in December, for the month of November. Unfortunately, they arrived a little too late to go into January Focus.

November 2020	November 2019
Burglary = 0 Attempted Burglary = 1 Business Burglary = 0	Burglary = 6 Attempted Burglary = 1 Business Burglary = 1
Theft of Motor Vehicle = 3 Theft from Motor Vehicle = 3	Theft of Motor Vehicle = 2 Theft from Motor Vehicle = 8

Damien also posted the following good news:  
**Suspects Arrested for Burglary in Babington Road and an Attempted Burglary in Dorian Road**

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Burglary had been reported to Police on 14/01/2021 between 0320-0326 hours in Babington Road, Hornchurch. No house alarm on the property. Suspect(s) unknown had gained entry by forcing open a UPVC front door, which was not double locked with the key. Once inside, the dogs barked which disturbed the occupants. The suspect(s) then stole a handbag containing a purse and debit/credit cards and exited the property towards Hornchurch Road.

Suspect(s) returned to Babington Road again on 14/01/2021 at about 1800 hours, ended up in the rear garden of an address in Dorian Road and were seen by the occupant on cctv, who phoned police.

Police arrived on scene and the suspects fled, but were caught by a police dog in Babington Road and were arrested for attempted burglary. Then after a search, they found the handbag in their possession, which belonged to the occupant of Babington Road, who was burgled earlier in the morning, so were further arrested for this burglary.

**Please ensure if you have a UPVC front door, that you lift the handle, lock the door using the door key and remove the key afterwards.**

**Environment Issues** - For the past 3 months workmen have been resurfacing the pavement in Globe Road and making a rather good job of it too. So, as you can imagine, when someone fly tipped tins of paint that spilt all over the newly resurfaced pavements, I received quite a few angry calls from upset residents. The fly tipped mattress at the end of Southdown Road was reported and swiftly removed by Environment Services, Thank you. The large potholes in Hornchurch Road have also been reported and promptly filled.

## Elm Park News

## Councillor Stephanie Nunn

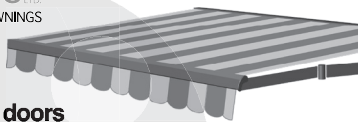
Firstly, I would like to advise that I have not resigned as a Councillor. Several people have asked me, and it must be related to my article in November when I said I was resigning as Chair of the Hornchurch Residents' Association after almost 4 years. So, I am still a ward Councillor until May 2022 and hope to stand once more to represent the people of Elm Park. It is a privilege to be elected to this role.

**St Albans Church:** On Thursday, 17 December, we attended a ceremony in the grounds of

St Albans Church, Langdale Gardens (Covid safe and socially distanced) along with a group of parishioners and neighbours. This was to celebrate the restoration of the church bell in memory of those who have lost their lives to Covid 19. The bell had been hoisted up on 11 December after being anointed with holy oil and water. We were honoured to be asked to unveil the plaque at the ceremony and thank Father Maurice and the parish for this privilege. Rev Amanda and Father Tom Keighley and Rev Marianne Hayward from St Nicholas were also in attendance. At this point I would like to thank all our ministers in Elm



Park for the comfort and support they give to our community, particularly at the moment, they all work so hard.



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**Scargill School:** As you know I am trying to improve safety around this school. I have had a response about the lack of a School Crossing Patrol Officer (lollipop lady/man):

*"Unfortunately, recruitment for SCPOs has become incredibly difficult and continues to be a challenge. Therefore, it has become commonplace not to replace SCPOs at sites which already have an engineered solution in place such as a zebra or pedestrian crossing. As Scargill School already has a zebra crossing, the SCPO would not have been automatically replaced as they already had an engineered solution in place to mitigate the risks associated with crossing the road. I understand the crossing is on a busy route, however even with a SCPO on site there is no evidence that the risk of a drive through or near miss is improved."*

Has anyone seen any adverts for SCPOs? I am advised by Mrs Graham the Head Teacher of the Junior School that when there was a lollipop lady present, drivers' speeds were noticeably and significantly slowed down as she (and her lollipop) was much more visible. I am yet to receive an answer to my request for more signage.

**Parking Enforcement Officers:** Currently Havering has 24 officers, 6 of which are permanent staff. There are 88 schools in Havering, 62 of which are infant, junior and primary schools and these are the main priority. They try to patrol them twice a week, either during drop off or pick up times, dependent on officer availability. If a car parks across a resident's driveway preventing them from gaining access or egress, then they can call 01708 432787 to provide details for the supervisor to dispatch the first available officer to patrol the location.

**Rainham Road:** Further to my request, I have now been advised that the gullies were checked and cleaned in this area on 19 October 2020 and it was reported that the main drain was slow to clear. It has been suggested by the Flood and Rivers Manager that residents should contact Thames Water directly to inform them when flooding occurs, i.e., that the main drain is slow. *If more than one resident is raising concerns, they are more likely to prioritize their investigations.*



Thames Water 0800 316 9800 website <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/contact-us>. Please see Barry's article, he's raised a complaint about the continual flooding.

**Zebra Crossing at Sainsbury's:** A resident asked us about the possibility of installing railings to deter people from crossing the road near the roundabout. I was advised:

*"Highways Officers will monitor the area to determine what impact if any, railings would achieve near the crossing at Sainsbury's in Elm Park. However, please be advised that railing installation is not usually encouraged as it not only adds to the highway maintenance budgets but also raises other safety concerns."*

**Graffiti:** I am sorry to see that graffiti is appearing in Elm Park, this has not been a problem before. I have taken photos and sent them to Havering asking if they can remove it. Some of it is on businesses and I would urge them to get rid of it. Once there, it seems to attract more.



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**Housing Strategy:** As we approach the New Year, Housing Services is busy developing a new Housing Strategy to drive Havering services forward for the next five years.

*"It is hoped that all elected members will contribute their own views, and encourage constituents to also give us their opinions about our proposed aims, which are:*

- *Aim 1: Deliver more genuinely affordable homes that meet the needs of Havering residents.*
- *Aim 2: Maintain good quality homes, prioritising safety and environmental sustainability.*
- *Aim 3: Support existing and future residents to live independently and well.*
- *Aim 4: Deliver good quality housing services for all residents.*

*The consultation questionnaire takes only a few minutes to complete and is available online here: <https://consultation.havering.gov.uk/housing/a-new-housing-strategy-for-havering/>"*

**The consultation runs for 12 weeks, closing on 7 March 2021.**

**Ennerdale Avenue/Kendal Croft:** Well done to our deliverer Chris for pointing out the very dangerous sunken inspection cover here. We went to have a look and Barry almost disappeared as I was taking the photo! We phoned BT on their free phone number 0800 023 2023 (option 1) and someone came down the same day to make it secure. You will find that most of the services have a free phone number as well as a website to report problems.

**Healthcare in the EU:** One day we will be free to travel again. It is useful to know that the European Health Insurance Card will be replaced by the Global Health Insurance Card. This is part of the UK deal with Europe and ensures the right for UK citizens to access necessary healthcare on holiday. The EHICs will remain valid for as long as they are in date. This is not a replacement for travel insurance.

Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank Jeff who did a very kind deed for one of our residents when I sought his advice. There are many kind deeds going on unnoticed at present, but they all make a huge difference, so although life is different at the moment, let's continue to think of others.

## **St Andrews Work**

**Bryan Vincent**

As my colleague Gerry has mentioned in his report, we are all hearing of Covid19 cases affecting neighbours and friends closer to where we live than we ever did during last year. In fact, my own son, his wife and two daughters who live locally all caught the virus over the Christmas period. Nobody could have followed the rules closer than they as a family. However, their weak link was the youngest child's school. She was sent home due to a child in her class showing signs of the virus and they now believe she brought it home having caught it from the classmate.

It shows no matter how well we follow the rules we can all have a weak link that lets the virus into our home. Once in, it is certain to spread quickly to others in the house. Stay safe, with the vaccination rolling out faster than anywhere in Europe let's hope we can all look forward to getting out and about in the spring.



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The good news is my son and his family being all in good health and young have now all tested negative.

### **Parkhill Close**

This is the road that leads off Abbs Cross Lane (opposite the Harvester Restaurant) to the Sunrise Estate and the 3 tower blocks that look out onto Harrow Lodge Park. You may or not be aware, Havering Council has demolished the ground level homes for the elderly that sat opposite the blocks and construction has started on a new high-rise development. However, of concern is that Parkhill Close was used by homes along Abbs Cross Lane for somewhere safe to park and by the owners of the allotments who accessed their plots off the road.

With limited notice, the road has been painted with double-yellow lines and no-loading/unloading markings at any time. The reason given is that it is a temporary measure for 2 years. The restrictions, it is claimed, are needed to offer a clear route for construction traffic to the new development. Your local councillors, residents and the allotment owners were not contacted to discuss the restrictions which have caused major problems for all concerned. We have made representation to Havering Council in the hope that some arrangements can be made to alleviate the problems particularly for the allotment holders to park somewhere near to their plots. This is just another example of the "Build, Build, Build" mentality of Havering Council at the present time ignoring the needs of residents.

**The Cranleigh Restaurant**, on the corner of Station Lane and Stanley Road.

You guessed it - yet another application for demolition and a block of flats in its place. Several residents in Stanley Road have serious concerns on certain aspects of the proposed design and have relayed their concerns to Havering council. I hope these are considered. Stay safe.

## **Elm Park Round Up**

## **Councillor Barry Mugglestone**

### **Egbert Close**

A resident has contacted us regarding a penalty charge notice (PCN) they received in Egbert Close. They had parked their car on a part of the road that is the same level as the footpath, it appears that you can't park in these areas. However, in this area the council have marked some yellow lines in the raised areas, but not all raised areas have yellow lines especially in the area where the resident was parked, so yes this is a very confusing/grey area. I have emailed the council to get some clarification on this, I understand these areas are called Home Zones, we have another Home Zone linking South End Road to Sopworth Close.



### **Signpost – Crawford Compton Close**

Remember the missing signpost in Gull Walk and what a problem it was for the delivery drivers, knocking at doors disturbing residents? Well, we are now chasing to have a sign put up in Crawford Compton Close directing delivery drivers to Dewey Path, as it is confusing for the drivers when using their satnavs as it says they have arrived at their destination when

actually they have to walk down an alleyway to reach Dewey Path.

### **Planning**

Good news for the residents who finally got the planning application to change their garage into a dining room approved, yes it was a good result. Remember, if you do have a planning

application that you are not sure about, talk to your Ward Councillor as they might have some useful info to help with your application (as in this case). I must say I was very pleased to be of assistance to the residents and wish them well in their new dining room.

### **Astra Close**

I am still awaiting a reply from the management agent regarding the tree and dangerous footpath, if I have no reply by the end of January, I will take this further and get enforcement involved.

### **Airfield Way**

The temporary bollard has been damaged, so this has been reported. If you see any damage, please contact us. Also thank you to the resident who contacted us regarding the damaged inspection cover, I experienced at first hand falling down one of these holes, it's not nice and very frightening, it happened to me in Egypt a few years ago, with a fall like that you could easily bang your head.

### **Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)**

A resident contacted me regarding a PCN they received; they first knew of the PCN being issued when they received a letter demanding £195 as they had not responded to the first letter that was issued by the council. Well, the resident didn't receive that letter, as we all know the post in December/January has been a nightmare. So, if you do receive these demands speak to the enforcement team and if you have any issues please contact us, in this case the resident contacted the enforcement team, and it was sorted out.

### **Broken Pavement**

Thank you to the Elm Park resident who contacted me regarding a damaged pavement in Upminster, as we want all Havering residents to be safe.

### **Flooding Rainham Road**

I have put a formal complaint in regarding the flooding in Rainham Road at the junction of Coniston Way, I will escalate this to stage 2 of the Council's Customer Complaint procedure. For your info, if anyone wants to raise a complaint about the council please follow the link below [www.havering.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.havering.gov.uk/complaints)

Well folks, the start to 2021 was not a good one with us all in lockdown, I am hoping we get back to some sort of normality ASAP. Please look out for your neighbours, especially the ones who live alone as I know it can be very lonely in these times.

## **Hacton Ward**

**Councillor Ray Morgan**

### **Lockdown Again**

Firstly, can I start by thanking all the members who sent us Christmas cards and very kind wishes and comments. It provides so much encouragement to know how much the work that we do on your behalf is appreciated.

One of the things that I have always liked about the Hornchurch Residents' Association is that we are principally motivated by serving you, rather than the other parties who are more interested in themselves.

Although I anticipated that we would have a further lockdown in January, it came a bit earlier than expected. So, it is back to staying in my flat, although there is still plenty that can be achieved with just a computer and phone to hand. Roll on Spring though when at least the weather will be brighter and warmer.

In terms of Council meetings, they are still being held online, but it would be fair to say that they are not as productive as when they were in the Town Hall, but hopefully later in the year things will return to normal.

Very little happened at the December meeting of the Council, although Damian White had the cheek to present a petition which he and some of his Conservatives colleagues had put together against the proposed development at the Seedbed Centre (opposite the former ice-rink site).

Whilst I have no problem with the petition per se (as one of my biggest concerns over the next decade is the over-development of Havering), there is more than a whiff of hypocrisy when the Conservative Administration is fully behind the re-development of its own Waterloo Estate where the height of the block of flats will increase to at least similar to that proposed at the Seedbed Centre, but with greater density and less green space.

What Damian and some of his colleagues are waking up to (at long last) is the fact that Havering residents are rightly very concerned with the over-development of Havering and the impact that it will have on our quality of life.

Through one of the Council committees, we shall continue to press for details of the plans the Conservative Administration have to improve our local infrastructure and to ensure that personnel such as doctors, nurses, GPs, teachers, police officers and all other key service workers increase in number to keep up with the population growth.

### **Overgrown Gardens**

Over a number of years, I have received complaints from residents about the state of their neighbours' front or back gardens. Whilst I do not want to be in a nanny state that micromanages everything we can or cannot do, I do think that everyone is entitled not to have to live next to what in many cases is a total eyesore. Havering Council sadly seems to allow such places to exist and seemingly reluctant to take much positive action to ensure that front and back gardens and even the property itself is in a reasonable state. This is an issue that I plan to pursue further.

### **Council Complaints System**

Another area that I have already flagged up to pursue at one of the Council committees, is to review the council's complaint system which for some time I have felt falls short of where it should be.

### **Berwick Pond Road**

A resident contacted me about a parking ticket she received when parked in a siding in the above road (there were no yellow lines in place) and wanted me to warn others about parking there when going to Berwick Woods.

### **Road and Pavement Defects**

Please continue to let us know about any road or pavement defects in your area so that we can flag them up to the Council for inspection and repair. Normally, most repairs are carried out within 28 days of being ordered, although quite clearly over the past number of months, this standard has slipped quite considerably, and in many cases, it has taken well over two months for repairs to be completed.

One such road where this has been the case is Kenilworth Gardens. However, with this road, no sooner is one pothole repaired, another appears. Why this road (and indeed several others) still continue to be absent from the whole street re-surfacing programme is baffling to me. As I

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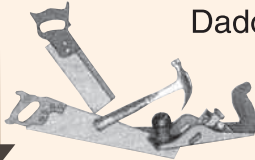
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have written before, the system used to determine which streets have their pavements or road renewed in my opinion is flawed. Again, this is another area of the Council which needs a complete root and branch review to ensure that the money spent creates the greatest return on the investment.

### **Safer Neighbourhood Team**

The local Hacton and Elm Park Ward teams have now vacated Tadworth Parade, Elm Park and will now work out of Hornchurch Police Station.

Don't forget that if you have a non-urgent police matter to call 101. This will ensure your issue is duly recorded by the local police, in order that the issue can be duly investigated. Please feel free though to also advise one of your Action Team Members.

### **Faded Lines**

Please continue to let us know about faded lines whether yellow lines on the road or indeed parking bays on pavements. We can then raise them with the Council to avoid parking tickets being unnecessarily or erroneously issued.

### **Gerrymandering**

Despite our best efforts, including obtaining legal advice, in trying to get the Leader of the Council, Damian White, held to account for his attempt to gerrymander wards to his and his party's political advantage during the Boundary Commission review, we appear to be heading to the end of the road with our complaint.

There are still one or two issues that are still being pursuing with the Council's Monitoring Officer, although to be honest, I do not hold out much hope. For me, there continues to be political bias within the Council and frankly the whole sorry saga has turned into a whitewash, no pun intended.

The Leader of the Council thinks that our pursuit is all about political mischief. No, it is about honesty and integrity which seems to be decreasing in our politics.

In terms of the Boundary Commission Review, a large number of residents took part in the consultation and a substantial number made comments about the gerrymandering. The Boundary Commission will now be carrying out a further public consultation, so it is unlikely we will know all of the proposed ward boundary changes before May/June this year. Once any changes to your ward are known, we will, of course, let you know.

## **Hylands Ward Updates**

**Del Ganly**

A few residents contacted me regarding the possibility of someone living in a **caravan in Grenfell Avenue**. I reported this to the **Hylands Safer Neighbourhoods team** and Damien visited the area to find out the situation. It transpires that the man living there had fallen on hard times, had been loaned the caravan by a friend, and was due to leave by the end of the week. Damien told the man to not leave any rubbish when he departed, reported this to Havering Council's Environment Services, and a 'COUNCIL IS AWARE' sticker was placed on the vehicle, so that residents and the occupant knew that it had been reported. As I haven't heard from anyone since, and I have not been over that way, I cannot comment further, but hope it has been resolved.



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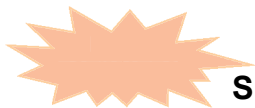


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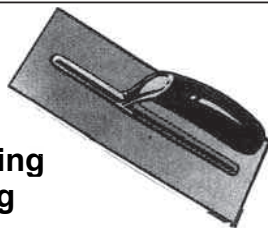
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As the **Chair of The Friends of Hylands Park**, I was greeted by a sorry sight in January as yet another massive tree had to be felled due to disease, the 'stump' that was left, although not round, was over six foot wide! (1.8M) The 60+ footer at the junction of the paths by the tennis courts in the middle of the park, had been through the wars in these increasingly high winds we seem to be getting, with a huge bough crashing down about 4 or 5 years ago.



That's probably about half a dozen big trees that have come down in the last decade that I remember, with the most notable for me being the one that 'hid' the monstrosity at the Globe Road end, the phone mast, which appears to be steadily growing taller and sprouting more green shoots (cabinets) at the base in Rossall Close. In the original planning application for it, the objections were brushed off as the trees, at the time, shielded it from view, and its proximity to so many children (school/park users) and pets didn't matter because the Government's boffins and their figures say they are completely safe, and don't pose a health risk. Strange then that after installing masts on the roof of our training tower at the fire station, we were not allowed within two floors of the top, nearly making me miss the millennium fireworks across London!

Credit where credit is due, the Council helped the helpers and the **Havering Heroes Parking Permit was extended**, currently to the end of April. This allows those who are shopping or picking up prescriptions for the vulnerable and/or shielding residents in the borough, to park for free in permit zones and council car parks for up to three hours. This has proved invaluable for several people I know, and I am glad the Council has had the sense to action this. If you do shop or help out someone in need on a regular basis, you can apply for a free Heroes Permit via [https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20005/parking\\_permits](https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20005/parking_permits), inputting your details along with your registration details, etc.

When Jody and I visited **Harrow Lodge Park** on New Year's Day we noticed one of the Canada geese had what appeared to be a red plastic ring trapped through its nose. While it didn't seem bothered at all and happily gobbled down the food we had, we were a bit concerned if it could actually breathe properly. On our return a few days later, we managed to speak to Ali, the owner of the superb Cafe by the lake, who had just seen one of the conservation team members who helps with re-siting injured and adolescent swans to the lake. As we were talking to them both and feeding all the birds by the water's edge, amazingly, up jumped the 'goose with the noose' and we were able to carefully corner it. In a somewhat hilarious melee, Jody and I made like goalkeepers, Ali managed to grab the goose while uttering soothing muffled words through his facemask, and the 'swan lady' calmly removed what turned out to be a red plastic milk bottle-top retaining strip!

Unfortunately, the paparazzi were otherwise engaged and no pictures are available. But rest assured, no birds or café owners were harmed in this 'you couldn't make it up!' sketch.



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Here we are, Christmas has passed for another year. As I write this, we are expecting snow. Normally I enjoy the little snow we get, for the first day everything appears to be just a little more magical, the urge to walk out and hear the crisp snap/crunch as you walk through some previously untouched area of snow is hard to resist. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> day I have usually had enough and yearn for the easy and safer walk on the streets.

**Question about parking – Can we have a free hour?** In December I raised a question for a cabinet member, requesting free 1-hour parking in the Hornchurch and Upminster council owned car parks. The car parks have been mostly empty since we lost the free half hour parking (the ONLY wards to lose this privilege were Hornchurch and Upminster).



During the 1<sup>st</sup> Covid19 lockdown, for a brief period, the council made parking free in council car parks – the car parks quickly became very well used.

Questions to cabinet members have to be provided a few weeks in advance to allow them a chance to prepare an answer. In many cases we suspect that the questions are farmed out to members of staff at the council; the answers we receive are often as much of a shock to us as they are to the cabinet member reading them out loud. My question was (in typical fashion) not answered. There were plenty of words, but they did not address my question.

The person who raises an initial question is allowed a follow up question (based on the answer given). Due to time constraints at the meeting I had to email my follow up question.

My follow up question was “You have failed to answer my question – will you give Hornchurch and Upminster a 1-hour free parking period (in council car parks)?”

The response was reasonably short and said (paraphrased) – You never had free parking for 1 hour before, so no. This totally disregards the fact that we used to have 30 mins and now nothing at all. This does not help our traders survive the pandemic.

There you have it folks. The Tory Administration running the council does not feel there is a need to assist the people and shops in Hornchurch. The car parks remain mostly empty. Please remember who removed the free 30 min parking allowance from just Hornchurch and Upminster (out of 18 wards) when you start to receive the leaflets telling you how good this Tory Administration has been to you. In May 2022 you can let the administration know what you think of them.

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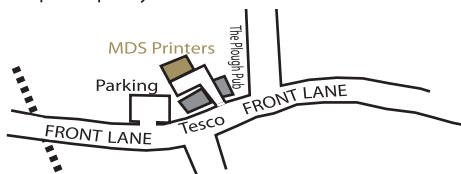
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**Parking Tickets** I am regularly contacted by residents who have been issued parking tickets. It is never nice receiving a fine. I help where I can. It is always a good idea to get as much evidence as possible at the scene. Take photos of any notices, were they easy to read and visible? Were they obscured? Why do you believe you should not have received the fine?

You have the option of paying a reduced fine within 2 weeks. You can appeal to Havering during this period and the clock is halted until a decision has been made. If the ticket is upheld, you can still pay the reduced fine as long as you are still within the 2 week period (excluding the time from your appeal to the decision). If you still believe the PCN should not have been issued, you can contact the external ombudsman. If the ombudsman upholds the ticket, you will have to pay the full fine.

**Dog mess - General litter** Like many people during this extended lockdown, as the gyms have been closed, I have gone for more walks than I usually do. It is noticeable how much dogs mess there is. It amazes me that some people take the time to collect the mess in a bag and then dump it in the bushes. Please dispose of your dog's mess properly.

The next bugbear is litter. I understand that many more people are having a quick takeaway, especially as the restaurants are closed. It is really disheartening to see the number of discarded cartons, cups and other items. These are often only a few metres away from a bin. A bin the person who dropped the litter would have had to walk past anyway. Please be considerate. Pick up your litter – if you can't find a bin – take it home and bin it.



### **Missed rubbish collection**

Over the Christmas period (and any period where we have a bank holiday) the collection date for the rubbish collection shifts by 1-2 days.

The council ask the residents NOT to put bins out overnight and NOT to place sacks of rubbish by street bins. We have many foxes and rodents that will rip apart the bags and scatter the contents.

The Bin Collection Team are supposed to collect all the rubbish – however, they will pick up the bags and

major spilt rubbish but can never get everything which then litters the streets. Please only put your rubbish out on the morning of your collection day (by 7am). If a collection is missed please report it to the council after 5pm

[https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20003/rubbish\\_and\\_recycling/519/report\\_a\\_missed\\_collection](https://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20003/rubbish_and_recycling/519/report_a_missed_collection) (Google havering council missed collection)

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Please note – this February edition is currently available ONLINE ONLY – if you know neighbours and friends who usually receive the magazine, please let them know.

We aim to get the printed version back out to you ASAP – possibly March. STAY SAFE

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