



**HEGNPG**

Supporting our Community

**Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group**

**Report and Accounts 2019/2020**

On behalf of the Group I have pleasure in formally reporting with our statement of account for the last year.

Attached, as **Annex A** is a consolidated statement of our financial transactions during the year and at **Annex B** is our formal report dated 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020, as already issued to our Sponsor Parish Councils.

Our accounts record the direct financial transactions of the Group and so ignore the massive investment of time made by Group members in working on behalf of the community. We have tried to estimate the time spent by members of the Group and, and approximate this at 3,300 hours My thanks goes to the members of our Group who have made this investment of time on behalf of our community; many of the contributors also belong to other community groups so are investing in the community in other ways beyond this Group

The highlights of our work are as follows:

**A Our income, of £77,325.00, for the year 2019/2020 is made up from; -**

- Grants from Locality towards the Neighbourhood Plan costs: **£16,975**
- Parish Council grants: **£8,500**
- Places for People and Government grants: **£51,850**

**B Our work for the year 2019/2020, in financial expenditure terms totalled £53,209.62 and falls into three principal heads of spend; -**

- Our work on preparing our Neighbourhood Plan: **£17,551.98** and **33.86%** of our expenditure
- Our work in commenting on the Planning applications made during the year: **£31,835.10** and **61.42%** of our expenditure
- Our on-going work representing our two sponsor Parish Councils, administrative costs and other expenses: **£2,442.40** and **4.71%** of our expenditure

**EXPLANATORY NOTES ON INCOME**

- The income from Places for People and Locality is not ‘annual’ income. The PpP funding needs to be carried forward reflecting the on-going nature of our work on behalf of the community in respect of the project.
- The Village 7 landowner has, to date, declined to contribute towards our costs.
- Following representations to the Secretary of State we have been awarded a grant of £30,000 for our work, in recognition of the burdens placed upon us a community. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board administer this grant, £20,000 has been used up to support the professional support needed

on the planning applications and the balance of £10,000 has yet to be released to us.

- The Locality funding comes from central Government as a national grant regime and, in recognition of the complexities of our Neighbourhood Plan we have been given additional resources beyond the 'basic' grant.

## **C Other matters of note**

### **o Procurement**

Significant sums have been spent during the year, especially in the procurement of professional services from Urban Silence and Markides Associates. This work has not been tendered because: -

- It is our collective view that the work represents excellent value for money.
  - The firms involved have a long term relationship with us, as a NPG, so their work brings with it the immense background of relevant detail which any freshly appointed Consultant would not have and require much time to be invested in 'reading in'.
  - The work on the Neighbourhood Plan closely interrelates with their work in 2018/9 on the Concept Framework and Planning applications
- o **Approval of expenditure;** all expenditure is approved by me as Chairman with the oversight of the Chairmen of our Sponsor Parish Councils, regular reports are made on all expenditure to the NPG and in our meeting records which are published on our web site.
  - o **Handling of NPG funds;** Eastwick and Gilston Parish Council kindly handle the funds on our behalf and pay invoices etc. on our behalf. As such the Parish's accounts are audited in the normal way so we have not commissioned a separate audit of our own accounts. (The only exception being the HGGT funds, of £20,000, which are paid by them through Epping Council's payment centre).
  - o **VAT;** Reflecting our status as working for our sponsor PC's our accounts are reported net of VAT
  - o **Administrative costs and Group Members disbursements;** We benefit from the support of an excellent Secretary and Communications Manger who is paid for his time and out of pocket costs in supporting the Group's work. Members of the Group have recovered small amounts of direct costs such as travel to meetings or refreshments have been required for lengthy meetings; these payments, in my estimation, understate the costs to members, for example the vast amount of printing stationery etc. used by the Group but the costs of which members have kindly not sought reimbursement for.

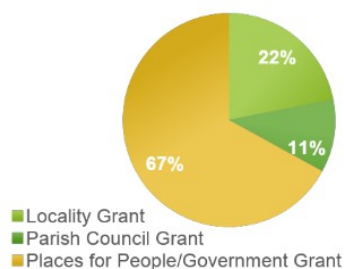
## **D Conclusion**

I commend this report and our statement of account to our Sponsor Parish Councils and thank them for their support and encouragement in addition to the thanks expressed by our community on many occasions during the year.

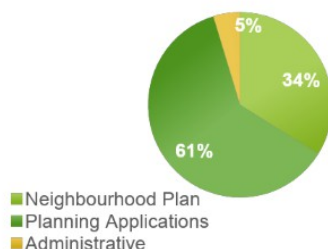
**Anthony Bickmore, Chairman HEGNPG**

**1<sup>st</sup> May, 2020**

Income £77,325



Expenditure £53,210



Volunteer hours

3,000

Opening Balance			£3,548.76
<b>Income</b>			
Date	Contractee	Purpose/Notes	Amount
<b>Developers and Government</b>			
01/05/19	Places for People	For planning applications and highways advice	£31,850.00
01/05/19	Harlow & Gilston Garden Town	For Gilston planning applications	£20,000.00
<b>Developers and Government</b>			<b>£51,850.00</b>
<b>Parish Councils</b>			
29/07/19	E&G Parish Council	Annual contribution	£5,000.00
29/01/20	Hunsdon PC	Annual Contribution	£3,500.00
<b>Parish Councils</b>			<b>£8,500.00</b>
<b>Locality</b>			
10/06/19	Locality	Neighbourhood Plan funding	£8,975.00
25/11/19	Locality	Neighbourhood Plan funding	£8,000.00
<b>Locality</b>			<b>£16,975.00</b>
<b>Total Income</b>			<b>£77,325.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Date	Contractee	Purpose/Notes	Amount
<b>Urban Silence (Consulting)</b>			
22/04/19	Urban Silence	For Planning Applications and Transport	-£1,850.00
22/04/19	Urban Silence	For Neighbourhood Plan	-£450.00
29/06/19	Urban Silence	For Planning Applications and Transport	-£9,570.00
16/09/19	Urban Silence	For Neighbourhood Plan	-£8,025.00
04/03/20	Urban Silence	Villages 1-6 and 7 responses work	-£4,430.00
04/03/20	Urban Silence	Village 7 responses work	-£4,990.00
27/03/20	Urban Silence	Neighbourhood Plan	-£4,540.00
27/03/20	Urban Silence	Neighbourhood Plan	-£3,640.00
<b>Urban Silence</b>			<b>-£37,495.00</b>

<b>Markides Associates (Transport Consulting)</b>			
10/07/19	<b>Markides Associates</b>	Transport Assessment review and workshop	-£4,000.00
15/08/19	<b>Markides Associates</b>	Initial consultation with PFP / Vectos	-£1,000.00
15/08/19	<b>Markides Associates</b>	Preparation of CC and EC highway designs (Feasibility Level)	-£5,000.00
		<b>Markides</b>	<b>-£10,000.00</b>
<b>GIDE Associates (Landscape Consulting)</b>			
13/08/19	<b>GIDE Associates</b>	Landscape advice	-£995.10
		<b>GIDE</b>	<b>-£995.10</b>
<b>Admin/comms (Mayer Nissim)</b>			
May 2019- March 2019	<b>Mayer Nissim</b>	Secretary/Communications work	-£1,985.00
		<b>Mayer Nissim</b>	<b>-£1,985.00</b>
<b>Solopress (Printing)</b>			
05/09/19	<b>Solopress</b>	Leaflets for NPv1	-£67.95
05/09/19	<b>Solopress</b>	NPv1 Printing	-£406.62
17/09/19	<b>Solopress</b>	NPv1 Printing Run 2	-£422.41
		<b>Solopress</b>	<b>-£896.98</b>
<b>Expenses (Various)</b>			
September 2019-March 2020	<b>Various NPG expenses</b>	Stationary, printing, travel, food, web expenses, tech	-£457.40
		<b>Expenses</b>	<b>-£457.40</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>			<b>-£51,829.48</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>			<b>£29,044.28</b>

	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Neighbourhood Plan income	£16,975.00	21.95
Neighbourhood Plan expenditure	£17,551.98	33.86

	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Planning Application income	£51,850.00	67.03
Planning Application expenditure	£31,835.10	61.42

	<b>Amount</b>	<b>%</b>
Other income	£8,500.00	10.99
Other expenditure	2442.4	4.71

**Hunsdon, Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group**  
**Report to Sponsor Parish Councils**

We are pleased to offer our annual report and in doing so have the opportunity of thanking both Hunsdon and Eastwick and Gilston PC for their support, financially, and their encouragement. The last year, as I hope our report illustrates, has been a very busy one. I am happy to take questions, or attend a meeting, to review this report with your Councils, if helpful.

**1 Background/overview**

With your sponsorship we have met, as an NPG, monthly, had bi-monthly meetings with East Herts Council (EHC), had regular meetings with the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board (HGGTB) and meet with the lead developers monthly. We also review many documents and respond to ‘consultation’ requests on behalf of both Parish Councils; in short a lot of volunteer time has been invested on behalf of the community in meetings, let alone the work between meetings!

Over the last year we have made significant progress, alongside reforming how we operate, as summarised below: -

**2 Neighbourhood Plan V1**

Almost exactly a year ago we formulated an approach to preparing our Neighbourhood Plan based on the already agreed Concept Framework and making it the heart of our Neighbourhood Plan. Our objective is to ensure that this agreement of the Concept Framework between the community, EHC and developers is given real meaning through being made into a part of the EHC Local Plans. As the Concept Framework was “agreed” by all our view is that we should be able to put this in place quickly and so hopefully it will become a statutory planning document second only to the EH District Plan in any consideration of Gilston planning applications. Over the summer, with the help of our external Planning advisors, we produced a draft Plan running into some 110 pages and, in September, undertook a formal ‘Regulation 14’ public consultation including three well attended public meetings. As a result of this consultation we had some 550 responses that needed to be individually reviewed and we then considered whether the Plan should be modified. We have undertaken further extensive consultation with key stakeholders and are now able to produce the final version of our draft Plan for submission to EHC in the next step of the statutory process. They will take it to another public consultation and on to official Examination. We hope to get through those stages later this year and on to final approval by public referendum in 2021 - delayed from original plans as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. In the meantime, we press the case that the emerging plan should be taken into account in the planning applications before EHC this year.

**3 Formal responses to the four planning applications made last year**

The landowners/developers have made four planning applications over the year and we have responded to the public consultations. In all cases we have had to respond to the consultations over national holiday periods so have in effect been at a disadvantage because of that. With the support of our consultant teams, funded by Places for People and/or HGGTB we have made responses and published these on our website as well as in Gilston the PC has arranged for a printed copy to go every household. On detailed analysis of the 1,000s of pages of documents the applicants put in to support their applications the NPG could not support the applications **so we have objected to them**; major, strategic, issues include: -

- The scheme did not comply with the Concept Framework – as already agreed by them
- The necessary infrastructure was planned to be delivered after new homes are built so increasing the current problems we are all familiar with.
- The transport aspirations were not met and improvements to the station not detailed or guaranteed.

We are waiting to hear of EHC's assessment of the applications and expect the applications to be modified and possibly a further round of consultation – watch this space!

#### **4 Highways response**

Alongside the 'responses' on highways proposals in the planning applications we continue to vigorously object to the proposal that the A414 should be extended from Eastwick Roundabout to the proposed new eastern crossing through the middle of Pye Corner so cutting the community there in half by a major highway. Both EHC and HCC are clear that they have not considered any alternative options or assessed the environmental implications of these proposals; this feels like a neglect of their duties. Our highways consultants prepared a review showing that the rerouting of the A414 is not needed by the housing development. It now seems HCC Highways Dept. accepts this point, but we will need to make sure they continue to do so.

#### **5 Stewardship**

A key part of the commitment made at the outset by both the developers and Leader of EHC is that the Community would have ownership of the landscape buffers between the Villages and of the Airfield Park, between Eastwick and Hunsdon. Working out how we, as a community, will hold and manage this land so that the promises that it will never be developed and used for public purposes are complex and sadly have not been moved on at the speed we would like. We continue to press the Developers, EHC and HGGTB on this subject given that it is a part of the formal Local Plan policy. Our view is that these agreements need to be put in place now and not after the 'last house' has been built whenever that is – maybe in 30 or 40 years time when these commitments might be diluted?

#### **6 Website and administration**

With the help of your funding we have taken on the help of a Secretary and Communications Manager to share the burden of administration. In addition to this working well we have issued press releases, sharpened up our community messaging and revamped our website – please visit – which is a store of useful information and contains minutes of all of our meetings etc. see [www.HEGNPG.org](http://www.HEGNPG.org)

#### **7 Funding and governance**

To do the above we have needed a lot of support from professionals as well as massive amounts of time across the members of the NPG working on behalf of our community. The consultancy work needs paying for! We have long argued that we should be given funding to help us do our work; beyond the very important funding we are given by you, our parish Council sponsors. This year I am pleased to report that this principle was agreed and we have received funding from the developers of Villages 1 – 6 (but not Village 7 developers), HGGTB and Locality, via EHC, for our Neighbourhood Plan.

We are using this money judiciously as we will need resources going forward as there is still much important work to do!

#### **8 Next steps and major activities anticipated over the next year**

- We aim to put in place our Neighbourhood Plan by the late summer

- The four planning applications we believe will be modified and so need further scrutiny generally and especially on the phasing of infrastructure.
- We hope to agree a way forward with the Developers over the important issues of Stewardship.
- The Developers, as a first step to thinking about the individual village master plans, will start on a landscape master plan; we, as a community, need to contribute to that work, including early wins.
- Both developers plan to connect to the stations with paths and cycle routes over land they do not own or control; the Stort Valley is an important local area and needs to be carefully managed.

## **9 Conclusion**

None of the above happens without an active Group of willing people prepared to take a community-wide view, they are all unpaid for the massive amounts of time they contribute; at the many public meetings their work has kindly been acknowledged, that is greatly appreciated. We also need the support of our hard working Secretary and professional advisors, while we are paying them, they have done a wonderful job for us and with that brought a real professionalism to our work and so I believe respect, by many, for us making serious, balanced and meaningful responses on the above issues.

Your Council's endorsement of that sentiment and continuing support for us remains vital too; thank you for the trust you have placed in us.

**Anthony Bickmore, Chairman**  
**2020**