

Update from Cllr Sue Nicholls for Chipping and Buckland Parish Council meeting Monday 8 January 2024.

Ward Freman Swimming Pool

A small group of residents and Local Ward Councillors Sue Nicholls, Vicky Burt and Councillor Sarah Hopewell (Executive Member for Wellbeing) met at Ward Freman on Saturday for a site visit conducted by Everyone Active. We had the opportunity to see a lot more as to the issues with the pool, including concerns around the pool tank, lifting tiles, the filtration system and plant room, and other equipment that needs modernisation (e.g. air handling system, boiler etc). To better understand the problems with the pool tank, the pool needs to be drained (this would have to happen regardless, as the filtration system fix requires draining the pool). Draining the pool takes 2 - 3 weeks. Unfortunately, it does risk the sides collapsing, but since any of the work would require the pool to be drained, all we can do is hope that they don't. Once drained, we can then take a closer look at the wider issues and potential costs associated.

At this stage, we don't have a clear position statement from Hertfordshire County Council. As owners of the pool building, their position will determine whatever our next steps look like. Officers from Herts County Council and East Herts District Council are due to meet on Wednesday 10th January, and so we should know more information after that. Vicky, Sue and Sarah are also meeting with Buntingford Town Council on 23rd January to discuss possibilities with them. In 2 - 3 weeks time, we should be in a much better position to evaluate the available options (assuming that the draining the pool doesn't bring up any worrying issues).

A reminder of two grants currently open to applications

1. Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 (HUG2)

This is open to home-owners and private tenants in:

Homes not heated by mains gas which includes oil, coal, LPG or only electric heating

Households with a combined annual income of less than **£31,000 gross** OR receiving certain income-related means-tested benefits such as Universal Credit OR you live in an area of Index of Multiple Deprivation (some homes in the Buntingford EH District Ward have been identified as meeting this criteria).

The scheme is to deliver energy-saving improvements to the homes of people who struggle to pay their heating bills and keep their homes warm in the winter. These improvements are made free of charge and will help residents to keep their homes warm while using less energy and help them to manage their heating bills.

Funding of up to £14000 is available and can for example be used for improvements to insulation and ventilation to prevent damp and mould and improve heating. Installing heat pumps, solar panels and efficient heating controls.

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Details of the HUG grant are available on the HUG website:

[Home Upgrade Grant - Free energy-saving improvements for your home \(hugapply.co.uk\)](http://hugapply.co.uk)

Or by phoning the Energy Saving Trust on 0808 1968255

2. Grants available for residents, community groups and local parish/town councils as part of the East Herts Council Wellbeing Strategy

3 grants are currently open to applications (see link below to find out more details for all 3 grants).

Applications for the **Environmental Sustainability Grants** close soon - on **22 January** (another round of funding will be available in the next financial year).

This grant is designed to help individuals, community groups and local councils with decarbonisation. Examples of this can include:

Installing LEDs, wall or roof insulation, heat-loss reduction measures including draft exclusion, doors, windows and thermal window dressings, thermostats, renewable energy sources, associated heating system upgrades.

Help to fund EV charging points, bike racks

Help with community events such as Eco fairs, EV demonstrations, funding the purchase of heat cameras to help identify heat loss in homes and other buildings.

[More details of the criteria for this and the 2 other grants currently available \(can be found at:](#)

[Grants Priorities V3.pdf \(onwebcurl.com\)](#)

[More information on all Wellbeing grants currently available and a link to the application page can be found here:](#)

[East Herts Grants Programme 2023/24 | East Herts District Council](#)

NB: Anyone applying for grants will have to register with My East Herts first (this only takes a couple of minutes to do).

Please don't hesitate to ask for more help with the application process, either through local ward councillor (Sue Nicholls) or East Herts Officers.

Sue Nicholls