

Report from Sue Nicholls, District Councillor to Chipping and Buckland Parish Council - 4 March 2024

Swimming Pool Update

Herts County Councillors and Officers met on 7 February to discuss whether they would consider further funding of the Ward Freman pool. They decided against this, partly in light of the Department for Education decision to cease funding for school swimming pools from August 2025. They did, however, agree to support any proposals that might come forward for a community-run pool and as the building's owners requested that the Buntingford Pool Group submit a business plan to Herts County Council by the end of March.

The Buntingford Pool Group is made up of local residents (including swimming teachers, former pool users and those with relevant business experience) local Ward District Councillors and Cllr Sarah Hopewell (EH Executive Member for Wellbeing). There is a strong desire amongst residents to explore the feasibility of sourcing funds (through available grants and fund raising efforts) to enable the replacement of plant room equipment and repairs and upgrade needed to the pool which would be required before opening and running it again as a community asset (by forming a Community Interest Company or charity run enterprise). The pool group is holding regular meetings to discuss plans and also speaking to individuals and groups from across the country who have been in a similar position and successfully rescued their community pool.

Taylor/Wimpey outline planning application for around 200 homes and full application for GP surgery on Land North of Hare Street Road.

The strength of feeling against this proposed development plans by the Buntingford and Puckeridge Medical Centre to move the surgery from the centre of town to the site on Hare Street Road in the results of the Buntingford Town Council residents survey (sent out to Buntingford residents) last October.

Of 1150 responses
1029 (89%) responded "No"
121 (11%) responded "yes"

The application is on the portal now for comments - early today already had 50 objections (5 in support).

There is a new mechanism in place to enable local communities to meet with developers and East Herts planning for a one-off meeting. They are called Development Management Forums - to trigger the process need 25 signatures on a petition which is submitted to East Herts Planning during the period when the application is open to comments on the planning portal.

