Welcome to the autumn edition of Harborough District Council's residents' newsletter.

As you can see, we have another very busy period ahead. In recent weeks the Leicestershire County Show, and the Food and Drink Festival at Welland Park, attracted tens of thousands of people to the district. Over the coming weeks more exciting events are set to draw the crowds.

We are also entering a critical stage of discussions around our Local Plan and preferred options for housing development. The public have been vital in helping shape these decisions and will again be able to make representations regarding this important work.

Finally, we are undertaking a lot of work in relation to local governance and how we conduct elections. Remember you can play your part so make sure you register to vote.

Councillor Blake Pain
October festival

Double delight comes to Market Harborough in October with a World Village Market on The Square and a Craft Beer Festival on the adjacent Commons car park.

This is an all new event for the district and has something for everyone - including street food stalls, crafts, clothing, children's entertainment and a music stage plus a craft beer and cider festival with outdoor seating area.

The event takes place on Friday 7 October 2016, Saturday 8 October 2016 and Sunday 9 October 2016.

You can book to trade at this event here

Arts Fresco street theatre event returns

It's back! People can expect some thrilling sights and sounds on the streets of Market Harborough when the international street theatre festival Arts Fresco returns to the town on Sunday 18 September 2016.

Arts Fresco is one of the largest, free street theatre festivals in the UK and an array of popular UK and international performers will transform the streets of Market Harborough at this year's event.

Find out full details here

Coming soon to our website

Council tax payers, business rate payers, and benefit claimants can look forward to improved online services. You will soon be able to:

- View your bills online (last three years)
- Move to paperless billing
- View electronic bills by clicking on a link within emails
- See your charges and payments made
Landlords of tenants receiving Housing Benefit, via a unique PIN, will be able to:

- View payment schedules (last 3 years)
- View electronic copies of letters from the council
- Move to paperless billing
- View electronic letters from the council by clicking on a link within an email

More details will be made available on the council’s website as these options become available.

Local Plan options - decision time

In October, councillors will meet to discuss the next stage of Harborough district's Local Plan.

Currently four development options are being considered and worked through by Harborough District Council following public consultation – with a preferred single option or hybrid option due to be selected.

To assess the potential suitability of each location for new housing a number of background studies have been carried out to form an overall ‘Options Assessment’.

On 19 September the council's Local Plan Advisory Panel will discuss the Options Assessment and officer recommendations.

The final preferred option will be considered by Harborough District Council's Executive on 10 October 2016.

A draft version of the full Local Plan – incorporating the preferred option details – will then go to Full Council on 12 December 2016.

Harborough District Council's new Local Plan will set out planning policies in the district up to 2031. It will make sure development meets strategic priorities in terms of housing, employment, community facilities, transport and other infrastructure needed to support development.

The public will be invited to make representations on the Local
Plan, in the new year, before it is submitted to the Government for examination.

**Lifeline - new webpage launched**

A life-saving emergency telephone service now has a dedicated webpage offering more information to those who may wish to benefit from it.

Harborough Lifeline is available to anyone who feels vulnerable or alone, whatever their age or needs, and helps them retain their independence and enjoy the comforts of their own home.

It offers reassurance, support and peace of mind by providing a direct link to a local control centre and team of caring operators - there 24/7, 365 days per year.

The lifeline equipment is quick to install and easy to use in an emergency. Clients are provided with a pendant which serves as a remote trigger to their lifeline equipment. This allows the user to summon help from anywhere in their property at the touch of a button.

[View the new Lifeline webpage here](#)

Interested? [Get in touch with Lifeline's friendly team](#)

**Building control - what you need to know**

If you are planning improvements to your property remember that you may need building regulation approval to make these changes.

[Building regulations are legal requirements](#) that are there to make sure the work you have done meets national standards and that your property is safe, energy efficient and properly constructed.

The regulations cover the construction and extension of buildings, but you might also need approval, for or follow certain rules, for lots of other smaller projects, such as:

- Replacing fuse boxes and connected electrics
- Installing a bathroom that will involve plumbing or changing electrics
- Replacing windows and doors
- Installing or replacing a heating system, or adding extra radiators

If you're not sure check with our Building Control team. With a free initial consultation we can quickly let you know if you will need to make an application. If you are required to make an application our officers can support you and your builder through the process, checking your plans, advising on how to comply with the regulations and carrying out regular site inspection visits.

Find out more about building regulations and how our Building Control team can help keep your home safe and secure.

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**Make sure you're registered to vote**

All properties within the district have been sent an annual canvass form for the register of electors.

The annual canvass is something that we are required by law to carry out every year. The purpose of the canvass is to confirm who is living at a property and to identify any new electors so that they can be invited to register to vote, and that people who are no longer at the property can be removed from the register of electors.

Even if there have been no changes from last year we require you to tell us that is the case to ensure that you remain entitled to vote at forthcoming elections and referenda.

You are legally required to respond to the annual canvass.

If there have been no changes then you can [tell us online](mailto:e.services@harborough.gov.uk) or by telephone by following the instructions on the canvass form. If there have been changes then you should annotate these on the form and return it in the pre-paid envelope.

Reminders will be sent out during September to properties which have not responded. If no response is received it will be followed up by house to house visits during October.

If you have not yet responded please help us to minimise the amount of work and cost involved in chasing up outstanding canvass forms by responding immediately.

If you have lost the form then you can contact the council via [e.services@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:e.services@harborough.gov.uk) or by calling 01858 821372.
Electoral review - your views soon needed

The way the district is governed could be changing.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is currently undertaking an electoral review of the district.

The review will determine how many councillors represent the residents of Harborough on the district council and the boundaries of the wards that the councillors represent.

The LGBCE will set the number of councillors in October and this will be followed by a period of public consultation where individuals and groups will be invited to put forward their views on warding arrangements (the number of wards and ward boundaries). It is likely that this period of consultation will start on 21 October 2016 and end on 9 January 2017 (subject to confirmation by LGBCE).

The LGBCE will consider representations made during this consultation before publishing its draft recommendations. This will be followed by a further period of public consultation on the draft recommendations.

As the review progresses the LGBCE will publish further details of the review on its website at www.lgbc.org.uk

Any changes arising from the Electoral Review will take effect from the next district council elections in May 2019.

Should you wish to discuss any further aspects of the review please call the Corporate Services Manager, Richard Ellis on 01858 821155 or email e.services@harborough.gov.uk

Polling stations - have we got it right?
We are asking residents for their views on polling stations and whether improvements are required.

The Council is reviewing the buildings it uses as polling stations in the district.

We are responsible for designating polling districts and polling places to ensure all electors have reasonable facilities for voting which are accessible to all. In addition each Parish must be within a separate polling district.

We want your views. Find out more on the council's website here

All comments will be taken into account when making recommendations to change any of the existing arrangements. We will publish our recommendations on this website at the end of the review.

Digital reviewers group

We're looking for more people to tell us how we can improve our online services.

Our website aims to provide visitors with a 24 hour service where they can access clear and useful information, and conveniently complete tasks online.

To achieve this we have created a Digital Reviewers group - a group of people interested in helping us identify areas for improvement on our website.

We will contact the group several times a year with opportunities to provide email feedback on certain areas of the website and new developments, or to take part in some testing sessions - there will be no obligation to take part in any of the feedback or testing sessions.

Your experiences and opinions can be really useful whatever your level of ability with computers or websites. We are looking for customers that use our website and those that may have struggled using our site, not web experts or web design companies.

If you would like to volunteer to join our Digital Reviewers group please register your interest by emailing website@harborough.gov.uk