

Community NEWS



SPRING 2026

Spring Festival returns for a second year



The St Albans Spring Festival – our free street event with live entertainment for all – is returning after its successful debut last year.

The Festival will be held this year on Sunday 17 May and will again be a celebration of food, well-being, community spirit and sustainability.

Thousands of people are expected to attend the City Centre event which will take place from noon to 6pm, with St Peter's Street closed to traffic.



Among the many attractions will be live music, arts and crafts, street theatre and dozens of stalls selling takeaway food, drink and other products.

There will also be a wide range of fun activities for people of all ages including the chance to learn, create and play with others.

To ensure accessibility, sighted guides and British Sign Language interpreters will be in attendance. There will also be ramps for wheelchair users, priority seating and a quiet zone.

The Council's events team is organising the Festival which is being sponsored by Code Ninjas and Specsavers.

For more details about these and other events, scan the QR code to access the Enjoy St Albans website.



Council Tax

All you need to know about this year's Council Tax
Pages 4 and 5

Recycling

Your cut-out-and-keep recycling and waste calendar
Page 8

What's On At The Museums

Page 7

Community News is published by St Albans City & District Council

www.stalbans.gov.uk

Approved by Plain English Campaign

Booming leisure centres

Our four leisure centres are growing rapidly with membership increasing over the last year by an impressive 12%.

The number of Westminster Lodge, Batchwood, Harpenden and Cotlandswick members now exceeds 15,000.

To ensure the facilities remain outstanding, £1.5 million has been invested over the past two years on improvements. This includes new padel tennis courts and golf course enhancements at Batchwood.

In addition, Verulamium Spa at Westminster Lodge is undergoing a £400,000 refurbishment.

The centres are managed by leisure operator Everyone Active which also runs our entertainment venues, the Alban Arena and Eric Morecambe Centre (EMC).

The 2025 pantomime at the Arena was the most successful in its history in terms of ticket sales and revenue with 96% of seats sold. It was a similar story at the EMC with 600 more seats sold than last year.



Image: artist's impression of how the Verulamium Spa cold room will look.

Help make our District Age-Friendly

We are looking for people who want to make their community a better place for older people.

If you are aged 55-plus and live in the District, you could join the St Albans Older Adults Forum which meets four times a year. This is a place to share experiences, raise local issues and suggest improvements for older people.

In addition, our partners at Age-Friendly Hertfordshire are looking for volunteers to become Age-Friendly Ambassadors. You will get free training and support to promote the interests of older people in your area.

If interested in either role, please email agefriendly@ageukherts.org.uk or call Peggy Sharp on **01727 819340**.



Have your say

Residents and organisations in Hertfordshire are being encouraged to comment on proposals to change how local government is structured.



In February 2025, the Government invited councils to submit plans for reorganisation aimed at simplifying services and reducing costs. A seven week statutory consultation is now open until Thursday 26 March.

District and borough councils deliver services such as housing, planning, leisure, waste collection and tax administration, while the county council's responsibilities include children's services, education, highways, libraries, public health and trading standards.



The Government proposes replacing all 11 Hertfordshire councils with unitary authorities responsible for every service.

Scan the QR code to contribute to the consultation. The Government's decision is expected in summer 2026.



May elections

Elections for St Albans City and District Council seats will be taking place on Thursday 7 May.

Twenty of the 56 seats on the Council will be up for election, one for each District ward.

Make sure you are registered to vote by the Monday 20 April deadline.

Poll cards will be issued in late March and voters are asked to check to see which polling station they should attend.

To vote at a polling station, you will need an approved form of photo ID such as a current driver's licence or passport.

Check your poll card to see whether you have a postal or proxy vote. The deadline for changing or cancelling a postal or proxy vote is 5pm on Tuesday 21 April.

More information, including how to apply for a postal or proxy vote, can be found by using the QR code to access our election webpages.



Trader scents success at Charter Market

Entrepreneur Laura Golicza is one of the many new traders operating at St Albans Charter Market.

She launched her L&L Decor Candles stall last year and her homemade designs are proving to be a star attraction.

Her eco-friendly candles are made from soy wax and include dogs of various breeds, cats and other animals as well as mermaids and flowers. They come in many colours and scents including lavender and lemongrass.

“The market has been great for me and I would recommend anyone who is thinking of opening a stall to give it a go,” she said.

You can enquire about hiring a stall by emailing markets@stalbans.gov.uk.



Fancy a career in local government?



Working for your local authority gives you the chance to make a difference to your local community.

It will also help you develop and enhance your skills through training and hands-on experience.

There are opportunities in finance, housing, museums, markets, planning, regulatory services, car parking and other areas.

From entry-level to management positions, we provide rewarding and varied jobs that make a positive impact on local people and businesses.

Our staff include environmental health practitioners, accountants, surveyors, civil enforcement officers, customer delivery assistants and many other roles.

We will soon be welcoming applications for our annual intake of paid summer internships.

Scan the QR code to visit our jobs and careers webpage and start making a difference today. You can also find us on LinkedIn where we post the latest vacancies.



Electric Vehicle charging at home



Residents can apply for a licence to install electric vehicle charging equipment across a pavement.

The licence will allow them to run charging cables through a channel from their home safely across pavements.

They can then benefit from domestic energy tariffs which tend to be cheaper

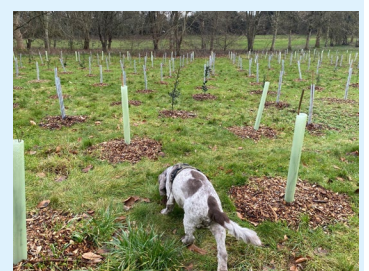
than the cost of using chargers at garages and other commercial outlets.

We are running the pilot scheme in collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council. Scan the QR code to apply.



Tree planting at Verulamium Park

More than 4,400 new trees are being planted at Verulamium Park in St Albans and new wildflower meadows created.



The aim is to enhance the park's biodiversity and provide a natural habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including birds, bees and other insects.

In addition, the project will help improve the local environment as trees keep the atmosphere rich in oxygen and counter harmful emissions.

We are running the scheme in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside Management Service and volunteers from Friends of Verulamium Park.

Your Council Tax explained

Your total bill includes Council Tax for:

- Herts County Council • St Albans City and District Council
- Herts Police and Crime Commissioner • Town and Parish Councils

For every £1 you pay in Council Tax

Hertfordshire County Council will get **77p** Total £120.7m

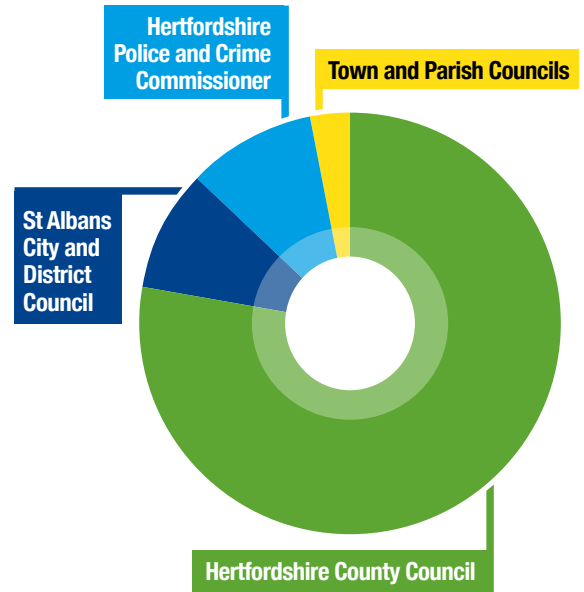
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner will get **11p** Total £18.2m

St Albans City and District Council will get **9p** Total £14.0m

Town and Parish Councils will get **3p** Total £4.3m

On average, you will pay just £4.12 a week for all the services provided by your District Council including:

- Refuse and various recycling services
- Leisure, cultural and community centres
- Parks and sports facilities
- Street cleaning
- Museums
- Parking control
- Planning and enforcement
- Housing and benefit advice
- Tackling crime and nuisances like fly-tipping and noise
- Elections
- Sustainability initiatives
- Food, health and safety inspectors



Our four key priorities, designed to deliver a viable, happy, inclusive and sustainable community, are to:

- Support great communities
- Improve social housing provision
- Make the environment a priority in all our decisions
- Treat everyone with fairness

How Council Tax is calculated

The Council's funding comes from a number of sources including Council Tax. The Council's gross expenditure of £58.9m is the main determinant of the level of Council.

Expenditure and Income Summary	2025/26		2026/27	
	£m	Council Tax Band (D) £	£m	Council Tax Band (D) £
St Albans City and District Council budget expenditure	£45.6m	£705.24	£58.9m	£906.29
Plus contribution to reserves	+£1.2m	+£18.24	+£1.4m	+£20.78
Total Gross Expenditure for Council Activities	£46.8m	£723.48	£60.3m	£927.07
LESS income from fees, charges, sales, rent, grants	-£25.1m	-£388.75	-£37.4m	-£575.68
St Albans City & District Council net budget	£21.7m	£334.73	£22.9m	£351.39
LESS funding from elsewhere				
Central Government, Business Rates, and Collection Fund Surplus	-£8.2m	-£126.73	-£8.9m	-£137.17
Total funding from elsewhere	-£8.2m	-£126.73	-£8.9m	-£137.17
Council Tax – St Albans City & District Council	£13.5m	£208.00	£14.0m	£214.22
PLUS				
Town and Parish Precepts	£4.1m	£63.08	£4.3m	£66.81
Hertfordshire County Council Precept	£114.4m	£1,769.87	£120.7m	£1,858.19
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	£17.1m	£265.00	£18.2m	£280.00
Total Council Tax	£149.1m	£2,305.95*	£157.2m	£2,419.22*

*This is the average rate of Council Tax across the District. The actual charge will vary between areas. See box on page 5.

What you pay

PARISH	BAND	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
St Albans City		1,578.90	1,842.06	2,105.21	2,368.36	2,894.66	3,420.96	3,947.26	4,736.72
Colney Heath		1,665.63	1,943.24	2,220.85	2,498.45	3,053.66	3,608.87	4,164.08	4,996.90
Harpenden Rural		1,582.04	1,845.71	2,109.39	2,373.06	2,900.41	3,427.75	3,955.10	4,746.12
Harpenden Town		1,638.78	1,911.92	2,185.05	2,458.18	3,004.44	3,550.70	4,096.96	4,916.36
London Colney		1,646.88	1,921.36	2,195.85	2,470.32	3,019.28	3,568.24	4,117.20	4,940.64
Redbourn		1,648.92	1,923.75	2,198.58	2,473.39	3,023.03	3,572.67	4,122.31	4,946.78
St Michael		1,573.68	1,835.96	2,098.25	2,360.52	2,885.08	3,409.64	3,934.20	4,721.04
St Stephen		1,638.91	1,912.07	2,185.22	2,458.37	3,004.67	3,550.98	4,097.28	4,916.74
Sandridge		1,620.89	1,891.03	2,161.19	2,431.33	2,971.63	3,511.92	4,052.22	4,862.66
Wheathampstead		1,639.43	1,912.67	2,185.92	2,459.15	3,005.63	3,552.10	4,098.58	4,918.30

% Change from last year

PARISH	St Albans City & District Council - General Expenses [#]	St Albans City & District Council - Special Expenses (see box at bottom of page) [#]	Hertfordshire County Council [*]	Hertfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner	Town & Parish Councils
St Albans City	3.75%	2.51%	4.99%	5.66%	-
Colney Heath	3.75%	-7.00%	4.99%	5.66%	2.99%
Harpenden Rural	3.75%	-	4.99%	5.66%	-3.76%
Harpenden Town	3.75%	5.91%	4.99%	5.66%	4.32%
London Colney	3.75%	-71.33%	4.99%	5.66%	9.43%
Redbourn	3.75%	-93.80%	4.99%	5.66%	10.98%
St Michael	3.75%	-	4.99%	5.66%	4.00%
St Stephen	3.75%	-34.82%	4.99%	5.66%	6.00%
Sandridge	3.75%	7.73%	4.99%	5.66%	7.37%
Wheathampstead	3.75%	-66.93%	4.99%	5.66%	4.46%

The County Council precept includes a levy on behalf of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority and the Environmental Agency. Details of the levy are available on their website www.hertfordshire.gov.uk

[#] The percentage change on the combined total of General and Special Expenses for St Albans City and District Council is 2.99%

^{*} Hertfordshire County Council's element of council tax has increased by 4.99%, of which 2.00% is attributable to the Adult Social Care precept and 2.99% to general expenditure. Information about spending by Hertfordshire County Council is available at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/counciltax Email: contact@hertfordshire.gov.uk Telephone: 0300 123 4040.

Further information about Council Tax and how it is calculated is available at www.stalbans.gov.uk/council-tax



Charges, and why they vary between areas

St Albans City and District Council also collects Council Tax on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Town and Parish Councils in the District.

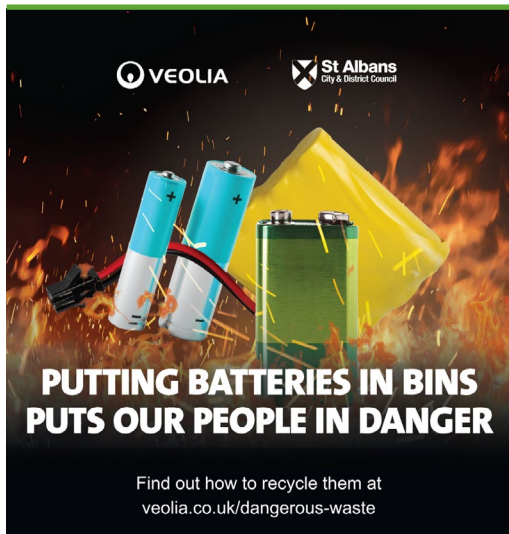
The actual charge for each band varies from area to area. This is because certain services are provided by the District Council in some areas, but by the Town or Parish Council in others.

Town and Parish Councils have the freedom to set their own precepts. The amount you pay depends on where you live.

For more information, please see:

www.stalbans.gov.uk/where-your-council-tax-goes.

Recycling News



Careful with batteries

Batteries can cause dangerous fires and explosions when they are crushed in our bin lorries.

You should dispose of them safely by putting them in a small bag beside your bins for our weekly kerbside collections.

Do not put them in the bins – and the same applies to small electrical items which can have hidden batteries. They can be put in a bag with your batteries.

By doing this, you will keep yourself, neighbours and our bin crews safe and help recycle precious resources.

Recycle Tetra Paks

You will be able to recycle Tetra Pak containers from this April together with aluminium foil, tubs and trays.

These should all be put into your black mixed recycling bin for fortnightly collections.

The initiative complies with the UK Government's new Simpler Recycling legislation which all local authorities must follow. See page 8 for more recycling information.



Keep cardboard dry

Help us recycle cardboard and paper by keeping it dry for our collection crews.

If the cardboard collected in our lorries is contaminated with moisture, then we cannot recycle it and it must be disposed of in a landfill dump instead.

This is costly and a waste of precious resources, so we are asking residents not to put wet cardboard out for recycling.

During wet weather, you can cut up dry cardboard to fit in your recycling box or hold on to it until the next collection.



Attention landlords!

Our Private Sector Housing Team supports landlords to manage their properties and sustain successful tenancies.

Our goal is to make renting a home in St Albans easier, safer and more rewarding for both landlords and tenants.

We offer landlords a wide range of help that includes finding reliable tenants, meeting housing standards and complying with legislation. We can also support landlords to prepare for the upcoming Renters Rights Act and the changes it will bring.

We host regular landlord forums where you can network and hear about the latest housing initiatives with the next one due on Tuesday 2 June.

If you are interested in working with us or attending a forum, please email landlordforum@stalbans.gov.uk or call **01727 814674**.



WHAT'S ON at the museums

St Albans Museum + Gallery, St Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3DH
Verulamium Museum, St Michael's Street, St Albans, AL3 4SW



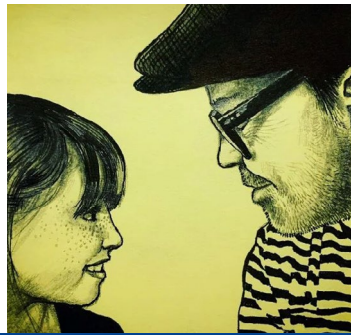
For detailed information about the events programme, scan the QR code. Visit regularly to catch these and other great exhibitions and events.

Draw with Rob, Friday 27 March to Sunday 20 September, Weston Gallery, St Albans Museum + Gallery, Free

A celebration of the Rob Biddulph's amazing drawings from Post-it notes he put in his daughter's lunch box every day of her primary school year to his Guinness World Record breaking #DrawWithRob online art classes.

Explore Rob's world and, with the help of Peanut Jones and her magical pencil, see what you can create yourself.

Plus, look out for a programme of creative events for all ages running alongside the exhibition.



Easter Holidays, Monday 30 March to Thursday 9 April

At Verulamium Museum, get creative with an Easter-themed Mosaic Making Workshop on Monday 30 March, or explore our Family Archaeology sessions on Tuesday 31 March and Wednesday 1 April.

At St Albans Museum + Gallery, enjoy hands-on crafts with an old-fashioned toys activity on Wednesday 8 April, or try your hand at designing your own Inn Sign in our art session on Thursday 9 April.



Religion in Verulamium: Tolerance and Fusion, Verulamium Museum, until Sunday 26 April, Free with admission

What were the religious beliefs and practices of the Celtic peoples living in Verulamium at the time of the Roman conquest? How were they changed by the Roman occupation and a different group of gods?



This new exhibition, using objects and images from Verulamium and beyond, seeks to answer these questions and asks whether Romans tolerated all religions equally.

Image: Reclining Diner

Inns and Alehouses in Victorian St Albans, Keeper's Galleries, until Sunday 19 April, Free

Towards the end of the nineteenth century St Albans boasted just under a hundred commercial drinking establishments.

This exhibition looks at the differing types of venue that served the city's population from beerhouses to taverns and the reasons that they flourished or failed as St Albans moved into the twentieth century.



The Clock Tower



Climb the 93 steps to the top of the Clock Tower during weekends and Bank Holidays from Easter to September. The season begins on Friday 3 April.



St Albans
City & District Council

Have your say... we welcome anything you want to say about our services.

We hope you enjoy reading Community News. If you can spare a moment, please email communications@stalbans.gov.uk and let us know your views on this edition.

St Albans City & District Council,
Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3LD

Website: www.stalbans.gov.uk

For latest service information, updates and general enquiries please go to the Council's website.

Alternative formats: If you want to receive this newsletter in an alternative format, such as Braille, please call 01727 819572. See www.accessible.co.uk for information about access to local facilities.

See us on
social media
[@stalbanscouncil](https://twitter.com/stalbanscouncil)



Waste and recycling calendar 2026/2027

From 31 March 2026, Simpler Recycling legislation means we can accept clean Tetra Pak and aluminium foil as well as tubs and trays. For further details please see the article on page 6. Information is also provided on our website.

- General waste and food waste collections.
 - Garden waste, recycling and food waste collections.
 - Bank Holiday collections will be one day later than usual all week.
 - No garden waste collections.
 - Collections over the festive period will be up to 4 days behind.
- Sign up to monthly online Community News to keep up to date with collections at bit.ly/3Y29ltS
 Normal collections will resume on **Monday 18 January 2027**.
Note: crews are working on Good Friday.

Please check the website should any additional bank holidays be announced or amended in 2026/27.

IMPORTANT: There is no garden waste collection service for two weeks from 25 December as outlined in the terms and conditions. The service restarts on 11 January.

Extra garden waste can be presented next to the garden waste bin on your first scheduled garden waste collection day following this period. Garden waste subscribers can also put Christmas trees in their garden waste bin for collection at this time.



JUNE: Garden waste subscription renewals open.

Week 1

Find out which week you are by visiting www.stalbans.gov.uk/rubbish-collections

Week 2

April 2026

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April 2026

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January 2027

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29	30	31				

Need more information?

Email wastemanagementservices@stalbins.gov.uk Visit www.stalbans.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling