

ABOUT WATFORD



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Autumn
Winter 2021



Sustainable
Watford

Pages 4 - 7

ABOUT WATFORD



Peter Taylor
Elected Mayor of
Watford

www.watford.gov.uk/electedmayor

Welcome to the latest edition of About Watford. I hope you all had a great summer and made the most of the easing of restrictions.

While our new 'normal' may take some getting used to, there are some things in Watford that are making a comeback like they never even left! From our famous Cassiobury Fireworks display (p15), to another of our Market Lates celebrations (p18), events in Watford have never been better. The council and partners throughout the town are committed to making our exciting events accessible to everyone and I look forward to seeing you all at an event soon.

Even though restrictions have been eased, there are still so many businesses in Watford finding their feet again. That's why we've been working really hard to ensure there is lots of support available to our local businesses both in the form of financial aid and advice services. Working with partners has been key to ensuring we can offer a range of support to suit all businesses, so I would like to say thank you to everyone who continues to support business in Watford (p20) and welcome to the new organisations popping up around town (p22).

Next spring will see the return of Watford's Audentior Awards, where we celebrate and recognise the fantastic work of local people. Having not held the awards since 2019, I'm sure there are lots of very deserving people out there who have made significant contributions to our town. More details about the awards are on page 27, including details of how to nominate the amazing people around you.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to everyone who has helped to make Watford a more dementia-friendly town over the last few years. We've done such an amazing job that our initiative has been recognised by the Local Government Chronicle and shortlisted for an award in the category of 'Diversity and Inclusion'. It's a great achievement to be recognised on this scale, and it would not have been possible without the work that many people have put into making the project a success. We are looking to continue this work over the coming years, to make sure nobody with dementia in Watford gets left behind, and are currently running a survey as well as continuing the excellent work with our partners in the town (p30).

If you have an issue that you think I might be able to help with, please get in touch at themayor@watford.gov.uk or call my office number on 01923 278371.



Published by Watford Borough Council. This magazine is printed on chlorine free paper, made from sustainable forests and costs 22p to print and distribute. Please recycle it when you have finished with it. This magazine is available on our website. It can be downloaded as a PDF document and also as an audio file.

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WE'RE HERE TO HELP IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

www.watford.gov.uk

Email: enquiries@watford.gov.uk

Telephone: 01923 226400

Watford Borough Council, Town Hall, Watford, WD17 3EX



watfordcouncil

Read all about it in your inbox

Sign up to the council's eNewsletter to receive information straight to your inbox. Read the latest stories from around the town, keep up-to-date with waste and recycling, events and activities, campaigns and much more.

www.watford.gov.uk/newsletter

Great Big Green Week hits Watford

The first ever Great Big Green Week arrived in Watford this September, inspiring the public to make positive changes for the planet.

Held between 18-26 September, Watford's Great Big Green Week was part of a national campaign that featured a range of exciting events, organised by Friends of the Earth Watford, Watford Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council.

Bike trips, a Love Your Leftovers webinar (partnered with Veolia), enchanting nature tours, volunteering opportunities and more. We also created a green-living booklet, packed full of advice on how to live a more eco-friendly life.



These events aimed to illustrate the many simple changes residents can make to live more sustainably and help fight climate change.

Events included The Great Big Green Litter Pick, free Beryl

500,000km travelled on Beryl Bikes

Over 140,000 journeys have been taken and 500,000 kilometres covered through-out Watford, in a year when many have rediscovered the benefits and joys of cycling.

Beryl, the British bike share operator, Watford Borough Council and sponsor Camelot are celebrating the wide-reaching accomplishments of their pedal-powered scheme in the town.

The 500,000 kilometres ridden by Beryl Bikes over the year is equivalent to over 90.42 tonnes of CO₂ saved, helping Watford to become cleaner and more sustainable - as well as improving users' mental and physical health.

Watford's residents have made great use of the 300 bikes and 71 Beryl parking bays since its launch, with over 24,000 riders using the bikes so far.

Data also shows that those who ride Beryl e-bikes are travelling further and doing so more often - a promising sign that users are switching car journeys to travel by bike!



Watford's recycling rates on the up

In September 2020, Watford Borough Council made changes to its waste and recycling service - introducing a new weekly food waste collection while simultaneously reducing the collection of general black bin waste - to encourage households to recycle more and produce less waste.

Our recycling rate has risen from 46% to 51% - this is 5% above the national average rate of 46%.



Through the new food caddy collection service, we're now converting 1,867 tonnes of food waste directly into green electricity power for our homes and businesses. We also take additional food waste, mix it with garden waste, and turn it into compost.

The amount of non-recyclable waste has reduced by 10,767 tonnes since the start of the service change in September 2020 meaning less pollution that can harm our health and the environment.

Learn more about waste and recycling at www.watfordrecycles.com

Veolia funds help reinvigorate run-down spaces

The Veolia Sustainability Fund has made a big impact over the past year, helping to improve areas throughout Watford.

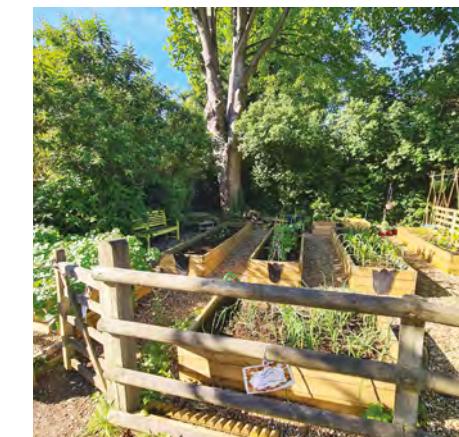
The funding provides cash sponsorship, in-kind resources and volunteers to support not-for-profit organisations and community groups working to transform their local community or environment.

Such work includes enhancing biodiversity, promoting sustainable waste behaviours, preserving resources and protecting the natural environment.

This year, the programme has helped to fund the Watford Synagogue Community Garden, which has turned a waste ground into a community garden, as well as wildlife, fruit and vegetable gardens in the grounds of Nascot Wood Infant and Nursery School.

Got an idea to help transform your community or environment in Watford? Veolia wants to hear from you. The deadline is 31 October

2021 - submit your ideas at www.veolia.co.uk/sustainability-fund



Solar powered 'Bigbelly' compactor bins arrive in Cassiobury Park

Six new 'smart' litter bins have been installed in Cassiobury Park to help residents and visitors recycle on-the-go and combat litter issues in the park.

The new solar-powered 'BigBelly' bins, capable of compacting up to 960 litres of litter, automatically crush down the litter so they can stomach eight times more waste than a standard litter bin.

They also contain sensors that send automatic alerts to our parks staff when nearing full capacity, increasing the team's efficiency and contributing to a more sustainable town.

The units are completely self-contained, meaning waste can't

escape from the bin when full - keeping wind-blown litter off the ground. Rodents and other scavengers are unable to get in to the bin to eat leftover food, making cleaner, safer public spaces.

Plastic bottles and cans can be placed in the recycling units. Everything else (including disposable coffee cups, plastic bags and food waste) must be placed in the general waste units. The bins have been installed thanks to WRAP's Litter Binrastructure grant, where the

council received the maximum amount of £25,000.



Town-wide survey responses shaping future transport in Watford

Throughout the summer, Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council consulted residents on their 'Transforming Travel in Watford' strategy, which sets out how we plan to make it easier and greener for people to get around Watford.

Over 1,000 people got involved in the consultation, which mainly focuses on walking, cycling and using public transport, and is part of the key target to make the town net zero carbon by 2030. The results of the survey will now be reviewed and the final strategy will concentrate on key issues such as less traffic congestion, cleaner air, safer cycling and walking, and better public and shared transport provision.

As a sector, transport produces more greenhouse gases than any other in the UK and with this year's climate change report by the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC) declaring we are at 'code red for humanity', both councils are taking a stand against climate change by developing six key themes to help fulfil the 20 year strategy. This includes the initial proposals below which are currently being reviewed:

- **Active travel** - making the streets of Watford attractive and safe places for people of all ages to walk and cycle with new cycle lanes and cycle parking and new and improved footways
- **Longer journeys** - providing real alternatives to driving into and out of the borough

- proposals include more bus lanes and better connection of the current train stations with the development of a new green, rapid transport system

- **Alternatives to the petrol car** - offering a variety of choices that make leaving the car at home an easy choice for people - proposals include a 'Watford car club', greener, more efficient taxis and more electric vehicle charging points across the town
- **Town centre** - making more space for walking, cycling and public transport - proposals include pedestrian and cycle crossings on the ring road and a sustainable transport hub on the High Street.
- **Moving goods from A to B** - reduce our reliance on trucks and vans and introduce e-cargo bikes, more parcel lockers and freight consolidation centres
- **Supporting change** - providing everyone with the know how to make use of the new schemes and incentives to embrace them.

Whilst the survey is now closed, you can still view the plans at www.futuretravelwatford.com. You can also read about all the council's effort to become greener at www.watford.gov.uk/sustainablewatford.



Green Homes Grant helps residents cut energy costs and carbon emissions

Watford Borough Council are offering fully funded energy-saving home improvements worth up to £10,000 to qualifying residents and encouraging those eligible to apply now in the run up to winter.

When Lesley Clark moved into his new home 60 years ago it was heated by just one hot water tank in the kitchen, one radiator, and a coal fire. Today - thanks to a new Green Homes Grant scheme offered by the council - his house has been fitted with wall insulation which will keep it warmer than ever in the winters ahead.

The 88-year-old former Rolls Royce employee said: "Now I am getting older I do feel the cold. Rather than putting a blanket over me, I'll have a warmer house. The outside wall in the winter was like a block of ice before - now it will be much cosier."

Lesley is among many local residents to benefit from the scheme run by the council. Grants of up to £10,000 are available for homes to receive energy efficiency measures such as external wall insulation, for free, in one of the biggest grant-funded retrofit programmes to date. Under the scheme, households can also apply to have fully funded measures such as solar panels and loft or cavity wall insulation.

The external wall insulation fitted to Lesley's house could save him



around £225 per year on heating bills and reduce domestic carbon emissions by approximately 930kg CO₂ per year.

Hundreds of properties across the town are expected to receive a share of £1.85 million awarded to Watford, with homes now starting to be insulated. Residents can apply for this funding if they have a combined household income of less than £30,000 per year and live in a property with a low energy efficiency rating (G, F, E or D rating).

The council is also supporting all homes that need energy efficiency upgrades regardless of their income with grants and interest free loans. For details of the schemes and to apply you can contact our partners at Better Housing Better Health on 0800 107 0044, by a simple online referral at www.bhbh.org.uk/make-a-referral or by E-mail to bhbh@nef.org.uk

Staying well this winter, with advice from Dr Asif Faizy

Local GP Dr Asif Faizy helps to oversee GP services for more than 230,000 patients in our area. He has been instrumental and inspirational in getting our community through the challenges of the last 18 months. On behalf of all of Watford we want to say a massive thank you!

Here, he shares his journey to becoming a doctor in the UK and explains why it's important for everyone to get the vaccines they need this winter.

Dr Faizy is the first person to become a doctor in his family, and the first to go to medical school. He lives in Enfield with his wife and two daughters.

"I feel privileged to serve the community in Watford and Three Rivers. The diversity here is what makes Watford beautiful. Everyone has a story to tell, and immigrants like me bring skills and experience, fighting back is something we must all learn to do."

Fighting back is something we must all learn to do



One of seven children, Dr Faizy grew up in a small village where there was no medical care.

He first qualified from Ibne-Sina Balkh Medical School, Afghanistan in 2000, before training in Hull in East Yorkshire and completing his GP training in Wessex.

He says of his experience: "My parents felt our future was in getting an education. The first time the Taliban took over our city was a year before I finished my medical examination and then we left to

come to England. I then went for my examination to convert my medical qualification to English."

"The situation today in Afghanistan is sad, it's like an earthquake, without having an earthquake, turning people's lives upside down. History has repeated itself."

"I met my wife in medical school, but she could not complete her education because of the Taliban regime, because she is a woman. We are a living testimony that the Taliban can really affect your life."

Reflecting on the last 18 months

"During the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic we didn't have the vaccine and we saw the huge effect on our communities, with some people falling seriously ill or dying, and everybody living with lockdown measures.

"We need to fight back against the impact of the virus on our lives. Testing and vaccination are the best tools we have to get out of the pandemic."

Getting tested and getting your vaccine

Dr Faizy encouraged all Watford residents to come forward to get the vaccine: "Covid-19 is still a killer condition and it hasn't gone away. Many people who didn't see themselves as being at risk are living with the effects of Long Covid, which can be very serious.

"If you are going out and about, it's important that you take a regular 'rapid test' twice a week, in case you have picked up the virus without having symptoms and are passing it on to others who could become very unwell. If your 'rapid' or 'lateral flow' test is positive, you must book a PCR test. It's the only way to know for sure if you have Covid-19."

Getting your vaccine booster and flu jab this winter

"The Covid-19 vaccines and the flu jab are very safe. We are very lucky that we have vaccinations

available to us. They have saved countless lives. I can't think of any vaccine apart from the Covid-19 vaccine that has been given to over a billion people in the world.

"If you are worried, or anxious about needles or allergies there are specific clinics that we can send you to.

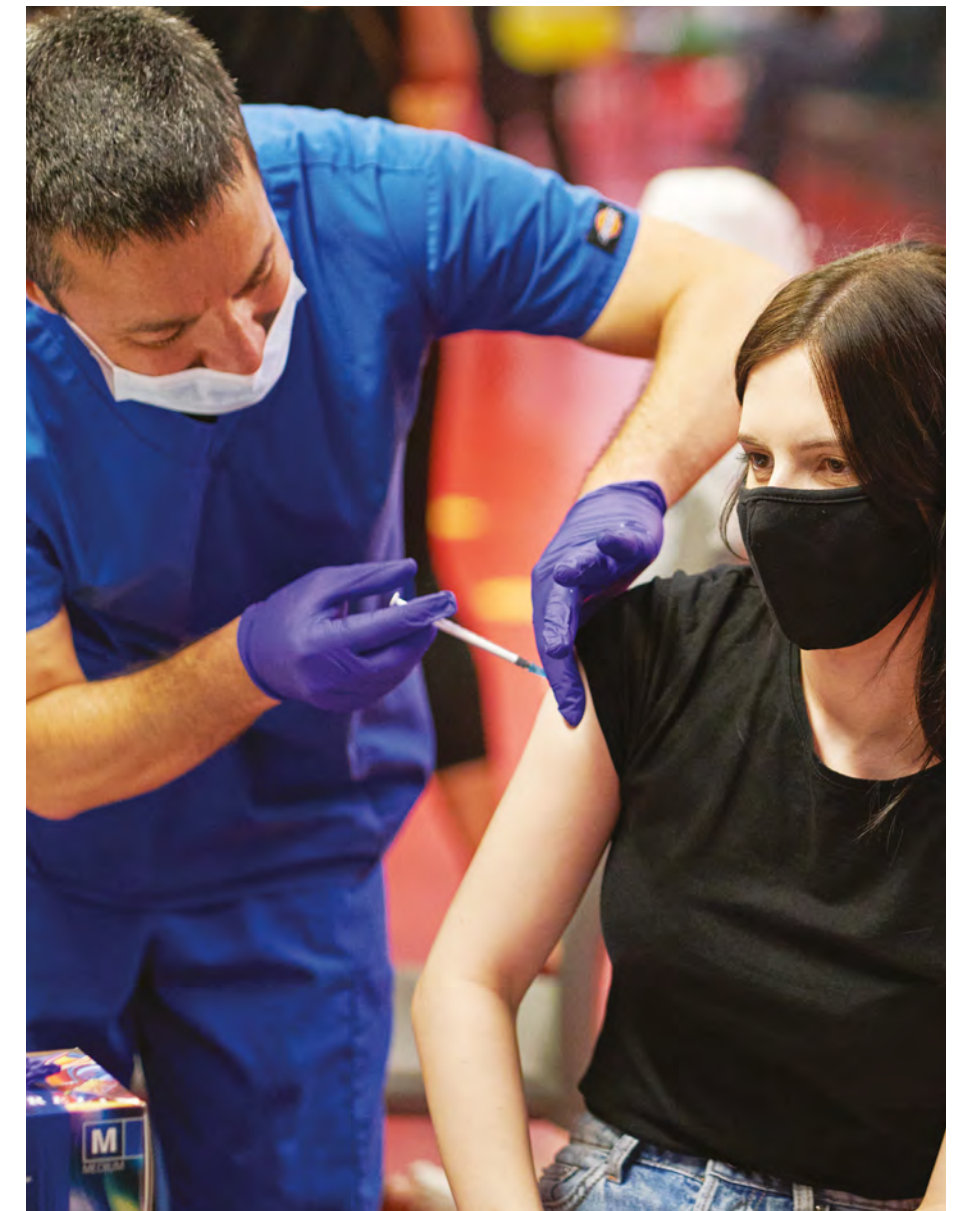
"All those eligible to get their Covid-19 or flu vaccine should get it as soon as they can, to have the strongest possible protection over the winter months.

"Some people are being invited in to have a Covid-19 'booster'

vaccine. That's because they got their second vaccination more than six months ago and the protection it gave them is starting to wear off. If you get the call - please get your booster vaccine straight away and keep your protection levels topped up."

To date we have administered over 62,000 Covid-19 vaccine jabs at Watford Town Hall since it opened as a vaccination centre.

For more information and news about staying well and getting the vaccine, please visit: www.watford.gov.uk/news



Neighbours Together is looking for Community Champions

Together we can help reduce loneliness in Watford!

Do you remember the W3RT Neighbours Together What's On guide? It was originally printed, highlighting what activities, clubs and events are available for Watford and Three Rivers residents aged 55+. Unfortunately, the Covid-19 emergency meant that most activities stopped and the production of the guide temporarily went on hold.

Early this year, the What's On guide was re-launched online and now the W3RT Neighbours Together project are looking for Community Champions.

Did you help a neighbour, friend or relative through lockdown by delivering their shopping, or keeping them company by chatting to them from the front garden? Now lockdown is over, would you like to continue helping people in some way?

The after effects of lockdown and the Covid period have left many people in Watford feeling lonely and isolated. Some people have completely lost their confidence and are reluctant to go out and mix with others. Many just don't know about the clubs and

activities they could take part in, in their community.

To help your friends and neighbours get out more and feel part of the community, you could use our What's On guide: www.mywellbeing.community/whatsonguide

The W3RT Neighbours Together project is looking for caring and community spirited people - just like you - to become Community Champions, to help others join activities listed in the What's On guide. It's not a formal volunteer role, just something you can do day-to-day.

To help, the W3RT Neighbours Together team has developed a Community Champion Toolkit with ideas and tips on how you can be a Community Champion. Get in touch and we'd be happy to share this with you.

Find out more:

www.mywellbeing.community/communitychampions

neighbourstogether@w3rt.org

01923 606447



Mayor's Small Grants Fund helps local community groups

Did you know that if you run a not-for-profit community group in Watford you can apply to the council for a grant of up to £3,000 to help fund a project/community initiative or to purchase a piece of equipment?

The Mayor's Small Grants Fund gives groups and organisations the chance to apply for funding, as long as it is used for the benefit of local people. The new programme of grants will be open in April 2022 and you can find out more at www.watford.gov.uk/mayors-smallgrants.

Lots of local community groups have benefited from the Small Grants Fund over the last year, including the following charities:

Bereavement charity StrongMen

StrongMen - set up by two ex-contestants on Channel 4's SAS: Who Dares Wins - encourages men to open up about bereavement in a safe and secure environment and thanks to funding from

the Mayor's Small Grants Fund they will now support Watford residents.

Their main two bereavement services are the Weekender, a weekend break for men who have suffered a bereavement, and Man2Man, providing peer support on the telephone to people who need help instantly. strongmen.org.uk

Random Café

Random Café - a community hub which uses waste food donations from supermarkets - was awarded over £1,870. The money has gone towards the cost of keeping their electric van operational, as this is vital for the collections of food donations and distribution. randomcafe Watford.com

Watford Workshop

Local charity Watford Workshop, which provides employment, work experience, functional education and life skills training to local adults with disabilities, received £2,400 to put towards the general running of the organisation. watfordworkshop.co.uk

Financial support provided to asylum seekers and refugees

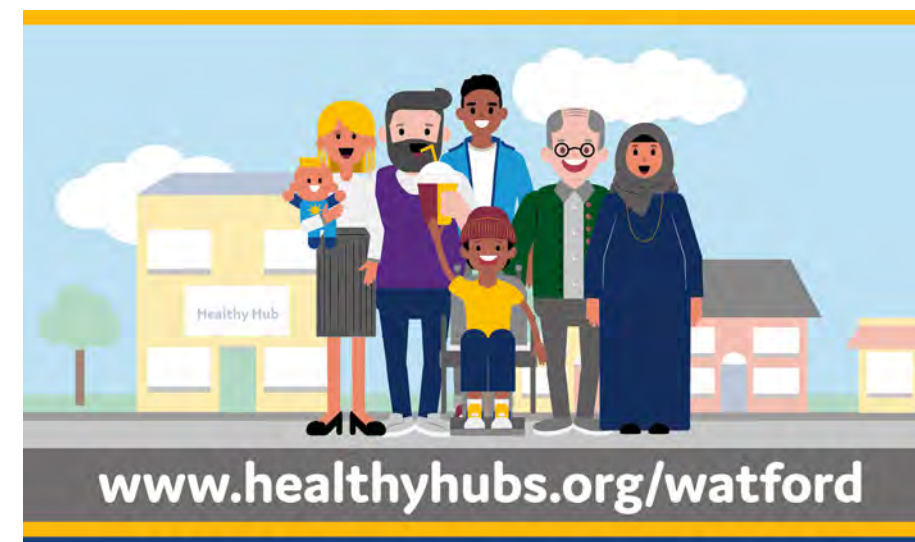
The Watford & Three Rivers Refugee Partnership, which offers practical and emotional support to asylum seekers and refugees in Watford and Three Rivers, has received £2,689 in funding.

The charity aims to show refugees a caring face, as well as helping with food, toiletries, and suggestions for seeking advice about accommodation, money, and access to legal advice to regularise their legal status, if required. The funding will be used to continue to providing people with everyday essentials. wtrrp.org.uk



Watford's Healthy Hub

Watford's Healthy Hub offers free information, advice and support to help residents stay healthy and well. We work with a range of professionals to help you get the service you need.



0300 123 4043 at any time. Call 999 if there is immediate danger or a crime is being committed.

You can also call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, (Monday to Friday, 8am - 10pm and 9am - 6pm at weekends) or email help@nspcc.org.uk. Help is free and you don't have to say who you are.

Adults

If you are worried about an adult being abused or neglected, call Hertfordshire County Council Adult Safeguarding 24 hours a day on 0300 123 4042.

For more information visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services

Working with Cathartic C.I.C

We are also working closely with Cathartic C.I.C. to deliver services for local residents living with dementia, dealing with bereavement, or receiving palliative care.

To sign up to any of these activities, contact Maria Todesco at maria@catharticcic.com or Nicky Day at nicky@catharticcic.com. For more information, visit www.catharticcic.com

Mental health

Working closely with Hertfordshire Mind Network, we focus on improving mental wellbeing, providing a range of recovery-based services across Watford so you can make your own choices, find solutions and build resilience.

Contact watfordhealthyhub@hertsmindnetwork.org or call 01923 727 356.

Domestic abuse

Partnering with Watford Women's Centre, we are providing support for those experiencing domestic abuse, which has become more prominent during Covid-19. If you have been impacted by domestic abuse or are struggling with

relationship issues, you can seek face-to-face or telephone advice, information, safety planning and signposting to other support services.

Services available include legal advice, support groups and specialist support for migrant women. Contact our domestic abuse caseworker at general@watfordwomenscentre.org.uk or call 07857 973718.

Safeguarding - whatever your worry

Young people

If you are a child or young person being abused or mistreated - or an adult worried about a young person - call Hertfordshire safeguarding children at risk on

**WATFORD
PALACE
THEATRE**

2 DEC 2021 -
2 JAN 2022

Dick Whittington

and His Cat by Andrew Pollard

TICKETS
FROM £11



Winter events in Watford



Cassiobury Fireworks

Our legendary Cassiobury Fireworks are back after a one-year absence. Don't miss out as we light up the night sky with our famous thunderous light display, held in the stunning Cassiobury Park on 6 November. There'll also be a variety of food and drink outlets, children's funfair rides, bungee trampolines, live performances and more. Head to [watfordbigevents.co.uk/cassioburyfireworks](https://www.watfordbigevents.co.uk/cassioburyfireworks) to learn more.



BID Christmas Light Ups

This year's Christmas Lights Switch-On, organised by Watford BID, will be held on Saturday 13 November by the Parade (by the Pond). The evening starts at 4pm with live entertainment, and the switch-on at 5pm. It'll be a dazzling evening for the whole family - and with our incredible local bars and restaurants all around, it'll be the perfect opportunity for a meal surrounded by loved ones!



Dick Whittington and His Cat at Watford Palace Theatre

The most magical pantomime adventure returns to Watford Palace Theatre - Dick Whittington and His Cat! Running from 2 December to 2 January! Visit the Watford Palace Theatre website - [watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk](https://www.watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk) - to book your tickets.



Market Lates

Christmas event on 3 December. There will be live festive music from local and national performers and delicious street food and drinks from around the globe, to help bring the Market to life, by night. See the Watford Market website, [watfordmarket.co.uk](https://www.watfordmarket.co.uk) for more details.

BOX OFFICE 01923 225671 | [WATFORDPALACETHEATRE.CO.UK](https://www.watfordpalacetheatre.co.uk)

Delivering for Watford in 2021

Healthy and Happy Town



Two successful Super Sunday Covid vaccination clinics held at Vicarage Road enabled around 3,000 residents to get vaccinated in one go.



Our Single Homelessness Pathway is underway, bringing together all the key providers into a multi-agency team and collaboratively supporting the most vulnerable in the town towards a better life.



Watford has been accredited as a dementia-friendly town for a further two years! Support and activities for those living with dementia and their families continue to gather pace.



Our Mental Health and Domestic Abuse workers are supporting residents across the town, with almost 100 people helped within the first few months.



Upgrades to St Albans Road and across the Watford Junction forecourt have made a tremendous difference. Work continues to improve and refresh Clarendon Road, a key gateway into our town.



Thriving, Diverse and Creative Town



We won £3.5million to decarbonise the Town Hall and Colosseum, contributing to our carbon neutral target and providing these much-loved heritage buildings with a sustainable future.



Work has started on Watford General's new multi-storey car park, which the council is helping to fund and deliver. A game-changer for patients and visitors.



Watford Market upgraded and we've launched Market Lates - the first in the series saw 600 flock to the market to enjoy music and food.



Through a range of grants, we've pumped around £2.5million and specialist support into boosting businesses and charities, ensuring residents continue getting vital support.



Our work on keeping Watford Covid-safe and welcoming, including holding our Summer of Fun events, encouraging thousands back to support local businesses, with the number of visitors this summer similar to pre-Covid numbers.

Serving Our Residents



£1.85million of external wall insulation rolled out across Watford. Watford is the highest performing council in Hertfordshire for our work in this area.



We're providing opportunities for our young people by welcoming a number of young people on the new KickStart scheme into our ranks.



Design works have started on Woodside Sports Village, which will provide outstanding sports and leisure facilities for everyone to enjoy.



Croxley Business Park has had an impressive refurb and major improvements to Watford Business Park underway, with many of the units already snapped up.



Following the successful opening of our state-of-the-art Oxhey Activity Park, we've extended the car park to make it easier for more visitors to enjoy the facilities.

Even more services have been added to our digital MyWatford platform so you can access our services when best for you. 30,000 of you have already signed up for a MyWatford account.



Watford Market's first-ever night event Market Lates hailed as 'fantastic'

Watford Market opened its doors after hours in September, welcoming over 600 visitors to its first-ever night event, Market Lates.

Set to a soundtrack of live music from local and national performers including Tom Craven, Sam Winston, Soraya Ray and George Styles, the event also featured delicious street food and drinks from around the globe.

Charlie Smith, who visited Market Lates said: "A fantastic event and a great way to spend a Friday night. Family friendly with great music, food and drinks from the small businesses of Watford."

Future events will be held throughout the year and will be advertised on the council and market social media channels and website. For more information, head to www.watfordmarket.co.uk or follow the dedicated social media channels on Facebook and Instagram @watfordtownmarket.



Put the next Market Lates in your diary!

Halloween - Friday 29 October

Christmas - Friday 3 December



Watford Chairman launches new book

Watford Borough Council's Chair, Cllr Bilquees Mauthoor, has released a book in support of her campaign to tackle violence against women and girls. *Dear Sheba*, which draws on the chairman's own experiences, was launched at an event at Watford Museum in September.

It charts the journey of a young, affluent but naïve girl who envisages a happily married life ahead before things take a different turn. The aim of the event was to raise funds for Cllr Mauthoor's #delete consortium of five grassroots charities - Dignify, Homestart

Watford, Watford Women's Centre, Watford Palace Theatre and Safer Places - which are all working to end gender-based violence.

Dear Sheba is available to buy on Amazon and all funds raised will go to the consortium of charities.



Watford Mencap service plans taking shape - thanks to support from council

An exciting new chapter for Watford Mencap - which provides services to those with learning disabilities - is taking place with the charity moving to their new home at 92a Langley Road after support from Watford Borough Council.

Over the last six months, 92a Langley Road has been undergoing significant refurbishment works to create a welcoming and safe Mencap hub in the heart of the Watford community. As well as providing daily support for Mencap service users, specialist activity space is also available to other community groups, local charities and families. The works are expected to finish soon and the centre will be open by Christmas.

The move from the charity's current home at the Lemarie Centre in St Albans Road has been made possible with the support of Watford Borough

Council. As a public sector organisation, the council was able to negotiate the purchase of 92a Langley Road from Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust (HCT), the previous owners, before it was marketed for sale on the open commercial market. Once this purchase was complete, the council simultaneously completed an agreement with Watford Mencap to pass the property directly to them in a back-to-back, not-for-profit transaction.

Roger Jones, Chairman at Watford Mencap, said: "The new facility in the heart of the Watford community provides a permanent home from which our caring and experienced teams will be able to support people to live the lives they want for themselves. We are grateful to Watford Borough Council for helping us to secure this wonderful building which will be a hive of activity and inspire people for generations to come."

Flying the flag in honour of NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day

Watford Borough Council raised the NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' flag on 5 July, to honour the workers who have sacrificed their lives to help others during the Covid-19 pandemic, and those who continue to do so today.

The event began with the flag raising followed by a remembrance service. In the afternoon, Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor, and Chairman Cllr Bilquees Mauthoor, visited Tremona Care Home to thank all the selfless care workers who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

The day raised money for two excellent causes - NHS Charities Together, which supports 250 hospitals and their charitable trusts, and the National Care Association, who represent the 1.6million workers that care for some of society's most vulnerable

citizens. The date was chosen specifically, as it marks the anniversary of the NHS' formation back in 1948.



Grants galore! Watford opens support lifelines for organisations hit by Covid-19

Over the past 18 months, many small and independent businesses had a tough time of it, with Covid-19 putting a halt on their ambitions or in many cases forcing them to close altogether.

Now, Watford Borough Council has created the Watford Business Growth Grant to help Watford businesses get back on their feet.

The grant was launched earlier this year by Elected Mayor Peter Taylor. To qualify for the scheme, a business just needs to have between five and 20 employees, be based in Watford, and be able to show that Covid-19 has had a negative impact on their business (not too difficult for most small companies!)

Once a business has expressed interest in the scheme, Growth Account Managers from the Hertfordshire Growth Hub will work closely with them to determine their business needs and offer free, bespoke advice and support. If the business is a suitable candidate, the Growth Account Manager will also assist them in applying for a grant of up to £10,000 to help improve their operating performance and drive the innovation and growth of their company.



Launching the grant, Mayor Peter Taylor said: "Watford's business community is so important to the town, providing employment opportunities to residents and helping us to prosper. The past year has been tough for so many small companies. The Watford Business Growth Grant Scheme is our way of investing in local businesses so that they can get the support they need to succeed in the future."

The Watford Business Growth Grant is open to applications until 31 March 2022 or until the money runs out. If you think you or someone you know might work with an eligible organisation, apply today!

You can find out more and apply here: www.watfordbusiness.com/business-growth-grant

New support available for charities

Small businesses weren't the only ones who struggled with the impact of Covid-19 over the last 18 months. While the nation's charities found their services were needed more than ever before, restrictions on gathering cut many of them off from their usual fundraising techniques. Here too, Watford Borough Council was able to step in.

Local community groups and voluntary organisations are now eligible for assistance from not one but two new support funds: the Watford Charity Support Grant and the Covid Community Grant.

The two grants are administered by separate bodies, but are otherwise very similar: the main difference is that the Watford Charity Support Grant is only available to organisations operating in Watford, while the Covid Community Grant is also available to charities in Three Rivers.

The Watford Charity Support Grant awards funding of up to £5,000 per organisation, while the Covid Community Grant goes up to £7,500, but both grants are available to charitable organisations of any size, and charities operating in Watford can even apply for both grants simultaneously.

"I'm incredibly proud to be launching this fund along with our friends at Three Rivers,"



said Elected Mayor Peter Taylor. "Hertfordshire's charities have played a really important role during the last 18 months, and have shown great determination during this period. While many traditional methods of funding have been unavailable, they have adapted and gone to extraordinary lengths to provide their vital services."

Just like the Watford Business Growth Grant, these sources of funding will only be available until the end of March 2022, so it's important to apply soon if you think your organisation might be eligible. You can find out more and apply to both schemes via the Watford & Three Rivers Trust website: w3rt.org/page/community_funds

More to come!

If that weren't enough, there are even more funding opportunities coming in the next few weeks, including support for businesses trying to reduce their carbon footprint, and for freelancers and small businesses working in the creative sector. If you think you or someone you know might be able to benefit from these programmes you can keep up with all the latest developments and opportunities by following @WatfordBusiness on Twitter.

New businesses thrive in Watford

Despite the pandemic, Watford remains an exciting hub for independent and small businesses, with new shops and cafés continuing to open and prosper throughout lockdown and beyond.

In fact, just this summer, new research from Tide revealed that Watford is the best place in the country to start a business outside of London.

In Watford town centre alone, around 30 new shopfronts have appeared since March 2020, with many more due to open within the next few months, including the Puttshack indoor golfing experience, an independent brewery, and Watford's first branch of the wildly popular independent burger chain Honest Burger.

In particular, Watford has seen huge growth in retail, hospitality and leisure-based businesses, which should make Watford an even more exciting place to live, work and visit.

"I believe Watford High Street and The Parade are bucking the trend," says Joel Lobatto, Head of Commercial Property at Perry Holt & Co. "We are seeing retail space being re-let on a regular basis and if you walk the whole of the High Street up to The Parade there is only a small amount of vacant

space on the market. I certainly feel the development of high street retail will continue to be positive in Watford".



Here are just a few of the recent openings:

- A&V Cutting Room - Barbers
- Blooms Yard - café & bar
- Blue Inc - Retail
- British Heart Foundation Furniture Shop - furniture shop
- Café Bianco - food & drink
- Escape Hunt - Leisure
- Fratelli - Food & drink
- Full Stop Aesthetics - Beauty
- Heavenly Desserts - food & drink
- Menspire - grooming
- Oodles Chinese - food & drink
- Splattercraft - arts & craft
- Amplifon - retail
- Sunshine Co - tanning & beauty
- Taco Bell - food & drink
- The Best Connection - recruitment
- The Garden Rooms - café & bar
- Tikka Nation - food & drink
- Krantz Bakery - bakery
- Boga Steak Grill - food & drink
- Piranha Comics - retail
- Tag Heurer - retail

Local shopping app supports Watford's High Street

Among the only "winners" of the pandemic were the big online shopping sites, which made a fortune from their door-to-door delivery model.

No one wants to lose independent shops forever! Moving with the times, Watford recently announced a partnership with the local-shopping app Oiyaa to bring customers back to independent shopping on the high street.

Oiyaa works by partnering with small businesses and offering promotional discounts and rewards to customers who make purchases via the app. These offers are only available via the app, so if you want to shop local and get the most bang for your buck, download the Oiyaa app today and see what's on offer.

In addition to making local shopping more attractive and fun, Oiyaa is donating a percentage of each transaction on the app to the Watford Helps Covid Appeal, which provides funds for charities playing a vital role in helping Watford recover from the pandemic.

Neeta Dhorajawala is CEO of Localvalu, the company

responsible for designing the app. "We believe that Oiyaa will be the go-to tool of choice for retailers looking to recruit and retain a new and loyal customer base," she said. "We have designed the app to be the 'Eat Out to Help Out' for every retailer on the high street."

Elected Mayor Peter Taylor added: "I have no doubt that the Oiyaa App will prove to be a valuable asset to Watford retailers facing the current high street challenges," and welcomed the pledge from Oiyaa to contribute to the Watford Helps Covid Appeal.



Market Street undergoing exciting improvements

Watford's popular shopping destination Market Street is to benefit from a range of improvements to the look and feel of the area, after local residents and businesses backed a series of council proposals.

Works, which began in September, include new, more attractive paving, cycle parking, safer cycling routes, new modern street furniture, improved drainage and measures to prevent illegal parking. This will better connect Market Street to the recently renovated town centre, while also giving visitors, shoppers and businesses a far better experience.



The council has developed a phased improvement plan for various locations, including St Albans Road, Clarendon Road, Queens Road and the town centre, with the long-term ambition to create sustainable and vibrant local high streets to support the community and local businesses.

Elected Mayor of Watford, Peter Taylor said: "One of my key manifesto commitments was to improve this area and I am pleased we are delivering on this. We must make sure that all of our town can benefit from investment and schemes like these are really important in making Watford a

better place. The changes will make a real difference to the look and feel of Market Street, making it much more attractive for residents, shoppers and visitors."

Following the successful introduction of the first phase of works on High Street, plans are also being drawn up for further phases to provide a comprehensive public realm space for the whole length of High Street. This will build on the changes brought about as a result of the temporary Covid-19 measures to permanently exclude non-essential traffic and enable a more pleasant environment to be created for all users.



Watford's town centre CCTV: keeping you safe

Whether you are working, shopping or socialising in the town centre, Watford's CCTV operators are helping to keep you and our town safe.

Based in our town centre control room at Watford Police Station, camera operators monitor over 280 cameras and can display live images across 30 screens. There is an ongoing programme of camera expansion and improvement, with the addition of eight cameras since the start of 2021.

Footage is recorded digitally and is held for up to 31 days before it is overwritten. The operators also have radios so they can communicate with shops, bars, parking attendants and Police on patrol. They can even transmit live images to the Police control room at Welwyn or to the match day control room at Vicarage Road Stadium.

This state-of-the-art technology enables the Police to deploy resources more effectively to incidents and, if necessary, directly to the CCTV control room. It also enables them to have timely and meaningful briefings and information exchanges on current and emerging crime trends. The cameras also monitor traffic and provide live updates for the highways authority and radio traffic information providers.

The CCTV room operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and is staffed by an experienced and qualified operator at all times.

Peter Taylor, Elected Mayor of Watford, says: "It is vital that Watford is as safe as possible for residents and visitors, no matter where or when they visit.

"Having this control room within Watford Police Station means that we can provide a faster, more efficient and joined up service. That is good news for all of us."



Did you know?

In the year up to the end of March 2021, our CCTV operators' proactive approach assisted with more than 300 arrests, mostly for public disorder or nuisance behaviour.

For more information, visit www.watford.gov.uk/CCTV or look at the locations of all our cameras on our interactive map "Explore Watford" at www.watford.gov.uk/explore.

Plans for an outstanding new sports village at Woodside move closer

We're planning a fantastic development of part of Woodside Playing Fields, including creating the Sports Village with modern facilities, new changing rooms and up-to-date equipment, as well as a cutting-edge toddler and junior play area and community café.



The preparation work is well underway, with the first priority being to move the parks maintenance team out of the historic stable block buildings and stable yard square to a new facility in spring 2022. This will free up the historic buildings for renovation and redevelopment.

Detailed designs are progressing well and construction work will start in early 2022, with the Sports Village opening to visitors in early 2023. New public toilets, a Changing Places facility and additional parking are also planned.

For more information on the project, head to www.yourwoodside.co.uk



Celebrating the stars of our town

Nominations are now open for Watford's 16th Audentior Awards which recognise local people and organisations who are actively making Watford a better place to live and work in.

With nine categories including the Mayor's Special Achievement Award, Watford residents are being encouraged to put forward their everyday heroes who go the extra mile to help friends, family or people around them or who help local people achieve something fantastic. The awards are the council's way of rewarding people in our town who go above and beyond in helping others.

Elected Mayor of Watford Peter Taylor said: "These awards recognise and celebrate hard work, dedication and personal achievement. Watford has so many people who regularly do wonderful things for our community. These unsung heroes do so much for our town. The Audentior Awards are a chance to say thank you to people who deserve to be recognised."

This year the categories are:

- Carer of the year
- Charity worker of the year
- Public service award
- Pride in Watford
- Young achiever of the year (25 and under)
- Contribution to sport and healthy living
- Chairman's culture award
- Good neighbour award



The Mayor's Award, sponsored by Warner Bros, celebrates the outstanding contribution of an individual to our town. The nominees for this award will be put forward by the Mayor and residents will be able to vote for their favourite when the shortlist is announced.

Nominations close on 28 November 2021. The awards ceremony takes place on 4 March 2022 at Watford Colosseum.

To learn more or to nominate someone, visit our Audentior Awards website at www.audentiorawards.co.uk.

We have one of the **largest collections of new developments** in Hertfordshire and surrounding areas.



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Watford | Bushey | WD25 | Hemel Hempstead
 newhomes@imagine-group.co.uk #ImagineMyHome

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New affordable houses unveiled for local families

Along with our partner **Watford Community Housing**, we have unveiled the first set of homes to be completed as part of the **Watford Social Rent Programme**. Together, we're delivering **56 high-quality homes for disadvantaged local families**.

The first site to be completed, **Lutreola Close**, is now home to **three large three-bedroom family houses, with five off-street parking spaces, private gardens and auto-mist sprinkler systems for added fire safety**. The name **Lutreola** pays homage to a type of otter which was once native to **Watford**.

Social rent is typically around half the cost of renting an equivalent property on the private market.

Peter Taylor, Elected Mayor of Watford, explained: "When I was elected I made a promise to deliver more homes for social and affordable rent for local families. By supporting low-cost homes in Watford we can make sure there are opportunities for everyone in our town."

Tina Barnard, Chief Executive of Watford Community Housing,



added: "These are spacious, modern houses that offer an excellent standard of living at a sub-market rate. Watford Community Housing is wholly committed to working in partnership with the council to deliver these much-needed homes and I look forward to more

of the same as the development programme progresses."

In addition to £180,000 in government grant funding from Homes England, Watford Borough Council and Watford Community Housing each contributed over £130,000 to the development.



Watford's growing 'Dementia Friendly' community

We need you to help shape our action plan to support everyone impacted by dementia.

Watford Borough Council is improving access to all of its services and facilities for those impacted by dementia, in an effort to ensure the town is a place where those living with the condition feel understood, respected and supported. In recognition of this, the council was shortlisted for the LGC Diversity and Inclusion Award.

You can help us by completing our three minute survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WBCDementiaFriendly.

To obtain a hard copy of this survey, email our Older Adults Projects Officer, Hannah Foster at hannah.foster@watford.gov.uk

Watford's Golden Memories bringing joy to local people

Golden Memories, designed for people with dementia to socialise in a safe and familiar environment, runs every week at Vicarage Road. It is delivered by the Watford FC Community Sports and Education Trust in partnership with the council-run Watford Museum.

Funded by the Premier League and the Professional Footballer's Association, the programme

creates a space with various memorabilia and magic moments for people living with dementia to stimulate the senses and evoke personal memories.

Former Watford FC player, Walter Lees, said: "Golden Memories is a lifeline for people with dementia. I really appreciate it. I don't know if they realise the good they are doing for people in our situation".

With carers and loved ones also welcome to join, physical activities such as chair exercises and table football are introduced during the programme. The project also created a collaboration piece - The Activity Book - with the help of West Herts College and dementia groups, with 500 copies going out to support older adults, care homes, and people living with dementia.



If you would like to be a part of Golden Memories, email Hannah Foster at hannah.foster@watford.gov.uk or call 07510 593192.

To find out more about how former Watford player Walter Lees is feeling the benefit of the programme, go to www.premierleague.com/news/2242458

Current café listings

Dementia Friendly Watford offers a variety of social activities and clubs, with space for family and carers to get involved.

Forget Me Not Restaurant is back on Thursday 11 November and Friday 3 December (Christmas lunch) from 11.45am to 2pm

To find out more about what's available go to dementiafriendlywatford.com.

How your council lines up



In Watford we have an Elected Mayor, Peter Taylor, who was elected for a four-year term on 3 May 2018. You can contact the Mayor if you wish to raise an issue with him directly.

Watford Borough is divided into 12 wards. Each ward has three councillors whom you elect to represent you for a four-year term. Councillors can be contacted on the phone numbers shown or by email and are there for you to discuss any issues or concerns you have about your neighbourhood or the town.

Peter Taylor
Liberal Democrats
01923 278371
themayor@watford.gov.uk

Callowland



Dennis Watling (Lab)
07719 976512
dennis.watling@watford.gov.uk

Ian Stotesbury (LD)
07999 938202
ian.stotesbury@watford.gov.uk

Dawn Allen-Williamson (LD)
07891 914319
dawn.allen-williamson@watford.gov.uk

Central



Marilyn Devonish (LD)
01923 337282
marilyn.devonish@watford.gov.uk

Aga Dychton (LD)
07936 404305
aga.dychton@watford.gov.uk

Rabi Martins (LD)
01923 228713
rabi.martins@watford.gov.uk

Holywell



Nigel Bell* (Lab)
07783 812703
nigel.bell@watford.gov.uk

Favour Ezeifedi (Lab)
07535 284216
favour.ezeifedi@watford.gov.uk

Matt Turmaine (Lab)
07411 153095
matt.turmaine@watford.gov.uk

Leggatts



Bilqees Mauthoor (Lab)
07958 566037
grimston@watford.gov.uk

Richard Smith (Lab)
07976 350871
richard.smith@watford.gov.uk

Asif Khan* (Lab)
07931 529164
asif.khan@watford.gov.uk

Meriden



Amanda Grimston (LD)
07702 815172
amanda.grimston@watford.gov.uk

Jennifer Pattinson (LD)
07515 468580
jennifer.pattinson@watford.gov.uk

Peter Hannon (LD)
07359 121894
peter.hannon@watford.gov.uk

Nascot



Tom Osborn (LD)
01923 278605
tom.osborn@watford.gov.uk

Mark Hofman (LD)
01923 239893
mark.hofman@watford.gov.uk

Mark Watkin* (LD)
01923 255715
mark.watkin@watford.gov.uk

Oxhey



Maggie Parker (IDG)
07958 518838
maggie.parker@watford.gov.uk

Karen Clarke-Taylor (LD)
07963 345868
karen.clarke-taylor@watford.gov.uk

Imran Hamid (LD)
07451 989427
imran.hamid@watford.gov.uk

Park



Peter Kloss (LD)
07885 760658
peter.kloss@watford.gov.uk

Peter Jeffree (LD)
07854 842669
peter.jeffree@watford.gov.uk

Jessica Stiff (LD)
07920 095281
jessica.stiff@watford.gov.uk

Stanborough



Keith Crout (IDG)
07972 912711
keith.crout@watford.gov.uk

Simon Feldman (LD)
01923 278608
simon.feldman@watford.gov.uk

Tim Williams* (LD)
01923 663436
tim.williams@watford.gov.uk

Tudor



Stephen Johnson (LD)
07929 024712
stephen.johnson@watford.gov.uk

Bill Stanton (LD)
07545 045044
bill.stanton@watford.gov.uk

Darren Walford (LD)
01923 336450
darren.walford@watford.gov.uk

Vicarage



Jagtar Singh Dhindsa (Lab)
07803 610441
jagtar.dhindsa@watford.gov.uk

Sara-Jane Trebar (Lab)
07903 205269
sara-jane.trebar@watford.gov.uk

Nasreen Shah (Lab)
01923 253783
nasreen.shah@watford.gov.uk

Woodside



Richard Wenham (LD)
07891 138833
richard.wenham@watford.gov.uk

Glen Saffery (LD)
07939 218788
glen.saffery@watford.gov.uk

Ann Saffery (LD)
07803 714108
ann.saffery@watford.gov.uk

(IDG) = Independent Democrats Group (Lab) = Labour (LD) = Liberal Democrats

* Denotes Hertfordshire County Councillor (plus Stephen Giles-Medhurst, County Councillor for Central Oxhey, and Stephen Cavinder for Meriden Tudor)

Cassiobury Park fireworks

Saturday 6 November

watfordbigevents.co.uk

Music from 6pm. Fireworks at 7.30pm.

Food and drink stalls.



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BOROUGH
COUNCIL**