



WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

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- Committee members for Hemel Hempstead and Redbourn

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE NICKEY LINE

Planning and Funding Issues

Funds Obtained For Improved Surface East from Maylands

Countryside Management Service report they have secured funds for re-surfacing in Dacorum to run from Maylands in the direction of Redbourn as far as the money will fund – probably somewhere around Hunters Oak.

East Hemel Development

In a meeting with the development team, we were informed that the planning application for East Hemel should be submitted around March 2020. The latest plans include the Toucan crossing we requested on the new north south road being driven through the Nickey Line plus proposals for improving the Redbourn Bypass crossing by the M1. Discussions on the latter are expected with Herts Highways and we have been asked to participate in these. We have recorded a disagreement over the lack of a ramp access at Cherry Tree Lane rather than the less attractive alternative level access eastwards via Wood End Farm being proposed.

Lawes Trust Proposals for Redbourn Lane Roundabout Crossing

The Lawes Agricultural Trust latest consultation indicated the bridge proposal had been dropped and the pedestrian / cycle crossing at the roundabout may be moved away from the roundabout but it is possible that traffic volume concerns may affect the final solution. The proposed development is still not in SADC's proposed Local Plan.

Lottery Application

The Friends continue to liaise with Countryside Management Service (CMS) on proposals for a lottery application by CMS to fund heritage enhancements along the Nickey Line.

Harpenden News

Vandalism

The fixed metal panel at 5 Ways intersection was found lying against the gate which opens. A piece of the frame was left in the ground projecting by about 1 inch and was a trip hazard. St Albans DC contractors have made this safe.

Hemel Hempstead News

New Ramps at Hunters Oak and Spencers Park

Two new access ramps have been constructed – one to Hunters Oak (almost finished at the time of writing) and one to Spencers Park, close together at the western end of the two developments. Hunters Oak now has 3 formal accesses but Spencers Park still only 1 – more will be needed to this growing development.



Hunters Oak New Ramp



Spencers Park Ramp

Repainted Midland Railway Sign by Cherry Tree Lane Bridge

Observant users may have noticed a gleaming white gradient post by Cherry Tree Lane bridge. Our Hemel Hempstead team discovered the post when they cleared the vegetation from this bit of the bank.

A bit of detective work indicated the correct slope figures to be pop riveted on and, a dash of paint later, there we have a much restored sign. We hope to add back a second arm soon too.



Redbourn News

Redbourn Lane Car Park Entrance Widened

Following the Friends' request to Herts Highways to widen the entrance to avoid unnecessary risk of damage to users' vehicles, we are pleased to report this has been implemented. However, we continue to recommend users to go round the roundabout and turn right into the car park to enter as close as possible to 90 degrees (NB with care re the fast moving traffic).

Redbourn Classic Cars

The Friends supported the Redbourn Classic Cars event and we gained several new members. We again thank Luton and Dunstable Cycle Club for use of their Sustrans gazebo to weatherproof us....

Chequer Lane Ramps

Work has at last started on these new ramps. Progress has been hampered by wet, muddy conditions, for example a day was lost with a machine being stuck in the mud... We are hoping they will be finished by Christmas.



West Ramp From Chequer Lane



East Ramp From Chequer Lane

FRIENDS NEWS

I Dig Trees

The Friends have successfully obtained 2 packs of saplings (100 trees) from I Dig Trees – see www.tcv.org.uk/communities/i-dig-trees. We intend to plant some of them to block off the hedge gap by the disabled entrance in Park Hill, Harpenden to allow the removal of the unsightly chestnut fencing, and the rest where we have been hedge laying south of Knott Wood.

Facebook Group “The Nickey Line”

Our Facebook Group now has over 325 users who publish pictures, comments and stories about the Line as well as communicating problems noticed. Why not join the group today and add your favourite photos and stories?

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/363326034099616>

Ramblers Worldwide Holidays Walking Partnership

Book a holiday with Ramblers Worldwide Holidays (www.ramblersholidays.co.uk) and you can nominate Friends of the Nickey Line to receive £10 per head for UK holidays, £20 for short haul holidays, and £30 per head for long haul holidays.

****You must nominate Friends when you book! ****

Walks Programme

Identifying Trees In Winter – A Sunday in February, starting from Harpenden

Details to be announced – See our website nearer the date.

Dawn Chorus, Harpenden, Sunday 10th May at 5.45am, followed by Breakfast (provisional)

This event is being held jointly by the Friends and the local branch of the RSPB. This is the seventh time we have combined to run this biannual ever popular event, which will be held at Youth With a Mission at their site off Ambrose Lane Harpenden. Enter the site using the road alongside the Nickey Line by the Ambrose Lane bridge, and proceed to the back car park. There will be a charge for this event, details to be provided later. Booking and pre-payment will be required. Breakfast will be served about 7am. *Contact Roger on 01582 763560 if further details required.*

Hemel Hempstead Spring Watch Walk (about 3 miles) Sunday 10 May at 10am

Meet in the Gadebridge Lane car park by the white bridge. Our route will follow rural footpaths for the main part, so wear stout footwear as the paths could be muddy. We will be looking for signs of Spring, so if you have binoculars, please bring them. This event is open to all and there is no need to book. *Contacts Roger G on 01442 257030 and Roger T 01582 763560 if further information needed.*

Redbourn 4 mile walk, Sunday 14 June at 10am, visiting site of historical interest

This is likely to be a joint walk with the Ver Valley Society, but currently it is provisional. All will be welcome. *Details will be released later.*

Redbourn Butterfly Walk, Sunday 20 July at 10am

Meet in the car park at the bottom of Redbourn Lane, or if full, use street parking in Harpenden Lane. This annual walk has been run at Harpenden in past years, and is becoming very popular, with 14 different species this summer. Because of this, attendees will be limited to a maximum of 20. To get to the main area of interest the walk is about 1 mile in total, but there is the option to walk a further mile taking in another excellent location. Wear stout footwear. All are welcome and bring close focussing binoculars if you have them. *Pre-book by contacting Roger on 01582 763560 or rogerjan76@gmail.com or if further details are required.*

Work Parties

A number of work parties have taken place over and since the summer. Roger Green has encouraged a group of Hemel based volunteers to help with regular litter picks, and carried out further work creating good sight lines of the outstanding Cherry Tree Lane Bridge. Encouragingly, we will in future be covered by DBC for public liability insurance.

In Redbourn, the small orchard near Chequer Lane has recently been cleared of brambles and the coppicing towards Beaumont Halt was continued. Items that had been fly tipped were gathered in one location so that they could be cleared by St Albans DC. Also one sack of litter was removed. The latest working party consisted of Friends Volunteers plus CROWS (Community and Rights of Way Services) which resulted in 31 people – one of our largest ever work parties. We plan to cut the orchard again mid-summer to suppress the vigorously growing brambles. (This is due to happen on Wednesdays, weather permitting.)

Nearer Harpenden, the grass areas opposite Knott Wood were cut in late September, and the hedge line lowered to provide excellent views over the Ver valley. A number of large hazels

have been coppiced, and a section of hedge laid below Knott Wood. The Friends now have a scythe to help control young nettle and bramble growth. Opening up views of the Ambrose Lane bridge is planned for December.

Why Not Join Our Volunteer Team?

Our work parties are fun and enjoyable, and a great way of contributing to making the Nickey Line even more enjoyable for all. You can work for as long as you wish, and all contributions are welcomed. *Contact Geoff at geoffbunce@talk21.com or 07903 476584 to be added to our volunteer working party email notifications. Watch the website for details of future planned work.*

Next Year's AGM & Talk

A date for your diary – Next year's AGM will be at Redbourn Parish Centre on 14th May. Jim Cannon, co-author of the very readable 1977 book, "The Nicky Line", will be our speaker and, if you are interested in the Nickey Line and free, this should not be missed!

See our website www.nickeyline.org for events as they are announced.

Nickey Line Talk To Your Local Group?

We give illustrated talks a year on the History of the Nickey Line to local organisations who want a guest speaker, in return for a small donation to the Friends. If you know of any organisation who may want one, please suggest they email us on friends@nickeyline.org.

*****YOUR COMMITTEE – CAN YOU HELP?*****

We are pleased to welcome Hemel Hempstead based Karen Summers to our small but enthusiastic committee.

We ideally still need another **committee member from both Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead** - Even a small amount of your time would be very welcome to help us monitor these sections of the Nickey Line, give feedback to the Councils and to build our activities further. Can you help? Contact Chairman Dave Abernethy at friends@nickeyline.org or ring 01582 622771.

A Happy Christmas and Good New Year to all our Members

Friends of the Nickey Line 01582 622771 www.nickeyline.org friends@nickeyline.org