

# UPDATE

AUTUMN/WINTER 2009/2010



## CCTV

Royston First has sponsored an additional CCTV mast to boost security for the companies in South Close (off Orchard Way). The project was proposed and organised by FactoryWatch assisted by the PCSO's. Cemex Industries very kindly gave permission to site on their land and the CCTV surveillance unit in Stevenage provided the technical specification (and will monitor local activity). This is a small project, admittedly, but a good example of agencies combining to improve our town.

## YOU'VE SEEN THE HEADLINES

(and you're not the only ones!)

Our innovative approach of contracting uniformed police officers for additional patrols is not only working but is also attracting national attention. Other towns and forces have been asking for details of the Royston policing initiative made possible by a close working relationship with Hertfordshire Constabulary.

Not that we care much what others are thinking. What matters is that our experts in the front line (the officers on the beat) think it works. And the statistics seem to back them up. Obviously we can't tell what proportion of a 25% drop in the crime rate is down to our patrols ... all we need to know is that we've contributed. Mind you, some statistics are easier to attribute than others! There's not much doubt that the arrest by our patrol of two thieves in the process of helping themselves to £15,000 of equipment from a local company was chalked-up to Royston First. The fact that there've been no crimes against businesses recorded in the first three months of our patrols would also seem to be a strong indication that we're doing something right!

Various levels of police patrols are set to continue for the entire 5 years of the BID.



## SHUTTLE BUS - use it or lose it

At the beginning of October we launched a new bus service. It currently runs every 15 minutes for a two-hour period at lunchtimes Monday to Friday. Passengers are not charged to use this service.

The idea of this bus route is to make it easy (and free) for workers on the industrial estate to nip into Royston during their lunch hours. Whether this is to top-up on grocery items from Morrisons, pay road tax at the Post Office, drop-off dry cleaning, or simply to grab a sandwich or meal... we really don't mind! The idea is simply to provide a new service to those working on the industrial estate... whilst at the same time creating a new source of customers for the town centre.



# FREE

This Shuttle Bus service is for a trial period of three months. What happens to it after that will depend entirely on the observed patterns of usage. If you or your colleagues have been thinking of giving the bus a try, make sure you do so between now and Christmas!

**Stop Press:** In response to feedback from users, the shuttle bus will now return via Orchard Road - dropping-off any passengers from the town centre en route.

## Let there be light(s)!

In 2008, the Royston Town Centre Forum started the task of updating our Christmas lights. The objectives for the first year were relatively modest and consisted of new installations at The Cross and Angel Pavement.

This year our plans are far more ambitious in that we intend to link last year's areas with a combination of cross-street garlands and refurbished wall motifs. We will build on last year's display at The Cross (including new lights on NHDC's Christmas Tree) and then string eight cross-street displays up the High Street. The motifs from last year will remain at the ends of Angel Pavement but we will install refurbished Christmas Trees in the brackets on the walls the length of the Pavement.



Royston First is coordinating the new lighting display with Royston Town Council. Both organisations are contributing funding previously allocated to this project. In addition, the Royston Chamber of Commerce are donating funds collected for Christmas Lights in years gone by and The Brian Leslie Racher Trust has also made a generous grant.



## DON'T FEED THE PIGEONS – please!

It really is the simplest of messages. Feral pigeons will breed more or less in proportion to the amount of food available. In the wild, these pigeons would most probably lay an average of two eggs per year and probably succeed in bringing one of their offspring to adulthood. In a town situation and given unlimited food, one pair of pigeons can raise up to **18** offspring per year. And pigeons don't go off in search of new territories... they just join the flock!

This is the message Royston First will be relaying to the people of Royston. We have access to the editorial pages of a couple of widely distributed publications plus, given the fun they've had with the subject already, we can be fairly certain of coverage in the local press! In addition, we are and will be instituting a number of measures to reduce the population and attractiveness of Royston town centre as a roost.

One highly visible measure we have taken is to 'pigeon-proof' one of the empty properties in the High Street (No.16 – formerly Newdales Cycles). You will see the marked improvement in the property in contrast to a similar empty property next door. Regrettably we don't have the funds available to complete similar projects on every building that needs it. However, we are sponsoring the contractor to be in town regularly over the coming months (to continue the control program). This means very good prices\* can be obtained by anybody wanting to initiate proofing activities of their own.

**\*The job illustrated was completed for well under £300**



## In the pipeline...

Anyone who reads the local press will know that we are actively trying to deliver on our promise to **improve Angel Pavement**. As a key gateway from town centre parking to the High Street, we are seeking to replace an old, broken mixture of paving slabs and tarmac with a smart, new, unified paved surface. A multi-agency approach with NHDC (political representatives and officers), Hertfordshire Highways and Royston First all trying to coordinate on an issue fraught with Health & Safety issues is making progress – albeit slow!

The **parking initiative** involves all the players involved in Angel Pavement – together with the Department of Transport (and the Highways Act) thrown in for good measure! Royston First is currently focusing on a two-pronged approach looking at 1) boosting the on-street parking provision, and 2) converting some off-street spaces into free 1-hour parking. Either (or both!) options require detailed Traffic Regulation Orders to be produced and subjected to statutory consultations prior to implementation. We shall persevere!

Rather further down the line we have the **community cinema** project scheduled for delivery 2011/2012. Given the enormous social and budgetary implications of this project, preliminary work has already started. The initial focus is to negotiate a suitable venue. With this aim in mind, Royston Town Council has been formally approached with regards to the potential for re-purposing the Town Hall. Having embraced the concept, RTC is actively engaged in canvassing public opinion and investigating structural/cost issues. We will continue to update progress over the next three years.

Finally; the next project you are likely to see happening in Royston. In the near future, we intend to dress **empty shop windows** in the town centre. Most likely we will adopt the 'wallpaper' approach of attaching vibrant, attractive images to the windows of untenanted shops. Issues such as what images to display in which windows and when are currently being debated. Don't watch this space for progress... watch the retail spaces in the town centre!

## Collection of the BID levy

Royston First is pleased to report that the majority of levy bills have been paid remarkably quickly. Although the BID company will be actively trying to gain additional funding from external sources, the BID levy is the lifeblood of the whole operation. Prompt receipt of much of the revenue has been crucial in enabling many

projects to already be up and running or at the advanced planning stage.

Royston First has recently contacted any businesses with outstanding bills to remind them of their liability to pay the levy. In cases of hardship, monthly instalments have been negotiated with NHDC. However, there are a handful of invoices that remain unpaid despite all efforts. Because the BID is a statutory levy that by law must be collected from all the businesses within the BID area, regrettably, NHDC will be required to commence legal proceedings against those businesses that have not paid.

## Your representatives 2009/10

The Royston First Advisory Council is responsible for directing/delivering the actions specified in the BID Prospectus. All businesses within the BID boundary are entitled to propose candidates for the RFAC. The volunteers for this year are listed below, together with the business or organisation they represent.

John Gourd – Chairman (Johnson Matthey)  
Alan Barlow (ABA)  
Cath Boughton (The Listing)  
Jim Bullard (Archers Residential)  
Bill Davidson (RTCF)  
Norman Dawes (Meridian Line)

Cllr. Fiona Hill (NHDC)  
Steve Jackson (Enfield Electrical)  
James Keatley (NPK)  
Ian Knowles (Sharman Knowles)  
Stephen Larcombe (Limbach Banham)  
Kay Makowecki (Godshaw Jewellers)  
Rupert Matthews (Fourways)

Mike Mildwater (Hiremee)  
Oscar Sassoli (Penn Sassoli)  
Nigel Reader (Borders & Bows)  
David Smyth (WVKH)  
Nick Tait (Syrris)  
Susan Thornton-Bjork (RTC)

We thank everybody involved with the RFAC for their time and effort on behalf of Royston.