

STEVENAGE Comet

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April 2, 2026 Number 1 for local news & views since 1971

FREE

Can you help Frankie?

Bid to fulfil teen's dream

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Tributes paid to stalwart Joan Lloyd

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Partnership to boost gaming accessibility

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Ex-councillor pleads guilty to sex offences

Former aide to be sentenced at crown court



CHRISTOPHER DAY
Local Democracy Reporter

A former Stevenage Borough councillor has admitted to three counts of making indecent images.

Conor McGrath, 29, who now lives in Biggleswade, pleaded guilty to having 515 indecent images of children, which were found on his iPhone and iPad, Stevenage Magistrates' Court heard on Wednesday (March 25).

The court heard that police seized several of McGrath's devices at his home on March 25 last year in connection with an unrelated matter.

In mitigation, McGrath's solicitor

said the defendant "suffered trauma in his childhood" and has "fragile mental health".

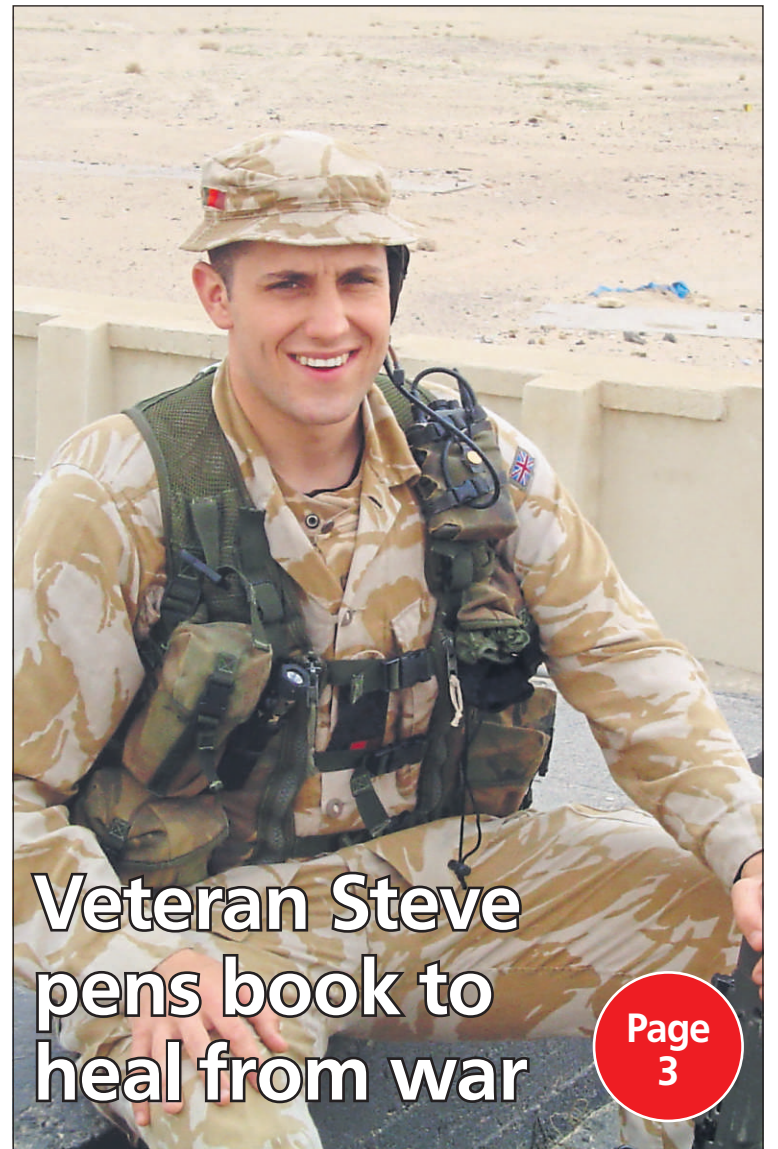
District Judge Alan Thorn told the defendant the matters fell outside his sentencing powers in the magistrates court and the matter would be sent to Crown court.

He served as a Labour councillor for Stevenage Borough Council's Bedwell ward for more than two years from January 2023 until April 28 last year.

He resigned his council seat four days later, on May 2, and stopped working as an aide to Kevin Bonavia, Stevenage's Labour MP, at around the same time.

■ Full story: Page 8

Conor McGrath was a borough councillor for Bedwell ward



Veteran Steve pens book to heal from war

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Access And
Mobility Bathrooms

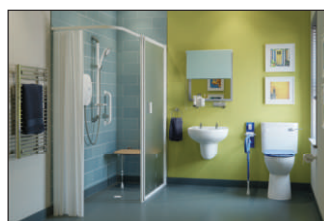


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LETCHWORTH EDUCATIONAL SETTLEMENT

229 Nevells Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4UB

Registered Charity No 311085

Meet, Learn, Create!

The Settlement is a 100 year old organisation based in the middle of the world's first Garden City. You will work in a unique Grade II listed building, the old Skittles Inn, built in 1907, which has been a centre for adult education since 1920. We are a registered charity, providing a wide range of courses, workshops and events to the local community. As we move into our second century, we are looking for a highly organised and proactive Administrative Assistant and Marketing Officer with the vision, skills and energy to help us deliver a bright future for the Settlement, and work at the very heart of our organisation.

What we are looking for in our Administrative Assistant:

- Strong organisational and time management skills
- Confident communicator with a friendly, professional manner
- Good working knowledge of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Outlook)
- Experience of using a database and/or accounting package
- Ability to prioritise tasks and work independently
- High attention to detail and accuracy
- Previous administrative experience is desirable but not essential

What we are looking for in our Marketing Officer:

- Strong writing and content creation skills
- Confident using digital marketing tools
- Creative thinker with excellent attention to detail
- Able to manage deadlines and prioritise effectively
- Experience in a marketing role is ideal, but not essential

Salary: £13.00 per hour/£11,757 per annum for a 19 hour week on a rota basis, term time only (42 weeks per year, including Easter and Summer Schools). Closing date: Friday 24 April 2026.

Salary: £13.00 per hour/£8,663 per annum for a 14 hour week on a rota basis, term time only (42 weeks per year, including Easter and Summer Schools). Closing date: Friday 24 April 2026.

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 5 May or Thursday 7 May 2026. Start date: Monday 8 June 2026 or earlier, subject to negotiation.

The full job description and application form are available on the Settlement's website or by contacting manager@letchworthsettlement.org.uk. Completed forms should be emailed to manager@letchworthsettlement.org.uk

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ALCOHOL & Licensing

Licensing Act 2003

Notice is hereby given that Poppy O'Neil has applied to North Hertfordshire District Council for the variation of a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of Spoke Cycles CC, Ridge Farm, Rabley Heath Road, Codicote, AL6 9UA.

This application is for the extension of days and hours pertaining to the sale of alcohol. Representations relating to this application must be made in writing to North Hertfordshire District Council, Licensing P O Box 7075 Manchester M28 8JX or by email to licensing@north-herts.gov.uk by no later than 17th April 2026.

All relevant representations, including names and addresses, will be supplied to the applicant and included in a public report.

The full application can be inspected at the Council Offices during normal working hours by prior appointment only or can be viewed on the Council public register available online at www.north-herts.gov.uk

It is an offence on summary conviction to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application, the maximum fine for which is £5,000

LICENSING ACT 2003
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that Hartsfield JMI School has applied to North Hertfordshire District Council for a premises licence in respect of: Hartsfield JMI School, Clothall Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 6PB

The application is to permit: The exhibition of films: Sun to Thur 10:00 – 21:00, Fri and Sat 10:00 – 22:00, Live music and recorded music: Sun to Thur 12:00 – 20:00, Fri and Sat 12:00 – 00:00. The sale of alcohol: Sun to Thur 12:00 – 22:00, Fri and Sat 12:00 – 00:00

Any person wishing to make representations in relation to this application may do so in writing to the Licensing Authority at: licensing@north-herts.gov.uk

Representations must be made no later than 20th April 2026 . The application may be viewed at the Offices of the Licensing Authority during normal office hours or online where applicable.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

STUART ROBERT JENKINS
(Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 49a Coppice Mead Stotfold Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 4JY, who died on 28/04/2025, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 03/06/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

HECKFORD NORTON, 19 Leys Avenue, Letchworth, SG6 3EB

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PLANNING



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 3JF

The following PROPOSALS are the subject of an application submitted to the Council.

PROPOSAL AFFECTING A CONSERVATION AREA

26/00649/FP 211 Icknield Way Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 4TT

Erection of one detached 4-bed self-build dwelling including parking and landscaping following demolition of existing detached dwelling.

26/00424/FPH Larch House Old Knebworth Lane Knebworth Hertfordshire SG3 6FS

Erection of four bay cartlodge with habitable accommodation at first floor and external staircase following demolition of existing stables and store.

PROPOSAL AFFECTING A LISTED BUILDING OR A BUILDING OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

26/00579/LBC 32 Sollershott East Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3JN

Replace 3no. windows on front elevation (ground floor and first floor bay windows and 4-light first floor window) with like-for-like single-glazed, leaded-light, timber windows.

26/00681/LBC The Green Man 5 High Street Offley Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3AR

Installation of 2x sign written house name letters, 1x car park sign, 1x small directional sign and 1x information panel.

26/00708/LBC Manor Farm Church Lane Graveley Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7BN

Removal of expanded metal lath and cement render and its replacement with vapour open materials. Remove timber panels in the Living Room to allow a full structural assessment of the brickwork behind prior to reinstatement.

26/00613/LBC The Biggin Queen Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1AB

Internal and external alterations including replacement and repairs to fenestration, external timber and rainwater goods repairs. Installation of gate.

PROPOSAL AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING

26/00639/FPH Chapel Barn Rabley Heath Road Codicote Welwyn Hertfordshire AL6 9UA

Erection of detached ancillary garden annex with decking and associated access steps

PROPOSAL AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING AND AFFECTING A CONSERVATION AREA

26/00612/FP The Biggin Queen Street Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 1AB

Installation of perimeter railing, gate and wall following removal of existing fence. Installation of free-standing Air Source Heat Pump and associated enclosure, new bin and cycle store together with hard and soft landscaping works including low-level lighting.

PROPOSAL CONSTITUTING MAJOR DEVELOPMENT, NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 15, CONTRARY TO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

26/00587/S73 Ickleford Mill Arlesey Road Ickleford Hitchin Hertfordshire SG5 3UN

Variation of conditions 4, 10,11,14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 31 32, 35 and 37 of outline planning permission 17/01955/1 granted 11.03.2024 for up to 71 dwellings and associated access, car parking, garages, landscaping and open space including demolition and removal of all existing structures, buildings and handstanding (all matters reserved except means of access).

The application details can be viewed on the Council's web site at www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/planning. Any person who wishes to make representations about the PROPOSAL should submit them in writing to this office by no later than 23 days from the date of this notice. For householder applications, in the event of an appeal against refusal of planning permission, which is to be dealt with on the basis of representations in writing, any representations made about this application will be sent to the Secretary of State, and there will be no further opportunity to comment at appeal stage.

Shaun Greaves - Development and Conservation Manager

Correspondence address: North Herts Council, PO Box 10613, Nottingham, NG6 6DW

Date: 02/04/2026

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PLANNING



STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

THE FOLLOWING APPLICATION(S) AFFECTING A LISTED BUILDING HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

26/00264/LB 108 High Street Stevenage	Listed building consent for internal alterations to facilitate conversion of existing commercial premises (Use Class E) to form 1 no. two-bedroom dwelling (Use Class C3).
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Members of the public may inspect copies of the applications, plans and other submitted documents online at www.stevenage.gov.uk or can be viewed on the Council's computers at the Customer Service Centre, Danestrete between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday. Assistance is available if required.

Anyone who wishes to make representations about any of these applications should write to the Council at Council Offices Daneshill House Danestrete Stevenage by 19 April 2026 under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, any comments can only be taken into account if they are available for public inspection before the applications are determined and therefore they cannot be treated confidentially.

For applications relating to householder developments, in the event of an appeal against the refusal of planning permission, which is to be dealt with on the basis of representations in writing, any representations made about the application will be sent to the Secretary of State, and there will be no further opportunity to comment at appeal stage.

DATED : 2 April 2026

SIGNED : Alex Robinson
Director, Planning & Regulation

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015

NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Proposed development at: Land at London Road, Gosmore, Hertfordshire, SG4 7RE. Take notice that application is being made by: Hornbeam Homes Ltd. For planning permission to: Residential development, parking, landscaping and access. Local Planning Authority to whom the application is being submitted: North Hertfordshire District Council, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF Any owner of the land or tenant who wishes to make representations about this application should write to the Council within 21 days of the date of this notice. Signed: Robert Shrimplin on behalf of Shrimplin Planning & Development. On behalf of: Hornbeam Homes Ltd. Date: 26.03.2026

Statement of owner's rights

The grant of planning permission does not affect owner's rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or in a lease.

Statement of agricultural tenants' rights

The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants security of tenure.

'Owner' means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than seven years. 'Tenant' means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.

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