

Norman Cutting

Independent - Opinionated - Local

Norm's Home Page

Norm's ramblings for the year of 2010

JANUARY 2010

I hope everyone has made the most of Christmas and the New Year, as it can only go downhill from now on. The latest betting is for a March election but then what? Dunno!

I've been sent a report by the government on how County Councils rate as far as highway maintenance go. You will be gob-smacked to know that Hertfordshire County Council is not high on the list – unless you turn it upside down and it then becomes a very high listed Council for poor maintenance.

Another document that appeared was which roads/footpaths are salted/cleared. Once again, another document that illustrates how the real world is so different from what Councillors and officers believe happen. For example since the schools have been closed, the couple of hundred yards of road between the Thomas Corum School and the junction with Chestnut Drive have been ploughed once and salted about 3 times. The CC list suggests salting to the county boundary – which is another ½ mile or so further on.

Strange world we live in.

The government encourages housing no-where near employment, so commuting is the norm. Then they complain that the 'rush hour' is a problem, but not to worry, we can cram you onto public transport that costs more to use than the average car. Not to worry, they allow the increase in fuel costs, parking costs, road costs and finally, a congestion charge which has little effect anyway. All these 'costs' do not go towards improving the commuting experience, but what choice do many have? They even insist on you travelling when you are unfortunate to become unemployed as any benefits can be stopped if you are not prepared to travel.

What started this thought? We had a couple of inches of snow today, and naturally, the country ground to a halt. The schools were closed as neither the teachers or pupils could get to school. I have these elderly bits of me called legs and feet. The elderly dog that takes me for a walk most mornings has four of the things. We managed to travel down the hill, along the canal tow-path and back up the hill without any real problems. OK, it took about 10 minutes longer than usual, but can't be further than most children are from their school. In fact, when I was a kid, it took about 30 minutes to walk from one end of town to the other. The only pupils who didn't make it in were usually from the Gaddesdens (I'm talking about Ashlyns). The primary and infant schools didn't have a problem either as both teachers and pupils generally came from the town. We even had factories and other employment here. Hemel was a long, but doable walk, if you really had to work there. Otherwise the few commuters to the big metropolis, walked to the station (like many did this morning) and hoped to catch the train. The puff-puffs made short work of a bit of snow or ice due to their weight most of the time (even leaves on the line was generally still in the future).

With the advent of all this global warming, we will be getting more cool and wet summers and cold and snowy winters I expect, so perhaps now is the time to actually change our environmental commute and work locally.

Some hope!!

I've just had another idea. They could use all this money raised from travelling taxes to encourage/build employment nearer to where the employees actually live. Whoops, that would mean the 'income' from travel tax would drop and that wouldn't do. Would it?

Here we are on Friday (8th), just 3 days since we had about 3 inches of snow. You will not be surprised to know that we still have 3 inches on the road outside. Main/through roads are passable with care, the schools are closed, the canal frozen over and it's very cold. Side roads are just that and lots of vehicles still 'parked' along the High Street and London Road as the hills are a challenge.

My 'priority' footpath clearance map isn't worth the paper it wasn't printed on – but the Borough men are shovelling for all their worth to get a clear space for the market outside the Town Hall (which they own!!). I heard that even Hemel is getting similar treatment as the main dual-carriageway (St Albans Road) from the magic roundabout to Jarmans' Park was a real struggle to get up yesterday.

Two quick reminders (OK, three), Berkhamsted Access Committee meeting this afternoon has been postponed, the 'planned' DHAG for Marlowes tomorrow has also been cancelled, but the consultation period regarding the re-opening of the Hemel Birthing Unit has been extended from 12th January to the end of the month, so you still have time to let the PCT your views on the 'temporary' closing of our birthing unit.

Isn't it exciting? The country gets back to normal and then another couple of inches of snow arrives. This time the government decides to ration salt for roads. Naturally this area stops for 3 days as no-one can get up the hills. After the 1st couple of days signs go up closing the roads due to accidents! I've seen at least two vehicles give up trying to get up a hill, manage to 'park' safely, lock car only to see it slide down into another due to the condition of the road!

You can tell an election is coming when a minister from this Labour government reports that the Tories are embarking on 'social engineering' when they suggest encouraging couples to get married and form a 'conventional' family. Kettle and black are included in a phrase that springs to mind.

Don't worry, I'll be back shortly!

Your local electrician is still [Norman Cutting](#),
so why not give him a call for your electrical installation work