History of borough status and the Audentior in Watford

On 18th October 1922 Watford Urban District was granted borough status. This is also when the coat of arms, known as ‘The Audentior’ was changed to the one we see today.

Plans for this had been discussed in the 1800s, but it was not until 1919 was a petition organized and presented to the King George V due to the outbreak of World War One. Borough status gave Watford the right to build a town hall, make by-laws and gain freedom from the local Government Board.

The Member of Parliament for the district, Mr Dennis Herbert, came from London with the Borough Charter. This was presented to the Earl of Clarendon at the Borough boundary at the junction of London Road and Haydon Road near Bushey arches. The Earl of Clarendon was Watford’s First Mayor.

# **Explanation of the Coat of Arms**

The deer or “harts” represents the County of Hertfordshire and the cross between them is from the shield of St Albans to commemorate the long association between the city and Watford and that Watford is part of the St Albans diocese (Bishops District). Watford was part of the lands of Abbey of St Albans.

The axe and stick denote that Watford has magisterial authority and the two wavy lines on either side of this represent the Rivers Colne and Gade which flow through Watford.

The two shells on either side of the rivers are taken from the coat of arms of the Earl of Clarendon. The word “Audentior” (which translates to “be bold”) comes from a quotation by Virgil “Yield not thou to ills but go forth to face them more boldly than thy fortune shall allow thee.”

 