

Stansted network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED MOVE OF ST MARY'S SCHOOL

As part of this process, Essex County Council held a meeting on Tuesday, 23 February for parents and other interested parties. It had been expected that a full presentation covering the reasons for the move to Foresthall Park, the design and advantages of the new school and ideas to mitigate issues for pedestrians and motorists in moving between the centre of the village including St John's (remembering that this is a Church school) and Foresthall Park would be included.

The Parish Council felt that the lack of information provided and the poor quality of the presentation (if indeed it could be designated as such) meant that neither the parents could be expected to judge whether the proposals were in the interests of their children nor could other parties who might be affected significantly by a change of use on the existing site.

The Parish Council has, therefore, asked for the consultation period to be extended (if necessary) and that another meeting is convened at which a comprehensive presentation should be made along with appropriate designs, drawings or models.

RELOCATION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OFFICES - CONSIDERING POSSIBILITIES

Assuming that the Primary Care Trust constructs the new health centre (negotiations are, so we are told, still on-going) then the Clinic will move from Crafton Green. The Parish Council will have to decide where to locate its offices given that there is a legal responsibility as well as a more requirement to be accessible to those with disabilities. In addition the existing office is too small for current needs. The Council is now considering its options, some of which are listed below:

Relocate to the ground floor of Crafton Green House; Lease Crafton Green to 3rd party and rent more appropriate accommodation; Redevelopment all or part of the site to provide better and additional community facilities.

It is right in this process to review all of the facilities now provided on the Crafton Green site and discussions on their future prospects will take place with Essex County Council and Uttlesford District Council. Any significant redevelopment (if this was to be pursued) will require external funding and no major development could occur without the achievement of such funding. No decision of substance will be taken without consultation with the parish.

PARISH BOUNDARY REVIEW

It is expected that Uttlesford District Council will undertake a review of the parish boundary now that the building of Foresthall Park is moving ahead. At present Foresthall Park is divided between Stansted Mountfitchet and Birchanger.

This appears an unsatisfactory on-going position to have two parish councils on one estate with an arbitrary dividing line. Given its close proximity to Stansted Mountfitchet, it seem logical to move the whole estate into this parish, unless of course it is decided to establish a new parish council for Foresthall Park.

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS RESURFACING UNADOPTED ROADS

The Parish Council has a long-standing policy to contribute up to 15% of the resurfacing costs on an unadopted road. This policy was introduced and has been successful in encouraging the quality of these roads to be improved.

The Council has received indications from Residents' Associations for two major roads that they intend to undertake works in 2010. Assuming the works take place then the budget allocated for 2010/11 will be fully used. Thus no further applications will be considered until the following financial year ie 2011/12.

USING THE PARISH COUNCIL NOTICEBOARDS

The noticeboards are well used and this reflects well on the level of activities in and around the village. However, space may be at a premium.

To minimise problems please observe a few simple rules:

- All notices should be A4 in size or smaller.
- Notices advertising events or services within Stansted take priority. Those covering other nearby communities are welcome but may be covered up temporarily if space requires.
- No commercial activities are to be advertised on these boards. Any such notices may be removed.
- Notices which are intended to remain on the boards for a period of time should be kept to a minimum and must be laminated. Tatty notices will be removed.
- The removal of notices is only permitted if the relevant date of the event/service has gone or if it is a commercial advertisement.

Hopefully the notice boards will continue to be a joy in appearance and information!

PARISH COUNCIL VACANCY

At the Council Meeting on 10 March, Mrs Iris Evans of Park Road was co-opted to fill the vacancy which arose following Gaye Ellington's departure from the village.

WILLOW TREE AT THE FOUNTAIN, CHAPEL HILL

As we go to print, soil testing is being undertaken at two properties close to the junction in order to establish the type of soil and the condition of the willow tree's roots. With this information, we can then assess whether the felling of the tree is likely to cause any knock-on effects in terms of heave to those buildings – all part of the risk assessment that we must undertake. We will keep you informed, but once the information is to hand, the Council can decide whether to fell the tree in one go, or whether it must be phased over a period of time.



The picture above shows how the junction used to look, with three established horse chestnut trees

and several people have suggested that we restore this look. However, since those times, cables and pipes have been laid underground, there are such things as sight-line requirements, health and safety and red tape!! There are strict rules relating to tree planting and the distance that must be kept from gas pipes etc. It is our intention to replace the willow, but it is likely that the planting will have to be kept to the eastern side of the junction, and perhaps with a smaller specie.

BIRCHANGER WOOD

In early March we were told that urgent work was required to trees in the wood, particularly along the boundary with the A120, but that the Trust had insufficient funds in its account to complete the work. The work was ordered by Hertfordshire County Council – Highways – as the trees posed a danger to traffic on the by-pass. As part owners of the Wood, the Parish Council shares liability for maintenance of the Wood and has agreed to contribute £500 towards these costs.

WINDMILL

We are still on course for completion of the project at the end of March. Thoughts are now turning to how we might celebrate the re-opening of the Mill when the better weather comes!



ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

As the weather improves, so the bedding plants should start to recover – the bulbs are certainly coming through now and hopefully we will see a host of golden daffodils before too long. Summer planting this year will be a repeat of last year, with marigolds in all the beds, including the newly formed bed at the corner of Blythwood Gardens.

We are, however, changing the hanging baskets. For many years we have planted them with mini cascade pink geraniums which are effective, but we have received comments that perhaps it is time for a change! We have listened, and this

year you will see mauve petunias with white daisies – any feedback in due course would be appreciated.

Finally on the gardening subject, we will be looking at gardens, tubs, beds and baskets for this year's Stansted in Bloom competition. Last year, the judges wandered at random around the village looking for award-winning displays, and some people were nominated by friends or neighbours. This less formal approach worked very well and will be repeated this year. In next month's Link you will find a cut-out nomination form which can be used to put forward your own efforts or those of someone else. The competition is not only for gardens, but any floral effort that has been made to brighten up a property or street scene.

SECURITY

We have recently learned of two burglaries from dwellings on one night in early March, following which some words of caution arrived from our Chief Inspector:

Uttlesford has one of the lowest recorded rates of domestic burglary - if you want the statistics we had 1.3 burglaries per 1000 households in the last quarter. That is amazingly low and we are well placed when measured against the most similar group of districts nationally that we are compared against. Rather than be satisfied with that we are committed to continuing to reduce the number of dwelling burglaries further because it is a horrible crime that we are keen to have as few victims as possible suffering.

One of the latest pieces of information that we have discovered is that many recent burglaries have been committed by entering through UPVC back doors. These doors have a number of different locking mechanisms – some can be locked by simply lifting the handle; In others lifting the handle drives across a closing bolt but a key is needed to lock the door. It is clear from speaking to recent victims that they had thought they were locking their doors when they were just closing them and actually if the handle was operated from the outside their door would still open. This mechanism is also available on conservatories and can be used with wooden doors so this message is for everyone.

Please make sure you know how your locks operate so when you are locking up you are, in fact, locking up. If you need any assistance with door locks or are confused about this message then please speak to our crime reduction advisor, Peter

Caulfield on 0300 333 4444 and he will be happy to advise you.

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

7 April	Full Council
14 April	Open Spaces
21 April	Full Council
28 April	Finances & General Purposes

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Catherine Dean	813579
Jo Freeman	812524
Bridget Gott	814440
John Hudson	814489
Peter Jones	813252
Janice Loughlin	812346
Tudor Owen	812825
Ruth Rawlinson - V/Chairman	814222
Jonathan Rich	813112
John Salmon	814789
Dan Scott	815098
Geoffrey Sell - Chairman	815925
Bill Stiles	813172
Valerie Trundle	813433

CONTACT US!

Clerk - *Ruth Clifford*
Admin Assistant - *Anne Court*
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Phone/fax: 01279 813214 10am - 1pm

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

The deal with South Cambridgeshire District Council to make savings by sharing staff, accommodation and computing facilities has well and truly fallen through with an unedifying spat of claim and counter-claim in the press between the two councils. The falling-out was precipitated by a back-bench revolt within South Cambs. The Cambridge based council runs a cabinet-style system of decision making whereas Uttlesford runs the more inclusive committee system. It seems that the South Cambs cabinet didn't involve those councillors outside the cabinet until a deal was almost sewn up; and they didn't like it! Uttlesford's Conservative administration also wants to switch to the cabinet system next year. I think we need to tread carefully and learn some lessons from this recent costly debacle.

There have been complaints on behalf of pedestrians about the appallingly long-standing unsafe surface of Water Lane near the railway Black Bridge. Discussions with Essex Highways have

been arranged, though I don't want to raise expectations about an early improvement as everyone has been avoiding responsibility and action to repair the surface for years.

Walson Way is expected to have been opened through to Church Road by Easter. Once that is done, the 510 bus will be routed along Walson Way and will use the smart bus stops that have been installed. Essex County Council has told me that there isn't time for the 7/7A bus route to be extended to Walson Way to provide a link to and from the 510 and that part of Stansted. I have told them that I disagree as I believe it would add only 30 seconds to the journey of the 7/7A.

(Cllr Alan Dean)

Local Development Framework-Further Consultation

All households should have received a questionnaire from the Council about its 'Local Development Framework'. It is entitled Developing Uttlesford. From 15 February until 9 April the Council is asking among other things, for opinions on the location of 4000 new houses in the district over the next decade and beyond.

Some readers will remember that two years ago four options were put forward for consideration, with the District Council stating its preferred option to be Option 4, a 3,000 home new town between Elsenham and Henham. This new consultation is also seeking views on where the balance of 1,000 houses should go to complete Option 4. The document states that the Council would like to hear your views on whether you agree with the Elsenham proposal or whether you think there is a better option, and why. If you believe like me that a significant new development at Elsenham would have a detrimental effect upon Stansted, it is important to respond to this consultation.

In the last two years various technical studies have been carried out and each option for housing growth has been examined and compared. So the consultation also asks a question about whether Option 4 is the best one, or whether residents would prefer a new settlement on land at either i) north-east of Great Chesterford or ii) Boxted Wood, Stebbing, or iii) Easton Park (between Stansted Airport and Great Dunmow), or iv) Chelmer Mead, Nr Great Dunmow.

Other questions in the consultation are about airport growth, business growth and local jobs and traveller and gypsy sites.

There is also the opportunity to respond on-line at www.uttlesford.gov.uk. All the technical studies are also available at links from the same webpage and in paper copy at Stansted library. Your attention is drawn to the Comparative Transport Analysis and the Comparative Sustainability Assessment. Do you agree with the scoring system in the latter analysis that narrowly rates Elsenham as the best location for most new housing? Do you agree with the assumptions used in this assessment? Tell the council what you think.

Council Tax 2010/11

The Council has agreed to a 2.9% increase for the forthcoming financial year. For Band D this amounts to £147.42 per annum. Although this is a welcome reduction from last year's increase of nearly 5%, I believe more could have been done. For the current financial year 2009/10 there is a substantial under-spend with £761,000 being committed to the reserves. I supported an amendment which would have meant a 1.2% increase in council tax. This was however defeated.

(Cllr Geoffrey Sell)

OTHER CONTACTS

Uttlesford District Council Members

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Member of Parliament

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