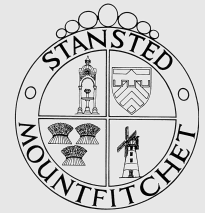


STANSTED NETWORK NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS



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COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH – VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Complaints about speeding regularly top parishioners' complaints. Whilst the police undertake checks more effort is needed. Nearly a year ago our local police appealed, without success, for volunteers to be trained for Speedwatch. At that time, Essex Police were offering to fund 120 schemes in the county. This has been achieved so funding will have to be provided through the Parish Council.

In order to launch a Speedwatch scheme, a minimum of 6 volunteers are needed in order to run two teams. However, before investing in the equipment, the Parish Council believes that not less than ten volunteers need to come forward.

Speedwatch volunteers would operate equipment which would monitor the speed of vehicles. Offenders, using number plate identification, will be reported. After second warning letter, offenders will be visited and spoken to by local police.

If you are interested, or want more information, please contact the Parish Council offices (01279 813214) or our local police (07801 461 666).

PREPARING FOR WINTER

Assuming snow and ice makes an appearance or two in coming months, the Parish Council is attempting to see which roads and footpaths could be gritted to improve safety and facilitate moving around.

It is assumed (but a check is being made) that Essex County Council will, as last year, grit the main roads and bus routes along with the footpaths in the main commercial areas. Additional requests have been made to grit Walson Way, Station Road and St John's Road (to help St Mary's School).

Apart from the entry to the Day Centre, Uttlesford District Council has little responsibility in this area, so any further action falls to the Parish Council. Subject to clearance from our insurance company, the Council will aim to grit some of the main footpath routes such as Cooper's Alley and Crafton Green Road. No action will be taken in terms of roads.

Seven grit bins are to be purchased and will be filled so as to be available in severe weather conditions. Taken in conjunction with existing bins there will be eleven bins positioned throughout the village.

BE WARNED - WHEEL CLAMPING OFF CAMBRIDGE ROAD

First of all some facts. The landowner of You're Furnished is within his legal rights to employ a wheel-clamping firm to penalise unauthorised parking. Second, the firm undertaking the clamping is licensed. Third, the level of unlawful parking has increased following the opening of Tesco reflecting the higher level of business on Cambridge Road. Fourth, the wheel-clamping activity has nothing to do with Tesco as a company.

The advice is clear - do not turn into or park along the private road between You're Furnished and Tesco, nor in the car park at the rear, unless you are a customer of You're Furnished. If you remain on Cambridge Road, then the clamping company can take no action against you. The Parish Council is in touch with the owner of the property to see if the warning sign detailing the charges levied, if wheel clamped, can be made prominent from whichever direction a driver approaches.

Following a request to Essex Highways, it is hoped in 2012 to increase the number of short-term parking bays on Cambridge Road, introduce a loading bay for delivery vehicles and discuss a pedestrian link to the Crafton Green car park.

Grit will be delivered by Essex County Council and stored by the Parish Council at a central point.

Residential roads (unless possibly on a bus route) will not be gritted. If residents could clear outside their own properties, this could be a major help. The elderly and those unable to cope will need help from all of us. Hopefully these precautions will prove unnecessary!

RESIDENTS' PARKING SCHEME IN LOWER STREET/GROVE HILL

The scheme as advertised was implemented by Essex County Council and reflected the views of the majority of the residents. Only a few objections from the Mews were received and these were withdrawn.

This scheme is a trial and Essex County Council has indicated that a review after six months will be reasonable. At that stage changes to the scheme will be considered and, between now and then, the Parish Council would welcome views on the operation of the scheme.

The early issues relate to the large number of empty spaces during the day and the impact on businesses in the immediate vicinity. The Council is conscious of these concerns and will be seeking ways to mitigate the impacts when the scheme is reviewed.

PARKING ISSUES AROUND BENTFIELD SCHOOL

A number of complaints have been received about illegal or inconsiderate parking around the entrance to Bentfield School.

Damage to the verges at the corner of Rainsford Road and Pennington Lane will be prevented by installing wooden posts and, at the same time, limiting parking obstruction.

Residents in the stretch of Rainsford Road from Pennington Lane to Croasdaile Road will be consulted to see whether there is support for the introduction of parking restrictions covering the periods around the arrival and departure of pupils at the school

SURFACE OF WATER LANE

Essex County Council has adopted a stretch of Water Lane to enable the authority to undertake limited maintenance work. This is a route from east of the railway to the station and the village and should benefit the residents of Foresthall Park and pupils at the new St Mary's School. It is hoped that surfacing work will happen in the first quarter of 2012.

BONFIRE NIGHT

Our sincere thanks to all those who helped stage a most successful and well-attended event on 5 November. The weather was kind to us for the setting up, the event itself, and the tidying up on Sunday. We are keen to find more younger volunteers for setting up the event, so if you would like to get involved, please contact the Parish Clerk.

SHAPING THE BUDGET FOR 2012/13

Although expenditure is projected to rise you will be pleased to hear that council tax payments should fall. Both of these conclusions reflect, to a large extent, the inclusion of the whole of Foresthall Park into this parish.

It is assumed that litter and dog bins will be installed on Foresthall Park and will require to be emptied while play equipment and play areas will need to be regularly checked.

The Parish has benefited this year from a rates rebate and insurance premiums below budget plus payment back from the original installers of the skatepark. This surplus will be used to fund a number of small projects and costs relating to the windmill, the Recreation Ground, printing a footpath booklet, replacing the hanging baskets and purchasing grit bins and spreaders.. These gains will not have any impact in terms of council tax. The budget will be confirmed in its final form at the council meeting on 14 December.

BONFIRE TO CELEBRATE THE DIAMOND JUBILEE

On the 4 July, as part of the celebrations for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, 2012 bonfires are to be lit across the country.

The Parish Council proposes to be part of this celebration with a bonfire possibly located as on Bonfire Night at Elms Farm. As in 1977 consideration is being given to holding a firework display - more later.

Please let the Parish Clerk know of any events being planned.

PROPOSED NEW HEALTH CENTRE

We have been waiting for the developers of the proposed site in Lower Street to submit a planning application. Just as they announced that they were ready to do so, we have heard that the PCT have changed the goalposts. The Parish Council had not, as we go to print, been made aware of any of the detail and it seems the community is being ignored yet again.

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Uttlesford was due to receive during November a planning application for a building in Lower Street incorporating a health centre. For the past three months, the developer has been designing a new road layout for the complicated junction at the bottom of Chapel Hill. The new design is intended to overcome one of the major concerns about a health centre and shop at the former Hilton Cars location - traffic congestion. As Link was going to press, we heard that the PCT wants to redesign the building, creating yet more delay. This is yet another major disappointment.

At the end of October the council's cabinet decided to abolish the garden waste skips that come fortnightly to Stansted's Lower Street car park. The only garden waste service that Uttlesford will provide from April 2012 is a subscription to a doorstep collection. This will use an additional wheelie bin of the same size as the existing green recycling bin. The service will cost £40 per annum and there may be an additional purchase cost for late subscribers. No decision has been made on whether the existing collection service of garden waste sacks will continue.

I carried out a survey of users of the skip over the last weekend in October and found out the following:

- One in three users of the skip comes from outside Stansted
- The wheelie bins service will be no good for six in ten skip users as the bins will not be big enough
- Nine in ten skip users want that service to continue

- Fewer than one in four skip users say they will subscribe to the new service
- Six in ten skip users say they will be forced to drive their garden rubbish to the Bishop's Stortford amenity site, provided that service remains available to Essex residents

I would like to think that the Council will remain open to public representations on the very popular skip service. At the start of October no details of objections had been made public, including in the relevant cabinet paper.

Iris Evans and I took part in a well-attended and successful meeting on 31 October with the aim of setting up a residents' association for the Mountfitchet Estate. Several estate residents have agreed to meet again at the end of November to consider some of the issues that were raised and to take the next step towards creating the association.

(Cllr Alan Dean)

NEWS FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

As I write this article we are entering the National Adoption Week, although I do suspect that by the time you read this in the Link the intent will have passed and been forgotten by most people other than those who are inspired to come forward as potential adoptive parents. The trouble is that the media have high jacked all this and now the government has decided to look into the manner in which adoption agencies carry out their business, so maybe it won't be forgotten so quickly.

I write about all this with some passion because Essex County Council is an adoption agency and I have been the member of one of the panels that perform a statutory function in this for nearly seven years. The one thing that I have learnt is the need to set aside our prejudices because things are seldom what we would expect and most importantly, our preconceived ideas are invariably wrong. The first of these is that babies who come for adoption are not as they were in the past, relinquished babies from teenage mums, but are almost exclusively children from mothers suffering with serious drug and alcohol abuse and often those babies need to undergo extensive treatment to withdraw from that addiction. The dreadful fact is that the long-term effects of parental drug abuse or the sadness of foetal alcohol syndrome that has a detrimental ef-

fect on the life chances of a significant number of children. In fact the largest majority of children who are approved for adoption come from a background of domestic violence, serious neglect or abuse and parents suffering from substance abuse. In fact, in seven years I have only seen one relinquished baby.

Adoption can provide traumatised and needy children with a loving long-term family that they much need and similarly give people the chance to have the joy of being parents. But we do need to get the process right.

So, to get back to the main reason for the National Adoption Week, we need to recruit more adoptive parents. It is, of necessity, a long and exhausting process to become accepted and ultimately have a child placed with you, but when it all works well it is the perfect outcome for all.

For me, as a member of the panel, the joy that adoptive parents display more than offsets the harrowing process we go through reading of the dreadful experiences some children are subjected to.

(Cty Cllr Ray Gooding)

DATES OF MEETINGS

7 December Finance Committee
14 December Full Council
11 Jan Open Spaces
18 Jan Full Council

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!

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PCSO's (Stuart/Kelly) Tel: 07801 461 666

Neighbourhood Watch
www.stanstednhw.org.uk

fect on the life chances of a significant number of children. In fact the largest majority of children who are approved for adoption come from a background of domestic violence, serious neglect or abuse and parents suffering from substance abuse. In fact, in seven years I have only seen one relinquished baby.