

# Stansted network

## NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

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### THE PARISH BUDGET FOR 2011/12 HAS BEEN AGREED

Expenditure in 2011/12 is estimated at £163,000, an increase of 11% over the expected outturn in the current year. Allowing for more dwellings, especially at Foresthall Park, the rise in council tax for a property rated in Band D is estimated at 6-7%. To put this rise into perspective, it represents about £3 per year for a Band D property or about 6p per week. In total the Parish Council levies a rate for Band D equivalent to about £1.20 per week.

The main changes affecting the proposed budget are summarised below:

- Expenditure has increased in the following areas - five yearly test on memorial stones (required by law), plant costs including more plants in hanging baskets, recommencing the repair fund for the Windmill and the electrical and structural testing of the street lights (required for insurance) and maintenance of the skatepark. So far as staffing is concerned, an amount has been included to increase staff hours if Foresthall Park becomes part of the parish while holiday cover is now budgeted for litter collection and cleaning and the full fifty-two week cost for checking play equipment. Spending on unadopted road maintenance will be lower.
- Income is likely to rise from Crafton Green car park and interest receipts.

Looking forward to the following year it is likely, but not certain, that Foresthall Park will become part of this parish with the population here rising by about 30 % once the estate is completely developed. Both income and expenditure will rise and over the next months detailed work will be undertaken to assess the impact and ensure that cost effective services are delivered to the larger parish.

### POLICING IN STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

At a meeting of the Parish Council, Robert Chambers, Chairman of the Police Authority, indicated that the police station, located at Hargrave Close, is likely to close by the middle of 2011. Whilst the Parish Council does not consider the closure of a rarely open station to be much loss, it is strongly opposed to our local police being based away from the parish.

Once the new health centre is operational, there will be space in Crafton Green to house the local police and provide a reception which will handle information

relating to the police. Once this was in place, it is likely that parishioners will have a better service with accessibility in a location which many visit. A financial contribution would be sought from the police.

However, there is a timing issue given a closure in mid-2011 and the availability of space in Crafton Green perhaps in the first half of 2013. Although an offer of a mobile police station has been made, this will not meet the need and further discussions will be needed to seek a solution.

Currently PCSOs in Essex are not allowed to issue tickets for parking offences including obstruction. The Parish Council is lobbying the Chief Constable to reverse this policy given that this parish has only one police officer. This simple change would improve road safety on the streets.

### THANK YOU FOR MAKING FIREWORK NIGHT SO SUCCESSFUL

The response to the firework display in the village has been favourable and for the first time covered all costs.

It is intended to improve the display next year and hopefully, with the growth in the local population, attendance will grow and the event will again be successful, enjoyable and safe.

Helpers are needed to set up on Saturday morning, 5 November 2011 and to clear up on the Sunday morning. If you have your new diaries or calendars to hand and would be happy to help, then please let Ruth Clifford know either by emailing [parishcouncil@stansted.net](mailto:parishcouncil@stansted.net) or by telephoning 01279 813214. Thank you again for your support and help.

### FILLING GRIT BINS - CHANGE IN ECC POLICY

Formerly Essex County Council offered to fill and refill grit bins and so the Parish Council sought to encourage residents to take advantage of this offer.

This policy has now changed and, whilst ECC will make a bulk drop of grit into a safe place designated by the Parish Council, this leaves the problem of distribution as the Council has no suitable transport while staffing may be an issue.

With the existing bins nearly empty, it is essential to see if these can be filled. By the time you read this, you will know if we have succeeded.

## PARKING ISSUES – CAMBRIDGE ROAD

Following representations from parishioners, we met in mid-December with representatives of the Highways Authority, Uttlesford, the Colchester Parking Partnership (enforcement officers) and the Police to look at Cambridge Road and Clarence Road.

It was agreed that there were various measures that could be taken to improve on-street parking (thereby supporting our local businesses) but also to keep the traffic flowing. The items below have now been sent to Essex County Council for comment and, hopefully, implementation. In addition, we hope to persuade Uttlesford District Council to allow one hour's free parking in both of our Pay and Display car parks.

- Junction protection markings for Clarence Road where it meets Cambridge Road, but not to extend beyond the eastern side of the driveway of the first house on the left, nor the start of the white wooden rail on the right.
- No waiting at any time restriction on western side of Cambridge Road from the end of the pedestrian crossing zig-zag markings along to Croasdaile Road.
- Reduce the length of the "no waiting at any time" restriction on the eastern side of Cambridge Road at the southern end of the section outside the Greens Building.
- Reduce the length of the bus stops on each side of the road to increase available limited waiting areas.
- Reduce the length of stay within the limited waiting areas from one hour to thirty minutes.
- White line the limited waiting areas to show individual parking bays.
- Introduce a Loading Bay restriction outside Tesco Express, 6am-6pm – this would serve both Tesco and the Co-op stores, but allow public parking after 6pm.

### **Dunmow and Stansted Youth Centres "Right to a Life" Belfast, Northern Ireland Exchange Project**

This project began back in April 2008 when youth workers in discussion with 2 groups of 15 year old young people from Stansted and Dunmow Youth Centres planning what they wanted to do in the Summer term. The answer was "don't know, it's boring round here, I hate living here, my life is rubbish". The discussion then continued trying to find out why they



felt that way and how we could help them realise that maybe their lives weren't that bad and how they could make it better. The second aim was to prove to the young people in Belfast that two groups of young people 10 miles apart could be friends and work together and therefore why could two groups of young people barely a mile apart not be friends and work together. One of the youth workers had a friend who lived and worked on the Shankill Road in West Belfast as a Youth and Community worker and had discussed with her in the past about the problems that young people faced living in Belfast and how they were affected by them.

We then decided to speak to some youth centres in Belfast to see if they would be interested in participating in an exchange project. In May three youth workers went to Belfast and visited several youth centres and community centres and spoke to lots of people. It was decided to do the project in 3 parts with Stansted Youth Centre linking with a centre in the Ballymurphy area of the city and Dunmow Youth Centre linking with a centre in the Shankill Road area and then bring both groups of young people together in Essex in April 2010.

On our return the young people were very enthusiastic with the idea of the project and began researching the area we were going to and the history behind the unrest that has caused a lot of the problems for the young people who live there. In August 2008 ten people flew out to Belfast and linked with the Corpus Christi Youth Centre in Ballymurphy for five days. It was an intense, hectic five days of visits, talks, debates and fun.

Places visited were the Crumlin Gaol, Stormont, Northern Ireland's Government, The Republican Museum, the Odyssey Centre. We were given a tour of the "Peace Wall and Murals" by an expert guide who explained the reasons behind them and also took part in a "Youth Fringe" debate for the BBC with a panel of professionals, the Mayor of Belfast, Chief of Police for Northern Ireland, Head of the Youth Service for Northern Ireland and MP's from two of the main political parties in Northern Ireland.

The last two days were spent on the Antrim Coast with 12 young people from the Corpus Christi Youth Centre where we visited the Giants Causeway, Carrick –a-Rede Rope Bridge and Portrush for some fun and chill out time before flying back home. Since that initial visit Dunmow and Stansted Youth Centres have visited Belfast 3 more times and the Belfast young people have visited Stansted. All 4 youth centres have forged strong friendships with each other and speak regularly either by text or on Facebook.

We are now recruiting the next group of young people who would like to get involved in this exciting and very rewarding project. In November it was shortlisted to 6 out of 460 youth projects from all over the country for a Young People Now award for excellent youth work. Sadly we did not win but just to be shortlisted was a

huge achievement and shows what an excellent experience this is for young people to get involved with!!

The youth centre is open Wed, Thurs 7-9.30pm and Fri 7.30-10pm and is totally free to young people aged 13yrs+. Come down, say hi and find out more about what we offer!!!

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT OF ELMS FARM**

The Gemmill Family are holding a public exhibition into the potential for residential redevelopment of Elms Farm, Church Road on Saturday 26 February 2011 at the Stansted Day Centre between 9am - 4pm. All members of the public are welcome to attend, community views will be sought and all comments received will be used to inform the planning process. Chris Tivey on 01621 868404/07835 927754 or [chris@octaplanning.com](mailto:chris@octaplanning.com)

### **NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.**

#### **Looking ahead to 2011**

What will 2011 bring on the council front? It will see the District Elections in May. However, there will be no Parish Council elections in Stansted or Birchanger because of the boundary review relating to Foresthall Park. Hopefully, we will see a definitive local development framework which will finally consign Option 4, the large scale development at Elsenham to the dust. We should also see some progress on the new health centre at Stansted. It looks increasingly as if it will be on the site of the Castle Sports Cars site in Lower Street.

#### **Keeping warm in winter**

Keeping yourself warm in winter is very important especially for older people, as it is clear that more people fall ill in cold weather and some of the illnesses people get, such as pneumonia and bronchitis can be fatal.

Being more energy efficient at home could help you stay warm this winter and save you money. Uttlesford is a partner in the Hertfordshire and Essex Energy Partnership (HEEP). This has been established to provide a simple, one stop shop for anyone interested in improving the energy efficiency of their home. HEEP will do the legwork for you by checking to see if you are eligible for a grant from a variety of different funding bodies and initiatives such as Warm Front and the Low Carbon Buildings Programme. The partnership also has its own extra government funding allowing it to offer householders extra grants and loans over and above what is available from these national schemes.

All measures are installed by council approved installers, so you can be sure that any work necessary will be carried out in a high standard. To find out more call HEEP free on 0800 980 6026 or visit [www.heepgrant.org](http://www.heepgrant.org)

### **Uttlesford ranked 8th best place to live in UK**

Uttlesford has been named as one of the best places to live in Britain. The study has been carried out by the Halifax and the aim is to compare living standards in more than 400 local council areas nationwide. It compares their performance on a range of 'quality of life' indicators such as education, employment and health.

Most residents of Uttlesford would agree that we are fortunate to live here. We are blessed with much attractive countryside, historic villages and towns combined with proximity to London and Cambridge.

Of course, such an award is something of a double-edged sword. Not only does it affect central government funding but also serves to increase development pressures. High house prices makes it more difficult for people to get a foot on the housing ladder.

#### **Cabinet adopted for 2011**

A meeting of the Full Council in December passed by 19 votes for and 11 against the recommendation that the Council adopt an executive system of governance. This will mean that from 8 May 2011 Uttlesford will have a Leader and Cabinet. It will replace the existing policy committees. Unfortunately, the voting was largely on party lines. I argued that none of the questions raised about the cost of switching to the new system, how scrutiny and community engagement would work had been answered. The reply from the Leader of the Council was that this would be left to the Constitution Task Group which would meet in the New Year.

#### **Government financial settlement**

We also received details of our provisional grant settlement from Central Government. The Revenue Support Grant accounts for 39% of the council's total revenue budget. We have been told that we will receive just under £3.2 million for 2011/12 which is a cut of 17%. In 2012/13 we will receive just under £2.8 million, which is a further cut of 13%. It is perhaps not surprising that the Council has not done well under this financial settlement. Over the last two years we have built up significant reserves. We are unlike most councils not as dependent on central government grant.

#### **(Cllr Geoffrey Sell)**

There was a lot of national press coverage just after New Year about the increasing generational divide between those who have a home and those who haven't a chance of getting on the housing ladder. The local strategic partnership economic development group which I chair has been receiving some alarming news in recent months. This can be summed up as Uttlesford increasingly becoming a place for older people and less welcoming for people of working age who want to work and live round here.

The group has been pondering the following information. In the next 20 years the Uttlesford population aged over 65 is forecast to nearly double from 12,000 to 22,000. Yet the number of residents in the working age group is expected to decrease slightly, according to the Office of National Statistics. Already, the proportion of residents round here in the 20-35 age-group is over a third smaller than in places like Chelmsford and for England as a whole. Perhaps surprisingly, pay rates in Uttlesford are lower than in Harlow yet homes here are more expensive; they cost 13-times that average local salary, so are financially out of reach of most people employed locally. One newspaper reports headlined this "House prices run young buyers out of Uttlesford".

The message is fairly clear. Uttlesford needs more higher-paid jobs, more young people and more homes for them to live in that are affordable if Uttlesford is not to become increasingly a place for elderly, retired people.

Planning for new homes has not been going well in the past two months. Uttlesford has lost two appeal cases because its own long-term plans were considered by the government to be inadequate. The first was for a moderately sized development in Elsenham. The second was over a gipsy and traveller site in Little Hallingbury.

The council's plan has to show at least 5 years' worth of future deliverable housing. The Elsenham inspector wrote in his report "in the light of the council now proceeding to review its housing targets, the consequent delay to the Core Strategy and the inability to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites, dismissing the appeal would not be justified". Because there is no longer a sound council plan, Uttlesford's ability to refuse planning applications has been weakened.

Government ministers were making plain over the Christmas and New Year holiday that new homes must be built and price rises must be kept down by increasing the supply of new homes to meet a growing shortfall. We have heard a lot about localism recently, but it is quite clear that localism doesn't give councils and communities the right to do what they like in the face of a growing housing crisis.

(Cllr Alan Dean)

**DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| 9 February  | Finance      |
| 16 February | Full Council |
| 23 February | Open Spaces  |

**CONTACT DETAILS**

Clerk - Ruth Clifford  
 Admin Assistant - Anne Court  
 Email: parishcouncil@stansted.net  
 Phone/fax: 01279 813214 10am - 1pm  
 www.stansted.net

**Uttlesford District Council Members**

|                                     |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Alan Dean</i>                    | Tel: 01279 813579 |
| Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk   |                   |
| <i>John Hudson</i>                  | Tel: 01279 814489 |
| Email: cllrhudson@uttlesford.gov.uk |                   |
| <i>John Salmon</i>                  | Tel: 01279 814789 |
| Email: cllrsalmon@uttlesford.gov.uk |                   |
| <i>Geoffrey Sell</i>                | Tel: 01279 815925 |
| Email: cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk   |                   |

**Essex County Council Member**

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|--|-------------------|
| <i>Ray Gooding</i>                     | Tel: 01279 813103 |
| Email: cllr.ray.gooding@essexcc.gov.uk |                   |

**Member of Parliament**

*The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP*  
 House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
 Tel: 0207 219 5214/Fax: 0207 219 5600  
 Email: haselhursta@parliament.uk

**Police**

|                              |                    |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>PC Tom Bastendorff</i>    | Tel: 01279 812211  |
| Non-emergency number         | 0300 333 4444      |
| <i>PCSO's (Stuart/Kelly)</i> | Tel: 07801 461 666 |

**PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

|                                    |        |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Catherine Dean                     | 813579 |
| cllrcmdean@uttlesford.gov.uk       |        |
| Iris Evans                         | 815848 |
| ijevans36@googlemail.com           |        |
| Jo Freeman                         | 812524 |
| j.freeman195@yahoo.com             |        |
| Bridget Gott                       | 814440 |
| John Hudson                        | 814489 |
| cllrhudson@uttlesford.gov.uk       |        |
| Peter Jones                        | 813252 |
| peter@lowerstreet.com              |        |
| Janice Loughlin                    | 812346 |
| cllrloughlin@uttlesford.gov.uk     |        |
| Tudor Owen                         | 812825 |
| tudor@tudorowen.com                |        |
| Ruth Rawlinson - <i>V/Chairman</i> | 814222 |
| ruthrawlinson@tiscali.co.uk        |        |
| Jonathan Rich                      | 813112 |
| joerichlaw@aol.com                 |        |
| John Salmon                        | 814789 |
| cllrsalmon@uttlesford.gov.uk       |        |
| Dan Scott                          | 815098 |
| dandh_scott@btinternet.com         |        |
| Geoffrey Sell - <i>Chairman</i>    | 815925 |
| cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk         |        |
| Bill Stiles                        | 813172 |
| candbstiles@tiscali.co.uk          |        |
| Valerie Trundle                    | 813433 |
| prtvrt@btinternet.com              |        |

**STOP PRESS .... PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF PROPOSED NEW HEALTH CENTRE, CASTLE LOTUS GARAGE, LOWER STREET - 27.1.11, 11 am TO 8.00pm**