

Stansted network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

WILLOW TREE, FOUNTAIN JUNCTION

Unfortunately, the willow tree at the Fountain at the top of Chapel Hill has reached the end of its life and will be felled soon. The tree has been monitored by an independent expert, David Brown, over the last ten years and surgery has been undertaken as and when required. Mr Brown inspected the tree again in 2009 and now advises that the tree should be felled. Uttlesford District Council concurs and has granted Conservation Area consent for its removal. [Mr Brown's report is available on the website should you wish to read it - www.stansted.net]

We will, of course, plant a replacement tree, probably towards the end of this year, once the ground has recovered. The Open Spaces committee will be meeting soon to discuss the specie.

BUS SHELTERS

After a very lengthy wait, the three new bus shelters were installed in the late Autumn and we have received many favourable comments about them. However, we have been informed by Essex County Council that the one on Chapel Hill must be relocated! It was installed too close to the fencing behind, and is now to be replaced with a cantilever design which will be located at the edge of the pavement. We have therefore asked County to move the one currently on Chapel Hill to Cambridge Road, by the Feathers Pub. They have agreed, but it is subject to a site inspection. The good news is that all of this work will be undertaken at the County Council's expense and not out of the parish coffers.

GRITTING/SALTING OF ROADS AND PAVEMENTS

By the time that you read this article, we hope the worst of the wintry conditions will have passed. The Parish Council is currently looking at the village - in particular unadopted roads - to see where further grit boxes might be useful. Whilst the Council cannot fund these boxes, we may be able to act as facilitators and obtain discounted prices for residents' associations. Cost is in the order of £300 per box. Where we have contact

details, we will be writing to these groups, but if you think your road may be interested, please do contact the Clerk direct to let us know.

Essex County Council has done a good job of gritting the roads this year, and was much quicker in dealing with the pavements. Similarly, Uttlesford District Council battled through to undertake most refuse collections in trying conditions, and to clear their own properties of snow. We would like to thank them, and all of you who have endeavoured to keep our community spirit going - trying to keep the area in front of your home/shop/office clear, helping to clear unadopted roads and keeping an eye on neighbours. We are trusting the Government's comment that insurance will not be an issue.

WINTER PLANTING

As we write these Council pages, the flower beds are hidden by a blanket of snow. We had hoped that they would be planted with yellow violas, but when these arrived with our gardening contractor, he rejected them as the quality was not good enough. We therefore have pansies which will hopefully show themselves again soon!

BENTFIELD POND

On a nice sunny morning on Sunday 6 December, five people from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, three parish councillors and one parishioner turned out to clear the weeds and side growth from the pond at Bentfield End. Those of you who have your own ponds know such work is on-going.



This was our third year of work on the pond and it is proving to be very worthwhile - it is surprising how fast the reeds and brambles grow! Considering the weather we have had recently, we were particularly lucky on that day and hope you will agree that this attractive approach to the village has been further enhanced.

For those people who may think that the water is not very deep – beware! The middle of the pond, heading towards the children’s play area is approximately 5 feet deep.

2010/11 BUDGET AGREED - ESTIMATE A 4% RISE IN PARISH COUNCIL TAX

- The outturn for 2009/10 is likely to be closely in line with the budget set a year ago, despite higher costs for lighting maintenance after an enforced change in the contractor.
- Expenditure in 2010/11 is anticipated to rise by 8% as the full cost of the annual contribution towards the PCSO is borne, a contribution towards the cost of repairing unadopted roads is needed and a full year of the new lighting maintenance contract is felt. However, with more properties the impact in terms of council tax should be mitigated with the estimate being 4%. On this basis a Band D taxpayer should be charged £61 - £62, equivalent to around £14 per week.
- The Council’s reserve position remains should but it should be stressed that significant costs will accrue once the Clinic vacates Crafton Green and moves to the new Health Centre (assuming this is built) while the net costs associated with Forest Hall Park still remain to be clarified.

STANSTED IN BLOOM 2010

Once again, it is the time to be thinking about Stansted in Bloom and we have decided to hold the event sometime during the months of June/July. An actual date or dates will be announced later. An invited judge or judges and some members of the council will be ‘keeping an eye’ on the gardens, floral displays, etc. Of both residential and business areas alike. This way of judging was such a success last year that we have decided to do the same again this year. We will let you know when and where prizes will be presented.

If you would like to let us know of a garden, business display or an area of particular merit, please don’t hesitate to point us in the right direction!

It is hoped that the three schools in the village will take part once again and that members of the public will be able to see the results of any work that they may produce.

Watch this space for more information about ‘Stansted in Bloom’.

PROGRESS AT THE WINDMILL

All is going well with the restoration of the Windmill. By the end of December, the cap had been removed and the scaffold completed to protect the mill and the repairs to the brickwork from the elements.

The sails have been removed to the contractors workshop while repairs to the cap are carried out on site.

Your mill is in good hands! Four Millwrights, Paul Sellwood, Snod, Graham Robinson and Vincent Pargeter attended the last site meeting to discuss how repairs to the curb should proceed.

You can follow the progress of the restoration on the Parish Council’s website.



DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 27 January Full Council
- 3 February F& GP
- 17 February Full Council
- 24 February Open Spaces

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Catherine Dean	813579
Gaye Ellington	813933
Jo Freeman	812524
Bridget Gott	814440
John Hudson	814489
Peter Jones	813252

Janice Loughlin	812346
Tudor Owen	812825
Ruth Rawlinson **	814222
Jonathan Rich	813112
John Salmon	814789
Dan Scott	815098
Geoffrey Sell *	815925
Bill Stiles	813172
Valerie Trundle	813433

* Chairman

** Vice Chairman

CONTACT US!

Clerk - *Ruth Clifford*

Admin Assistant - *Anne Court*

Email: parishcouncil@stansted.net

Phone/fax: 01279 813214 10am - 1pm

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

From Cllr Alan Dean

Several residents have commented favourably on the improved snow clearance and gritting of main pavements during December's first signs of winter. Both Essex and Uttlesford have introduced better plans since a petition and complaints were made last February. I would like to see more grit bins located in particularly tricky areas so that residents can help themselves and their neighbours. I am writing this on January 3rd and as the New Year has got off to a cold start, it seems likely that these safety measures will have been tested again before *Link* is delivered.

The environment committee meeting in November decided a fresh round of consultation on the local development framework will get underway in February. The council intends to run it far more professionally than two years ago; with better information including exhibitions on future locations for homes and jobs. We are still waiting to see the final highways report, which should spell out in plain English why Elsenham is a poor choice for a new town. Members have been pressing for this report to be published since it was first promised in November, but it has repeatedly been delayed and is said to be politically sensitive.

I have received an acknowledgment from the Essex Chief Constable to my support of the Royal National Institute for the Blind over parking on pavements but I have not yet heard whether the police will take action. I think it is likely that a carrot and stick approach will be favoured.

I have been in contact with the intended developer of the old school house next to the Free Church in Chapel Hill and that has been in an untidy state for many months. I was told there should be some action in January. I do hope so.

The council has added a new page to its website to cover scrutiny at Uttlesford. This can be found at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/main.cfm?Type=SCRUTINY&MenuId=976 or via the Your Council link on UDC's homepage. It shows how the public can try to hold the council to account by submitting a petition. We can also request other organisations such as the NHS, Police and other councils to explain their services and make improvements.

From Cllr Geoffrey Sell

A new year, a new decade

The last ten years have been the most eventful of Uttlesford's nearly 40 year history. It has been a period where the council's political control has moved from no overall control (no one party having a majority of the seats) to Liberal Democrat and currently Conservative. Not surprising the majority of councillors were not members ten years ago. Likewise there has been a considerable amount of officer turnover. Since 2000 we have had three chief executives. There has been innumerable reorganisations, another one is due this year. This is all in the name of efficiency.

There have been recurrent themes which I believe will not go away. Firstly financial pressures, council tax only provides a minority of the revenue needed to provide services. Uttlesford like other councils is very dependant upon central government grant. Whoever forms the government after the next general election it is likely that we will be faced with a tight financial settlement. Another theme is development pressure. One of the Council's highlights was the way it dealt with the planning application from BAA for maximum use of the runway. The local development framework still needs to be resolved. It will be going out to consultation early this year.

There are some ongoing issues in Stansted which I would like to see some significant progress this year. There has been no planning application submitted yet for the new doctors surgery. There has been extensive negotiations between the Primary Care Trust, the landlord, Essex County Council Highways and Uttlesford planners. The slow progress has been frustrating for many

residents. Another concern is the number of empty commercial and residential premises in the village. Sometimes this is the result of market conditions, for example the financial collapse of Threshers. However, there are other sites which have been empty for some time i.e. B & R and the Three Colts both on Cambridge Road. We also have part of the Peter Kirk Building in Chapel Hill and Mont House in High Lane. Some of these properties are becoming eyesores. This will be an issue that councillors will be addressing.

Elections

Uttlesford is responsible for the conduct of all elections. It provides the electoral registration service, staffs the polling stations and does the count. A general election has to be held this year. Unlike for councils parliament does not have a fixed term so it is unclear whether the general election will be in March, May or June. Turnout at general elections is normally considerably in excess of council elections and therefore this will place more demands upon the councils resources. The council wishes to make the voting process as easy as possible. On our website uttlesford.gov.uk there is some information about electoral registration, postal and proxy votes. Postal vote forms can be downloaded from the Electoral Commissions website aboutmyvote.co.uk. This will need to be forwarded to the Electoral Registration Officer, UDC, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER. Alternatively any query about elections can be dealt with through phoning 01799 510431 or emailing elections@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Stansted for electoral purposes is divided into two wards North and South. Each has its own polling station, North at the Peter Kirk Centre, St John's Road and South at the Youth Centre, Lower Street.

OTHER CONTACTS

Uttlesford District Council Members

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Essex County Council Member

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Member of Parliament

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
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Tel: 0207 219 5214/Fax: 0207 219 5600
Email: haselhursta@parliament.uk

Police

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

LITTER COLLECTING

We are very grateful to Uttlesford District Council for their help in emptying our litter bins and dog bins during Gerard's recent sick leave.

We are still very keen to find a relief litter collector to cover when Gerard is on holiday but also, rarely, on sick leave. If you or anyone that you know is interested in further details, please contact the office on 813214.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Early warning! Our annual meeting will be held at the Free Church on Wednesday 24th March 2010 at 8pm. We are not inviting any guest speakers this year, but will make a short presentation on the findings, to date, of the Village Plan Questionnaires. In order to facilitate smooth running of the meeting, we would ask parishioners to keep their questions for the Open Forum at the end. Anyone speaking will be required to give their name and address and, for the benefit of all attendees, to use a microphone. The meeting will finish at 10pm. The agenda and accompanying papers will be circulated with the March edition of The Link.