STANSTED NETWORK
NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

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

BUDGET FOR 2012/13 AGREED - COUNCIL TAX UNCHANGED

The outturn for the current year should produce few surprises but some windfalls (rates rebate and compensation from Clever Curves) have enabled a number of additional small projects to be approved without adding to expenditure next year or reducing reserves. Beneficiaries include the Windmill (additional spend on the cap), Recreation Ground (reinstatement works and a new hedge), flower baskets (replacement of existing), a booklet outlining footpath walks and grit bins and spreaders (to enable some footpaths to be treated if snow/ice occurs).

The Government has indicated that it intends to introduce, with effect from 2013/14, a cap on the level of council tax raised by town and parish councils. If an excessive increase (not specified yet) is raised, then the District Council will require a referendum to be held, the cost of which will fall on the parish council. If parishioners reject the higher level of council tax, then spending will have to be adjusted accordingly including the cost of the referendum. In 2010/11 the parish share of your council tax at Band D was £65.10 and the absolute cash sum raised is small. Given the growth in population in this parish and the pressure from spending cuts elsewhere the Parish Council has decided to hold the Council Tax unchanged albeit immediate spending plans could have seen a decrease of 5%.

Expenditure in 2012/13 is budgeted to rise by 12% to £183,000. Additional spending is planned in the following areas - emptying litter bins and checking play equipment on Foresthall Park, funding green waste skips (service withdrawn by UDC), work on trees in St Mary's Churchyard, increasing the reserves for trees and new lighting, restarting the maintenance fund for the Windmill, a bulk clean and bulb change on street lights, rising energy prices and a survey on Crafton Green House. On the other hand lower rates, reduced CCTV maintenance charge and the absence of spend on memorial testing and electrical and structural testing on street lights offset some of the additional expenditure.

Higher spending but an unchanged council tax charge reflects the increasing tax base given the rising number of homes mostly on Foresthall Park, including the dwellings transferred from Birchanger Parish in April 2012. However, unfortunately for those residents moving from Birchanger to Stansted Mountfitchet, their parish tax will rise as the smaller community of Birchanger raises a lower precept.

To put the level of council tax into context, the proposed Band D charge

VEHICLE CLAMPING ADJACENT TO TESCO

Much publicity was given in the local press following the clamping of cars parking on the land adjacent to Tesco on Cambridge Road. Please note that the land is privately owned and is not a public car parking area. We have asked the landowner if the warning signs could be made more visible, ie brought lower down, so that they are clear for everyone to see. However, we would appeal to the public to park legally and responsibly. We hope that our request to amend some of the parking restrictions on Cambridge Road will come to fruition this year - this should increase the availability of on-street parking whilst keeping road junctions clear and assist the flow of traffic.

NEW FOOTPATH MAP

We are delighted that the new map of the village, detailing in particular the routes of our public footpaths, has been published. Copies are available, free of charge, from the Parish Council offices as well as other outlets such as the Post Office, Library and GP surgery.

of £65.10 for 2012/13 compares with £106.42 for Saffron Walden and £117.29 for Great Dunmow, both figures for 2011/12.

NEW HOMES BONUS - FUNDING ORGANISATIONS & PROJECTS

Under funding received from the Government relating to new homes built, Uttlesford District Council allocated £97,000 to this parish.

The Parish Council has decided to use this money to fund a number of projects and to give funds to several village organisations.

- Projects being funded by the council are the refurbishment of the fountain area, stronger fencing around the skatepark, the provision of new allotments (subject to agreement on the site), tree planting, covering the village with daffodils, posts to protect the verges at the junction of Rainsford Road and audio visual equipment for the Day Centre and village. If there is any surplus money then it will be devoted to the plans for new play equipment.
- The following organisations will receive varying sums of money towards designated projects - Stansted Cricket Club, Stansted Hall Cricket Club, Bowls Club, Tennis Club, Football Club, Rainbow Pre-School, Buffy Bus, Youth Club, U3A, Free Church Pilots and Foresthall Residents Association. Together these grants amount to £40,000. In addition a small project at the Windmill may be funded.

CONTINUING WITH GREEN WASTE SKIPS

Uttlesford District Council (UDC) will no longer fund skips to collect green waste but will collect from residents who pay for the service. The earlier decision of the Parish Council was not to fund the skips. However, with UDC reducing its charge by 50% and following an assessment of the budget for 2012/13, it has been decided to reverse this decision. It is now proposed to fund a skip fortnightly (on Saturday or Sunday) from April to early November.

HEALTH CENTRE - PLANS SUBMITTED

We are delighted to report that the long-awaited plans for our new health centre with associated retail and residential accommodation have been submitted to Uttlesford District Council. The application should be determined before the spring.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND TARGETS

At a meeting with planning officers there was an exchange of views on possible future development in this parish.

The view of the Parish Council was reiterated - any substantial new development outside of the current village limits in green belt or in the

CONSERVATION AREA DIRECTIONS

Some years ago a study of the conservation areas in the village was undertaken by Uttlesford Disdtrict Council. As a result of this, a new conservation area was designated at Bentfield Green and all residents affected by that change were notified by UDC at the time.

Since then, a more detailed study of each area has taken place, and new “Article 4” directions have just been introduced. In brief, this means that home owners living within the designated areas will have to apply for Conservation Area Consent to undertake certain changes to their properties such as replacement windows, certain doors, construction of porches, creation or replacement of hard standing areas and changes to fences, walls and railings. Again, each householder should have received a letter from the District Council detailing their responsibilities. The aim of the direction is to preserve the amenity of the conservation areas.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Our plea in the last magazine for volunteers to sign up to a Community Speedwatch scheme has proven largely successful with eight people having come forward to register their interest. PCSO Kelly Roberts will be pursuing this with those volunteers, but if we could reach a total of twelve individuals, that would be ideal. Please contact the Council Offices or Kelly if you would like to find out more.

POLICE BEAT SURGERIES

The next Beat Surgeries will be held in the Library on Tuesday 7 February, 10-11 am. and 23 February, 2-3 pm.

countryside will be opposed given the scale of the new estate at Foresthall Park which is still under construction and which still needs to become part of this community. At the same time smaller sites within the village which were supported in the Parish Plan (see p13 for details) still remain on the table. The next stage will be for Uttlesford District Council to develop a plan for the allocation of housing around the district. Early in the year the demographic study which will consider six scenarios will be received while by June sites for development should be identified leading in October to a pre-submission draft of the proposals to meet housing needs. If, within two years, UDC fails to produce an acceptable plan, then control will be lost and national policies will be implemented.

LDF CONSULTATION

The District Council will be holding a public consultation on the Local Development Framework on 6th February at the Day Centre, Stansted, 10 am - 8 pm. Please make a note in your diary! Further information will be available in the local newspapers nearer the time.

CLOSURE OF POLICE STATION

On 28 November, at very short notice, the police station in Hargrave Close was closed. The Parish Council was disappointed with the speed of closure and the consequent basing of our local police at Great Dunmow. However, looking forward it is hoped to have a civilian police reception in the rebuilt Library-Parish Council building as well as seeking to provide the police with back office space. Negotiations are on-going, apparently even reaching to the Home Office!! In terms of personnel, there should be no change - PC Tom Bastendorff and PCSOs Kelly Roberts and Stuart Stranger.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - 21 MARCH 2012

Make a note in your diary to attend the Annual Parish Meeting at 8 pm on 21 March in the Free Church, Chapel Hill. A full list of papers along with the agenda will be distributed late in February. Remember this is your chance to voice views and ask questions.

PARISH PLAN DELIVERED

By the time this edition of The Link drops through the door, you should have received your copy of the Parish Plan. Much work went into its preparation and a number of the action points have already been accomplished or are in train. It is intended to review the plan annually so please continue to let the office have your views or ideas.

ADVANCE NOTICE .... our annual village litter pick will take place on the weekend of 3rd/4th March - please watch noticeboards, website and next edition of the Link for further details.

NEWS FROM DISTRICT COUNCIL

The New Year is beginning with another stage of consultation on the local development (planning) framework. The council has published draft policies and a map of ten sites around Stansted which developers have put forward for new homes. It is not yet decided how many new homes need to be planned in Uttlesford over the next 15 or so years, so it isn't yet clear how much land will be needed. The consultation paper says that 'identification of a site does not mean the council considers it appropriate for development'.

Several local residents and councillors have been trying for the past few months to find out which, if any, of these sites in Stansted and elsewhere were selected last summer as suitable for early development to plug a shortfall in the supply for new housing for the next five years. Central government places a requirement on councils to be able to demonstrate this. Uttlesford presently cannot do so.

I have continued to investigate the time it takes for housing and council tax benefit claimants to receive the payments due to them. I want the council to adopt a public commitment on the standard of service it makes to this vulnerable group of people.

Consultation needs to be carried out soon with residents, especially those who live on Foresthall Park, on how developers' money in a Community Fund is to be used. So far bids fall into four main categories: traffic speeding and pedestrian safety, parking, a new Parish Council office and Library, and bids from local community buildings and sports organisations. There have also been bids from

Birchanger village.
(Cllr Alan Dean)

SOUTH UTTLESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM
To be held on Tuesday 28 February 2012 - meeting starts at 7.30 pm

Venue: Helena Romanes School & 6th form College, Parsonage Downs, Gt. Dunmow.

Theme for the evening will be Housing Development - what does it mean to you - how can you get involved?
Olympics and Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - what's happening in Uttlesford?

7 - 7.30 pm there will be a Public Exhibition - Local Development Framework Consultation - your chance to have your say on the future of the District.

Presentations from:

Sustainable/Affordable Housing - Hastoe Housing, John Lefever, Regional Head of Development.
British Transport Police - John Angell.
Future allocation of New Homes Bonus Grant - John Mitchell, Chief Executive.
Olympic & Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - Gaynor Bradley, Partnerships Manager.
(Sue Hayden)

DATES FOR MEETINGS

CONTACT DETAILS

Clerk - Ruth Clifford
Admin Assistant - Anne Court
E-mail: parishcouncil@stansted.net
Phone/fax: 01279 813214
www.stansted.net

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dan Brett	817974 contact@danielbrett.com
Catherine Dean	813579 Catherinemarydean@btinternet.com (vice-Chairman)
Iris Evans	815848 Iris.evans9@googlemail.com
Jo Freeman	812524 j.freeman195@yahoo.com
Bridget Gott	814440
John Hudson	814489 John@hudson8889.fsnet.co.uk
Peter Jones	813252 peter@lowerstreet.com
Janice Loughlin	812346 cllrloughlin@uttlesford.gov.uk
Tudor Owen	812825 tudor@tudorowen.com
Ruth Rawlinson	814222 ruthrawlinson@tiscali.co.uk
Jonathan Rich	813112 joerichlaw@aol.com
John Salmon	814789 cllrsalmon@uttlesford.gov.uk
Geoffrey Sell	815925 sellgeoffrey@yahoo.co.uk (Chairman)
Bill Stiles	813172 candbstiles@tiscali.co.uk
Valerie Trundle	813433 Prtvrt@btinternet.com

Uttlesford District Council Members

Alan Dean	Tel: 01279 813579 Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk
Iris Evans	Tel: 01279 815848 Email: iris.evans9@googlemail.com
John Salmon	Tel: 01279 814789 Email: cllrsalmon@uttlesford.gov.uk
Joe Rich	Tel: 01279 813112 Email: cllrrich@uttlesford.gov.uk

Essex County Council Member
Ray Gooding
Tel: 01279 813103
Email: cllr.ray.gooding@essexcc.gov.uk

Member of Parliament
The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
Tel: 0207 219 5214/Fax: 0207 219 5600
Email: alan.haselhurst.mp@parliament.uk

Police
PC Tom Bastendorff Tel: 01279 812211
Non-emergency No. 101 OR 0300 333 4444
PCSO's (Stuart/Kelly) Tel: 07801 461 666
Neighbourhood Watch
www.stanstednhw.org.uk