

Stansted network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

WORKING WITH OTHER COUNCILS

As the Parish Council has limited powers and money, although its power to raise money through the council tax is not limited by the Government, improving conditions and facilities in the parish requires argument, lobbying and occasionally a financial incentive to persuade councils such as Uttlesford and Essex to act.

This month we highlight the main areas in which Uttlesford District Council (UDC) is important to us. Essex County Council will be featured in a future edition.

Planning and Housing. All planning applications are determined by UDC (other than appeals). The Parish Council is notified of all plans and may send comments to the Development Control Committee or officers. Although the Council can make any comment, the only comments likely to carry weight are those which can be sustained under planning law so, for example, no-one is guaranteed a view but interruption of light or invasion of privacy should be upheld. Equally too, having many restaurants even of the same type is not a ground to refuse another, unless it is in a location where it may interfere with adjoining properties or lacks parking (nearby public car parking is acceptable).

The Labour Government increased housing density requirements, the results of which are evident around the village, as well as imposing housing targets with the Elsenham new town proposal a consequence. The new Government has indicated that it will return these sorts of decisions to local authorities - we shall see if it happens and if so what difference it makes.

Leisure. One of the responsibilities falling to UDC is the provision of facilities for leisure so for example the leisure centres are funded by the District Council. However, the availability of finance is now limited or non-existent so, to achieve any significant project, external funding is needed (one recent successful example is the all-weather sports area on Mountfitchet Road). Likewise, the Parish Council with voluntary fundraising and grants has created the skateboarding facility off Lower Street. Similarly, we are supportive of the aims of building adequate pitches

for junior football but this is only achievable if land can be obtained on a long-term lease (or by purchase) and land on which planning approval can be obtained. Such permission was denied by both UDC and on appeal, for the land kindly offered at Bentfield Green. Discussions on another site remain on-going, as does an attempt to provide a substantial area of open space.

New Developments. Apart from determining which parish(es) take responsibility for Foresthall Park, UDC will want to negotiate with the Parish Council to take over its maintenance (grass-cutting, gardening, play areas and litter collection). This represents a substantial financial commitment and agreement needs to be reached on an adequate funding contribution from the developers.

Car Parking - on and off street. Crafton Green is owned by the Parish Council but operated by UDC (with revenues net of costs shared) while Lower Street is owned and operated by UDC (including the public convenience). Regulation of parking in terms of charges and enforcement of yellow lines is undertaken from Colchester by a joint council agency. The decision to put in new restrictions or to remove existing lines is the responsibility of Essex Highways.

It is the Parish Council's intention to produce information with the help of UDC and the Police explaining the policy towards parking on footpaths and who is responsible for enforcing particular restrictions.

Licensing. The decision to grant licences for the sale of alcoholic drinks, opening times and licenses to play music are the responsibility of the Licensing Authority - in this case Uttlesford District Council. The Parish Council neither has any responsibility nor is it consulted. If parishioners believe that licence conditions are being breached and the licensee does not agree, then the only remedy is to complain to the Licensing Authority.

STANSTED NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The meeting of NhW on Wednesday May 26th was attended by several interested residents from the village. Martin Ford, who is the Community Safety Officer for Uttlesford, was invited to the meeting

and he spoke of his work within the community. Residents asked questions which were answered by Mr Ford, also by Lyndsey Baillie who is the Essex Watch Administrator and Pc Tom Bastendorff, Stansted Police.

A discussion took place concerning the possible replacement of 13 NhW signs which are almost unreadable, replacing them with the newer version which are light reflective and are made of a more substantial material. This we intend to do as soon as possible. Highways are in the process of placing new large reflective NhW signs at the entrances to the villages and towns within Uttlesford. We hope that our six new signs will be in place very soon!

Richard Portway gave an update on the NhW website which he has established and is now up and running and used to great effect both by residents of Stansted and surrounding villages and the police. We greatly appreciate the time and effort that Richard has given to bring this website about.

We would like to thank the small number of loyal members of the public who give their support to our NhW meetings, and without their continued interest, it would be difficult to maintain our NhW group in the village.

Date of the next meeting, Wednesday September 29th 7.30pm. Venue to be announced.

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Mrs Diane Roberts Tel: 01279 813089

STANSTED IN BLOOM

Preparations are well in hand and we hope that you have entered your gardens, hanging baskets and tubs etc to make Stansted in Bloom 2010 a real event in the life of the village.

The judging date is Saturday 3rd from 2.30pm onwards. It is hope to present prizes donated by various businesses in Stansted on the following Saturday July 10th in the afternoon. Venue and time to be arranged.

As stated in the May edition of the Link, during the month of June, we will be walking around the village looking out for prize winning gardens etc., as well as taking into consideration any entries placed at the council offices.

Our three schools in Stansted are also taking part and their artwork will be placed in various shop windows around the village. Towards the end of the school term, we hope to be invited into the schools

to present the children with appropriate prizes and/or vouchers that they can use as they wish to enhance their school surroundings.

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Mrs Joy Thomas 01279 813871

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

We are pleased to learn from the CAB that their outreach service in Stansted is proving beneficial to local residents. If you need support from the CAB, you can make an appointment to see one of their counsellors at the Youth Centre in Lower Street. The contact telephone number is 01799 526557. The Parish Council was very pleased to be able to assist in bringing the CAB to Stansted by funding the purchase of a laptop.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL

We were all sorry to read that Stansted Junior Football Club has reduced to one team. Since the Club's plans for a new home at Bentfield Green were refused, the Parish Council has continued in its efforts to find an alternative. One possibility sadly did not come to fruition as lease terms could not be agreed. However, we are in discussion with another landowner and that is on-going.

The Club has held discussions with Manuden to discuss the possibility of those players wishing to continue joining their team next season, so SJFC is still keen to hear from you with any enquiry - e-mail to info@stanstedjfc.co.uk. The Club has said it is appreciative of the Parish Council's continued attempts and hopes that these discussions will one day allow for the club to rightfully restore itself as one of the largest voluntary organisations within Stansted.

TESCO EXPRESS ... OR NOT SO FAST

Having seen no visible progress on Cambridge Road at the former B&R Carpet Shop, we wrote to Tesco to ask them what was happening. We received a reply which states

"We are still in due process at negotiating the last few points remaining to the fit-out of the above unit with the landlord and hope to be in a position to commence our works over the next couple of months."

We have made a diary note to contact them regularly for updates.

VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN – CAMBRIDGE ROAD

The installation of the flashing 30mph sign is yet to be completed on Cambridge Road. Essex County Council have recently carried out a site visit with a view to finding a more suitable location further into the village, possibly in the vicinity of The Three Colts as they feel this will have more effect in slowing down speeding traffic. A final decision is awaited.

LITTER COLLECTION

Most residents of our village are well aware of the good work undertaken by our litter collector, Gerard Frogley. It is a thankless task and there is never a quiet time of year. However, Gerard is entitled to holidays but is often reluctant to take them because the litter piles up during his absence. For some years we have been fortunate to have a volunteer who has helped out when Gerard is off and our grateful thanks go to him. However, we would like to officially appoint a relief litter collector so that Gerard can go away and forget about Stansted from time to time! If you are interested in helping out in this paid position, for up to five weeks per year, please contact the Council Offices.

On the subject of litter, it has recently been brought to our attention that there is a group of people who regularly meet on the Recreation Ground in the morning to walk their dogs. They are responsible dog owners and clear up not only after their pets, but I am told they go around picking up other people's general litter too. Again, you must know who you are and we are very grateful to you.

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

Electoral Aftermath

The electoral dust has settled and we have a new coalition government at Westminster. Coalitions are not new for local government and many local authorities such as Birmingham and Colchester currently have them. Firstly, congratulations to Sir Alan Haselhurst on being re-elected as Member of Parliament for the Saffron Walden Constituency. Whichever party or parties form the government it has significant consequences for local government. The bulk of the money that local authorities receive comes from central government grant. The laws of the land Parliament makes and often it is down to local authorities to enforce them.

A lot of hard work was done by the council to ensure that the election was held efficiently. Boundary changes to the Saffron Walden

parliamentary constituency meant that we took on the responsibility this time for organising the election within four wards of the Chelmsford Borough area as well as the whole of the Uttlesford district.

In total there were 95 polling stations in the constituency each of whom had to be staffed between 7 am and 10 pm. We employed, trained and paid 233 polling staff. At the count held at Saffron Walden we employed 49 counting staff and a variety of other staff totalling 80 people.

The Acting Returning Officer is the council official responsible for the efficient operation of the count. The Chief Executive, John Mitchell performs this role.

However, much of the work of organising elections in Uttlesford (parliamentary, european, county, district/parish) falls upon the shoulders of Peter Snow, the Council's Committee and Electoral Services Manager. Mr. Snow has been involved in election work since 1974 and has been directly responsible for them since 1990. He says that he still enjoys them but the job of managing elections is much more difficult and stressful than it used to be. One significant change he highlighted has been the growth of postal voting. A total of 7,346 postal ballot papers were included in the general election count. Checking the signatures and dates of birth of postal voters is one of the most difficult and time consuming aspects of the election process.

Summary of points that may affect Uttlesford District Council contained in the Coalition Programme for Government.

Although it is very early days there are a number of measures announced by the new government which I welcome. There are a range of proposals that involve the devolving of power to councils to deliver for local people. These measures include:

- Promotion of decentralisation and democratic engagement and an end of the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.
- Promotion of the radical devolution of power and greater financial autonomy to local government and community groups.
- Rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils. This will bring to an end regional housing targets.

- Reform of the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live.

The tone of the coalition's approach to local government and communities, a "fundamental shift of power from Westminster to people" is something most councillors would endorse. Greater financial independence for councils and community groups, powers for communities to take over services and a new "general power of competence" for councils. In other words, councils can do anything they like as long as its legal.

However, within the programme there are challenges for local government. A freeze on council tax for one year will put pressure on local authority's finances with inflation running at nearly 4 %. Increasingly, we will see councils seeking partnerships with neighbouring councils. Additionally, councils will wish to devolve the running of services to town and parish councils. This is already happening within Uttlesford.

Walson Way Play Area-Foresthall Park

Although the play area is finished and ready for release now, officers at the district council are going through the necessary procedures to take it over. This involves checking the ROSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) assessment and agreeing the maintenance sum. The developer has been asked to open it to the public prior to its transfer, but they didn't want to take the insurance risk. Hopefully, the play area will be open in the very near future.

(Cllr Geoffrey Sell)

UTTLESFORD'S GOT TALENT?

A Talent Show is being held to raise funds for Uttlesford Community Travel. Entry forms will be available from the Parish Council. Entry cost is £5 and there is no age limit. Closing date for entries is 24 July. The talent show itself will be held at Foakes Hall in Dunmow on 1 October. Further information from Peter Toms: 07966884852

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

7	Full Council
21 July	Finance & General Purposes
28 July	Full Council

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Member of Parliament

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Police

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

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Iris Evans	815848
Jo Freeman	812524
Bridget Gott	814440
John Hudson	814489
Peter Jones	813252
Janice Loughlin	812346
Tudor Owen	812825
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John Salmon	814789
Dan Scott	815098
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