

Stansted network

NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

THE PROPOSED NEW HEALTH CENTRE - A NEW CHAPTER

At a public meeting on 18 October, West Essex PCT made the following statement:

'The Trust Board, at a meeting on 23 September, made the decision that its preferred site for the development of a Primary Care Centre in Stansted is the Castle Lotus site (off Lower Street) but at the same time it did not want to take the risk of losing the Foresthall site. The existing business would relocate to Parsonage Farm industrial estate.

Therefore it agreed to run with both sites in parallel and ask Uttlesford District Council to give notice to Taylor Wimpey of its intention to acquire the land at Foresthall under the Section 106 Agreement. It was also agreed that if no appreciable movement to a legally binding commitment on the Castle Lotus site is obtained by the end of the calendar year, The Trust would divert its attentions to Foresthall'.

The Trust's definition of a suitable commitment in this timeframe for the Castle Lotus site would be

- agreement of car parking arrangements
- agreed Heads of Terms subject to planning permission
- agreed design specification
- agreed lease terms

A representative from the developers, who are locally based, was present at the meeting and made the following points:

- The building, which is likely to be of modern design, will be four floors but will be setback and will be no higher than the Social Club.
- Apart from the Health Centre, there will be retail outlets on the ground floor and 2-3 bed apartments (only a small number) on the third and fourth floors.
- The plan is to put NHS dentistry on the ground floor with the Health Centre taking the whole of the second floor. There will be two lifts and direct access from the new car park to the Health Centre.

- A new two-storey car park to the rear will provide 58 spaces while the existing car park will be reorganised to ensure that no spaces are lost.
- The access road will be widened and the junction improved so as to handle the increased number of traffic movements with additional protection for pedestrians around the corner into Church Road.

The timescale to completion, whichever site is chosen, should be similar ie about two years. The practice in St John's Road is happy with either site but, should Foresthall be chosen, the Health Centre will be on three floors rather than two at Lower Street. Facilities on either site would be similar.

The Parish Council hopes that there will be no delay in committing to one or other of the sites as the new Health Centre is needed with urgency. It recognises that the PCT has put in considerable effort to secure a central site and hopes that there is, in this respect, a successful outcome. However, the Council retains an open mind on the outcome given the complexity relating to traffic congestion, access and parking. It is envisaged that traffic movements to the health centre would be up to 400 per day. The plan, along with the views of Essex County Highways, will be eagerly awaited and it is to be welcomed that the developers intend to mount over several days an exhibition of the scheme at which questions may be put (and hopefully answered).

THE PARISH PLAN HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE PARISH COUNCIL

At a recent meeting the Parish Council voted unanimously to adopt the Parish Plan together with the proposed programme of action points. The Plan will shortly be submitted to Uttlesford District Council for approval and adoption. Assuming this happens, the view of the Parish and Parish Council will, under the localisation policies of this Government, carry much more weight when planning issues affecting the parish are considered by the District Council. It is to be hoped that this is correct but time will tell.

USING SECTION 106 MONEY TO IMPROVE HIGHWAYS

Under the Section 106 agreement, the developers were required to provide a sum of money to fund highways improvements which would improve the situation surrounding the new estate at Foresthall Park.

Following discussions with Essex County Highways the following projects are under serious consideration:

- A footpath from Palmer Way to the junction with Church Road thus allowing safe access to MMCC and the Leisure Centre
- Improvements to the bridge over the brook (near the Black Bridge) and the footpath up to Millfields thus completing a safe walking route for the new St Mary's School to St John's Church.
- Taking action to improve the surface of Water Lane. It should be noted that this does not imply the adoption of this road by ECC.
- The widening of the footpath along Church Road to create a safer route for all pedestrians but particularly for pupils attending MMCC and parents and children walking to the new St Mary's School on Foresthall Park.
- The provision of a safe pedestrian route from Jordon Close to Walson Way.
- Traffic calming measures for Walson Way and Church Road are under consideration in the light that these roads are bus routes (a complication).

The Parish Council continues to hold discussions with Essex County Highways about a number of other issues affecting the village including speeding, the lights on Grove Hill, traffic volumes and speed on High Lane, pedestrian crossings on Silver Street & Cambridge Road, the Fountain junction as well as a residents' parking scheme covering Lower Street and Grove Hill (see elsewhere for details). The achievement of some, alone all of these objectives, will require money which, in the current climate, is likely to be scarce.

BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS EVENT

What a wonderful village event this was and our grateful thanks to everyone who attended. The weather was very kind to us staying dry not only for the event itself, but also for the essential setting up and clearing away.

Takings on the gate increased from £2015 in 2009 to £3,583 and profit on the refreshments rose from £130 in 2009 to £275 this year. Unfortunately, the cost of the fireworks has also increased greatly!

We cannot hold this event without the hard work of a band of volunteers - too numerous to name here individually - who give up a considerable amount of their time on both the Saturday and Sunday. If you would like to be involved in future years, please contact the Clerk.

Finally, our thanks to Denise and everyone at Elms Farm for making us so welcome, allowing us to use their land, and assisting with transportation on the site!

STANSTED NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The meeting held on Wednesday 29th September was attended by nine Stansted residents who discussed aspects of the village NhW Scheme. Eight residents gave their apologies.

Diane Roberts gave an update on how the scheme was working regarding co-ordinators and the general running of NhW in the village. Alan Johnson (Chair of UD NhW), Peter Caulfield (Crime Reduction Adviser), Kelly Roberts (PCSO) and P.C. Richard Woolgar (Dunmow Police), were present and each gave reports on their individual work within the community, relating especially to NhW.

It was felt that due to the now up and running website that has been set up by IT Specialist Richard Portway, to whom we are extremely grateful, it was decided to have only one main public meeting per year as all information regarding NhW is continually updated and passed on via the site. It was also decided that the smaller steering group would meet as and when necessary to keep things on track.

Provisional date for the next Public Meeting will be Wednesday 25 May 2011 at 7.30 pm in Stansted Free church Hall.

Website address: www.stanstednhw.org.uk

Contacts:Cllr Valerie Trundle 01279 813433
Mrs Diane Roberts - 01279 813089

NEW BUS SERVICE

From 13th December a new bus service (Service 300) will be operating from Saffron Walden, passing through Newport, Quendon, Ugley, Stansted Mountfitchet, Maitland Road Estate, Foresthall Park, then onto Bishop's Stortford. The service will run weekdays except Tuesdays (due to operating difficulties) with no weekend or Bank Holiday service. There will be two services in the morning from 'The Feathers' Cambridge Road, at 9.43 and 11.37, returning from B/S at 10.23, 12.25 & 14.25. The Foresthall Park times to the village on the return journey will be 10.37, 12.37 and 14.37.

When timetables become available they will be placed in the Library, Day Centre, Surgery, Council Offices and possibly the Post Office. This is a Commercial Service and therefore not subsidised by the ECC and will be reliant on the support and use of the general public in order to maintain the service and hopefully to extend it. The bus will stop at all the normal pick-up points but will also operate on a 'hail and ride' service throughout the journey. For more information please contact: Cllr Valerie Trundle on 813433 or Joy Thomas on 813871

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

Comprehensive Spending Review

The money Uttlesford spends comes from three main sources- council tax, income from fees and charges and grants from central government. It is this final category that is most affected by this review. The Government has announced cuts to local authority funding on average of 28% spread over four years. The actual reduction for Uttlesford will be confirmed in early December. It has been confirmed that local authorities will be compensated for next year's council tax freeze. This compensation will be paid in each of the next four years.

In order to deliver the savings required the Council has approved a partnership with Harlow District Council for its Revenues and Benefits section. This is responsible for collection of council tax and payment of benefits such as housing and council tax. The shared service which would be based in Harlow is intended to deliver economies of scale. Although in principle supportive of the partnership I expressed my concerns about the affect of the transfer upon our staff. For some who have childcare

responsibilities a move from Saffron Walden to Harlow is not practicable. For those employees who do move there would be no free car parking at Harlow's offices.

New website

I value the opportunity of writing a regular column for The Link. It gives me a chance to inform residents about the District Council and my work as a councillor. As an additional source of information for those readers who have access to the internet, I have set up a website. It is <http://geoffreysell.mycouncillor.org.uk/> I have also included a number of useful links and information about myself. There is also an ability to comment upon topical posts.

(Cllr Geoffrey Sell)

Those of us on Uttlesford's scrutiny committee completed a review of the district's five day centres in November. The council and the volunteers on the day centre management committees have been asked to consider employing someone to support the management committees in their important work. Stansted already does this and 'The Stansted Model' seems like a good idea for Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Takeley and Thaxted. The question still to be answered is where the money will come from.

The news of yet another potential site, this time in Lower Street, for the new doctor's surgery and health centre (see page 17) has been greeted with enthusiasm by some people and concern by others. I have practical concerns about traffic congestion and safety at the difficult junction with Church Road and Chapel Hill. My main worry is whether what seems to be a complicated commercial arrangement including shops and homes can really be made to work in such an uncertain financial climate. The primary care trust says it wants to settle these big issues by the end of December. I think they are being optimistic.

The council has provided a new batch of street signs for Foresthall Park that should make finding one's way around a bit easier. I am pleased that a new, though very limited bus service will connect the Walson Way area with Lower Street and Cambridge Road from mid December. This is small but encouraging progress towards improving transport links with Foresthall Park. More will be needed if/when the primary school and health centre are built there.

I have been running a web blog for some time. I make regular comments on local and other

issues. I usually post my Link article there. It can be read at <http://alandean.mycouncillor.org.uk/>
 If you find it interesting or have suggestions for improvement, please let me know.

(Cllr Alan Dean)
KEEPING WARM

Will you have trouble keeping warm this winter? If your house is leaking warmth, it's also leaking money. Draught proofing, double-glazing, insulating the water tank with a jacket can all keep the heat in. But the most cost effective ways to keep warm are by insulating cavity walls and the loft. The Herts Essex Energy Partnership is offering discounted insulation (£49) until March 2011, and for some people on benefits, over 70 or disabled, it could be free. Contact 0800 980 6026 to check your eligibility.

If your gas and electricity bills are high, then changing to another supplier could be the answer. Log on to www.uswitch.com or phone 0800 404 7908 to find independent price comparisons. Or maybe just changing the tariff with your present supplier would give you a better deal. Phone them and say you are considering switching supplier and ask if they can give you a cheaper rate. Changing the way you pay can also save money (Direct Debit is usually the cheapest). For anyone who is struggling to pay energy bills, there is help available through an organisation called Charis Grants, which can be contacted by email: admin@charisgrants.com or by phone 01733 421060.

I found out this information (and more) from a seminar at the Citizens Advice Bureau. If anyone wants to find out more please contact me on 813579.

Cllr Catherine Dean

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

1 December	Finance
8 December	Full Council

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