

I will not read out the report that has been published in the March version of the Link and is available here tonight; however, I propose to update you on a number of topics I referred to in the report:

Firstly, The Mountfitchet Exchange will be opened to the public with a working, stocked and more up to date service as soon as possible in April. It is planned for the Parish Council Office and the library to open at the same time. The achievement on the library follows successful campaigning and lobbying by our Library campaigners who continue to work to ensure our library is maintained beyond the first year part fund by ECC, and fully funded for the next 10 years at least.

I asked ECC, at the Extraordinary meeting called in response to the public outcry against the proposed library closures, if they were going to honour their funding agreement in full. Cllr Barker responded that she would talk to us again after the analysis of the consultation response!

We are back to square one in the recruitment of a PCSO. There were 2 candidates, one did not pass the vetting process, and the other declined to continue with the training.

We have involved our MP, Kemi Badenoch in the process to secure a second pharmacy in the south of the village. She has requested representatives of the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board visit the community and discuss and see the issues we face.

Discussions are ongoing with UDC in relation to the Crafton Green Car Park and additional capacity. For any project to go forward we need to ensure funding is available – which UDC is pursuing – and reach agreement on how any additional funds required would be paid back. There could be a possible 10/12 additional spaces made available in the future.

The village Neighbourhood Development Plan is in the final draft stage and it is hoped consultation will commence in the next few months. There are no surprises, as dependent on the Uttlesford Local Plan going to Public Inquiry in July and, if adopted, we expect no further proposed large developments in Stansted; but we also need to acknowledge that with no development comes no funding for infrastructure change.

We are now successfully twinned with Rungis. Our schools are participating in correspondence exchange and some village organisations are making links with

their French counterparts. We are hoping to have an event in the summer and invite French families to attend – but we still need villagers to sign up to host (on a B&B basis) – so please let us know if you are able to accommodate anyone on an exchange visit.

We have identified Link Councillors for each of our schools to promote communication and support between us, and to give our young people an insight into the work of the Parish Council. We also hope to set up a Youth Council to feed in ideas from the younger generation to enhance and sustain our village for their future.

All the allotments on Elms Farm are now taken – but Walpole Meadows have some vacant plots for anyone who is interested.

The Council thanks Daphne Wallace-Jarvis for her many years of work on the Birchanger Wood Trust and the handover to the new Trustees.

Finally, our thanks to all the Councillors as this term of office ends, especially those of long standing – Peter Jones and John Salmon, Valerie Trundle, Samantha Dunn and Rachel Rands who will not be standing for future office.

Thank you also to the Clerk and her staff, who do all the work behind the scenes to maintain and promote the village.