



STREET LIGHTS

An unexpected upside of the national lockdowns has been the faster fixing of street lights in Stansted.

In a typical year the time to repair a street light can be measured in weeks. But the pandemic has seen a fix take just days. This is because normally it is more efficient for street lighting contractors to complete several repairs in an area on a single visit. The Council then needs to wait for a number of lights to be fixed before a contractor is called. But with lockdowns impacting on regular workloads, a damaged light can now be tackled almost as soon as it is reported.

The Council's own contractor, AJ Lighting Ltd, has fixed 10 of the village's 253 street lights since the start of 2021, all within days of a fault being reported. The speedy service means there is presently no backlog of lights awaiting repair.

The provision of street lights is one of many services the Council provides to keep residents safe. A little over 5% of the Council's budget in 2020 was set aside to fix lights and illuminate streets and lanes. Of this figure £5,250 was spent on maintenance and a further £2,500 went into our cleaning and testing reserve. The reserve sees money saved annually to cover electrical and structural tests of all village lights. The tests are performed once every three and every six years.

The number of lights needing a fix has increased in recent years from 41 in 2017 to 57 in 2020. Repairing a light is not always as simple as replacing a bulb. Some lights were installed decades ago and parts are no longer available. Replacing an entire fitting in these circumstances can cost in the region of £350.

SO HOW DO I REPORT A BROKEN LIGHT?

The process is straightforward.

Each street light has a number and letter combination that allows the Council to identify it. When you spot a fault, you should record this code — this would be 'BG2' in the case of the light pictured opposite.

Faults can be reported to the Council by phone, email or in person at our office (when lockdown tiers permit).

It is possible to report a damaged light with just a description, eg the road name and the nearest house number. For safety reasons, repairs are performed in daylight hours when faults are less visible. So the wrong light may be fixed if the description proves less than accurate.





SKATEPARK

The Council announced on Feb 1 a two-week trial opening of the skatepark. It began once steps had been taken to ensure users could use the park safely, and after local police gave the Council the green light. During the trial, we received very few messages contesting the decision and a good deal of community support for the initiative. The Council will keep the skatepark open with the current Covid-19 restrictions and precautions remaining in place.

STOP THE ROT

Eagle-eyed residents will have spotted the Knight sign has vanished at High Lane junction.

Both of Stansted's Knights are to get a fresh lick of paint for garden festivals this July. But it is the sign at the north end of the village that demands the most work and has had to be taken down.

The elements have taken their toll since this Knight was last fixed in 2002. The repairer Charnwood Antiques report the sign is riddled with rot — the entire board and frame need replacing as well as the bottom rim of the central board.

Repairwork could last six weeks, but in a best case scenario, and depending on the materials used, the sign may not need such major TLC for another 50 years.



Funds for this Knight's restoration are largely secured, but there is an appeal for public help to fix the Blythwood Garden Knight at the south of the village. Contact the Council directly if you wish to assist.



ELECTIONS

Elections for councillors is just around the corner in May.

Voting preparations for parish, district and county council positions are underway. As part of those Uttlesford District Council is hosting a 90-minute zoom meeting for candidates and election organisers on Wed, Feb 24 at 5pm.

Those interested can email candidateinfo@uttlesford.gov.uk for an invite. Further details can be found [here](#).