

Annual Ugley Parish Meeting
Minutes of the Annual Ugley Parish Meeting,
held at 7.00pm on 25 March 2024 in the Village Hall.

Present:

Cllr. Nick Shutes (Chairman) and Mrs. Louise Johnson (Parish Clerk).

Members of the Public:

Cllr. Matthew Francis, Cllr. Roger Pryor, Cllr. Clayton Powter, Cllr. Elizabeth Reay and
County Cllr. Ray Gooding.

1. Welcome.

2. Apologies for Absence: Cllr. Nick Bowers and District Cllr. Janice Loughlin,

3. Minutes. The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2023 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

4. District Cllr. Janice Loughlin's report.

Cllr. Loughlin sent in the following report.

District Councillor's report 2023 -2024

Firstly, I'd like to apologise for not being present at the AGM this year. I send you all my very best wishes; and I hope to see you soon.

Local elections were held on 4th May 2023 R4U were elected to be the council's administration for a second term.

The political balance is now:

R4U 22 members

Conservatives 11 members

Liberal Democrats 4 members.

The 2 Green party members lost their seats.

COUNCIL TAX: This has risen by 2.99%. A Band D property has risen to £176.74 which is an increase of £5.13p on the previous year. Precept levels are set for funds required by Essex County Council, town and parish councils, Essex police, the Fire and Rescue authority and the requirement set by UDC.

THE LOCAL PLAN: The draft Regulation 18 consultation ended in December 2023. 5 exhibitions were held across the district, one being in Stort Valley ward, at Manuden. 35,000 leaflets were sent out, press releases were issued to inform residents of sites numbers and relevant information in the plan.

All responses are being collated and will be available to view soon. The government has imposed a figure of almost 14,000 homes over the next 20 years. Approximately 8,000 have already been built or have planning permission- with a built-in buffer the draft plan currently proposes allocations for 6,076 additional homes over the period 2021-2041.

Education, healthcare, employment infrastructure for improved transport links and community use are also included whilst the environment and maximising opportunities for active travel also feature. The Local Plan timetable consists of:

The gathering of evidence, consultation reg 18, review of comments, submission version (Reg 19), examination by an independent planning inspector, and finally, the adoption of the Local Plan. The last 2 Local Plans have failed so, hopefully, this new Local Plan will be found sound and passed by the Planning Inspectorate. An up-to-date Local Plan is needed to put an end to speculative development which has been affecting the district for some time. The last local plan which the council is still working to is dated 2005. The Localism Act states that ‘For too long, central government has hoarded and concentrated power “The act sets out a series of measures with potential to achieve a substantial lasting shift in power away from central government and towards local people .it aimed to make the planning system more democratic and more effective and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally.” Local Plans are meant to be part of that process.

WASTE SERVICES: As everybody is aware an ‘administrative error’ caused the biggest uproar that I have encountered in my 24 years at UDC. The council’s operator’s licence was revoked which meant that the council was unable to fulfil its function of waste collection. 10 refuse vehicles and crews were grounded causing chaos, upset and anger throughout the district. Essex County Council, Widdington Recycling and Braintree District Council stepped in to help. In the budget which was approved on 26th February extra provision was made for more bin crews and 3 new lorries. It was also agreed to bring forward by 2 years the replacement costs for the first third of the council’s bin lorries meaning that there will be more reliable and modern vehicles which should reduce the number of breakdowns. A task and finish group has been established by the Scrutiny Committee to investigate UDC’s ‘Operational Resilience’ in the context of the waste collection disruption and with a brief to look at all UDC’s operations and services. The results will be made public and will be brought to full council.

CHESTERFORD RESEARCH PARK: UDC has decided to sell its 50% share in Chesterford Research Park. This has proved to be very controversial. The council acquired its 50% stake in 2017 to generate income due to the diminishing of local council funding.

INDEPENDENT BOUNDARY REVIEW: The Independent Boundary Commission for England’s recommendations, which will come into effect at the next general election, will see the Saffron Walden constituency become Northwest Essex.

Two wards – 1) Broad Oak and the Hallingbury’s and 2) Hatfield Heath will come under Harlow parliamentary constituency.

Two wards - 1) Felsted and Stebbing and 2) The Sampfords will come under Braintree parliamentary constituency.

There will be no change to local council services such as bin collections, schools, etc.

5. Ugley Parish Council’s Chairman’s Nick Shutes report.

Ugley Parish Council

Chairman’s Report – March 2024

Highways and Planning have again been major issues for Ugley.

Highways

Reinstatement works by Essex Highways to the road from North Hall Road to Patmore End were completed in November 2022 following the long-term closure of North Hall Road. I reported last year that it was hoped the reinstatement works would prove successful and indeed during summer 2023 the verges recovered well. During the recent

very wet winter and with traffic levels still higher than they were historically, more damage has been done.

Large numbers of heavy goods vehicles continue to use the B1383 and they are mainly tipper lorries carrying excavated soil from building sites in Bishop's Stortford north through Stansted and Ugley.

Drivers of HGVs continue to ignore the width restriction through Ugley Green.

Potholes continue to be an increasing problem as they are throughout the county and country, and generally faults or damage reported to Essex Highways tend not to be dealt with.

Planning

For very many years most of the planning applications considered by the Parish Council were for extensions, single infill properties or single demolition/replacement. In recent years we have experienced larger applications. Last year I reported that a large housing application on land to the south of Bedwell Road had been refused by Uttlesford District Council and the applicant had lodged an appeal. That appeal has been upheld by the Planning Inspectorate, so the development will go ahead.

In 2020 Uttlesford District Council rejected an even larger application for housing on land to the north of Bedwell Road and east of the M11. That appeal was dismissed but a new application has now been submitted for the same site.

Applications have been submitted and refused for smaller scale developments adjacent to The Old Forge off Cambridge Road and off Vicarage Lane. Neither of the developments have been approved, but the developers appear to be of the opinion that if they try for long enough, they will eventually succeed.

In February a pre-application presentation was given to the Parish Council for a possible development of up to sixteen houses on land adjacent to the Village Hall. So many members of the public attended this that the meeting had to be held in the main hall to accommodate everyone.

County Council

Ray Gooding continues to highlight the major issues affecting Essex County Council as being Adult Social Care and Highways.

District Council

Janice Loughlin has kept us informed about issues in respect of planning, the Local Plan and more recently problems with waste and recycling collections following Uttlesford's temporary loss of their Operator's Licence.

People

David Cross decided not to stand again as a Parish Councillor in May 2023. I would like to record our thanks to David for his many years of service as a Parish Councillor and as Vice Chairman during the last ten years.

Jonathan Harding put his name forward to fill the vacancy left by David's departure but with only seven candidates, again there was no election to the Parish Council in 2023.

I would like to record my thanks to Ray Gooding and Janice Loughlin for keeping us up to date on County and District matters respectively. We wish Janice a full and speedy recovery following her recent heart surgery.

Finally, I would like to thank Louise Johnson for her highly efficient and professional managing of the Parish Council administration.

Nick Shutes
CHAIR.

6. Essex County Councillor's Report - Cllr. Ray Gooding.

The government has allocated £12.5 million to ECC for 20 additional crews to repair potholes in the county. March is always the season for potholes, but this year it has been especially bad. This is a national problem.

Social Care continues to receive the lion share of the council tax. One council spending 80% of their annual budget on adult social care.

Some parents of children with special needs are taking councils to tribunals to get the care their children require. The judges always assess the needs of the child, but their ruling is not always deliverable, spaces for children with special needs are limited.

Judges understand the issue with prisons being full and will take this into consideration when sentencing. But for children with special needs the judge will always rule that the child gets the best care for their needs, and this, very sadly, is not always possible.

ECC spend about 65-70% on Adult Social Care, this amounts to 20-30 million being spent on 0.1% of the population.

It is very difficult to find permanent housing for adults with learning difficulties. Often, they are moved from one place to another, which doesn't help them establish friends.

Recently ECC has purchased 15 flats in Waltham Abbey for adults with leaning difficulties to live with assisted care.

7. Finance Report Louise Johnson.

Ugley Parish Council ended 2022/2023 with £8,683 in their bank account. Added to this was a precept of £7,000 and a credit for £168. The Parish Council paid out £7,586 making the final total for the financial year 2023/2024 a healthy £8,233.

The Parish Clerk gave a copy of the payments during the year to each member.

The meeting finished at 7.20pm.