

Annual Ugley Parish Meeting

Minutes of the Annual Ugley Parish Meeting held on 11 April 2016

Present: Cllr. Nick Shutes (Chairman), Cllr. David Cross (Vice-Chairman), Cllr. Betty Francis, Cllr. David Hilton, Cllr. R Prior, Cllr. T Turner, Cllr. Jean Reay and Mrs. L Johnson (Parish Clerk).

Members of the Public: Cllr. R Gooding, Cllr. J Laughlin and Dr Mott.

The meeting opened at 7:00pm

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence:
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2015 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
4. **A presentation from Chivonne Claydon, Community Agents Essex.**
Chivonne explained that Community Agents Essex is a countywide network of agents and volunteers who support older people and informal carers to find and develop independent living solutions from within their local community.
It is an innovative new partnership:
Promoting health and independence.
Reducing social isolation.
Finding practical solutions to daily living.
Providing confidential trusted information.
Informing choice and reducing confusion.
Increasing individual and community resilience.
The service is delivered through a community and voluntary sector partnership consisting of Rural Community Council of Essex, British Red Cross, Age UK Essex and Essex Neighbourhood Watch.
5. **Essex County Councillor's Ray Gooding Report.**
Cllr. Gooding reported on the changing nature of the County Council. The Council is doing a lot less than they did in the past and will do even less in the future; this is all to do with money.
At the end of 2015 the final details of the Comprehensive Spending Review were published and Essex suffered particularly badly in this process. The effect of this is that Essex will lose approximately £53 million; making reductions to budgets speeding and services.
There are still statutory responsibilities that Essex County Council has to continue to provide, but they cannot and should not always be the provider of last resort.

Children centres are changing the way they are run; with some centres reducing their opening times, but with more officers going to visit the families in their homes, this will make sure that families get the help they need.

Essex Youth Service is an excellent informal education, social and personal development service targeted at the most vulnerable young people from those communities that need the most support. It is commission through community capacity building to enable and support young people and partners from within the communities to deliver positive leisure and personal development activities for themselves; enabling young people to achieve their full potential.

There is £364 million in the budget to spend on new schools for the next three years; which includes £88 million going towards special schools. Schools in Essex are above the average in every key stage. The Government has announced that all primary and secondary schools rated as “requiring improvement” or “inadequate” by Ofsted could be given new leadership and converted to academies. Under the Ofsted inspection framework, schools are now placed in four categories – outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. Currently only schools rated in the fourth tier – inadequate – can be forced to become academies.

The number of people in Essex having ‘Meals on Wheels’ has dropped in the last few years from 2500 to 600’ this is mainly due to convenient meals. The Council would like ‘Meals on Wheels’ to be more localised which would make it more efficient.

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In the last few years Essex Highways have concentrated improving the main roads while local roads and pavements were left to deteriorate; Highways have a budget this year of £66 million which is to be used on improving local roads and pavements.

6. **Chairman’s Report – Cllr. Nick Shutes**

Planning and Development

Once again there have been no Planning Applications of significant note in the Parish during the past twelve months. New building activity along Cambridge Road has seen the new property at Sundown completed two new homes adjacent to West View completed and sold and two more nearing completion.

This time last year we were waiting for the Planning Inspector’s decision on Fairfield’s application for 800 homes between Henham and Elsenham which was expected after the General Election. The lack of a forthcoming decision is of concern.

Major building work continues in Elsenham which is likely to increase traffic on the roads through Ugley.

Uttlesford District Council is continuing work on the new Local Plan following the Planning Inspector’s rejection of the previous proposal. We will wait to see how proposed development in the surrounding area may affect Ugley.

Highways

The response by Essex County Council Highways to reports of matters which come under their jurisdiction continues to be poor. This is presumably due to budget

restrictions and lack of funds which will only get worse in the current financial year and beyond.

The state of minor roads in and around the Parish continues to deteriorate with potholes between the verge and road becoming a major issue. The northern end of North Hall Road in particular is in very poor condition.

The issue of lorries travelling through Ugley Green continues to be a problem with many using the route as a shortcut to construction sites in Elsenham.

Stort Valley Ward

We welcomed Janice Loughlin as our new District Councillor following the election in May with Ugley falling in the Stort Valley Ward for the first time along with Farnham, Manuden and Berden.

Expenditure

There have been no major items of expenditure over the year and we were pleased to be able to transfer the £750 New Homes Bonus from Janice to the village hall to fund new security lighting.

Thank You

I would like to thank Ray Gooding and Janice Loughlin for keeping us informed about County and District matters and generally making such useful contributions to discussions at our meetings.

I would also like to thank Louise Johnson for the efficient and knowledgeable way she carries out her duties as our Parish Clerk.

7. District Cllr. Janice Loughlin's report

Firstly, I want to say thank you to all who voted for me last May. It was an unusual election as it coincided with the General Election. I decided to fight my campaign as I have always done by not being overtly political or making false claims and promises that I couldn't keep. I am delighted to be able to represent Stort Valley again. This is my 16th year and I have been very fortunate to have such a lovely part of Uttlesford as my ward. I have made many friends during my 5 terms as a District Councillor and will I will continue to do my best to ensure that Stort Valley is well represented and that your voice is heard.

ELECTORAL REVIEW: As you may know Ugley Parish joined Stort Valley after the election last May having previously been part of Stansted North. This was as a result of a full consultation and overwhelming support from Stort Valley residents. Having attended Ugley Parish Council meetings I'm struck by its similarities with the other rural, Stort Valley parishes. They have made me feel welcome and I'm very pleased that they have joined the 'best ward' in the district! Stansted is growing very quickly and is fast becoming a small town; its problems often differ from the smaller wards. Stort Valley is a single member ward (me!) and comprises: Berden, Farnham, Manuden and Ugley.

THE LOCAL PLAN: The last Local Plan was rejected by the Planning Inspectorate which meant that UDC had to start again and produce a new plan which will decide the future of development in Uttlesford for the next 10 years. The Inspector

recommended a dwelling target of 580 per annum and not the 523 dwellings as suggested in the previous plan. It is important for Uttlesford to have a Local Plan in place to provide development in a structured and coherent manner rather than face planning appeals over potentially unsuitable sites. There have been rumours about sites including that of a large single settlement somewhere in the district. This has been discussed but, as far I'm aware, no decision on sites has yet been made. All information and documents on the Local Plan may be found on the Council's website. As a result of the failure of the last local plan and questions about the lack of openness and transparency all Planning Policy Working Group (PPWG) meetings are now open to the public. I hope this will continue as there was a lot of mistrust and bad feeling during the putting together of the last local plan. The Planning Policy Working Group can't make decisions but may make recommendations to Cabinet. Cllr Howard Rolfe is Chair of the PPWG and is also Chair of the Cabinet which make the decisions. This has proved controversial with some councillors. The new Local Plan is expected to be completed by December 2017. I will keep you updated during the process.

DEVOLUTION: This has been the subject of much discussion during the past year. A group of Councils comprising Basildon, Braintree, Brentwood, Castlepoint, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Essex CC, Harlow, Maldon, Tendring, Rochford, Thurrock, Southend on Sea and Uttlesford have worked together to make representations to Government for Devolution for Greater Essex'.

Although sometimes controversial it has been said that devolution in England could change the way we are governed and create a more democratic and fairer dispersion of power, with more opportunities for people outside of Westminster to have a say. Local devolution agreements require mechanisms through which residents and citizens can hold government to account for its decisions and participate directly in decision making.

Cllr Howard Rolfe, Leader of UDC and Chair of the Essex Devolution Leaders Group, said in a recent newsletter "Over the last month Chief Executives and Senior Officers from the district, unitary and County Councils have been presenting our joint work to officials in Whitehall. This has been well received and gives us confidence that we could reach a devolution deal with government. However, it has become increasingly clear that Ministers do want to see a Mayoral governance model for county areas. The Leaders of the Greater Essex authorities are not convinced that this is the right model for Greater Essex.

Therefore, recognising the good work done to date, leaders have opted not to work towards a fixed date in submitting a deal, but rather wait to see how other county deals, elsewhere in the country unfold, and further consider the implications of the asks of Government.

We intend to reconvene our discussions with all 'authorities after the elections in May.'

I'm sure there will be a lot of discussion/argument at Uttlesford and the other Councils involved before this comes to fruition.

ONE-STOP MULTI-AGENCY CENTRE: You may have seen, in the local press that a new monthly drop-in centre started on Monday 21st March. It will open from 10am-12 noon, and takes place in the Council Chamber at UDC offices in Saffron

Walden. It brings together, under one roof, several agencies which can advise on issues such as dealing with debt, benefits, housing and eviction, domestic abuse and drugs and alcohol. The Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) is led by the Dept. of Work and Pensions (DWP) in partnership with the Council's Housing Dept. and organisations including Family Solutions, Citizens Advice, Family Mosaic, Mind, Essex Children's Centre, Adult Community Learning, Open Road and Uttlesford Credit Union. The service will offer people who may have several problems to visit all the relevant agencies at one go rather than having to make and attend several different appointments.

POLICE DESK: This opened at the UDC offices on April 4th. It replaces the front desk at Saffron Walden Police Station which closed last October. Opening hours are Monday-Thursday 9am-5pm and Friday 8:30am-4:30pm. The desk will be manned by 2 full time police staff.

Lodge House, a separate, self-contained building at the Uttlesford site and with the potential to house up to 14 officers, is expected to open in the near future. On Wednesday 6th April the Planning Committee approved an application for a Crematorium and Gardens of remembrance in Uttlesford. It will be sited at Great Chesterford.

During the past year I have continued as a member of the Planning Committee. I am also a member of the Finance and Audit Committee, The Standards Committee. The Planning Policy Working Group (local plan) and the Housing Board. If I can be of assistance please don't hesitate to contact me, in confidence, at: 01279-812346 or e-mail: cllr.Jloughling@uttlesford.gov.uk

8. **Finance Report**

The finance figures for 2015/16 were circulated.

This year we had receipts of £8,818.86 and payments of £5,373.07, meaning for the first time in a few years we have had more money coming in than going out; ending up with a surplus figure of £3,445.79. adding this to the opening balance of £2,710.21 we have a final end of year balance of £6,156.

This is due to asking for a precept of £7,200, allowing us £2,000 in case we had to hold a Parish election, there wasn't any funds spent on major projects around the village so the maintenance budget was down by £900, also we had received back £275 VAT.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed

Chairman

