



## UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Felsted & Stebbing Ward

District Councillors Sandi Merifield & John Evans



### DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: APRIL 2021

Cllrs Sandi Merifield and John Evans are pleased to present their Monthly Report to the Parish Council.

We would like to express our thanks to you for being able to incorporate our Monthly Reports by hyperlink into your Minutes – it is very helpful and will assist us in bringing to Residents' attention in an accessible way some of the more significant news and activities within the District.

### **CORONAVIRUS**

Sadly, one of the outcomes of the Coronavirus is the upsurge in Scams. There are criminals who try to take advantage of the coronavirus situation. These Scams range from fake vaccination calls and texts; to BT calls; to HMRC tax rebate texts and emails and Council Tax refund emails. Information on these and others can be found on <https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/6649/Scams-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

### **LOCAL PLAN & POLICY MATTERS**

With under four weeks remaining of the early Issues and Options consultation, we really encourage people to add their voice to the conversation. The discussions are not about 'if' there will development (given the Government's requirement that planning authorities provide for more housing to be permissioned), but more what type, how it will be delivered, how to mitigate impact and where.

The consultation was split into nine different 'bite sized' themes, each theme was 'launched' for consultation at a meeting of the Community Stakeholder Forum which commenced in October 2020.

This **consultation ends on 21 April 2021**, after which all comments will be used to inform the Council's work progressing on a draft version of the Local Plan. The call for sites and youth survey conclude at the same time.

As to the **Youth Survey**, given that the Local Plan goes forward long into the future, UDC is very keen to secure as much input from the younger section of the community as is possible. Accordingly, UDC is conducting a youth survey for the Local Plan open to any secondary or college students who live in the district. To encourage them to take part in these surveys and tell us about their views of where they live

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and their ideas on the future development of Uttlesford, including during the Covid-19 lockdown, they are to be given a chance to win some Amazon vouchers.

Completing Part 1 of the Survey will take about 5-10 minutes and there's a chance for them to receive one of 100 £5 Amazon vouchers. How long it takes to complete part 2 would be up to them and how creative they want to be, and there's a chance for them to receive one of ten £50 Amazon vouchers.

**We need their views by 21 April 2021.** Perhaps our Report to you is a convenient means of bringing this Survey to as wide an audience as possible and this is the link [here](#) to take part. We shall publicise this also by social media.



This is the form used for submission of comments



Comments Form All  
themes Other comme

## **RURAL MATTERS – REVITALISATION**

We wanted to bring the subject of rural matters to your attention for the first time.

Uttlesford has been a member of the Rural Services Network (“RSN”) for some time, but historically it was not a body actively promoted by UDC’s previously nominated member representative.

RSN is the national champion for rural services, ensuring that people in rural areas have a strong voice. It promotes a fair deal for rural communities to maintain their social and economic viability and membership comprises 121 rural local authorities plus over 215 other rural service providers and interest groups including Rural Housing Associations, Healthcare Trusts and Charities. Additional information may be found more about RSN at its website [www.rsonline.org.uk](http://www.rsonline.org.uk) .

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John is the current UDC nominee to RSN's membership and is looking to raise awareness of rural priorities among the UDC membership as a whole. Sandi is fully supportive of this body's policies and also attends its topic meetings as arising. There are 14 policy areas which concern RSN overall, including most significantly at the present time those relating to rural housing, rural transport and rural economies. Many of these policies find resonance with incidentally CPRE, of which body we know many residents are members, so we think that you and many would be interested to know of RSN and its worthwhile activities.

The Government has recently published a strategy for bus and more active transport entitled *Bus Back Better* at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/local-transport-update-national-bus-strategy-for-england-published>.

Bus Back Better Strategy provides for a very large amount of funding - £ 5 billion – but how much of this is to be made available for rural services remains to be seen. Essex County Council is required to make provision for this and is shortly to enter into discussions with UDC as to application of funds within the District and we shall keep you advised of developments in this connection.

There is a very interesting piece of work undertaken by RSN on green and carbon reduction issues and a link to it is to be found at:

<https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/decarbonising-rural-communities.pdf>

We will provide you with further information concerning RSN's work and UDC's support of it in coming months.

#### **NEWS – GLADMAN AND STATION ROAD, FELSTED**

Further to the last Report, Gladman have last week been supported in their request to the Supreme Court for permission to pursue their Appeal, by the trade body of which they are Members, who are doing so on the grounds that the issue raised ie the interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework raises issues of national legal interpretation/significance. We will keep you advised.

Finally, as before, while we are still unable to hold face to face councillor surgeries, we would be very happy to hear from any parish councillors or residents by email or phone should there be anything they think we can help with or answer any questions you may have on our report.

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Cllr John Evans

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