



**UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Felsted & Stebbing Ward**  
**District Councillors Sandi Merifield & John Evans**



**DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORT: OCTOBER 2021**

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

We might take this opportunity of mentioning that our Reports are written at a time enabling (as on this occasion) the latest information to be included. That means that they are not available until after your Agenda pack is distributed to Members, but in any event, in good time enough for consideration we hope before your Meeting. We trust that this is convenient and acceptable to Members.

Again, we ask to be excused and extend our apologies for our inability to be present at your October Meeting because of a requirement to attend a full UDC Council Meeting fixed at very short notice to consider the item regarding Stansted Airport described next below. This will be the second full UDC meeting in two days, the regular one taking place the prior evening, when matters including solar farms and their decommissioning as well as green policies as they extend to the Local Plan will be debated.

This month's Report is rather shorter than usual since we have decided to pass over matters relating to the Local Plan in very short order this month and will provide a more extended item as to it next month.

**STANSTED AIRPORT: HIGH COURT CASE (PLANNING) APPEAL**

In our last report, we advised that the Secretary of State (against whom the application to challenge the Planning Inspectors' decision was made) had submitted a set of reasons why the Inspectors were, in his view, justified in reaching the Decision they did. He was supported in this by MAG.

A copy of the various papers lodged in the High Court in London by UDC and also the other parties is to be found on the UDC link, and it relates to the entire Planning Case and also the Appeal to the Court:

<https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/article/7028/Stansted-Airport-planning-appeal>

It is necessary to obtain permission to appeal and this is done "on the papers" alone and this hurdle has to be overcome before the appeal proper can proceed. It is noteworthy that UDC were supported in their

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efforts (which sought to challenge the Inspectors' Decision to allow the prospective expansion to 43 million passengers pa from 35 million and also the awarding to MAG of their legal costs) by outside interested parties, namely Stop Stansted Watch, North Somerset Council (who are concerned about an application to expand Bristol Airport) and also by action groups opposing that expansion and also one at Leeds Bradford Airport.

Unfortunately, on Friday 1 October 2021, the Judge (Mrs Justice Lang) refused the application and so UDC has to decide (within a very short space of 7 days) whether to renew the application for permission to Appeal in order to seek to pursue the arguments before the Court, doing so orally. This is a standard procedure in the case of Judicial Reviews of "administrative decisions". This decision is of considerable importance, being required to be made as a matter of urgency also, and is being brought before full Council at a specially convened meeting which unfortunately coincides with your Meeting. We will supply a full report on this next month.

### **LOCAL PLAN**

Currently, the UDC Officers are evaluating the 299 sites put forward in the Call for Sites stage of the plan making as being "available" and initially are verifying the factual bases advanced. As to this, they will be in contact with the Parish Councils during this month to fact check the accuracy or otherwise of the submissions made – they are not seeking comments on the merits or demerits of each possible site in planning policy terms at this stage.

Additionally, they are holding initial discussions with the promoters of the larger sites (17 in number) on a without prejudice basis to understand what each is proposing and their ideas. Also, they are asking them whether or not they would be willing to enter into a Collaboration Partnership with UDC in the event that the sites were to be advanced in the Local Plan. This document would represent a framework whereby the prospective developer/landowner would be willing to adhere to concepts of good governance, place making and other concepts in accordance with "Garden Principles".

This concept has been promoted by John as a result of earlier experience in his and Officers' discussions with promoters/landowners in relation to the 2019 withdrawn Local Plan when it proved, at that very late stage, difficult to secure equivalent considerations. This time, it is intended that this opportunity is being taken very early in on so as to secure the best possible provision in good design, place making and standards generally for the benefit of not only current residents and communities but also those yet to come in the long term future; after all any larger new settlements (should they be decided upon and it must be emphasised that no decision has been taken on this question of principle yet) will have a very long term impact given the likely 30 year + duration of any such potential development.

We think that those Members and residents who are following the Local Plan making process will find the meeting of the Local Plan Leadership Group held on 30 September 2021 to be interesting and will give a

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clearer and more detailed account of the significance and hopefully value of the prospective arrangements, which were indeed approved earlier in the month by UDC Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5812/Public%20reports%20pack%2030th-Sep-2021%2019.00%20Local%20Plan%20Leadership%20Group.pdf?T=10>

### **STANSTED AIRPORT - NIGHT FLIGHTS AND OTHER MATTERS**

A robust response was submitted prior to the deadline of 30 September 2021 by UDC to the Government regarding their consultation upon policy towards night flights which we outlined in last month's Report. This issue (and overflying aircraft noise generally) remains a matter of considerable concern to a great number of our residents and we will continue to monitor the debate closely.

### **UDC EXECUTIVE NEWS AND THE PLANNING FUNCTION**

With effect from 1 October 2021, UDC has a new permanent Chief Executive, Mr Peter Holt, and we welcome his appointment and arrival in the District. We wish him every success in his new role. He comes from a long standing and successful career in Local Government. Sandi was one of the members of the cross party Appointments Committee, recommending on the recruitment, and reports that the candidates who reached the short list were all of a very high standard.

You might recall that we advised that an independent review was to be conducted of the way and standards of performance of the UDC Planning Department, as well as interaction with it by Members of the Council, which for some time has not been considered to be at the level that it should be operating.

This detailed report conducted by consultants appointed by the East of England Local Government Association has just been received and is attached. It is to be discussed shortly by Members and the Cabinet and decisions then taken as to how it might best be acted upon and implemented. We look forward to our part in this work. First, it is to be brought before Scrutiny Committee on 8 October 2021. A copy of the Report is found here:

<https://uttlesford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s25195/Scrutiny%20report%20Review%20of%20Planni ng%20Service.pdf>

### **UDC - COUNCIL SPENDING**

A consultation exercise is underway in anticipation of the setting of the UDC 2022-23 Budget and a press release in respect of it is attached. We would urge residents to participate in the consultation as to spending priorities etc which is open until **Sunday 17 October 2021**.

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Have your say on  
council spending.doc:

### **WARD MEMBER'S INITIATIVE**

We would like to remind community organisations from within the Parish that we are able to provide some financial support, using our annual UDC Councillor initiative funds whenever the opportunity arises and are always ready to receive proposals or enquiries. We were very pleased to receive a report of the Felsted Friendship Club outing – their first since COVID - which we were pleased to support recently.

### **FLOODING ISSUES**

We have been able, together with County Cllr Martin Foley, to open a dialogue with the Manager of the Essex CC Flood Management Team recently concerning the unacceptable state of the drains and sumps under the Flitch Way Bridge on Stebbing Road. We have raised a number of issues with her and the team regarding the clearance of the drains and sumps but also particularly as to the source of the water from field/land drains in the adjacent field which appears to us to be the cause of the problem bringing, as it does, entrained mud and stones into the drainage system. Discussions might need to take place as to the latter with the Environment Agency and DEFRA too. We shall bring you up to date with how this is proposed to be resolved in we hope, next Month's Report. We have met the residents most affected by this flooding problem and have assured them that we are seeking to finalise matters satisfactorily as soon as we can.

### **OUR SURGERY**

Due to the need to attend UDC Council described above, we are unable to hold our scheduled Surgery this month, but as ever, of course, we would be very happy to hear from any parish councillors or residents by email or phone and of course to meet them should there be anything they think we can help with or answer any questions you may have on our report.

Cllr Sandi Merifield

Cllr John Evans

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