

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting
Tuesday 17th December at 6pm

Attending: Councillors, Richard Freeman (Chairman), Graham Harvey, Andrew Parker and Clive Perrins and Roy Ramm. In attendance Clare Schorah - Assistant Clerk

1. Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Hywel Jones.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Graham Harvey declared a prejudicial interest in application UTT/24/3025/FUL - Agricultural Building Rear Off The Mole Hill Hollow Road and stated that he would remove himself from the meeting when the matter was discussed.

3. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 19th November meeting were formally approved. They will be signed at the next Full Parish Council Meeting.

5. New Applications to be considered

[ESS/61/24/BTE](#)

Rayne Quarry, Dunmow Road, Braintree, Essex, Rayne, CM77 6SA

Proposal: Vary Condition 18 of Planning Consent ESS/19/17/BTE dated 23 August 2019 to facilitate an Increase in HGV movements to and from the site at Rayne Quarry, Broadfield Farm, Dunmow Road, Rayne, Braintree CM77 6SA.

No Comment

[UTT/24/3025/FUL](#)

Agricultural Building Rear Off The Mole Hill Hollow Road

Proposed demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of 1 no. dwelling, new access and associated development.

No Comment

[UTT/24/3087/HHF](#)

Thorpes Frenches Green

Proposed demolition of existing garages and construction of new garage.

No Comment

[UTT/24/3139/FUL](#)

Tessmoorlands Frenches Green

Construct 1 no. self-build supplemental dwelling with associated parking and landscaping ancillary to the main house.

Comment: Felsted Parish Council recognises that this application meets the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Policy HN6 which supports the building of supplemental dwellings to support familial links, and will not object to the proposed development.

6. Decisions received since 22 October

[UTT/24/1445/FUL](#)

Land East Of Oaklea Causeway End

Erection of 1 no. Dwelling complete with all related works including access

Permission Refused – 22nd November 2024 *'[The]site lies outside the defined settlement development limits of any village or town... [it] would introduce a sizeable new development to an area of open countryside. The proposals by reason of its sitting, size and scale would have a harmful impact upon the rural character and appearance of the area. There is no substantive justification for the proposal specifically relating to the developments needs to take place there or being appropriate in the countryside... The proposals would significantly harm the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside... Insufficient information has been submitted with this application to enable the Local Planning Authority and its consultees to assess the proposal for Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.'*

[UTT/24/1151/FUL](#)

Reekie Building At Felsted School

Installation of in-roof flush fitted PV panels to the South- West facing roof slope of building and associated works including reroofing remainder of building in a natural slate

Permission Granted – 25th November 2024

[UTT/24/2590/HHF](#)

Golden Bells Watch House Green

Proposed first floor extension, amendments to conservatory and proposed conversion of existing double garage.

Permission Refused – 3rd December 2024 *'The proposal fails to be subservient in appearance to the host building and would result in further, and excessive, intensification of development in this rural location, eroding the rural characteristics and failing to protect or enhance the character of the local area, resulting in an urbanisation of the site and area.'*

[UTT/24/2523/HHF](#)

1 Brook Meadow Gransmore Green

Conversion of existing integral garage to habitable space, and construction of new detached garage to front.

Permission Granted – 3rd December 2024

[UTT/24/2445/HHF](#)

Homewaters Braintree Road

Proposed front dormer roof window, two storey rear extension and front porch with canopy over.

Permission Granted – 3rd December 2024

7. Appeals Update – Cllr Roy Ramm arrived at this point in the meeting (18.24)

[UTT/23/2526/FUL](#)

Appeal Reference: APP/C1570/W/24/3348002

Land To The West Of Chelmsford Road

Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site for 5 Gypsy families, each with two caravans, including laying of hardstanding, erection of 5 no. utility buildings and construction of new access.

Appeal Allowed - 3rd December 2024

Cllr Richard Freeman delivered the following speech at the Appeal Hearing on behalf of Felsted Parish Council:

I am Chair of Felsted Parish Council Planning Committee and Vice Chair of the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Steering and Review Group.

We seek dismissal of this Appeal which we consider a wholly unacceptable speculative application for a development in a completely inappropriate and damaging location and as I will demonstrate this proposed site is far from necessary.

We have previously submitted robust objections to this application which I will not rehearse here but I do ask the Inspector to take full account of our previously submitted strong objections.

*Let me make it absolutely clear from the outset that Felsted Parish Council is not “anti” traveller sites, indeed, Felsted is already home to one of the largest traveller sites in Uttlesford, but we are “anti” the wrong development in the wrong location. Felsted Parish Council robustly objected way back in 2018 to market housing on this very site which was rightly refused because of the unacceptable impact **any** development here would have on the character of the countryside. We will always rigorously protect the historic layout and character of Felsted.*

*We are also not against development per se. Through our Neighbourhood Plan which is currently under review, our community will be supporting 167 dwellings in Felsted. 63 in the original Neighbourhood Plan and a further 104 through the current review of our Plan. But **any** development must be appropriate for its location.*

There are many reasons why this proposal is both unacceptable and demonstrably unnecessary. I wish to address the specific issues raised in the Case Officers agenda.

Firstly: Whether the proposed development would be in a suitable location.

*Felsted Parish Council considers this to be a wholly inappropriate location for several reasons. These include, but are not restricted to the negative impact on the character and appearance of the area, the **existing** level of local provision to meet a need a sites or pitches if required and traffic and highway safety, all of which I will address as specific topics.*

I will address the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, the effect on wildlife and the negative impact on the historic form of our village gateway and the setting of listed buildings.

*The planning history of this site makes clear that previous planning officers and an Appeal inspector determined that from a planning perspective the damage that would be done to this specific area of rural open countryside of Felsted would **significantly and unacceptably** outweigh any benefit. It would conflict with NPPF Policies, Uttlesford District Council Policies and critically the fully “Made” Felsted Neighbourhood Plan which is **less than 5 years old**. Our Neighbourhood Plan, being the most up to date component in the Statutory Local Development Plan **must** be afforded maximum weight in line with the NPPF and the Localism Act 2011, Section 116.*

The house next to this site is Millbanks, built by George Boote in 1598. George Boote is a highly regarded medieval builder with a strong connection to Felsted. Another George Boote House dominates the centre of the village. It is not just the rich heritage of the building itself that is important but crucially, the context of the environment in which it has sat for over 420 years.

The building is itself is protected by Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 but it is the wider rural setting, in which it has stood for over four centuries forming a gateway into Felsted that is historically important and must be preserved.

It would also conflict with the Felsted Heritage and Character Assessment which identifies the threats and vulnerability of the larger hamlets such as Causeway End and their relationship with the historic settlement pattern.

To further demonstrate the risk to the character of the immediate area, the land directly opposite the site is an established 40 acre wildlife and nature area created 25 years ago and planned by Essex Ecological Society which contributes to the rural setting with important wildlife corridors connecting adjacent agricultural land which includes the site in question. The Essex Field Club Programme regularly visits the site to survey and to monitor and record rare species of flora, insects and mammals.

This reinforces the unsuitability of the proposed development which if allowed with its urbanising introduction of extensive hard surfacing and re-profiling, amenity buildings, erection of fencing, lighting and siting of mobile homes and caravans would have a permanent and detracting impact on the local landscape.

Such an incongruous development would have a significant adverse influence which could not be mitigated through planting, changing the character of this part of Felsted forever by eradicating the soft gradual transition when entering the village from open countryside into one of the 15 hamlets that make up Felsted Parish.

The location has a distinct rural feel in a countryside setting with some views to the wider landscape and an intrinsic rural atmosphere. The site is visible from the public realm and would be one of the first things you see when entering the Development Limits of Felsted from the south.

The introduction of such an incongruous built form in the countryside with urbanising effects would be contrary to UDC policy S7 and above all, sections A, B and D of paragraph 180 of the updated 2023 NPPF.

Moving on to the existing level of local provision and need, or otherwise, for sites/pitches.

*There are two separate issues here, whether a **need** can be proven and if it can be, whether there are pitches available locally.*

*Felsted Parish Council cannot comment on the evidence regarding a “need” for sites. However, UDC includes a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in their “Core Policy 60: The Travelling Community” of their Regulation 19 Local Plan submission and as a consequence, proposes the introduction of **18** additional traveller pitches throughout*

Uttlesford District of which **14** pitches are proposed to be located on the existing Felsted site, known as “Pits Cottages” (with a further 4 pitches at three other Uttlesford locations). With 14 additional pitches proposed at the existing Felsted Site there can be **absolutely no** justification for the creation of a damaging “open countryside - green field” site in a location that a previous Inspector concluded, and I quote: “would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to section 12 of the Framework, Local Plan saved Policies S7, GEN2 and Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Policies, CW1 and IH1 which seek to achieve a high-quality design, protecting and enhancing character and setting”.

And crucially, I would add that should a proven need to identified, it would not be necessary to wait for approval of UDC’s Regulation 19 Local Plan as the necessary pitches already exist at the Felsted site. A simple check on Google Earth clearly shows **numerous vacant pitches** on the Pits Cottage Felsted site which is less than 2 miles away.

There can be **absolutely no** justification to create a new green field site in a critically sensitive location when there a number of vacant pitches already exist on the existing Felsted traveller’s site, which I would also add would also be more socially appropriate being within the existing “settled Felsted traveller community.”

I have here a screenshot taken only this week, clearly dated 2024, showing numerous vacant pitches at that site.

Traffic and highway safety

One the many additional reasons why the proposed site is unacceptable which was included in our written objection, is the derestricted B1417 road and total lack of safe pedestrian access with no pavements serving the site, no street lighting and a high number of vehicle numbers travelling at high speed.

The applicants limit their comments in reference to the road to simply stating that it has an average speed of 46MPH.

This is highly misleading as the applicant’s source of information is a traffic survey that was undertaken by Ardent Consulting Engineers. This was not arranged by today’s applicant but was undertaken on behalf of the previously refused market housing applicant from which the applicant quotes an average vehicle speed of 46 MPH. The Ardent Consulting Engineers report is in the public domain as it is accessible on the UDC planning portal for the original refused application for 23 market houses on this site.

There are a number of reasons why simply quoting an average 46MPH is a very misleading. Firstly, the survey was undertaken during Easter week on Wednesday 17th and Thursday 18th of April 2019 with Good Friday being the 20th when the roads around Felsted were unnaturally quiet because the biggest traffic generator in Felsted, which is Felsted public school were in recess. With over 1,000 pupils, the majority of which are driven in and out of school daily and almost 300 staff plus of course Felsted Primary School with 280 pupils and around 30 staff also closed for Easter, undertaking a traffic survey during Easter week with around 1500 of Felsted’s regular road users absent makes the value of that traffic survey at the very least, questionable.

Whether the decision to undertake that survey during Easter week was deliberate or just an unintended poor decision I know not but as a consequence, the Ardent conclusions were based on their assessment of just 400 vehicle movements.

Secondly, selectively quoting the average 46 MPH, conveniently ignores the fact that apart from giving an average vehicle speed, the Ardent Consulting Engineers survey, within those 400 vehicle movements, recorded 122 vehicles (that's over 30%) vehicles travelling at over 50 MPH and 6 vehicles (that's 1.5%) travelling at over 60MPH.

These might not sound like significant numbers but as I pointed out, the Ardent survey, undertaken during Easter week, based their findings on just 400 vehicle movements, which becomes very significant if calculating the number of potential speeding vehicles is based on realistic current total vehicle movements.

Reliable independent data comes from a Department of Transport survey way back in 2008 which is in the public domain (listed under DoT Site number: 941152) when even then the DoT identified an average daily vehicle volume of 2766 vehicles on the B1417 Chelmsford Road. With the DoT advising that average traffic growth rates since 2008 were in the region of 37% this would now equate as an up to date average of over 3,789 vehicles per day using the B1417.

So using the combined sources of information quoted by the applicant from Ardent and adjusting that data using reliable DoT up to date full day vehicle volumes, this would equate to well over 1,000 vehicles a day passing the site at speeds in excess of 50MPH and even more concerning, more than 57 vehicles a day passing the site at speeds in excess of 60MPH. I remind you, the B1417 at the site location has no pavements or street lights and therefore having a site entrance onto this road and with potential pedestrian use, even the potential of a pedestrian pushing a pushchair, with no pavement to walk on and using the carriageway itself in poor visibility with literally more than a thousand vehicles day travelling at speeds over 50 MPH and almost 60 travelling at over 60 MPH must make safety a seriously concern which cannot be ignored.

*ECC Highways, for some unexplained and inexplicable reason performed a volte-face within just weeks of their original recommended refusal, when in their previous response to the application on exactly the same site for application UTT/19/3091/FUL, they recommended refusal stating: **“There are no footways to provide safe access and egress for pedestrians”**.*

What on earth do they think has changed? I seriously question and frankly, cannot fathom why ECC Highways without any explanation withdrew its previous objection, unless this was a consequence of an inadequate and flawed desktop reassessment as absolutely nothing has changed. It remains an undeniable fact that there are “no footways to provide safe access and egress for pedestrians” as ECC Highways previously identified as a concern. This was also cited as one of the reasons for dismissal by the previous Appeal Inspector who afforded substantial weight to her concerns about highways safety because of the dangers that could be caused.

The vehicle volumes and speed data I quote are not fanciful guesswork but data recorded by both the traffic survey referred to by the applicant and a Department of Transport survey revealing the potential for 100's of vehicles a day travelling past the site at high speed to be a proven reality.

This is not a safe road for the proposed development.

This is not new evidence as all of this information is available in the public domain and I have copies of this data here if anyone requires it!

Finally, with regards to Local infrastructure

I make no excuse for repeating, no local services can be reached on foot without using the B1417 without pavements or street lights, including the nearest Primary School which is over 2 miles away in Watch House Green. The nearest secondary schools are in either Great Dunmow or Braintree which are several miles away. The nearest bust stop is around 1 mile away and again, cannot be reached on foot without walking along the B1417.

So, to summarise

Felsted Parish Council is not “anti” traveller sites, as Felsted is already host to one of the largest traveller sites in Uttlesford and our previous opposition to development on this site included objections to market housing.

The site is clearly a sensitive location, forming a rural gateway into Felsted and it is directly opposite a 40 acre wildlife site.

Uttlesford District Council is proposing 14 new pitches on the existing “Felsted” traveller site less than two miles away and as I have pointed out there are already numerous vacant pitches on that site which could be brought back into use if a genuine need is identified. The B1417 where the site is located carries a high number of vehicles daily with many travelling at high speeds, some even in excess of 60MPH and the road has no pavements or street lights.

The proposed site is inappropriate and would appear incongruous, damaging the historic layout of our Parish irreversibly impacting the character and environment and above all, it is unnecessary.

I am happy to answer any questions on behalf of Felsted Parish Council. Thank you.

[UTT/23/1249/FUL](#)

Appeal Reference: APP/C1570/W/24/3338901

Princes Halfyards Stebbing Road

Demolition of stables/outbuilding, barns (1 and 2), construction of two dwellings and conversion of barn 4 to an annexe to Plot 2.

Appeal Allowed - 6th December 2024

[UTT/24/0721/FUL](#)

Appeal Reference: APP/C1570/W/24/3356425

Land North Of Milch Hill Willows Green

Change of use of agricultural land to residential, construction of 1 no. dwelling and associated landscaping.

Appeal to be considered by written representations. All representations must be received by 16 January 2025.

8. Parish & District Councillor Planning Enforcement Training Update

It was noted that Cllr Richard Freeman attended training on Planning Enforcement and the Assistant Clerk circulated the relevant training materials to the Planning Committee for their information.

9. Consider London Stansted Airport Draft Sustainable Development Plan

It was noted that the Draft London Stansted Airport Sustainable Development Plan is available and a full consultation will be open in 2025.

10. Draft Local Plans - Uttlesford DC, Braintree DC

No Comment.

11. Other Urgent Planning Business and Future Dates

It was agreed that the Assistant Clerk will contact a landowner about some signage that needs to be removed.

Next Meeting is 14th January 2025 online using Zoom.

..... 5th February 2025 Chairman

Planning Information for Residents

Residents wishing to make comments on Planning Applications or view other comments can go to the Uttlesford District Council Website: <https://publicaccess.submitted.uttlesford.gov.uk/online-applications>. To find out more about Appeals please go to the Planning Inspectorate Website: <https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk> Visit <https://felsted-pc.gov.uk/planning/> to find out more about the Planning process.