

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting
Tuesday 16th September 2025 at 6pm

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

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Graham Harvey declared a prejudicial interest in application UTT/25/2447/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 August meeting were formally approved. They will be signed at the next Full Parish Council Meeting.

5. New Applications to be considered

[UTT/25/1929/OP](#)

Land North Of Garnetts Lane And Stebbing Road

Outline planning application for erection of up to 70 no. dwellings served by vehicular and pedestrian accesses, complete with parking provision, drainage attenuation, public open space, landscaping and related infrastructure and works; All matters reserved except for primary means of vehicular and pedestrian access (to exclude internal roads and footways not covered herein).

Comment: This application relates to a site which is the subject of active consideration by the Felsted Neighbourhood Plan Review Group (FNPRG) and referred to as the “Water Tower” site. Therefore, because the FNPRG has engaged extensively with Felsted Parish Council and the Felsted community over the past two years regarding this site, in the interests of both openness and completeness, the response to this planning application includes a contribution from the FNPRG.

At the outset, it is important to say that had Felsted not received an indicated allocation of 104 new homes from UDC in their Emerging Local Plan (ELP), currently submitted under Regulation 19, the Parish Council would not have considered supporting this or any similar planning application as our community considers that Felsted Parish has already been subject to a disproportionate degree of development and the unique and diverse character of our 14 greens and village centre is threatened.

Indeed, this disproportionate degree of development was evidenced when during preparation of the new UDC Local Plan, Felsted was classified as one of only eight “Larger villages” within the District and was initially allocated a housing requirement of a further 320 units. An allowance was then made for the 216 dwellings that had been built between the time of that initial determination and the 1st April 2024, when the final “emerging Local Plan” was established. This reduced Felsted’s requirement from 320 to a residual allocation of 104 units.

As the above figures demonstrate, Felsted has seen significant growth in recent years and therefore without the ELP allocation, the parish would have opposed any further major developments.

However, following the indicated allocation and faced with the choice between allowing developers to choose their preferred sites for us or to allocate sites, the FNPRG concluded that it was in the best interests of the parish as, a whole, to allocate sites for the development of the circa 104 new homes.

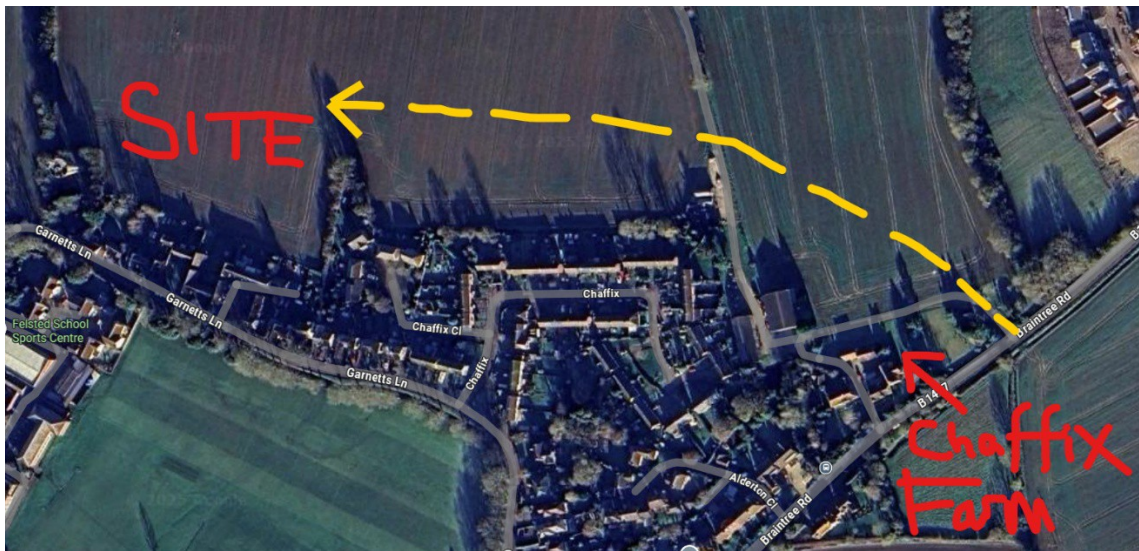
The FNPRG conducted a detailed site assessment of the 22 sites submitted by landowners and included in the 2023 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) process and concluded that the sites submitted provided adequate choice for allocations. In March 2024, following an initial assessment by the FNPRG of suitability, 12 of the 22 sites were subject of a public consultation event in the Felsted Memorial Hall and whilst the consultation was poorly attended, the Water Tower site received some public support, in particular from residents who considered that the eastern side of the parish had received more than its share of development (of the 216 dwellings referred to above, around 50% were located in Watch House Green, virtually doubling the size of that settlement).

Following the initial consultation, the FNPRG entered discussions with landowners of three sites, including the Water Tower site, which together the FNPRG considered could meet the allocation requirements. After a dialogue with UDC, one of the three sites was ruled out as being unacceptable and on the recommendation of UDC the intended allocation for that site was transferred to the Water Tower site, increasing an initial proposed allocation to around 70 homes.

Subsequently, following further public consultation, further discussions have continued with two sets of landowners' agents with the aim of delivering circa 87 homes (since reduced from 104 by windfalls) and community gain through the Neighbourhood Plan process. Public concerns in relation to the Water Tower site centred on over-development, access and the feared damage to heritage caused by significantly increased traffic, particularly during the construction phase (circa 2+ years) and with final occupation.

The FNPRG's discussions with the agent for the site subject to this application centred on the site access. While the completed site would unavoidably add unwelcome additional traffic congestion in the village centre, the FNPRG's focus was primarily on the harmful impact of heavy construction traffic, which has also raised serious concerns with local residents.

At their own consultation event, the agent for the Water Tower site had raised the possibility of a "Temporary Haul Route", providing access to the site from Braintree Road across farmland (also owned by the same landowner), as a mitigation of the impact of the development on the historic village centre and Garnett's Lane and Stebbing Road.



Indicative possible “Temporary Haul Route” – NOTE: Drawing recently supplied by the Applicant

It is disappointing that this “temporary haul route” has not materialised in the application. Felsted Parish Council considers this addition essential due to concerns about Garnetts Lane’s suitability for heavy construction vehicles. We understand that a separate planning application is needed and would support it.

We understand that as the “Statutory Consultee” on highways matters that ECC Highways are the final arbiter on access and road suitability but from a “local knowledge” perspective we feel strongly that Garnetts Lane, with its unrestricted “on road” parking, lack of overtaking opportunities and high density of residential dwellings is an inappropriate access route for heavy commercial vehicles when an alternative could be provided.

Assessing the impact on the character and appearance of the rural area, the Felsted Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets is a careful balancing exercise; weighing any potential identified harm against the public benefits, the positive reasons for development and the need for the Parish to meet the UDC indicated housing allocation for Felsted. This approach is ingrained in planning policy that seeks to manage change within historic environments while acknowledging the need for some development, specifically taking account of NPPF paragraph 215 that states “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use”.

It is noted that in the “UDC - Built Heritage and Conservation Advice Note” response, the Principal Conservation Officer concludes that “the proposed development would result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Felsted Conservation Area and to Little Garnetts /Nunty”. The conclusion that “development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset” acknowledges, in line with NPPF paragraph 215, that whilst there will be some negative impact on the immediate area that the effect is minor and therefore does not fundamentally erode the significant elements that contribute to the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby heritage assets.

It is noted that whilst the submitted “traffic management plan” includes a well-intentioned proposal restricting the use of Stebbing Road which runs through Felsted School, it incorrectly presumes that during “holiday periods” the school is unoccupied and suggests the use of Stebbing Road during school holiday periods. However, as stated by The Felsted School Director of Operational Services in his 26th August submission the assumption that the school is not occupied during “holiday periods” is very much misguided as Felsted School is a boarding school and during “holiday periods”, operates an active Summer School which can have up to 400 people per week (320 pupils and 80 staff) for several weeks. In addition, during “holiday periods” the school runs numerous other activities such as hosting rugby clubs, hockey clubs, cricket matches and many other activities.

In order only to meet our housing requirement, Felsted Parish Council gives qualified support to this application. The evolving Neighbourhood Plan Review is likely to put this site forward as the preferred location site for the majority of our housing allocation, however, the proposed access will directly impact the traffic through an already critically congested village and we therefore urge UDC to explore with the applicant the inclusion of their previously implied “temporary haul route”.

If the application is approved, it should include an enforceable condition prohibiting the use of Stebbing Road by construction related traffic at all times.

(Clerks Note: Cllr Ramm left the meeting at the end of the discussion of this item at 6.37pm)

[UTT/25/2205/HHF](#)

Cromwell House Willows Green Main Road

Proposal for garage with first floor annexe accommodation.

Comment: Felsted Parish Council supports this application.

[UTT/25/2162/HHF](#)

Fairfield House Bakers Lane

Proposed Outbuilding.

No Comment.

[UTT/25/2272/LB](#) / [UTT/25/2271/HHF](#)

Argyll House Station Road

Erection of single storey extension to later additions to property. New/replacement of external joinery together with internal alterations within later parts of property and other associated alterations. Removal of detached outbuilding. Landscaping and associated works.

No Comment.

[UTT/25/2342/HHF](#)

Orchard Side Causeway End Road

Demolition of conservatory, garage and porch extension. Construction of rear, side and porch extensions. Alterations to internal layout and external appearance.

No Comment.

[UTT/25/2447/FUL](#)

Agricultural Building Rear Off The Mole Hill

Demolition of existing agricultural building and erection of 1no. self build/custom build dwelling, new access and associated development

No Comment.

6. Decisions received since 19th August

[UTT/25/1617/LB](#)

Russetts Chelmsford Road

To remove a bedroom window which is not original or in keeping with other windows in the property. To replace with a slim, double glazed window with glazing bars to match other windows, with outside putty.

Permission Granted - 13th August 2025

[UTT/25/0790/LB](#)

Cressages 2 Cressages Close Bannister Green

Replacement of 13 rusted single glazed metal and rotten single glazed timber windows with modern vacuum glazed unit with integral comes.

Permission Refused - 9th September 2025 *'The information submitted does not meet the requirements of Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).'*

7. Appeal to be considered

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

APP/C1570/W/25/3371686

Agricultural Building Rear Off The Mole Hill

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

No Comment

8. Enforcement update

The Assistant Clerk provided an Enforcement update.

9. Hedgehog Farm Public Consultation

It was noted that the consultation period for the Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm proposals has begun and will run until Monday 6th October.

The Planning Committee briefly discussed TotalEnergies withdrawal of their NSIP proposal and their advice that they will now submit the application as a normal Planning Application directly to UDC. The Planning Committee is likely to recommend a refusal to the Parish Council.

Cllr Freeman will step down from the Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm Community Liaison Group to ensure that Felsted Parish Council Planning Committee responds to the anticipated planning application solely on its merits and on behalf of residents of the parish.

10. Draft Local Plans - Uttlesford DC, Braintree DC

No Comment.

11. Other Urgent Planning Business and Future Dates

It was noted that Chelmsford City Council has published its updated Statement of Community Involvement for consultation. The Assistant Clerk will respond to this consultation with any feedback given to her by members of the committee.

Next Meeting is 22nd October 2025 online using Zoom.

..... 5th November 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>

More information about the Planning Process is available here: <https://felsted-pc.gov.uk/planning/>

To find out more about Felsted's Neighbourhood Plan please visit our webpage here: <https://felsted-pc.gov.uk/felsted-neighbourhood-plan>