

# Your views

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## Dunmow Broadcast

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## ON THE WEB

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2. Felsted student in gig of her life at London 2012 opening ceremony
3. Exclusive: Uttlesford Olympian gives her take on London 2012 so far
4. Man dies after being hit by train
5. Dunmow's Chloe Rogers rescues Team GB in thrilling encounter

### Tweet of the week

"Gold!"

@BenMaher1

# We should send all new builds to the North West

I WRITE to express my concern at the flyer recently put about by the Fairfield Partnership promoting the development of large housing estates on land between Elsenham and Henham.

All of the land they propose for their development is greenfield prime agricultural land and not brownfield derelict land which is the government's preferred option for development as outlined in various Defra documents.

The UK no longer produces sufficient food for its own requirements and over 50 per cent of our food now has to be imported. The world population is expanding at a faster rate than the production of food, and there is increasing competition for food stocks.

In East Anglia there is already a deficit of rain leading to drought conditions and frequent shortages of fresh water. There appears to be no development programme by the government or the water companies to rectify this problem. The Fairfield Partnership omit any comment on this subject and I see no sign of a reservoir or other conservation proposal in their flyer.

It would make far more sense to look for other areas of the country where development would be more compatible. For example in the north-west there is a surplus of water and there are also many brownfield sites still available. It would make more sense for the government to direct all new development in that direction.

The Fairfield Partnership has 755 acres of agricultural land at Elsenham available for development. From their previous development sites the average number of houses per acre has varied between a low of nine per acre to a high of 17 per acre. If we use these figures the Elsenham site therefore has the potential for between 6,795 and 12,835 new homes. This would be a large new town bigger than Saffron Walden.

The partnership claims that their development will deliver much-needed infrastructure such as drainage, sewerage, roads, jobs and schools. Unfortunately they don't tell us who is to pay for all this. We must assume that it will not be the partnership. As their is no sign of all this infrastructure being included in the various council budgets will it ever happen?

Where are all the new jobs they say will appear? Talk to the people of Elsenham or Henham and they are not aware of any jobs in the area. Perhaps the partnership has in mind a secret agenda to push for the expansion of Stansted Airport to four runways and to be the major hub airport for London and Britain – now that would create a lot of new employment! If that is denied then we must assume that any new employment is elsewhere and a vast amount of commuting traffic will have to take place. Where are the roads or public transport to handle all this?

It is quite clear that the Uttlesford planning department should refrain from supporting development of these greenfield sites. In the future food and

water will become in increasingly short supply, once the land has been built over it is very hard to return it to agricultural production. Future generations will not thank us if we are so short-sighted as to destroy the land now.

**Robin Morgan  
Watling Lane  
Thaxted**

## Housing plan is rotten

THERE'S no doubt, something rotten is going on at Uttlesford District Council regarding the proposed housing strategy.

Trying to get to the bottom of all this is like banging your head against a brick wall. I can't wait for it to stop!

Every week now we read more letters from concerned residents who are worried about the future development of their towns and villages. It seems we, the Council Tax payers, are paying our hard earned money to Uttlesford, and for what? They owe it to us to be honest and straightforward with the information they give. This is obviously not the case. We are being treated like idiots. Meetings behind closed doors with developers. This still rankles with me.

So we have heard from Cllrs Rolfe and Ketteridge, or did we? No questions answered as far as I was concerned. Now let us hear from the UDC cabinet.

Come on, don't be shy, write your explanations to the *Broadcast* on why you changed your minds with regards to the building of a new town to the residents you represent are waiting to hear from you and why, in a play on words of a certain politician, you were turning.

**Wendy Morrone  
The Downs  
Great Dunmow**

## Stubborn time wasting

AS leader of the opposition Liberal Democrat group on Uttlesford District Council, I want to comment on recent letters relating to the Conservative administration's proposed Local Plan.

Serious problems have arisen because the council's Conservative cabinet were forced to put this plan together in a hurry because they have had to abandon their proposed Option 4 for a new town in Elsenham. This option was introduced without consultation, officer support nor expert reports.

Consequently, a number of insurmountable problems such as transport issues and a lack of other infrastructure such as water supply and drainage, together with sustained opposition from residents and the Lib Dems, forced the Conservatives to back down on Elsenham, a plan which evidence has shown is simply not sensible or deliverable.

If the Lib Dems had been in control of the council, we would have embarked on a staged, considered and transparent consultation process with communities to formulate a plan based on maximum consensus. We would have taken proper account of transport concerns and made evidence-based decisions.

The council's ruling Conservatives have not been able to follow this path because of the amount of time wasted stubbornly defending the failed Option 4. This has resulted in a failure to work with communities to deliver an evidence-based plan over the past five years and has now left Uttlesford residents on the wrong end of a planning 'free-for-all'.

**Cllr David Morson  
Leader of Uttlesford Liberal Democrats**

## We don't believe them

THE public disapproves of corporate fat cats in banks and evasive politicians at all levels of government. Their secretive culture is not acceptable. Uttlesford's planning controversy is a local example of organisations acting outside expected standards. In Stansted we have just witnessed an example of planning at its worst. People don't believe what they are being told; nor do I.

The seriousness of this situation for the council cannot be underestimated. Since September 2007, when the council was bounced by politics into adopting a new-town strategy for future housing, the council has been living with deception. The decision to adopt a new town at Elsenham/Henham was misguided. The responsible councillors now seem to be trying to switch horses without losing face.

Another thread was the claim by at least one senior councillor that the need for extra homes was no more than a creation of the last government; that with a change of government the need would evaporate. They even fought elections on this false claim. That is, until we got a new, coalition government that also told the truth like the last one: for many years far too few homes have been built.

Instead of coming clean with the public, Uttlesford began a clandestine exercise. A year ago the council began behind the scenes to encourage some specially selected landowners to submit premature planning applications to plug the second hole they had created by their dithering – a short-term supply of housing land.

In Stansted the district council enticed one owner of employment land on Cambridge Road to apply to build what the developer called "an exclusive enclave" of homes. In so doing, Uttlesford threatened the future vitality of our town centre. It actually destroyed jobs. Despite desperate attempts by the "planning establishment" to get quick approval for this proposal, the council's own planning committee twice in the two months

rightly threw out the application.

Few of us knew what had been going on behind the scenes. No one at Uttlesford told the public during two consultations this year that some sites had already been given at least an amber light. I don't know how the latest set of proposals for building sites across the district was derived. I was even threatened with disciplinary action for speaking out about this lack of transparency. The culture at Uttlesford is rooted in secrecy and authoritarianism.

Uttlesford should now be honest and open about what has been going on; admit its mistakes; rebuild trust with the people whom they are supposed to represent. Start an evidence-based approach to planning. Only by taking the residents of Uttlesford with them can the council hope to produce a credible and trusted local plan for the next 15 years. Royal Bank of Scotland said last week that it is cleaning-up its past. Will UDC follow RBS's lead?

**Cllr Alan Dean  
Member for Stansted South  
Uttlesford District Council**

## Thanks for the boost

WE wanted to say thank you to the family of the late Lord Newton and the people of Braintree for their generous donation of £2,500 to Rethink Mental Illness' carers group.

Our group supports people who care for those with mental illness in the Braintree area. We have been active for over 25 years and some of the original members still attend our regular meetings. We support each other, campaign against mental illness discrimination and put on events to raise awareness of mental health issues.

We strongly believe that a better life is possible for millions of people affected by mental illness.

When Lord Newton sadly passed away earlier this year, we got a phone call to say that all donations to his funeral will come to our group. We were touched by the family's generosity at a very sad time for them.

Lord Newton always supported charities in Braintree and during his last months at the House of Lords he spoke up many times for social welfare. His widow, Lady Patricia Newton, has always been our supporter as well.

We will use the money to help our carers and we'd also like to invite Lady Patricia as a guest of honour to a social evening.

Once again, we wanted to thank the late Lord Newton's family and donors for this kind donation.

**Trina Whittaker  
Co-ordinator  
Braintree Rethink Carers Support Group**