

# Your views

## Saffron Walden Reporter

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### Tweet of the week

"Gold!"

@BenMaher1

# Destroying land for future generations

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 there 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 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

## Give them a ticket

AFTER all the argument earlier this year about parking outside Ice House Lodge on Audley End Road, when it was claimed that it was dangerous to traffic and environmentally damaging, and banned, I was surprised and angered to see that this weekend it was the designated spot for set down and pick-up for the concerts at Audley End.

Are English Heritage, Lord Braybrooke and their clients above the law? I hope that if this happens on future occasions the officers from our solely-for-profit parking partnership will be in attendance to enforce their Urban Clearway with tickets. It might keep them out of town for a while anyway.

**Peter Cowper**  
Beeches Close, Saffron Walden

## Plan needs a rethink

I, LIKE many Saffron Walden residents, am dismayed at UDC's latest 'Uttlesford Plan' and the lack of any coherence or reason to the plans.

The council has executed a complete U-turn from its previous plan to consolidate all new housing to one new settlement.

This seemed to make a great deal of sense as it avoided forcing unsustainable levels of housing and congestion into traditionally small, rural settlements. At no stage has the council produced any meaningful reason for this U-turn.

Indeed, the new policy directly contradicts the findings of the council's own research – namely that communities such as Saffron Walden and Newport cannot accommodate substantial new developments.

Added to this is the unanswered question of the additional traffic which will be generated in the already over congested Saffron Walden residential east to west routes.

Peaslands Road is already a nightmare due to the much smaller Friends

The winner of our star letter wins a ticket to Saffron Screen

SAFFRON SCREEN



School development. This will become far worse and create gridlock should the planned massive Radwinter Road development ever go ahead.

UDC should be aware it needs to completely rethink their plans, not just make token reductions in new housing number plans (as happened with the Friends School development).

Given the massive opposition to the plan, councillors would be wise to consider their re-election chances should they choose to push ahead with an unjustified and undemocratic scheme.

**Paul Sinnott**  
Saffron Walden

## Scheme unsustainable

EVERY time I hear a call for more housing, I get annoyed thinking of the five empty, unfinished, apartment blocks sitting alongside Bishop's Stortford station which have been there unoccupied since the financial crash of 2008.

Would it not be a good idea for Hertfordshire Council to acquire these and bring them into service post haste?

Then, if in Uttlesford we really need additional housing, I would suggest a small settlement at Stumps Cross could be eminently suitable, as proposed earlier in response to the Local Development Plan. The site is convenient for transport links, being close to the M11, as well as Great Chesterford and Audley End stations. It could also provide housing for staff at the science parks of Chesterford, Babraham Biotech and the Genome Campus.

Let's remove the politics from the Local Plan and get back to practical solutions. Rather than simply dumping 880 houses on the most inaccessible side of Saffron Walden, where traffic congestion and pollution could become intolerable, the planners should produce a rational response.

Certainly a new settlement requires infrastructure like sewers, water supply and drainage, but Saffron Walden will also be under considerable stress in these respects when the approved 200 houses are built off the Ashdon Road. The current proposal for major housing schemes in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Newport is simply unsustainable.

**Keith Vines**  
The Spike, Saffron Walden

## The easy way out

WHILE much has been analysed over the consequences of the current predictions for housing, there are still some important aspects which have not been clarified.

These relate to the concept of 'affordable' which might be acceptable for rented properties but is far more difficult to accept for properties to be purchased amounting as it does to a massive taxpayer funded subsidy which, for many first time buyers, comes from the Bank of Mum and Dad.

Putting that to one side, can we be assured that when these properties are sold on, usually within 5-7 years, this subsidy will be refunded, something which can be assured by placing a charge of the deeds of the property which will inevitably be sold at ruling market value.

Particularly as the intention of these proposals is not to solve local problems but south east overspill introducing people not local to the area.

This needs clarification at the highest level as it is all well and clever to advocate charitable actions when it is not your money that is involved.

Why is any of this proposed housing being reserved for migrants when, as Spain has now shown, it is within EU rules to demand that migrants have the resources to avoid being a charge on the state.

The overall justification is to answer demand for housing the south-east to which governments of all persuasions have simply acquiesced making no effort to reverse the process.

The lead employment type usually involves operating a computer which can be done anywhere capable of being connected to the electronic information system. So why are efforts not made to encourage a shift northwards where there is a significant employment problem?

The overall conclusion must be that what we are seeing is a solution to the surface of a problem which is easy and requires little central government effort.

**T Rumble**  
Walden Road, Searoads End