

Yourviews

Write to Saffron Reporter, 54 High Street, Saffron Walden, Essex CB10 1EE
or e-mail editor@saffronwalden-reporter.co.uk

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54 High Street, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1EE

EDITORIAL

Telephone: 01799 512882 / 512883
E-mail: editor@saffronwalden-reporter.co.uk

Editor Andy Veale
01480 443447
andy.veale@archant.co.uk

Chief Reporter Daniel Barden
01799 512882
daniel.barden@archant.co.uk

Reporter Sam Tonkin
01799 512890
sam.tonkin@archant.co.uk

ADVERTISING

E-mail: sales@saffronwalden-reporter.co.uk

Sales Manager Dawn Robinson
01480 411481
dawn.robinson@archant.co.uk

Sales Executive Ellie Riley
07918 767939
ellie.riley@archant.co.uk

Recruitment Debbie Cole
01480 411481
debbie.cole@archant.co.uk

Trades & Services Hayden Armes
01480 443439
hayden.ames@archant.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION

Telephone: 01438 866130
Email: distributionqueries@archant.co.uk

LEAFLETS

Telephone: 01438 866072
Email: elena.goakes@archant.co.uk

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ON THE WEB

Most viewed stories

1. Jogger dies after power cable incident in Newport
2. Tributes paid to jogger who died in freak power cable accident
3. Plane spotters turn up in their droves ahead of London 2012
4. Sherlock Holmes sale is online record
5. Computer tablet stolen at airport

Tweet of the week

"I am now British champion! Won the final 3-2! Last time I won it we won Paralympic gold in the same year!"

@Bentleyboccia

Warden also left me with a bitter taste

I WAS prompted to respond to the letter from Nicola Brooks ('Fine left bad taste after lovely meal') which appeared as the Star Letter of the Reporter last week.

I was 'caught out' in very similar circumstances several years ago when I parked in a residents' parking zone at around 7pm one evening assuming, incorrectly, that in line with the normal off street parking arrangements, parking restrictions ceased at 6pm.

I wrote to Uttlesford District Council to point out what appeared to be an inconsistent approach and although needless to say, the content was anodyne in the extreme, I did at least receive a letter of acknowledgement.

So what are we to conclude? It seems that we have officials who are employed at public expense to skulk about the streets of Saffron Walden during the evening hours in order to entrap the unwary. At a time of day when normal business hours have ceased, there can surely be no justification for this activity purely on the basis of traffic or parking management considerations; and the draconian fine imposed on the unfortunate Nicola would suggest that we are probably looking at a revenue raising exercise - or in other words a 'stealth tax'.

As a resident of Duxford, I would like to enquire what sort of message the 'powers that be' consider such activity sends to the occasional visitor to the town? Believe me, it certainly isn't 'Welcome to Saffron Walden'.



David Sarsons
St Peter's Street
Duxford

Setting record straight

WE are writing in response to the recent letters in your paper about housing and the Draft Local Plan.

The level of public involvement is to be welcomed. Two phases of public consultation have been undertaken but residents want to understand the detail - in Saffron Walden particularly around the implications for traffic, air quality and community benefits.

Notwithstanding that some details are only explicit in a planning application, UDC will continue to inform residents as studies (such as for traffic) become available.

There has been a degree of misinformation in some of the letters and recent debate. The current proposal for dispersal is not the policy of one or two councillors but agreed, as the basis for consultation, with cross party support. UDC has decided that the appropriate

The Saffron Walden Reporter prides itself on lively and often heated letters pages which offer a variety of opinions from different sections of society. Letters are usually only edited for grammatical sense, never for content, and we strive to publish all of the correspondence we receive. We have been running our Star Letter, in conjunction with Saffron Screen, for more than a year. The initiative, which earns the correspondent a voucher for Saffron Screen, is aimed at sparking healthy debate and gives you, the reader, a platform on which to express your views.

number of additional dwellings in Uttlesford (further to the number that already have planning permission) is 221 per year over the next 15 years.

This number must be approved by the Inspector and therefore must have credibility in numbers, profile and community development, we believe that residents will expect the council to produce a plan that can be approved by the Inspector but that does not recommend excessive numbers.

Last week the Secretary of State approved the building of 1,000 houses in Gloucestershire because the local plan was not making sufficient progress. It is important that we continue to develop our new plan to ensure that we retain control of decision making locally.

There are 1,200 people on the council's housing waiting list and a real need for affordable housing, it is all our responsibility to find a way of providing that as part of fulfilling a 15-year plan that meets the Inspector's criteria.

Clr Howard Rolfe
Clr Jim Ketteridge
Uttlesford District Council

Questions unanswered

THE letter from councillors Rolfe and Ketteridge claimed to try to clarify "a degree of misinformation" about residents' letters but instead managed to avoid answering any of the main questions posed by residents in recent weeks.

Cllrs Rolfe and Ketteridge claim that "residents want to understand the detail" of the proposed housing strategy. I don't know who they have been talking to, but those residents I have spoken to - and the more than 2,100 that have signed objection letters - aren't worrying about the detail at the moment; they are far more concerned about the overall housing strategy and why on earth Cllrs Rolfe and Ketteridge are proposing it.

UDC has spent over five years compiling evidence showing that Uttlesford's towns and villages cannot support major new housing and that the best strategy is a new town.

Yet suddenly, in June this year, UDC completely changed this strategy and proposed exactly the opposite. Why?



LAST week saw the start of the British summer (finally) and Uttlesford residents were out enjoying the sun.

Paul Morrison, from Church Street in Stansted, sent us this picture, using iWitness.



The standard answer now is that UDC has found a way to build fewer houses, but the difference between the new and old numbers is far too small to justify the change.

The new requirement is only three per cent less than the old, and would get to the same total in less than two more years anyway. Given that nothing significant has occurred to justify the U-turn, residents are entitled to an explanation, which Cllrs Rolfe and Ketteridge seem to be extremely reluctant to give.

UDC planning policy is a mess. UDC has been working on this plan for six years, at taxpayers' expense, and has still failed to deliver a coherent or defensible plan.

As a consequence, UDC has been in breach of government planning requirements to identify enough suitable housing sites and officers are instead recommending unsuitable developments, such as the one recently approved south of Ongar Road in Dunmow.

Instead of producing a sensible new plan in a timely fashion, UDC are

proposing to completely change their strategy, dragging out the timetable still further, and leaving residents exposed for still longer. The proposed housing strategy is even worse - it exposes all the major settlements across Uttlesford to unsuitable development.

UDC's only consistent policy appears to be to avoid a new settlement at Stumps Cross at all costs, even though their evidence says this is the best option. UDC's planning head recently said that the change in strategy was just a political decision and there was new evidence; is avoiding development at Stumps Cross the real "political decision" that he has referred to?

Instead of UDC apologising for the current mess, and answering the questions that residents have been asking, we get a smoke screen letter from two councillors which tells us nothing new. As taxpayers and voters we are entitled to far more.

If, as Cllrs Rolfe and Ketteridge claim, their plan has broad cross-party support, why are many councillors still