

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rooted in secrecy

LARGE swathes of the public seem to have lost trust in Uttlesford Council's attempts to create a 15-year plan for the district. They don't believe what they are being told and nor do I. The seriousness of this situation for the council, for local democracy and for those of us who love this district, cannot be underestimated.

The culture at Uttlesford is rooted in secrecy and authoritarianism. So where should UDC go next? Those in charge could start by being honest and open about what has been going on, admit their mistakes, start to rebuild trust with the people whom they are supposed to represent and take 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

Pressure for a new town

THANKYOU to all who supported our campaign to oppose the Uttlesford Local Plan; we have delivered over 2,100 individually signed letters to UDC, hundreds have signed up on our website and over 5,000 people responded to UDC with the vast majority objecting to their proposals.

Given the large response to the recent public consultation residents are clearly engaged and understand the issues. Many of the letters urge UDC to revert to their original and evidence-based solution - a new town. But they may still fail to act on your instructions. So residents should continue to tell councillors what they think and can use the quick email links on our website to do this.

- Dan Starr for WeAreResidents.org

Residents on wrong end of a planning free-for-all

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 Conservative cabinet was forced to put this plan together in a hurry because it had to abandon its proposed Option 4 for a new town in Elsenham.

If the Liberal Democrats had been in control of the Council we would have embarked on a staged, considered and transparent consultation process with local communities to formulate a Local 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 local 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 the Liberal Democrats Uttlesford District Council

Priority for developers

WHEN will the whole UDC consultation be exposed for the sham that it is? UDC has admitted by email to the Save Newport Village group that it prioritised developers' comments as it felt it important that the public had access to them.

What a pity the the developers didn't submit these until the last minute, effectively stopping the public from commenting on them. Alarming this information has no research or hard

evidence base. I am saddened that the UDC has decided that instead of following the democratic process it decided (independently) which comments are important and again allowed the developers to take priority. When will someone investigate UDC's disregard for due process and fairness and take them to task?

- Lisa Davidson, Newport.

Thanks to Dawn and family

I would like to say thank you to Dawn Thake, her daughter Gemma and two sons Sam and Tom who organised a Memorial 20 20 Cricket Match, Bar B Q and disco to commemorate Dawn's husband David 'Dickie' Thake on July 27.

The event raised a total of £500 for Addenbrooke's Kidney Patient's Association and we can assure everyone who supported the function that all the money raised will go to help kidney patients throughout our region.

- Tony Weaver, Chairman Addenbrooke's Kidney patient's Association.

Parking on Audley End Road

EARLIER this year there was a lot of argument about parking outside Ice House Lodge on Audley End Road. It was claimed that it was dangerous to traffic and environmentally damaging and, as a result, it was banned. So I was surprised and angered to see that this weekend it was the designated spot for set down and pickup 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 Saffron Walden

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