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## COMMUTERS WORST HIT AS HURRICANE STRIKES



● A shipping container was dislodged by heavy winds at Shirehill (Photo: Ben Warbey)

**THE ST JUDE HURRICANE** hit Saffron Walden early Monday morning, causing odds and ends of damage but generally, compared with other areas in the South and Wales, our area got off lightly.

Among the worst hit locally were commuters needing to get into London from Audley End. Greater Anglia cancelled trains because of affected power lines and suggested travellers stayed at home. It was hoped that full service would be resumed Tuesday morning but at the time of going to press the service between Cheshunt and Audley End had not been fully restored. Commuters were told they could use the Cambridge-Kings Cross service instead.

There were several road blockages in Uttlesford that were dealt with by

councils, the police and the Highways Agency.

By yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon UK Power Networks engineers had restored power to over 300,000 customers in the East of England who were affected by extensive damage to power lines. The company is asking customers to report any power cuts and damaged lines on free helpline 0800 783 8838.

An Essex County Council spokesman said: "More than 400 individual calls were received following the adverse weather conditions that struck the county, causing wide-spread disruption and localised damage.

"We did our utmost to respond to ongoing concerns as quickly as possible using every resource available to clear

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● Peter Marsh with the fallen apple tree

## Sad end for tree providing apples for almost 50 years

● A LOCAL CASUALTY OF THE STORM was an apple tree in the garden of Steve Sparks' home in Harvey Way. Steve discovered it when he returned from work on Monday evening. He said: "It was quite remarkable that it fell in the one place where it could not do a lot of damage, missing the house, a rabbit hutch, a fence and a shed. All it did was pull down a clothes line." Neighbours Peter and Brenda Marsh, who have lived in Harvey Way since their marriage 52 years ago, were saddened by the tree's demise. Said Brenda: "It was planted by one of our former neighbours Mr Grasby, almost 50 years ago. He and his wife used to help by babysitting for me so I could go to work. Strangely enough there were more apples on the tree this year than ever before - perhaps it was an omen."

## Planning Committee 'hoodwinked'-claim

UDC PLANNING COMMITTEE members were this week told they'd been 'hoodwinked' into saying yes to a controversial care home proposal in Bury Water Lane, Newport.

Neil Hargreaves of the Save Newport Village campaign group told the Local that there had been a 'very significant' change of plan.

He said: "The agent for the site, Bill Bampton of Pelham Structures, now intends to apply for change of use to residential and has started new negotiations for an estate of 45 houses.

"In approving the care home application the committee ignored residents' strong concerns about the unsuitability of the location and about the lack of disabled access from the site to anywhere. "They ignored flooding of the access road and the objection by Newport Free Grammar School on the grounds of extra traffic and student safety. They believed the Essex Highways "expert" who said that the lanes are too far below standard width for his computer models but could still take 2,500 vehicles an hour (about half the flow of a three lane motorway).

"They accepted an assurance from the UDC Head of Planning about Anglia Water's refusal to fix the sewerage problems, presumably unaware that he wasn't answering their question. And they ignored the NHS who said it breached 10 national and local policy requirements.

### Report by John Brooker

"They also ignored residents' concerns that the scheme looked unviable it was likely to be switched to housing. However, it seems that this was the intention all along as it has taken just three weeks for this to happen. Knowing a care home was more likely to be accepted than more housing it looks as though it was used as a Trojan Horse to fool the committee. In his pitch to the councillors Mr Bampton said a care village was not the most profitable use of the site but he and the owners felt that it was the best option for the village. How charitable of them!

"If this comes back to the committee as a housing application please will they in future give proper consideration to what people who live here have to say? And when a developer makes out that they are doing something out of philanthropy maybe alarm bells should ring?"

Said Bill Bampton for Pelham Structures: "If the letter from Mr Hargreaves refers to our consulting with Newport Free Grammar School, exploring all the options to resolve serious safety and congestion issues at the school, then I plead guilty as charged."

Said a spokesman for Uttlesford District Council: "The Council is not aware of any changes to plans in Newport. If there are changes a formal application would need to be made which would be assessed at the appropriate time."

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