

LETTERS

Have your say: Write to 54 High Street Saffron Walden CB10 1EE or email editor@saffronwalden-reporter.co.uk



Saffron Walden Reporter

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

EDITORIAL

Telephone: 01799 513000 / 513024
E-mail: editor@saffronwalden-reporter.co.uk

Editor: Andy Veale
andyveale@archant.co.uk
Chief reporter: Daniel Barden
01799 513000

daniel.barden@archant.co.uk
Reporter: Sam Tonkin
01799 513024

sam.tonkin@archant.co.uk
Reporter Emma Hardwick
01799 513051
emma.hardwick@archant.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Fax: 01480 411481
Sales manager: Jackie Bevan
01480 411481
jackie.bevan@archant.co.uk

Sales executive: Rebecca Anderson
07584 311458
rebecca.anderson@archant.co.uk

Recruitment: Claudia Owen
01438 866100
claudia.owen@archant.co.uk

Trades & Services: Lavinia Edwards
01438 866079
lavinia.edwards@archant.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION

Telephone: 01438 866130
Email: distribution.enquiries@archant.co.uk

LEAFLETS

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

PUBLISHED BY

ARCHANT } HERTS & CAMBS

Managing Director:

Johnny Hustler

This newspaper conforms to the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice. If you have any complaint or comments, please contact the editor in the first instance. To enquire about permission to copy cuttings from this publication for internal management and information purposes, please contact the Newspaper Licensing Agency (NLA), Wellington Gate, 7 & 9 Church Road, Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1NL. Tel: 01892 525273. E-mail: copy@nla.co.uk

January - June 2013
16,530



On the web

Most viewed stories

1. Man killed in Hatfield Heath crash is named
2. Saffron Walden school staff support Mover
3. Apprentice stars at the Olympics of the skills world
4. Walden school wins top prize for Summer Reading Challenge

Tweet of the week

"And that's a wrap! A HUGE thank you to everyone who has been part of an incredible long weekend of Opening Celebrations!"

@SaffronHallSW

We need to work together on housing

There needs to be a constructive relationship between the various housing campaign groups and the Conservatives at Uttlesford in order for us to have any success in getting the right result for the community overall.

The housing argument has descended into a row between various councillors and groups and as a result nothing is being achieved to actually get the housing numbers reduced and that's what we really need.

We need a body made up of district councillors, town and parish councillors, members of the campaign groups from the towns and villages around the district and our MP. This should also be done in partnership with neighbouring districts who are all going through this same painful process.

The sole objective of this group should be to lobby the relevant ministers to allow councils to both decide their own housing numbers/ need, and to be able to restart and review their local plans and without the threat of mass development going ahead as a result of the delay. The council has recently been criticised by local campaign groups and the Liberal Democrats (who already resigned from the housing debate some time ago at Uttlesford) for allocating the majority of the additional homes to a single site in Elsenham. This is something many of the same people had previously been in supportive of.

We need to stop arguing over the sites and the plan and start working together constructively to get the numbers reduced to levels we believe will be sustainable for Uttlesford. If these homes weren't allocated to single site in Elsenham, they will go to the bigger settlements such as Saffron Walden. Presently simply saying "no" to new housing is not an option for any of us.

Cllr David-James Sadler
Uttlesford District & Saffron Walden Town Council

We need transparent representatives

As a parent and having previously taught in schools that supported significant numbers of families in need, I've become very interested in the debate on appropriate housing provision in the town.

I am concerned those families in housing need will get lost in the political arguments for and against mass development as a whole. UDC has constantly referred to the number of 1,600 on the housing waiting lists in Uttlesford as a reason to green light more housing as a whole, when the truth is that there are half the number.

The actual figure on the list is 754 families in band A-D, i.e. those who are not adequately housed, and of those, 638 have an Uttlesford connection. UDC hasn't provided the details of those specific settlements that are most in need, which is surely essential to make sure that we build the right houses in the right places! This all proves both the frailty and the futility of the Local Plan –

Not having a plan is Lib Dems' best policy

I note the recent suggestion of a local Liberal Democrat that I should intervene to make Uttlesford District Council think again about its housing proposals (*Reporter*, page 3 Nov 28).

It strikes me that the council has been thinking about this issue non-stop for the last eight years, first under Lib Dem control and more recently with Conservative leadership. Funny thing, but I don't remember the Lib Dems getting so far as having a finalised plan which we could all stand back and applaud for its sensitivity and far-sightedness.

Agreeing on a plan is, of course, when the trouble begins. As soon as people see their village or their town being allocated more houses than they feel they want they – quite understandably – resist. That is where the Lib Dems come in. The affected community will quickly discover that the Lib Dems are on their side.

Maybe the council after consultation has a change of heart and the finger then points in another direction. With a crunching of gears and a squeal of brakes the Lib Dem protest wagon will roll up to make common cause. Not having a plan is undoubtedly the Lib Dems' best policy. No-one



need be offended. They become everyone's sympathetic friend. Stick with condemning Plan A whatever Plan A happens to be. Don't be so foolish as to offer a Plan B, because that would actually mean having to say where 4,000, 6,000, 8,000 or 10,000 houses should be put. That might just prove controversial. Perhaps I am being a bit unfair. In reality I have to admit that the Lib Dems do have an alternative plan. You see, it's the next plan, the one

just round the corner, the one that 'thinking again' will produce. How blind we all are not to recognise it. After all it is just a matter of going back to the drawing board. Before long it will be staring you in the face. Strange though that the Lib Dems have given us no hint as to what shape, let alone content, it might have. One wonders how long they can hide.

I tried in 2008 to help the council by holding an informal meeting of parish and town councils. All bar two were represented. On a private and non-committed basis the largest number of voluntary bids for new housing reached around 2,100. This is way below estimated need for the next 20 years.

No amount of thinking again can reduce the serious nature of the decision that the council has to take. In the meantime planning applications whether in conformity or conflict with the draft local plan will have to be processed.

It really would help if the Lib Dems would tell young people who aspire to own or rent a home in the district where they may expect to find one. A spoonful of bi-partisanship might help lasting decisions to be made.

Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
Saffron Walden constituency

affordable housing that supports our local families that are most in need, must be strategically targeted to the areas that specifically require it. I am disappointed that UDC has appeared to mislead residents with incorrect numbers and worse still, appear to be using housing need as a tool for political leverage in order to justify generic mass development.

Jen Beaton
Families spokesperson
weareresidents.org

Can you shed light on the illuminations?

Last night (Wednesday, November 27) I took a stroll through the town in order to show my four-year old son the marvellous Christmas illuminations. Even though it is November: The lights were rather lovely, especially in the trees on the High Street, but their twinkling luminescence prompted a question to which I turn to your inestimable publication to help provide an answer.

Where are they plugged in and who pays the electricity bill? Is each individual dangly lighting thingy plugged into one of the shops close to where it...er...dangles? Does each individual light therefore effectively have its own sponsor? Or is there a system – akin to firefighters and fire hydrants – where such displays can be plugged directly into the National Grid? If so, how does one calculate the amount of electricity used and who pays for it? I presume Uttlesford? Might I suggest they pay monthly by direct debit as it saves a bit of money in the long run.

I think we should be told. I am sorry not to write a more worthy letter, but I have got so bored reading about roads (or lack of) and housing developments,

I felt it time to move the debate onto a more interesting and seasonal topic. Plus my son will only keep asking the same question for the next month, so for the sake of my sanity, I would love to furnish him with an answer:

Philip Sunderland
Thaxted Road
Saffron Walden

Thanks for support in town for dog charity

The Inner Wheel Club of Saffron Walden would like to thank all members of the community who attended the coffee morning or who bought raffle tickets in the market square. Many local businesses willingly donated raffle prizes and we are hugely grateful to all of them.

We raised the brilliant sum of £1386.86 for Canine Partners. The amount raised will go a long way towards the club's aim which is to at least buy two puppies for this very worthwhile charity.

The Inner Wheel Committee

Slow down and take care on the roads

I would like to point out to readers an incident which happened to me on Friday. At about noon, I was on my mobility scooter in South Road, on the corner of Four Acres. I had just pulled out into the road to cross it, when a light blue car came round the corner. It was really close to the corner and the driver swerved but still clipped the buggy. She must have known she hit me, because she slowed down, but she did not even have the courtesy to stop. Fortunately, I was not hurt, although it did shake up me up. It did cause some damage to the buggy.

This is the first time that anything like this has happened to me and I would just like to point out to this lady that it could have been a lot worse – she could have killed someone. There are many elderly people who live there, and also children. I would urge her to slow down and take more care in future.

Name and address supplied

Shoebboxes are on their way to children

I saw your note in last week's paper asking if anyone else was support the shoebox appeal. The Baptist Church was a collection point for the town and 226 boxes were collected this week along with several sacks full of addition donations of knitted items, toys and other supplies.

The boxes were taken to the Cambridge warehouse where they are checked, sealed and packed in boxes where they will travel by road to Liberia, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus. The first lorry left for Liberia last Wednesday and on Tuesday (December 3) two further lorries set off to the other destinations. A big thank you to everyone who donated boxes, supplies and money for the transportation.

Tracy Todman
Saffron Walden Baptist Church

Come on council, let's get bike-friendly

Access Walden's criticism of Saffron Walden Town Council's decision to install only four of the 12 cycle racks that were available to the council absolutely free of charge is rooted in a forward-looking vision for the town and its people. This vision is one in which the increased provision of accessible, secure cycle parking in

the centre of the town would encourage residents and visitors to leave their cars behind, easing pressure on our increasingly congested roads and car parking, as well as having benefits for the environment.

At a time of increasing fuel poverty, the council should be making a greater effort to provide facilities that enable individuals and families to make normal journeys into and out of town using bike as their every day mode of transport.

Of course we welcome the fact there will be parking space for eight more bikes. However, for a town of 15,000-plus residents, four racks barely scratches the surface. With the cycle racks being offered to them free of charge, and the site locations identified and assessed for them, all the council had to do was say 'yes please', and they would have been off to a great start on cementing the Tour de France legacy they seek. There is still time.

So come on SWTC – show some ambition and vision, let's act to secure that legacy, and make Saffron Walden a cycle-friendly town!

James Savage
Access Walden

Time for Christmas shopping event

Late Night Christmas Shopping on Friday promises to be a great community evening with over 30 charity stalls as well as a wide range of market square traders. It will be the 11th time it has been organised by the Saffron Walden Initiative with the support of the town council.

The Round Table will be present with Father Christmas and his sleigh. There will be carol singing and street entertainment.

The event starts at 5.30pm specifically to allow for young families to attend.

Peter Riding
Chairman, Saffron Walden Initiative

Pledging a lot, but very delivering little

I was interested to read the letter from John Lodge in your paper last week (*Time for leader and cabinet to quit*). During his county council election campaign earlier this year, Mr Lodge pledged to "take the party politics out of local politics".

He is now talking about an alternative administration.

Dress it up how you like but that sounds like WeAreResidents, which in itself is

a "party", the problem being that it is a single issue party that appears oblivious to other key services and activities essential to a robust community.

Mr Lodge has pledged a lot but delivered nothing. Whatever happened to the temporary Thaxted Road traffic light rebate that he promised? Road surfaces are already deteriorating in and around Saffron Walden and winter has barely started.

Worse than that, Mr Lodge is trying to claim credit for projects that were underway long before he got involved. And what of planning? Build the houses in Elsenham said Mr Lodge during his campaign, and when a proposal is put forward he calls it "omnishambles". The new organisation, UUR, that Mr Lodge's WAR party is affiliated to, oppose house building everywhere which is a popular political slogan but leaves Uttlesford exposed to unlimited, unwanted development on a calamitous scale.

Paul Draper
Bury Water Lane
Newport

Education and traffic is a real concern

It does seem that the negative scenarios relating to Saffron Walden's future are rapidly in danger of becoming reality. I am referring to two issues in particular: education and traffic.

Next week an application will be presented before the planning committee for 300 homes to the east of Walden. This site has zero employment benefits and whilst it promises to bring additional leisure facilities to the town, will provide zero additional school places.

Essex County Council did suggest the developer should provide a school but Uttlesford's officers said this wasn't fair on the developer and should be the responsibility of the developer of the "bigger adjacent" site.

In addition the developer of this "bigger adjacent" site was also to be responsible for delivering the "essential mitigation measure" (the words of Kier's Transport Assessment) to cope with additional traffic caused by the Kier site. This site is no longer bigger than the Kier site but also no longer adjacent.

So in one fail swoop the "required mitigation measure" of the link road to Kier has disappeared as has any hope of asking the other developer to deliver a new school.

Matt North
Mount Pleasant Road
Saffron Walden

Scouts turn Tesco bag packers for funds



■ Scouts Grace Cordall (left) and Isobel Poles (right) with Tesco community champion Susie Diggins.

Saffron Walden Scouts have made the best of the run-up to Christmas by using the festive season to raise funds.

As people did their food shopping at Tesco, in Saffron Walden, the Scouts were on hand to pack their bags as they checked out of the store.

Nine Scouts from the 1st Saffron Walden Scout Group and the Saffron Walden (Town) Explorer Unit took part in packing bags for four hours, and thanks to the

wonderful shoppers, the group raised a total of £314.24.

We would like to thank all of the people who visited Tesco that day for their generosity, and especially Tesco for having us there – their staff were very helpful and friendly as always.

The Scouts involved also showed great enthusiasm in what they were doing and a massive well done to them also.

The money will be split between 1st Saffron Walden Scout Troop

and the Saffron Walden (Town) Explorer Unit.

There is currently space within the 1st Saffron Walden Scout Troop (10-and-a-half to 14 years) for new members and even more importantly for adult roles within the Group and District. Please phone me on 07967 500818 and we will point you in the right direction.

Kevin J Rule, Scout Leader, 1st Saffron Walden Scout Group



Paris Legore
Professional Floristry BA (Hons)




"FLOWERS ARE OUR PASSION AND HAPPY CUSTOMERS OUR INSPIRATION"

Wedding flowers - Events/House dressing
Indoor Plants - Sympathy flowers - Corporate
Outdoor plants - Cards - Gifts - Helium balloons for all occasions

Order your gift bouquet and Hand tied Aqua packs from £25.00

27 Lower Street, Stansted CM24 8LN

Quote SWR to receive 10% discount

01279 812 810 | www.parislegore.co.uk | paris@parislegore.co.uk



CHAPEL END NURSERY

CHRISTMAS TREES 4FT TO 10FT
NORMANII FIR (NEEDLE DROP RESISTANT)
CUT & POTTED NORWAY SPRUCE

AVAILABLE NOW

2014 COLLECTION SUTTONS SEEDS BUY 5 OR MORE SAVE 10P PER PACKET

WILD BIRD FOOD BIRD TABLES NESTING BOXES

HEDGING PLANTS Quickthorn, Beech, Privet, Laurel Etc

WE ARE HERE



XMAS WREATHS NATIONAL GARDEN GIFT VOUCHERS

OPEN 9am to 6pm EVERY DAY
MOLEHILL GREEN ROAD
BROXTED DUNMOW ESSEX CM6 2BW
Tel: 01279 850771
www.chapelendnurserysperry.co.uk

TREES CONIFERS SHRUBS ALPINES ROSES HERBACEOUS COMPOST STONE PAVING GRITS & GRAVEL SUNDRRIES POTTERY LOGS SALT & MUCH MUCH MORE