

# Author launches book in town hall

A FORMER Saffron Walden resident returned to the town to mark the release of his debut novel.

Seamus Shortt, who comes from a family of three generations from Saffron Walden, launched his environmental book *Monteviso* in the town hall.

Last week, Mr Shortt addressed an audience of 80 people and described the influences of living in the mountains of Andalusia that provided material for his book.

It is an environmental thriller set in the Spanish mountains, where the characters are animals who behave like human beings.

The novel has been illustrated by the Mr Shortt which has also compiled a wildlife glossary, detailing all the animal and bird species who appear in the story.

Mr Shortt, who was brought up in Wendens Ambo where his family still live, said: "It is wonderful to have my UK book launch here in my home town among old friends and family."

Copies can be obtained from Diana Healey on [dianahealey@btinternet.com](mailto:dianahealey@btinternet.com), or from Harts Bookshop, Saffron Walden.



**ENVIRONMENTAL BOOK:** author Seamus Shortt with *Monteviso* at its UK launch in Saffron Walden Town Hall. **Picture:** Keith Heppell

# MP hits back over housing problems

BY ELEANOR BUSBY

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**SAFFRON** Walden's MP has hit back on the issue of housing in Uttlesford with a stinging rebuke to his Liberal Democrat rival.

Sir Alan Haselhurst responded in robust terms after Mike Hibbs, Lib Dem prospective parliamentary candidate and Saffron Walden town councillor, suggested that he should put pressure on the district council over plans for 2,700 more properties.

The comments came after Uttlesford District Council (UDC) planning committee voted to reject the Fairfield Partnership's scheme for 800 homes on the site between Henham and Elsenham on November 21.

The committee reconsidered its decision to turn down the plan in October and voted a second time for refusal.

Cllr Hibbs said: "Building huge new housing estates with no plan for how to provide the necessary infrastructure or integrate them into the community will destroy Uttlesford."

"He [Sir Alan] should use his position to tell the cabinet to listen to local people and to involve them in planning for the future so that we don't get a repeat of the debacle in Elsenham and Henham."

Sir Alan responded: "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."

He jibed: "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."

Sir Alan concluded: "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 bipartisanship might help lasting decisions to be made."

An UDC public consultation on the new proposed housing sites is open until 5pm on January 13, 2014.

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