

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Liberal Democrats are always everyone's sympathetic friend

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.

It strikes me that the Council has been thinking about this issue non-stop for the past 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 recognize 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 for Saffron Walden

Good for my age

I READ with interest the letter from Steve Williams last week. Much of what he said was just simply incorrect but it amused me that his final and apparently most important comment was that the Uttlesford Cabinet is looking well past their sell by date.

As a member of the Cabinet myself I thought I was looking pretty good for my age - perhaps Mr Williams should have gone to Spec Savers!

- Julie Redfern
Cabinet Member for UDC

Cake and pie stall

ON SATURDAY we held our Cake and Pie stall outside Boots and raised the wonderful sum of £294.73p. We would like to thank everybody who supported us on a very cold day. This has been put into the 2013 Poppy Appeal.

- Bob and Marion Curran,
Saffron Walden Royal British Legion.

Hugh's back home after three days in empty house

WE WROTE to Walden Local last week regarding Hugh, our missing cat, and we are glad to report that Hugh has been found safe and well after three days shut in an empty house. The owner moved out of the property on Monday evening and, just before the door was shut for the final time, Hugh apparently decided that this was a good time to investigate a different house and got shut in.

The main reason for writing again this week is to say a big thankyou to all of those people who were

so kind in offering help and support to us in those worrying days. Social media often gets a bad press but these days offers an additional source of inquiry, help and support to many people for varying reasons. We would particularly like to thank local social networkers, our neighbours and those who contacted us after reading about Hugh in last week's Walden Local. The response has definitely given us renewed faith in human kindness.

- Andrew Folbigg, Saffron Walden



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