

Report from Dist Cllr Tina Knight

My sincere apologies for not being able to attend tonight's meeting, however, health issues have had to take precedence so I hope you will forgive me for missing, what I think is a very important meeting.

An enormous amount of my Council time has, as you can imagine, been taken up with the appalling state of the roads and the plethora of pot holes not helped, in my opinion, by the ridiculous amount that ECC waste by sending personnel out 3 times to just paint circles from white, to yellow, to orange before they even think about filling it in and then to watch in frustration while they fill one hole in and completely ignore the 10 surrounding it because they do not meet some bureaucratic measurement system that is obviously not working as the same holes repeatedly re-appear. I am not alone in this frustration and, hopefully, with the help of Cllr Walsh we may be able to get ECC Highways to rethink the whole system and once they have decided to repair a pothole, all surrounding holes, whatever colour or depth can be filled in. One large patch has less chance of breaking up than a number of small holes filled in at different times.

They say a change is as good as a rest so I can now inform you that the latest area of stupidity is the Road closure signs. The complete inability to organise a system or put correct signs up does not only beggar belief, it could cause major accidents for, as we all know now, half the time the road is not actually closed, most of the time nobody is working on them and nearly all the time, a traffic light system could be put in which would keep 90% of the roads operational. They constantly put a road closed sign up at Fox corner yet the road is actually open all the way to Debden Green, thus allowing traffic to use the Henham road to get to the Airport and the villages of Debden and Debden Green are easily accessible. The frustration of coming from Newport to turn right at Debden and finding a Road closed sign, to then drive to Thaxted and find a Road closed sign there is enough to give us all high blood pressure. Their piece de resistance a few weeks back was coming from Dunmow and reaching Thaxted both the Debden Thaxted Road and the main Thaxted Road were closed so, there was absolutely no way you could go further, that is as far as strangers to the area were concerned. Locals just ignored them and found the road was open all the way to Cole End Lane and even that could be bypassed as someone had moved the barriers and you could slalom through all the way to the traffic lights in town!! As you can imagine I have been complaining to Cllr Walsh and the Highways frequently. Getting an answer back from anyone is nigh on impossible and even Cllr Walsh suffers from this problem. That will not deter me from complaining as more and more people ignore the signs which to me means an accident waiting to happen.

The local plan is a large problem as far as I and other District Councillors from the East of Saffron Walden are concerned. Of course, it is natural that nobody wants to see large scale construction in their villages and that is why I have always supported a new Garden City approach for at least, they will have all the infrastructure built in. With a lot of the building work at present, there are no extra facilities for schooling, doctors, dentists etc., and as far as those of us residing on the East side of Town are concerned, no way of getting through Saffron Walden at peak times under half an hour. A number of mornings I have set out to go to Cambridge to find the town in total gridlock and have missed appointments. You may, therefore, appreciate my disappointment to see the Kier development rearing its head again. It has been refused by the Inspectorate a number of times and

yet, again it is coming up for appeal. I will do my best to oppose this for, without a by-pass this will make it even more intolerable for those of us on this side of town. This, obviously, does not make me popular with developers & Co but I feel it is important to try and get some balance in the growth of the town.

There is a lot of new building going on in the village and, unfortunately, people are reporting to me about encroachment of the highway verges. Obviously, this is an offence and so, I understand why people are complaining to me, however, it really carries more weight if the complaint is made directly to ECC Highways & Byways (the telephone number is 0345 6037621). Should you not receive a satisfactory reply then, by all means come to me to follow it up and I, likewise will do the same to Cllr Walsh if I do not succeed. This means that a three pronged attack will carry far more weight and increase the chance of a successful outcome.

Regarding Policing, it is proposed that the new Community Policing Team for Uttlesford will be made up of: one local policing and partnerships inspector, two sergeants, eight constables, two dedicated youth officers and six PCSO's.

- The team will be locally based and will prioritise: protecting people from harm; preventing and reducing crime; bringing criminals to justice; engaging with the public; and ensuring the public are satisfied with the service they receive.
- The team will work closely with partners to deal with all aspects of neighbourhood policing, from tackling night-time economy related violence to responding to emerging crime trends.

They will not deal with low level non-policing matters such as long-term neighbourhood disputes, low level anti-social behaviour and parking issues, but will work alongside partners, for example the local authority and Community Safety Partnership, who will address these matters.

Under current proposals, 20 of the 27 PCSOS may be removed. Affected staff would be deployed elsewhere or offered redundancy. It is proposed that the new Community Policing Team for Uttlesford & Braintree will retain six PCSO jobs. The Community Policing Teams will hold monthly Local Community Meetings where residents can raise their crime-related concerns. If you have any issues it is really important that you attend the Community Meetings to let the Police know what they are so they can address them.