

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018/2019

As usual, the year has been dominated by our dealings with Uttlesford District Council, almost all of them unsatisfactorily.

In May we met with the Leader of the Council, Cllr Rolfe, and Nigel Brown, Director of Planning and raised a number of issues of concern. Over the following months we slowly received replies to those issues. It transpired that UDC had not, after all, raised a charge on the land at Brick End to pay for the clearance of it, as its Legal Department had advised that there was little chance of ever getting the money. The litter bin opposite The Old Vicarage will not be emptied by UDC as it did not provide it originally. The nuisance at Pledgdon Barn is ongoing.

Planning matters have again taken up a lot of our time. The application to site a used car business at Wood Farm was withdrawn after a great deal of local opposition. The application to site two caravans on land at Brick End was refused in July, and it appears that there is to be no appeal. The Council helped organise massive opposition to this application, including the holding of a public meeting and more than 160 objections to it were lodged. Our request to UDC to be kept updated on developments as to a possible appeal have been ignored. The application to use The Old Post Office as a children's home, and one to build eleven houses to the south of Whitehall were both refused, and we are still awaiting the decisions to build two bungalows on Bell Meadow and eight houses at Dunwell, Chapel End. We have been notified that there are to be appeals against the refusal for a new house opposite The Maltings and a coach station at Waltham Hall (both just outside the parish) but there appears to be no timetable for either of them. The revised District Plan is with the Government Inspector for review and there will be a public consultation at some time. The future of the Easton Park project depends on the acceptance of the Plan.

The major planning application of the year was that by Stansted Airport to increase passenger numbers to 43 mppa. This was granted approval in November after a long and complicated campaign to oppose it. There are various legal issues to be dealt with before the approval can be confirmed, and it is to be hoped that, even at this late stage, the plans may still be called in by the government to be subject to a full public enquiry.

Our suggested names for the development at Whitehall were ignored by UDC and it is to be called St. Mary's Mews.

Potholes and road closures have been on the agenda for much of the year. Gigaclear are cabling much of the district in preparation for Ultrafast Broadband, and Highways has been closing roads, often without notice, for emergency repairs. It is to be hoped that permanent repairs will be made at some stage, especially in the area between the Prince of Wales and Chapel End.

In November we marked the centenary of the end of World War One by holding a reception and lighting the beacon at The Prince of Wales.

For very many years we have been trying to get a children's playground in the village. A suggested site at School Villas has been proposed and Uttlesford (owners of the land) was

approached in October for its comments. Its initial reaction was unfavourable, but repeated attempts to discuss it further have been ignored.

At the end of 2018 our Clerk, Phyllis Clark, retired after more than 35 years in the job. Her knowledge, experience and hard work will be missed. We are very fortunate that Kate Rixson quickly volunteered to take on that role, thus avoiding a hiatus whilst we sought and appointed a new Clerk. Kate's resignation from the Council generated a vacancy and I am delighted to report that Wendy Adams put herself forward and was duly co-opted in January.

Finally, my thanks are due, to each Councillor for their contributions through the year to the work of the Council, to Brenda Andersen who is our Public Transport representative and the booking clerk for the village hall; and to Sarah Cousins who very efficiently updates our website with all the information we as a Council are obliged to publish. Thanks too to Kate who stepped up to the plate to take over as Clerk and has very quickly got to grips with the requirements of that job.