

ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING
convened by
GREAT CHESTERFORD PARISH COUNCIL
Wednesday 24th March 2009, at 7.30pm
in the Community Centre

Present for PC: Peter Fentem – Chairman
 Joanna Francis
 Sorrel Gordon-Foxwell
 Shirley Clark
 Susan Ross
 Tim Fowell
 Julie Redfern – also Uttlesford District Councillor

Elaine Culling – Clerk

Present Other: Robert Chambers – Essex County Councillor
 Melanie Jones - Principal Planning Officer
 Planning and Housing Strategy
 Uttlesford District Council

48 members of the public

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting mentioning by name **Melanie Jones**, who was attending on behalf of Uttlesford District Council, and **Robert Chambers**, who is our village representative at county level.

2. Minutes of the 2009 Annual Parish Meeting

The minutes of the 2009 Annual Parish Meeting were approved.

Matters Arising

Skate Park

The **Chairman** congratulated **Cllr Gordon-Foxwell** on achieving the village Skate Park in less than 12 months, pointing out that it was at the 2009 Annual meeting that the proposal was first unveiled.

Linton Wind Farm Application – *update attached*

3. Housing Options for Great Chesterford

Cllr Redfern introduced this item by explaining that everyone should have received a leaflet from UDC entitled '**Developing Uttlesford - your district your choice**'. She emphasised how important it was for residents to respond to the consultation, especially as one of the sites now being put forward for 3,000 homes is land adjacent to Great Chesterford.

Cllr Redfern went on to introduce **Melanie Jones** from UDC who was present to explain exactly what the Core Strategy is and to answer any questions.

Presentation attached.

Q. I understand that the map being used in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was drawn up in 2007, what is the current position?

A. UDC is unaware of any change.

Q. Will any of the houses be 'affordable housing'?

A. The policy at UDC with any housing development is for up to 40% to be allocated to affordable schemes.

Q. I did not see Great Chesterford as a site for 3,000 homes in the leaflet, only for 30 homes.

A. Page 2 of the leaflet refers to 'alternative locations for a new settlement' which includes Great Chesterford.

Q. Where will these people work if the new settlement was to be in Great Chesterford, surely Elsenham would be nearer any potential work.

A. UDC agrees that the new settlement should be near to employment.

Robert Chambers stood at this point to emphasise that UDC were being forced by the Government to find sites for 4,000 new houses and that with unemployment being very low in the region it was difficult to know where the people would work.

Q. What is the view of our elected MP, I moved to this area in order to work at Stansted Airport and there are now less people employed there than in the 60's?

A. Sir Alan Haselhurst is against these homes and has indicated that there will be a change of policy should the Conservatives win the forthcoming election.

Q. If the figure of 4,000 homes is driven 'top down' from Government, what would the figure be if it was driven 'bottom up'?

A. There is a significant need for additional housing in the district and this could be as many as 3,000.

Robert Chambers stood up to state that he believed there were currently 1,000 names on the housing waiting list.

Q. With UDC currently in favour of Option 4, a new settlement at Elsenham, a change of Government possibly reversing policy and a question mark over the land at Chesterford being available, just how serious a proposal is the prospect of the new settlement being at Great Chesterford?

A. UDC would reiterate the importance of responding to the consultation stating your preference for any of the options as well as commenting on the Comparative Sustainability Assessment with particular reference to Great Chesterford.

Q. With regard to the site being promoted for a new settlement at Great Chesterford, the SHLAA indicates that the land is available. At the time when the map was drawn, 2007, the eco town at Hanley Grange was being resisted. How do we know that this land is still available?

A. The promoters of the site have indicated that the land is available. If anyone knows otherwise, please advise UDC.

Q. What happens if UDC simply says no to these new houses?

A. They will be imposed on us and we will have no say in where they are located.

Q. On what basis did the government decide that Uttlesford should take 4,000 new homes?

A. Not known.

Q. Where will the people come from who will live in these new homes?

A. Not known.

Q. Even if Elsenham is selected for the new settlement, is it just a matter of time before Great Chesterford is developed?

A. Not known.

Q. I appreciate that Elsenham is the preferred option, however if Great Chesterford scores second in the Comparative Sustainability Assessment surely that means that housing will be coming here at a later date?

A. The Comparative Sustainability Assessment scored the options at a high level; although it scored Elsenham 1st and Chesterford 2nd there are still a lot of unknowns.

The **Chairman** asked the questioner whether he had seen the Comparative Sustainability Assessment. He had not but had just been handed a copy.

Melanie Jones added that there were copies available at the meeting to take away and that further copies could be obtained from the UDC offices.

Q. How are the sites selected?

A. Anyone can put forward a site.

Q. Who put forward the site at Chesterford?

A. Bidwells are acting on behalf of the landowners.

Cllr Redfern thanked Melanie for taking the time to attend the meeting.

The **Chairman** said that draft responses to the consultation were available at the meeting and will be placed on the website shortly. He drew attention to a display in the hall showing the location of a Roman settlement and temple that existed on the proposed site in 400 AD.

Cllr Redfern concluded this item by asking that everyone respond to the consultation and reassured those assembled that should a new settlement at Great Chesterford become more likely that another meeting will be called.

4. Recreation Ground

Multi-Sports – *report attached*

Q. Do you want questionnaires returned if they are negative rather than positive?

A. Yes

Play Area – *report attached*

5. Community Centre

The **Chairman** explained that he had hoped to say something about the future governance of the Community Centre. However no progress in this matter has been made and therefore there was nothing to report.

6. The Chesterfords, Ickleton and Hinxton WI - *Presentation attached.*

7. Afternoon Tea Sessions

Cllr Francis explained that these sessions had begun just before Christmas and took place every Wednesday afternoon between 1.30 and 3.30pm. They are run by volunteers on a not-for-profit basis and are open to all ages.

It is hoped to combine these sessions with other opportunities for the village and with this in mind a Martial Arts and Birds of Prey exhibition has been organised for Wednesday 14th April.

8. Youth Club

Jeremy Irving explained that the village youth club had been closed for 6 months due to a lack of volunteers to help run it. He was now involved in establishing a group of people whose aim is to get the club re-opened as soon as possible.

The age range will be 10 upwards and the club will be linked to the Essex Boys and Girls Club as well as the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

It is hoped to be able to offer archery and rock wall climbing along with IT and filming opportunities.

It is proposed to charge £1.50 per session.

Q. Will people volunteering need to be CRB checked?

A. Yes.

Q. Does this also apply to children who are helping out as part of their Duke of Edinburgh scheme?

A. No.

9. Neighbourhood Watch

Presentation attached

The **Chairman** took this opportunity to mention the Chesterford googlegroup as a useful and valuable way of circulating information. Those interested can become members by accessing the village website.

10. Parish Council Q&A session

Q. Why, when there seems to be only a yard of tarmac to complete, are there still traffic lights in Jacksons Lane? No worker has been seen since last Thursday.

A. A resident stood up at this point to explain that as a result of connecting one of the properties to the gas main, the contractors had inadvertently buried the ‘mole’. The delay in finishing off was due to the need to agree how best to retrieve it.

Q. The mobile police van visits the village once a month and always parks in the same place, Horse River Green. Could it not sometimes park in another area of the village?

Robert Chambers stood at this point to ask those present if they would prefer a ‘village bobby’ to visit the village and walk around it once a month rather than having the van.

The response was a resounding yes and **Robert Chambers** promised to look into this.

11. Chairman’s Concluding Remarks

The **Chairman** closed the meeting by acknowledging the hard work and dedication of all the Parish Councillors. He thanked everyone for attending and added that he hoped they would remain to take advantage of the refreshments provided.

Cllr Redfern stood to announce that sadly the **Chairman, Peter Fentem**, had decided to stand down. She would like to take this opportunity to thank him, on behalf of the village, for all his valuable work over the years, adding that he will be sorely missed.

Meeting closed at 9pm.

Signed (Chairman).....

Date: March 2011