

# Little Easton Parish Council



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Minutes of the LITTLE EASTON ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY held in the Memorial Hall at 7:00pm on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2018

Present: Cllr Fowell Cllr Hindley Cllr Dodsley Cllr Rush Cllr Jones  
 Dist Cllr Freeman Dist Cllr Foley County Cllr Walsh  
 Jon Hilton – SRC Quarry  
 Members of the public

<b>APA 01</b>	<b>APOLOGIES</b> Cllr Wyatt
<b>APA 02</b>	<b>WELCOME FROM THE CHAIRMAN</b> Cllr Dodsley outlined the proceedings for the Annual Assembly and welcomed all in attendance.
<b>APA 03</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY APRIL 2017</b> <b>RESOLUTION</b> – Proposed Cllr Hindley, Seconded Cllr Jones
<b>APA 04</b>	<b>CHAIRMANS REPORT</b> Full report - APPENDIX A
<b>APA 05</b>	<b>CLERKS REPORT</b> Held over to the Parish Council meeting directly following the annual assembly. The Clerk commented how the recent transfer to TSB bank with their current IT problems was proving challenging to running the office financial affairs.
<b>APA 06</b>	<b>DISTRICT COUNCILLORS REPORT</b> Full report – APPENDIX B
<b>APA 07</b>	<b>COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT</b> Full report – APPENDIX C
<b>APA 08</b>	<b>PRESENTATION FROM JON HILTON OF SRC QUARRY</b> A fascinating overview and insight into the workings of the Quarry operation, expanding over five years to now include sixty 8 wheel trucks for mineral movement plus various other HGV / Cement trucks, thus far extracted two million tonnes of mineral with an additional circa two million tonnes yet to be extracted,

three “phases” in total worked thus far with some of those areas being restored during 2018.

The operation generally extracts some six metres of Boulder Clay before arriving at the mineral level they seek, this invariably goes to a depth of a further seven metres before they then arrive at Blue Clay, which is where the extraction stops.

Due to its proximity to the airport and the risk of bird strikes the site will not be used for general landfill but only the natural waste coming from their intake and processing of commercial hardcore/building materials, processed into second grade minerals and or types of sand using their bespoke processing plant recently installed at significant cost to the operation.

Likewise the pond areas are kept to a minimum to dissuade migratory water fowl from visiting the site.

School visits have proven so popular for both the Quarry and the students that future such events are to be positively encouraged. A selection of ancient mineral rocks were displayed and left for the members to keep.

The Quarry has an initiative in mind to encourage younger students to visit the site to both explain the workings, show the mineral extraction but to take the opportunity to cover health and safety dangers of a quarry, to help deter young people using the area as a playground.

The Quarry would welcome a combined Parish and District council visit, other group visits were likewise welcome.

<b>APA 09</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT PARISH ASSEMBLY</b> To be Confirmed
<b>APA 10</b>	<b>CHAIRMAN TO CLOSE MEETING, ORDINARY PC MEETING TO FOLLOW</b> The meeting closed at 8pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

## **APPENDIX A**

Good evening and welcome to this the Little Easton Parish Council Annual Assembly.

My name is Andy Dodsley, I'm the Chairman of the Parish Council and alongside me is our Parish Clerk, Ian Brown. Amongst you are your Parish Councillors: Janina Jones, Jessica Rush, Chris Hindley and Rebecca Fowell. Our other councillor, Doug Wyatt, is unable to attend this evening and sends his apologies for his absence.

This Parish Assembly is where I, as Chairman, report to you on our activities over the past 12 months. More importantly, it gives you as residents the chance to ask questions and comment about subjects that are of concern or interest to you.

The structure of the forum is that firstly, I will deliver my chairman's report, then Ian as parish clerk will deliver the financial report.

There is also an agenda item for a presentation from SRC about the quarry which we hope will be of interest to you.

I will be giving an update on where we are with the Uttlesford Local Plan. It is my deliberate intention not to make this year's Parish Assembly just about Easton Park. We all understand that if the proposals go ahead, they will have a profound effect on the village and all of our lives as well as on the character of the whole local area. I will therefore give you an update on what your council has been doing with regard to the local plan over the last year.

I will be going through the key areas that the parish council has responsibility for and what we have been doing over the last year.

If you have any questions about anything I report, this Parish Assembly will be followed by our normal Parish Council meeting and you are more than welcome to stay and ask any questions you may have in the public forum at that meeting.

## **War Memorial**

The Parish Council is responsible for the upkeep of the War Memorial. Following the replacement of the back railings in 2016 the final aspect of the refurbishment was the clearance of existing vegetation and replacement of soil. Contractors were engaged to undertake this task, replacing the original soil with a combination of farmyard manure and fresh topsoil.

Having completed these tasks, fresh plants were purchased comprising 2 x Evergreen shrubs, 2 x Red Hydrangeas, 4 x Fuscias, 4 x Lavender.

This was an initial planting scheme providing the option to add further plants in future if necessary, but allowing space for plants to spread and mature.

The last area of work after planting was to cover the bed with a membrane in order to limit weed growth and promote moisture retention, with a top dressing of slate chippings.

The work was completed during the spring/summer of 2017.

Further consideration will be given to updating the verge in front the memorial later this year. Regular inspections and weed treatment will be ongoing.

## **Village Sports Day and Family Christmas Party**

Another successful and well attended Family Fun Day took place in August, with people coming together from the village and beyond to enjoy an afternoon of races, qwik cricket, cakes and a picnic. The format of the day seems to have become a popular formula that people seem to enjoy and we are already planning this year's event.

The Christmas party was a bit quieter than the year before with fewer families attending. With this in mind we would be happy to hear any suggestions and ideas for this years' party or other event as it is a nice idea for the village to join together over the festive season. Everyone seemed to enjoy the children's entertainer that we hired and Father Christmas also made his annual appearance and distributed presents to the all the children who came along to the party.

Councillor Jess Rush and her team of volunteers are already planning this years' events and if you would like to get involved just speak to her. Keep an eye out for information on both these events on the website and in the 5 parishes' magazine.

## **Children's Play Area**

Although regularly serviced and checked, some of the equipment has been starting to show its age. In particular, one piece of equipment was starting to decay and, if not addressed, could have led to the children's play area having to be closed as it was becoming unsafe.

Urgent action was therefore needed and Councillor Rush undertook extensive research on what we could do to replace the decaying equipment. Once a shortlist was put together, consultation sessions were held with a number of parents in the village which resulted in an agreement to purchase a new piece of equipment for the play area. This was the 'Marco Polo' playhouse and pictures of the playhouse are available for you to have a look at this evening.

We applied for, and were successful in obtaining a grant from Uttlesford District Council towards the costs and the new equipment was installed in the second half of 2017.

Feedback from the village has been very positive, with a number of people commenting via e mail and Facebook on how much their children are enjoying the new playhouse.

Going forward we hope to be able to replace some of the soft surfaces around the play area as they need doing and painting some of the other pieces to brighten them up.

The council is also responsible for arranging and paying for the annual safety checks that need to be carried out on the play area and all of the equipment. These checks are ongoing.

Even with the grant and the reclaiming of the VAT, the purchase of the new play equipment was quite expensive at a time when there were a number of other calls on the councils' financial resources. We will be looking to smooth out the cashflow for future repairs and replacements by allocating a continuing budget to the play area and funding future enhancements from pre-planned budgets rather than from reserves.

## **Speedwatch**

Following repeated incidents of speeding through the Village and Mill End, the Council resolved to set up a speedwatch group in an attempt to address the issue. Following unsuccessful attempts to arrange this with Essex Police, the responsibility for road safety was taken over by Essex Fire and Rescue and a central Co-Ordinator was appointed. Contact was made and an initial group of 6 volunteers was established in the village. The village already possessed a speed camera and we obtained additional necessary equipment such as high-visibility jackets and signage. The initial team of volunteers was then trained in the use of the equipment. A meeting was later convened to plan the group activities, but unfortunately only one person attended.

Several further attempts have been made by the council to revive the group, with requests for volunteers advertised in the 5 parishes' magazine. To date no responses have been received to any of the requests for volunteers. Speeding through our village remains an issue and could lead to a serious accident at some point in the future.

Your council remains open to the formation of a speedwatch group but this will only happen with the committed support of residents. If anyone feels strongly enough about the issue of speeding through the village to get involved and help do something about it, please let us know.

After a long period of lobbying the Local Highways Panel by your council and a subsequent consultation exercise by Essex County Council, the section of road between Mill End and the centre of the village which currently has an unrestricted speed limit will be changed to a 40mph speed limit in early 2019.

This will hopefully help to limit the speed of cars as they drive in between these two areas of the village resulting in slower speeds through both parts of the village.

## **Highwoods Quarry (Presentation to Follow)**

Work at the quarry is progressing as scheduled. They are now up to phase two, phase one is complete and the land is being infilled. The office will not be moving from B lodge, as was suggested last year, because all vehicle movements have now been fully computerised.

We are currently waiting for the next set of water level results that are being put together by SRC's consultants.

One area for concern that was mentioned in last month's parish magazine is the issue of dog walkers allowing their dogs off the leads close to where the quarry trucks are operating. We would ask that anyone who walks their dogs in the vicinity of the quarry be mindful of keeping your dogs under control.

## **Superfast Broadband**

Our Superfast Broadband champion, Adrian Hoodless has provided the following report:

The Duck Street/Manor Road part of the village will have Fibre-to-the-Curb from a new green box that has

been installed in the village. This was connected into the copper network last December and awaits a fibre connection from Great Easton. This should have been done before the end of March but we understand from an Openreach technician working at the box, that there has been a problem getting this fibre from the exchange. Adrian is currently in communication with Superfast Essex to establish the next steps.

The rest of the village will be covered by a Fibre-to-the-House solution provided by Gigaclear Ltd. This will give up to 1000Mb/sec broadband but may be more costly depending on how the landline phone service is handled. Adrian has been advised that digging for this will start this year. Some residents at the far end of Mill End may find that the existing fibre service from the box on Parsonage Down is already giving improved broadband speeds.

I would like to thank Adrian for his continuing efforts in monitoring and reporting the progress of the delivery of Superfast Broadband to the village.

These are the main areas for which your parish council has ongoing responsibility on which we report and discuss plans at our monthly parish council meetings. The council also has responsibility for a number of other areas including:

#### **Footpaths**

The weather has not been very conducive to walking our footpaths, but if anyone finds a problem with any of the footpaths within the parish, please advise the parish clerk.

#### **Grounds Maintenance and Grass Cutting**

The council arranges and pays for the maintenance and grass cutting of parish owned land around the village, particularly the village green outside the memorial hall. This also includes the clearance of the large volume of leaves in the autumn.

We have recently commissioned a tree survey of all the trees around the field and will be going through a supplier selection process to appoint a tree surgeon to maintain our trees and ensure they remain healthy and safe.

## **Memorial Hall**

Although the memorial hall is owned by the parish council, it is managed throughout the year by the memorial hall committee. We were all greatly saddened by the passing of the committee Chairman Roy Blackwell and the memorial hall committee have resolved to continue with the improvements Roy wanted to be completed and are looking to advertise for bookings to generate more income.

## **Lighting**

The council pays for and arranges the maintenance of all street lighting in the village.

## **Planning Applications**

The council receives a copy of all planning applications impacting on the village and is required to either support, object or otherwise comment or not upon the application. In the last year the council has received both individual applications and from commercial enterprises such as the Highwood quarry.

In November 2017, the council received a short presentation from Magenta Planning for a new proposition for the land to the rear of the Stag. This was well publicised and a number of residents attended the presentation. After the presenters had left, a number of concerns were raised about the proposition and 100% of those present objected to any suggestion the land should be developed in any way. All residents were advised to channel comments, observations and objections via the parish clerk. To date, nothing further has been heard from the proposers.

If you have any comments on any of these areas or would like to discuss them further, please feel free to come along to a parish council meeting or contact the parish clerk. All of the parish council meeting dates are published on the parish council website and on notice boards in the village.



## **Uttlesford Local Plan and Easton Park**

At last year's assembly, full details of the Easton Park proposals were provided including maps, numbers and an overview of the key dates. Easton Park has continued to dominate our parish council agenda over the last year, including the holding of an Extraordinary General Meeting last August where the Uttlesford Local Plan proposals for Easton Park were discussed and resolutions made in terms of the council's position of opposition on Easton Park and agreement of budgets for fighting the proposals.

At last year's assembly, we told you that UDC had announced that they needed to build a total of 14100 houses in the next plan period of 15 years to meet the housing demand. The preferred strategy was to put the main part of this new housing in a number of New Settlements with the balance of the housing then spread around the district.

At that time, UDC were going through a site selection process with a number of potential sites being assessed. In June of last year, UDC announced that there would be 3 preferred sites in the new local plan. These were:

1. Great Chesterford (known as North Uttlesford)
2. West of Braintree (Andrews field near Stebbing)
3. Easton Park

Although it was half expected, the selection of Easton Park for the proposed development of up to 10,000 new homes was a huge disappointment. At the July PC meeting, your parish council resolved to oppose the development proposal and work to challenge the inclusion of Easton Park in the local plan.

Last year's assembly also called for a campaign group to be formed as a matter of urgency. This led to the formation of the Stop Easton Park campaign group in May of 2017 and for the last year, the parish council and the Stop Easton Park group have together been focused on challenging the local plan and arguing that the proposals for the development of a new development at Easton Park are ill conceived and unworkable.

Representatives from the parish council and Stop Easton Park have spoken at numerous UDC planning meetings, challenging the proposals on a number of fronts, the main thrusts of the arguments being:

- Heritage – destruction of an ancient deer park and the settings of multiple heritage assets and listed buildings
- Coalescence with Great Dunmow (which itself is doubling in size irrespective of Easton Park)
- Proximity to Stansted Airport, Health & Noise impacts
- Environment and Landscape Harm
- Transport – Underestimation of the impact and no robust infrastructure plans, particularly the impact on the A120, local roads and Junction 8 of the M11
- Employment – UDC over-estimating local employment benefits
- Deficiencies in the UDC process for site selection and presentation of evidence.

The local plan was published for initial consultation (called Regulation 18) in July last year with comments needing to be returned to UDC by the beginning of September. With strong support from the Stop Easton Park group, an 11,000+ word response document was submitted to UDC challenging the development proposals for Easton Park and the inclusion of the site in the local plan. We also leafleted the village to raise awareness of the consultation and to ensure everyone knew how, where and when to make comments if they wished to do so.

In July 2017, UDC also held an exhibition of the proposals at the Memorial Hall. Your parish council were present for the whole exhibition canvassing residents' views on the proposals so that we could be confident that we were representing the views of the village. The poll revealed that 98% of Little Easton residents who attended the exhibition were opposed to the development proposals. Residents who attended the July parish council meeting, when the proposals were discussed, were unanimously opposed to the proposals.

Since the end of the consultation period in September 2017, Uttlesford have been working on the next iteration of their local plan. They have had thousands of comments on the first version and had originally planned to issue the next version in the first quarter of 2018. However this has now been delayed until June 2018. When the next version of the local plan is issued, we shall again be challenging the inclusion of Easton Park, as well as ensuring that our mitigation and community requirements are enshrined in the specific policies within the plan.

Your Parish Council are not experts in planning and development matters and it is not enough to just object to the proposals just because we don't want them to impact on our village. Any objections have to be based on planning criteria. To make robust planning arguments, the help of professionals and experts has been required. These are numerous but include:

- Specialist solicitors and barristers
- Heritage consultants
- Transport Consultants
- Noise consultants

Little Easton parish council do not have the financial resources to commit to the levels of expenditure required to engage the various professionals and experts required. We are grateful to Great Dunmow Town Council for taking the lead in engaging a number of professionals and experts in the field of planning, heritage and transport. With their greater financial resources, Great Dunmow have been able to initiate the hiring of professionals to structure the arguments addressing the planning issues and have been able to meet the significant costs involved with contributions to the costs being made from smaller councils such as ourselves.

However I would not wish to underplay the significance of the costs involved to Little Easton Parish. In order to meet the costs of fighting the Easton Park proposals, your parish council has to date committed to spend a total of £6000.00. £3000.00 for the work involved in challenging the Regulation 18 iteration of the local plan in September 2017 and a further £3000.00 for work since then towards the Regulation 19 version of the plan.

For a parish with an annual income of around £15,000.00 this is a significant amount of money and has had to come from the council reserves – currently around 40% of the reserves have been spent on opposing Easton Park.

It is worth noting that should the Easton Park proposals go all the way to the final stage – The planning Inspector public enquiry – which I fully expect to happen – The funds required to engage the appropriate levels of legal representation will be much higher – in the tens of thousands – and alternative funding strategies will be required.

## **Mitigation**

Although we are opposed to the concept of the Easton Park development, we would be foolish to put all our eggs into the “Stop” basket. The battle is much harder than it was for the Land Secs 700 homes proposal because for that proposal, we were on the same side as UDC as they also opposed the development. This time we are fighting BOTH Land Secs and UDC and you know what they say about being able to fight city hall!

So at the same time as opposing the development, we are also having to think about our contingency plans for the mitigation of the impact of the development on Little Easton should it go ahead.

Along with other councils, we first met with UDC and Land Secs last August to discuss our mitigation and community requirements should the development go ahead. At that time we presented UDC with our initial list of mitigation requirements (known as “Red Lines”) and other potential community benefits. These included:

1. Buffer / Country Park

A Buffer / Country Park to protect the Heritage Assets from Brooke End past Easton Lodge to past the Little Easton Conservation Area in Park Road. We also want a transfer of ownership of the land to safeguard against future development.

2. Early phase development to be at the south end of the site (Not near Easton Lodge as currently phased)

3. No access to any part of Park Road or the continuing private road from Easton Glebe to Brook End Farm (as already committed by Councillor Rolfe).

4. Legal Agreements set in place as to the future ownership of the private road and existing Public Rights of Way from Easton Glebe to Brook End Farm currently owned by Land Securities.

## **Community Requirements**

1. Enhancement of The Gardens of Easton Lodge and ownership of the Gardens to be transferred to the community. Plus funding of capital projects to further enhance the restoration of the gardens.
2. Ownership of the Triangle field at the lower left hand side of Park Road (currently owned by Land Securities) to be handed to the Local Community to protect the main part of the village against future developments.
3. Restoration and protection of the Grade II listed Easton Lodge gatehouse on the edge of Highwood

Meetings with UDC and Land Secs are ongoing (Most recently the 19<sup>th</sup> April) and we will continue to press UDC to enshrine our red lines and mitigation requirements into the Local Plan policies so that we gain some protection for the heritage assets and buildings around the village should the development go ahead.

## **Next Steps**

The next significant checkpoint in the process will be the publication of a further version of the Local Plan (called Regulation 19) by Uttlesford District Council following all of the comments that they received on the previous version. This is currently due in June 2018.

We will again be reviewing the content of the plan and will be responding on behalf of local residents in respect of all the areas mentioned previously. I would encourage you all to make a note of this in your diaries as this will be the last opportunity for residents to make any comments on the proposals in the plan before the proposals go to the Planning Inspector Enquiry in 2019.

I would like to thank Vincent Thompson and the other members of the Stop Easton Park Group for their support, passion and enthusiasm in fighting the proposed development of Easton Park in the Uttlesford Local Plan and their ongoing commitment to preventing the destruction of a beautiful deer park and the development of a 10,000 home new town on our doorstep. If you feel strongly about this and would like to get involved in the fight, please feel free to contact the parish council or the Stop Easton Park Group for advice.

## **Summary**

Finally I would just like to say a sincere thank you to my fellow Councillors for all their commitment and hard work through what has been a very busy and difficult year.

As a Parish Council we work very closely with our County and District Councillors and I would like to thank them for their input and support.

I would also like to say thank you to Ian Brown our Parish Clerk who ensures that the Council conducts its business properly in line with regulations and who underpins the work of the council through his objective advice and support. He keeps me in particular on the straight and narrow!

This is your Parish Council and we are here to represent you the residents so please come along to the Parish Council Meetings and get involved - This is your community.

Our Parish Clerk will now report on the Parish Council finances.

## APPENDIX B

### Stansted Airport Expansion.

There is concern from residents and some Councillors that the application to expand Stansted Airport is being rushed through.

Stansted Airport/Manchester Airports Group, are seeking to build extra taxiways and aircraft stands and to increase the passenger throughput at Stansted to **43 million** passengers per annum (mppa). By comparison, Stansted handled **25.9** mppa last year. They have already authority to go to 35million.

If the application were approved, it would mean a 66% increase in passengers and bigger planes - more noise, more pollution for our area.

There is a call that the Stansted Airport Expansion plans should be determined nationally rather than locally.

Some Councillors who do not live near the airport see potential gain for their own local agenda from the application, even though this would be at the expense of places like The Eastons and Thaxted which it is meant to serve. There would be both an increase aircraft noise and air pollution, also pressures on the road and rail networks.

If you would like to comment on this Stansted Airport Planning Application make your voice known by writing to UDC. If you wish to object or agree please say in your own words why you object or agree. This will carry far more weight than the electronically-generated standard emails which the owners of Stansted Airport are using to persuade people from outside this area, staff, customers and suppliers to flood UDC with posts supporting the application often from London, Manchester and beyond.

You just have to 30th of April to comment.

### Council Tax

The overall tax increase this year will be 5%

The UDC element will be plus 3%

As you know I am against Easton Park Development...

I have in the last few months taken the opportunity at Uttlesford Full Council to bring up the latest CPRE report on 1 million homes in brownfield sites. The changing face of retail in our larger towns and cities will bring more ex retail sites available for homes development. These sites will be effectively brownfield sites and affordable homes could be built where they are actually needed instead of using good farmland and creating urban sprawl like Easton Park. There is some time related issues still with Carver Barracks . This huge brownfield site will come on stream by 2030.

*Martin Foley 07968 520520*

**County Councillor's Annual Report 2018**

**County Council £300m budget spending plan**

A record programme of more than £300 million will be invested in roads, schools, new homes and supporting the economy across Essex, as part of the County Council's budget proposals for 2018/19. The continued reduction in central Government funding, which will disappear completely by 2020, combined with increasing demand for services, increases in inflation, business rates and National Living Wage payments, mean the Council is proposing to increase Council Tax for only the third time in the last eight years.

This will rise by 2% through the Government's social care precept, which will be ring-fenced to adult social care, and 2.99% to support the delivery of vital services such as highways, public transport, libraries and recycling centres.

The proposed rise means a £1.12 per week increase for the average Band D property.

The Council has delivered over £350m of savings in the last four years by generating income and reducing costs.

In the last year, the Council created 2,500 new places in Essex schools, 92% of which are rated good or outstanding, and supported the creation of 11,370 apprenticeships.

It also repaired more than 5,000 potholes, resurfaced more than 400 miles of road, while bringing superfast broadband to another 100,000 homes in the county.

Waste reduction remains a challenge, and a number of schemes will be promoted this year to encourage more reuse and recycling. Uttlesford residents remain one of the best performers for recycling. To help achieve greater reduction, the County will be supporting more food waste collections, more composting, clothes recycling and encouraging people to take small electrical for disposed at many of the County Libraries.

**Local Highways Panel**

This continues to be oversubscribed, with far more projects than the budget allows. Unfortunately we were unable to secure a top-up this year, so we are working on a much reduced budget of some £240,000. Byway 75 is scheduled for more work on surfacing and drainage in this year's budget.

**My role**

I continue to be Cabinet member for Environment and Waste, and it is proving to be a busy portfolio. There are proposals for a second nuclear power station at Bradwell and I have oversight of that on the County's behalf. I am also responsible for supporting work to reduce flooding and work very closely with Environment Agency colleagues to get funding for a whole range of programmes, not just inland but also in protecting the coastline. I have received visits from the Flood Minister, Therese Coffey, and the Chief executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan. These visits raise the profile of work done in Essex and our Flood Team is recognised as being one of the best in the country.

Other work covers out Outdoor education Centres and Country Parks. Both are investing significantly in order to improve income which will be reinvested in further improvements.

Our joint agency work on fly tipping is beginning to show dividends, with the net closing on a number of suspects. My next piece of work is to reduce general littering which is proving to be a blight across the county.

Simon Walsh March 2018