

SUMMER 2020

IN TOUCH

A DIGITAL NEWSLETTER FROM

SAFFRON WALDEN CONSTITUENCY CONSERVATIVES



CORONAVIRUS

FIND ADVICE AND OFFER HELP

GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

Find up to date Government guidance on a wide range of issues including: protecting yourself and others, employment and business support, benefits and travel at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

HEALTH GUIDANCE

If you are exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus (a temperature, dry cough or loss of taste and smell) DO NOT visit a GP or hospital. You should self isolate immediately and call **111**.

LOCAL SUPPORT

In response to the Coronavirus crisis, Essex Welfare Service has been set up to support the most vulnerable in our community. You can call Essex Welfare Service on **0300 303988** or visit www.essexwelfareservice.org.uk

VOLUNTEERING

You can volunteer to help in Essex through: [facebook.com/essexcoronavirusaction](https://www.facebook.com/essexcoronavirusaction) or visit Volunteer Uttlesford at www.volunteeruttlesford.org.uk

You can also sign up to be an NHS Volunteer at www.goodsam.org/NHS, roles include calling people in self isolation, delivering medicine or doing shopping for people in self isolation.

Dear Readers

Welcome to the summer edition of In Touch, the in-house newsletter of Saffron Walden Constituency Conservatives. We have been publishing digitally since the beginning of lockdown and hope that the information included is interesting and useful.

The work that Conservative run Essex County Council (ECC) have and are doing to support our community as well, of course, as the work of Boris Johnson's Government is impressive. The financial support is unprecedented and will hopefully help the nation to recover economically. Their support contrasts dramatically with the febleness of the R4U Administration at Uttlesford who have shown no leadership and are merely a conveyor of Government money. It was down to the Town Teams working with Town Council staff and ECC to get our High Streets open and operating safely. In other areas the process for the new Local Plan is dysfunctional and paves the way for Government intervention.

Financially the Council has problems and they are not all Covid related. It is important that voters are aware that R4U have broken many of their pre-election promises and are struggling after 15 months in office. Meanwhile in Chelmsford, the Liberal Democrats, who voted through the previous Conservative Administration's Local Plan, are now trying to amend aspects of the Plan and are creating real confusion. Despite allegedly being in favour of public transport, they are trying to remove the bus link from the Warren Farm development! So when it comes to the County Council elections next May we will be able to contrast strong and effective Conservative management of Essex with the floundering and confused administration of our Local Council opponents.



OTHER USEFUL HELPLINES

For support and conversation for elderly people:

[@TheSilverlineUK](https://www.silverline.org.uk) - 0800 470 8090

[@Age_uk](https://www.ageuk.org.uk) - 0800 678 1602

For Mental Health support:

[@MindCharity](https://www.mind.org.uk) - 0300 123 3393



CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CONSERVATIVE TEAM

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Twitter: [@SWTories](https://twitter.com/SWTories)

FLOOD PREVENTION

One of my responsibilities as Cabinet member for Environment and Climate Change Action is to have oversight of the County Council's role as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). In Essex, Uttlesford is unique in that it sits across three major catchment areas, and consequently is served by three Environment Agency (EA) Regional Flood and Coast Committees (RFCCs). Cllr. John Moran is our representative on the Anglian Great Ouse RFCC and I sit on the other two. Each RFCC has a substantial multi-million pound budget, funded by Government and by local levy derived from the Council Tax. Each local authority identifies schemes working closely with the Environment Agency and these are ranked in terms of their effectiveness of protecting property, and other factors such as environmental improvements and habitat gains. Essex overall has done well over the last few years, getting funding invested into the County well in excess of that it puts into the respective RFCCs.

We have been pleased to be one of the pioneers in developing Natural Flood Management schemes, including one in Thaxted, which involved building leaky dams with timber sourced from a local ECC wood at Barnston. Suffolk Punch horses were used to extract and move the timber on site as their weight and manoeuvrability proved less damaging to the underlying ground flora. In nearby Finchingfield we supported the reintroduction of beavers, and these are busily building dams to help protect the village further down the valley. ECC is also proud to have set up its own 5-year £19 million scheme to help protect vulnerable properties which may not have qualified for EA funding. In addition, we continue to run a property level resilience scheme which provides small grants for householders to install protective measures around their home such as door flood barriers and automatic sump pumps. Climate change is bringing a new focus to flood protection, with more flood events occurring with more frequent storms and extreme deluges drenching areas with inches of rainwater. This has been recognised by our Conservative Government, and it is my job to see we get the right level of support to protect the people of Essex.



Cllr Simon Walsh, Essex County Councillor for Thaxted and Cabinet Member



AN UPDATE FROM PFCC

Roger Hirst, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

The investment we have made in over 400 more police officers over the last couple of years has really stood Essex Police in good stead over the period of the COVID-19 crisis. Police services have been uninterrupted by the crisis. And Essex residents have overwhelmingly kept to the social distancing and COVID-secure guidance, supported by the Police approach on engaging and advising people on what to do.

There have been very few cases where a fixed penalty notice or arrest has been necessary. Thanks to everyone who has done their part to get the infection down. Our investment continues: we are in the process of doubling the size of the Police Rural Engagement Team, who have made such a difference to such crimes as unlawful encampments and hare coursing. And we have two more years of the Government's Police Uplift Programme to come. The lockdown has made it tough for criminals; we need to make sure they do not recover as it relaxes.



WE'RE INCREASING POLICE PAY BY 2.5%



ESSEX YOUTH SERVICE CONTINUED SUPPORT THROUGH LOCKDOWN

Cllr Ray Gooding
Essex County Councillor For Stansted
and Cabinet Member.



The Essex Youth Service have, despite denial by Opposition parties, been running an extensive programme of activities during the lockdown and these include:

- Holding a weekly timetable of Zoom sessions that young people can access for help and advice and this includes support with their mental health and wellbeing.
- Employment advisers have been supporting those young people at risk of becoming unemployed or falling out of education via 'online' means with webinars and chats.
- Targeted Youth Advisers have continued to support those young people on our employability programmes such as 'PlanB' and caseload welfare check in's.
- And very importantly The Young Carers Team have continued to support these young people who are often faced with difficult challenges in looking after members of their immediate family.

As lockdown eases the youth service have been stepping up their detached street-work sessions to support young people from the challenges of modern life. This year youth work sessions have risen again by 8% to a total of 16,481 sessions and the number of young people engaging has increased to a total of 54,957. This summer the Youth Service have a whole programme of activities planned including our Virtual Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE).

All this activity has enabled us to gain a grant of £56,000.00 from the Youth Endowment Fund and this will enable ECC to offer online programmes like "Prison No Way", "Sisters in Strength" and the "Goodman project" for 10 – 14 year olds. All this successful work is a prime example of why innovative thinking by Conservatives will always provide a better service than the Labour or Liberal Democrat approach that is always predicated on pouring more and more money into the process.



CHELMSFORD LOCAL PLAN

So, we move to the next stages of the Chelmsford Local Plan (approved 27th May) where we consider the individual Masterplans. So far, the council has looked at the Masterplans for West Chelmsford (Warren Farm) and Land North of Broomfield (Bloor Homes). It is good to know that we are making progress in a controlled and structured way that is not possible if you don't have a Local Plan! All of the ground work and content of the Local Plan and Masterplans was done by the previous Conservative administration.

But the current Lib-Dem administration's approach to this seems to be – if you don't like what's in the Masterplan, that's because it was created by the Conservatives, but if you do like it, then it's a Lib-Dem plan! And just to add to the confusion, the Lib Dems support the Warren Farm Masterplan, but want to change it to remove the bus link to Avon Road. But the bus link addresses the main concern of the extra traffic along Roxwell Road created by 800 homes. Very confusing! Are the Lib Dems in favour of or against public transport? Many people feel disenfranchised by the pushing through of a poorly publicised online consultation. In terms of the Broomfield site, the main issue is the extra road traffic it creates on Broomfield Road.

The usual criticism is that infrastructure lags housing development, but the Conservative controlled Essex County Council is pushing ahead with the Chelmsford North East Bypass and the new Beaulieu Station which will reduce the need to drive into the city centre. To find out more, please visit the Chelmsford North East Bypass website which includes an exhibition as if you were attending in person and make your comments [HERE](#).





Cllr. Susan Barker
Essex County
Councillor for
Dunmow and
Cabinet
Member

RETURNING AND REOPENING...

Life is beginning to return to a new normal in my Portfolio area. As at close of play on Friday 17th July, 2,192 birth registration appointments have been completed since reopening birth registrations on the 16th June. We have been reopening appointments in tranches, dealing with babies born before April in the first instance. We are now in our second phase, and offering appointments to parents of babies born before the end of May, and, by July 24th we will return to offering appointments for all new born babies.

This will mean that we will then be working towards registering births within the 42-day period again, and back to a BAU state for birth appointments. Many thanks to the Library staff who worked with the registrars to make this happen. As from 20th July, we are also able to accept new Wedding bookings.

From August 1st, 73 of our 74 Libraries will be back open. From the same day we will be re-opening the Reservation service and offering one computer station in all libraries with a few more in the largest libraries. The exception to re-opening is co-located in a college which is currently closed. Most non- frontline staff continue to work from home, which many prefer although we recognise this does not work well for everyone. Desks , chairs and other equipment has been made available where this is needed.



Cllr John Moran
Essex County Councillor for Saffron
Walden and Deputy Cabinet Member.



Paul Davies



RESIDENTS MUST BE HEARD

After well over a year in charge, the R4U Administration at Uttlesford continue to stumble and falter over delivery of their Local Plan. Hot on the heels of their U-turn on 'total transparency' by including private meetings within their Local Plan work, Council Leader John Lodge has now sneaked in a decision to stop residents having access to hard copies of Local Plan documents in our libraries and Council offices.

Decisions like this deletes residents from the Local Plan process entirely and increases concerns that R4U are desperately trying to shut down public opinion. While Coronavirus plays a part, the critical failure here however is that it's taken feeble R4U since March to take this decision and in doing so they display no innovative thinking around how to communicate during a critical period.

The impact of lockdown has seen us all making changes in how we access and consume important information through video presentations, online conferencing, or socially distanced meetings. Pre-Coronavirus "normalcy" is likely a while away yet and there's a real risk that residents won't get a chance to make our voices heard in time due to R4U's continued failure. With transparency and openness already an enemy to R4U, now their promise of 'Get Your Voice Back' is beginning to lose its voice.

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

The Covid crisis continues and some restrictions on our lives are likely to be in place through to next year and possibly beyond. In Uttlesford we have had a low level of identified cases and Covid linked deaths, including a much lower than the regional average of cases in care homes. It is important that we continue to follow the Government's advice to wash our hands, keep socially distant and where appropriate to wear face masks, I have taken to wearing one when out and about.

The road closures in Saffron Walden town centre to assist with social distancing has allowed shops and services to reopen, they will be reviewed on a regular basis and I would welcome your views on this matter, they are there for safety reasons only. In my role as Deputy Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care I am at the centre of the response to Covid and I continue to be very impressed by the dedication of all health professionals and volunteers across Essex, a big thank you goes out from me to them all.

SAFFRON WALDEN
CONSTITUENCY
CONSERVATIVES

R4U PROMISED YOU'D 'GET YOUR VOICE BACK'
NOW THEY'RE IN POWER

YOU'VE LOST YOUR VOICE





Kemi Badenoch

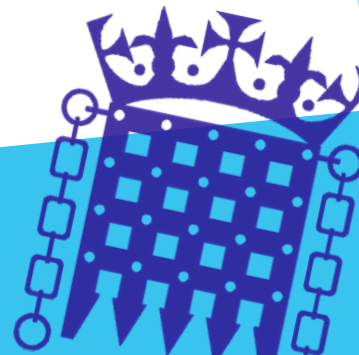
Member of Parliament for Saffron Walden

Earlier this month (July) the Chancellor announced the Government's Plan for Jobs, worth up to £30 billion which will contribute to kickstarting our local economy and help support and protect jobs across the constituency and the United Kingdom. Many residents have contacted me over the last few months expressing their gratitude for the Government's efforts to support their business and their employment, particularly through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Whilst it is clear this scheme could not continue indefinitely, as a Treasury Minister, I am pleased we have introduced another scheme that will reward and incentivise employers who have furloughed their staff through the new Jobs Retention Bonus Scheme, giving them a one-off payment of £1,000 to every business that keeps furloughed staff on continuously until the end of January 2021.

Last week I spoke to the restaurant Manager of The Flich House in Dunmow to find out how they have been managing since re-opening on the 15th June. Despite it being a difficult few months, they were able to access support through the various Government Schemes and have been successfully welcoming back customers. It is vital we support our local businesses during this time, and I know the Chancellor's announcement of a VAT cut for those in the tourism and hospitality sector to 5% and the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme is evident the Government will continue to do so. As part of my #ShopLocal campaign, I am continuing to encourage residents to support businesses too.

I have received many letters not just from constituents but people across the country in my role as Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury asking the Government to help protect our cultural and creative industry. Our constituency is home to many cultural sites such as Thaxted Guildhall, the Saffron Walden museum and Mountfitchet Castle. The Treasury team have worked extensively on a package and I am pleased that £1.57 billion will go towards supporting venues and organisations in the sector that have been impacted by the crisis.

If residents have any enquiries regarding our local high streets, businesses, government support schemes or anything else, please get in touch by emailing me at kemi.badenoch.mp@parliament.uk or call my office on 0207 219 1943 and my team and I will support you as best we can.



OPEN LIBRARY

INVESTING IN OUR LIBRARIES

Essex County Council continues to invest in libraries and is responding to the diverse ways that people now access reading material. Essex Libraries will soon join The Libraries Consortium (TLC), the UK's largest library consortium, giving users access to almost eight million items of stock. In addition, the library management system and self-service facilities will be upgraded, and it will be easier for people to access their local library 24/7.

The County Council has also introduced a library app, allowing users to remotely access the service. In the longer term, the Council sees Community-run Libraries (CRLs) as a way of creating modern community hubs with updated services, whilst at the same time providing better value for taxpayers.

This is timely given that use of the library service has dropped significantly, yet costs continue to rise. Community-run libraries have been successful in other counties, and a third of English library services are now community-run.

I am working with Writtle Parish Council on investigating whether the CRL scheme is right for Writtle Library, whereby a County Council grant of £18,000 could go toward implementing the project.

There is a clear vision for Writtle library to become a sustainable and vibrant village hub, underpinned by a business plan. We are fortunate to have a County Council that is both investing in our libraries today, and planning for tomorrow.



Andrew Thorpe-Apps

YOUR UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSERVATIVES CONTINUE TO HOLD THE R4U ADMINISTRATION TO ACCOUNT.

Whilst they dither and delay on the Council's corporate plan and our District's local plan, and whilst they fail to address the public health emergency, we have been working with Essex County Council to see the reboot of our local high streets, a summer offer for children and their families, as well as continuing to push for action to lessen the impacts of the coronavirus on local residents. At Council, we have led the way of scrutinising the administration's lacklustre attempts to kick start a new local plan. It's been over a year since they took office and no progress has been made: only backwards steps.

They now want meetings held behind closed doors, a suspension of the document that champions community involvement in the process and have been arguing that they can get a local plan through by the government's deadline, seen by many as an unrealistic pipe dream. In their corporate plan, they've stopped all work on improving governance, transparency and democracy.

They're breaking their promise to residents only a quarter of the way through their term.

R4U haven't got a clue. Your Conservatives deliver.

Cllr Chris Criscione

Leader of the Uttlesford Conservative Group, Conservative District Councillor for Flich Green & Little Dunmow



STAY ALERT 

CONTROL THE VIRUS



SAVE LIVES