



Annual Parish Meeting – Monday 4th April 2022

Planning & Transport Committee

Chair's Report – from Cllr Dave McLellan

The Planning and Traffic Committee meets twice a month to discuss upcoming planning applications and ongoing transport issues and highway defects.

2021/22 saw us welcome a new staff member to support the planning process at SWTC. Georgia Arnold joined us in July and has quickly become both diligent and knowledgeable on planning.

Planning:

As a town council we are a statutory consultee and can make comments on planning applications – whether that is small residential extensions or large major applications. Any final decisions come down to the Local Planning Authority which is Uttlesford District Council.

We work closely with UDC to try to ensure s106 contributions for relevant new applications are appropriate and sufficient. We monitor the delivery criteria and the receipts of the contributions. We have introduced regular meetings (now monthly) with the UDC planning department where we can receive updates and ask questions directly on significant applications affecting Saffron Walden.

In the last year we have received an application from Rosconn to build around 240 homes on the Radwinter road. This development is within Swards End parish, but would clearly have a significant impact on Saffron Walden and as such we have raised our objections. On 17th March 2022, UDC Planning Committee unanimously resolved to reject the outline planning application and the Town Council welcomes this decision.

Other significant applications include:

The old Printpak site application has been approved by UDC this year and will bring a new supermarket, a care home and a residential home.

A second application was submitted for the triangle of land at the top of De Vigier Avenue which has been refused again by UDC.

Two applications were received to build four homes on the site of the Gate Public House, which were both refused by UDC. Unfortunately, the first application recently won on appeal by the inspector and development will therefore go ahead.

Abbey homes on Little Walden Road, Linden Homes on Radwinter Road and Bellway on Thaxted Road are all under construction and are at different stages of development.

A highlight of the year was the recent completion of contracts with Persimmon for the transfer of playing fields and other public open spaces to the Town Council, which brought to an end the long running saga of trying to get the developer to meet their s.106 obligations at both Lime Avenue and Tudor Park. Thanks must go to the Town Council staff that have stubbornly pushed this along as well as the efforts of the football club and the efforts of councillors.

Highways and Transport:

At SWTC we continue try to encourage sustainable transport methods and have recently submitted eight applications (via the Essex Local Highway Panel, LHP, process) – these including two pedestrian islands; four zebra crossings, a formalised footpath and cycle links in Saffron Walden. We are also working with the LHP to try to repair the High St pavements and achieve a safe long-term solution.

Most highway repairs (chiefly potholes and blocked drains) are the responsibility of Essex Highways. We regularly report these defects to Highways and maintain an ongoing dialogue with Highway Officers and County Councillor Paul Gadd who assists in chasing ongoing defects to be repaired.

Debden Road/Landscape View, Audley Road, East Street and Radwinter Road have all been resurfaced this year, and Essex Highways have assured us that Winstanley Road and Cromwell Road will be resurfaced in the coming year.

Several longstanding drainage issues have also been addressed this year, in particular on Newport Road, East Street and on the approaches to Little Walden and appear to be standing up to recent heavy rain. We continue to work with our County Councillor to address the backlog of drainage issues affecting the town.

Further details can be found on the “Highways” page on the Council website.

Neighbourhood Plan:

The external examiner reviewed the submitted neighbourhood plan and provided an initial response late in 2021 with a follow up in February 2022. We have decided to submit the plan, with the examiners suggested amendments after a statutory consultation period.

I'd like to pass my thanks to all the members of the Planning and Transport Committee for their hard work and attendance this year.

Having to hold the meetings virtually for a period has meant that members generally review applications prior to the meeting, making the meetings more efficient and shorter. It has also saved many reams of paper.