

Dear All,

Please accept my apologies for my absence from your meeting this evening. I have a diary clash, and the other meeting relates to the Local Plan Refresh and the Call for Sites process that has been conducted. I have heard a rumour that there is a fear amongst officers and the Local Plan Subcommittee that they are not adopting enough sites to meet Government housing demands, and so they are thinking of revisiting consideration of some sites in the more northerly Wards. The only Parish in Stour Valley South Ward that indicated a willingness to accept any of the proposed sites was Bures Hamlet, and my purpose in attending the meeting at Braintree this evening is to try to ensure that this is reflected in any reassessment of Stour Valley South proposed sites.

I note that you have the speed limit proposal on your agenda and have to confirm that I see little or no likelihood of this proposal being implemented for reasons I have spoken of in the past. I therefore recommend that this item be dropped for the foreseeable future.

I have been working with your village assets and their organisers to secure funding for various improvement projects. Those assets include the Lamarsh Lion (Terrace and Frontal Seating Project), Lamarsh Village Hall (Front Door Replacement), and Alphamstone Village Hall (Heating Project, where I helped with application wording to align the proposal with Council Priorities and Policies). I am also aware of an aspiration to install solar panels on the roof of AVH and will be encouraging and supporting applications to funding sources that I am aware of with respect to this prospective project.

My recent work on social media with respect to your communities has included awareness of funding opportunities, including one from the National Lotteries Community Fund, and applications to this need to be in by mid-December. I am also aware of funding that will come from National Grid in compensation for the Bramford to Twinstead Project. Importantly, of the £4M total pot, £500k relates to the substation and I understand is intended to benefit residents within 5km of the site. Clearly, this is a huge and important opportunity. This sort of sum may well require that we come up with projects that involve more than one of our local organisations and communities. It seems sensible, therefore, that a meeting is convened of local interest bodies to consider what sort of projects we all might want to put forward, and I hope in the coming weeks to organise something along these lines.

My intention in all of this is to work to ensure that we seize the opportunities that are likely to arise in the coming months, and make sure that the funds available support delivery of meaningful, tangible, and long-term benefits in compensation for the long-term price our residents will pay for National Grid's project(s).

I am, of course, very willing to meet with you at a mutually convenient time and place to discuss any of the above matters (and others) in detail, so please let me know what you want. I reiterate that I am sorry to miss your meeting, but feel that it is important that I do what I can to ensure that the decisions the Local Plan Subcommittee has made for your villages remain firm.

Wishing you a successful meeting this evening,