

Dear Residents

It is 18th January and water levels are still very high around the Country. Thank you to the farmers and landowners and Councillors who have been out there clearing ditches and gullies and helping to reduce the levels and the problems. I am aware that there is still more work to be done in Hatfield Heath, High Easter, Bush End, Barnston and Margaret Roding where there are specific locations that need work to resolve the issues. If you are aware of other areas please let me know. Many of the problems are caused by blocked gullies where mud, debris and leaves are washed off fields and additionally by road sweepers inadvertently pushing sweepings into the drains. Essex Highways clears thousands of Gullies every month but I continue to push for more.

As we come towards the end of the Financial year I am aware that this has been a year like no other in terms of trying to balance budgets with both the District Council and the County Council experiencing reductions in income from areas for the District Council such as Car Parking Income, Planning Fees and Taxi Licensing and for the County Council in areas such as library charges and room bookings, Country Park and Adult Community Learning income and wedding cancellations . In addition the District Council has managed a whole additional raft of Grants to businesses and the County Council has supported Care Homes, School Transport companies, provided Holiday Clubs, Food Vouchers for holidays (February Half term and Easter Planned too), managed Track and Trace and the pressures of an increased number of deaths. There have , of course, been large tranches of additional funding to assist with these costs from Central Government. For the County Council setting a budget as we have to in February, all these issues have made this more complicated. We do not know how long the current restrictions will last or the impact of additional residents losing their jobs and claiming Universal Credit (who are likely to pay reduced Council Tax) and what effect that will have on the amount of Council Tax we will receive. We are discussing at Cabinet on January 19th a 0% Council Tax increase and a 1.5% increase in the Adult Social Care precept. This will be debated at Full Council in February.

Essex County Council is working on an ambitious programme to assist families who have children going to school “ remotely” and have purchased around 2500 laptops for pupils where schools have identified the need for a machine. 1700 have to date been handed out. If you are or know of anyone in that situation please make contact with your school. This programme started with Senior Schools but Junior schools are now being contacted. As well as purchased machines, if you have an old machine you are no longer using we can clean and refurbish those and pass on to someone in need. The Uttlesford Local Highways panel met last week to discuss progress on Schemes. These include the mini roundabout at the bottom of Rosemary Lane and works to the Roding Drive Roundabout in Takeley as well as potential pavement widening in Barnston. We also had two members of the public speak about speed on the B1256 in Little Canfield and in Dunmow at the bottom of Braintree Road. The full list be found here <https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/local-highway-panels/uttlesford-lhp.aspx>.

If there are matters you would like help with or information about please do get in Touch

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