

District News

Both Neil and I welcome you to this month's edition of District News and hope that you have enjoyed this year's spring weather so far, is this a sign for a great summer? Personally, I hope so.

Uttlesford launches new package of support for pubs

Uttlesford District Council has made several funding and support programmes available for pubs and bars as part of a wider engagement project.

The programme includes a grant scheme for pubs and bars to carry out energy efficiency measures, trialling new community initiatives and support for social media and website promotion. This is the beginning of a longer-term approach to engagement with the sector, linked to the council's corporate priority of addressing rurality.

Over the last few months, the council's Economic Development Team has worked with social enterprise specialists Cultural Engine CIC to meet pub landlords across the district to understand their challenges. The project recognises the unique role pubs and bars play in the local community – economically, socially and culturally – as well as the challenging conditions in which they are operating such as rising energy costs, particularly for older buildings, alcohol taxes, rent, staff retention and keeping up with social media promotion and website updates.

<https://business.uttlesford.gov.uk/>

Litter Picking

Whether you are an individual, part of a town or parish council, a school, local community group or just walking through our wonderful countryside, you can organise and carry out litter picks with our support.

How to get involved

Litter picking kits can be provided that include essential equipment such as litter pickers, high visibility vests, gloves and bags. These kits can be loaned out to anyone interested in organising a litter pick. Additionally, we will arrange for the collection and disposal of the litter gathered during these events, To request a litter picking kit, email wasteaware@uttlesford.gov.uk with your name, address, contact details, the equipment required, and the dates for collection and return of the kit.

Farming Equipment and Technology Fund 2025

A FETF grant for help to buy items that improve productivity, manage slurry and improve animal health and welfare.

Grants of between £1,000 and £25,000 are available for each grant theme.

Find out more at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-equipment-and-technology-fund-2025

UK transition from analogue to digital landlines

What the retirement of analogue phone lines, also known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), means for you.

Overview

Communications providers in the UK are replacing the technology they use to provide fixed telephone networks (landlines). For most customers, the upgrade is expected to be complete by January 2027.

Details

In November 2017, the telecoms industry announced its intention to retire analogue telephone networks such as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), which provides many analogue telephone services.. The Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN), which is also used to deliver telephone services, is also being switched off. Most customers are expected to have made the switch by the end of January 2027. The industry will upgrade landline services to new digital technology using an internet connection, such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), Digital Voice or All-IP telephony.

For most consumers and businesses, this change will be straightforward. Nobody will have to lose their landline service because of this change, as there will still be the option for a 'landline only' service should a customer not wish to purchase a general internet connection. Communications providers will continue to be bound by the same regulatory obligations as they are today.

The upgrade of the UK's telephone lines is not a government programme and does not result from a government decision or policy, and therefore specific questions about how the upgrade programme might affect you should be directed to your service provider.

Government Safety Message on e-bikes and e-scooters

If you own an e-bike or e-scooter or are thinking of purchasing one for yourself or someone else, please take note of this Important Safety Message from the UK's national product regulator, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS).

E-bikes and e-scooters use large lithium-ion batteries which can present a risk of serious fire or explosion in certain circumstances. While these can be used safely, there have been a number of fire incidents involving lithium-ion batteries in e-bikes and e-scooters, including in conversion kits.

OPSS recommends you follow these five steps when purchasing, using or charging your e-bike or e-scooter to reduce fire risks:

Step 1: RESEARCH – only BUY an e-bike, e-scooter, charger or battery from a known seller and check any product reviews

Step 2: READ – always READ and FOLLOW the manufacturer's instructions for charging and using e-bikes or e-scooters

Step 3: CHECK – not all e-bike or e-scooter batteries and chargers are compatible or safe when used together. Check and only USE the manufacturer's recommended battery or charger

Step 4: CHARGE – always charge in a safe place without blocking exits and always UNPLUG your charger when you have finished charging

Step 5: NEVER – attempt to modify or tamper with your battery

Graham Russell, Chief Executive of OPSS said:

“As the popularity of e-bikes and e-scooters increases we have seen more tragic fires in homes where e-bikes or e-scooters are charging. We are stepping up our actions to tackle the sale of unsafe e-bikes and e-scooters but it's important to remember that manufacturers only assure their e-bikes and e-scooters are safe when used in line with their instructions. I would urge consumers to follow these five steps to reduce risks to their families and homes”

Source

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/government-safety-message-on-e-bikes-and-e-scooters>

“Powered transporters”

Is a term used to cover a variety of novel and emerging personal transport devices which are powered by a motor, including e-scooters.

As mentioned in the opening paragraph, summer is on the way and no doubt so are the school holidays with parents looking for ways for their offspring to enjoy themselves which may include allowing them to own or use an e-scooter (powered transporter).

Given how powered transporters are motorised and designed, they fall within the legal definition of a “motor vehicle”. Therefore, the laws that apply to motor vehicles apply to powered transporters.

It is illegal to use a powered transporter:

on a public road without complying with a number of legal requirements, which potential users will find very difficult in spaces that are set aside for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders; this includes on the pavement and in cycle lanes. Please also take into account personal safety for the rider

Any person who uses a powered transporter on a public road or other prohibited space in breach of the law is committing a criminal offence and can be prosecuted.

It is legal to use a powered transporter:

on private land with the permission of the landowner.

Source:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/powered-transporters/information-sheet-guidance-on-powered-transporters>

Please also think about personal safety

Casualty Distribution:

In 2022, 1,402 collisions involving e-scooters were reported, with 12 deaths and 440 serious injuries.

Injury Types: Studies have shown a higher incidence of severe trauma among e-scooter users compared to cyclists. Common injury types include head, upper extremity, and lower extremity injuries.

Source:

Google e-scooter accidents statistics

Ward Surgeries

Normal Ward surgeries will take place on the first Tuesday of the month at Great Hallingbury Village Hall, between 2 – 4pm (03 June 2025).

Little Hallingbury Village Hall (20 June 2025), between 9 – 11 am with the Dukes Head PH, Hatfield Broad Oak between 2 – 4pm the same day.

And the normal reminder, that should you need to contact us, you can email us on the following addresses.

clldriscoll@uttlesford.gov.uk or cllrreeve@uttlesford.gov.uk