

## **District News**

Neil and I welcome you back to this edition of District News

I (Geof) would like to start this month's newsletter by mentioning that I enjoyed a Tuesday morning recently in the Little Hallingbury village Hall. It started with a chair fitness workout, soft exercises to loosen one's joints as we get older, and was conducted by Claire to music. I found this a very social event with everyone present enjoying the session, I think that the group could benefit with a few men joining in, so how about it guys.

After the above exercise I was ready for a coffee and low and behold, my prayers were answered by Alzy's Coffee Bar, also based in the village hall. All customers were made welcome from mums on their way home from the school run to those working on lap tops or just checking emails on their phones, I will certainly visit again.

Thanks go out to both Clare and Alzy along with Sue Meyer for her invitation and the ladies of the fitness group who accepted me without question.

### **Royal Voluntary Service**

Talking of village halls like most of a certain age I had to attend my doctor's surgery for a couple of Jabs recently and came across a leaflet from the above group. Brought to you by the charity, the Virtual Village Hall is a free, online activity hub and community, designed to help people stay physically and mentally active, connected and having fun. There is no sign in or subscription required. There are 12-15 live sessions (from Art to Zumba) every week and a library of 2,000 sessions to choose from, all led by expert tutors and presenters, open to all. Join in live daily on Facebook, YouTube or X, or catch up on YouTube or the Virtual Village Hall website when suits.

[facebook.com/VirtualVillageHall](https://facebook.com/VirtualVillageHall)

[@VirtualVillHall](https://twitter.com/VirtualVillHall)

[royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/vvh](https://royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/vvh)

[YouTube: search 'virtual village hall'](#)

### **Winter approaches**

Although our winters appear to me to be milder than when I was a young lad, the weather is changing and now is the time to prepare for the approaching

Winter season. I would like to reiterate my message of last month, should you find that you need any help or advice on benefits or finance please call the following, do not be proud. UDC website has a selection of independent, free and anonymous benefits calculators to check what you could be entitled to and give you an estimate of:

the benefits you could get

how much your benefit payments could be

how your benefits will be affected if you start work or increase your hours

how your benefits will be affected if your circumstances change - for example, if you have a child or move in with your partner

Citizens Advice East Herts (Bishop's Stortford) - 01920 459944

<https://www.citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk>

Citizens Advice - Saffron Walden - 01799 618840

<https://www.uttlesfordca.org.uk>

Uttlesford District Council – 01799 510510

[https:// www.uttlesford.gov.uk](https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

### **Safety kit for cars during the winter months**

Uttlesford is a rural District and many residents rely on using a car to get out and about. These are some easy items you could put together to help you stay safe this winter should you be using a car, they may help in the event of a breakdown or bad weather. The choice of items will be yours to form a minimal basic option. However, I believe you should also consider a more substantial kit, if possible, we do live in a rural area.

A well-prepared winter driving kit should include:

A torch and batteries.

A first-aid kit.

An ice scraper and de-icer.

Wellies or winter boots.

A snow shovel.

Screen-wash.

A blanket.

Jump leads

Reflective warning triangle – ideally two

Sunglasses (Low Sun months)

In-car phone charger – and a portable battery charger

Chocolate bar, packet of crisps and water/soft drinks and/or hot flask in case of being stranded.

### **The advice below is from the RAC**

Cars should also be taken into consideration for winter use and bad weather when carrying out that school trip, travelling to or from work or visiting friends and relatives.

### **Fuel**

It may sound obvious but ensure you have enough fuel for your journey – it is a good idea to fill-up before setting off. Cars use more fuel in heavy traffic and start/stop conditions which can be regular occurrences, especially in wintry weather. And if the weather changes and it takes longer than you expect you could encounter problems.

### **Oil**

Check your oil level using the dip stick and top-up if necessary – check your handbook if you are unfamiliar with how to do this and to ensure you use the correct oil. Locate the oil cap with the oil can symbol on it and pour in the right amount. Make sure you replace the cap fully and be careful not to overfill as this can cause more problems.

### **Rubber**

Check your tyre tread depth and air pressure.

Remember that well-maintained tyres are vital to give you traction and grip on icy, wet surfaces. Your car's recommended tyre pressure can be found either in your car's manual or inside the driver's door.

The legal tyre tread depth for cars in the UK and Europe is 1.6mm. Check your tyre tread depth using either a tyre gauge, the marker bars on your tyre or a 20 pence coin. If you can't see the outer band of the 20p your tyres are within the legal limit. RAC recommends you check your tyres every fortnight, and before long journeys. Ideally a minimum tread depth of 3mm in icy or very wet conditions is recommended.

### **Check your wiper blades**

In winter your windscreen can get a very dirty from rain, snow, ice and road salt. Maintaining good visibility is always imperative so check your wipers are doing the job by spraying some washer fluid and checking they clean the windscreen. Then get out of the car and run your fingers along the length of

the blades to check for splits. It's recommended to change wiper blades every 12 months.

### **Screen-wash**

Make sure you top up your screen-wash with a product that is effective down to at least -15 degrees Celsius (recommended). This additive helps to keep the windscreen free of ice and dirt, particularly the winter road grime caused by road salting and gritting which can cause visibility issues, especially during the low sun months of November/December and February/March.

### **Coolant**

Coolant (a mixture of water and antifreeze) is pumped around your engine to cool it. You should regularly check your engine coolant level and top-up if required. Remember only check this when the engine is cool otherwise you risk scalding yourself. It's not normal for coolant levels to drop suddenly, so if it does, get it checked out at a garage. You should find the coolant is between the min/max marks on the side of the tank.

### **Electrics**

Check your lights and indicators are all working properly and replace bulbs or fuses if required. Battery problems are the reason for more RAC call-outs in winter than anything else.

### **Ward surgeries**

Please note that these surgeries are for you to discuss issues that you may have with UDC, that we as your District Councillors can help with, or represent you where possible. Please do come along and have a chat, you do not need to arrange an appointment, they are walk in surgeries.

See below for location and timings:

The first Tuesday of each month at Great Hallingbury Village Hall, 2 – 4pm (05 November) and the third Friday of each month at the Dukes Head PH, Hatfield Broad Oak also between 2 – 4pm (15 November).

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

[clldriscoll@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:clldriscoll@uttlesford.gov.uk) or [cllrreeve@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:cllrreeve@uttlesford.gov.uk)