

For Terling and Fairstead; The Notleys and Faulkbourne

Spring 2017  **Follow us on Facebook at Essex Green Party**

Major development planned for land between Black Notley and Great Notley

Braintree District Council will be deciding on its Draft Local Plan in June. There will then be a final round of public consultation, after which the Plan will be examined by an Inspector.

Large scale development is proposed in the Draft Plan between Black Notley and Great Notley totalling 2000 houses. This will cover all the countryside north of Bakers Lane and will also spread south of Bakers Lane around the junction with London Road.

In total, BDC is being required by the Government to allocate land for around 14,600 houses to the year 2033, almost all of them in the southern half of Braintree District around Braintree and Witham with further sites at Hatfield Peverel and other larger villages. Huge "Garden Communities" are also proposed along the A120, one of which, at Marks Tey, could be larger than Braintree.

Cllr. James Abbott, County Councillor for Witham Northern has been the only local councillor to consistently challenge these housing numbers. He said:

"Whilst clearly we do need some new housing, particularly for local people that is affordable to buy or rent, and we do need more local jobs, the sheer scale of what is being proposed is simply unsustainable. **In the 3 years to 2016, an average of 370 homes a year were built in the district. The new target is 860 a year, well over doubled.** These high targets are being forced on councils like BDC by the Government."

Cllr. Abbott has attended many of the meetings at which the sites in this area have been discussed and has raised concerns about the increase in traffic that could result along Bakers Lane and through the Notleys and Faulkbourne where speeding is already a problem.

Planning matters

Getting planning decisions right is important for local communities. County Councillor James Abbott has worked closely with residents on a number of planning applications, including making representations at planning meetings and Appeal hearings. Development can bring benefits, but it needs to be in the right place and designed so that it does not cause adverse impacts from heavy traffic or environmental blight.

Going the right way

As well as working to get potholes filled and keeping roadside footways clear from obstruction, Councillor James Abbott is calling on ECC to work with local parish councils and residents to ensure that rural directional signposts are reinstated.

"Fingerpost" signs are a traditional feature of rural areas in Essex. Braintree District has many cast metal ones, installed during the late C19th and early C20th which are of historic interest. An audit of signs in Terling and Fairstead revealed many that are missing or damaged.



Cllr. James Abbott at the junction of Witham Road and Church Road, Black Notley with the new directional sign that he requested ECC to install.

Community Policing

Many residents have reported their concerns about low levels of policing and longer waits for calls to 101 to be answered.

In October 2016 the new Essex Police & Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst held a public meeting in Witham. Almost all the questions put to him and senior police officers were about lack of policing and poor communications.

The main cause of this is cuts in funding from the Government. Witham Police station has been closed, most PCSOs have gone and the police are responding to fewer calls. Waits on 101 have been reported as being as long as 50 minutes.

James Abbott, County Councillor for Witham Northern, which includes Terling, Fairstead, The Notleys and Faulkbourne said

“Community policing is an essential public service. Being able to contact the police to report crime, getting a good response to calls and having local police about to give reassurance should be high on the agenda of decision makers. Rural areas have been particularly hard-hit by reductions in policing but residents are paying more through their council tax for a declining service. The Government has cut funding for the police year on year and we are now seeing the consequences. Mr Hirst says he is aware of the problems and is trying to get better funding for Essex – let us hope he succeeds.”

Recycling services

Braintree District Council suspended collections of garden waste in the green bins between 5th December and 27th February.

This service reduction was on top of Essex County Council's decision to reduce services at Witham Recycling Centre. Residents can no longer take DIY type waste there and all vans and trailers are banned except for blue badge holders.

Conservative Essex County Council says it has changed the rules to stop commercial waste being taken to recycling sites. But it is not applying the rules evenly - Braintree still takes DIY waste and allows vans in so long as it is household materials being taken.

Green Party County Councillors tabled a motion to the December Full Council meeting at County Hall calling for a rethink. This followed concerns that the new rules

could result in increased fly-tipping. Residents have also reported been turned away from the Witham Recycling Centre and told to go to Chelmsford even though they were bringing their own materials to be recycled.

Caring for vulnerable people

Social Care funding for the most vulnerable people in Essex is in “crisis”.

Those are the words of the Conservative Leader of Essex County Council who has warned the Government that ECC will not be able to protect services to those who need care if funding cuts continue.

The Government has allowed councils to apply a “levy” to help support Social Care Services and for 2017/18 this means ECC will increase council tax by 3% – but even so, reductions in funding from the Conservative Government means there will still be cuts to Social Care.

2016 confirmed as the hottest year globally on record

The Green Party has been raising awareness about climate change for decades.

Long before other parties claimed they took these issues seriously, the Greens were campaigning for recycling to be made accessible to everyone and for investment in clean green electricity and energy efficiency.

While a lot of progress has been made over the years, there are worrying signs that policies are now being weakened with the planning system being tilted more towards developers of greenfield sites, reduced recycling services and steep cuts in support for solar power. Locally there is the looming threat of the Rivenhall Airfield waste incinerator which, if built, would burn 595,000 tonnes of waste a year – equivalent to almost as much as all the waste put out by all the households in Essex each year.

On its own this polluting plant would pump over half a million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year – as well as increasing pollutants which we would all be breathing in locally depending on which way the wind blows on any given day. Hundreds more HGVs would be using the A12 and A120 each day and waste would be trucked in from outside the county.

The Green alternative is to invest in re-use and recycling, supporting the development of more businesses on existing industrial estates in Essex – a much better policy than burying or burning waste.



If there is a local issue you need help with, please get in touch:
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