

# **A Residents' Manifesto for the future of Uttlesford**



**Election 2015 Manifesto**

## Chairman's Statement and Introduction



We are excited to launch our *Residents' Manifesto for the future of Uttlesford*. It provides a high-level roadmap with key policy summaries that outline how we'd propose to run the District Council if elected.

In it we promise an open and progressive local government that will be financially responsible and answerable to residents.

We will focus on growing and keeping businesses in Uttlesford; we will ensure that development is in tune with local needs and that it is both sustainable and infrastructure-led; we will hold other authorities to account for our needs, such as schools, health, roads and water; and we will encourage healthy lifestyles with improved green spaces, sport and leisure amenities.

If elected to run Uttlesford District Council in May 2015 we will form a local government of the residents, by the residents, for the residents.



John Lodge  
Chairman, Residents for Uttlesford

## Public Consultation

Uniquely amongst political parties, we have built our manifesto with the community and it includes input from more than 600 Uttlesford locals. If you have any comments on the manifesto, please submit them online at [www.residents4u.org/consult](http://www.residents4u.org/consult) or email us at [manifesto@residents4u.org](mailto:manifesto@residents4u.org).

Our registered address is 3 London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ED.

## Contents

Chairman’s Statement and Introduction .....	1
Public Consultation .....	1
Find Out More.....	2
About Residents-for-Uttlesford.....	3
Prospective Candidates .....	3
Our Party Principles .....	4
Summary of Manifesto Policies.....	4
1. Finance, Local Government & Council Services .....	5
2. The Economy & Jobs .....	5
3. Housing & Planning .....	6
4. Local Plan .....	6
5. Schools & Education.....	7
6. Roads & Transport .....	7
7. Environment .....	7
8. Health .....	8
9. Community & Leisure .....	8

## Find Out More

Our manifesto is online at [www.residents4u.org/manifesto](http://www.residents4u.org/manifesto) or scan the QR code on the right with your smart-phone.

General information is available about Residents-for-Uttlesford on the web at [www.residents4u.org](http://www.residents4u.org). There is information on how to contact us, and you can find links to our Facebook and Twitter pages. You can also find out about our prospective candidates, how to vote, donate to the campaign, and subscribe to our email news.



## About Residents-for-Uttlesford

Residents-for-Uttlesford (R4U) is the local party for towns and villages. Our political party was formed by residents' groups in north Essex to provide a strong, independent voice for the views of the people of the area. We believe that on local issues locals should decide, not Westminster parties.

Uttlesford residents achieved election gains in 2013, winning their first county and district council seats. The election successes were based on our localism advocacy platform and the desire to create and implement long range strategic and sustainable plans for our area. In 2014 a number of existing District Councillors crossed the aisle to join us so that they could better represent their constituents' wishes.

Our stated intention is to win seats in the 2015 local elections to gain control of Uttlesford District Council on behalf of residents. We already have 5 elected councillors.

## Prospective Candidates

Our 2015 prospective candidates are outstanding in their fields and bring a wealth of both public and private sector experience that is much needed at Uttlesford District Council. They include a lawyer that worked at the UN promoting women's rights, a chartered construction professional that has delivered national infrastructure, former mayors and councillors, and business leaders with wide perspectives in the operation of councils, finance and private sector enterprise. We believe that our party is the only one that can offer the range and depth of experience needed to fix Uttlesford District Council.



## Our Party Principles

We are a residents' party and our principles mean that we will:

1. Listen to residents and make objective decisions that are right for local communities.
2. Plan strategically for the long term and focus on sustainable development.
3. Deliver excellent services and fiscal responsibility.
4. Develop ideas and policies that are progressive and independent from national party politics.
5. Make Uttlesford District Council more transparent and accountable.

Local government of the residents, by the residents, for the residents

## Summary of Manifesto Policies

In summary our policies are:

1. **Council Services, Local Government & Finance:** We will be open, transparent and accountable to you; we will be responsible and run services efficiently; we will be a strong voice for Uttlesford on policies and authorities that we can't directly control.
2. **Economy & Jobs:** We will support economic growth and employment inside Uttlesford and promote our district as a great tourist destination.
3. **Housing & Planning:** Our planning will be driven by local housing needs, homes will be built to high environmental standards, and we will incorporate the infrastructure essential for our vibrant and growing communities.
4. **Environment:** We will protect and enhance our built and natural environment, creating new green spaces, reducing pollution and improving sustainability.
5. **Health & Leisure:** We will encourage healthy lifestyles and work to improve sport and leisure amenities and the provision of more healthcare facilities.

## 1. Finance, Local Government & Council Services

*You said: Why does no-one listen to local people? Stop wasting our money.*

We are a residents' party and we will listen to you and make sure that we all have a voice. We will always be open, transparent, democratic and accountable to you and make rational decisions based on evidence - not on party politics. We will work for the community together with other parties and independents to truly represent the interests of Uttlesford residents. Where possible, we will devolve decision-making to towns and villages. We will review and improve, or if necessary replace, the current Cabinet system to make the Council fairer and all voices heard.

We will make the Council more efficient, stop the waste of money and provide better value for your Council Taxes, including resolving the issue of the millions of pounds currently held in duplicated or seemingly unneeded reserves.

We will be strong advocates for Uttlesford on policies we can't directly control such as education, highways and healthcare, and support vulnerable residents and the agencies working with them.

## 2. The Economy & Jobs

*You said: We need quality business parks and start-up hubs and we want to keep our individual shops and cultural centres.*

We will develop plans to encourage economic growth, avoid conversion of viable employment sites into housing, and make the whole of Uttlesford a great place to work, visit and do business.

We will promote innovation and entrepreneurship; encourage businesses to come to Uttlesford; work to improve broadband speeds and develop better links with major employment centres such as Cambridge and Stansted Airport. These measures will enable the creation, development and retention of a wide range of businesses offering high-quality, well-paid local jobs and apprenticeships.

We will support the arts and creative industries. We will make Uttlesford a tourist destination in its own right. We will seek to create a brand, with facilities to attract tourists to our stunning towns and villages with their culture, pubs and shops; to our beautiful countryside and to our ancient Hatfield Forest and heritage sites such as Audley End House.



### 3. Housing & Planning

*You said: Build for locals and put the infrastructure in first.*

Our planning will be driven by identified housing needs and realities and we will put in place a series of measures to conserve the natural and built environment of Uttlesford. Our planning will be sustainable and innovative, incorporate the infrastructure essential for our vibrant and growing communities.

To meet that identified housing need we will explore the possibility of building a single settlement in a suitable area that will take the majority of new housing. We will consult with residents about any such proposals. Recommendations will be based on evidence and best practice – not Westminster party politics or central government edicts.

We will encourage parish Neighbourhood Plans and consult with you about implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy so that towns and villages can directly receive up to 25% of the financial proceeds of any homebuilding in their communities.

We will obtain the right mix of social and market housing built to high environmental and energy efficiency standards and ensure that designs are in keeping with the local area. We will ensure that developers meet all their commitments in full with significant and worthwhile contributions for the benefit of local communities.

### 4. Local Plan

*You said: Sort out the mess left after the Local Plan was rejected; make sure our voices are properly heard, and don't wreck our communities.*

We will produce a new Local Plan which will both guarantee that all development in Uttlesford relates closely to identified need and also satisfies the Planning Inspectorate.

We shall hold to account both developers and the agencies responsible for the delivery of key infrastructure, ensuring that this is reviewed prior to giving planning permission.

We shall involve Town and Parish councils in arriving at decisions based on evidence, not on political influence. We will remove political influence over the Planning Committee, make their meetings more accessible to residents, and reverse the ban on public speakers.

## 5. Schools & Education

*You said: We need more schools.*

Our children should be able to go to top quality schools near their homes. We will work with Essex County Council and the independent academies to resolve both the existing serious shortage of early years, primary and secondary places, and to ensure there are viable plans for the further demand from new housing developments. We will link with Essex County Council, the third sector and adult educational institutions to create new opportunities for our residents to share their expertise or improve their skills and employment prospects.

## 6. Roads & Transport

*You said: Sort out our road and parking problems. We need more and better bus services.*

We will work with Essex County Council and transport companies to develop a strategic plan for the highway and transport infrastructure of Uttlesford such as improving local rail and bus services. We will work with Essex County Council to maintain our roads to a high standard and solve existing traffic problems such as reducing heavy vehicle access to towns during peak hours and introducing 20mph zones to make our communities safer for all. We will encourage initiatives such as safe cycling, safe walking routes and school 'walking buses' to minimise car usage; and improve car parking management.

## 7. Environment

*You said: We need communal and green spaces where the generations can mix.*

We will maintain the cleanliness and appearance of our towns and villages, create new green communal spaces and plant trees and shrubs. We will monitor and seek to reduce pollution; increase recycling; monitor flood protection, and improve and increase green spaces. We will seek to raise Uttlesford's homes and commercial buildings to the highest energy conservation standards and explore new energy production methods. We will support, improve and protect allotments and local food production and encourage more farmers' markets.



## 8. Health

*You said: We need more medical surgeries and dentists.*

We will work with the NHS, Essex County Council, Town and Parish Councils and local community groups to develop an up-to-date and fit strategy for Uttlesford; that promotes healthy and active lifestyles; and that seeks to ensure quick and easy access to healthcare when you need it. We shall also seek to ensure that specialist facilities are provided to encourage GPs, dentists and medical auxiliaries to set up new practices, or to improve the current ones.

## 9. Community & Leisure

*You said: We need youth clubs and better sports and leisure facilities.*

We will work existing providers of sports and leisure facilities to invest in better facilities and make them financially and physically accessible. We will compel developers to provide significant green, play and sports areas for the community when new homes are approved. This will benefit everyone in our community including families, young people, the elderly and those with special needs.

We will encourage healthy living and wellbeing activities such as walking, cycling and horticulture, and work to improve the infrastructure that supports these and other activities.

## Find Out More

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Engage at [www.Residents4U.org](http://www.Residents4U.org)

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