

Guardian

AT A GLANCE

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Discover the ins and outs of this quiet chalet-style character home called The Conifers in Debden Green

Motors



MERCEDES BENZ SILK RANGE:

There aren't too many cars with folding hard top roofs that get an unre-served thumbs up but the Mercedes Benz Silk range is hard to fault.

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VIDEO LIBRARY: Eton Manor book their place in the Essex Senior Cup Final, brushing aside National League outfit Barking
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IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Warning: serious challenges ahead

By **EDMUND TOBIN**

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LOUGHTON Town Council claims it has had a successful year – but has warned “serious challenges” lie ahead.

At the council's annual town meeting, members gave their views on an eventful past year and answered question from a packed audience at Murray Hall in Borders Lane.

David Wixley, chairman of the council's recreation committee, said work at the hall had accelerated since it opened 18 months ago.

He added: “A landscaped garden has been brought in at a cost of £22,400 with a contribution of £2,000 from Essex County Council. The insulation and security fencing has also been improved

“Bookings have increased and there have also been some commercial lettings. Many positive comments have been received.”

He spoke of his pleasure at the town council finally gaining the lease on the Roding Valley recreation ground, and said numerous improvements had been made including new goalposts and a refurbished playground.

After many years in the pipeline, he said the council was still interested in constructing a skateboard park, and the Willingale Road nature reserve was being looked at as a possible venue.

Environment and heritage committee chairman Chris Pond said recent permission to explore the possibility of reusing dormant graves would be looked at.

He said hanging baskets for the High Road were all set to go, but there had been delays from the district and county councils, adding: “When the Broadway enhancement scheme has been done, the council will consider installing them there.”

After expressing his disappointment at the lack of Christmas lights in the High Road, Mr Pond said he blamed their disappearance on poor support from traders. He added: “We hope next year will be much better.”

Attacking the county council for its so-called lack of attention to roads, Mr Pond promised the town council would exert as much pressure as possible for more work.

The King's Green war memorial is also set to be refurbished to reflect Loughton's pride in the peo-



Town council recreation committee chairman David Wixley – “many positive comments have been received” about Murray Hall (above) (c)



ple who “made the ultimate sacrifice”.

Resources and general services committee chairwoman Janet Woods said the council had dished out £10,000 in grants, with a further £4,000 to the town's Citizens' Advice Bureau, and had delivered a below inflation increase in its precept.

‘Influx of people’ and ‘traffic’ concerns

FROM FRONT PAGE

concerns and win the Epping community over.

He said: “The sewers and services are of adequate capacity to serve the site. The principle of development was established a number of years ago with the grant of outline planning permission, which essentially crystallised the residential potential of this site.

“To date, the scheme has been driven by English Partnerships and their need to provide the homes which are needed within the east of England.

“I believe the scheme has been very well designed and do not consider it to be over-developed. It's in line with the best practice and

development of a brownfield site. The site proposals are not out of character with the previous development of the plot.”

Access to the scheme will be via a new traffic light controlled junction onto The Plain.

Gillian Eastman, 63, of Hartland Road, in Epping, said: “It's ludicrous. If you look at the traffic now it's bad and there will be no doctors' surgeries. It's going to be too large. I've lived here 27 years and it's going to spoil the town.

“You've got to look at Epping now and you can't park anywhere – it's going to make it worse.

“I think anybody looking at the proposals will say it's too big and it will spoil the character of the town.”

Derek Ball, 63, of The Plain – a supporter of the Plainly Say No campaign – said: “It directly affects me as it's going to be built on the back of my property. It's too high

rise. The impact is going to be huge because it's a big development.”

Opponents are worried about the height of some of the buildings and that the town's services will not be able to cope with the extra influx of people.

Danny Brown, 64, from Epping, said: “They've not even applied for a doctors or school. It's terrible, we've lived here 40 years and you can't keep bringing people in. The problem is the influx of people. I feel sad for my grandchildren, what are they going to do? It will force them out. You can understand why people go to live in Spain.”

Mavis Ellis, 80, of Egg Hall, in Epping, said: “It looks like it has been built in the 1800s and somewhere everybody has to live because they're working in a factory environment, not in the middle of Epping. It's not what Epping wants. They won't sell them. There will be too much traffic.”

Tony Carr, 69, of Centre Drive, in

Epping, said: “I think the pictures look very nice and it will be an ideal development for an urban town centre where people could walk to offices, shops and stations, but it's not for Epping.

“It's going to be a difficult problem with traffic and what about school places?”

But Jan Sullivan, 57, from Ongar, said: “I think it looks very nice. It's land that can be used and we need more properties in the area.

“I think it looks really good and I'm looking forward to it. I'm in Epping all the time because this is my local town and I have three daughters and they have a chance to move to the area they know and this is perfect.

“We don't want to move out, we want to stay here. They are new and modern homes which is what young people want.”

It is not yet known when the plans will be discussed by district councillors.

THE MP'S CONCERNS...

EPPING Forest MP Eleanor Laing said she supported development on the site, but not on the scale proposed.

She has branded the proposals “inappropriate and unacceptable” and has raised objections over the “very high density” development which she claims is not in keeping with the rest of Epping, and is unsustainable in terms of the lack of infrastructure to support it.

She added: “I'm particularly concerned about the lack of foresight with regard to transport, traffic, parking provision and roads.

“I'm also concerned about the access to the development, both in terms of the effect on the traffic which already uses The Plain where considerable congestion would be likely at busy times, at least twice a day, and also because of the single access route which would be very limiting in many circumstances, for example for emergency vehicles.”



Epping Forest MP Eleanor Laing – current proposals are “inappropriate and unacceptable” (c)

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