

Observer COMMENT

A woman in fear of life's mod cons

LIFE for Lesley Moylette is like living in the 20th century.

Her sparse flat in Bishop's Stortford is devoid of all mod cons and she lives without any of the trappings of modern life the rest of us take for granted.

As a sufferer of electrosensitivity, any contact with electrical appliances common in millions of homes brings on debilitating symptoms such as migraines and chest pains.

After years of ill health she has finally found a safe haven in her daughter's flat in Windhill and for the last three months has been fighting East Herts District Council and housing association South Anglia to stay there.

Every time she steps out her front door, Lesley potentially faces more bouts of sickness. If evicted, she is genuinely frightened for her life. With society's increasing dependence on new technology, such as mobile phones and wireless laptops, life is only set to get worse for the mum-of-three.

The latest gadgets are designed to make our lives easier. It is difficult to imagine what it must be like when they have the opposite effect.

Have your say on second runway

STOP Stansted Expansion alone has more than 7,000 members and Uttlesford District Council claims 89 per cent of residents reject further runway expansion at the airport – so the weight of public opinion soon to land on the desk of the inspector who will hear next year's public inquiry will be weighty indeed.

But often it is all too easy to rely on the endeavours of others when we should be putting pen to paper or sending an email and adding our own voices to an argument.

Tomorrow (Friday) is the last chance for readers to make a formal response to BAA plans for 68m passengers a year by 2030.

Whether you are concerned about global warming, a champion of community life or indeed a local business which backs expansion, now is the time to act and send your comments to Uttlesford. Don't delay – have your say!

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Practice that makes country life stink!

READERS of the **Observer** will, like many country residents, have been made only too aware lately of the spreading of sewage waste on farmland.

NVZ (nitrate vulnerable zones) are under special controls regarding such spreading of this offensive material and, indeed, other nitrogenous products; in short, operations may not extend into October.

Looking generally at our farms, many readers will have felt some dismay at the change from a promising state of our cornfields in July to an ensuing August quagmire.

The combination of inclement harvest weather and the resultant compression of field work has made it impossible for farmers to follow the optimum practice of ploughing in sewage waste (which must be spread before the end-of-month deadline) within 24 hours. As a result, some local residents have suffered this appalling stink for days.

The subject also begs the question of whether farmland disposal of this waste, which contains heavy metals, is wise at all. In the South East, 21 per cent of land is already disqualified from sludge application because of the build-up of heavy metals – the Environment Protection Agency is under legal attack to ban the practice; in Ireland, no sludge takes this route.

As landfill sites and the ocean become exhausted, alternatives for disposal are hard to find; however, one must ask whether it is sensible to continue with farmland disposal when its efficacy is so hotly debated.

Harvey Starey,
Upwick Green, Albury.

This is social engineering

IN Sinead Holland's article "Fairfield counters its eco-town critics" (Dunmow &



GREEN AND UNPLEASANT LAND: Harvey Starey questions the practice of farmers ploughing in sewage waste

Stansted **Observer**, Sep 18), the comments that are attributed to Fairfield's spokeswoman are little more than the same old rhetoric we have heard before.

Firstly, they talk about the preferable benefits of a single location for housing development over a number of diversified sites, but that will always be a matter of conjecture when central government dump unwarranted housing allocations on a district like this. We should understand and in many ways agree with all of the arguments about the benefits of scale from a single location providing funding for numerous facilities like shops and health centres, but if we are genuinely concerned about the provision of affordable homes for people from Uttlesford then building them all in one location, cut off from the outside world, is the last thing that will achieve that.

Indeed, the social engineering of which this brave new eco-world relies is, frankly, a step too far.

The spokeswoman goes on to assure us that there are no links with the expansion of Stansted Airport but then says:

"Fairfield's transport consultants have met with BAA representatives to identify ways in which new transport measures can be linked to benefit the new market town and existing communities."

What on earth has this got to do

with BAA? It runs airports and is not a highways authority. Indeed, BAA is not even prepared to fund any infrastructure improvements outside the confines of the airport which emanate from its own expansion proposals, so what Fairfield thinks it will get from BAA is a mystery.

The difficulty for Fairfield is that Essex County Council is the relevant highways authority and we have roundly condemned its proposals, so we must assume that Fairfield has approached BAA because it has a similar motive – the desecration of this area.

My understanding of the term "sustainable" in the context that the spokeswoman uses it is that new facilities can be built which have no perceptible impact on the environment. Nothing that comes from the Labour Government's housing plans, BAA or Fairfield can be said to achieve that and, as an Essex County Council executive decision regarding the eco-town noted recently, "the Elsenham proposal is not sustainable and its location prevents it from meeting the Government's own objectives".

I will continue to promote that view and fight for the withdrawal of all of these monstrous proposals.

Cllr Ray Gooding,

(Con, Stansted), Essex County Council.

Keep in touch with voters

INOTE Uttlesford Tories have set up a community web forum (office hours only) to enable voters to contact their councillors and allegedly to speed the response.

Surely it is better to keep in touch with your voters by any or all of the following: live in the community you represent, shop in your community, use your local pub etc, be seen at community events, help in community activities – in other words, be seen out and about!

In any case, all Uttlesford councillors have an email facility courtesy of council tax payers for helping to keep in touch, and this operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If your local councillor hasn't given you his or her email address then ask them.

David Gregory,

Braintree Road, Felsted.

More years of congestion?

SO, once more we have unnecessary congestion in Pines Hill, Stansted Mountfitchet, caused by the road being dug up to lay what appear to be electricity cables.

The workmen packed up before 3pm last Friday, leaving one machine blocking the road, requiring traffic lights leading to long queues of traffic in both directions, at times running back to Cambridge Road!

How long is this nonsense going on for? Not another three years, surely?

I hope the planners of this latest fiasco haven't been asked to help out in the current financial crisis! If so, we might as well all pack up and leave.

Tom Collins,

Old Bell Close,

Stansted Mountfitchet.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

**By the Rev ALLEN R MORTON, minister,
Water Lane United Reformed Church,
Bishop's Stortford, & Stansted Free Church**

ALTHOUGH only recently moved to Stortford, I decided to do my bit for the Bishop's Stortford Churches Together project, SHINE!, by picking up litter around the garden estate where I live.

In a half-hour walk round my neighbourhood I bagged a decaying football, a mouldy tennis ball, sweet wrappers, crisp packets, plastic

bottles, drinks cans, one unopened packet of cigarette and a wrecked plastic bucket!

All this I reaped on a posh estate and in a town where there is every incentive to recycle and so help save the Earth from the excesses of our throw-away society.

Followers of Jesus were told to shine as lights to the world, which word inspired Churches Together in Stortford to initiate, along with the town council and other bodies, a two-week endeavour to clean up our environment and encourage a greater sense of community.

Community, environment and citizenship are

spiritual matters as much as they are ecological and sociological: they are about the Eden of Earth story that tells us we were put here to look after the world for the Maker to whom all belongs.

I am not the only one in my neighbourhood who cares: one passer-by noticing what I was about remarked: "Oh, my husband does the other end of the estate." So I am left asking how anyone living in such a lovely, well-to-do area as this could possibly rubbish it. In our making Stortford SHINE!, the light shines on us all.