

LOCAL GEOLOGICAL SITES

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT



UfdG26 Newport Puddingstone

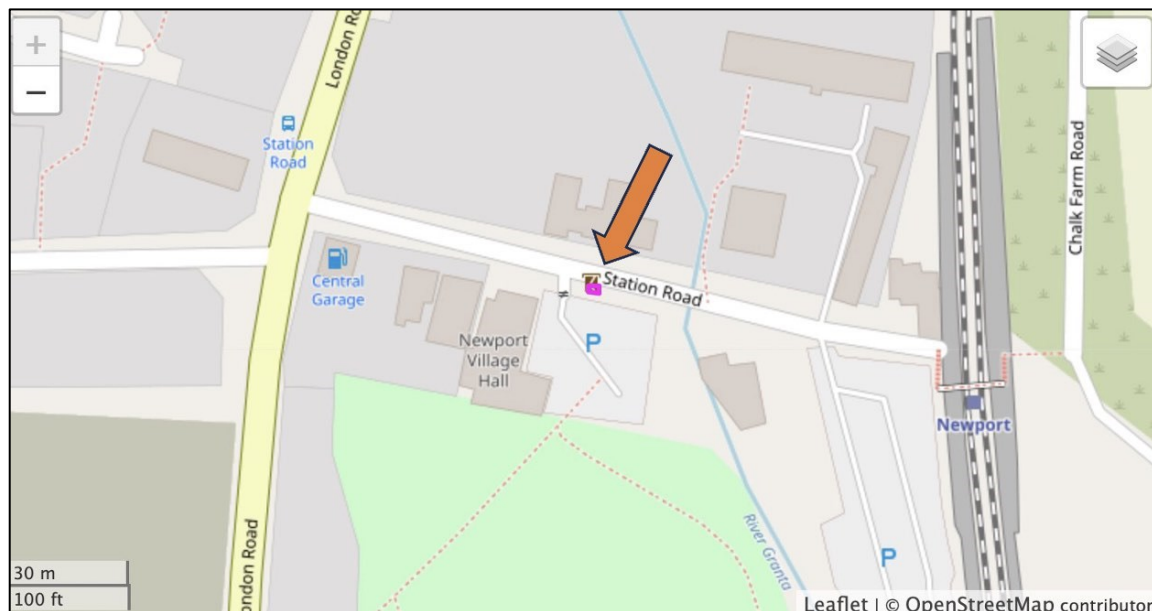
Site location: On the grass verge next to the Village Hall in Station Road.

Grid Reference: TL 5214 3358

Status: Publicly accessible

Summary of the geological interest:

A large boulder of puddingstone can be seen by the village hall in Station Road. It was brought here from the outskirts of the town in the 1950s when the village hall was built. It stood outside the village hall until 2008 when it was moved a few metres onto the grass verge.



Site Assessment. Local Geological Sites (LoGS) in Essex are assessed using criteria based on DEFRA guidance. An assessment form is used which asks key questions under four value categories: scientific, educational, historical and aesthetic. This site has been assessed and qualifies under these criteria.

Scientific interest and site importance

On the grass verge outside Newport Village Hall is a large and colourful boulder of Hertfordshire puddingstone about 1.8 x 1.15 x 0.75 metres in size.

Puddingstone was formed around 55 million years ago when the climate of Britain was hot and a layer of sand beneath the surface of the ground became cemented with quartz. The formation of silcretes (which includes sarsens and puddingstones) has been the subject of recent scientific debate. Research has compared the conditions under which sarsens and puddingstones may have been formed with the present-day climate in the Kalahari Desert and parts of Australia.

The boulders of puddingstone that are found in Essex most probably originated in Hertfordshire and were brought to Essex by the Thames when it flowed far to the north of its present course.

Isolated erratic boulders are also of historic interest as there is usually speculation about if, when and why stones were moved to their present position. This particular stone was moved to outside the Village Hall from the outskirts of the town in the 1950s when the Village Hall was built. It came from a spot just beyond what is now the M11 bridge. Some years ago, it was moved to the Common but was moved back to the Village Hall as a result of demands by local residents. In 2008 it was moved a few metres to its present position on the grass verge.



The puddingstone outside the village hall. Photo: M. Ralph

Reference:

LUCY, G. 2003. Essex erratic boulders: a gazetteer. *Essex Naturalist* (New Series) No. 20. Pages 115-134.