

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 13 February 2019 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mr Wenman, Mr Brown - away, Ms Newland - abroad

Present: Mr Sole, Mr Barnes, Mrs Slator, the Clerk and 6 members of the public.

Minutes: of the January meeting were agreed and signed.

Declarations of Interest: None received

Co-option: Mr Garth Wheeler stood for co-option and was voted unanimously onto the Council. He had already sent the required completed Members' Interest paperwork to the Clerk, who will send this in and inform SCDC that Council has a new member and is at full strength. The Chairman thanked Mr Wheeler for his interest and welcomed him to the Council.

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Implementation Group:

Housing: Mr Ralph recapped on the Community Led Plan views for developments. The results from this were that more affordable homes were needed for Croydon. The Local Plan had not been adopted in mid 2018, and this allowed a lot of building where normally there would not have been any. Building on exception sites could not be prevented because SCDC could not demonstrate that it had identified a 5 year supply of land for housing development. Hills was the first developer who expressed an interest in a small development in the village, but this interest ceased and after a break another developer, Hillsons, became involved. However, because the Local Plan had now been adopted, it is almost impossible to obtain planning permission for an exception site. It is necessary to demonstrate a need for affordable housing in the village. There must be a village connection of some sort to Croydon for any prospective tenants. Only the minimum number of market houses will be built in order to make the development viable. The Community Led Plan is not sufficient evidence to proceed with any development, and so a Housing Needs Survey by an independent body has to be undertaken. It is likely to be ACRE on behalf of South Cambs District Council. Once the report is received and the number and type of homes is discovered, all potential development sites in the village can be investigated.

Mrs Slator explained how the survey happens. ACRE arranges for a survey to be sent to every house and business in the village for completion. ACRE is able to cross-reference answers to check their veracity. Once these surveys have been analysed and a final statistical report made, a copy is sent to the Parish Council, and this will help with the decision of whether to go ahead with a development or not. Data obtained in this way lasts for 5 years. If a development does go ahead, the Parish Council's comments on the planning application will be given more weight.

Council resolved unanimously to approach Uzma Ali at SCDC with a request for a Housing Needs Survey. Cllr Williams asked to be copied in to this letter.

Communications: The IG has a Communications Group who are keen to promote a monthly secular magazine posting for the website. Mrs Pillinger has volunteered to edit any material that she receives for this.

Parish Website: George is happy to continue posting on the website, and has generously declined the small remuneration he was offered by Council for his work.

Emergency Plan Template: Deferred until March due to time constraints arising from the CamBed RailRoad presentation and also Mr Brown not being present.

High Street subsidence: Nothing further has been received on this.

Speedwatch: Information has been collected was passed to the IG to see if there is anyone interested in training to become a Speedwatch volunteer.

Parish Council responsibilities: Circulated to all Councillors for information.

Meeting Calendar: After a brief discussion, it appears that the third Wednesday is probably best for everyone, so the rotation will remain as it is, with the exception of the April meeting. This may be moved a week either way depending on whether Easter is early or late.

Correspondence:

Community Resilience Event: This is to be held at SCDC Hall in Cambourne on 9 March. Clerk expressed an interest in attending, but Mrs Slator pointed out that she has already attended various meetings that have covered the same elements.

Greater Cambridge Planning Policy: South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council will be starting preparation of a new joint Local Plan in 2019, as set out in the joint adopted Greater Cambridge Local Development Scheme. As an early stage of plan making, they want to know about potential sites or broad locations for development. The Government requires Local Planning Authorities to conduct a 'Call for Sites' exercise as a key component of the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment to inform policies in the new Local Plan for housing, employment and other uses. They are proposing to carry out a Call for Sites from 11 February for six weeks. During the consultation period a form will be provided that seeks information needed for a site to be put forward for assessment. More information will appear on the Council's website:

www.scambs.gov.uk/gclpcallforsites Deadline for submitting sites is 5pm on Monday 25 March 2019.

Contact: planningpolicy@scambs.gov.uk or 01954 713 183

Bus Services: It is proposed that all current bus services will remain as they are for a year from April, while radical reforms of the system are discussed.

Electoral register: Alteration circulated for Councillors' information.

Tidy Britain: Asking for Councils to support its initiative - passed to IG, but they are already doing this in the village.

SCDC Planning Consultations: There are several current consultations:

- North East Cambridge (Cambridge Northern Fringe) Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation
- Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement
- Greater Cambridge Local Plan – 'Call for Sites'

Consultations run from 9 am Monday 11 February to 5pm on Monday 25 March 2019.

Electronic correspondence: All circulated

South Cambs District Cllr Williams gave a verbal report:-

The IT crisis at SCDC is alarming - the Scrutiny Committee felt that they had been "managed". Cllr Williams is still investigating to try to get to the bottom of it. The Council's Chief Executive is not in the office.

Finance Director, and the Director of Housing have left and many other officers are leaving.

The recent recycling talk in Croydon was well received and the recycling wheels distributed were very informative. The budget is to be sorted out at the end of the month - a possible increase is £5-00 on Band D and possibly an increment for the Police, however, more cuts would still be required.

Taxi Licensing: Drivers are now required to have a DBS check (previously CRB check) - you (as a customer) have the right to see their licence before getting into the cab. Cabbies working here who are licensed in other areas may not have been DBS checked when their licence was issued

Cllr Williams' written report for February:-

East West Rail: The Oxford to Cambridge Rail line central section (between Bedford and Cambridge) could have a huge impact to our area. East West Rail Company have started a non-statutory public consultation that runs between 28th January and 11th March, I would like all in our area to take part, your views are extremely important. My personal view is that a southerly route would be detrimental to where we live and would have an unforgivable impact on the Wimpole Hall estate, which is of unique historic value to our area. You can have your say via the link below:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay>

Taxis: Over the last few months I've been sitting on taxi license hearings. As a customer you have every right to ask to see a taxi drivers license. If anyone has any concerns or are aware of an unlicensed taxi driver operating in the area, then please do report it to SCDC or myself. Unlicensed drivers are a public safety concern.

Highway Issues: I would just like to remind that, you can report problems on roads or pavements including potholes, kerbs, verges, flooding, hedges and trees, public rights of way, road markings, road signs and traffic signals on the Cambs county council website via the link below:

<https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

Community Chest Grants: At November's Full council meeting I seconded a motion that called for the administration to give re-consideration to the barring of some parish councils from accessing the Community Chest funding. This is because of my concerns about where the line has been drawn to define which parishes were "small" for the purposes of the policy. Only Parish meetings or parish councils with less than 160 registered electors can currently apply for Community Chest Funding, meaning many parishes in the Mordens ward no longer qualify. I also feel that Council Tax is collected on the basis of households, not electorate, and feel that the link to the number of electors is unfair as not everyone qualifies for inclusion on the electoral roll. I note as well that small community groups could apply for funding, but if the scheme is on parish council land, the parish council is expected to contribute 50% of the cost and this could discourage proactive groups from being able to apply for funding.

County Cllr Kindersley's written report to the meeting

East West Rail – Consultation NOW OPEN: East West Rail announces five routes for Bedford-Cambridge rail line - public consultation starts now! The long-awaited public announcement of the route shortlist for the Bedford-Cambridge section of East West Rail has just been made.

There are five routes and the current consultation runs from today (28th January) until 11th March. The next stage will be another consultation in 2021, on one final route. The track the line eventually is built on is likely to be within 1km of the line they show us on the map at this point. The final decision is expected to be made later that year.

East West Rail says it expects to complete the Bedford-Cambridge section of the line by the mid-2020s but this seems incredibly optimistic.

The five routes all have significant local impact on Parishes in the Gamlingay Division and beyond. Each route shows a hatched 'corridor', wider in some places than others. We do not know where in the corridors the route would go and it is entirely possible the final route may be slightly different.

Route A - Is the quickest route at 76 minutes from Oxford to Cambridge and appears to be the cheapest at £2bn. However, the corridor it cuts right through Sutton, Eyeworth, Tadlow, Shingay cum Wendy – Bassingbourn to the Liverpool St Cambridge line. It runs very close to the RSPB and would affect views from Wimpole Hall. It would involve relocating Sandy Station to the south and does not include the cost of a new Bassingbourn station.

Route B - Would take 80 minutes and cost £2.6bn. It looks like it would involve Sandy Station being relocated to the north, to the Tempsford area. Instead of Bassingbourn, this time Cambourne looks to be the next station. It passes north of Gamlingay past Waresley to Cambourne and is likely to pave the way for housing north of Sandy.

Route C - Would take 80 minutes and involves sharing the main line around Sandy with existing routes. Seems to involve a new station at Tempsford but retaining Sandy station. It would cost £2.5bn and would have a similar impact to Route A via Bassingbourn and runs very close to the RSPB and would again affect views from Wimpole Hall. Cost does not include the new Bassingbourn station.

Route D - Similar to Route C except would come out of north Bedford and would take 83 minutes and again cost £2.5bn.

Route E - Would take 82 minutes and cost £3.25bn so is the most expensive option. The interchange would be somewhere between Tempsford and St Neots and the next station at Cambourne. Seems to allow new housing north of Sandy.

Despite the curling routes C and D might well be the options that are favoured by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mayor, James Palmer, as they allow for lots of houses to be built around Tempsford and Bassingbourn. The numbers - according to EWR Co - would be 20,000 - 30,000 houses at Bassingbourn and 30,000 - 50,000 houses at any NS/EW intersection at Tempsford. At a Councillors' briefing EWRC would neither confirm nor deny these figures. For comparison Cambridge is about 47,000 houses.

Policing: Bridget and Sebastian have been working hard to address the issues raised by the local public petition about policing in Gamlingay which had an exceptional number of signatures. Sebastian helped draft the petition and Bridget has met with the Chief Superintendent to discuss it. She has also arranged for it to be presented to the District Council meeting. Superintendent Sutherland was very reassuring about the commitment of the force to increasing the numbers of warranted officers. Numbers are going up significantly and this will translate into us seeing more officers on our roads and in our villages. What they are not doing is recruiting more PCSOs. We had hoped that commissioning our own PCSO might be an option and though this may be possible it is unlikely that there will be any availability for the foreseeable future. The police are currently running a recruitment campaign which is specifically aimed at producing Neighbourhood Officers - exactly what we are calling for. They had 2500 applications for 500 places. Their training is quick and more engaging than the traditional 2 year probation system and they are turning out to be exceptional calibre officers.

Last year the police ran a couple of very successful 'crack down' days and more are planned this year. They are interested in focusing on our most vulnerable residents, both the young and the elderly. We are awaiting with interest the feedback from Jason Ablewhite the Police and Crime Commissioner whose job is to set the policing priorities and budgets.

County Council Budget: CCC met on Tuesday February 5th with one main item on the agenda – finalising the budget for 2019-20. The background is already familiar to readers, I hope, as we have been reporting on this regularly over the last few months i.e.

- * Demand for council services is increasing (more older people, more younger people with special needs of various kinds)
- * The cost of providing these services is increasing as they are mainly delivered by people rather than by technology
- * The grants to local government from central government have been decreasing over the last few years and have now dropped to £0 for Cambridgeshire.
- * The government sets a limit on the amount by which local taxation (i.e. the Council Tax), can be increased without there having to be a referendum. The pre-determined limits this year are 2% for Adult Social Services and 3% for all other services.

To maintain last year's level of expenditure on services would have required a council tax increase of 14%. So the debate was about how to make the savings e.g. by reducing/eliminating the service, or by providing a similar service more economically. Increasing income (e.g. by selling off CCC assets) and reducing administrative costs are also considered. For example, moving CCC HQ from Cambridge to being a 'hub' in Alconbury Weald and making greater use of existing council buildings as 'satellites' is in the pipeline.

The outcome of four hours of rather tetchy debate was that the ruling group's (Conservative) proposal for a tax increase of 2% + 2.99%, 4.99% in total was voted through, together with a range of service reduction measures amounting to a total of £27.354 million compared with the previous year.

To give you an overview idea of the net revenue expenditure (i.e. after grants, fees and other income is accounted for), CCC needs to find £319 million, of which the two main expenditure areas are 'People and Communities' (e.g. adults and children's social care) £254 m and Place and Economy (Highways, Environment, waste disposal, libraries, concessionary fares) £58 m.

The opposition groups (Lib Dem and Labour) put forward amendments. In summary, Labour wanted to use up more of the reserves to support Children and Young People, more health visitors, more funding for libraries, better street lighting, and a total tax increase of 3.99% rather than 4.99%. (NB Councils are required to keep a specified level of reserves). Lib Dems supported the higher tax increase of 4.99%, proposed reductions in payments to councillors, reduction in administrative costs (fewer committees), removal of wage cut for employees, better youth services, protection of services to the most vulnerable young people.

In the years 2014-2017, the Conservatives, under pressure from UKIP, did not fully utilise the council tax flexibility. Had they done so, the council tax base would have risen and this year's increase would have brought in an extra £11m. The cost to a Band D household of every 1% increase is 23p per week. The 4.99% increase will cost £1.15 per week. Over 60% of households in Cambridgeshire are in the lower bands A-C.

Central government has made some minor increases in what it allocates to local government and a new distribution formula is promised now that 'austerity is over'. CCC officers anticipate that a further £41m of savings will have to be found over the next four years.

Council Business Plans: The District and County Councils have been consulting on their business plans and inviting residents to give their views on whether they have hit on the right priorities for South Cambridgeshire and the whole County. Thank you to those people who have participated so far. For future reference consultations are always available on the councils' respective websites. The priorities for South Cambs are:

- Helping business to grow
- Being green to our core
- Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do
- Building homes that are affordable to live in

These business plans determine the budgets and you will be seeing a £5 increase in your council tax for South Cambs. The Fire Service proposes three per cent increase to the fire service's proportion of council tax for 2019/20, equating to an extra £1.98 a year for a Band D property and we await the police service's precept. It is also possible that the Mayor/Combined Authority will be expecting to raise revenue from Council Tax in the future.

We hear a lot in the national press about how school budgets are being squeezed. Schools in Cambridgeshire will receive between £18.28 and £29.19 LESS per pupil in 2019/20 than they did last year. Setting a balanced budget is going to be an enormous challenge for many schools as they face the nightmare scenario of rising costs and a falling budget. Teachers have been awarded pay increases of between 2% and 3.5%. (Inflation was 3.21% for 2017/18, so this is not unreasonable after years of below inflation pay increases.) There are also significant rises in pension costs, and inflation for heating and lighting is also running at above 3% which also put pressure on budgets. All of this means schools are trying to manage rising costs on a falling budget.

The situation in Cambridgeshire has been made worse by the County Council's decision to take a top-slice off mainstream school budgets to help with a big deficit in the budget for the "high needs block". The "high needs block" is money set aside for children with special educational needs and disabilities who need extra support. If CCC had taken the Council Tax increases permitted over the years it would have about £26 million more in the Council Tax income account. The typical household would be paying about £2 a week more in tax.

Barrington Quarry: Further to issues being raised in respect of excessive dust at the cement works, the contractors advise that this occurred when they were trying to remove the silos. They have tried a couple of different methods to try and reduce the dust generation but none worked. Given the issues they stopped the demolition of the silos and requested additional dust suppression units to assist in the matter. They have assured us that given the issues dust will be monitored closely to avoid any repeat of the issues that occurred.

The next Liaison Group meeting will take place on Thursday, February 21st commencing at 6.00 pm at the Village Hall. Further to recent discussions and correspondence, the import of material by rail will now recommence on Monday, February 4th. There will be one train a day for the time being and this is scheduled to leave Foxton at 11.51 am. The transit time is about 30 minutes in total. It is due to leave Foxton at 17.44 pm and thus is likely to depart the site between 16.00 and 16.30 dependent on weather and discharge time.

Footway Repairs - Gamlingay: Government has announced some extra highways funding and this has now been allocated – mostly to outside South Cambridgeshire. However, Cinques Road (from Waresley Road to Green Acres) and Green End (School Close to Fairfield) have been added to the list of schemes.

Safety at Gamlingay Village Primary: We have written formally to the Trust to request a meeting to discuss highway safety outside the School. Despite two chicanes, a 20mph speed limit and obviously large number of children some drivers are whizzing past at high speeds. Despite parental accompaniment and control some children are not being road aware. We need to ensure that all reasonable steps to keep children safe are taken.

Changes to the Letchworth, Royston, Ashwell & Morden Rail Timetable: The planned May 2019 timetable restores the weekday service for stations to the level before the May 2018 timetable changes. The key highlights are

The restoration of stops for both Letchworth and Royston on all the fast Cambridge Flyers from London Kings Cross in the weekday evening after 16:12. Additional stops on fast services to and from Cambridge in the morning (07:48 and 09:47 from Royston) and evening (16:54 and 17:54 from Cambridge, calling Letchworth and Royston), with the evening services also providing an early evening fast service into London for evening workers and those going to events in London.

Non-stop services from Letchworth to London Kings Cross in the morning peak, leaving Letchworth at 06:34, 07:04, 07:34, 08:04 and 10:04 (in addition to the current 06:04, 08:34 and 09:08 departures; the 09:08 is retimed to 09:16).

Maintenance of the 09:25 fast service from Royston to London Kings Cross.

For Ashwell & Morden a much improved direct semi-fast 47-minute service to/from London St Pancras throughout the day, half hourly during the morning and evening peaks and hourly throughout the daytime, until the 22:31 from London in the evening. This will provide a consistent service with seating in the peaks, rather than the small number of overcrowded fast trains at present, and connections to the Thameslink core stations.

The first train from Ashwell & Morden to London will now be an hour earlier at 05:43.

Introduction of the second hourly Thameslink service between Cambridge and Brighton in both directions throughout the day for all our stations in the week. Restoration of the fast Saturday morning service to London, from Royston at 05:54 and Letchworth at 06:04. Maintenance of the previously removed fast Saturday evening services back from London Kings Cross for Letchworth and Royston.

Finance:

Website: George Ralph has declined Council's offer of £20-00 per month for maintaining the website, saying he would rather the funds were put towards an eventual redesign of the website. Council was grateful for his consideration.

Bank Statement: Following a payment for expenses incurred on the website, the bank balance is £11575-59.

NSI: Council received interest of £84-48 on the deposit account.

Items for next agenda: Church Fabric
Defibrillator

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 10 April - Annual Meeting
Wednesday 15 May - Annual Council Meeting

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 9.05pm.

Signed

Date