

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was due to be held on Wednesday 18th March 2020 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

**Apologies:** Due to Government advice on social contact, it was decided to postpone Council meetings until further notice.

**Minutes:** of the February meeting have not been agreed as correct. They will be posted on the website as "unapproved."

### **Items that were due to be discussed, and a brief explanation of each.**

#### **Matters Arising and Village Issues**

**Implementation Group:** No report received

**Housing Needs Survey:** No update received

**Emergency Plan - corona virus contingency:** Volunteer group to be set up, in line with any Government advice. Leaflets circulated to the parish via Mailchimp and hard copies..

**Website - WCAG 2.1 AA Regulations:** These must be complied with by every website and designer.

**Speedwatch:** No date for a meeting has yet been arranged.

**Clopton site sign:** No report on this.

**Defibrillator:** Quotations have been obtained. From the information received, Councillors will have to consider the implications of having a defibrillator in the village.

**NALC guidance on financial assistance to the Church/Arrington PC enquiry:** Still to be discussed. Clerk has replied to Arrington's Parish Clerk regarding the circumstances of Council's grant for churchyard maintenance, citing the relevant regulations.

**Zero Carbon Community/Climate Emergency Survey:** Members of the IG were due to attend the Zero Carbon Community meeting, but were unable to do so due to the Government advice on the Coronavirus emergency. The meeting did take place and a Sustainable Communities group has been set up. It is called "Slack" and is not monitored by SCDC. SCDC can be contacted on [ZCC@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:ZCC@scambs.gov.uk),

**High Street repair:** CCC Highways advised that all highways problems must be reported through the Highways webpage. However, as an officer was in the vicinity he did look at the reported problem in the village, and replied as below:-

" I looked outside Portelet and there are no highway gullies at this location. There is some verge damage due to vehicles over-running the highway, but nothing that would meet CCC intervention levels." Clerk thanked the officer concerned for his time and guidance.

**Three Free Trees:** SCDC offered £60-00 vouchers to purchase trees for planting, originally, on Council land, but subsequently for any land accessible to the public. Because the voucher ran out on 31st March rapid arrangements, but working within the Government guidelines on Coronavirus, had to be made. The suggestion from the IG was for a replacement rowan for Clopton Close. Unfortunately, there were none available from the approved local supplier so it was decided to opt for two Crab Apple trees for planting in the churchyard extension as part of the Bronze award which is currently being worked towards. The fruit will be available for anyone in the community, should they want it. If not, the wildlife will clear it up.

#### **Correspondence**

**Electoral Register alterations:** None received

**SCDC debt procedure - Cllr Williams:** Awaiting information.

**Greater Cambridge Planning Policy Update:** Circulated to Councillors for their information.

**CAPALC - invoice for membership:** Invoice received asking for £167-28 for one year's membership. Croydon PC has not been a CAPALC member for some time, as the Clerk believes that her membership of the SLCC is better value for money.

**Traffic Management:** Some of the roads in the area are being surfaced using Microasphalt. This is a sealer rather than a resurface, and should keep the weather out. Nearest roads to Croydon are in Bourn and Caxton. Signage will give up to 5 days notice of works, if it is carried out.

**Traffic Management Course:** This was due to take place in April, but has been postponed due to the current situation. It is planned to be rescheduled later in the year.

**SCDC - Social Isolation:** Local approaches to tackling social isolation. A series of meetings was due to take place, but will probably be cancelled due to the current situation.

**CCC - Health and Wellbeing Consultation:** CCC is consulting on the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Cambs and Peterborough, taking the "think community" approach. If you require further information email:- [PublicHealth.AdminTeam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:PublicHealth.AdminTeam@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**Electronic correspondence:** Any subsequent correspondence has been circulated to Councillors.

Councillor Kindersley sent his report covering both February and March:-

**VE Day:** Over the three day period the events - the first of which on Friday May 8 has been declared a special public holiday - will include the playing of specially written musical tributes to highlight the Nation's Toast to the Heroes of WW2. There will also be a Cry for Peace around the World and all Churches and Cathedrals are being asked to take part in sessions of Ringing out for Peace. Street parties and parties in pubs, clubs, Hotels, on town and village greens and in halls etc will be the plans for the Saturday and services of commemoration and celebration in churches, including the reading of the Tribute to the Millions and the playing of the Last Post on the Sunday.

**New Electric Buses:** Stagecoach have purchased 2 electric buses to run in Cambridge using £400,000 of funding from the Greater Cambridge Partnership which South Cambs and the County Council are partners in. They can travel 160 miles on one charge and will be running the Citi 6 route. We are anticipating that this will be the beginning of a much larger electric fleet serving South Cambridgeshire in the near future.

**Complaints and Compliments to South Cambs:** We have now launched our Open Process portal, which allows customers to create an account where complaints can be raised and tracked throughout the investigation, until resolution. There is the facility for supporting documents to be uploaded and messages can be sent between investigators and customers, which will help to speed up the process. All complaints need to be made through: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/feedback/compliments-complaints-and-suggestions/> (selecting the option for the "Online Complaints Form").

**Annual Survey of Councils:** Interesting to see some of the key findings from all UK Councils. Nearly all councils (97%) plan to increase council tax in 2020/21, with most (93%) planning to raise it by more than 1.5% and nearly all councils (97%) plan to increase fees and charges. 12% say they are in danger of being unable to fulfil statutory duties this year with Children's Services & Education the top immediate pressure, while Adult Social Care remains the top long term pressure.

qThere was near universal disappointment in the Government's progress delivering a sustainable funding system for local government (97%) and a long term social care strategy (98%).

**South Cambs - more greenery...**

Proposals have been put forward to make the Council offices less dependent on fossil fuels, including installing a solar car port which will generate more than 20% of the electricity for the entire building and installing a ground source heat pump to reduce the amount of gas used on site by at least 80%

**Zero Carbon Grants:** We are delighted that Gamlingay is to be one of the 19 communities to benefit from some of the £120,959 South Cambs has awarded as part of its Zero Carbon Grants Scheme. Gamlingay Eco Community Group will offer plastic free alternatives via a monthly pop up shop (£2,129). Very well done to them. The Zero Carbon Communities grant was established in May 2019 to drive the Council's ambition for the district to become net zero carbon before 2050. Also locally the Orwell Benefice's Living Food Bank will establish plots to grow vegetables and introduce opportunities for food production in people's own homes (£4,150).

**Local Plan Consultation:** Brilliant that the Local Plan road show came to Gamlingay and that so many of you took the trouble to talk to the planning policy officers about what is important to you living in S Cambs. This is being described as the most important document you have never heard about but it will determine where future jobs and housing is to go for decades to come, what infrastructure we will be needing, where new open and green spaces will be located and how we will be managing the challenges of climate change, air pollution inequality and growth. The reality is that Cambridge and S Cambridgeshire are going to be the focus for significant growth in coming years in terms of jobs and housing. The fact that we are actually more successful than just about anywhere else in the country means that we should attract further investment so that our success can be capitalised on. The big decisions are around where that growth is focused - around Cambridge City (which is green belt), around existing communities such as Cambourne, Northstowe and larger villages, or in new communities? It is all up for discussion and your views really matter.

**South Cambridgeshire District Council Budget:** £5 million has been pledged in South Cambridgeshire to tackle the global climate emergency. The money will go towards improvements linked to the District Council's 'green to the core' priorities. This includes improving the Council's offices to cut carbon emissions and energy bills, providing communities with grants for projects that cut carbon emissions in their areas, making Council houses more energy efficient and helping people cut the amount of food they waste.

In 2018 the Council declared a climate emergency and pledged to reach net zero carbon by 2050. To help move toward that goal the Council plans to invest in 2020-21 a further £100,000 on Zero Carbon Community grants for community initiatives to cut carbon emissions and tackle climate change, £1.9 million 'greening' of its offices to cut energy bills and show others how they could go green and a further £1.3 million on improving energy efficiency of Council homes. In addition £1.3m will replace 1,800 District Council owned streetlights with LEDs to reduce energy consumption by 60% and £400,000 on an electric bin lorry to see whether it is viable to shift from a diesel to an all-electric fleet.

In 2020-21 the Council expects to generate over £3.5 million from investments which will be spent on local services and help offset cuts to their funding by central Government. The Council's budget also proposes investing an extra £200,000 in expanding the mobile warden scheme in the district. Local Mobile Warden groups support older people to live independently by carrying out practical tasks such as making light meals, shopping, making appointments, filling in forms and collecting prescriptions.

A further £200,000 is also planned to be invested in increasing support for local businesses so that villages remain vibrant and new jobs are created close to where people live.

**Extraordinary times at the Combined Authority:** At the end of February the Mayor announced that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority would take control of public transport improvements in the area. A decision on the final route for the Cambourne to Cambridge Guided Busway Scheme was due to be made at the GCP's Executive Board on 19 Feb but the papers were pulled after the Mayor's announcement, in which he said that the plans didn't fit with his plans for the Cambridge Autonomous Metro. This despite the fact that the GCP has been working alongside the Mayor's office, which had not raised any concerns about the GCP proposals. The proposals included delivering phase one of the CAM including connections to Cambourne, Waterbeach, Granta Park and towards Newmarket. So the Mayor's announcement is completely at odds with recent Combined Authority decisions.

The Combined Authority plans a meeting on 6 March to consider proposals which would include an interim solution for the Cambourne to Cambridge route that would not involve "flooding the city with buses".

**East West Rail:** East West Rail Co has now advised of the preferred route via St Neots/Tempsford to Cambourne and thence to a new station at Cambridge South. CamBedRailRoad continues to campaign for it's own routing for three main reasons. Firstly the new railway line does not follow the proposed dualling of the A428. This is a missed opportunity to save money and disruption to the community. Secondly, the Cambourne station is proposed south of the town and not on the A428 where it would be most sensibly located as the new developments at Cambourne, Bourn Airfield and north of the A428 (probably) come forward. Lastly the line then drives through a series of villages to join the mainline somewhere near Gt Shelford.

Those Parishes need to be aware that the trainline proposed is not in any way similar to the Varsity line of old. It will run high speed trains carrying both passengers and freight. It will be segregated from the surrounding area by significant security fencing. It will sever nearly all bridleways and footpaths it crosses as well as local roads. Network Rail has a policy that the UK will never again build a level crossing. Roads will be bridged or tunneled with the consequent cost, visual intrusion and disturbance. As a high speed line it will not be able to weave in and out to avoid important buildings, woods or places of interest.

The East West Rail website has a number of useful maps and documents on it.

**County Council Meeting - Budget 2020/21 to 2024/25:** Cambridgeshire County Council approved a budget including a £4 million deficit while increasing Council Tax by 1.59% instead of by the permitted 1.99%. At the beginning of this financial year the potential gap was £21 million, so over the year the Council has had to make savings of £17 million to reduce the potential shortfall. Whilst some efficiencies have undoubtedly been justified, they have made dramatic cuts to Adult services (-£5.8m), to Highways and to Children's Services (-£6.3m). You will all be aware that our Local Highways Officer has been

unable to commission work for lack of funds. Many Councillors report waiting years for simple maintenance jobs to be completed.

At a liaison meeting on 20 February with the Clinical Care Commissioning Group and Healthwatch, County colleagues heard some stern words of warning about the impact of the new Adult Social Care charges. Council finance remains in critical state, as seen for example in new controversial and complex charges to vulnerable people receiving Adult Social Care that will save the council £3.4 million over the next two years.

This pattern over recent years (2016-2019) of not raising council tax by small permissible increments, including a sustained period of total council tax freeze, has cost the council £34 million that should have been deployed to prevent this tide of disappearing public services. The difference between 1.59% and 1.99% for a Band D home is 11p/week/household which could have added £1.17m to the Council budget this year and £6.39 million over the forward plan period.

**Gamlingay First School:** Gamlingay PC hosted a Think Communities meeting at which a number of agencies met and agreed various points in relation to the First School site. Essentially, Cambridgeshire County Council agreed to grant Gamlingay Parish Council a 9 month Lease of the Playing Fields. The Lease will be at a Peppercorn rent and the Parish Council will take on full responsibility for the maintenance, management, insurance of the Playing Fields. The Lease will allow the Parish Council to share use of the Playing Fields, by way of an agreed Licence - for a maximum of the Term granted by the Lease, less one day.

CCC will allow the PC to plant replacement Cherry Trees to the south of the Playing Field Site. 6 trees will be planted in agreed locations – 3 donated by the South Cambs Tree planting scheme and 3 by local groups. This fulfills the commitment made by CCC when the original trees were removed owing to disease.

CCC will work with the CAM Academy Trust regarding the Former First School Buildings. It is understood that our Education Team have requested a decision by the end of March, as to whether the Former First School Site is suitable and useful for their needs. If CAT do not require the First School Site, CCC will submit an application to the Department of Education to declare the whole site surplus. If the D of E declare the Site surplus, CCC will be free to look at options for Disposal or redevelopment of the whole site.

CCC have agreed to safeguard the Playing Fields for Community Use going forward and as part of this there will be the potential for a longer Term Lease/disposal of the Playing Fields to GPC going forward. All options for the whole site to be considered will seek to safeguard the playing fields. CCC committed to work with the Parish Council with regards the wording of the Policies within the Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan.

The future of the site is very complicated – bound up by hideous amounts of red tape and legislation. We are very grateful to all those who attended the meeting and we feel more confident that we now have a roadmap for the future of the site that will be in keeping with the wishes of the Gamlingay community.

**Land South of West Rd:** The planning application for the Land South of West Rd has been held up as some issues of ecology are resolved. We will keep you posted.

**Green End Planning Application:** We are expecting the final decision on the 90 new homes at Green End to be decided probably at planning committee in April. We have made representation about the amount of renewable energy in the scheme and about the height of some of the buildings - which we now believe have been lowered to 2.5 floors from 3 floors. This is a public meeting and you are welcome to come and see how the decision is made and even submit a question (or more)!

End of Councillor Kindersley's report

### **Planning:**

**SCDC planning updates:** There has been a change to the SCDC constitution with a view to removing a legal ambiguity. This has been challenged in respect of whether it is lawful to make a change at Planning Committee, rather than at a Full Council meeting. A final decision on this is scheduled to be made at the Full Council meeting on 2 April, should it take place.

### **Finance:**

**Bank statement:** None received.

**Car Show facilities funding:** The Car Show is unlikely to be taking place this year, so as yet no funding for facilities is required.

**NSI:** Notification received that the interest on this account will be reduced from 0.80% to 0.60% from May 2020.

**Next scheduled meeting:-**

Annual Meeting on Wednesday 22 April 2020 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm

It is very unlikely that this meeting will take place. Clerk has requested annual reports from the usual participants, which can be collated and put onto the website.

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