

## **The Annual Parish Meeting was due to be held on Wednesday 22nd April 2020 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

Because of the Coronavirus situation, this meeting will not take place, but these reports will be available on the Croydon village website.

### **Police Report:**

I have searched through crimes from April 2019 to April 2020 and I'm pleased to report that Croydon seems to be a very low crime village. There have been a total of three crimes reported to us.

There have been a high number of road traffic collisions - eight in total between May and January - all on Lower Road. I would suggest contacting the County Council to see if there is any improvement that can be made. I will link in with them but the Parish Council will need to make contact as well.

35/4421/20 17<sup>TH</sup> January business burglary Lower Road  
35/22267/20 19<sup>th</sup> March business burglary attempt  
35/61419/19 27<sup>th</sup> August shed break Lower Road.

We are currently carrying out patrols to enforce the new rules to help stop the spread of Covid 19 and we have an online reporting service to help reduce calls to emergency lines.

This is via <https://bit.ly/2V8qPol>

You can also find us on Facebook Policing South Cambridgeshire and get weekly updates on crimes, prevention and events on [www.ecops.org.uk](http://www.ecops.org.uk)

PCSO for Croydon

### **County Council report from Cllr Kindersley:**

The Gamlingay Division is comprised of the Parishes of Abington Pigotts, Arrington, Barrington, Croydon, Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Hatley, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Steeple Morden, Tadlow & Wimpole.

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley on 01767 651982 or [skindersley@hotmail.com](mailto:skindersley@hotmail.com) or write to the Manor Barn, East Hatley, SG19 3JA

District Councillor Bridget Smith (Gamlingay Ward, SCDC) is on 01767 650510 or [bridget@glockling.com](mailto:bridget@glockling.com) – twitter and District Councillor Aidan van de Weyer (Barrington, Orwell, the Eversdens & Wimpole SCDC Ward) can be called on 01223 870 869 or email him [aidan@mishmush.com](mailto:aidan@mishmush.com) You can also follow your councillors on Twitter: @Cllrbridget, @SebKindersley @aidanvdew

Because of the ongoing Pandemic we have decided to focus our Annual Report on what is happening now – rather than pre-Covid! – with the exception of the Budget positions of both Councils. The world is going to be a very different place indeed once lockdown starts to be relaxed and we will have many more issues to face than the usual round of potholes and missed bin collections!

**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.

**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.

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.

**Impact of Covid-19 on Councils:** Both County and District Councils have been very severely impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. Aside from the human cost – which is horrific and substantial with a third of SCDC dustbin operatives either ill or self-isolating as an example – the financial impact is again, horrific. Although the government has announced a further £1.6 billion investment to help Councils it is clear that the return on investments made by Councils will be very reduced and the call on Council services will be very much increased.

This pandemic has led to significant unforeseen demands and costs – to protect the vulnerable such as older, disabled and homeless people - and in order to continue to keep normal services running, such as bin collections. This is at the same time as councils have seen a large and immediate hit to their income. Many councils use income from fees and charges to fund a range of services, such as leisure, parking and planning services, many of these services are scaled back or closed so income has dried up yet most costs including payment of staff continue to be incurred.

This extra £1.6 billion takes the total given to councils to help their communities through this crisis to over £3.2 billion, an unprecedented level of additional financial support in recent times.

**Help for the Shielded List:** The County Hub has sent the NHS Shielded list to the District Councils and in South Cambridgeshire this is managed by a local data controller in the district's 10 patches. Many residents don't want further assistance especially the food parcels. The data controllers are mainly councillors but there are other trusted volunteers involved.

So far three lists have been distributed to local groups: those over 70 years taken from the electoral register, vulnerable SCDC housing tenants compiled by the Housing Team and the NHS Shielded List. There's a lot of duplication and the data controllers have been cleaning them up as well as dividing up for the local volunteers on a need to know basis.

Patch officers are also working with district members and the local groups to identify others not on these lists to ensure comprehensive knowledge of who needs help in each of the wards and that they are being covered by the local volunteers. The Council also has contact details for those who have volunteered to the Hub so that they can be used to plug gaps local to where they live. Patch officers are giving advice and calling on assistance from within the council and other services such as CCC social services.

**Impact on Business:** At the time of writing South Cambs DC has paid out almost 70% of its allocation of the government grants to businesses. All eligible businesses have been mailed or emailed about 300 have not responded or applied. If you think you might be eligible for a grant please visit the website [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) to check your eligibility and to register. We are aware that there are many small businesses who have fallen through the net and are not getting any financial support. Do please email your MP, Anthony Browne, about this.

Please also let South Cambs know who you are by emailing [greatercambridge.business@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:greatercambridge.business@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). You'll be added to an email list for the one stop shop newsletter which is being updated every few days. There is also a lot of information about borrowing money for businesses on the Gov.UK website. It appears the easiest option is to go through the British Business Bank (from HMG) with the simplest system and a 6% fixed interest rate.

South Cambs will soon be fully mobilised to help in small business recovery and to make sure that when we get to the end of the crisis we still have jobs and businesses in our villages. If you need any advice please do not hesitate to contact the council directly or Bridget on [cllr.bridgetsmith@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.bridgetsmith@scambs.gov.uk)

**Urgent appeal for foster carers across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough:** The number of people enquiring about becoming foster carers has dipped, with the immediate need being for teenagers, children with additional needs and sibling groups.

People who believe they can make a positive difference to a child's life are encouraged to contact the council today. All carers receive training, 24 hour access to support, along with allowances. As a foster carer you need to have the time, patience and determination to support and help vulnerable children and young people who are living away from their families. You will need to be over 21 and have a spare bedroom in your home. Visit: [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering). email [fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or call 0800 052 0078

**Testing:** The national testing programme has now expanded capacity to test other frontline workers who are having to self-isolate due to having coronavirus-like symptoms or because a member of their household has symptoms. The full list of eligible employers now includes:

All NHS and social care staff – including hospital, community and primary care, and relevant staff providing ancillary support to frontline NHS services (e.g. accommodation catering) and voluntary workers, Police, fire and rescue services and Local authority staff – including core and essential workers such as those working with vulnerable children and adults, victims of domestic violence, the homeless and rough sleepers, and those staff essential to the continuity of business.

The new testing facilities have been established at several locations including Papworth Hospital (Addenbrookes site), Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Peterborough City Hospital and at Stansted.

As the test needs to be completed on days 3-5 of having symptoms it is essential that staff refer quickly for a test so that it can be completed within this timeframe -

organisations either have or are setting up their own internal process for them to do this. In addition, swab testing is taking place for staff and residents in care homes.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

the NHS and save lives. We'll all be experiencing highs and lows and it's perfectly normal to miss loved ones, get frustrated, feel anxious or stressed. There are things we can all do to look after our mental wellbeing at this time. Every Mind Matters can help get you started with your NHS online plan, showing you simple steps to help deal with stress, boost your mood and feel on top of things. The NHS Every Mind Matters website provides simple tips and advice for you to look after your mental wellbeing during this time – visit [www.everymindmatters.co.uk](http://www.everymindmatters.co.uk) to get your free online personal Mind Plan.

**Are you ill?** There is real concern building that people are not coming forward early enough with symptoms of other serious illnesses - heart attacks, strokes, cancer symptoms - as they are concerned that there is not enough capacity in the system due to COVID-19. This is not the case and people are being urged to come forward with these symptoms early, as usual.

**People in Danger:** We are aware that as a result of the lockdown situation a number of children, young people and adults are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. We would like to remind everyone that during the Covid-19 crisis concerns that a child or young person is being abused or neglected, a referral should be made to Cambridgeshire Children - 0345 045 5203.

**Highways:** Highways teams are key workers - Crews across Cambridgeshire continue to carry out safety critical work and essential highways maintenance, any on-going work is being carried out in accordance with government health and safety measures, with workforces practising social distancing.

Highways teams are aware of concerns from members of the public around continuing work at this time and are keen to stress that any work will only be carried out where it is safe to do so.

**Bonfires and BBQs:** With the sun expected to continue to shine, lighting a bonfire in the garden or having a BBQ is ever more tempting. However, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service are urging you to think before lighting a fire and consider the impact it might have. The message is simple around bonfires - don't have any bonfires!

It is possible to have a safe BBQ, but please follow some simple tips: placing it on level ground away from fences, sheds, trees and other garden furniture, wait until it is fully out and cooled down before disposing of it and where possible, keep a bucket of water, sand, or a garden hose nearby for emergencies. So far since the government advice to stay at home, crews have attended more than 50 outdoor fires.

It could also aggravate health conditions for neighbours, particularly if they are isolating due to COVID-19 symptoms.

**The Cambridgeshire Coronavirus Community Fund :** This is offering grants to help Parish, Town, District, City and County Councils, along with local charities and groups to deal with issues affecting older and vulnerable people in our community as a result of the continuing threat of COVID-19. Grants between £1,000 and £5,000 are available for projects that aim to tackle the impact of financial hardship, potential for hunger, lack of shelter, health issues, loneliness, isolation, etc.

<https://www.cambscf.org.uk/cambridgeshire-coronavirus-community-fund.html>

**Drugs:** There have been two successful drugs raids in the Gamlingay division very recently. Acting on information from the public, the force's South Cambs Neighbourhood Team and Rural Crime Action Team raided a house in Waresley Road, Gamlingay - finding a small

amount of cannabis, cocaine, debt sheets and a large quantity of cash. Two men, who are in their 20s, were found inside the house and are assisting with enquiries. This was a direct result of information received from the public.

Police also uncovered a cannabis factory in Arrington worth more than an estimated £850,000 - again acting on intelligence received from members of the public. The property in Ermine Way yielded more than 1,000 cannabis plants across seven outbuildings at various stages of growth, three suspected stolen vehicles and two men aged 32 and 37 detained and arrested on suspicion of cultivation of cannabis and immigration offences. A third man, aged 55, was arrested on suspicion of cultivation of cannabis and handling stolen goods. They all remain in custody.

Information about illegal drug activity can be reported via [www.cambs.police.uk/report](http://www.cambs.police.uk/report) or by calling 101.

**New Road Gamlingay:** A reminder that this will be closed between 8 June and 19 June 2020 for bridge works (at time of writing!)

**Parking at Church Lane Arrington:** We know this has been an issue for Croydon residents with the road sometimes impassable due to poor parking by visitors. Arrington PC has obtained funds to research and install some kind of parking discouragement scheme but in the meantime is buying some cones for residents to put out.

Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!

#### **District Council report from Cllr Williams:- Parish AGM Report 2020 The Mordens Ward**

I would like to start my report with the most recent of events. The way our communities have responded to the Covid-19 Pandemic has been outstanding. Everyone has their part to play and I am prouder than ever to be a representative of your communities at this time and my thanks to all parish councils, volunteers and everyone involved in supporting their fellow residents at this time. I would just like to reassure all that, despite the current circumstances, I am still representing you at South Cambs District Council and will continue to do so either remotely or in person when restrictions are lifted, I have no opening hours if you or any resident are in need at any time please do get in touch via the details at the end of this report, chances are that if I can't help you personally I will be able to help you get to a person who can, its what I stood for election to do, to do my best to support residents and that will never change whatever the circumstances we find ourselves in.

**Financial Position of the SCDC:** The year ending March 2018 accounts are yet to be signed off (these accounts were due to be signed off back in the autumn of 2018). This does mean that we know the March 2019 are already late and the March 2020 accounts will most likely be late also. Though there are no financial penalties for Local Government bodies filing late accounts there are extra external auditor costs expected. It is of deep concern for myself and many others that these matters are still unresolved.

At the February 2020 full council meeting the budget for the 2020-21 year was set. At the 2019-20 budget I raised concerns as to the £3 million spending gap, I was uncertain as to whether it was possible to close such a substantial figure. My concerns have not been alleviated as in the 2020-21 budget there is now a spending gap of £5 million. An area of particular concern, worsened by recent events, is that the council is heavily dependent on business growth to fund this gap. Being so reliant on a third party given that economic markets and businesses are out of the councils control it feels to me that this is a high risk strategy.

There were many things that I welcome in the budget, so as the funds to support mobile warden schemes and the £5 million set aside to make environmental improvements. I am not convinced however that now is the right time for the 17.5% reduction in planning services.

The council continues to increase its investment portfolio, within the year the £100 million investment strategy was revised to be increased to £340 million. I am in no way opposed to the council seeking alternative forms of income, investments in Ermine Street Housing (a residential property rentals company owned by SCDC) have proven to be steady investments that have made good returns of over £2 million pounds in recent times. However, this acceleration into commercial property investment among other things at the rate that is proposed is of too high risk in my view when it is taxpayers' money that is funding it. There have also been serious reservations been raised on the theory by government and CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy) with restrictions being investigated.

When balancing all these factors, both for and against, I felt that I could not support this budget nor the capital programme to invest £340 million in the next 5 years.

**Fly-Tipping:** There has recently been an increase in fly-tipping through the district recently with some of the fly-tipping being witnessed by our Environment Enforcement Officers is being described as 'industrial-scale'. This is a blight for all residents and there are concerns in the current climate that we will see yet another rise, but residents can check via the link below that those who are collecting their rubbish are properly licensed.

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>

**The Environment:** I'm pleased to say that SCDC have declared a climate emergency with near unanimous support, I have been proud to support our communities and the council in many of the environmental improvement initiatives that are coming through. The Zero-Carbon grants were launched this year and many parishes has benefitted from the three free trees planting promotion. I am completely committed both personally and as your councillor in tackling climate change. I have raised concerns previously as to how the money is being spent such as the purchase of an electric bin lorry. I hope this will be a beneficial purchase for the council but at this time I have reservations as this will be one of the first in the UK with previous trialling having been done in more urban areas such as Islington borough in London. My concern is that this is unproven technology and given the rural nature of South Cambs I am sceptical as to if this is the most appropriate option along with spending a further £1.8 million on improving the council building itself I would prefer that this money was spent more towards helping residents to make a cultural and habitual shift in relation to climate change which I believe would have a larger impact on helping to lower emissions in the district than an 'exemplar' building.

**Planning Department:** There has been much change in the way planning works at SCDC. The shared service of the Greater Cambridge Planning Service between South Cambs and Cambridge city is now established. During the year an external company has been brought in to deal with planning procedures normally completed by officers at SCDC. We have been told that this is a temporary measure to relieve pressure within the department, an issue many have been raising for some time. Concerns have been raised in relation to this decision mainly due to the lack of information councillors have been given. At September's full council meeting there were motions calling for more transparency in the planning process including a clear audit trail of those contributing comments towards applications, being clear when an external company has been involved in an application, but these were voted down.

SCDC has been challenged at the High Court in relation to several applications and had the legality of its scheme of delegation challenged leading to constitutional changes being required. The scheme of delegation is the way in which it is decided which planning applications that parish councils and local district councillors "call-in" go to committee. It was proposed at a planning committee meeting that the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development make the decision of which applications were to come to committee. This was not welcomed by many residents, nor myself, as this leads to an impression of officers "marking their own homework". Accordingly, I voted against but this was passed 5 votes to 4 with 1 abstention. Subsequently this process was challenged as a constitutional change is believed to be only possible if agreed by full council, therefore the matter of the scheme of delegation is yet to be resolved and any applications where a request for call in has been made are currently unable to be determined by officers.

**Councillor Allowances:** At September's Full Council meeting, Council debated the issue of the amount councillors will receive in allowances, which apply from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 in relation

to Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances to increase from 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The Basic allowance has increased by 2% (£98) as is the percentage increase that officers will receive. This I believed to be an acceptable proposal, however the arrangements in respect of Special Responsibility allowances (SRA) were not. There is an introduction of 9 new SRAs some of which are 4 figure sums and one being over £5,000. Other SRAs have been increased over 100% and members are able to receive not one SRA as has previously been the case but can now receive two SRAs. This means that as the Combined Authority executive board member is the council's Leader the amount received by the Leader of SCDC is now over £20,000 in comparison to the basic allowance of £5,010 and an increase of over 35%. One of the arguments for the increase was to make the role of being a councillor more assessable, if the substantial increase was to the basic allowance, I would have understood this logic but to increase the SRAs, in my opinion, means this logic is lost. With all of this in mind, I voted against this proposal.

**As your district councillor** I am on the following committees:-

Audit & Corporate Governance Committee  
Civic Affairs Committee  
Climate & Environment Advisory Group (Substitute)  
Council  
Employment & Staffing Committee  
Grants Advisory Committee (Substitute)  
Licensing Committee (Substitute)  
Planning Committee  
Scrutiny and Overview Committee (Substitute)

I also have responsibilities as the Major Opposition Group Leader, I sit on the Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly and I am a substitute on the Combined Authority's scrutiny and overview committee.

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## **Petersfield Annual Report - March 2020**

**Pupil Report** - Responses from pupils from Reception to Year 6 to the Chair of Governors

Under very unusual circumstances, I asked pupils to give their views about life at Petersfield School and from their homes they told me the following:-

### **What makes Petersfield School Special?**

- Seeing my friends. I like how the teachers are all quite nice. I like doing fun activities and maths and that is special at Petersfield. I like researching bugs in fields.
- School is special because we see our teachers. I miss them.  
School is special because we see our friends. I have lots of friends. The whole school is my friend.  
School is special because the learning is so much.
- Lots of kind people.

- Petersfield is special as they welcome new and different people. People are really nice.
- My teacher makes it special.
- The teachers help us with our work. The Head teachers are nice to us.
- What makes school special is that the church we're supporting isn't too far away.

#### **What would make school even better?**

- A bit more fun activities like doing something with light - we could use gadgets.
- Coding club and Scratch being open to younger children.
- Cool equipment for outside like a bigger climbing frame or like a climbing wall.
- School would be better if all classes had a school pet.
- Children being even kinder
- Just playing games and not doing any work!
- I don't know what would make it better.
- Nothing.

Some of the responses are clearly very heartfelt and some raise some interesting points for school to further consider. Speaking on behalf of all governors, I would like to say how proud we all are of our children and our staff at Petersfield School. If you have not read the latest Ofsted Report (February 2020) then please do. The report is a very accurate reflection of our great school and can be accessed through the school website.

#### **Headteachers report -**

As you will be aware, at the time of writing schools are closed to all but a few vulnerable and keyworkers children in line with the national response to covid-19. This situation is unprecedented and has obviously put on hold many events, celebrations and activities that form part of the school year. Our thanks go to the pupils, parents, governors and community who have worked so closely with our amazing staff team as we continue to manage this situation.

Just prior to the closure, we were extremely pleased to be able to publish our latest Ofsted Report which is now available on the school website [www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk). We have now been graded **GOOD** in all areas.

The Ofsted inspector asked us to thank the school community, and especially the pupils, and we are delighted to do so as we are so, so proud of the Petersfield team and all we have achieved together.

This report is down to the hard work and commitment to continuing rapid improvement shown by the school community over the past few years - including pupils, parents, FOPs, volunteers, Cambridge County Council staff, the church community, staff and governors.

The report clearly identifies that relationships throughout the school are very strong and 'staff care deeply and are vigilant about all aspects of pupils' safety'.

Our staff have worked tirelessly to make the school the great place to be that it is and we could not have received this outcome without their amazing effort.

We are also very pleased that Leadership and Management was identified as a particular strength. The Inspector commented that leaders dramatically improve the quality of education, with strong and clear educational justification for all actions taken.

The dialogue with Ofsted also shows that we are very clear about the next steps to make every pupils' education even better. We relish this prospect.

Our KS1 children wrote a newspaper report about Ofsted in English. They reported:

- “Ofsted asked the children questions. They also went out at lunch.”
- “They went around the school and checked behaviour, work and how the teachers explained the work.”
- “They looked in the books to see if we were learning. They said ‘good’ to the teaching and the behaviour”
- “They inspected all the classes and how tidy it was”
- “We got good from Ofsted and are very proud plus we are determined to get great”
- “If you want to find out more, go to [www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk) to find out more”.

The donations of time, expertise, resources and money make an enormous difference, thank you!

As soon as school is reopened, if you have any spare time, we are always looking for volunteers to support the children’s learning e.g. listening to readers, helping in the library, supporting the wider curriculum etc. We are also still looking for governor volunteers to support the continued development of the school. Both of these ways of supporting your local school bring huge rewards to both the school and yourself. If you feel you may have the relevant skills and the time to do this work or if you have any suggestions as to how we can access funding sources, please do contact the school office, in the first instance: [office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk).

Once school reopens for all, please do look at the ‘[Latest News](#)’ on the homepage of our school website [www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk) to find out more! If you wish to contact us or find out more, please do not hesitate to do so by coming into school once we reopen, calling 01223 207382 or emailing [office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk). We look forward to welcoming you. Best wishes for your health and well-being at this time.

Chair of Governors and Co-Headteachers

### **Croydon Reading Room report**

The Reading Room became fully registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission ( Number 1185668) in Oct of last year. This has really helped applying for Grants etc. The website has made a good job of raising the profile of the Reading Room with better follow up on bookings and accounting. Our neighbours, have kindly cut the grass for free this year and have offered to continue indefinitely. Bookings and regular meetings such as Tai Ji Classes on Thursdays, and Tuesday Group Meetings have continued until very recently. Wear and tear is an ongoing feature requiring constant maintenance and help. We are still planning to raise funds to build a store room attached to the building, a bigger food hatch and French doors out through the chimney, and to create a patio area suitable for a few small outside activities. A parishioner kindly drew up the plans two years ago, and the Church is interested in the shed for storage. We are very grateful for the Parish Councils support in this matter It really helps! We still hope to tidy up the pond, which could be such a lovely area in time. We will need the support of a local farmer and The Fresh Waterways Trust, fingers crossed. We hope 2019/20 will be a productive year in the long run. Covid-19 has effectively closed the Reading Room for now, but I am busy applying for Grants and support for when this Emergency Situation settles. My thanks to all the Trustees, and the continuing interest of the Parish Council, whose support is always welcome. We welcome interested villagers to come to our AGM in the Summer and welcome all feed back & ideas. We wish all of you good health & safe passage during his difficult period.

Diana Walters  
Chair of the Trustees

## **Implementation Group report to the (Virtual) Parish Council AGM - 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020**

Thank you for the invitation to report to this non-meeting and we hope that the arrangements made for these extraordinary times succeed in providing good public access.

The full Implementation Group (IG) has met only twice in the past year, the last time being in September. Smaller team meetings have also taken place focused on particular activities. Thanks to Sue Slator for continuing to be the main link member between the Parish Council and the IG.

In general terms, this has been a year of reduced IG activity and some reasons for this are reported below, but first we must record grateful thanks to Jonathan Firth who mid-year stood down as Co-Chair having served in this role since the formation of the IG more than three years ago. Jonny's calm, polite, yet determined manner served the IG and the wider community well, so thank you very much Jonny. Thanks also to Val Barnes who stood down as minutes secretary, thank you Val for your past support.

**Terms of Reference:** Despite the IG having received many favourable comments about its achievements, nonetheless, last year's report raised Co-Chair concerns that some clarifications were needed about its status, role and operation. In response, proposals were made and discussions took place during the first two meetings of the Parish Council after last year's AGM and we are very pleased to report that subsequent correspondence with the PC confirmed the Terms of Reference and the operation of the IG.

A particular area where clarification and changes were thought to be needed was in connection with approaches from potential developers. The Council felt it needed to maintain an arms length relationship and, as a result, the IG had been tasked with fronting such contacts yet this had drawn some criticism despite representative Parish Councillors having been present on every occasion. To address these concerns, a new and small, Housing Working Party was established comprising three Parish Councillors plus the IG Co-Chairs; current membership is Sue Slator, Peter Barnes, Garth Wheeler, and our two selves. Its key role is to be the point of contact for approaches by developers and especially following-up the Housing Needs Survey –see below.

**Village Development:** No sizeable development sites remain within the current Village Development Framework and therefore any proposals for more than one or two homes must look towards what are termed Exception Sites. Current understanding is that developments in such sites will only be permitted in response to a demonstrated need for affordable homes, and with this need being established through an independent Housing Needs Survey (HNS). At this time last year the Parish Council had instigated an HNS to establish the demand for affordable homes for people with a connection to Croydon. The survey form was sent to every household and was available also to businesses with employment premises in the parish. The report was presented to an open meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> July and concluded there is a need for ten affordable homes for people with a connection to Croydon. If such a development were to be proposed then a number of market homes might also be permitted but limited to the minimum number to make the affordable scheme financially viable.

Subsequently, the newly formed Housing Working Party (see above) hosted a walkabout with Hastoe Housing Association and SCDC officers to review all potential sites within easy reach of the main part of the village. Once Hastoe have considered all sites and discussed possibilities with SCDC Planning, a shortlist will be drawn up then landowners approached. We understand this process has slowed down by the present lockdown but is otherwise proceeding.

**Recreation & Facilities:** The IG has held off further consideration of possible sites for community land for recreation purposes, such as a small play area, as it is possible that with

some community pressure such a facility might be included as part of an affordable homes scheme.

The two new village groups reported on last year (neither of which is under the control of the IG) - First Tuesday Group (Maggie 01223-977632) and the Birding Group (Carol 207354) - have continued to meet, and Tai Ji classes for all have continued on Thursday evenings though now all on hold during the lockdown.

New Churchyard Initiative - A new and exciting churchyard initiative has been launched and, while this is not part of IG activity, we wanted to mention it here as it links across community facilities, environment and sustainability. All parts of the Churchyard are included in this initiative though with a particular focus on the new part. The key aims are conservation, biodiversity, public enjoyment and wellbeing. More information can be found in the Annual Church Fabric Report which forms part of this pack or can be obtained from either Maggie (01223-977632) or Val (208532).

**Village Environment:** Two more Village Tidy-up Days took place, one in Spring which was well supported, the other in November which was less so. On both days litter was picked from within the village and also alongside Larkins and Lower Road (sadly, the usual dozen or so black bin bags were filled), overhanging brambles were cut back from the roadside footpath, and the footpath cleared of mud and debris. Thanks to Elaine Hughes for leading this, to the PC for supporting and to SCDC for collecting the filled bags. Subsequently, Amelia Parsley continued litter picking as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award tasks, so thank you Amelia. The provision of motorised path and roadside cleaners has been muted by SCDC and District Councillor Williams has been asked to pursue this possibility.

**Sustainability:** Croydon continues to be a member of SPEP (the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership and information is received through Judith Pillinger who has continued as the main contact. Thanks to Judith for leading this. Anyone interested please contact Judith on 07774-126686. SCDC have launched Zero Carbon Initiatives for small communities and two IG members were scheduled to attend a meeting in March but in the end Covid-19 intervened so watch for future information.

**Communications:** There are several community sources of information, which the IG supports.

**E-News:** This system is working well and the membership continues to gradually grow. Over 70% of households receive e-News and opening rates are generally above 70% and with a high of 84% which is amazing! This system has been used well by the PC to circulate meeting agendas and public notices.

**WhatsApp Community Group:** A very successful and lively group favoured for up to the minute communications amongst those who have signed up. Membership continues to grow (from 37 to 46 individuals in the past year). The system has come into its own during the present lockdown with messages about help, shopping, plant swaps and even snake spotting! The important key use of this system is for alerts and immediate responses for such as security alerts (a modern day Neighbourhood Watch), calls for help, and emergencies of any kind including medical/falls etc. The greater the membership the more effective this system will become so anyone wishing to join please contact Keith 07711-788490 or Malcolm 07801-434603. Members will always be able to remove themselves if they wish.

**Village Website:** IG support has continued to be provided to the current village website, Croydon-village.co.uk. This website remains on air while progress is being made helping the PC to move towards a new and easier to use website. In the meantime PC membership details and minutes continue to be updated. To post a notice on the website, or notify about information, please contact either Judith on 07774-126686, or Malcolm 01223-208939.

**“Clopton Chatter”:** A new Village Facebook Page – This has just been launched as a home for general chat and fun rather than notices and messages which should remain on the WhatsApp group. Thank you to Janet Wheeler for setting this up, also to Kate Parsley for helping. For information contact Janet on 208709.

**Safety:** Cameras - As reported previously, it is difficult for the PC to “officially” organise public security cameras but it is hoped that some coverage might be provided by private citizens especially at both ends of the High Street. For further information please contact Keith Buchanan on 07711-788490. The question of signage to alert potential offenders that the community is on watch remains an outstanding issue.

**Speeding traffic:** Speedwatch is an officially supported campaign with equipment and training provided. The details of offending vehicles are automatically transmitted to the DVLA. Some volunteers have come forward but training remains outstanding. District Councillor Williams is to advise on training opportunities, now on hold during the lockdown. To join the team, or for further information, please contact Malcolm on 208939.

Concluding remarks: We wish to thank the members of the IG for their continued support, also all Parish Councillors for giving of their time for the benefit of the community.

Thank you.

Malcolm & Judith - Implementation Group Co-Chairs

### **Chair of the Parish Council report - Mrs Sue Slator**

This report is presented in written form due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The last meeting of the Parish council was held on the 19th February 2020. Meetings are currently suspended, but monthly notes of relevance will be available on the village website.

Membership of the Parish Council has been constant, this year.

During the past year, the council has been working on various issues:

#### **Planning**

A number of applications have been considered this year and council made comments as appropriate. One dwelling was approved on appeal.

#### **Housing Needs Survey**

A Housing Needs Survey on behalf of the parish was conducted by Cambridgeshire ACRE in April 2019. 47 responses were received, which is about 52%. This was considered a good response rate. The results were presented at a PC meeting in July to which all members of the community were invited. A copy of the report can be found on our website at [http://www.croydon-village.co.uk/04\\_2019\\_Croydon\\_HNS\\_Report\\_Public.pdf](http://www.croydon-village.co.uk/04_2019_Croydon_HNS_Report_Public.pdf)

The conclusion was favourable support for affordable housing and an identified need for a small number of affordable houses. To progress the findings a meeting was held with ACRE and Hastoe a Housing society who specialises in small developments, followed by a review of all potential sites in the village. Hastoe are now reviewing sites with SCDC planners and then landowners to identify a potential site. If a site is identified and available, consultation will commence. No timetable is available due to current circumstances.

#### **Website**

The village website continues to be administered remotely by a volunteer to whom we are most grateful. A specification for the new website has been developed and was put out for tender. Two respondents were considered suitable and further investigations made. A final proposal will be put to council for consideration and approval, once meetings resume.

## **Community Benefit Fund**

After the final instalment was paid this year the fund stands at £22,161.32. The funds are available for the use of the community including Parish Council projects. This year it has been agreed in principle to fund a defibrillator and the development of the new website. The telephone kiosk on the High Street was purchased from BT for £1 to house the defibrillator and investigations on the process of installation and maintenance continue.

**Details of how to apply and the criteria for grants can be found at the end of this report.**

## **East West Rail**

The route of the new railway has been announced. It will run from Bedford via St Neots and Cambourne. It will not directly affect Croydon and its surrounds, however the impact of the route to be taken from Cambourne to Addenbrookes is yet to be seen.

## **ACRE Conference**

The Clerk and I attended the conference on 8th November 2019. Croydon was signed up to the Cambs and Peterborough against Scams Partnership. Clerk will receive notice of any new scams reported, and these can be immediately circulated to parishioners via Mailchimp. We also attended the following workshops:-

- Mobilise your Community:
- Data Protection
- How to make use of data in Cambridgeshire Insight.
- Understanding your carbon footprint and developing a climate change strategy.

## **Thanks**

Firstly, I must thank our Clerk, whose invaluable support and dedication is essential to the running of the council. In addition, I thank the work of the Councillors.

Many people contribute to the life of the parish and we are grateful for all your support.

Thank you to Malcolm and Jonny, the Co-chairs for their work with the Implementation Group. A special mention and thanks to Jonny as he retires from the post of Co-chair, as his past efforts are much appreciated. We also thank Judith who has agreed to replace him as Co-chair with Malcolm.

Once again, we would like to thank the Elaine and the Village Environment Team for the Cleanup days, which have really improved the look of the village. Thank you too, to the Reading Room trustees for maintaining the Reading Room.

Finally, in this period of uncertainty I want to thank everybody who has stepped up to support neighbours who need help during these difficult times of self-isolation.

## **Croydon Parish (Cambridgeshire) Community Fund - Grant making Criteria**

As administrators of the Fund, grants will be determined by the Parish Council and can only be given to benefit the Parish of Croydon.

We award grants to charities, voluntary or community groups and organisations which are charitable in purpose. We seek to support genuinely good ideas that will make a real difference to the lives and environment of local people. The Parish Council can apply for funding for projects that are for the benefit of the community.

Grants will be awarded from £100 to a maximum of £2500.

The following criteria are guidelines only and we reserve the right not to progress any initial enquiry to a full application.

## **Judging Criteria**

The main criteria used when assessing applications received will be:

- The social, economic and environmental benefits which will result from the project.
- The level of community support for and involvement in the project.
- The number of people within the Parish that will benefit from the project.
- The ability of the applicant to deliver the project.
- How the work will be continued after the project has been completed, i.e. its sustainability and legacy.
- Value for money.
- Other factors appropriate to each application will also be considered.

The Fund supports core costs, new or continuing projects, one-off initiatives, and capital costs. We seek to achieve an equitable distribution of resources across the Parish. Match funding may be required.

### **Eligibility**

- You must have a recognised governing document e.g. Constitution, Memorandum.
- If you are working with children and/or vulnerable people, you must have a Safeguarding Policy in place
- You must be able to provide annual accounts for your organisation.
- You must have a bank account in the organisation's name which requires two signatories for all withdrawals, or if there is no bank account, payments will be made and controlled by the Parish Council.
- You must have a management committee with at least three members

### **Grants will not be given to:**

- Projects not benefiting people living in Croydon Parish
- Grants to individuals or families for personal needs
- Start-up funding for a project that is unable to start within nine months
- Sponsored or fundraising events or groups raising funds to redistribute to other causes
- Promotion of faith, religious or political causes.
- Improvements to land that is not open to the Parish
- Direct replacement of statutory obligation and public funding, including educational institutions.
- Groups with significant financial funds
- Retrospective grants
- Contribution to endowment fund, payment of deficit funding or repayment of loans
- National charities that are not providing clear local benefits
- Overseas travel or expeditions
- Medical research
- Commercial ventures, unless the group is a registered not for profit organisation
- General appeals
- Animal welfare
- Fees for professional fundraisers

**The Parish Council will review the Grant making Criteria annually. The Community Fund will close once the funds are exhausted**

Applications should be made in writing in the first instance, to the Clerk.  
Applications can only be made once in a 12 month period.

Amendments to this document were agreed at The Croydon Parish Council Meeting 19th June 2019.

# Croydon Parish Council Accounts 1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020

These accounts have been circulated to Councillors and posted on the village notice board

Receipts		Payments	
Precept	£3,300.00	Insurance	£364.35
Push Energy	£4,935.00	Reading Room rental - PC	£162.50
VAT	£102.79	Reading Room rental - IG	£26.00
Interest - NSI	£111.15	Churchyard Maintenance	£400.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£8,448.94</b>	Fete Toilets (PC)	£246.00
		Subs to SLCC Association	£65.00
		RBL wreath	£17.00
		Auditor	£40.00
		Purchase of BT kiosk	£1.00
<b>Restricted Funds</b>		Charles Arnold-Baker (Clerk's bible)	£108.79
<b>Community Benefit Fund</b>		Clerk - salary	£1,100.00
Balance to date	£16,649.90	Clerk - petty cash	£54.99
Income this year (Final instalment)	£4,935.00	Clerk - IT allowance	£25.00
Interest nominal - transferred	£464.97		£2,610.63
NSI Interest	£111.15		
VAT refunded (First Aid Course)	£19.80	<b>Restricted Fund</b>	
Reading Room Rental	-£19.50	Reading Room rental (First Aid course)	£19.50
Balance	<b>£22,161.32</b>		
		<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£2,630.13</b>
<b>Balances at 31 March 2020</b>		<b>Balance at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>£23,424.64</b>
Investment Account	£21,977.20	add receipts	£8,448.94
Bank Account	£7,266.25	less payments	-£2,630.13
less unrepresented cheques	£0.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£29,243.45</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£29,243.45</b>

## Village Matters:

### Church Fabric and Restoration

All Saints' Church, Croydon cum Clopton

Report to Croydon Parish Council (Virtual) AGM –22nd April 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the condition of All Saints' fabric and other matters. Sadly, at the time of writing, the church has had to remain locked. Furthermore, it looks very much as though our big summer show will not be allowed to go ahead. This will inevitably have a serious impact on finances so at the end of this report we have said more on this topic. These are clearly very difficult and uncertain times, but above all we must not lose sight of the fact that many people, including some locals, are losing loved ones.

In summary, much of this report will look familiar, and whilst there is positive news that some works have been completed, on the other hand, the news on grants has changed but not for the better! A new and exciting Churchyard initiative has been launched which it is hoped will benefit the wider community.

Several areas of the building have continued to deteriorate, notably: stonework around many of the windows some of which are now propped; growing cracks to the base of the Tower; increased concern over some internal arches; cracks in the Chancel Floor over the Downing family vault causing this area to remain roped off - see more on this later in the report. On the plus side, high level repairs have been completed to re-bed ridge tiles and flaunchings along the length of the building, also joints to the capping stones at the east end of the Chancel have been resealed to prevent water penetrating the East Wall. The cost was £3400 which was paid from our Parochial Church Council (PCC) funds accumulated from fund raising events but also supported with a very welcome 50% grant from the National Churches Trust.

Our report last year included good news that Historic England (H.E.) had recognised the historic significance and visual appeal of All Saints' and had written a supportive report proposing a comprehensive monitoring programme of building movements. H.E. also added All Saints' to the Register of listed buildings most at risk – the At Risk Register, which, at face value, appears an alarming development, whereas, in theory at least, it increases the chances of success with key grant giving bodies - note Barrington Church has been on the Register for several years!

In response, despite being told that chances of success were slim, together with Percy Mark (thank you Percy) we have spent the year putting together a grant application for a comprehensive two year monitoring programme. Also included were some emergency repairs, the opening up of the Downing vault under the Chancel, a water supply and attention to the very large trees on the north side of the churchyard as well as some funding for a new churchyard initiative – more information below. This programme was to be directed at the key grant giving body (recently renamed) the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and total funds required would be in the region of £130,000. This application involved working closely with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, inviting tenders from survey and deep borehole companies, linking with Cambridge University Engineering Department (CUED) and engaging with the nominated architect and structural engineer. The NLHF's interest is not limited to saving historic buildings, they also require links to be forged with local schools, colleges and several community groups within Croydon and surrounding villages, and this caused considerable extra work and commitments. Nonetheless, much of this had been completed and the (long and overly complicated) on-line application form completed, when without notice just one week before Easter, all applications for grant aid were halted because of the very adverse financial impacts of Covid-19 on the many projects already underway, and on the lottery income itself. To say the least this came as a body blow especially as there is no certainty when the situation will ease, it seems unlikely before in to next year.

With this very unwelcome news we could either throw in the towel or pick ourselves up and see what alternative approaches might be possible. At the time of writing we are looking at the possibility of a much reduced, and highly focused, project of around £12,000 if we can obtain up to 50+% funding from two much smaller charities (ie more than 50% in total). This project would have three objectives: limited emergency repairs to stop water damage, gaining access to the Downing Vault, and training leading to community monitoring of cracks and movements. It is possible that CUED may yet remain onboard through other external funding. Importantly, we are reasonably confident that we can cut safe access in to the vault because of borescope camera inspections already conducted. We will issue updates as this situation develops.

Moving to the churchyard, the big news is of a new and exciting initiative, linked to the Wildlife Trust. The aim is to improve nature conservation, wildflowers and increase biodiversity in both parts of the churchyard but with a particular emphasis on the new part. The intention is to improve this area and, as well as being good for nature, to also encourage more visits from the wider community as a place of beauty, calm and wellbeing. This initiative was also part of the now halted NLHF grant application but despite no funds now being forthcoming, nonetheless, some tasks will still be possible with local involvement. Clearly, this cannot be a free for all and the PCC has a responsibility for the churchyards, but working together exciting improvements can be made. Thank you to Judith and Maggie for launching this initiative. For more information please contact one of us.

More generally within the Churchyard, the west boundary near the Tower has been recommended for maintaining at hedge height and more work needs to be done here. The line of trees along Church Lane has recently been pollarded which is a requirement every few years for the safety of the trees and because if too large they remove moisture from the foundations at the east end of the building. The North boundary presents a much greater problem as the trees have grown very tall and some die-back is evident. A tree study was also included in the halted NLHF project but this will now need to be postponed. Money spent on upkeep of the churchyard is always a challenge as any expenditure will have been diverted from maintaining the building itself. In this regard we are grateful to the Parish Council for continued financial support for grass cutting and we look forward to the PC continuing to work with the PCC so that the churchyard remains open for all parishioners. On behalf of the PCC and the wider community, we thank Michael Norie for doing a great job of keeping the grass cut and the Churchyard tidy, thank you.

Finally, a very big thank you to all in the parish who contribute financially whether by regular giving, or indirectly by helping to organise, and/or support fund-raising events. Without such support All Saints' would be unable to attract repair grants and would in the end close. Understandably, many parishioners do not realise that All Saints' does not receive any funds from the Diocese or any other body, save for very occasional and increasingly hard to come by repair grants. Indeed, for Croydon to retain its Parish Church, as a community, we support the Diocese of Ely to the tune of £3000+ per year. All Saints' is an 800+ year old gem of a building in our midst which is open to everyone 365 days per year (in normal times!) and is also available for marriages, christenings and funerals; the churchyard also is open to all parishioners. While fund raising events are crucial to this survival, it is regular monthly income which underpins everything yet this support is given by very few households - less than the fingers on two hands and excluding thumbs! There is a painless way to make contributions and even a little would make a huge difference, added to which in, most circumstances, the government is willing to top up with a further 20%! If anyone feels they would like to regularly contribute to the upkeep of All Saints' and the churchyard then please do contact one of us. If you wish for your support to be used only for the building then this can be arranged. Thank you.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this report.

Malcolm Ralph & Carol McGeogh – Churchwardens

**Possible date of Next AGM - 21 April 2021 (TBC)**

**Possible date of Annual Parish Council Meeting - 20 May 2020**

Signed .....

Date .....