

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 19 June 2019 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Cllr Kindersley - meeting in Leeds, Cllr Williams - family celebration, Ms Newland - unwell.

Present: Mr Sole, Mr Barnes, Mr Brown, Mrs Slator, Mr Wheeler, Mr Wenman, the Clerk and two members of public.

Minutes: of the AGM were agreed and signed. Minutes of the May meeting were amended, agreed and signed.

Declarations of Interest: None received.

Members' Interest Forms: Mr Brown, who was not present at the last meeting, checked, re-signed and dated his form as still correct.

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Implementation Group: No report received. The Chair and Vice Chair had met to compose a letter in response to the letter received from the IG Co-Chairs. Mrs Slator read the proposed response to the Councillors, which was unanimously agreed. The letter is copied below.

"Councillors have all received a copy of the letter from the co chairs of the IG group. This was sent in response to a discussion about the IG group at the May meeting.

As a small village with limited resources, it is important we value the volunteers in the PC and the community. I would therefore like to clarify some matters in relation to the Community Led Plan and the IG group.

Parishes can if they wish develop "Neighbourhood Plans" which form part of statutory planning policy or a "Community Led Plan", which is more informal and covers a wider range of issues. Due to the fact high levels of development were unlikely in Croydon and the high cost of a Neighbourhood Plan, it was decided that a CLP was a more sensible route.

Community-led plans are also much broader than Neighbourhood Plans, covering more than just planning issues. South Cambs encourages the plans to be led by a steering group of community members not the Parish Council.

A CLP will involve widespread community involvement, so the views of the whole community can be taken into account. Some concern has been raised recently as to the age of the plan (published 2015) however despite some household changes, the majority have not. More importantly, the soon to be available Housing Needs survey will update key data on support for and need for affordable housing.

Once the CLP was published it was again the advice of South Cambs that an Implementation Group be formed to progress the findings of the CLP. This was when the IG was created and included members of the PC. Its Terms of Reference were agreed by the PC.

Since its inception, the IG group has regularly reported to the PC and received funding. At no time has it operated outside its ToR. Two potential developers have asked for information from the IG, regarding the CLP. The IG obviously has no decision making powers regarding planning and a representative of the PC was in attendance at these informal meetings. As it happens, no planning applications were ever made, so the PC was not required to formally comment.

At the May PC meeting it was agreed that if any future informal approach was made by a developer a formal subcommittee of the PC would be agreed to include representatives of the PC, IG and interested parties.

Overall the IG has been beneficial to the Parish in many ways. It would be a great loss to the community if their activities were to stop. We therefore encourage the IG to continue their community activities and offer the full support of the PC."

Clerk will send this letter to the Co-Chairs of the Implementation Group, as requested.

Speedwatch and Speed Signs: The IG has several people interested in undertaking the Speedwatch training, but does need a few more before this scheme can start. If you are interested, please contact a member of the IG. Once data has been obtained from the Speedwatch group, an investigation into the most effective sites for a speed sign can be decided. The sign can be privately funded, or applied for through CCC Minor Highways Improvements Scheme.

Housing Needs Survey: This has now been completed and analysed and will be presented to the village by Mark Deas of ACRE, and Uzma Ali from SCDC on 17 July. Council decided that the normal Council meeting will be brought forward to 6.30pm and the HNS presentation will then commence at 7.30pm. Publicity will be sent out in the village nearer the date to encourage parishioners to attend.

Website/E-mail addresses: Mrs Slator prepared a comprehensive overview of the requirements of a new website for the village. There are several free basic templates available, but Councillors felt these were not suitable, as they were not going to be "owned" by Council. Also, with the new Accessibility requirements, the new website must demonstrate compliance with these. Mrs Slator will meet with the IG Communication Team for their ideas. Individual e-mail addresses for Councillors will be finalised when the new website is operational.

Community Benefit Fund Criteria: Mrs Slator suggested the following amendment be added to the criteria under Guidelines:-

The Parish Council can apply for funding for projects that are for the benefit of the community.

Councillors were all in agreement with this amendment - Clerk will update the criteria.

Emergency Plan: This did not reach SCDC on the first attempt, but the e-mail and attachment have now been acknowledged.

Fete Toilets: Insurance for these has been included on the Reading Room insurance. Delivery arrangements have been made with a member of the Committee.

Defibrillator and BT: BT has confirmed that, as only 7 calls have been made from the Clopton Close phone box in the last 12 months, the box is due for removal under their next renationalisation programme. Clerk will discover when this is scheduled for, and notify BT that the Parish Council would like to purchase the box for the installation of a defibrillator.

High Street Closure: Croydon High Street will be closed for repairs from Monday 15th until Wednesday 17th July, between the hours of 8.30am - 3.30pm. The closure will be between 7 and 22 High Street. Work will also be taking place on Croydon Hill during the same period.

Information Commissioner's Office: Using a short survey, Clerk was able to check whether Council had to register with the ICO for Data Protection. Council does not have to register.

Correspondence:

Insurance: Confirmation of renewal received.

SLCC Conference: Invitation to attend a conference in Colchester. Clerk felt that the content was not relevant to her role in Croydon.

Hopkins Homes: Information regarding this developer received.

Electoral Register: Amendments to the register received and circulated to Councillors at the meeting.

Wheelie Bin Stickers: Information regarding provision of bin stickers received from a relatively local company. There are already bin stickers in the village.

SLCC: Offer of a Training Seminar on the 17th July 2019 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel on Brayford Wharf North, Lincoln for information about cyber crime. As this is the same day as the next meeting, Clerk will not be attending.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning: Comments invited on the Histon and Impington Village Design Statement. To view the Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents, visit:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/HistonImpingtonNP>

There are a number of ways to comment:

- using the online consultation system: <http://scams.idi-consult.net/localplan/>
- emailing to neighbourhood.planning@scams.gov.uk

- writing to Planning Policy Team, SCDC, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA

All replies to be received by 31 July.

CAPALC: Offer of attending the Annual Conference with the keynote speaker. Mayor James Palmer, received. For the day, the training sessions actually covers 2 hours 50 minutes, the rest of the time is welcome, coffee, networking, buffet lunch etc. The cost of £100 makes this training quite expensive!

Electronic Correspondence: All circulated.

Although not present Cllr Kindersley had already sent his report for June, as below:-

Climate Emergency: Last November, South Cambridgeshire District Council declared a Climate Emergency and set itself a Zero Carbon by 2050 ambition, setting the basis for adapting new policies to meet its goals. The new Zero Carbon Communities Grant is one example (see below).

In April, school children planned a demonstration at Shire Hall to raise awareness at Cambridgeshire County Council of the Climate Emergency.

At the May meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council, the Council Leader brought forward a motion pledging to continue and improve the council's good work on environmental challenges and proposed that officers be given six months to develop a new Climate Change and Environmental Strategy. The Liberal Democrat group proposed an amendment acknowledging the Climate Change Emergency and setting a Zero Carbon target ambition for 2050, in line with many other local authorities; the amendment also tasked a group of cross-party and cross-committee councillors to take the lead on setting new policy. The amendment was lost, with objections raised against the Zero Carbon target and councillor involvement. However, the amendment proposer came back with a suggestion confined to the declaration of a Climate Emergency and this was unanimously agreed.

As painfully preoccupied with process as this might seem, the outcome was significant because consensus building does not often happen in this way. It's good to see consensus developing across the councils too. That said, the County Council's planned move to Alconbury, away from public transport links, will be difficult to reconcile in climate emergency terms.

Highways England – Consultation on Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet: Having announced their preferred route for the new A428 dualling (with 83% of respondents in favour) Highways England is now conducting a more detailed consultation on the actual route. The consultation runs to 28 July 2019 and will deliver a number of benefits. It will cut congestion and increase capacity and journey time reliability between Milton Keynes and Cambridge, with journey times dropping by more than a third at peak times. It will be a safer and better connected road and you can respond at

<https://highwaysengland.citizenspace.com/he/a428-black-cat-to-caxton-gibbet-improvements/>

New Road Railway Bridge: An application has been lodged to backfill the void under the old railway bridge on New Rd (running from Fuller's Hill to Hatley Road). Anyone using this road will know that it is at best very uneven owing to subsidence, and the back fill should cure that. The badgers on the side will be left unmolested.

Illegal Parking in Poppyfields Gamlingay: A number of commercial vehicles are using Poppyfields for parking. This is not permitted. The management company who are responsible for the estate are willing to investigate any issues but need residents to send them details of times, registration plates and photographs. We are told that it could take a couple of weeks to resolve problems but that they do take this matter seriously.

Planning and New Housing: You will recall that for some years under the old administration at South Cambs District Council there was no Local Plan and no 5 year housing land supply. This meant that planning rules were much more flexible and during that time over 4000 houses were given planning permission in South Cambs which under normal circumstances would not have been. Many of these houses were in the countryside (defined as being outside the village frameworks) and were not required to make much financial contribution to the communities they were associated with to pay for things like health care, education and community facilities. Since the change of administration, the Local Plan has been adopted and a 5 year housing land supply is in place. This has resulted in the planning laws - especially those preventing development in the countryside - being rigorously enforced. This may not seem fair to people who would have liked to build on their land in the countryside and who are now not able to do so but have seen land near to them developed over the past few years. Fair or not, planning is controlled by policies and if a policy is against development in the countryside then it will be prevented unless there are truly exceptional circumstances. One of these circumstances is the provision of

'exception sites' which are exclusively for 'affordable housing for local people'. These sites have to be adjacent to village boundaries and landowners can expect to receive only a small percentage of the value of the land had it been given permission for market housing. Bridget is always happy to advise anyone interested in putting land forward as an exception site.

Cambourne to Cambridge Better Public Transport Project: The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) is developing proposals to create a new transport link between Cambourne and Cambridge, and a new Park & Ride facility. The project team have received over 5,000 responses during three phases of public consultation and are continuing to welcome views and contributions as part of the scheme development.

There are two community drop-in sessions at Hardwick Primary School, Limes Road, Hardwick, Cambridgeshire, CB23 7RE. Thursday 11th July, 5pm-8pm, Saturday 13th July from 10.30am-1.30pm. This will be an opportunity to see proposed features to protect and potentially enhance biodiversity, ask questions of the project team and share views.

Stocks Lane Medical Centre: Congratulations to the all at the Stocks Lane Medical Centre on the new interior arrangements which will make a big difference to how the practice works. This project was paid for by S106 money from Station Road (yes, it sometimes does take that long!) We are very fortunate to have a surgery remaining in Gamlingay and long may it prosper.

Minor Highway Improvements: The County Council is now accepting Local Highway Improvement (LHI) 2020/21 applications with a deadline of 4th August, following which Parish Councils will be contacted by an officer to develop a Feasibility Study. They will work to ensure the project scope and budget are accurate and achievable before the proposals are presented to the LHI Member Advisory Panels in January 2020.

Cambridge Airport: Marshalls has announced that it intends to move from Cambridge Airport, something which has been on the cards for many years. The site could provide "space for 12,000 new homes as well as about five million square feet of business and commercial space." Added to the c7,000 homes planned for the Anglian Water sewage site on North East fringe this is considerable growth in Cambridge. Marshalls hopes to move to Duxford and Anglian Water - despite all the dancing around 'public consultation' about sites - can only move to Waterbeach.

Potholes: Cambridgeshire has received the maximum amount of additional road maintenance funding from the Department for Transport, with £2.5m in recognition for making the best use of funds available and prioritising the needs of the public. This year (2019/20), Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have also received funding totalling £990k to help prevent and fix potholes. The 'dragon patcher' has been busy most recently in Shingay-cum-Wendy and the Mordens. The rutting on Croydon Hill has been scheduled for works which will close the road for a couple of days in mid-July.

The Mayor's Latest: The latest news to hit the headlines regarding the Mayor has been the recruitment into his political office of an ex-Councillor without any reference to the Combined Authority's Employment Committee, job advert or as far as we know even a job description. At the beginning of May this Councillor was leader of East Cambridgeshire Council and one of the members (along with Bridget) of the Combined Authority Board. He has now stood down from that role to be employed by the Mayor on a pretty hefty salary. Headline number two has been the Mayor's decision to appoint (without the involvement of the Employment Committee) the current two interim CEOs as permanent for the duration of his term. These two individuals (one of whom is also the CEO of East Cambridgeshire District Council) were standing in following the sudden departure of the previous incumbent. A new full time CEO was advertised for and interviews took place but despite there being very credible candidates the Mayor exerted his power of veto and no appointment was made. The Board voted to support the two interim roles being made permanent until the Mayor's term of office ends. Bridget did not vote in support.

It has been a busy a month at the Combined Authority and so the third headline grabber has been the Mayor choosing to write, in his capacity as Mayor, to the Government Planning Inspector in support of a major development just off the A505 near Duxford and Hinxton. The reason this is an issue is that the application by Smithson Hill for an agri-tech site was rejected by South Cambs planning committee and then, as is their right, Smithson Hill appealed the refusal. For the Mayor to try to interfere in a decision made by South Cambs councillors (and bearing in mind that a planning committee is non-political) is quite extraordinary. Bridget has made formal complaints about all these issues both to the Combined Authority and higher up the political food chain.

Shire Hall: Following a meeting behind closed doors, Cambridgeshire County Council has announced regeneration company Brookgate as its preferred bidder for the council's Shire Hall site in Cambridge. The decision was taken in confidential session very much against the spirit of openness and

transparency and despite Sebastian's best efforts to ensure that Cambridgeshire residents could see and hear how their Councillors took this decision.

Brookgate will lease the Shire Hall site for a period still to be agreed. The company proposes to establish a hotel and office accommodation, while the county council moves its HQ to Alconbury. We opposed the move to Alconbury, on the basis that there are too many levels of government in Cambridgeshire, and we should not be building an expensive new headquarters at a time when we should be reducing the number of councils and moving to a unitary structure.

The proposed lease arrangement leaves the council with a high level of future risk. The expectations of income over the next 30 years depend on complex calculations of inflation and rental income. This income is far from certain. So a relatively simple property arrangement has been made as complicated as possible with all the attendant chance of it going horribly wrong - because that's never happened before with a CCC project....

Grays Rd Parking: The proposed extra parking bays in Gray's Road is turning into as much of a saga as the Combined Authority. After a real mess up with a lost payment for the planning application we are now told that new plans are having to be drawn up as the County Council have objected to the materials which were to be used for surfacing and it is hoped a new planning application will be submitted in AUGUST. We can but apologise to residents who have been waiting for almost 2 years.

WI Site: There have been concerns about the height of the pair of houses being built on the WI Hall site. The original plans were to sink the building into the ground in order to reduce the impact on the neighbouring houses. Now, a reduction in roof height has been incorporated into the design so that the need to sink the building is not so marked. We are assured that what you now see complies with all planning conditions.

Bourn Airfield: Plans to build some thousands of houses on Bourn Airfield are progressing with a 'Supplementary Planning Document' being discussed this month by South Cambs Cabinet. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee were quite critical of the SPD and a number of changes have been made as a result. One of the big issues is access onto the A428 and whether an additional junction is required. As a Council we are committed to trying to reduce rather than increase car use and the fact of the matter is that if you make it easier for people to use cars, by increasing road capacity for instance, then people will use their cars instead of more sustainable modes of transport such as public transport, walking and cycling. It is a difficult balance to strike but we have to start to plan for developments which are either car free or which actively discourage car use whilst encouraging alternatives. People like 'carrots' but dislike 'sticks and you have to have both to really make a difference. Commuters into and out of Cambridge will know that the road capacity is already exceeded and so we have to find ways to get people out of their cars. For those of us in rural villages that has to mean that we have access to high quality, affordable and reliable public transport. The Mayor's plans for a Metro from St Neots and Cambourne will offer a partial solution (once he finds the £4billion it will cost) and an East West rail link could be similarly useful. However, there has to be a plan to get us from Gamlingay to these transport hubs where we can pick up whatever public transport there is.

Grants at South Cambs and Cambs County Council: The District Council has significantly improved the haphazard way in which various grants have been allocated in the past. For instance instead of an elite (and elitist) sports grant which has for instance paid for one person to go to the USA for a competition, sports grants will in future focus on community events. The new Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme will give large grants (up to £15,000) to effective plans to reduce carbon emissions in our villages.

The next deadline for Cambridgeshire County Council's Innovate & Cultivate Fund applications is 1st August – Cultivate grants (£2,000 – £19,000) and Innovate grants (£19,001 – £50,000). The aim is to support initiatives that strengthen communities and reduce pressure on County Council services. There are two funding streams: a 'Cultivate' fund for smaller projects that build community support networks and an 'Innovate' fund for bigger, bolder and more innovative initiatives. Council services that are inviting applications include adult social care and children and families services. Projects thus far have included Timebanks, Good Neighbour Schemes, Dementia-Friendly Communities and Men's Sheds.

The fund is open to voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations based in and outside of Cambridgeshire, and public sector organisations in Cambridgeshire.

Crime: Brilliant to see the Gamlingay residents who have organised themselves so well to address Crime Prevention in Gamlingay. They have been very well received by the Police and Crime Commissioner, who spoke at the last Parish Council APM and are now working with officers from South

Cambs to develop their plans. Bridget is delighted that they are also going to be doing some work with Forward Gamlingay and the Youth Club to involve young people in their future work and plans.

Community Right to Challenge: This initiative is part of the Localism Act and gives voluntary and community groups, charities and parish councils the opportunity to make formal expressions of interest in running Council services if they believe they can provide them in a more efficient, responsive or cost-effective way. The period to put forward an expression of interest is now open and local groups have got until the end of July to challenge for the running of our services. Visit

www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/community-rights/community-right-to-challenge/

for more information or contact Ryan Coetsee on ryan.coetsee@scambs.gov.uk or 01954 713 461.

Empty Homes: South Cambs District Council is increasing council tax on houses that have been left empty for a significant period of time. The Council offers lots of help for landlords and owners of empty homes to help them get them back into use, but now has the option to significantly increase council tax where there are no convincing reasons for them to remain empty.

Currently the owners of homes that are left empty and substantially unfurnished for more than two years must pay an extra 50% on top of the regular bill. Following the full Council meeting, the 50% premium will be replaced by the following arrangements – all in effect from April 1. Homes that are empty for two years or more will be charged double their regular Council Tax (i.e. an additional premium of 100%); for five years or more will be charged a 200% premium on top of their regular Council Tax; for ten years or more will be charged a 300% premium on top of their regular Council Tax. Currently in South Cambridgeshire, 100 properties have been empty for between 2-5 years. 41 homes have been empty for 5-10 years. 39 properties have been empty for more than ten years.

And finally - The Plague!: Makes a refreshing change to Brexit...the County Council has just published research results that involved archaeological material for Barrington that is stored in the Council's collections. Cambridge University have been undertaking a major research project called 'After the Plague' that studies the impact of disease in the mediaeval period. As part of this they accessed several of the collections, including Barrington (Edix Hill) and Gamlingay (Station Road).

As part of this research, scientific analysis by Cambridge University and Max Planck Institute of the Barrington material has demonstrated that during the 6th century a major European wide plague pandemic was also in Cambridgeshire. The international team of researchers have found the same strains of plague here that has also been found in Austria, Britain, Germany, France and Spain. This is probably what is known as the 'Justinianic Plague' that is believed to have played a major role in the shift from Roman to Germanic rule at that time. It is the first time this has been identified in England, and is a major discovery for the understanding of this period. We are planning to develop this discovery further.

More information on the 'After the Plague' project at www.aftertheplague.com/index.html

Planning: Ref: S/1786/19/FL - 32 High Street: Application for a two storey infill.

Councillors perused the application paperwork and as there were no objections to the proposed development, all were in favour. Clerk will respond to the SCDC Officer with this decision.

Finance:

Audit Regulations - discuss effectiveness of the system of internal control and consider the findings. The current information provided and the production of the bank statements as they are received at the meetings was considered an adequate control - Clerk does not handle cash, except her own for petty cash, and has no power to sign on either of the accounts.

Croydon has again been able to certify itself as Exempt, because neither Council's receipts nor payments exceed £25,000. The external auditor did state last year that Croydon's reserves were too high, and the Clerk explained that this is due to the Solar Farm funds and is entirely separate from the precept.

Council went on to deliberate the following:-

- i) approve the Annual Governance Statement by resolution
- ii) consider and approve the accounting statements by resolution
- iii) Chair and Clerk signed and dated the accounting statements

Bank Statement: .The May bank statement has been received. Start balance was £12962-59 and after some of the cheques issued had been presented, the balance was £11418-25.

Exemption: Confirmation from Littlejohn that they have received Croydon's Certificate of Exemption.

Payments: The following was presented for payment:-

Internal Auditor invoice	£40 - 00
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All were in favour, and the cheque was signed - Clerk will action.

Solar Farm: Despite two e-mails to the address given to the Clerk, neither response nor payment has been received. Council's letter requesting a reduced contribution for the life of the Solar Farm has not been replied to. Clerk outlined her actions so far and Council agreed that if the last of the agreed payments is not shown on the next bank statement , nor a response to the letter received, Clerk may write to the company's registered office in London.

Items for next agenda: Replacement Clopton Village sign at the site.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th July at 6.30pm, followed by the Housing Needs Survey presentation at 7.30pm

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed

Date

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