

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 21 February 2018 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mr Brown - abroad, Ms Newland - meeting at work.

Present: Mr Wheeler, Mr Wenman, Mrs Slator, Mr Sole, Mr Barnes, Cllr Smith, Cllr Kindersley after another meeting, the Clerk and one member of public.

Minutes: of the January meeting were agreed and signed.

Declarations of Interest: None received.

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Implementation Group: Malcom Ralph gave a short verbal report:-

Reminders: Tuesday Group meets in the Reading Room on 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in the month. The first meeting was board games and was for fun, the second meeting was village history. Next month the meetings will be poetry, and more on the village history including how to research the history of your house.

Birdwatching Group: If you are interested please contact Carol McGeoch or Judith Pillinger for details. The Group has been over to Wimpole Park and spotted 32 different birds.

Whatsapp Group: This is a way of receiving important village news direct to your phone. If you wish to join, contact Judith Pillinger.

Housing: Nothing new to report on the housing front.

Car Show: The date for the next car show will be Sunday 15th July. The first meeting of interested persons will be on Wednesday 28th February in the Reading Room.

Chairman thanked Mr Ralph for his report.

Speed Signs: Hatley's Clerk has been very accommodating in sending Croydon the speed data from Hatley's speed signs. However, because Larkins Road is 60mph, and not 40,ph as through Hsaltye, there is probably not enough evidence there to warrant reducing the speed limit to 50mph. Council has decided not to pursue a flashing speed sign at present. but ask Cllr Kindersley about the procedure to obtain cables across the road to collect speed data.

Lower Road: Clerk reported Council's concerns over the lack of white lining on Lower Road, and CCC Highways has replied that they intend to "*carry out additional lining works on this road in a few months time when the weather and road conditions are more conducive to this type of work*".

Reading Room Trustees: Cllr Smith has some information which might prove to be helpful and will send it to the Clerk for distribution. It is to do with sub-committees and affiliate groups.

Footpath Problem: Following the comments on this section of footpath, SCDC has cleared the litter from the area and the local PCSO has included in his patrols. Hopefully this has deterred the perpetrators, but if it happens again it must be reported to the PCSO.

Notice Board: Following the incident with the broken door on the old notice board, it was resoled after discussion that the board should be scrapped and not replaced as a lot of communication now takes place electronically. Clerk will arrange for this to be done, and the memorial plaque from the board will be kept to mount onto a piece of hardwood, with a view to its display in the Reading Room.

Gliding Club: Meeting on 28 February at the Lodge on the airfield regarding the variation of planning conditions currently in place. After over 25 years of operation at Gransden Lodge, the Gliding Club believes that it is now appropriate to review these conditions in the light of experience, technological progress, modern business and council methods and the ease of electronic communication.

Clerk and Mr Barnes will attend for Council.

Postscript: Meeting subsequently postponed for one week due to weather conditions

Verbal report from Cllr Smith:

Potholes: Are bad all over the road network.

Council Tax: Is currently being discussed. Possibility of £5-00 on a Band D property.

Speed Cameras: In Hatley are confirming that almost 50% of the vehicles travelling through the village are exceeding the 40mph speed limit.

Magistrates Court: In Cambridge is to be closed due to financial constraints. This means that all witnesses and defendants will have to travel to Huntingdon, putting additional stress on the people who are involved.

CCC: Shire Hall is to be closed and sold off as a hotel. The County Council will relocate to either Northstowe or Alcombury.

Flooding in Arrington: Still causing problems on A1198 by Wimpole Gate.

Arrington: Parking with Wimpole Hall in both Church Lane and Church End is becoming a nuisance. It restricts access for large vehicles to Croydon and sometimes the parking is so far up the road it goes around the corner, forcing vehicles heading towards Croydon onto the wrong side of the road at the bend. Cllr Smith suggested that Cllr Kindersley might be able to help

Housing: The five year housing supply is being discussed at a meeting on Thursday, as further speculative development will undermine the Local Plan.

Boundary: There is a change in the boundary between Over and Willingham. Over did not want the change and it was about money. The meeting was nasty but Willingham prevailed and got the land in question, which is to be sold off for housing,

E-mailed Report from Cllrs Kindersley and Smith:-

Potholes: A perennial issue – some good news, some bad. Firstly the good news: the County Council now has a specialist machine, known as the ‘dragon patcher’, to work across the county’s roads to complete pothole repairs. It is the first in the region and has already made around 1700 repairs.

It is much more efficient, as it can repair up to 150 potholes a day, faster and quieter than traditional methods and our contractor, Skanska, is firing it up on a road near you. (Fingers crossed). Nicknamed the ‘dragon’ because it fires out flames to dry out the road surface which is then cleaned with compressed air and sealed with a stone mix and hot bitumen. This is much quicker and simpler compared to traditional methods.

Traditionally, an inspector would go out and look at the pothole and a team of two or three would come out to repair. With the dragon, it will free up time for other work as a pothole is fixed in around three minutes so it can move onto the next.

In order to keep the roads maintained, YOU need to help us by coming forward and reporting them: Telephone: 03450455212 Website: <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

Now the bad news: I have been in dialogue about a series of very bad roads (Church Street Gamlingay, Mill Street Gamlingay, Church Street Guilden Morden to name but three) and there appears to be an emerging issue as procuring lining/pothole filling with the new Highway contract is extremely difficult without incurring hefty ‘minimum site visit’ charges imposed by the contractor. Conditions in the winter when roads are wet, cold and covered in grit also do not lend themselves to lining works which require that the area to be swept clean and artificially dried prior to any lines being installed at this time of year.

Road surfaces are deteriorating and this has been exacerbated by the cold weather. The local Highways team have no budget remaining this financial year to complete carriageway patching works on any other road so are ‘fire-fighting’ and trying to keep on top of all the potholes that seem to be forming on a daily basis. The County has had two pothole crews working full time in South Division but they are struggling to keep up with demand and it has just been agreed to engage a third one to try and resolve the backlog.

New parking places at Avenalls Way and Grays Road: The new parking places at the entrance of Avenalls Way are under construction - though there has been a bit of a glitch with the plans showing them extending into a resident’s living room. Hopefully this will have been sorted out by the time you read this. The Council is still waiting for the plans to be received back from their architect for the new parking bays in Grays Rd. Once they have been received and we have had a satisfactory consultation with residents we will then need to go through the planning process. Fortunately the road is not adopted by Highways so that should make the planning application quicker.

Council Tax – Cambridgeshire County Council: Much to everyone’s amazement – not least ours - the County Council has agreed to increase Council Tax to the maximum permitted by Government - 2% on adult social care and 2.99% across the board. However, the County Council is still projecting a budget gap for 2018/19 of £4.3m. The Council Tax increase of 2.99% will add £23.76 annually (46p weekly) and £35.64 annually (68p weekly) respectively to a Band D property. That’s where the good news stops.

For several years now, opposition councillors have pointed out that increasing council tax is the only way to protect the services local residents value. Inflation takes its toll. The Government has massively reduced its funding to councils. The population is ageing. The number of children in care continues to increase. Patients are stuck in hospital because there is nowhere appropriate for them to move to. Roads crumble.

All of this is familiar and expected - no surprises - but executive councillors have chosen not to act, until now. Having resisted pleas to raise the cash needed over the last few years, the funding crisis is more acute than it need have been. If the County Council had raised Council Tax by the permitted 2% over the past few years it would have an extra £50m to spend on services.

Now that the administration has belatedly joined the consensus that 'we can't go on like this', the real differences between the parties at Shire Hall are about what to do with the 2.99 per cent (£7.969 million) extra to be raised when the budget is set next month.

Instead of investing this into services the increase will be put into reserves - in effect taking money out of your bank account and keeping it in the County Council's bank account. Various proposals to actually use this cash - on saving Children's Centres, for example, or filling potholes - were debated by the Council but the Leadership feels that having heaving reserves is better than paying to provide better services to Cambridgeshire residents.

Still - could be worse. Northamptonshire County Council issued a Section 114 notice imposing immediate spending controls due to severe financial challenge facing the authority, with a significant risk that it will not be able to deliver a balanced budget by the end of the year. This means no new spending is permitted at the council. While we are concerned about the effect on a neighbouring authority, this news has a only a minor effect on Cambridgeshire County Council, which is a co-owner of LGSS, with Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes Councils, providing our HR, financial, procurement and IT services.

Robinson Court Redevelopment: The new housing at Robinson Court is going well though there has been an issue about reconnecting the drains which we hope to have resolved soon. Some residents have told us that when all 30 of the flats' sewage went through one drain, that there were a number of incidents of the drains blocking and people having raw sewage in their gardens. We have spoken with Anglia Water who are going to do a full inspection with cameras through the existing drains and will carry out any necessary repairs. Additionally, only the sewage from 6 of the new properties will be going through the original drain so hopefully the likelihood of future blocks will be much reduced. Anglia Water has said that any future problems need to be referred straight to them rather than to private (expensive) contractors.

Greensand Country: Bridget has been involved for a couple of years with a project, funded by the Heritage Lottery, to improve the Greensands Ridge which runs from Gamlingay all the way to Leighton Buzzard, 40 miles away. The project is now to be known as Greensand Country and is looking for people interested in the countryside to become Greensand Brand Ambassadors.

The role of each Brand Ambassador will be to promote Greensand Country wherever possible and what we are told is that the role is to connect Greensand Country Landscape Partnership with any businesses/organisations that you feel would be suitable to use the brand (for mutual benefit); to support the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership as eyes and ears in each area and generally to be a gatekeeper for the Brand in your area. If you would like to know more the website is <http://greensandcountry.com> or give Bridget a ring.

Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro: The Mayor's Combined Authority has approved spending of £600,000 to develop an outline business case and options appraisal report for a 'Cambridgeshire Autonomous Metro'. The Mayor had promised a light rail system, but an independent report suggested this was not the best solution. The preferred option as set out by the consultants is an electric powered vehicle which operates independently without tracks or rails and can be run on and off road on busways. It would entail about 31 miles of new busways, and nearly four miles of tunnels under Cambridge - one underground section from Madingley Road to Mill Road, and another from Mill Road to Cambridge North station. The price tag for the project would be around £1.5-£1.7bn.

Green Acres Grounds maintenance: We have had quite a few emails recently about leaves making paths slippery and asking us to arrange to have them cleared up in and around Greenacres. The responsibility actually rests with R & H Wale Group but they feel that pruning the trees and mowing the grass is as far as this responsibility goes. We know that a number of residents have been clearing up leaves, litter and other less pleasant things for many years but for a number of reasons do not feel able to carry on. Unfortunately the only solution is for more able residents to step up and take

on the burden in the best interests of everyone. One way of doing this would be for the residents association to arrange a couple of clear up days each winter with perhaps a litter pick in the summer. The Parish Council can lend out litter picking tools and the District Council will willingly collect any bin bags of rubbish and leaves.

There has also been an issue around the footpath dividing Green Acres from Elizabeth Way. R & H Wale Group have kindly agreed to remove the bulky garden waste that had been dumped at the back of the garages, blocking the path and causing a serious hazard to visually impaired and disabled residents wishing to walk that way. Residents whose garden trees were over hanging the path have willingly and happily agreed to cut their trees back so that they do not hit walkers in the face. Please keep an eye on the trees and foliage from your own gardens that may be causing a hazard to others.

Speeding: Hatley Parish Council are able to collect data using their new speed camera of the speeds at which vehicles are driving through their village and where they are coming from. The East Hatley data shows that in just under a month there were 4250 cars recorded travelling over 50 mph, with 58 cars exceeding 70 mph. The speed limit is 40mph and this is a village with vulnerable children and animals so these figures are pretty shocking. Are you one of these drivers?

Schools: We have been waiting since November to have a meeting to update us on progress with the new school site. The County Planners have now agreed the final consent for works at the old GVC site. Works should commence shortly and the academy Trust has already started to clear the Village College building and remove asbestos. We should have more detail about timescales next month.

We have no further information about the future use of the First School site once it is vacated but will be continuing to push for it to become an Early Learning Centre. This is even more urgent now that the Eco-Hub Nursery has closed down. This has left us with no before and after school care and no nursery provision. We know that demand for places is going to increase in September so this is a matter of the utmost urgency for us; and we are working hard to resolve this issue.

Communal Rooms: You may or may not know that both our sheltered housing schemes in Avenells Way and Blythe Way have rather lovely communal rooms for residents and other people to use. The residents pay for these facilities which includes access to laundry facilities. We have recently heard some concerns from residents about how these rooms are used and how much the Council charges non-residents to use them. About a year ago we met with some residents with similar concerns and this triggered a review by the District Council of all communal facilities. Cllr Lynda Harford is in charge of housing and this is what she has to say:

“Over the last year I have met with many representatives of the Council's sheltered tenants and leaseholders both in individual groups at their own schemes and through the Council's Tenant Participation Group meetings. During these meetings, one of which was with a group at Gamlingay, I have noted the different concerns about management of our sheltered schemes and in particular issues with the communal rooms.

We have now commenced a review of the management and usage of communal rooms. One thing is very clear: there is very little uniformity in the way that the communal rooms are used from one scheme to another. This does mean that there is no one solution that can be applied to all the communal rooms and the project group has commenced its work by looking at individual villages and the communal rooms that they have.”

Cambridge Magistrates' Court Closure: The Ministry of Justice has just revealed plans to close the Magistrates' Court on St Andrew's St in Cambridge, which serves South Cambs. The MoJ says that the current court is underused and that it could save money by closing it. Some civil matters would be moved to the County Court on East Road, but all the minor criminal work would go to Huntingdon and Peterborough Magistrates' Court.

The Cambridge Magistrates' Court is housed in a purpose-built part of the Grand Arcade complex. It has full disabled access to the court rooms. It was, in fact, built that big so that as our population grew it would have room to expand.

This change would make it very hard for all of those involved in the work of the court, whether defendants, lawyers, CPS, witnesses, or families. Many defendants and witnesses have limited means and often don't have a car. It often takes an hour to get to Huntingdon by car, and even longer by public transport. It goes against the principle of local and accessible justice.

The MoJ is running a consultation on the proposal until 29 March 2018. Please do add your comments. <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/cambridge-magistrates-court-proposal-on-future/consultation/intro/>

Cycling: A resident has contacted us regarding cyclist and cycling in the dark. Having researched this, it is all very confusing about what lights a cyclist should have, how powerful it should be and where it should be located. Rather than reprint it all we suggest you look at this website:

<https://www.cyclinguk.org/cyclists-library/regulations/lighting-regulations>

The problem for our resident was a cyclist with a very bright white light on their back which looked like a single light vehicle coming towards the car driver and which was frightening and confusing. If you are a night-time cyclist - well done - but please do check that you are complying with the law for your safety and the safety of others.

Local Plan Consultation: The ongoing saga of the South Cambs Local Plan is limping to its conclusion. A consultation on the Planning Inspector's proposed modifications to the Plan has been launched. Comments are only permitted to be made on the modifications, not any new business. The key issues are:

- The Inspector looks set to accept a joint housing supply strategy between SCDC and Cambridge City which should reinstate a five-year housing land supply.
- Sites for new developments at Bourn Airfield and Waterbeach will be enlarged.
- The affordable housing threshold is now triggered at >10 houses, rather than >2.

It looks highly unlikely that the Inspector will report before purdah for local elections starts on 23rd March (during which the Council may not make key decisions) so even assuming there are no more modifications after the consultation, we will not have a Local Plan in place until the middle of the year.

St Denis' Church East Hatley: Excitingly the contractors are just about to move on site to commence restoration works. This Phase one will put in flooring, replace the boarded-up windows and a number of other works. It will not immediately make the building open for the public but it is a great first step.

Royston Trains; There has been much on the local news about changing commuter train services from Bedford but Royston is also being hit and obviously this is a popular station for residents from Arrington, Croydon etc. The key issues highlighted by the local rail users group are the loss of the fast train to London on Saturday morning at 06:00; loss of the evening fast trains back from London on Saturday evenings between 20:44 and 23:14; and the loss of the additional hourly service back from London on Sunday evenings at :52 minutes past the hour between 16:52 and 20.00 amongst other changes.

Royston is a busy commuter and leisure station. The fast train to London on Saturday morning is important for shift and other workers working on Saturday. The fast evening trains back from London on Saturday evening are always very busy and are important both for those returning from work and for leisure travellers returning from days or evenings out in London.

As regards the Sunday service, our members are concerned that the hour later arrival time of the first train into Royston will affect connectivity to Heathrow and Gatwick for those wishing to use the airports for holiday or business travel. The additional evening trains are typically busy in the same manner as the Saturday evening trains, with leisure and work travellers returning from London.

Parking: We are receiving a lot of casework about parking at the moment. Pavement parking is a constant irritant and is especially problematic in Elizabeth Way and Mill Street. This impacts very much on the visually impaired, disabled and people with prams. In our sheltered housing schemes car parking places are for general use - no one place belongs to any one house. There is an ongoing issue of people parking their vehicles on open, public green space which is meant for recreation and not for car parking. All these issues are antisocial and make life less pleasant for people. The police have more important things to deal with so it is up to all of us to park responsibly and considerately. Failing that you can report illegal parking on: <https://southcambscops.org/2017/05/05/%E2%80%8Bin-february-we-launched-a-web-site-when/>

Little Heath Gamlingay: We've arranged a meeting for Little Heath residents to discuss the state of the road and what – if anything – can be done with it. Letters will be distributed nearer the time to each property, but an early alert has also gone onto Facebook – triggering a lot of comment. Please do come and share your views with us and your neighbours!

Flooding in Arrington: Sebastian has been working with County officers to try and resolve the issue of flood waters running off land and down the A1198. Several site visits have taken place and a number of different solutions are being investigated including inspection of the under road drainage pipes, storage of water from the solar farm and so on. The Arrington Parish Clerk will have the latest update if you are interested.

Moat Farm East Hatley: A well attended meeting of Hatley Parish Council heard of plans to convert two agricultural buildings to residential use at Moat Farm. A number of concerns were expressed around highway safety, the village framework and the appropriateness of the application. It appears documents were omitted from the South Cambs website so the consultation has restarted.

News from Wimpole Estate: The planning application for the new carpark to enable the relocation of existing parking on Phase 1 (700 spaces), and provision of new parking in Phase 2 (660 spaces), making good the land to parkland together with the erection of 2no. buildings at the visitor entrance, provision of a connecting pathway between the new car park and Wimpole Hall has been approved. Still not much further forward on the issue of the new footpaths across the estate, however....

Sheen Farm Litlington: The planning application was approved by South Cambs Planning Committee and will deliver 50% affordable housing (11 units).

Superfast Broadband at the Heath: What good news to end on - residents of The Heath now have access to superfast broadband. The new cabinet that was installed on the Iron Church crossroads was commissioned during Christmas week, and orders are now open for residents to upgrade to fibre broadband. Some of have already been activated, and it's reportedly made a huge difference already!

Correspondence

Biodiversity Partnership: Information forwarded to Implementation Group.

GDPR: Or General Data Protection Regulations. clerk has received copious amounts of paperwork on the dos and don'ts of this. Cllr Smith said that basically, no personal information is to be kept or passed on without the permission of the person involved. Any Freedom of Information disclosure cannot include these details. Council is waiting to discover if an officer to police the GDPR needs to be employed.

Shire Homes Scheme: South Cambs District Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme, Shire Homes, offers homeowners a hassle-free way to rent out their property.

Benefits include:

- Guaranteed Rental Payments
- No Management Fees
- Day-to-Day Maintenance
- Regular Property Visits
- Full Management Service

For further information contact:- duty.housing@scams.gov.uk

Election Paperwork: There will be an election for the seven seats on the Parish Council in May 2018. Clerk has the paperwork and will advertise the election when appropriate.

Non-Emergency Police Contact: There is a Police website available to report non-emergencies and the phone number is 101. It is possible to have a web chat on the police website.

Keep Britain Tidy: Council has registered for this, as the IG is intending to hold a Spring Clean.

District Cllr Engagement: SCDC asked how the District Councillors should keep in touch with their Councils. Croydon felt this is fairly obvious, but added that our current Councillors are brilliant with their attendance at meetings, and verbal and written reports.

Defibrillators: Clerk reported that she heard on the radio about a recent incident where a young man saw an elderly gentleman collapse and used a defibrillator that was kept outside. Unfortunately, it did not work and the elderly gentleman died. The investigation proved that the defibrillator was not faulty, but because it was outside in a non-heated cabinet the battery was too cold to power the unit. This is something that must be considered if Croydon decides to acquire one.

Verbal report from Cllr Kindersley

Flooding in Arrington: Is still under investigation. It is possible that a diverted culvert dug by a landowner could be a contributory factor, or run-off from the Solar Farm; there is a culvert under the A1198 which could have been blocked. but this appears to be all right.

Potholes: This problem will only get worse as there is no budget left to mend them. Only the extremely urgent potholes are being repaired. Mill Lane is particularly bad and there is also flytipping down there. Mr Sole suggested that a passing place or two would be beneficial there.

Council Tax: Is going up by £5-00 for a Band D property. Some of this is to cover the cuts that are to be made but haven't been, and some to go into reserves. County Council borrowed £90 million from the Government and this needs to be repaid in 2021, and that is why it is necessary to increase them.

Northamptonshire: County Council is probably bankrupt which is a little worrying as Cambridgeshire shares the legal services with both them and Milton Keynes. Cambs County Council has been assured that there will be no impact on Cambridgeshire.

Bassingbourn New Town: It looks like this will happen and there will be a railway link to either Shepreth/Sandy or Hitchin - this is undecided as yet.

School Bus: There have been many complaints about the way the local school buses are being driven - not dangerously for the children, but inconsiderately for other motorists. Cllr Kindersley has taken this up with the bus companies, but felt that writing might exacerbate the problems.

Speed Data: Council would like to put cables across Larkins Road to measure the speed of vehicles, with a view to obtaining a reduction in the speed limit there. Cllr Kindersley will speak to a gentleman about this, possibly Josh Rutherford, but he is not sure and will report back.

Parking in Arrington: Further to the previous item on parking in Church Lane and Church End, Cllr Kindersley will take this up with the Estate Manager, although it is unlikely to prevent motorists parking there as there are no restrictions. Council suggested extended the yellow lines, but Cllr Kindersley said that Arrington did not want to do this.

Planning:

Clopton Farm - S/1127/17/VC

Variation of Condition 2 has been approved with conditions.

Finance:

Precept: SCDC has acknowledged receipt of the precept of £ 32650-00 for 2018-19, .

Items for next agenda: None put forward.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 21 March 2018 in the Reading Room, starting at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed

Date