

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 15 July 2015 in the Reading Room at 8.00pm.**

**Apologies:** Cllrs Smith and Kindersley - attending other meetings first. Mrs Slator - away.

**Present:** Mr Martin, Mr Wheeler, Mr Sole, three members of public and the Clerk.

**Minutes:** of the June meeting, previously circulated, were agreed and signed.

**Declarations of Interest:** None received.

**Co-option:** Mr James Brown stood for co-option and was voted onto the Council. He completed the required paperwork and Clerk will inform SCDC that Council has a new member.

**CCC Highways Enforcement Officer:** Following complaints from parishioners and at the request of Cllr Kindersley, George came to talk to Council about overhanging foliage in the village. CCC has set a deadline for owners to respond and if this is not met, then CCC will undertake the work and reclaim the cost. Apparently, the Highways budget is now so stretched that this work will cost 2 weeks' of the monthly budget for the whole area - in the region of £1600. This also includes a traffic management cost. He assured the meeting that the work would be completed by the winter. George was thanked for his input, and left the meeting.

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

**Queen Adelaide:** Building work is still continuing, and no further complaints have been made. It is hoped the QA will be open very soon.

**CLP:** There will be one more meeting to launch the brochure containing the results of the Community Led Parish Plan.

**Solar Farm:** Further to the invoice sent to Push Energy for the first year's Community Benefit payment, Clerk received an e-mail asking for the invoice to be re-issued as the company name should be Push Energy (Croydon) Ltd. Clerk produced an invoice as per these instructions, but before it could be ratified by Council received another e-mail from a company called Wise Energy, who asked that the Push Energy invoice should be sent to another address. Clerk prepared the third invoice for Council's approval, which was signed by the Chairman, and will send it to Push at the London address.

**Solar Farm Satellite dish:** A satellite dish has appeared on one of the buildings on the site. Council asked Cllr Smith if it needed planning permission. Cllr Smith thought that it may not, as domestic dwellings can site dishes. However, as the installation is commercial Council asked Clerk to contact SCDC Planning about this.

**Solar Farm Road:** There is still some disquiet about the access to Church Lane from the new road. Cllr Kindersley sent the latest e-mail he had about this to the Clerk, from which the excerpt below is taken.

*Apologies for the delay in getting back on this. I was waiting for one more piece of the jigsaw (ie 1910 Land Values Duties Map extract from Searches) before making an informed judgement.*

*As a result of my investigations, I believe the extent of highway to be as shown coloured blue/grey on the plan below. ie I do not believe there to be any third party land between the metalled carriageway and the developer site boundary edged red.*

This seems to indicate that there is no other owner to be approached and therefore the new access road may be joined to Church Lane. Council felt that referring to a map dated 1910 may not be the most reliable source of information and instructed Clerk to write to Sue Reynolds, Highway Development Manager, copying in Victoria Keppey and Cllrs Smith and Kindersley to see if a more up-to-date map would be clearer and whether it would point towards the same conclusion. Council also would like to know about the hedging/fencing of the road, and whether a gate is required on the new road, which would be set back 5m to allow a vehicle to park whilst gaining access. Clerk to action.

**Dog Bin:** The dog bin adjacent to the Reading Room has been emptied. Clerk to contact Heidi Duffett regarding the erection of the new bin.

**Footpath:** The overgrown footpath has been reported to the Ramblers by the complainant, and to CCC by the Parish Council.

**Transparency Code and Costs:** It appears from the information received from Claire Gibbons at SCDC that funding is available through CAPALC. As Council did not subscribe to CAPALC this year because of a 70% increase in the annual subscription, this may not be accessible.

**Lower Road Speed Limit:** There have been no objections to this, so it is going ahead.

**Community Benefit Fund:** A separate bank account will be set up for any monies received from the solar installation.

Verbal report from Cllr Smith and the June and July reports from Cllrs Smith and Kindersley.

**Green Belt:** The Inspector has asked for justification for large-scale building developments on Green Belt land on the A428 and A10. Nothing will happen until February 2016. East Cambs has just lost two appeals on their Local Plan - the Inspector said it was out of date, although only 4 months' old!

**Orwell:** There are plans afoot to build a further 40-60 houses on land adjacent to the school and opposite the affordable housing development. It is important to get the Inspector's agreement that SCDC has a suitable 5 year housing plan in order to prevent speculative building everywhere.

**Boundary Review and associated information:** This is associated with the number of Councillors who represent each section of the County. Currently there are 57 District Councillors, but the aim is to reduce this to 42. The wards will be arranged so that each Councillor has a similar number of constituents to represent. There is a preference for single member/two member wards, but with the current house building programme, this will need to be reviewed regularly. This is due to be discussed on 21 July. Councillors have been told they must update their Register of Members Interests if they are a freemason.

There is currently consultation on whether to standardise elections so that all District and Parish Councillors are elected at the same time (money-saving) or whether elections should remain staggered so that there is a gradual rotation of Councillors. There is a survey available on-line at

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/views-wanted-future-district-elections>

It looks as though SCDC and CCC may be moving towards becoming a Unitary authority. This is another money-saving idea, reminiscent of the shared housing maintenance scheme, which was a complete disaster.

**Hatley PO:** The future of Hatley Post Office is at stake - the present owner wants to let the premises on a commercial basis. At the moment the PO is heavily subsidised.

**Transparency Code:** Cllr Smith suggested that Council approaches Clare Gibbons re: funding if not a member of CAPALC. Clerk to action.

**Guided Busway:** There will not be a new guided busway along Madingley Road.

### **June Report:**

**Robinson Court:** We have now heard that the planning application for Robinson Court will be submitted by the end of July. This is a lot later than we had anticipated so we hope that the extra time has been used to good effect and that the plan will be excellent. As soon as they are public we shall ensure that they are made available so that you have the opportunity to say what you think about them. Just to reiterate – these will be houses for people with a Gamlingay connection not for those on the general housing list for the whole district.

**Local Plan:** You should by now be aware that the District Council's local plan has been suspended by the government planning inspector. This is really bad news for everyone in South Cambridgeshire as it means that there is no end in sight to the planning policy void in which we have been functioning for the past 12 months. So it is open house for developers wishing to submit applications for housing in places that would not normally have been given a second thought e.g. outside village boundaries, on green field sites etc. The District Council planning committee are still able to reject applications on the grounds that they are unsustainable BUT if the applicant appeals then there is a greatly increased risk that any refusal will be overturned by the planning inspector.

The grounds on which the plan has been suspended are that the Council has provided insufficient evidence to support the need for 33,000 new houses in South Cambridgeshire and the City. There is a risk that this could be increased to 43,000 and we have no idea as to where a further 10,000 could go. Secondly there is insufficient evidence to support the level of protection being given to the Green Belt around the City. The Green Belt is pretty large and not only protects the character of the

City as being small and compact but stops it leaching out into the sensitive countryside and surrounding villages and eventually over-running us all. Lastly there was insufficient evidence to support the large strategic sites for development of many thousands of houses along the A428 and the A10 mainly on the grounds that the roads will not cope and that the City Deal money is not guaranteed.

Though we have supported the protection to the Green Belt and the limiting of development in villages all through the Local Plan development process we have never been happy about putting thousands of houses along the A428 and A10. Our solution has been to go back to plan A regarding Northstowe which was for a town of 20,000 houses rather than the 10,000 that is now proposed. We have been told by the administration that this is 'laughable' but we shall see.

**West Road:** Sebastian and Bridget took part in an open meeting for residents organised by GEAG to talk about the Local Plan particularly in relation to the application from Trinity College to build 29 houses at the bottom of Mill St, on the land at the west of West Rd. By the time you read this the application should have been logged by the Council and should be available on the website for you to look at. It will also be available in the Parish Council office. As well as looking at the design and the housing you also need to see what is being offered by the developers to mitigate for the impact of the new houses e.g. contributions to the surgery, cycle routes etc. You will then need to make a judgement about whether the benefits outweigh the negatives or vice versa. As it happens the application is completely silent on the community benefit matters merely noting "Subject to viability" in every box. So we have no idea what the plans will bring - and it may well be nothing.

The Parish Council will be organising a public meeting at which the developers will be able to present their plans and to answer questions. After that it is over to you to send any letters to the District Council either supporting or objecting to the application. Please let Bridget know if you would like to be added to the e mailing list for West Road Action Group.

As a result of the Local Plan suspension we know that we are going to be receiving further applications. It already looks as if the rejected application for the Lupin Field is going to come back and there may well be more. We shall do our best to keep you fully informed.

**School Close Parking:** We continue to receive complaints about drop off and pick up parking in School Close. Please be aware that there is a carpark available at the back of the Cross, which is only a very short walk to the school.

**Bin Collections and Street Cleaning:** Finally, a street cleaning lorry has appeared in Gamlingay and some smaller villages - though the Parish Council volunteers seem to be mainly responsible for the noticeable lack of litter in Gamlingay. There are still people whose bins are not being regularly emptied but we think that most issues are now being resolved. Do let us know if you are having problems.

**Off Road Bike Track:** Do go and take a look at the off road bike track by the bowls pitch. Hutchinsons Builders very kindly lent us a man and a digger for a day to work with a couple of young people to remodel the track which had been looking a bit sad. The track is now bigger than it was and is free of brambles and nettles. Well done to all concerned.

**The City Deal:** The City Deal Assembly (on which Bridget sits) has met again, this time to focus on what the options are for improving traffic on the A428 from Caxton Gibbet to the City and in particular along Madingley Rd. There is an obvious appetite by the County Council to build further busways which is alarming when the original one ran into, and continues to run into, such problems. It is a hugely expensive option (£60 million) and the plans that are on the table involve cutting a huge swathe through the Green Belt. This is bad in itself but also has the potential to road lock large areas of countryside which it will then be difficult to reject as building sites for 1000s of houses. There is also the small matter of there really not being that many buses from South Cambs into the City - at the moment just the 18 (which now stops in Cambourne and no longer goes to St Neots) and the expensive X5. The argument that a busway would generate buses was a bit underwhelming.

**PIP payments:** There has been a lot in the press recently about the appalling time that has been taken in some people's case to sort out their disability benefits (PIP payment). If you have been waiting a long time do let us know and we can advise you on how best to move things forward.

**Fostering:** Foster carers are being sought by the County Council. If this is something you may have considered and would like to know more, please visit <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering>. The number of children in care in Cambridgeshire is well over 500. You can also learn more about adoption, via the same web link. This is a really good thing to do - so please think about it!

**Concessionary Bus Passes:** A local resident keen to support the work of a local assistance charity inquired as to the average cost to the council of a concessionary bus pass, as the basis for making a charitable donation. Usage of a concessionary bus pass requires the local authority to compensate bus

operators, and the average cost per user per year is estimated at £60. Annually, the Council spends about £6 million on concessionary bus pass reimbursement. The bulk of this reimbursement relates to strong commercial services like the Guided Busway.

It is a coincidence not lost on us that the reduction of subsidised rural bus services, which largely serve concessionary bus pass holders who might otherwise suffer from rural isolation, will reduce that demand-led budget. We hope that the County Council's new Public Health remit will be able to make a strong preventive case for supporting subsidized transport for people at risk of isolation.

**Post 16 Education Transport:** The County Council is being forced to reduce its support for post-16 education transport. This is not unexpected because severe cuts to local authority budgets are forcing the council to direct depleted resources to statutory services - and many of the services it has traditionally supported have been discretionary, including levels of post-16 transport assistance. A public consultation has just been launched - please respond! The full document is posted on the County Council website.

Areas that will see change include mileage reimbursement for parents of children with a Statement of Special Educational Need; removal of the allowance for free travel for a second child in the same family currently in post-16 education; and the introduction of charges to new post-16 students with Special Educational Need and Disability. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have concerns or queries.

**Flooding:** Well. This is gripping stuff but here goes ..... Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) Cambridgeshire County Council has a duty to produce a strategy in partnership with key stakeholders involved in flood risk management. We are undertaking a public consultation closing 14th July 2015 and are seeking YOUR views on the content of the updated sections of the strategy. The draft strategy and online questionnaire can be found at:

[http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/custom\\_scripts/cons\\_details.aspx?ref=369](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/custom_scripts/cons_details.aspx?ref=369)

**Maintenance of ordinary watercourses:** Household owners or businesses whose property is adjacent to a river or stream or ditch are likely to be riparian owners with maintenance responsibilities. If a property backs onto a river or stream then the owner is likely to be a riparian owner and own the land up to the centre of the watercourse. Riparian owners have a responsibility to maintain the bed and banks of the watercourse and ensure there is no obstruction, diversion or pollution of the watercourse. Full details can be found in Cambridgeshire County Council's 'The rights and responsibilities of a riparian owner' [http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/336/riparian\\_owner\\_factsheet](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/336/riparian_owner_factsheet)

**Reporting flooding problems:** Officers are not in a position to know about every flooding incident that occurs, particularly those which do not lead to flooding within properties. However, records of flood incidents which affected roads or entered the boundaries of properties are important to record. They can indicate that there has been extensive flooding from relatively regular rainfall events, which would warn that the properties are at risk in more extreme rainfall events. This information is crucial in building up cases for flood defence and flood resilience schemes which will require strong evidence of the flood risk to properties. Flooding from overflowing drains and gullies can be reported to highways online:

<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/HighwaysReports/Highways/ReportProblem1.aspx>

District and parish councils and community groups and residents in areas which suffer from non-urgent local flooding (i.e. from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses) can report flood incidents online using Cambridgeshire County Council's interactive map.

[https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/xfp/scripts/xforms\\_form.aspx?formID=48&language=en](https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/site/xfp/scripts/xforms_form.aspx?formID=48&language=en)

**Funding flood risk management schemes:**

The County Council actively seeks grant funding to help fund flood risk management schemes that meet the Government's funding criteria. Some schemes will not meet the criteria set, but there are still opportunities to move these schemes forward. Under the Localism Act town and parish councils have been given the General Power of Competence, and can now spend money on flood alleviation schemes under the Section 137 limits. This means that parish councils can have a part to play in partnership funding contributions for flood alleviation schemes in the future. Town and parish councils are also able to apply for Public Works loans, at preferential rates, to enable them to contribute to more comprehensive flood risk management schemes.

**July report:**

**Planning - where are we now? - Local Plan:** South Cambs has written back to the Local Plan inspector (who has suspended further hearings on our Local Plan) saying that they will do the work

required to demonstrate that the green belt policy and the new settlement policy are robust. They will also review the housing numbers needed, and hope that there isn't an increase.

This work will be completed by October, and there will then be a public consultation on what comes out of it in November-December, with a view to submitted modifications in February 2016 and getting the examination back on track. That assumes, however, that the results of the work doesn't mean we need a more fundamental rethink of the plan.

**Planning - where are we now? - Speculative Developments:** In the meantime, we still don't have our housing land supply and speculative development applications are pouring in. Thus far, the planning committee is rejecting them all (apart from Barrington). But we still haven't had our first appeal result from this batch, so we don't know how many will get through. So this is a very difficult time for Parishes.

Gamlingay Parish Council has agreed to object to the planning application lodged by Endurance on behalf of Trinity College at West Road on a series of grounds. We do not as yet have any idea what the planning officers' recommendation will be but if it is for approval we expect the application to go to the September Planning Committee meeting at the District Council. The planning committee meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 10am and it is a public meeting held at Cambourne. A large number of letters of objection have been received and quite a few people turned out to question Endurance at the public meeting.

Orwell Parish Council has now had a presentation from developers anxious to build 'between 40 and 60' homes on Hurdleditch Road beside the school. And so it goes on - speculative planning applications on a quick count now amount to over 3,000 homes and over a further 1000 on pre-application enquiries. So the Local Plan process - which is supposed to protect South Cambs and keep it one of the best places to live and work in the UK - is having the absolutely opposite effect.

The Council has asked the Local Plan inspector for a preliminary opinion about the joint housing trajectory agreed with Cambridge City, in which our housing numbers and build-rates are counted together and would mean that we don't have a shortfall in land supply (as long as the housing numbers review doesn't come up with a much higher requirement). We don't know whether the inspector will pronounce on this, let alone what she will say.

The Council has also asked for outside advice on what reasons it can use to reject speculative applications. Hopefully that advice will be soon, and effective because at this rate.....

**Planning - where are we now? - Northstowe:** Despite serious misgivings over the paucity of information and the utter failure to deliver 40% affordable housing Phase 2 of Northstowe has now obtained planning consent for the outline planning application by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for the town centre, around 3,500 homes and facilities such as a secondary school - to be built alongside the first homes at the town - along with two primary schools. The sports plans "could" see an indoor sports hall based at the town's secondary school for pupils and nearby residents, as well as large outdoor areas offering a combination of grass pitches, artificial pitches and 'kickabout' space. A sports pavilion, changing and storage facilities are also included - all of which is a bit dire considering the size of the eventual town. .

Planning permission had already been given for Gallagher's first 1,500 homes, primary school, sports hub and local centre with shops. Work is underway ahead of homes being built in phase one which will also see improvements to the B1050. When complete, Northstowe will have up to 10,000 new homes and an anticipated population of around 25,000 people.

The next meeting agreed the S106 agreement for the town - or as one of the Committee wrote "The current chapter of the Northstowe saga limped on to its conclusion in a 7-hour JDCC meeting on 24 June".

**Planning - where are we now? - Cemex:** It was extremely disappointing that the Planning Committee at South Cambs did not heed the wishes of local people and refuse the planning application for 220 new homes at the Quarry. Effectively a new dormitory village has been created and residents are understandably angry about the increase in the size of Barrington by 47%. However, we are where we are and our job now is to make sure that the development is delivered with as little impact on surrounding communities as possible and with as much benefit to those same communities - of course Barrington above all. Some work has already been done between Cemex, the Parish Council and South Cambs on the S106 developer's contribution package which delivers nearly £5m in benefit.

It is because of these negotiations and partly because of Sebastian's repeated objection to the plans that he was unable to participate in the vote. The Legal Officer advised "I would most likely have advised the Chair that the participation of a committee member biased against an application or having

predetermined the same ... would expose the LPA and the decision it might make to an unacceptable risk of being challenged by any stakeholder concerned a fair hearing had not been possible. Challenge ... would be by the mechanism of judicial review and the remedy available to the court ... is to quash the decision and require it to be re-made. Obviously costs consequences for the authority inevitably flow from such proceedings..." He ends "In the event, I was and remain perfectly satisfied that your withdrawal and non-participation on this business was quite proper and entirely in accordance with ensuring lawful administration of the application."

**Shared Services:** South Cambs has now agreed to share services with Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire in three areas: legal, building control and ICT. This will start in October 2015. In principle this is a good idea, but none of these services will be based in South Cambs, and the mechanisms for holding the managers to accounts don't appear to be very robust. Officer employment will be transferred away (although they remain in the building) and so it's a bit unsettling for them at the moment.

**Street Lighting:** A slightly different angle to the continuing saga to the replacement of our street lights across Cambridgeshire... While Parishes such as Haslingfield, Wimpole and Gamlingay continue to suffer at the hands of Balfour Beatty - nearly a year into the start of works in some places - the County Council has agreed to switch off lighting to save £272,000 in its street lighting energy costs. The proposal is to increase the period of the current streetlight dimming (10pm until 6am) to all times and turning off lighting in many roads and streets between midnight and 6am. Street lights on main traffic routes will not be switched off and Parishes will have the option of taking on the costs of keeping lights on for £12 each a year. So our nice new lights (those that have them) will presumably last much longer than planned, what with being barely used... Anyway pleased to report that so far Parishes in the Gamlingay division will NOT have any switch-off at the moment.

**Buses:** The new timetable for the 75 agreed with the community following local engagement is now up and running between Wrestlingworth - Orwell - Cambridge. All journeys now follow a standard route between Orwell and Cambridge, one off-peak journey starts at or returns to Croydon and Arrington, the timetable retains peak journeys for work/college but sadly it no longer serves The Eversdens who can access alternative transport available using the Demand Responsive service provided by Huntingdonshire Association for Community Transport or other community transport schemes.

Now - keen bus users will recall that the 18 was re-focused on Cambourne so that residents could transfer to the 'numerous' daily services running from and to Cambridge. However, it did presuppose that there would be a transport interchange at Cambourne where people could wait in relative comfort. So what happened to it? The location identified is owned by the developer and there was no objection to the work when County Council and South Cambs DC met with them in January. The scheme was originally allocated budget from the Better Bus Area Fund. The deadline for spending this grant has now gone, but the County did manage to use some of the budget to purchase the shelter and keep it in storage. Needless to say because of all the messing about missing the grant deadline and so on there is no funding currently allocated for this scheme. Meanwhile we wait in the rain and wonder why so few people want to use the buses that they have to be subsidised.....

**MindEd Trust for Young People:** In memory of Meldreth resident Edward Mallen, who died following sudden onset depression earlier this year aged just 18, his family have launched the MindEd Trust. Its purpose will be to provide early support for young people at school, college and university. By raising awareness about and removing stigma around mental illness, the MindEd Trust hopes to encourage young people to seek help and support at the earliest opportunity - please do get in touch if you would like to know more.

**Free Health Checks!** Free NHS health checks are available to all 40-74 year-olds at your local surgery and I know Gamlingay surgery has written to many people offering appointments already. In Cambridgeshire, take-up of this offer, which is part of the Public Health prevention agenda, has been low. The check takes about 20 minutes and only requires you to contact your surgery to make an appointment.

We are continuing to work with the surgery in Gamlingay to investigate ways in which we can access funding to allow them to improve their facilities so that they can recruit more staff and hopefully reduce waiting list times.

Now's here's a story that might make you reach for the smelling salts. Gamlingay Medical Practice was allocated £43 000 as part of the s106 agreement for the new houses on Station Road. This sum is ONLY for the Gamlingay practice and cannot be used for any other purpose. It is specifically for capital improvements. It currently sits - alone, abandoned - with South Cambs. The

agreement requires it to be paid over to the Bedfordshire PCT (which no longer exists) and in turn to pay it to the practice.

Where's the catch, I hear you cry? It appears that the current organisers of the NHS (CCG and NHS England) have no process in place to deal with passing s106 money on. Nothing. So after much time and handwringing a means of getting the cash was identified: The Medical practice has to prepare an 'application' (for their own money) to be submitted to the designated person in Bedfordshire CCG. If she approves it, it will go to her line manager. If her line manager approves it, it will go to the Director. If he/she approves it, it will go to the Commissioning Board.

If they do approve it the practice is required to submit 3 quotes for every aspect of the work. The money will only be paid out on sight of paid invoices (how can a cash strapped practice do this?) and they will ONLY pay the lowest quote even if it is not the best quote.

If the money is not drawn down by 2019 it will go back to the developers and Gamlingay will not get the provision it needs to mitigate for the extra residents. So it is no wonder that there is not enough money for GPs when there are at least 4 levels of non-productive bureaucracy sitting above the people who actually do the work.

Needless to say we've involved YOU because you need to know, the Health Committee at the County Council (in the hope it might do something about this) and our MP. Please pray that this only happens once – in Gamlingay – and not to all the other practices that serve us.

**More Boundary changes:** Following on from the County's reorganisation of the number of Councillors and where they represent South Cambs has now started the same process. The Boundary Commission wants us to reduce the number of Councillors (which you might be very pleased about) and rationalise Ward boundaries. There are 2 options: an all-out election every 4 years (in which case we may keep our mix of 1 - 2 - and 3 - member Wards) or election by thirds in 3 of the 4-year cycle (in which case we will be obliged to have 3 - member Wards). But the decision on the total number of members has to be made \*first\*, before we can be clear on the implications for our villages. The only clear conclusion is that we should come up with firm proposals of our own rather than leaving everything to the Commission. What do you think? South Cambs currently has 105 Parishes with more on the way – the Haslingfield part of Trumpington Meadows, Northstowe and West Cambourne likely to be next.

**Local Highway Improvements:** Do you have an idea of how highways could be improved in your Parish (nb not potholes...)? Cambridgeshire County Council is once again delivering its Local Highway Improvement (LHI) initiative and is inviting applications for funding from Parish Councils and other community groups by Monday 2nd November 2015. Applications should be submitted to [local.projects@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:local.projects@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) and I strongly suggest applicants discuss their application prior to submission using the above email. Schemes are delivered on a jointly funded basis, with applicants able to apply for up to £10,000. You will need to provide a minimum contribution towards each project of at least 10% of the total scheme cost. This enables applicants to deliver minor improvements for as little as £500. Applications could involve any highway measure or improvement that is considered to offer benefit to the local community. Examples of schemes that have been delivered through this initiative include traffic calming, parking restrictions, speed limit changes and footway and pedestrian crossing improvements. So get thinking!

**Tempsford (& Foxton) Rail Crossings:** As a part of Network Rail's commitment to reduce risk of accidents and provide more reliable journey times, it was proposed to close all level crossings on East Coast Main Line (ECML) from King's Cross to Doncaster. Network Rail has been working together with WSP, who conducted a feasibility study for this project, and after formal consultations the preferred options were identified. But sadly NR has no money so has decided not to go ahead with any aspect of the ECML project but instead will be considering all crossings separately, trying to integrate the closures with other schemes in area. I would have checked the purse first but hey ho....

**Greenery in South Cambs:** Delighted to see that 1,000 more council tenants in South Cambridgeshire are set to join the growing number of households in the district benefitting from solar energy as the Council installs solar panels on more of its homes. As before, tenants will pay nothing for the panels or their maintenance and will save around £210 a year on their bills. In addition around 40 sheltered housing scheme communal rooms will also have PV panels installed, with electricity generated being available for free during the day. To date, the Council has installed over 2,000 solar panel systems, over 150 air source heat source pumps and improved over 450 homes with external wall insulation among a number of other energy saving measures. Tenants benefitting from these improvements have seen their fuel costs drop significantly.

This is important stuff – because in Gamlingay for example - when the proportion of households claiming Housing Benefit/Council Tax Credit is used as a proxy for low income, it shows that in 2010 15% of households in Cambridgeshire were claiming these benefits; in South Cambridgeshire that figure was 11%. However Gamlingay was at 12.57%. In South Cambs 5.3% of children live in claimant households - in Gamlingay 8.1% of its children live in claimant households. Gamlingay has a greater proportion of working age people claiming key benefits, a greater proportion of JSA claimants and a greater proportion of Incapacity Benefit Claimants than the rest of the district so free energy will make a difference.

**More greenery in South Cambs:** We have received a number of concerns about trees overhanging the road in Croydon making it dangerous as passing high-sided vehicles have to move into the middle of the road to avoid the low branches. The County's enforcement team has now agreed to trim the trees and recharge the cost to the landowners.

**Superfast Broadband in Hatley (and no doubt other Parishes...):** So it's great that the Exchange in Gamlingay is finally upgraded to accept superfast broadband. However, spare a thought for Hatley - where the PC has been advised "We want to reassure you that Hatley is included in programme to receive fibre broadband, however this is a complex engineering project and in some harder to reach areas such as yours it may take longer to deliver the best solution". We are assured, however that fibre broadband will be delivered during the first half of 2016. We will see.

**Grants in the Gamlingay Division:** We were delighted to support grants from the South Cambs Community Chest to the Almshouse and Pension Charity of the Julia Norris Trust in Little Gransden toward the refurbishment and remodelling of four almshouses of £1500, an award of £1,000 to Gamlingay Allotment Gardeners Association to purchase table and benches and £1,000 to Mother Goose Pre-School in Wimpole to purchase matting material to be placed around play equipment. If you or an organisation you are involved with could benefit from a Community Chest grant please get in touch.

**Assets of Community Value:** Changes to planning laws mean it's more important than ever to list your local pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). Pubs that are listed on the Council's register of community assets are protected by a removal of so-called permitted development rights. This means an owner cannot change the use of a pub, or demolish it, for 5 years from the date of entry onto the register. And developers must ask the Council whether their pub has even been nominated - waiting 56 days before undertaking alterations so that the value of the pub to the community can be assessed.

Even if the pub changes hands and is taken off the ACV Register, permitted development rights are suspended for 5 years, meaning the new owners also need planning permission to make any changes. Visit the Council's website for more information about this in our ACV protocol. You'll also find the nomination form for those pubs your community values and wants to support. It's never been more important to nominate a pub as an ACV!

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-right-bid>

**Crime in Gamlingay:** It is really disappointing to report a spate of vandalism and petty crime in Gamlingay. Long light nights have made it easier for miscreants to behave badly. The paint that was poured into the brook will have damaged the wildlife as well as causing an eyesore on what was looking really beautiful. Please do be vigilant and report anything you see on 999 if it is actually happening or 101 if it is too late for the police to intervene. Petty crime and vandalism is still crime and should always be reported and always punished. Grrrr.

### **Correspondence:**

**Passenger Transport Update:** From 27 July there is a new timetable for the 75 bus, which comes through Croydon. Clerk will put the new timetable on both notice boards.

**SCDC Local Plan update:** This has been covered in the reports from Cllrs Smith and Kindersley.

**Heidi Allen's Contact Details:** These are available from the main notice board in the village.

**Electronic Correspondence:** All circulated - nothing raised.

**Reading Room:** Mrs Wheeler asked if she could report to the meeting on the current position of the Reading Room. Her report is reproduced below:-

*It has recently come to light (through applying for the National Non Domestic Rate relief), that the Reading Room is no longer a registered charity. The Charity Commission say this is because we did not complete the yearly return and as a result 'de-listed' us some five years ago. It would appear that they only contacted one Trustee and didn't follow this up when they did not receive a reply. We are*

*unable to be reinstated because it is now a requirement that we have a 'turnover' of more than £5000.00 and we are nowhere near that. This has implications in respect of rate relief and I have been in contact with Trudie Mann of the NNDR team at SCDC. We have an ongoing dialogue and she has been immensely helpful and understanding. Today I received a form which we are to complete and return and the relief will then hopefully be granted.*

*However, there are other possibly more far-reaching implications for the Reading Rooms and the Trustees. We do not know at this stage whether the original constitution still stands especially since Downing College are no longer landowners or Trustees. There is also the Ecclesiastical link to consider. So we need to look at a new framework - we are a 'not for profit' group and we need to ensure we are legal and all above board. The Trustees are meeting next week to discuss the way forward and we are starting to research our options.*

*The Trustees ask that this is kept on the Agenda until we can resolve our status and implement (if necessary) a new framework. This is to ensure that we are open, transparent and engaged with the village. We would welcome help and advice from our District Councillors, the Parish Council and possibly ACRE (through the Parish Council) as well as any questions you may have.*

Reproduced below is the original communication which alerted Mrs Wheeler to the situation with the Reading Room status.

Dear Mrs Wheeler

#### **CROYDON PARISH ROOM - 254310**

Thank you for your email requesting reinstatement to the register.

I am writing to confirm that the charity was removed from the Central Register of Charities on the 9 September 2010. This was because, despite repeated Reminders, the charity had failed to submit the required documentation to us and was considered inactive.

In response to your request for reinstatement I notice that the income of the charity was below the registration threshold of £5,000 per annum and, therefore, as we no longer register charities below this income we are unable to reinstate the charity at this time.

If however the income has been over this threshold for the last 2 years you will need to provide evidence that the charity has been active, you should include copies of all overdue accounts (2009 and onwards) for the outstanding years **together with AGM minutes** to show that the committee was still active, please send the documents by email to enable us consider the reinstatement request.

- How to [prepare accounts](#)
- Help with [converting documents to PDF](#)
- What you [need to send](#)

Yours sincerely

Dawn Alexander (Miss)  
Charity Commission – First Contact

Council will keep this item on the agenda as requested until a conclusion acceptable to both parties has been reached.

#### **Planning:**

**Valley Farm:** Permission granted for a first floor extension for existing tenants who wished to expand their premises.

**Top Farm:** An application was received for an extension to the ground floor of an existing building adjacent to the farmhouse. There were no objections to this proposal - Clerk to action.

**Dr Gareth Burr:** Permission to use the site for educational activities has been refused.

**Finance:**

**Bank Statement:** Current account balance at 29 June is £2611-16.

**Items for the next agenda:** Village printer

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 16 September 2015 in the Reading Room, starting at 8.00pm.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 9.25pm.

Signed .....

Date .....