

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 20 July 2016 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

**Apologies:** Mr Brown - abroad

**Present:** Mr Wheeler, Mrs Slator, Ms Newland, Mr Sole (later), the Clerk, three members of public, Cllrs Smith and Kindersley.

**Minutes:** Of the May meeting and notes from the June "meeting" were agreed and signed.

**Declarations of Interest:** None

**Co-option:** Mr Peter Barnes stood for co-option and was voted onto the Council. He brought along the required completed paperwork and Clerk will send this in and inform SCDC that Council has a new member. The Chairman thanked Mr Barnes for his interest and welcomed him to the Council.

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

**Queen Adelaide:** Mr Wenman is still waiting for the Highways to rule on the visibility splays for the car park. Cllr Kindersley has put in official complaints about the time the decision is taking, and there is now a new Planning Officer in charge of the application. Apparently there is no set stipulation for when the number of dwellings/commercial premises on a site require visibility splays and it appears to be down to the Officer in charge. Mr Wenman has put up a new sign stating the street number of the pub rather than its name, as his post was going astray. He assured Council that a pub sign (not the pink Q and A) will go back when the pub reopens. The proposed Cheese and Wine party cannot be held on the pub premises due to insurance issues, but Council can site a marquee in the grounds and Mr Wenman can take interested persons around the pub to see the works.

**Dog Waste Bag Dispenser:** Deferred until next meeting.

**Reading Room Wall:** Deferred until next meeting.

**Implementation Group:** Mrs Barnes reported that members of the group had seen the boards and they are not what they appeared to be in the pictures. The Chairman asked that when they find some boards they do want, to come to a meeting with all the costings and information so that it can be presented to Council.

A report for the June meeting was read to Council:-

*We are pleased that Val Barnes is to attend tonight's meeting to put the IG case for portable display boards being paid for out of the new community fund. We believe this purchase will be of significant benefit to the whole community and all groups. Storage should not be a problem either in the main shed or in the storage area behind the church organ. There is an almost immediate need for these for the summer show on 10<sup>th</sup> July.*

*Possible housing development: Still no firm proposals to report. It is reassuring that contacts are being maintained. Please be reassured that nothing of substance is being hidden and, as soon as it is appropriate, any firm proposals will be opened up for wider comment. Further work by on other facilities is, to a considerable extent, awaiting this outcome.*

*Communications Survey: We are pleased to report that, following further efforts to encourage responses, the return rate has risen to well over 50% and may even reach the two-thirds mark! The results are being collated and a brief report is to follow.*

*Litter pick: Thank you for the very helpful resolution of the insurance question. An organised pick is in prospect this summer with James Brown being the main link between the PC and IG – thank you James.*

*Sustainability: This group is still at the stage of reviewing what other villages have achieved or are working on. Two visits have taken place. The first was a fact finding visit to the Gamlingay Community Turbine to compare the strong opposition noted in our CLP against their experience in Gamlingay. The second visit was a guided tour of the EcoHub and discussion of the design principles – thanks to Bridget Smith for hosting this – with some lessons and thoughts to be shared with the Reading Room team. These, and future visits are open to anyone to attend.*

*We think this covers the main points to date though we would be happy to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and continued support.*

*Malcolm Ralph and Jonny Firth – IG Co-Chairs*

**Stock Certificates:** Clerk has framed the certificates and will ask the Trustees if the frame can be displayed in the Reading Room.

**Community Benefit Fund:** The second annual instalment as promised by Push Energy, has been received.

**Speed Limit on Larkins Road:** From the County Council criteria, it looks unlikely that any reduction in the current speed limit for Larkins Road can be obtained.

**Members' Interest Forms:** It is recommended that these are reviewed/redone every year and when Clerk has collected them all together, will send copies in to the Monitoring Officer.

**Community Payback Scheme:** Mrs Slator stated that Petersfield School uses this scheme to get various works undertaken around the school and grounds, and said the lads involved work hard and have never been any trouble. She will make enquiries at school and report to the September meeting.

**Wimpole Hall parking:** When the County Show was held recently at Wimpole Hall, the Hall put signs up asking people not to park in Church Lane and Church End, Arrington. Unfortunately this did not deter people from doing so, and the roads were full for most of the day.

**School Bus:** Mr Wenman reported that he has heard nothing further about the incident with the school bus. Mrs Slator has told the school about it, who asked to be notified of any other problems with the bus.

**War Memorial:** Council has been officially notified by CCC that the war memorial is listed. Clerk was asked to check with AON if this makes any difference to the policy and what is the maximum amount that can be claimed.

**Grass Cutting:** Cutbacks in expenditure on grass cutting by both SCDC and CCC Highways have resulted in numerous complaints.

**Register of Electors:** Updates for June and July were circulated to Councillors at the meeting.

Report to the Parishes from Cllrs Kindersley and Smith (previously circulated)

**Commemoration of the Somme:** Sebastian was extremely humbled to read a citation about the Gamlingay men who died at the Battle of the Somme during the Commemoration Service at Ely Cathedral on July 1<sup>st</sup>. 13 men from Gamlingay died in the Battle of the Somme, nine with no known graves – what an extraordinary and chilling figure. The first to die – on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1916 – was John Norman - an 11th Suffolk. He was a farm worker, like all his family. We do remember them.

**Devolution:** Turning to the events of a century later we currently have a 'fluid' situation in terms of national leadership. More locally, all Cambridgeshire authorities plus Peterborough have agreed to start a consultation about the decision to move to a directly elected Mayoralty for the entire area. We urge you to take a moment to tell the authorities what you think – this is a profoundly important decision that will impact on us all.

Though it is called a 'devolution' deal it is not devolution in the true sense of the word. This involves the government devolving powers and spending down to a much lower level. In this case the powers never actually reach those of us currently in local government because two new levels of bureaucracy are being created: a Combined Authority consisting of the heads of all 7 councils and sitting above that an Elected Mayor.

We have very deep misgivings about this proposal. It will be expensive, bureaucratic, unaccountable and very difficult for any of us to engage with. The Police & Crime Commissioner provides a good example of how residents feel about this sort of Blairite pseudo-American post – low engagement, low turnouts, low interest and – one might argue – low effectuality.

We are told that the Mayor will bring enormous amounts of cash into the County which we otherwise would not get. However, the amounts concerned are pretty insignificant but will apparently 'leverage in more funding'. Hmm.

Perhaps most concerning from our point of view are two elements – firstly public funds will be used to trigger the delivery of housing in the area. Not housing new to the Local Plans but housing already planned but not yet built because developers – poor dears – are finding it expensive to deliver the necessary infrastructure. So the state will instead. You will, in fact.

Secondly the Mayor (due to be elected by you in May 2017, btw) has the power to create 'Mayoral Development Corporations' with planning and land assembly powers. These powers will be exercised with one other person having to agree them - the Cabinet Member in the relevant local authority area. Now - just imagine what this would mean for a site such as Bassingbourn Barracks. The

Mayor could decide that it will deliver 15,000 new homes, schools, road improvements, major employment parks, a town centre etc etc - all of these things without a whisper from you and I - the people. It's a dangerous way forward.

**Neighbourhood Plans:** Gamlingay Parish Council are making huge progress with their Neighbourhood Plan. This is a very worthwhile exercise as it allows parishes to indicate where local people think development should go, how much they believe they need and what sort of development it should be. Bridget is leading on the economic development strand of the plan and has been sending a questionnaire to all business owners in Gamlingay and Hatley. If you have not heard from her it will be because she has not got your contact details. Please send her an e-mail and she will be in touch very soon.

**South Cambs Magazine:** There are still some problems with delivery of the South Cambs magazine. If you do not receive it, please let us know. Hatley is now getting the Mag posted.

**Grass Cutting:** We have had an enormous amount of communication from residents of all of our villages about uncut grass. As we explained last month this has been due to a mess up with the County and District Council ground maintenance contracts which is yet to be resolved. That aside, even when the responsibility for each area is sorted out the grass will still not be cut as often as in the past and most likely not as often as you would like. In some areas residents have taken matters into their own hands and cut the verges outside their own and also their neighbours' houses. Thank you very much to everyone who has done this. The reality of the matter is that due to continued reduction in Council services we are going to find ourselves more and more reliant on these good citizens if we want the grass to be kept short. The same will apply to street sweeping, litter collection, snow clearance and so on.

**GreenSand Ridge LAG:** The Greensand Ridge Local Action Group is a body of local people, chaired this year by Bridget, which gives out EU funding to the Greensand Ridge region which stretches from the A1198 to Leighton Buzzard. So only the six villages of the Gamlingay ward are eligible for this funding in South Cambs. The LAG has been giving out grants since 2006 to projects which would struggle to get significant funding from anywhere else and focuses on farming, forestry, fisheries, micro enterprise and community projects. The Eco Hub has had £204,000 of grant from this source and would not have been built without it. There is more funding available but you will need to be very quick to get your application in as obviously - thanks to the events of the past few weeks - there will shortly be no more grants of this type available.

**Blythe Way Bollards:** At last, the bollards which the majority of the residents of Blythe Way did not want in the first place have been removed. Residents living in the housing nearest to Stocks Lane were happy for their bollards to stay, but those at the end of the road felt that their views were spoiled and that the bollards actually served no purpose. Thank you to those people who sent messages of thanks to us for helping to sort this out.

**Robinson Court:** The planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of Robinson Court is to be submitted early July. The old flats will be replaced by:

- 4 x 1 bed flat for affordable rent
- 2 x 2 bed flat for affordable rent
- 2 x 1 bed house for shared ownership
- 2 x 2 bed house for shared ownership
- 2 x 2 bed house for outright sale
- 2 x 3 bed house for outright sale

The reason for this work is that the existing flats now fall far short of what are the expected minimum standards for affordable housing. It is a shame that some of the new houses are to be sold but in these straightened times we have to accept that councils no longer have the money they used to have and so must find other ways of financing projects such as this.

The planning application should be submitted on the 4th July 2016. The decision to spend the budget (£2.3million) has been approved. SCDC is working with procurement and cost consultants to pull together the tender documents. As SCDC is a public body any projects over 25K will be advertised in Contract Finder in due course. With regard to the tender documents the Council is looking for experienced house builders that can build and deliver both Private and Affordable Housing and this will be required to be evidenced by all tenderers. So keep your eyes peeled, Gamlingay builders!

**Self-Build:** As property becomes less and less affordable many people are turning to self-build as a way forward. We know that there is an appetite for this in South Cambs as 460 people have already registered their interest. Last year the Council made a successful bid for Government funding and became one of eleven councils in the country piloting its new focus on self build/custom build housing.

Interested? There are registers on the Council's website at [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) for people interested in self build opportunities and anyone interested in bringing forward land for self/custom build. More information on self build can also be found on the National and Custom Self Build website [www.nacsba.org.uk](http://www.nacsba.org.uk)

**Education across Cambridgeshire:** We are all aware of the pressures from development in this area. None more so that the impact on Schools. Based on current understanding of growth of existing and new communities, the projected number of new schools required - just in Cambridgeshire! - over the next 15 years is 42! 26 primary schools, 12 secondary and 4 special schools will need to be provided - that's quite something. The new town at Northstowe will be the largest new settlement since Milton Keynes and will include: 1 secondary school (1800 places, opening approx 2019), 6 primary schools (first opening 2017) and an area special school.

**Great Gransden Windmill:** Not in our patch but how wonderful to hear that the future of the ancient windmill at Great Gransden is secured thanks to £92,000 grant funding. Repair work at the Cambridgeshire County Council owned Windmill has begun thanks to a £75,000 grant from the WREN FCC Heritage Fund and £17,000 from Historic England. The vital restoration work is already underway to remove and redress the millstones, replace major timbers and the external timber cladding.

The mill has timbers dating from the 17th century, but hasn't worked since before the First World War when the last millwright was killed on the Western Front.

**Streetlights:** How very annoying. Following requests for the return of the streetlight at the junction of Stocks Lane/Blythe Way at Gamlingay I've been told to get lost. Balfour Beatty designers revisited our concerns, looked through the plans and the road layout and continue to maintain that the current lighting situation is suitable for that location and road classification.

Pushing on, the Road Safety team was asked to assess the impact on safety of the junction. They looked at the bell mouth of the junction and concluded that as long as this remains lit enough for pedestrians to cross the junction, they have no other concerns. The designers believe that the light across from No. 52 Stocks Way next to the junction accomplishes this.

I don't agree. Do you? What's clear is that Balfour Beatty will do nothing and suggest "Balfour Beatty will be happy to assist the parish with the installation of a light at the parishes expense". I bet they will.

**City Deal :** We are not alone in being concerned that the Deal is losing its way. The funding model means that only short-term, quick-return schemes can be countenanced, and consultees - including the advisory City Deal Assembly - feel that they are being ridden over roughshod - which they are as Bridget will testify as she sits on it. Unfortunately, all the power resides in the tiny Board and the small number of officers who advise them. Plans for felling Milton Road trees, putting busways through West Fields in Madingley and over the Gogs, with other insensitive proposals, have been branded 'appalling' and 'woeful'; and defended by the Board as being 'just an outline proposal at this stage'. It is also of great concern that the Board seems to be becoming less transparent in its deliberations, and offering much less consultation as it comes to the most important decisions of all. *[Thanks DL]*

Bridget and Sebastian took themselves off to the A428/M11 Local Liaison Forum meeting which had been set up as a sop to ensure local residents/Parish Councils felt 'engaged' - intending to sit at the back, keep quiet and find out more about these Liaison fora. Flabbergasted to be handed voting cards and ushered to the top table we soon realised that the 11 proposals on the Agenda were simply paying lip service to residents' concerns - as became clear when after debating each item the County Council's response (in nearly every case reverting back to the Council position and refusing to change) was put up on the screen using a prepared slide - so there had been no intention to actually make decisions based on what we were saying.

So we overturned most of them having started by chucking out the rule banning Residents Associations from having a member on the Forum. The evening (ending 10.45pm) was a shambles and sums up pretty well everything that's bad about the City Deal. The South Cambs member of the City Deal Executive attended, said nothing and was - apparently - ashen-faced by the end. Let's hope he realises now how important local views are.

You'll be asking yourself "Why should the Parishes of South West Cambs like Gamlingay care about this?" The answer is hundreds of people from the villages travel into Cambridge for work, school,

fun and services. And we are building 22,000 more homes around the city – all of whose residents will be competing for the same roadspace. So it matters to us all.

### **County Cllrs Smith and Kindersley gave verbal updates:-**

**Devolution:** Another unnecessary level of bureaucracy. The process is not democratic and there is no scrutiny of it. Cllr Kindersley does not think it is a good idea, and urges all Councillors to respond to the on-line survey.

**City Deal - Congestion:** Congestion is not being addressed - public transport is bad so there are more cars on the road. All Chairmen of Parish Councils have been sent a letter asking if there is a site in their parish that would be suitable for a Transport Hub. Cambourne is probably the best bet for this.

**City Deal - Development:** Because of the amount of proposed new housing in Cambridgeshire, there will need to be a further 42 schools built to cope with the increased population. Northstowe will be the biggest development since Milton Keynes and has been designated a "healthy town" but has practically no green space!

**Housing:** There was supposed to be delivery of 1000 affordable homes on exception sites for local people, but these are now not affordable but part of the speculative application. However, SCDC now has infrastructure money to support the development.

**SCDC Housing:** Carly Freed (who used to be our PCSO) is now a housing officer with SCDC, and will be able to help with enquiries regarding grass cutting around council housing. Cllr Smith will obtain a map of the areas for which SCDC is responsible. CCC only cuts verges twice a year, but any reports of visibility splays that need urgent attention must be made through the website and will be tackled by a rapid response team within 24 hours.

**SC Magazine:** This is still not being delivered in Hatley, and so is being posted out to residents. Please let Cllr Smith know if you do not receive a copy of the magazine.

### **Correspondence:**

**Section 106:** New guidelines on what Council may obtain for affordable housing developments under this have been released and may affect the proposed affordable housing development in the village.

**AON Insurance:** Confirmation of renewal has been received.

**Annual Public Health Report:** Received from CCC and Councillors informed.

**SLCC AGM:** Following Council's decision not to renew their membership to CAPALC for the second year running, Clerk felt it would be useful to pass on comments from her Clerks' Society AGM regarding other Councils' experiences:-

*Henry Clark, Chairman of CAPALC gave a brief resume of the CAPALC written report.*

*It was at this point members informed Henry of the problems they have been encountering with CAPALC which includes:*

- *lack of communication*
- *expensive for the information/support received*
- *potential incorrect training for Councillors*

*Henry was informed that some Councils are looking elsewhere for Councillor training as a) it is cheaper and b) the training is more current and up to date. He was asked if the CAPALC Board had an overview of the training CAPALC provides. Henry confirmed that the Board does not review any training, but they need to know if training is not correct.*

*Diane mentioned to Henry that SLCC Members are asked to work better with CAPALC but with lack of support from CAPALC, members are bound to look elsewhere.*

**City Deal Letter:** All Chairmen of Parish Councils have received a letter requesting suggestions in their parish for a Transport Hub to help with congestion in South Cambs. Croydon has neither sufficient transport links nor a suitable site.

**Suicide Prevention:** Paul Lai's son Ben, committed suicide as his mental state was not established by professionals. The petition he is asking people to sign to help prevent this happening is on the link below:- <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/131314> The deadline for signing this is 1 December.

**MAGPAS:** Following Clerk's letter regarding Council's response to their request for funding, a "thank you for explaining why not" letter was received. The details of all the charities who asked for funding have been put in the main village notice board in case parishioners would like to donate to any of them.

**ALCC:** The SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) has created a union specifically for Clerks and membership is free for the first year. Clerk felt that membership of this is not necessary as she already belongs to a union through her day job and SLCC has covered everything she has needed, so far.

**Planning:**

**Manor Farm, Croydon:** Application withdrawn

**Valley Farm, Croydon:** Conversion of a barn. No objections from the Councillors at the June meeting. Clerk sent this in with clear notification that this was not a Council decision, just the views of the two Councillors at the June meeting.

**Solar Farm, Croydon:** Request to use spoil from the construction of the Solar Farm to infill a dip in the field adjacent to the access road. No objections from the Councillors at the June meeting, provided that no soil is brought in from elsewhere. Clerk sent this in with clear notification that this was not a Council decision, just the views of the two Councillors at the June meeting.

**Finance:**

**Churchyard Maintenance Grant:** It was decided to make an interim payment of £400-00 to the PCC, pending perusal of the accounts. The annual grass cutting cost has escalated since the inception of the churchyard extension and was double the PC grant last year.

**Bank Signatories and Statements:** Clerk has still not received notification from Barclays that Mrs Slator can sign the PC cheques. Mrs Slator will check with the bank she signed the necessary paperwork at, to see why this is taking so long.

May balance:- £12642-24

June balance:-£12190-74

**NSI Signatories:** Unable to complete this as Mr Brown not in attendance.

**Appointment of Internal Auditor:** Mr Chilvers has retired from auditing so Council will need to find a new internal auditor. Clerk has a gentleman in mind and Council asked her to discover an approximate charge for taking this on.

**Parish Council Election:** Invoice from SCDC received for £105-00, to cover the costs of the recent PC election. Clerk had to e-mail the Sundry Debtors department to explain why the account was not paid in June when it was due, but they understood and were happy to receive the cheque following approval at the July meeting!

**Frame Invoice:** This had to be purchased on Council's behalf on-line, and Clerk asked if she could be reimbursed before the year-end next March. All in favour and a cheque for £49-13 was signed.

**Planning:**

**Top Farm:** Information of a rainwater harvesting proposal received for the proposed grain store on Lower Road. No Council response required - for information only.

**Finance:**

**Precept:** The first instalment of the precept - £1790-00 - has been received.

**Audit:** This had to be done slightly differently this year due to a change in the Audit regulations. Council discussed the effectiveness of the system of internal control and considered the findings. Clerk was requested to produce an additional budget report during the year.

Council went on to deliberate on the following:-

- i) the Annual Governance Statement, which was considered and approved by resolution
- ii) the accounting statements, which were considered
- iii) the accounting statements, which were approved by resolution
- iv) the accounting statements were signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting

**Bank Statement and Signatories:** Mrs Slator completed the required paperwork, which has been sent to Barclays, and when Council receives confirmation, she will be approved to sign cheques along with Mr Sole and Mr Wheeler.

**Bank Statement:** At present, the current account is £9281-13. The second instalment of the agreed five year donation to the Community Benefit Fund has not been received from Push Energy yet.

**National Savings:** Forms for the change of signatories have been completed. Mr Martin is to be removed as a signatory and Mrs Slator added, so Mr Wheeler, Mr Sole and Mrs Slator will be the signatories for NSI. All present signed the forms, Mr Brown to sign at the June meeting.

**Invoices:** The following invoices were presented for payment:-

Reading Room - Parish Council	£133.25
Reading Room - Steering Group	£94.25
AON Insurance	£403-71
Internal Auditor (P Chilvers)	£20-00
Mr Wheeler - website hosting	£39-99
Clerk's salary and Out of Pocket expenses	£1170-18

The Chairman proposed that these were approved for payment. All in favour. It was decided not to rejoin CAPALC, as the annual subscription is now over £130. Discussion on the grant for churchyard upkeep will take place at the next meeting.

**Items for the next agenda:**

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

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Signed .....

Date .....