

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 19 July 2017 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Cllr Smith - another engagement; Mrs Slator - out of town. Ms Newland, had subsequently e-mailed an apology - stuck in traffic.

Present: Mr Wheeler, Mr Barnes, Mr Wenman, Mr Sole, Mr Brown, Cllr Kindersley, the Clerk and one member of public.

Minutes: of the June 21 meeting were amended, agreed and signed.

Declarations of Interest: Mr Brown - planning at Valley Farm.

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Cones on Lower Road: Mr Barnes has contacted CCC Highways, asking that the cones left behind following roadworks be collected. He has reported this three times so far - Mr Brown said he would remove them and store them, until such time as CCC is able to come out to collect them.

Implementation Group: As no IG representatives were available for this month's meeting a report was sent, which was read out to Council:-

IG Report

Housing: A conversation has been had with the landowners associated with the possible development in the centre of the village and a follow-up letter is to be sent from the IG. It does not seem likely that firm proposals are imminent.

In relation to small developments, say five houses or less, a meeting is being sought with Bridget and Sebastian to discuss perceived disincentives resulting from SCDC policies. This meeting is expected to take place within the next month.

Village Information System: progress has been made working with Mailchimp and if it had not been for the Co Chair's super fast broadband instead going super slow for the past week a pilot run might even have been achieved! A visit from BT Openreach has been scheduled - has anyone else's broadband recently slowed markedly?

Larkins Road speed limit: there is definite support in the IG for the speed limit zone to go beyond the top of Croydon Hill to include the blind bends which begin at Croydon Hill Farm. We hope that the PC will support this extension rather than leaving the IG to fight a rearguard action.

QA security cameras: the June meeting minutes state simply that this proposal had been passed to the IG. If items are passed across from the PC then the IG requests that a brief note (email) be sent to alert the Co-Chairs. This will help to ensure nothing gets overlooked.

Repair Cafes: this is something the IG Sustainability team has been looking in to and some concerns have been expressed, for example, about public liability. With these concerns in mind Percy Mark paid a reconnaissance visit to a recent event in Waterbeach. He returned with a very favourable impression of how well these events are run and how full is the support from SCDC. His report is to be disseminated more widely for further discussion.

Malcolm Ralph and Jonny Firth – Implementation Group Co-Chairs

Reading Room Trustees: Council discussed the lighting at the Reading Room. General feeling was that the quotes seen were excessive for the savings that might be made. Council agreed that a proper specification is required before any funding could be considered.

Larkins Road: Following the reports from both Highways and the Police, the likelihood of obtaining any speed limit on Larkins Road is nil without evidence. Council has requested quotations for flashing speed signs for the next meeting.

Speed Sign: Further to Mrs Slator's liaison with the Hatley Clerk about hiring their sign, Hatley Council felt that the sign is so new they do not want to hire it out yet. Clerk is waiting for a response from CCC Project Management Team, who are responsible for guiding parishes through the legalities involved with the siting of signs.

Croydon Hill: A complaint was sent to Cllr Kindersley regarding the use of the strip of land on Croydon Hill which was sold recently. There was a vehicle parked dangerously on the verge/gateway

of the site, and a caravan and toilet tent were seen there. Following enquiries, it was discovered that the new owners were giving a birthday party for their son and everything has now gone from the site.

Verbal report from Cllr Kindersley:-

Allowances: CCC employed an independent panel to review Councillors' allowances, which were reported to be one of the lowest in the country. The panel suggested an increase, but not as much as the Leaders of the Council suggested. An 8.9% increase has been made, bringing Cambs Councillors up to the national average in the allowance table and costing £1million per year. Croydon Councillors commented that it was a waste of money to employ a panel and then ignore their findings!

Cllr Kindersley then regaled Council with an anecdote from his first ever meeting as a Councillor.

Fire Authority: The Police and Crime Commissioner feels it would save a lot of money if one person made decisions on behalf of both the Police and Fire service, by doing away with the elected Fire Authority. There is no good business case for this - please respond to the very basic survey, the link is:- <http://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/get-involved/fire-governance-consultation/>

Planning:- There is a possibility of a new town for 10,00 dwellings at Tempsford with a new railway station. This proposal is for access to Cambridge, and the houses will be easily sold to people wishing to work in the city.

Children's Centres: These could be another victim of budget cuts, particularly Melbourn and Bassingbourn. Please complete the consultation - link below:-

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/children-s-centres/children-s-centres-consultation/>

SCDC Planning: Is in disarray. If the pre-application process is taking too long then refunds are being given. Nothing seems to be accomplished. It is likely that SCDC and Cambridge City planning departments will amalgamate, which might help. Planners are very risk averse - if you have a problem with any aspect of planning, please consult Cllr Kindersley.

Local Plan: The examination has nearly finished and the Inspector's report is due sometime this year. Croydon is safe from large scale development as it is not considered a sustainable village. The Supreme Court stated that where there is no 5 year land supply, the Planning Authority must have a good reason to disallow the housing. This is leading to large scale developments being given delegated approval, which allows Section 106. Where Section 106 has not been agreed, the planning has to go back and be reconsidered as it has not received consent. At the moment there is approval for 10,000 houses in Cambridgeshire, but nobody wants to build them.

E-mailed report from Cllrs Kindersley and Smith

Central Beds Local Plan: You may not know or care but Central Bedfordshire are currently consulting on their new draft Local Plan for two months from July 4th. You might care more if we tell you that included in the proposals is a new settlement proposal not far from Gamlingay, based around the old airfield near Tempsford (north of Sandy and south of the Black Cat roundabout), for 7,000 homes plus, and with a potential capacity up to 10,000 and a new Science and Technology Business Park.

CBC intend to use the outcome of consultations to prepare a pre-submission version of the plan for a final consultation in March 2018. The plan is very ambitious with 20,000 to 30,000 extra homes on top of the 20,000 already planned. The new town would be on the East Coast mainline, close to the A1, on the Oxford - Cambridge expressway, and they indicate just to the north of the preferred East-West rail corridor at Sandy.

Please do respond to this consultation. Residents do not have to live in the CBC area to make representations if they are likely to be affected and we find it very hard to believe that this new town will not have a very substantial impact on Gamlingay in particular and the south west of Cambridgeshire in general. South Cambs officers have not yet had a chance to look this in any detail yet but will be looking at this once they get past the last block of Local Plan hearings.

Buses & Local Transport: 17 July Bus User's Group: As has been extensively reported, changes are underway on local bus services. The Cam Vale Bus Users' Group has been set up to provide a collective voice for those who depend on local bus services to get around. For more information on all the items below, all welcome to the group's next meeting on July 17, 7:30PM, at The Limes Communal Facility in Bassingbourn High Street.

Stagecoach is making changes to its 26 and 27 commercial services, over which the County Council has no control as there is no public money subsidy involved. From the 23 July, the 26 bus will

resume an hourly service with some services going through Trumpington Park and Ride; this is being done on a trial basis and will need to see very healthy ridership to continue (when Stagecoach announced a reduction to two-hourly last year, they said an average of 300 extra passengers daily would be needed to make the service viable).

At the same time, Stagecoach is completely withdrawing the 27 bus, for which the average ridership was less than three passengers per day. Details on changes here.

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/regional-service-updates/east/cambridgeshire>

As for council-subsidised 127/128 bus services, we are expecting news this week announcing the operator for retendered contracts. The future of these services is uncertain due to continuing extreme cuts to council budgets.

We have been advised by one commercial operator, Whippet, who had been standing by to provide a commercial service between Bassingbourn, Whaddon and Meldreth Station - and potentially other village links in the 27 Bus area - that they can no longer play a role. Due to unprofitability on many of their Cambridgeshire services, they are in the process of deregistering them. The key problems they cite are lack of public support for using bus services, and intolerable congestion in Cambridge, which means their services cannot run to schedule. This leaves us with even fewer local public transport options, and we must be mindful of the fact that Royston and District Community Transport's council grant is not protected.

£31 Million further cuts this year at Cambridgeshire County Council: This municipal year the County Council must agree yet further cuts, of £31 million. This is a result of continuing Government policy to wind down revenue support grant to zero by 2019; Conservative/UKIP policy to freeze Council Tax; inflation costs; and demographic pressures mainly arising from an aging population with costly social care and health needs. County Council Reserves are very low and borrowing very high to the extent that there is no scope for exploiting either for spending on public services. The trend toward eliminating all public services that are not legally required means a continuing series of very significant and difficult changes.

Children's Centres to be 'redesignated': Children's Centres, providing essential support to young families, are to be rebranded as 'Child and Family Centres' in an exercise to save £1 million. This will involve demoting and amalgamating with some health services and effectively shutting some children's centres down. There are severe implications for Melbourn and Bassingbourn and the villages served by those centres such as the Mordens, Litlington and Gamlingay.

A consultation runs from July 17 - September 22.

Changes have been made on the basis of socio-economic indicators, however there are needy families within relatively affluent localities who will be directly affected. If families who need extra help are deterred from taking it up because of having to travel to get it, they will have more difficulties and there will be higher costs further down the line for schools and Children's Social Services – so the changes represent a serious false economy which could have been avoided.

This £1 million saving was unnecessary - but was chosen by Conservative and UKIP groups who imposed the council tax freeze, on the basis that this would save the taxpayer money. Liberal Democrat and Labour councillors together proposed taking up the 1.99% council tax rise; Cambridgeshire was the only shire council in England not to take the basic council tax rise.

Health Services: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Social Care are required to undertake a 'Sustainability Transformation Plan' - centred around huge cost savings and efficiencies compressed into a short period of time, to save money. Staff recruitment and retention are cited as the number one risk factor: There are more GPs leaving than entering due to pressures in the profession; general cost of living and lack of local transport that make low-paid jobs unviable; and Brexit and a better welcome elsewhere for health and social care workers affects the EU nationals make up 10% in Cambridgeshire health and social care sectors.

In a particularly garish example of financial pressures on local health services, a proposal is now out for consultation on the withdrawal of certain fertility services, including IVF (excepting unusual medical circumstances). The consultation deadline is July 30. More information and how to respond here. <https://www.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/consultations/>

The Library Presents: Cambridgeshire County Council's Community and Cultural Services have been awarded funding from Arts Council England for a four year programme of arts events and activities in libraries, beginning in 2018, called 'The Library Presents'; and is in line to receive a £694,980 grant which will enable a program of performances, Book Festivals and workshops across the County's libraries. The Council will work to transform library spaces for these activities and bring a

professionalism to the experience without losing the familiar friendly and welcoming elements which make such a positive difference to our participants and audiences.

It is envisaged that a wide range of art forms will be included – dance, classical, folk and popular music; visual arts activity with exhibitions linked to workshops and possibly a digital ‘trail’; poetry, digital arts; theatre performance, comedy and spoken word. Needless to say the County will be relying on the involvement of Friends Groups and volunteers, as well as the staff, to deliver a programme that takes arts into the heart of our communities, breaking down the barriers and reaching out to each and every corner – rural and urban - of the county.

Greater Cambridge Planning: Yes, your heart may well sink. However, this may be a good idea. What is proposed (subject to decisions made later in the year) is combining the planning teams at South Cambs and Cambridge City. Why? It is envisaged that the new team would be big enough to provide resilience in terms of staff, expertise in all areas of planning and sufficient career opportunity to make it an attractive place to work. It would provide a single service for everyone with all the economies of scale that you would expect on IT, processes and systems and it would have the capacity to deal with everything it is supposed to do, including with the next Local Plan (i.e. the one starting in two years time despite still not having the last one in place, yet.) Given that things can’t get much worse (see below) we are inclined to think this is worth further investigation.

Robinson Court Gamlingay: All seems to be going well at Robinson Court. The demotion is well underway. A noticeboard has been put up on the hoarding by the letterbox which tells everyone what is happening each week and which has contact numbers in case of problems. Residents report it is not too noisy and that the contractors are pleasant and working hard - even when it was so very hot. There is still access to the garages at the back but the road will be closed off fairly soon. Alternative parking has been provided for people with mobility problems. The planning application for extra parking along the existing grass verge on Grays Rd should be submitted shortly. Thank you to those people who have contacted us to highlight where this might create problems with access. We have passed all your comments on to the relevant people but you will have a further opportunity to express your views when the application becomes public.

Longstowe Bridge: A big thank you to the County Council officers who acted so quickly to rebuild the headwalls on the culvert under the A1198 at Longstowe. From an initial e-mail of concern to officers on April 4th to completed work on May 20th I think this may be a record of some kind.

Fire Authority: The Fire Authority has received an indication from the Police & Crime Commissioner that he would like to be the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner, which would see the end of the Fire Authority and invest all the decision-making process into one person. We think this is another erosion of the democratic process. If there were sound business reasons for it we’d be more inclined to be supportive. The Commissioner argues that the taxpayer would save £100k pa on Member Allowances. True, but there is no mention of how many bureaucrats would be needed to run the Authority. Secondly he argues that the ‘estate’ (ie police & fire owned stations) could be rationalised. Also true - and already happening. The public consultation is already running - search for the Cambs & Peterborough Fire Authority or the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Superfast? Broadband: Connecting Cambridgeshire Team reports that ‘the rollout of fibre broadband is becoming more complex as we move into follow-on phases to cover harder to reach areas’. Make of that what you will! The website is updated regularly and a new county coverage map and postcode selector will go live in the next few weeks to make it easier for people to check where fibre broadband is available or planned, with advice on how to upgrade.

We have been asked to encourage residents to check with their ISP or visit the website if they are not getting the service they want or need but are instead being told that there may be speed, coverage and ordering issues that require further investigation. Email contact@connectingcambridgeshire.co.uk or call 01223 703293.

Fire Safety: Following the devastating fire in London South Cambs has advised that the District Council does not own any tower blocks of flats. Our flatted stock is predominantly low level with some medium rise blocks in Sawston. None of the blocks has been clad with external wall insulation. In May Safesmart Limited, specialists in fire risk assessment, was commissioned to carry out a full fire safety inspection of our blocks and sheltered housing communal rooms. The inspection will conclude in July 2017 with a full report and the Council will take any action that is recommended.

Potholes and broken pavements: During the past month we have reported potholes and damaged pavements/footpaths in Dolphins Way, Blythe Way, Church Street and Manor Road. We are aware that some have been done and some have not been done - even when they were quite close to ones which

have been repaired. We are going to do a further inspection and will no doubt make further reports. If you see a pothole or broken pavement please do report it on the County Council's website. It is helpful if you can take a photo.

Footpath Issues: There have been a number of complaints about footpaths recently. Gamlingay Number 10 through Green End has now been cleared – this is the responsibility of the County Council and when it blocks again please use the website to report it. The spurs off it into Greenacres are not included. Hatley Footpath 16 has also been cleared of the blockages. If you come across the blocked footpath then please do report it via the County Council website – it's very straightforward.

Parking: We have a number of residents in Gamlingay who have serious visual impairment. They try very hard to remain independent but are constantly put in danger by inconsiderate and often illegal parking. It is not permitted to park on the pavement. It can result in extremely serious injury to people with visual problems, either because they collide with the parked car or because they are forced out into the traffic (which they can't see) in order to avoid it. It is also equally hazardous to people using wheelchairs and mobility scooters and parents with prams who we frequently see being forced into the road. We are currently considering creating a 'considerate parking scheme'. If you have any ideas please do let us know.

Speeding: Just as much a threat to people who are disabled and people with young children is speeding in the village. We have been astounded by the number of cars racing along Church End and Church Street recently - easily doing 40-50mph. We shall be talking to the police about additional monitoring on these two roads in particular.

Little Gransden Village Hall: Very pleased to report that the application to lower the kerbs outside the Hall has now been approved following a series of head-bashing interventions. How frustrating that it took so long that the deadline had to be extended not once but twice. This was - in the great scheme of things - absolutely straightforward and very important to the Hall. Which leads nicely on to.....

Planning at South Cambs – do you need help?: There are big problems with South Cambs planning service. Having made huge improvements in the past 2 years in reducing the backlog of applications from over 900 to about 50 it is now creeping up again. We were shocked to learn that if you want to speak to a planning officer about your application that they are most unlikely to answer the phone to you and that you will be told that you will be rung back in FOUR days. We are receiving numerous complaints, in particular from people wanting permission for business premises, about emails never being replied to, phone calls never being returned and planning decisions just not being made within the expected time. We have brought this to the attention of the most senior officers who are appear aware of the problems and who we have no doubt are doing their best to resolve the problems once they have identified what the causes are. Basically it is about lousy communications and decisions not being made on time. **If you are experiencing problems get in touch and we will do our best to get things moving for you.**

As if the process wasn't torture enough look at what just popped into our inbox: "Council planning bosses have apologised after an administrative error meant planning permission was incorrectly granted. SCDC have said that once the error was spotted they spoke to the applicant and have now filed legal papers with the High Court for the planning approval to be rescinded within 6-8 weeks. The plans for seven new homes were for Grove Farm in Haslingfield. The error took place after the decision to refuse the application was incorrectly entered as an approval into a computer system This process has already been changed and additional checks put in place to try and make sure the problem does not happen again". You couldn't make it up!

Gamlingay Neighbourhood Plan: As part of the Neighbourhood Plan work we are writing to people living in the satellite settlements around Gamlingay and conducting simple surveys to ascertain what you think is special about where you live and what is worth preserving. Gamlingay is unique in South Cambridgeshire for having a ring of small settlements such as The Cinques, Little Heath and Dennis Green which originated from the old market gardening way of life and we think that it is really important to retain their individual characteristics and their 'separatedness' from the main village. In every other large village in the district these settlements have merged into the main area of development and have lost their individual character. If you have any comments on this please contact Bridget who is conducting the door to door surveys.

Grants: Having secured grants for both the sheltered housing schemes to beautify their day rooms with planting outside, we have now managed to get a grant from South Cambs for a new freezer for the Avenell's Way Day Room to support their extremely successful lunch club. Just as this grant was awarded we heard back from the contractors, Taylor French, who are doing the work on Robinson

Court that they also were happy to pay for a new freezer. Obviously we do not need two so they are going to pay for some extra tables and chairs so even more people can have lunch.

Queen Adelaide Croydon: Having spent a great deal of time pushing both the Planners and Highways departments at SCDC/CCC to get on with the applications for the Queen Adelaide pub in Croydon it is with some considerable satisfaction that we can report the pub is now OPEN!

Little Gransden Almshouses: Sebastian was honoured to be asked by the Trustees of the Julia Norris Almshouses in Little Gransden to snip the ribbon following the recent refurbishment of the cottages. They have been completely modernised and internally reconfigured while retaining the Arts and Crafts exterior - beautifully done and we hope the new returning beneficiaries will be delighted.

Free childcare: You may be aware that there is to be extended entitlement to additional free childcare to eligible 3 & 4 year olds from September this year. Are you entitled to receive it?

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/childcare should answer your questions. You will need to reconfirm your eligibility every three months or you will lose your entitlement. In addition, some providers will not be able to provide the extra hours or will be doing it in partnership with other organisations - so please check online.

Neighbourhood Watch & Speedwatch: The Police have appointed a new Watch Coordinator, Mike Brooks, to support Neighbourhood Watch and Speedwatch schemes. Mike will be working with the schemes to help increase public involvement in keeping our communities safer. If you are interested in any of the Watch schemes, contact Mike on mike.brooks@cams.pnn.police.uk

Gamlingay Cinques: An issue raised by some Cinques residents in May was the speed of traffic through the Cinques and a request was made to reduce the limit to 40mph. We all agree that this is a dangerous bit of highway so I asked the Parish Council to consider including this as a Minor Highway bid for 2017. The Parish Council has asked for evidence that residents actually would support this reduction. If you are a resident of the Cinques, North Lane and East Lane please could you let me know if you would be supportive of this speed reduction measure (from the Cinques Crossroads to Stubbs Oak)? Thank you!

Hatley Speeding Signs: You may have noticed the new speeding signs in Hatley as you drive through. These flash your speed at you if you are doing over 40mph. It's not a challenge so please drive safe. The signs are moved every three/four weeks and the data about traffic speed is downloadable. Other Parishes have enquired as to the cost which works out at about £3500. If you are interested in further details please contact the Clerk at the Parish Council.

Train Timetable Consultation: The Thameslink timetable consultation is live until July 27. We've known for some time the very good news that Foxton, Shepreth and Meldreth will be getting twice-hourly trains throughout the day, and that rather than terminating at King's Cross they will run through to St. Pancras and through to Gatwick. Commuters have raised concerns about longer journey times on some services. It has been pointed out that the timetable is hugely complex; one small change affects everything else. You can respond here. <https://www.transformingrail.com/>

Correspondence:

Electoral Register: Circulated to Councillors for their information.

Flagpole bracket: Clerk contacted the Trustees of the Reading Room to see if they would like the bracket. The Trustees felt the Reading Room was not the right place for it, and thanked Mr Wenman for the offer.

SC Parish Councils' Conference : To be held on Friday 11 August, no-one available to attend.

Fire Governance Consultation: As mentioned in Cllr Kindersley's report, please respond to this.

Parish Council Representative: Mr Sole informed the meeting that after serving for 12 years, he is standing down as the PC representative on the Reading Room Trustees. After a brief discussion, Mr Barnes volunteered to represent the Parish Council on the Trustees. Mr Sole will contact the Chair of the Trustees.

Planning:

Reservoir at Manor Farm S/1989/17/PN: Further paperwork has been received - Council raised no objections

Dunsbridge Turpike - Commercial Unit S/2326/17/FL: No objections - all in favour.

Five Stables, Valley Farm S/2331/17/FL: Plans for a single storey rear extension, new detached double garage and new private access road were inspected. Mr Brown did not take part in the discussion, having declared an interest. After perusal of the application, all were in favour.

Finance:

Bank Statement: At the end of June, the current account stands at £15,308-02. Clerk reminded Council of the internal auditor's recommendation that excess funds should be placed in a deposit account, which they will consider following the speed sign decision.

Reading Room Rental: Council received an invoice for the use of the Reading Room in the year to 31 March 2017 and a cheque for £130-00 was raised and approved.

Items for next agenda: None put forward

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 20 September 2017 in the Reading Room, starting at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.41pm.

Signed

Date

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