

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 15 March 2017 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

**Apologies:** Cllr Kindersley - other engagement, Mr Sole - work commitment

**Present:** Mr Wheeler, Mrs Slator, Mr Barnes, Mr Brown, the Clerk and three members of public.

**Minutes:** Of the February meeting were agreed and signed.

**Declarations of Interest:** None

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

**Queen Adelaide:** Mr Wenman reported that he is waiting for a civil engineer to come out and plan for the services, which will entail excavation in the pub car park. Until the services for the new houses are installed the pub will not be opened, but it is hoped that the QA could be open in the next few months. He is currently investigating a couple of options for the opening.

### **Implementation Group:**

Mrs Hughes thanked Council for the purchase of the litter pickers and hoops for use in the village and gave a brief report on the work to date. Mr Ralph and Mr Firth, along with Ms Newland, attended the Community Awards evening at SCDC on March 9th. They were delighted to be awarded second place in the Environmental section of the award and received a plaque which they would like to display in the Reading Room. Second place in the whole of South Cambs is amazing for a village the size of Croydon - well done to the Group. The Communications Survey has only generated 23 e-mail replies so far, but not everyone who expressed an interest has sent their responses. Reports from the IG will be sent to Mrs Pillinger for proof reading then to Mr Wheeler for inclusion on the village website. There is a possibility that 4-6 houses could be built at the far end of the village. Nothing further to report on housing as yet. A litter pick will take place on Saturday 6 May at 10.00am in the village.

**Village Notice Board:** No quotation has been received yet for the repair of the old board.

**Annual Meeting:** Copies of the proposed agenda for the Annual meeting had been circulated.

Councillors wished to add Solar Farm funds to it, and then it will be publicised.

**Clopton Close Parking:** Apparently a letter from SCDC explaining what was happening in the parking area was only sent to one household. Cllr Smith is looking into why this has happened and hopefully it will be resolved shortly. It is possible that bays will be painted on the parking area.

**Website:** Mr Wheeler has been updating the website and it was generally felt that the current version is adequate for the needs of the village. Once the e-mail distribution list is up and running then directions to the website can be included.

**Fire Appliance:** Following a complaint from the village about a fire appliance trying to squeeze through a small gap instead of waiting for a lorry to move and thus damaging the grass verge in the process, a response has been received and passed to Council. The incident has been investigated and was justified (camera evidence on the appliance) and the Station Commander and officer involved have been spoken to.

**Cllr Smith:** gave a verbal report to the meeting.

**A14 Upgrade and the A428:** Cllr Smith attended and was the only Cllr from SCDC and City Council who was there. Highways England gave an impressive presentation and are very keen on customer satisfaction, and concerned what the general public think. There are three routes options for the proposed Oxford -Cambridge expressway and this should be ready when the A 14 upgrade is completed. There is a north option and two south options - the village of Abbotsley is not impressed with one of the options. All the options join at the Black Cat roundabout, which will also be upgraded. Please make your views known on the Highways England website. Network Rail need to liaise with Highways England over one railway, but are not easy to contact. There will be congestion while this is all underway but it is hoped that Highways England will be able to minimise it as much as possible. The whole scheme will take around 6 years to complete. See circulated report for greater details.

**SCDC:** has become a Dementia Friendly Council. The Dementia Champion recruits Dementia friends to help customers with the condition. Would the Parish Council like to sign up? Please think about it - Chairman asked for it to feature on the May agenda.

**Planning:** SCDC missed special measures by the skin of their teeth. If SCDC had become designated, then the Government would have taken over the planning in South Cambs instead of the local authority. It had been pre-empted by SCDC but they have also lost two very experienced members of the planning team.

**New Chief Executive:** There were 17 candidates for the post, one of whom has been appointed, but Cllr Smith is unable to publicise this at present.

**Open Afternoon:** at SCDC on Monday 20th March from 1.30pm - 5.00pm.

**Heidi Allen:** will be meeting with Cllr Smith on Friday afternoon. South Cambs has been deluged with Planning applications, with hardnosed developers asking for large amounts of houses, and there is a significant increase in single houses being put anywhere there is a space. All this development will change the nature of the countryside. Can anything be done about it?

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

**Council Budgets & Council Tax:** Oh dear. The political parties at the County Council again failed to set a Budget which meant a long debate on Valentine's Day – but despite a gloomy outlook (especially by the Chairman) the Council did in fact make a decision by 5.30pm. You will see the results shortly in your Council Tax bill. In an extraordinary move, the County Council rejected the standard 1.99% council tax rise allowed by government and adopted by almost every other local authority in the country.

As is well known, finance for public services is in freefall due to government policy of eliminating revenue support grant to councils, demographic pressures and inflation. Councils don't have the means of making up the funding gap, and government decides how much councils can raise in council tax.

Cambridgeshire will not even cling on to the permitted 1.99% rise that would have helped meet costs of inflation and pay for some of the basics. It also sends a message that we are managing just fine, even though pot holes are proliferating, white lines on dangerous roads have faded, and children's centres have no secure future. This freeze saves the average household 42 pence per week.

Many councillors tried to persuade colleagues to accept the government's suggested 1.99% rise, to no avail. The vote was won by one - in a repeat of last year's freeze which saw road gritting reduced and street lights switched off. The council has agreed to a separate 'social care' precept rise of 2% - but against the overall collapse of public services finance, this is a drop in the bucket and won't turn around the adult social care crisis that now features in newspaper headlines and is a factor in NHS hospital bed blocking. One group proposed rejecting the social care rise too, making up funding gaps from reserves. But as basic arithmetic shows, taking from reserves on a continual basis means that they eventually run out. Cambridgeshire reserves are already low.

Had the council not agreed a budget it would have been at the mercy of a Minister who would decide what to do. Some people have suggested this might have been a better outcome as Government might have taken steps to protect services to a greater extent than will now be the case. But that's speculation, and Cambridgeshire is now one of only a handful of local authorities nationally that has unnecessarily self-imposed additional austerity.

Over at South Cambs a rather less dramatic meeting agreed a Council Tax increase of £5 per Band D dwelling – again with savings required but South Cambs has at least diversified into the private housing rental market buying up homes and renting them for a profit of about 6%.

**Dodgy Traders:** Residents are being warned to watch out for doorstep sales people offering to repair damage caused by (most recently) Storm Doris to avoid poor workmanship, scams or other crimes. Cambridgeshire Trading Standards have been made aware of a resident paying over £500 to replace five roof tiles.

Residents wanting reassurance when looking for a reputable business to make any repair work can check out the Buy With Confidence scheme ([www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)). The scheme gives residents access to a range of businesses that have been checked and approved by Trading Standards authorities.

**Our National Health Service:** Last month's column mentioned the difficulty the development industry is having recruiting people. Likewise the NHS. The NHS is not having an easy time, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS is one of the most challenged health economies in England ('if not the most challenged', as we are always reminded). Staff recruitment and retention is a headline

problem, due to a combination of high living costs, lack of suitable housing and limited public transport to connect people from home to work.

The UK is lucky that so many skilled people from other countries have chosen to work here in the fields of health and social care. In Cambridgeshire about 20% of the health and social care workforce comes from outside Britain - half are from the EU and half from outside the EU. Apart from the eye-watering savings that the NHS is being asked to make – in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough alone it must transform and spend £500 million less by 2020 – how will it deal with the impact of Brexit on the staff we rely on?

**Drove Road Gamlingay:** Highways officer having been amazingly helpful with the proposals for making Drive Road safer and the PC and residents have sent some further comment to improve the schemes. The construction of the island and physical narrowing of the Iron Church junction should now be complete with additional resurfacing due to its poor condition (starting March 13<sup>th</sup>). It will be kerbed to tighten the junction to encourage greater compliance and reduce the future maintenance cost. There will be additional lining and signage at the appropriate places on the road. The sharp bend at the northern end of Drove Road has been redesigned and potential remedial works costed at £65,000 which is unfortunately outside the scope of the works so it will be held for now and prioritised with other maintenance schemes for the future.

**Surface Dressing Works:** We've had notice that surface dressing works will take place on Church Lane and Hatley Road in Gamlingay. This process seals the road surface to protect it from frost damage and also increases its skid resistance making it safer for drivers.

**A14 Upgrade and the A428:** You may have noticed that there are new street lights being installed along the A428 at Eltisley and that much of the verge towards St Neots has been cleared of trees and scrub. We have now learned that this is in preparation for the A428 to take the traffic which is diverted off the A14 when that is closed. This is going to be a nightmare and what is worrying is that when the A428 is completely congested traffic will set off down the A1198 and through Parishes such as Gamlingay, Arrington, Longstowe etc. We will be asking Highways what their plans are for managing this as we cannot expect small villages and local traffic and residents to suddenly have to cope with a diverted motorway.

We have now been briefed about the early plans for the Caxton Gibbet to Black Cat Roundabout road upgrade. This is being managed by Highways England who are currently defining the need, looking at all the constraints and refining their strategy. This has now produced 3 options which are now being consulted on with the public. It appears that the intention will be for the A428 to join the A1/ A421 directly at Black Cat roundabout. The transformation of this traffic black spot is key to the whole project. The consultation is now live. First shovels in the ground are expected in 2020 – the year the A14 is scheduled to complete.

**Land South of West Rd Appeal:** By the time you read this we shall have had the appeal against the refusal of the original planning application by Endurance Estates to develop the land south of West Rd. You may well ask why this appeal is taking place when a second application has superseded it and has actually been approved. The reason is that there is a period of time after planning being awarded during which a judicial review can be instigated which may overturn the decision. So what is happening here is that Endurance estates are taking a belt and braces approach and even though they have an approved application they are continuing to appeal with the original rejected application just in case the second one is overturned.

**Cambridge Central Library:** The Central Library will be closed for a week from Monday 20 March 2017 to Sunday 26 March 2017 inclusive in order to carry out an extensive programme of refurbishment work. The work includes a redesign of the first floor to make better provision for younger children and for teenagers, the replacement of the automated book returns machine, and the replacement of the shelf tracking in the Cambridgeshire Collection store. The first floor children's area refurbishment work is almost entirely funded by Developer Funding, amounting to nearly £65,000.

**Avenells Way:** Following resident feedback we asked some time ago for a dropped kerb to be installed at the point at which the Church St Path arrives at Avenells Way. Unfortunately our instructions were misinterpreted and they resurfaced the pavement instead. Anyway, they are now going to do 'a proper job'.

**Sons of Cambridgeshire :** In 2016 the County Council ran an HLF-funded heritage project, 'The Battle of the Somme,' to commemorate the men of Cambridgeshire who gave their lives in 1916; including a number from Gamlingay and the surrounding villages. The final product of this project is the

publication Sons of Cambridgeshire which is now available in libraries and at the Archives service, and copies have been sent to schools, partners and participants.

More details are available at <http://great-war.ccan.co.uk/> which is the digital memorial to the soldiers.

**Where can I bike?** In response to a resident's enquiry we thought it would be useful for all you keen cyclists out there to know that cyclists have a right to use bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic, but on bridleways they are required to give way to walkers and riders. Like horse riders, they have no right to use footpaths and if they do so they are committing a trespass against the owner of the land, unless use is with their permission.

**30 hours funded childcare for working parents:** From September 2017 working parents of 3 and 4-year-olds will be entitled to 30 hours of funded childcare and early learning – a doubling of the current universal entitlement. In order to access the additional hours, **parents will need to complete an online check**, and will receive a code to redeem with a childcare provider. The new website for parents and providers is [www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/](http://www.childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/)

HM Revenue and Customs have already written to some families to raise their awareness of the forthcoming increase but if not please head to the website.

**Robinson Court:** Robinson Court is shortly to be completely vacated and hopefully we will shortly meet the contractors who are going to be redeveloping the site with a mix of rental and private ownership housing. The residents of Robinson Court have moved out over a period of time and our understanding is that they have all gone voluntarily and are all happy with their new homes. We certainly hope that this is the case. There is no intention to move the Post Box.

**Tax-Free Childcare:** Tax-Free Childcare is to start from April 2017. Parents can register using their tax code to create a special online account with HMRC and will then be able to open an online childcare account, which they will use to pay for their childcare directly.

For every £8 a parent pays in, the government will pay in an extra £2. Parents can receive up to £2,000 per child, per year, towards their childcare costs, or £4,000 for disabled children – separate from funded entitlements. The offer will be available for children up to the age of 12, or 17 for children who are disabled. To qualify, both parents will have to be in work, and each expecting to earn at least £115 a week - and not more than £100,000 each year.

**Pinpoint Carers Network Self Harm Support Group for parent carers:** The next session is on Wednesday March 15, 10.15 - 11.45am at Tesco Extra Community Room, Abbots Ripton Rd, Sapley, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 2LA. Parent carers are welcome to just drop in or you can pre-register with organiser Eve Redgrave. T: 01480 499043 E: [eve@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk](mailto:eve@pinpoint-cambs.org.uk)

**Cambridgeshire Adult Care and Support Services Guide 2017:** The 2017 edition of this useful Guide is now available and copies can be ordered from [carechoices@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:carechoices@cambridgeshire.gov.uk). A PDF version of the Guide is available to download from the Care Choices website. The site also includes an ebook version and Browsealoud facility. [www.carechoices.co.uk/region/east-of-england/cambridgeshire](http://www.carechoices.co.uk/region/east-of-england/cambridgeshire).

**South Cambs magazine:** The spring edition of our quarterly residents' magazine will be delivered to all homes in the district between 28 February and 19 March. If anyone in has not received a magazine by Monday 20 March please ask them to contact Smart Distribution on [scdc@smartdistribution.co.uk](mailto:scdc@smartdistribution.co.uk) or 0800 6444 011 or Gareth Bell on [communications@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:communications@scambs.gov.uk) or 01954 713289

**Views sought on Pharmacies and Dispensaries in Cambridgeshire:** People in Cambridgeshire are being asked their views on pharmacies and dispensaries across the county. The consultation, commissioned by the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board, runs from 30 January 2017 to 30 April 2017, and asks people's views on pharmaceutical services for now and in the future.

Pharmaceutical services include filling prescriptions, selling medicines that don't need a prescription, giving advice and supporting people to quit smoking. At the moment there are 110 pharmacies and 43 dispensing GP practices across Cambridgeshire, with 23 pharmaceutical service providers per 100,000 people, the same as the national average. People's views will help to inform the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA), a statutory report produced by the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board. This will then be used to help shape future development of pharmaceutical services across the county, including decisions made by NHS England on applications to open new pharmacies. The final PNA will be published by July 2017. For more information visit: <http://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/joint-strategic-needs-assessment/PNA>

**Correspondence:**

**Transparency Code:** Clerk received an e-mail offering to design a "Transparency Code compliant" website for the village. As Mr Wheeler has already entered the information required, Croydon's website is already compliant. There was however, an indication that smaller Councils (under £25,000) no longer need an external audit because the Council's financial activities are all available. Cllr Smith hadn't heard of this and took the paperwork to authenticate the information.

**Tesco Community Funding:** The Tesco Bags of Help funding scheme application criteria has opened up to allow for more communities to receive funding. The 5p carrier bag charge at Tesco stores is being used for grants to improve local parks, hold community events, support sports groups and more. The grants are managed by the community charity Groundwork UK. If you would like to apply for funding for a project, go to the Tesco website.

**Electoral Register:** Alterations to the electoral register was received and circulated to Councillors.

**SCDC Community Chest:** Small grants for particular purposes can be made from this, from 1st April 2017, until the funding is exhausted. Council was able to fund the notice board on the Reading room wall from this.

**Section 106 Funding:** Council believed that this is no longer available, but Cllr Smith said that once the Local Plan is approved, then Section 106 agreements can be made.

**Community Safety Day:** SCDC in conjunction with the Police - on 18th March from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

**Section 137:** Clerk reported that when she started working as the Clerk this resource was known as the Free 2p. It was the amount per head of the electorate that Council could spend on something that they could not usually fund. This is now £7-57 per head.

**Information Commission:** Following queries raised at the last meeting, Cllr Kindersley reported the Croydon PC does not need to be registered with the Information Commission as it doesn't does not hold or retain personal information.

**Mud on the Road:** Mud left on the road by farm vehicles should be reported to the Police on 101 or the local PCSO asked to intervene directly with those landowners responsible.

**Wimpole Trail:** Wimpole has been selected to take part in a national programme funded in partnership with Sport England, which will create all-year-round, multi-use paths at ten National Trust places around the country. This project is planned to start in 2017 - the multi-use trail will follow a circular route, and will be about 9km long (or just under 6 miles). There will be a public drop-in session on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March anytime between 3.30pm-6pm., where maps of the proposed route and plans will be on show, and members of the property team and project leads will be available to speak to.

**ACRE:** Information for Cllr Sole, who was unable to attend.

**Finance:**

**Bank Statement:** The bank statement showed a balance of £10,578-23 in the current account.

**Amazon Purchase:** Clerk presented the invoices for the pickers and hoops, which Council had already agreed to fund immediately, and it was resolved to sign a cheque for £164-76 to cover this. All in favour.

**NSI account:** £10-59 interest earned - total investment of 1773-21.

**Items for next agenda:** None put forward.

Mr Wenman volunteered to stand as a Councillor for the Parish, and the Clerk will send the appropriate paperwork to him.

**Date of next meeting:** Annual Meeting on Wednesday 19 April 2017 in the Reading Room, starting at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.34pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

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