

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 18 November 2015 in the Reading Room at 8.00pm.

Apologies: Mr Sole, Cllr Smith.

Present: Mr Martin, Mr Wheeler, Mrs Slator, Mr Brown, 2 members of public and the Clerk.

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

Declarations of Interest: None received.

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Queen Adelaide: Mr Wenman is still unable to give a date for the reopening of the Queen Adelaide.

CLP: The Launch meeting took place on Saturday 14 November from 10 - 12 noon and was reasonable well attended. Several people have signed up for both the Implementation Group and sections of the Plan in which they are specifically interested. Thank you for Garth for supplying and cooking the bacon for the refreshments! There has been interest in both the Implementation Group and the "areas of particular interest." The Steering Group asked that the Parish Council be represented on the IG, and both Mr Brown and Mrs Slator have volunteered to go, so that if one is unable to attend then the other can, and there will always be a report to the Council meetings.

There was a meeting with Hills the developers of the proposed residential site, and they appear to be very flexible in their approach and are quite happy to make any development acceptable to the village. The main problem appears to be the number of houses that is viable - it would be 12, and not the 4 that the CLP indicates.

Dog Bin: The responses from Clopton Close indicate that they do not want a dog bin on the road side of the letter box. Mr and Mrs Ralph have suggested another site, but as this is on their property, it is doubtful that SCDC will want to site it there. The Chairman asked that the Clerk send all correspondence on the bin site to Councillors, for discussion at the December meeting.

Transparency Code and Costs: The Chairman is optimistic that he can download the application form for funding, but has not had time to do so yet.

Community Benefit Fund: Councillors decided that the Everyday Saver is probably the best account for Council's needs and Mr Wheeler will look into opening this.

Solar Farm Planting: Push Energy's letter of 27 May 2015 stated that "the timescales for planting will be during the planting season which takes place in the autumn in accordance with the planning proposals." To date no planting has taken place, and this is now the optimum time to plant trees and hedging. Clerk was asked to write again to Push asking when this will happen, and also ask why there is no gate on the road yet, and why the junction of the access road has not been joined properly to Church Lane. All in favour.

Correspondence:

Connecting Cambridgeshire: Information and cards to hand out were distributed to everyone present. Superfast Broadband (fibre) is apparently not available in the village, although the box is at the junction of the High Street with Larkins Road. Mrs Slator has upgraded her supply through copper and is receiving 10 Mbps whilst Mr Wheeler only receives 1.5 Mbps at best.

Boundary Review: Further information received on Cambridge City and the time to comment on this is extended to February next year.

Electronic Correspondence: All circulated - nothing raised.

Subsequent receipts: The Reading Room Trustees have asked for 50% of the cost (£250-00 + VAT) to undertake a survey of the ongoing damp problem on the rear wall. Work has already been done on the gutter and outside around the problem area, but this does not appear to have solved it. This was discussed by Council, who felt that a competent builder would be more informative than a surveyor, and Mr Brown volunteered his builder to come and give an opinion. Clerk will reply to the Reading Room Trustees.

Verbal report - Cllr Kindersley

Article 4: Cllr Kindersley was asked about Article 4, in respect of the QA. Technically because a public house and a shop are in the same Business Class, there is no need to apply for planning permission for Change of Use from a pub to a shop. Article 4 has stopped this, so any change of use for a pub needs to have planning permission. There was concern about the QA not being on the Asset of Community Value register, and Mr and Mrs Wheeler will approach Mr Wenman about getting the pub put back on to the list.

Cllr Kindersley spoke at length about the County Council budget, and much of this is covered in his written report, below. There is still a further £100m in cuts to find in the next 5 years, but there is very little left to make savings on. Services which have been reduced are Children and Families, Adult services, Care support for vulnerable adults and people with mental health problems, road gritting, highways, mobile libraries; the money from the Government reduces by 20% each year. The problem in Cambridgeshire is that it is a fast growing county and more and more people are trying to use its services. Council Tax cannot be raised to a level to cover the cuts as there is a limit on how much it can go up each year.

Highways: Have contacted the landowners with a view to arranging the tree trimming on the entrance to Croydon from Arrington. The work is due to start shortly.

SCDC Local Plan: This has been suspended by the Inspectors. South Cambs have commissioned lots of reports and have finally come up with a well-evidenced report for the Local Plan. The Green Belt will be protected at all costs and there is hope that the plan will be approved next year. The level of speculative building should decrease once the Local Plan has been accepted.

Written Report from Cllrs Kindersley and Smith:

Planning: Some quite good news on the planning front this month, you'll be amazed to read. The suspended Local Plans for both Cambridge & South Cambs required further work on both the proposed level of building and the Green Belt, in particular, to prove they were robust. The reports – from independent experts - have confirmed that 33,500 homes would be needed by 2031 to meet local needs – just 500 more than originally put forward. The reports also confirm the two Councils' strategy to deliver growth through new towns and villages and protecting the green belt is the right plan for the Greater Cambridge area.

Since the Local Plans were submitted, promoters of the new town north of Waterbeach and new village at Bourn Airfield have stated the developments could begin earlier and it is now being recommended that restrictions on when the developments can start are lifted. This is not great news for those of us that think Bourn Airfield is the wrong place to build another village but the tone of the reports imply this is a 'done deal'.

The planning application to put 30 houses behind West Rd Gamlingay was unanimously rejected by the planning committee at South Cambs. The grounds for refusal were the negative impact on the Conservation Area and a number of Listed Buildings, negative impact on the residential amenity of people living on Mill Street and West Road and finally that the development, by virtue of its location and elevation, would be visually dominant and would cause demonstrable and adverse harm to the surrounding area.

It is likely that the applicant will appeal the decision but even in these difficult times about 50% of appeals are being upheld in South Cambs. We shall keep you posted on any developments. Many thanks to all the people who signed up to WRAG (West Rd Action Group) and who played such a large part in supporting the Parish Council on this matter.

In Haslingfield of course the Parish faces a threat from the Grosvenor sponsored 'Sporting Village' extension to Trumpington Meadows. The chances of this getting through are receding but it's still a very real threat. The electoral review which we hope will create a new Parish soon is again under discussion and hopefully South Cambs will get on with this as a matter of urgency as we have requested.

Blythe Way Bollards and Road Surface: Enough residents responded to the consultation about the bollards for South Cambs to agree that some action needs to be taken. Once they decide the details we will let you know. We have had less success trying to get the awful road surface sorted out as the County Council says it is not yet bad enough to need repair even though many of the users have

mobility problems. Sebastian is still working on this but as the purse strings tighten the chances of 'intervention' (as it is called nowadays) recede.

Cambridgeshire County Council Budget: Yes, it is already that time again. Yes, that is wailing and gnashing of teeth you can hear. Austerity continues (not by choice, I might add!). All Cambridgeshire residents are being asked to have their say on how to meet the massive budget challenge facing us – including finding more than £100 million in savings over the next five years.

We will have to find £41 million in savings next year alone. This follows massive growing demands on Council services and indications that Government's main funding for the authority will dwindle to nothing in the future. This of course follows savings of around £100 million in the last three years while trying to maintain vital frontline services, including caring for some of our most vulnerable.

Next year forecasts suggest we will have £15 million or 27 per cent less from the Government Revenue Support Grant while needing to find an extra £19.7 million to meet the pressures from more people needing our services as well as inflation. This is on top of other charges and savings we have to find – making up the £41 million total.

With the gap increasing between demand for services and funding the picture is bleak and we - you, dear reader, and I, will be faced with even more cuts. So we do have some ideas - one of which is to cut down on the use of Council services. For example if we could recruit 30 more foster carers the Council could not only help provide a much needed loving home for a child but save £480k a year. If every household put 1kg less waste in their black bins each week, Cambridgeshire could save £1m in landfill tax. That could mean just recycling a few extra jars or cans a week instead of throwing them away. If there was just a 10 per cent rise in people using online council services where they are available rather than calling or visiting, it could save up to £201,000. By simply being a good neighbour and keeping an eye on an elderly relative or friend residents can help keep someone fit and healthy, living independently.

Find out more by going to www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/challenge and have YOUR say.

Cuts Proposed include axing the mobile Library service, reducing winter gritting from 45% to 30% of the roads network, scaling back all discretionary expenditure (eg on post-16 transport) and upping the 'intervention levels' on adult social care and highways repairs. Things are extremely serious in Local Government as you will know from reading the correspondence between the Prime Minister and Leader of Oxfordshire County Council....

City Deal: There will be ongoing consultations on every element of the City Deal and we would encourage you to keep an eye on the Council and City Deal websites so that you can participate in these consultations. It is likely that a congestion charge will be introduced along with at least two new park and ride sites. These are things that will affect us wherever we live. Sebastian has also been raging against the continual roadworks on Madingley Road which seem never-ending. Response from the County Council is to take it up with the University (which is the client for these works) and so he will!

So a number of residents have been in touch to ask what the City Deal looks like, what does it all actually mean – what is it and how would we recognise one. So to try and give you some idea we thought we'd pick out some of workstreams for you to ponder.....

A1307 corridor to include bus priority /A1307 additional Park & Ride - Aim: Achieve faster and more reliable bus journey times between Haverhill, Cambridge and key areas in between, through bus priority at key congestion points on the A1307 and provision of an outer Park & Ride site on the corridor.

A428-M11 segregated bus route / A428 corridor Park & Ride / Madingley Road bus priority - Aim: To ensure that bus journeys between Cambourne and Cambridge are direct and unaffected by congestion by providing high quality bus priority measures between the A428/A1303 junction and Queen's Road, Cambridge and one or more Park & Ride or rural interchange sites on the corridor. There is potential damage to the Green Belt which is causing great concern for many people and groups. Currently the only bus running between Cambridge and St Neots is the X5 so there is poor evidence that there will be enough bus journeys to justify the cost of this. We are told that a good quality bus lane will stimulate bus provision!! Timing: Public consultation is ongoing on the initial options for the route and ends on 23rd November.

Chisholm Trail cycle links - Aim: to create a high quality strategic cycle route from Cambridge Station in the south of the city through to the new [Cambridge North] Station, providing connections

between the Science and Business Parks in the north and the commercial hub around Cambridge Station and the Biomedical Campus .

City centre capacity improvements Aim: To improve the reliability of, and capacity for public transport, cycling and walking movements in the city centre through a variety of potential measures to relieve congestion and manage the city's transport network.

City Deal Housing - Aim: To explore the creation of a joint venture to drive quicker delivery of 2,000 of the affordable new homes envisaged in the draft Local Plans, potentially drawing in land holdings from the partners and external investment to deliver more affordable housing, and deliver 1,000 extra new homes on primarily rural exception sites.

Western Orbital - Aim: To provide for orbital bus route movements to the West of Cambridge linking key sites for housing and growth. Timing: A list of options expected early spring 2016.

Children's Centre: The latest round of County Council cuts will affect Children's Centres which most importantly provide support for our most vulnerable families. Already we have seen a cut in provision in Gamlingay and it is going to get worse. Bridget is meeting with the locality manager to discuss the details and will put any further information on the local websites as soon as she has it.

County Council CEO: The current CEO, Mark Lloyd, heads for his new role as the Local Government Association's Chief Executive in November. The County Council has now appointed Peterborough City Council's Chief Executive, Gillian Beasley, to work across both Councils.

Hinchingbrooke Hospital

The Care Quality Commission will inspect Hinchingbrooke Healthcare NHS Trust shortly. Prior to the inspection the CQC inspection team are keen to hear from people who have used the services at the Trust and the public are asked to share their experience via telephone or online if they wish. Phone: 03000 616161 Email: tellus@cqc.org.uk Online: www.cqc.org.uk/sye

More Planning Applications...

The application for 90 houses on the Green End industrial site is likely to be heard by the planning committee at the beginning of next year. So far, very few people have written to the Council to voice their concerns/ objections/ support for this project. We have serious concerns about what is proposed. In the Local Plan it is a mixed employment housing site but the application is for 100% housing on 75% of the site which is not what we were expecting. We are very worried about the impact on traffic, parking in Green End and on Cinques Rd at school drop off and pick up times and on the doctor's surgery which is already at full stretch. Unless these things are generously mitigated for by the landowner and developer then this development will cause much more harm than good. We undoubtedly need more affordable housing but not at the cost of the quality of life of those of us who are already here. So please, as a matter of urgency, write to the Parish Council and South Cambs to let them know what you think.

In Orwell there are again concerns about proposals to build on land adjacent to the School – please contact the Parish Council if you have views or concerns.

In Croydon, Hills (who developed the affordable housing in Orwell) have been to speak to the PC about developing a small parcel of land in the centre of the village (outside the framework). Again if you have concerns please contact the PC.

Ermine Street Housing:

And what is this, you may be wondering... South Cambs has set up a property management firm - Ermine Street Housing - from which it forecasts around £600,000 could be generated in - to be ploughed straight back into Council services. We have agreed to invest up to £100 million in the firm to help offset austerity cuts and protect services people rely on.

Councillors agreed to invest up to £7 million in the pilot project at the end of 2013, with over 30 homes being purchased and rented at market rates. The company is managing a further 42 homes for the Ministry of Defence at Waterbeach and Bassingbourn on a five year deal. During the pilot Ermine Street Housing generated £100,000 of income for the Council. We have to do this because the grant the Council receives from Government to deliver services has been cut from almost £8 million in 2010/11 to £1.8 million in 2015/16.

Online Forms at South Cambs: South Cambs is introducing online benefits forms to replace the paper forms that are currently used. It has been a complex process as the paper form is very large but only a limited number of the sections are required depending on the claimant's circumstances. The new online benefits forms are excellent as they integrate with our back office systems to update them automatically. Once the new forms go live we will no longer be using paper forms. This is a big change

but we are working with stakeholders (YOU) to make sure people are aware and anyone who is not able to fill out the form online themselves will be given assistance over the phone as they are now.

Rubbish: Also in order to reduce costs South Cambs and the City have now combined rubbish collection services with bins from over 116,000 homes now being emptied from the South Cambs Waterbeach depot. The management teams for the two councils' waste operations came together in August - saving over £100,000 a year - and with the operations now working out of one depot, further efficiencies will be sought to drive down costs. We are also planning to set up a shared business waste service with the City Council.

Housing: We wrote before about the new problems facing housing authorities like South Cambs following the Election. It's good to report that South Cambs has now met with the Government's housing minister to make the case for how thousands of much needed new social houses could be built in South Cambridgeshire if we were given the freedom to do what's best for local people.

As we explained before proposals put forward by the Government as part of a new housing bill will see South Cambridgeshire's plans to build 1,000 new council houses over the next 30 years scrapped as the Council's funding stream to invest in new homes would be cut. Under the Government's plans, rents for Council tenants would fall by 1% next year and therefore could not be used to fund homes.

Under the proposed plan, the Council will collect £12 million less rent over the next four years and a £134 million reduction over the next 30 years making it unfeasible to make the planned investment in new homes. As the relevant portfolio holder said "I am pleased to say that Mr Lewis listened to what we had to say on the effect the proposals will have in South Cambridgeshire. We have a special case due to the growth, new jobs being created and high cost of housing. The fight doesn't stop though; we will continue to work with our local MPs and impress on the government the need for the freedom and funding to deliver vital social housing in the area."

Community Awards: The search is on to find the individuals, organisations, and businesses that make a big difference in small South Cambridgeshire communities with South Cambridgeshire District Council's sixth annual Community Awards celebration. Do you know someone who deserves an Award?

The five gongs up for grabs are:

- **Village Hero** - recognises outstanding individual contributions to community life.
- **Parish Councillor of the Year** - recognises the great work done by parish councillors who have given their own time to improve the local community for all of us in 2015/16.
- **Outstanding Youth Initiative** - recognises the excellent work done by youth groups and local businesses to support the development of young people in South Cambridgeshire.
- **Outstanding Local Service/Amenity** - recognises the amazing services provided by local shops, pubs, post offices, libraries, and many more besides.
- **Environment Award** - recognises the valuable contribution made by groups who seek to improve our villages for the long and short term.
- **Wellbeing Award** - recognises the many groups whose aim it is to improve our health and wellbeing, both mental and physical.

Nominations close on Friday 15 January 2016. Further information about the categories and nomination forms can be found at www.scambs.gov.uk/community-awards

Worried about an older person? From time to time, people get in touch because they are concerned about an older person perhaps living alone who doesn't seem to be coping. The County Council has a responsibility for coordinating adult social care and while it can seem horrendously complicated there are a few initial steps that should be straightforward. If you have access to the internet, then please look at the County Council website page, 'Worried about an Older Person'

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20161/care_and_support/595/worried_about_an_adult_or_older_person or telephone 0345-0455202. Please contact us if you have concerns.

Register to Vote: An historic overhaul to the system of voter registration is underway and every household will have had a letter to this effect. You would have been asked to check that everyone in your household who should be on the Electoral Register is so, and if not to ring or go on-line to rectify any errors. Please do this before December 1, 2015: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/register-vote>.

Street Lighting – Will this ever end? Balfour Beatty have been asked to resolve the outstanding issues at both Gamlingay and Longstowe and I have great hopes that I shall be disappointed yet again. However I have at least had a call from someone who seemed anxious to help.

Finance:

Bank Statement: Current total - £7888 - 08

Royal British Legion: An invoice for £17-00 was presented for the Royal British Legion Poppy Wreath, which the Mr Wheeler laid at the war memorial, on behalf of the village. It was resolved that, in pursuance of the power conferred by Section 137 (4) (a) of the Local Government Act 1972 and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, the Council approves the payment of the sum of £17-00 in respect of a wreath for Remembrance Sunday. All in favour, and a cheque for this amount was signed.

Items for the next agenda:

Loose livestock

Community Benefit Fund criteria

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

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 9.17pm.

Signed

Date

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