

## **A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 16 November 2016 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

### **Apologies:**

**Present:** Mr Wheeler, Mr Sole, Mrs Slator, Ms Newland, Mr Barnes, the Clerk, one member of public, Cllrs Smith and Kindersley.

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

**Declarations of Interest:** None

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

**Queen Adelaide:** No further information available but still supposed to be next spring.

**Community Payback Scheme:** The PCC meeting to discuss whether the Community Payback Scheme is suitable for church grass cutting is on Thursday 17th November.

**Implementation Group:** Mr Ralph reported that:-

**Village Litter Pick** in October resulted in 16 black sacks of rubbish, 1 car bumper, 2 five gallon oil drums, 2 car wheels, complete with tyres. These were all disposed of with the help of SCDC, who also helped with the provision of Personal Protective Equipment, for which the IG was very grateful. Thank you to all the volunteers who turned out for this. The IG would like to use some funding to purchase high quality litter grabbers for use in the village. Elaine Hughes is the litter champion.

**Display boards:** Still deciding on the final selection, but have now located freestanding boards.

**Croydon Spring Watch Weekend** or something similar to this is being considered for the new year. The IG intends to join SPEP (Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership) on a 6 month trial basis. They also intend to visit habitat award winning Greys Farm, which is near Royston.

**Communications Survey:** The report has been finalised and will be with the Parish Council for the December meeting. Several recommendations will emerge including a proposal that the IG gather parish bcc email list for 6-month trial with further investigation of data protection issues plus thoughts about the village website.

**Land on Croydon Hill:** There is a strip of land along the side of Croydon Hill which is currently on the market for sale by auction. Mr Ralph thought it would be nice if the village could purchase it as a safe place to walk up Croydon Hill to join the various footpaths at the top. Estimates of its value are between £5,000 and £50,000 (according to the website).

**Local Highways Improvements:** No response from Derek Crosbie - Sebastian suggested a follow-up e-mail. Clerk to action.

**Reading Room Proposal:** The Chair of the Trustees sent a report on how the proposed improvements would benefit the village in general. Council discussed this and resolved that it would be worth supporting the Stage 1 improvements, costing £1222-00.. All in favour. A cheque for £1222-00 was raised and signed. Cllr Smith did suggest that the Reading Room could claim up to £1500 from SCDC Community Chest.

**Hedge:** This has been cut - thank you.

**Members' Interest Forms:** were returned to those who were present at the meeting.

At this point the Chairman suspended to agenda to allow Cllrs Kindersley and Smith to give reports.

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

#### **SCDC**

**Clopton Close Car parking:** Cllr Smith has sent information to Carly Freed, a Housing Officer at SCDC, regarding the incidents that have been taking place. The Parish Council had a letter in 2006 which stated that all the residents of 1-9 Clopton Close and 29 and 30 High Street, may park one vehicle each in the car park. As the properties have been sold off the houses still retain the right to park one vehicle each there, but Council tenants may park more than one. Cllr Smith will look into deregulation of the lay-by, although nothing is enforceable. Council suggested painting numbered bays in the car park.

**Clopton Farm:** According to the Enforcement Officer from SCDC there has been no breach of planning conditions on the site. Other problems need to be dealt with by the Police. Cllr Smith has offered to meet Mr Gibney and if he would like to meet with the applicant, will attend the meeting to mediate. Clerk will contact Mr Gibney with the offer.

**Devolution:** It has been the biggest fiasco ever - District Council has to vote on whether to accept it when Councillors have not had time to read the paperwork before the meeting. The scheme will cost £1.5 million to set up and £850,00 to run. Elections will be held every 4 years and these will cost £750,000 each - all from the taxpayers. The Mayor and 7 Leaders of the Councils would have responsibility for all strategic decisions, transport, housing etc.

**City Deal:** Busway from Caxton Gibbet to the city would go straight through the Green Belt. Alongside the A428 would be much more sensible.

**Local Plan:** Nine Wells nature reserve is under threat - it will probably go as the land is owned by the County Council.

## CCC

**Budget:** It is deeply depressing. See November Report copied below.

## November Report to the Parishes from Cllrs Smith and Kindersley

**Budgets:** Last month we mentioned that Budget time was here again. You'll be aware (vaguely) that every Authority gets a lump sum settlement from the Government which is then added to by Council Tax and so on. As part of the last budget the Chancellor indicated an offer would be made to local authorities that would enable them to accept a multi-year grant settlement – jolly good idea as it would enable them to plan ahead, be prudent and so on. This would cover the forthcoming four financial years and it was made clear as part of this announcement that it was likely that those accepting the offer were likely to favour more favourably than those that did not.

The only requirement that we had to agree to was to develop an efficiency plan. Given our agreed transformation programme this was relatively straightforward.

Alas. Yet again HMG does the dirty. It turned out that the way the settlements were calculated would mean Cambridgeshire would actually receive a negative settlement in year 4 to the tune of £7.5m or so. In other words, we would be giving cash to other authorities - to subsidise them. Appalling. In any event the General Purposes Committee voted not to accept the government offer of a 4-year settlement. But the vote was only by one – in other words some Councillors were happy to accept a deal which would have left Cambridgeshire taxpayers paying for services in other areas.

Last year we did not ask Cambridgeshire taxpayers to pay £2 a month extra in Council Tax to keep our own services, (gritting, street-lights, children's centres etc) - but were prepared this year to ask Cambridgeshire taxpayers to pay £3 a month to subsidise central government and other councils. Just appalling.

**Local Plan:** Bad news on the Planning front as South Cambridgeshire District Council moves ever onwards in the Local Plan process. It intends to release another parcel of land south of the Cambridge Bio-medical campus from the Green Belt and thus allow the Campus to extend almost into the Nine Wells Nature Reserve. Apparently 'New evidence by leading experts' has confirmed no damage will be caused. Apparently said experts have misunderstood both the definition and purpose of the Green Belt – which is to protect Cambridge from sprawl development.

Also bad news are some modifications to the development at Bourn Airfield – “small revisions” which it turns out take up the employment area within the main body of the Airfield and some around the entrance to the new village and near Highfields Caldecote – signalling an effective ribbon of development from Caxton into the centre of Cambridge.

Just to remind you what is proposed in the Local Plan: North of Waterbeach (new town) – 8,000-9,000 homes, 1,400 of which by 2031. Bourn airfield new village – 3,500 homes, 1,700 of which by 2031. Cambourne West – 1,200 homes, all by 2031 (with planning application already in!) in addition to the 14,000 homes already committed to in locations such as the edge of Cambridge and the new town of Northstowe.

**Bus 75:** Clearly judging by the number of complaints about cancelled services, late running and general hopelessness the Whippet service 75 is in meltdown. Residents of Barrington and Haslingfield in particular have been in touch to report late arrivals at work, missed hospital appointments, having to walk to Foxton, take taxis home and all the other things that happen when buses don't arrive. We are aware that last month there was a shortage of drivers such that drivers were being shipped up from

London and being 'retrained'. Now the buses themselves appear to have stopped working with 3 out of action on one day.

This is not good enough. The County has been asked what it is doing to ameliorate the situation and ensure a decent service is available to residents - as has Whippet.

**Robinson Court:** The Planning Committee at South Cambs met on November 2<sup>nd</sup> to consider the proposed redevelopment of the site. They visited the site the day before and took into account the neighbour concerns about parking, foul and surface water drainage and issues around the construction phase. The Committee voted to agree the application unanimously but added a further condition that the green space be protected and not used for car parking. Housing has agreed that households will be leafleted before both the demolition and construction phases with contact details of the site managers and Council officers so that if there are any issues they can be dealt with quickly and easily.

The contract to redevelop Robinson Court has now gone out to tender. We are hopeful that things will start to happen in the early spring, initially with the demolition of the flats, soon to be followed by the building of 14 new houses and flats. Whoever wins the contract will be required to hold monthly meetings with residents to explain what is going on and to listen and respond to any problems. We are aware that access to the site will be an issue and have requested that no lorries go beyond the access to the field. We also know that residents with health problems are concerned about dust and we will be having discussions about how this can be managed. There will be restrictions on the hours during which activity will occur and we are also asking for clarification about security of the site. We are also hopeful that we will be able to provide some extra parking spaces for existing residents.

**City Deal:** As you've read over and over one Mrs B Smith has been creating merry hell about various City Deal proposals and it does now look as if proposals to fine drivers using key roads in and out of Cambridge in peak hours may be for the scrap heap.

It is excellent that the huge volume of objections appears to have forced the Cambridge area's City Deal Board into a rethink. But such a plan shouldn't have seen the light of day in the first place, especially without proper exploration of other ways to achieve the very necessary aim of reducing traffic congestion in Cambridge.

The decision two years ago to introduce parking charges for the park and rides into Cambridge resulted in a drop of 14 per cent in passenger numbers. That clearly needs to be mended. And we need an open and wide-ranging conversation including all who live or work in Cambridge, or visit the city for whatever purpose, about how to make travelling into the city more sustainable.

But the whole fiasco is also an object lesson in what happens under remote boards like City Deal, consisting of representatives selected by councils to make decisions at an extra remove from the public. And it's an alarm bell about how decisions on all sorts of matters will be taken by the new 'powerful Mayor' of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and his or her 'combined authority', which will be foisted on us by the Government from May next year.

**Concessionary Bus Fares:** Over the next 12 months around 80,000 people across Cambridgeshire will need to renew their concessionary bus pass. If everyone calls then our Call Centre will collapse. We know around 50% of those who use bus passes use online services as we have their e-mail addresses. If you are comfortable renewing online we urge you to do so. The County has improved the process and form on the website to make it easier, so people can use their own photos and even see what it looks like on a mock bus pass. Using the online form provides a speedier and cheaper process in the contact centre - so please do use the online form at [http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20017/buses/124/free\\_bus\\_pass](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/info/20017/buses/124/free_bus_pass) so we can better deal with those who aren't online. Thank you!

**Bassingbourn Barracks:** It is with considerable enthusiasm and relief that we greet the intention of the Defence establishment to continue to use Bassingbourn Barracks for military purposes as announced on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Enthusiasm because this means a boost to local employment and the local economy and relief because it means that - at least in the short-term - this site will not come forward for a new village as was feared. So two thumbs up for this.

**Gamlingay Village College:** Mr Burkitt kindly invited Sebastian to GVC to view some lessons and meet some pupils including the fab Head Girl and Head Boy who interviewed him about being a Councillor. It was a really interesting visit and both teachers and pupils most impressive.

**Winter Gritting:** From October 25<sup>th</sup> 26 gritters will be on standby, day and night, to grit the roads when necessary. However gritting routes across the county have been revised and the Council will be reducing its gritting routes. Last year we covered 44% of the County's roads - this year (and onwards) it will be 30% only. (The M11, A14, A1, A1 (M), A11, A47 and A428 are gritted by Highways England.)

There is no longer any attempt to cover school bus routes. The map is available online and it would appear that most of the Gamlingay Division routes remain unchanged.

**New Integrated Urgent Care Service:** Ever dialled 111? To help simplify access for patients, NHS 111 services have been extended to provide patients with access to a wider range of services and specialist clinicians such as GPs, pharmacists and health advisors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. NHS 111 enables patients and health professionals to get quicker access to the right health advice, at the right time and in the right place.

For patients who become unwell when their GP surgery is closed, dialling 111 will enable a clinical assessment to be made and referral to the most appropriate service for their needs. For patients who are in need mental health support, dialling 111 and selecting option two will enable them to speak directly to a member of the mental health crisis team.

By having one single point of access it also prevents patients having to contact multiple different services to receive the care they need. All calls from both mobiles and landlines to 111 are free.

**New Monthly Housing, Police and Councillor Surgery:** We have now run 3 surgeries at the Eco Hub and so far no one has been to see us. Make of that what you will – but we will struggle to keep these drop-in sessions running if they are not used. It is an opportunity for you to talk to us about any problems you have, get advice on housing matters or access help from the police, all in one place. They are held on the first Monday of the month from 9.30am until 10.30am. Please do come along if you are living in one of South Cambs houses or a housing association house just to let us know how things are for you. As always it is a case of 'use it or lose it'.

**Avenells Way:** We are aware that the lack of a dropped kerb to the alleyway leading to Church St is causing problems for residents using mobility scooters. We are asking council officers to see if something can be done to make this safer.

It has been lovely to see the communal flower beds looking so well tended recently. We are aware that this is due to the not inconsiderable efforts of some of the residents. We would just like to say thank you very much to them for being so community minded.

**A428 Busway:** The last meeting of the City Deal Assembly discussed the proposal for a busway running along or adjacent to the A428 from Caxton Gibbet. The City Deal Assembly made some very sensible suggestions for the route this should take so as to avoid damage to the Green Belt. They also suggested a far less damaging site for a new park and ride to the one which was being put forward which overpowered Coton. Despite a good and rational argument, the final decision made by the City Deal Board appeared to be a done deal and they rejected all the changes put forward by the Assembly. One can't help but wonder what the point of the Assembly is. On top of this the Board, of 5 members, has just had its 5th resignation in 2 years which says a lot about how well the governance of this project is going.

**Wimpole Hall Permissive Paths:** At last! After at least 5 years of badgering by Sebastian and Wimpole Parish Council the County has started public consultation on a number of changes to rights of way on the Wimpole Hall estate. One will tie up with the new footway along the A603 and a new bridge across the ditch. Public consultation runs to December 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Grass Cutting:** We must apologise for the wild flower areas on Manor Rd and Murfitt Way being left uncut for so long. They are the responsibility of the District Council who have arranged for them to be done by a contractor but not until early December. We shall be reviewing what happens to these areas for next year in order to avoid the inconvenience that has occurred this year.

**South Cambs Magazine Delivery Problems:** Please do keep letting us know if you do not receive the South Cambs magazine and also let us know if you have complained and are now receiving it.

**Boundary Review:** The review of the District Boundaries has now completed and we are going to see big change. Currently Gamlingay is a 2 member ward (Bridget and Sebastian as councillors) consisting of Gamlingay, Hatley, Arrington, Croydon, Little Gransden and Longstowe. The Boundary Commission have reduced the number of district councillors from 57 to 45 and so the number of wards has had to be reduced by a similar 20%. The upshot for us is that Gamlingay is being made a single member ward by itself, Little Gransden and Longstowe will be part of Caldecote, and Arrington, Croydon and Hatley will become part of The Mordens ward.

**Devolution:** All the Cambridgeshire Councils will meet in November to vote on whether to accept the government's devolution deal. A recent press release advised that the directly elected mayor will have the power to build on the Green Belt which only adds to our grave concerns about this.

It appears - from Council papers - that the annual cost of the Mayoral Authority will be £1.2 million. £80k for the Mayor plus £30k for NI and pension so £1.09 million on admin staff, travel, accommodation. Looks expensive to us.

**Land South of West Road Planning Application:** Bridget and Sebastian held a meeting of West Road Action Group to discuss how we are going to manage both the appeal for the original refused application for 28 houses on this site which is outside the village boundary. This was followed by a meeting arranged by the parish council and the promoters to discuss a second application which is likely to be heard by the District Council's planning committee in December. Both meetings were very well attended. If the new application, which differs little from the original one, is approved, then the appeal will not happen. If it is refused then the appeal will go ahead in the New Year. The council are still accepting representations from residents on this proposal so if you want to add anything please send your letters to [lydia.pravin@scamb.gov.uk](mailto:lydia.pravin@scamb.gov.uk)

**St Denis' Church East Hatley:** It's brilliant to be able to report – finally – that the Church has now been handed over by South Cambs to the Friends of Friendless Churches. This is a national charity which aims to restore and maintain derelict churches and turn them into community assets. The negotiations have been extremely lengthy and have involved numerous parties from the Diocese to the neighbours to the Parish Council with three sets of lawyers working on it at one point. So a big thank you to all those who committed to making this project happen.

**Correspondence:**

**Police:** There will be a meeting in Bassingbourn on 22 November - all welcome.

**SCDC:** Bin Collections will change over the Christmas period - please watch the magazine for details. If you do not receive a magazine, please let Cllr Smith know.

**Planning:**

**Carpentry workshop at Clopton Farm:**

This was refused.

**Finance:**

**Bank Signatories:** Barclays has written stating that Mrs Slator will need to go to the bank again as the paperwork was received outside the timeframe allowed. Councillors were not impressed with this as Mrs Slator would be unable to access Barclays in Royston due to the gradient in the High Street. Clerk was instructed to send in the completed paperwork and if it is not good enough, then the account will be closed and moved another bank. All in favour.

The Implementation Group will be invited to join the Parish Council for Christmas drinks and nibbles following the December meeting.

**Items for next agenda:** Cllr Kindersley CCC - personal liability for residents cutting the grass outside their houses, as asked to do because of the budget cuts.

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

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 8.42pm.

Signed .....

Date .....