

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was due to be held on Wednesday 16th December 2020 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Due to Government advice on social contact and distancing, it was decided to postpone open Council meetings until further notice, and the required meetings will be held remotely.

Apologies: Mr Brown - unavailable, Ms Newland - unwell.

Present: Mrs Slator, Mr Barnes, Mr Sole, Mr Wheeler, Cllr Williams, Cllr Kindersley, one member of the public and the Clerk.

Declarations of Interest: None received.

District Cllr Kindersley gave a report to the meeting:-

Planning: There has been a lot of publicity regarding a proposal by Thakeham to build a 25,000-home development, including a new town with a series of connected new villages, on land around Barrington, Bassingbourn cum Kneesworth, Foxton, Melbourn, Meldreth, Orwell, Shepreth, Whaddon and Wimpole. The impact on the locality for transport, health services, schools etc would be tremendous. A campaign group is already up and running, in which the local MP Anthony Browne is involved.

Covid: Winter Support packages are available for children over Christmas and Easter. These are for households in any kind of need, including help with bills, white goods, foods, clothes etc. CCC has to be aware that you exist, otherwise this help is not available.

Grants for Businesses: Grants for helping businesses survive the lockdown(s) are still available.

Public Transport: Face masks must now be worn by anyone over the age of 11 when accessing public transport.

Budget: There are plans to reduce the classification of A roads in East Cambs to B roads. This will result in a loss of £250,000 in the Highways Budget. There is a lot of disagreement with this.

Wimpole: The amount of car parking in Church Lane and Church End in Arrington, and sometimes on the A1198 and in Wimpole gateway, is getting worse. Wimpole Park website states that parking is free, but does not state that in order to park "for free" a ticket for entry to the Park, house and gardens needs to be purchased at a cost of £18-00. This results in people who only want to use the footpaths parking in the surrounding villages. Arrington PC has recently sent out letters to all residents, but some outlying residents are still waiting for theirs.

Flooding: With all the recent rain, the road opposite Wimpole gates has again flooded, and also the footpath in Wimpole Park is ankle deep in water. On several occasions Highways has attempted to find the problem, but so far has been unable to do so.

The Chair thanked Cllr Kindersley for attending, there was an exchange of festive wishes, and he left the meeting.

Written report from County Councillor Kindersley

South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council - December 2020

The Gamlingay Division comprises the Parishes of Abington Pigotts, Arrington, Barrington, Croydon, Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Hatley, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Steeple Morden, Tadlow and Wimpole. This report is /for all Division Parish Councils but please be aware that it will include items that may have little or no relevance to your particular Parish. Apologies in advance!

Seasons' Greetings: We would like to wish all readers a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year 2021. Here's to hoping that 2021 is not quite the rollercoaster that we've so far endured this year!

Cambridgeshire's New Town?: Sebastian writes: "A West Sussex speculative development company is proposing to create a new sprawling town of 25,000 homes between and encompassing the villages of Shepreth, Melbourn, Meldreth, Whaddon, Bassingbourn, Wimpole, Orwell, Barrington and Foxton. The

new town, dubbed 'South West Cambridge,' would profoundly change the hinterland of a multitude of villages and eradicate the rural nature of much of South Cambridgeshire.

The developer, Thakeham, has missed the deadline for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan's 'Call for Sites,' in spite of having spent the past two years preparing its scheme, during which time it will have been fully aware of the South Cambridgeshire Planning process. It now proposes a late submission in the Call for Sites. While it has contacted relevant landowners, Thakeham has made no contact with local residents or their elected representatives.

The South Cambridgeshire development hierarchy is structured around its largest population centres at Cambourne and Northstowe, which are served by the A428, the Guided Busway and the planned new Cambourne Station, as well as its new schools and health services.

An action group - South West Cambridge Action Group - has been set up and you can see their website at www.swcag.org for further information. Although Planning is a District Council matter District Councillors have been advised not to comment as this might prejudice their position later on in the process."

Gamlingay Gym: It was shock to the many of us who use the village gym regularly to learn that it might be closed down. Sebastian and I worked hard to secure the most recent funding for the gym (a dual use facilities grant from South Cambs) despite the Council (of the time) threat to spend it elsewhere. Likewise the successful funding of the MUGA and upgrades to the gym. These grants were made in conjunction with the establishment of a legal agreement between the education provider and the council to provide sports facilities for the benefit of the school and the community for a set period of time - in our case 12 years.

As soon as South Cambs became aware that the gym was at risk they made contact with the Academy Trust and council officers are currently in discussions to see what can be done to retain a fitness centre in the village. In order to help inform these discussions the council has commissioned a third party - Strategic Leisure - to urgently look at the viability of the current dual use facilities and also to see if any alternative locations could be used for the gym.

Because the Gym had employees there was a delicate balancing act to undergo by the Trust which meant that South Cambs District Council, Gamlingay Parish Council nor the members of the gym were notified that the Trust was considering closure of the gym and indeed the community was not asked to participate in a consultation about the dual use facilities prior to any actions being taken. Unfortunately – coming at the same time as the consultation on expanding the age range - people have assumed making provision for younger children is somehow dependent on the gym ceasing to exist. This is not the case.

We now know, thanks to the awful year we have been through, that being fit and healthy and controlling our weight is absolutely critical to surviving this pandemic and any future pandemics that come our way. To do this we must have easy access to affordable facilities that allow us to help ourselves to keep fit and well and so will be doing everything in my power as the District Councillor for Gamlingay to ensure that we retain the means to do this. Sebastian has been working on a plan to try and keep the Gym going and he will report more fully on this shortly. This is a fast moving situation so by the time you read this things may well have moved on – please do get in touch if you have concerns and thank you to those who have already done so.

Winter Support Packages: Cambridgeshire County Council will be offering Winter Support Packages to families to make sure that, not only all children have access to food whether they are eligible for free school meals or in a range of other categories, but also that families and individuals who might struggle with other essential bills, such as utilities, can be supported.

The food support will come via a voucher sent to families automatically, using a system many schools are already using. Each eligible child will receive a £15 voucher for each week of the school holidays (two weeks at Christmas and one week in February). Those eligible for the voucher will be those eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium, funded two year olds, eligible for Free School Meals (including those not currently on a school roll) and eligible for 16+ bursary.

In addition to the Food Vouchers, the scheme is also available to support these same families and individuals, as well as many more, with other immediate needs, including (but not limited to) other essential supplies and food, household energy and water bills and essential white goods in addition to those listed above, those eligible for this additional support will include: households who receive income-related benefits and households facing financial hardship – who councils are aware of; families identified as 'just about managing' by schools, anyone with an Education, Health and Care Plan, Care Leavers,

Young Carers and people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' status – such as asylum seekers. Anyone in need of additional support can access it using 0345 045 5219 or going to the website.

EU Regional Development Fund supports 'Shop Local' South Cambs Directory: A £140K grant from the EU Regional Development Fund has helped make possible a new South Cambs business directory aimed at encouraging and facilitating patronage of local businesses who are invited to register at <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/local-business-directory>

Government Covid Business Support Grants: Updates about the government grants continue to go to Gamlingay Businesses for whom we have contact details; including the regularly updated council business newsletter, Open for Business. Bridget has contacted all those businesses who should be eligible for the last round. If any local businesses think it might have been missed out - especially if they can evidence hardship as a consequence of Covid, please get in touch straight away. By 7th Dec on this particular funding round South Cambs had paid 479 grants in total worth £733,0016 of which 16 were Hardship Grants amounting to £48,000. We hope to have clarity and guidance from Government on how we issue Tier 2 grants and Wet Pub grants shortly.

Housing Refugees: Up to 12 refugee families, around 48 individuals, from war-torn countries will be offered homes in South Cambridgeshire in a three-year plan agreed by the District Council. Following a decision in 2019 to house a small number of families as part of our contribution to the national and international commitment to assisting refugees, South Cambridgeshire District Council has already helped four families (15 individuals) start new lives in the District. Councillors agreed to continue to provide help for up to four new refugee families per year for each of the next three years, if funding and support continue to be available.

This will include those who have been forced from their homes in Syria, Iran or Sudan, who require urgent medical treatment, who are survivors of violence and torture and include women and children.

It is anticipated that the waiting time for local families who are already on the Council's housing waiting list, and who are in the greatest need, will not be affected. The Council will be able to decide which housing it offers to the programme, thereby ensuring the least impact on existing levels of need within the District. The Council is working with an existing resettlement team at Cambridge City Council to integrate the four families who arrived during 2019/2020 into their new homes and communities, and to ensure practical support is in place.

How Covid is Affecting Cambridgeshire: As you will know we are all now in Tier 2. This means that we can only meet with people from other households outdoors and only 6 at a time. Indoors, including in pubs and restaurants, we have to limit ourselves to one household. We have to keep wearing masks in shops and other indoor venues and social distancing and hand washing is as important now as it ever was if we are to continue to see a decline in cases. As of 4th Dec there were 121 CV positive people in our hospitals. - this was down from 132 the week before but hospitals are all still very busy and very full of very sick people.

Older people are still being asked to minimise their social contacts and to work from home. The County Council is going to great lengths to contact paid carers to offer support and help where needed. Teams of trained vaccinators have started to vaccinate patients against coronavirus at Addenbrooke's Hospital at the start of the biggest immunisation programme in history. People aged 80 and over as well as care home workers will be first to receive the jab, along with NHS workers who are at higher risk.

Those people who fall into the priority groups will be called to book appointments. Over the coming weeks the CCG will be extending deliveries to local vaccination services, and we hope that later this month the MHRA will allow batches to be split, meaning that vaccination teams can go into care homes to vaccinate those who can't go to other services.

You can really help the NHS deliver this effectively to those who need it most. The NHS will contact you when it's the right time to come forward, so please don't contact the NHS to seek a vaccine before then. Please act on your invite when it comes, and make sure you attend your appointments when you arrange them and of course please continue to abide by all the social distancing, wearing of face masks and hand hygiene guidance, which will still save lives.

Face Masks: Face coverings must now be worn on transport to secondary school or college. If you have children over 11 years old, please be aware of the new guidance. In accordance with Government advice, face coverings must be worn by children and young people aged 11 and over on all transport to secondary school or college, whether that's public transport or a dedicated transport service. (This does not apply to those who are exempt from wearing a face covering.)

Council Finance: Despite Covid and other financial pressures facing every council, South Cambs District Council is in a good financial position going forward to 2023 and we will be working on plans to meet the need to find some £5million in savings over the course of the coming five years through efficiencies and new income streams which we have every confidence in achieving.

The current Medium Term Financial Plan has taken a worst case scenario approach with no provision for the Government providing support for the loss of Business Rate income arising from Covid 19 and an expectation that the Fair Funding Review will now happen for the financial year 2022/23 and that it will result in the council losing a substantial amount in Business Rate income as a result of the redistribution of that income to council's with adult social care responsibilities.

In Quarter 1 it was difficult to give a full assessment of the impact of Covid 19 on the council's finances. Unfortunately Quarter 2 is just as difficult, because Government support for the loss of income for the first four months of this financial year has only just been received and we have only just been asked to submit our bid for the next four months. Moreover we still await the Government's decision on whether or not it will reimburse us for the loss of Council Tax and Business Rates due to Covid 19.

The loss of income has impacted on Commercial Waste and Planning but Government has promised to make good for most of these losses, but the money is slow in coming through. As to additional costs arising from Covid 19 the Government has promised £1.9m to support us with so far £1.8m received.

The Government emphasises in the Spending Review that spending power for local authorities (i.e. the total amount of money that a local authority has to spend) will increase by around 4.5% for 2021/2022 however the majority of this will be funded by Council Tax. This will worsen the situation in rural areas for rural residents. Already in 2020/2021 rural residents pay, on average, 22.7% (£105) per head more in Council Tax than their urban counterparts due to receiving less government grant and rural residents fund 68% of their Local Government Spending Power through Council Tax compared with urban residents who fund theirs by 55%. So, rural residents pay more, receive fewer services and, on average, earn less than those in urban areas and that is inequitable – don't you think?

What does my Council Tax buy?: Councillors often get asked "What does my Council Tax buy?" so we thought we'd supply some examples over the next few months. You may be aware that when a child comes into care, the County Council becomes that child's Corporate Parent. This means we have the collective responsibility as a Council, ie elected members, employees and partner agencies, for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us until the age of 25.

Latest data shows we have 714 children in care for whom we are responsible. 74 of them are unaccompanied children seeking asylum and 229 are in long term placements or foster homes. Sadly this figure is declining – mostly due to Covid – and so if you are interested in fostering do please get in touch! 65 are disabled and 77% come from a white ethnic background. At any one time between 20 and 30 of these children are 'missing'. The good news is that the number of adoption orders granted is up by 15% and increasing.

Electric Bin Lorry: South Cambs is very pleased to finally be trailing a new electric bin lorry with a view to gradually exchanging our whole fleet of refuse vehicles as part of our work to become a zero carbon authority. Long may it continue!

Barrington Quarry: Cemex have advised that train movements are planned to restart now that HS2 drilling machines are back in action. A Liaison meeting is being planned to bring residents up to date.

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other matters, please do not hesitate to contact County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley on 01767 651982 or skindersley@hotmail.com or write to the Manor Barn, East Hatley, SG19 3JA

District Cllr Williams gave a report to the meeting.

Planning: There has been a lot of concern surrounding a proposal to build 25,000 homes in SCDC around 9 parishes locally. SCDC has not received any information from the developer during the recent site submissions exercise. Cllr Williams is not at all enthusiastic about the plans. There is a SCDC Scrutiny Meeting on 17 December, which will be live streamed and open to anyone to watch. The Chief Constable will also be there regarding potential cuts in the Police budget.

Grants: There is still grant funding for businesses available. The Reading Room may be eligible, if this has not already been claimed for it.

The Chair thanked Cllr Williams for attending; she wished the meeting a good Christmas, which was reciprocated, and she left the meeting.

Matters Arising:

Implementation Group: Ten people attended the Zoom meeting and the overall sense was very supportive of this being the right time to make the move from the more formal Community Led Plan Implementation Group (IG) to a looser Community Group (CG).

There was discussion of how the CG might initially be organised though in the longer term it was felt arrangements would evolve naturally.

It was not felt necessary to have a formal Chairing role, nor Secretary, nor formal minutes.

- Membership, such as it is, would be for anyone who is interested in being involved in any of the areas of interest being pursued though it seems likely that a core membership would emerge.
- Events and topics would be advertised widely on WhatsApp, e-News and Clopton Chatter
- It was thought important that the CG continues some good Initiatives from the IG, and also embrace the First Tuesday Group programme of topics. -Combining these two strands the discussion touched on a wide range of topics including Village Clear-up days, Communications & Website, Security, Footpaths/Cycleways, Biodiversity / Nature / Birding, Zero Carbon initiatives and Sustainability, Local History including Downings and Clopton, Church History and on-going Repairs, Kids Club/Activities, Talks/invited speakers, Village Breakfasts.
- Wider community to be informed in January for First Tues in February - first few meetings likely to be on Zoom:
 - 2nd February - Parish Tree Initiative/ Wildlife/Churchyard
 - 2nd March - What's all the digging under the church about?
- Future possible topics - Talks, Community Cafe for carers & dementia sufferers (Forget-Me-Not), Games for kids and parents
- Probably a couple of meetings per year for social and discussion.
- Initially, two village ladies to coordinate the First Tuesday programme though all are encouraged to suggest topics
- Initially The Parish Council Chair and ex-IG Co-Chair to coordinate the more established long running topics e.g. Clear-up days, HNS and biannual CG meetings.

Finally, there was discussion about the possibility of some kind of gathering with Carols on the Green. This would need to take full account of latest Covid guidelines so some uncertainty. Two villagers leading, more news anon.

Housing Needs: Hastoe has sent second letters to the landowners, but no replies have been received from them to date.

Website Update: The Chair, Clerk and three members of the public attended the website training via Zoom. It was interesting watching the presentation, but the amount of knowledge imparted during the training was immense. After a discussion, it was decided that the Chair and the Clerk would administer the website for the the village and Council. The website developer has sent a customised CMS Manual to assist with this, and the Chair was pleased to report that both she and the Clerk have managed to upload and place documents on the correct pages. When more documentation has been added to the website, it will be circulated for comments and possible further tweaking, before going live. The Chair said that a formal thank you to the gentleman currently maintaining the old website should be made.

Speedwatch: Still awaiting the appointment of a new Crime Commissioner, after which Cllr Williams will be able to arrange an area meeting.

Clopton Sign: The Clerk is currently storing the sign, as it has not yet been discovered who owns the land the sign was previously on.

Defibrillator: The Chair and Clerk have researched prices and types of defibrillator available. The Chair gave a brief resumé of the results which had already been circulated to Councillors, and proposed that a Cardiac Science G5 defibrillator, currently recommended by the East Anglian Ambulance Service should be purchased, along with all the necessary accessories from AA Defibs, using the Community Benefit fund. Total essential cost would be £1570 (including training and signs) plus VAT, which is reclaimable. Councillors were all in favour of the proposal, and the Chair will now obtain a formal confirmation quotation from AA Defibs. Following on from this, the path to the kiosk will need to be flattened so there are no trip hazards if being accessed in the dark. The Chair has offered to fund this, with some flagstones she has available and the help of a local man. Once this is done the kiosk will need to be

cleaned and the vegetation cut away, before the equipment is fitted by a qualified electrician. A rota of volunteers will also be established, to monitor the defibrillator.

War Memorial Insurance: Confirmation of the increase in insurance for the war memorial received, and the Clerk will print out the updated policy for the records.

Arrington Parking: See Cllr Kindersley's report entitled "Wimpole".

SCDC Covid Grant: This has been received and both Reading Room and parish church have benefited from PPE for the buildings.

Correspondence:

Electoral Register: The new Electoral Register has been received, which the Clerk cannot legally circulate to Councillors.

SCDC Community Facilities Report: SCDC sent a long survey for completion, and the Clerk and Chair of the Reading Room Trustees have completed this and it has been returned before the deadline.

SCDC Parish Bulletin, Social Media Toolkit and Festive Activities Toolkit: Council has been receiving copious information from local Councils regarding Covid. Articles which may be relevant in the village have been circulated on Mailchimp, so apologies for the amount and length of recent correspondence.

Urban Design Review Survey: The Chair completed this. The company is a consultant for SCDC and the Chair felt the review was a waste of time.

CCC - This Land finance: There has recently been publicity regarding the finances of this enterprise. CCC released the following information:-

This Land – an update from Cambridgeshire County Council

This Land began trading during the summer of 2017 and is progressing operations in line with its business plan. It takes several years for a start-up development company to purchase land, take it through planning, build houses and sell them before returning a profit. House sales are now underway, in line with the business plan.

This Land has never defaulted on any loans to Cambridgeshire County Council.

Amounts paid to Cambridgeshire County Council in interest are much more than £205k. Interest payments will continue to be made by This Land to CCC throughout the life of the loans as scheduled in the loan agreements.

An additional loan facility from Cambridgeshire County Council has been agreed; however, that does not mean that the entire facility will be utilised. Total lending today is below the £120m initial facility authorised in December 2017, and it was long-planned this would gradually rise to keep pace with construction spend across multiple sites in line with the business plan.

Independent legal advice was undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council when structuring the funding arrangements for the Company. Income derived from this investment is already helping Cambridgeshire County Council to support the delivery of frontline services to the most vulnerable people in the county.

The This Land Group accounts are calculated under IFRS accounting standards and have been fully audited by a reputable, top 10, firm of UK auditors.

All interest payments, capital repayments and loan receipts have been made in line with This Land Group business plan.

Cambs and Peterborough Draft Budget 2021-2022: A very lengthy and confusing document, and impossible to comment on logically. There was no baseline included, so no idea of what has been spent previously. The plan is to create affordable housing costing £100,000 per property on land acquired for free. This does seem a little unlikely to be able to achieve.

Thakeham and GCP: There has been a lot of concern over the Thakeham proposals, and a campaign against them is already underway. Concern has been expressed that the proposal will be presented to the Government at National Level, and if approved, would be imposed at Local level.

Council has received correspondence from Stephen Kelly, Director of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning, an extract of which is below:-

One of the first steps in creating a Local Plan is to ask people to put forward land they could make available for development if needed. This is called a 'call for sites' and took place in 2019-20 with over 650 sites put forward – far more than we could possibly need. Thakeham did not put forward their site as part of this process, and have not currently submitted their proposals to us as a late submission either.

Assuming they submit more information to us, Thakeham's proposal will be subjected to stringent tests including assessment of impacts on the local landscape and townscape, neighbouring properties, water supply, transport and roads. Sites also need to be compatible with the spatial strategy for the Local Plan, which is being developed in response to strong support in the First Conversation consultation last year for the 'big themes' of climate change, the natural environment, wellbeing and maintaining high quality places.

The sites that we feel are most suitable and sustainable will be put forward for public consultation as part of the Preferred Option stage of the Plan, in summer/autumn 2021. All parishes, and all members of the community, will be able to tell us your views on the proposed spatial strategy and site selection at that point in time.

Electronic Correspondence: Has all been circulated to Councillors, including subsequent receipts.

Subsequent receipts:

Luton Airport: Cllr Kindersley has prepared a response from his parishes, and Croydon has supported him in this.

E Scooters: These will be available to hire in Cambridge and Peterborough city centres from January 2021. A Mayor Palmer initiative.

Anthony Browne: A Zoom meeting is available to join on 17 December.

NALC: The following advice has been received by Council:-

Local council meetings

NALC strongly advises local councils to continue to meet remotely, without the need for face-to-face contact.

Local councils have the powers to hold public meetings remotely by using video or telephone conferencing technology currently until May 2021 and are advised to make use of those powers. There is an intrinsic risk to everyone attending a face to face meeting at this time. In particular, local councils have a duty to allow the public to observe council meetings without placing restrictions on the number attending, which many council meeting venues will not be able to accommodate in a safe way at this time.

Planning: 20/02656/FUL Installation of secure storage container

Previously received in July 2020, and already a re-submission of S/2248/19/FL, on land to the north of Manor Farm, Croydon. Apparently the plans were prepared incorrectly and the container is now sited 30 metres to the southwest, due to a manhole cover that cannot be built on. Council had a brief discussion on the application and did not wish to comment on this application. All in favour. Clerk will add this to the GCPlanning website.

Finance:

Bank Statement: The insurance cheque for £17-91 was presented for payment, and the £100-00 Covid grant from SCDC was received. Starting balance was £7821-56 and balance after these transactions was £7903-65.

Reimbursement: The Clerk has received orders placed by the Reading Room and church, and the requested items have been delivered, at a cost to the Clerk of £99-31, for which she would appreciate reimbursement. It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Mr Sole that a cheque for this amount should be raised - all in favour.

SLCC Subscription: Council have generously funded the Clerk's membership of this association for many years, and felt that it is very good value for money. The subscription for next year is £67-00, being an increase of £2-00 from this year. It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Mr Sole that a cheque for this amount should be raised. All in favour. The Clerk thanked the Council and will obtain signatures for the cheques out of meeting.

Items for next agenda: None put forward

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 20th January 2021 via Zoom.

If you wish to participate in the Zoom meetings, please contact the Clerk on croydonpc@bobburling.plus.com for details of access to the meeting.

As there was no face-to-face meeting and no mince pies this year, Councillors present and the Clerk raised a glass and extended Christmas wishes to each other.

As there was no further business, Councillors were thanked for attending and the meeting was declared closed at 8.21pm.

Signed

Date

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