

# **The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 21st April 2022 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.**

**Apologies:** Mr Brown - unavailable, Mr Barnes - unwell, Mr Sole - unwell, Cllr Williams - for late arrival due to another meeting, Ms Newland - sent apologies by email, received after the meeting.

**Present:** Mrs Slator, Mr Wenman, Mr Wheeler, Cllr Kindersley, Cllr Williams (later), two members of the public and the Clerk.

**Declarations of Interest:** None

**Reports:**

**Police:** No report received.

## **District Councillor Annual report (written):**

We started this municipal year still in a virtual world but we have ended the year in a more normal way, meeting face to face once again. It has been lovely to see people again and I would like to thank all parish councillors, Chairmen and residents that have made me feel so welcome at parish meetings.

My report includes some updates from the council over the municipal year; if you would like any further information on these topics or anything else to do with the District council then please do get in touch via the contact details at the end of my report.

## **Financial position of the SCDC**

The year ending March 2019 accounts were signed off on the 29<sup>th</sup> March 2022. There have been significant delays again in relation to completing external audits at SCDC. Though there are no financial penalties for Local Government bodies filing late accounts, there are extra external auditor costs yet again. The final bill has yet to be negotiated but the guide figure given at the latest audit and corporate governance meeting was £216,456. Others and I have continued to raise concerns as to whether or not the finance department is being properly resourced. Resources issues and staff turnover have been sighted as reasons for many delays along with resources issues from the external auditor.

The budget for 2022-2023 was agreed in February. There are many things to welcome in the South Cambs District Council budget such as money towards environmental improvements. I supported money towards building more council houses, something I believe we desperately need more of. However, other areas I could not support, primarily the increase of Council Tax and increased external borrowing for the purpose of commercial investment.

With the current cost of living problems, I could not support increasing the council tax to the maximum legally allowed which is £5 for a Band D property (a £50 difference to the council tax paid four years ago). The budget included spending £200,000 on recarpeting the council building and £70,000 on redecoration which I thought could wait and would cover the majority of the money an increase would raise this year (£327,000 is the amount generated from this year's council tax increase). It was also revealed through the course of the meeting that over £500,000 has been used to pay staff to leave the council over the past four years via Early retirement settlements, gardening leaves and redundancies, if this was avoided then significant savings could be made. The District Council will also be putting up council tenants' rents by the legal maximum of 4.1%, which I did not support.

The council's budget is reliant on the investment strategy. We can see that the only real need for the council to borrow and get into debt is to make commercial investments, like buying offices to rent out. The district Council has had to scale back on its investment plans due to government changing the rules, local authorities are no longer allowed to borrow money from government purely for yield, but there must be additional benefits for communities. Councils looking to bring in money from investments is not a principle that I disagree with entirely, but I don't believe we should be borrowing nearly £150m to do so in uncertain times especially when this risk could burden residents with further tax. Below is a table that shows the authorised borrowing limits:

	2020/2021 Limit £000	2021/2022 Limit £000	2022/2023 Limit £000	2023/2024 Limit £000
Authorised limit – borrowing	433,693	479,142	359,908	394,468
Authorised limit – other long term liabilities	-	-	-	-
Authorised limit – total external debt	433,693	479,142	359,908	394,468
Operational boundary – borrowing	428,693	474,142	354,908	389,468
Operational boundary – other long term liabilities	-	-	-	-
Operational boundary – total external debt	428,693	474,142	354,908	389,468

I had proposed for an additional planning enforcement officer, many have felt for a long time now that the planning enforcement department needs additional resource, unfortunately this was voted against but we have been told that there is a review taking place as to how the department runs. I hope that once this review has taken place, more officers will be recruited.

There has been a significant increase in the planning budget, a department that saw a large cut of nearly a million pounds two years ago this means a net increase over the two years of around £2m. Many have pushed for more money for the planning department at every budget meeting so in the first instance were pleased to see this. However, some of this increase covers yet another review of the planning department and in many parts of the planning budget were words such as “an increase in recharges/overheads for 22-23” or “Estimate to 2022-23 is mainly attributable to higher Recharge/Overhead costs being attributed to the service” which means we are unclear as to whether this will equate to more officers aka ‘new money’ or the majority being simply reallocation from other budget areas. This is particularly important as we are aware that over £300,000 is at risk of being returned to developers for failing to deal with their applications on time.

To see the budget papers in full you can do so via the link below:

[https://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g9214/Public reports pack Tuesday 22-Feb-2022 14.00Council.pdf?T=10](https://scams.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g9214/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2022-Feb-2022%2014.00Council.pdf?T=10)

### Universal Credit

Please see below details of how the District Council can support people who are financially struggling at the moment. In the current climate many people will find themselves in financial difficulty for the first times in their lives and seeking help may be a daunting and scary experience. I would stress that all conversations with the council, or myself are confidential. And whether this is the first time or not, if you, or anyone you know, is struggling please reach out, there is support out there, short term/ long term which ever applies to your circumstances please do not suffer in silence.

There are a range of options for those struggling financially, including:

- Discretionary Housing Payments which provide financial support towards housing costs. You can [apply for these Discretionary Housing Payments](#)
- The Council Tax hardship fund, which aims to provide support to those who are struggling financially because of the pandemic. You can [apply for this Hardship Fund](#)
- Support and advice from our Welfare and Money Maximisation Officer, Lucy Tompkins, who can be contacted via [Lucy.Tompkins@scams.gov.uk](mailto:Lucy.Tompkins@scams.gov.uk)
- Along with Cambridgeshire County Council and partners, we also still offer one-off small payments to help with immediate food or fuel needs - up to £49 for a family, or £29 for an individual, for food or fuel. Anyone needing that one-off help should email

<mailto:duty.communities@scams.gov.uk>

Email <mailto:benefits@scams.gov.uk> if you have specific questions, or call 01954 713 000.

### Environment & Waste services

I'm pleased to say once again that on environmental issues at South Cambs there is rarely a time where there is not cross-party support. Two further electric bin lorries should be arriving at the Waterbeach depot soon. This now takes the depot to its maximum electricity supply. A solar plant is now to be installed from part of the 'greening' budget proposals so that more electric bin lorries can be purchased in the future.

There have been interruption to the Green Bin collections over the last year but things appear to be getting back on track. Residents can now report missed collections on the website once more and I would encourage those who do experience problems to report it or get in touch with myself to resolve any outstanding problems.

The Food waste caddy trial has been run in parts of The Mordens ward. This has proven a well used and popular service with many. I have been feeding this back to the council and hope that this trial is rolled out across all villages within the ward and through the district.

### **Planning - Local Plan**

Thank you to all who took part in the local plan consultation. Officers are now looking through all the submissions and are aiming to compile the draft local plan ready for consultation in the Summer. The Local Plan sets out where development of housing and commercial sites are proposed to be situated during the planning period. The current documents are out for consultation soon but give a clear indication of what is proposed by the administrations. The policies within the Local plan will in many ways dictate how development happens in our villages for years to come. It will be what we rely on to support or refuse planning permissions. It is also vital that it is sound, robust, and reliable as the plan will need to be approved by an independent planning inspector. If the plan was to fail then our district, and our villages would be open to speculative development. This is why, it is one, if not the, most important document the District Council is responsible for producing.

The Council has gone through the for a call for sites and then Councillors and officers deciding which out of those proposed developments they want to include within the Local Plan. Ultimately the Council will have to come forward with a credible plan that will pass a planning inspectorate to show it delivers housing for growth within the Local Plan area.

The proposed Local Plan will have huge impacts on the District and I am sure that all the parishes within the area will want to make comments once more on these proposals when the next consultation begins. As a District Councillor, I have several concerns regarding the proposals put forward. My initial concerns are that around 48,840 houses are included within this Local Plan which is above and well beyond what the Government's calculated need suggests. Growth figures have been calculated within the Local Plan have been calculated by a methodology that has been used has not been used anywhere else before to our knowledge which has worried many.

I also have concerns about the build out rates that are proposed due to the worry of how realistic they are and to be so reliant on them given build out rates are at the discretion of developers. It is also noted that the proposed developments within this Local Plan, especially those around the city, are very dense, cramming lots of houses into small spaces, this will have a big impact on communities and residents' privacy in relation to garden space etc.

Water is a grave concern given the existing pressures on chalk streams and water supply in our area. 48,840 houses using 80litres a day equates to over a billion litres of a water needed every year, if the house numbers were lower, the water demand would also reduce. This has already been challenged by councillors and the response has been it is for others to sort the water problem, but it seems unreasonable to pass responsibility to others when so many more houses are being proposed. Requiring this amount of housing within the Local Plan with the infrastructure not being there is of great concern.

### **As your councillor**

As your District Councillor I am on the following committees:

- Audit & Corporate Governance Committee
- Civic Affairs Committee
- Climate & Environment Advisory Group (Substitute)
- Full Council
- Employment & Staffing Committee
- Grants Advisory Committee (Substitute)
- Licensing Committee (Substitute)
- Planning Committee
- Scrutiny and Overview Committee (Substitute)
- Anti – Bullying Task and Finish Group (Chairman)
- Planning Committee Development Group

I also have responsibilities as the Major Opposition Group Leader; I sit on the Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly.

## Political Balance of South Cambs District Council

The pre 2022 election Political Balance of SCDC is:

Liberal Democrats	31
Conservative	11
Labour	2
Independent	1

Cllr Heather Williams

SCDC The Mordens Ward

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## Cambridgeshire County Council - Annual Report

The Gamlingay Division comprises the Parishes of Abington Pigotts, Arrington, Barrington, Croydon, Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Hatley, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Steeple Morden, Tadlow & Wimpole.

Following the Elections in May 2021 the Council now comprises 61 Councillors made up by 28 Conservatives, 20 LibDems, 9 Labour and 4 Independent. The Joint Administration (JA) formed of Lab/LD/Ind members took control of the Council with a new Joint Administration Agreement which you can view at:

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cambridgelibdems/pages/5179/attachments/original/1620984611/County\\_agreement\\_2021\\_FINAL.pdf?1620984611](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cambridgelibdems/pages/5179/attachments/original/1620984611/County_agreement_2021_FINAL.pdf?1620984611)

The Chair is Cllr Stephen Ferguson (Ind) and I am Vice Chair. I also chair the Council's Constitution & Ethics Committee and I sit on the Planning Committee. I am a substitute member for several other Committees.

The County Council's move from Shire Hall in Cambridge to Alconbury finally took place in the autumn - but not for Full Council meetings, for which the 'Multi Function Room' at Alconbury is certainly too small for meetings with COVID social distancing, and possibly even permanently. The Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2021 was held amid the war planes of the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

The new Joint Administration has been taking stock of the Council it has inherited. We invited in a 'peer challenge' panel of expert councillors and council officers from the Local Government Association to look at the operation of the Council and advise on priorities. They did so, and came back in spring this year to update on how we were doing. We also convened an Independent Remuneration Panel, as we are required to do, to review Councillor allowances. Unlike the previous administration we agreed their recommendations unaltered.

The Council's Chief Executive retired during the year, and we appointed a new Chief Executive Stephen Moir who started in post in February 2022. Unlike his predecessor, Stephen will serve Cambridgeshire County Council only, not Peterborough too. This is part of a process of disentangling many of the joint staffing structures set up by the previous administration, so that we and they can focus on Cambridgeshire priorities.

The new Council inherited a budget gap of £22.2M for this year. We managed to balance the budget this time, but very significant financial challenges lie ahead. The budget gap we inherited was set to rise to £86M by 2027, and our 'peer challenge' team identified this as an issue 'of significant magnitude'.

The Council increased its portion of Council Tax in February, by 1.99% for general services, and 3% for adult social care. This was a difficult decision to take during the current cost of living crisis, but many people struggling most with increased bills and prices are those who are most likely to need council services, and likely to pay a lower council tax increase. The Council's budget for this year included a £14M 'Just Transition Fund' to tackle inequality, improve lives and care for the environment. The new Joint Administration commissioned an independent review of the Council's development company This Land. This found 'unusual' accounting practices and 'shortcomings [which] require immediate attention'. The review made a number of

recommendations, most to be carried out within three months.

The County Council's Farms estate extends to 33,000 acres - the biggest public sector rural estate in England and Wales. The new Joint Administration is keen to reposition this asset not just as a source of rental income (important though that is) but also as a major part of our environmental and climate ambitions.

One of the major changes the new administration made to the Council's committee system was to combine the former Adults Committee and Health Committee into a single committee, making the most of the close relationship between health provision and adult social care. We also welcomed a new Director of Public Health, Jyoti Atri, into post.

The COVID pandemic has had a devastating effect throughout the sector. We have adopted a 'health in all policies' approach; established increased support for unpaid carers and expanded the Direct Payment option to more people.

A major focus for Children & Young People during the year was to ensure funding of vouchers over school holidays for families eligible for free school meals. This happened throughout 2021/22 and is guaranteed throughout 2022/23. The numbers of children in Cambridgeshire eligible for free school meals has continued to increase significantly. We have carried out a high profile drive to recruit more local foster carers and ensure more children and young people in care can remain within the county.

The former Communities & Partnership Committee was renamed Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee. (COSMIC). The committee has been responsible for supporting communities through COVID, making provision for refugees from Afghanistan and now Ukraine, assisting EU citizens in obtaining settled status and voting rights, as well as a range of public services from libraries to mortuaries.

COSMIC makes decisions about the Household Support Fund, which supports people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food, household energy or other essential items. An increasing number of families is struggling financially at the moment.

The new Environment & Green Investment Committee is responsible for climate change and renewable energy, strategic planning, flood and water, biodiversity, waste, antiquities, and surprisingly digital infrastructure and broadband.

The committee developed two important strategies this year – a revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and an updated Climate Change & Environment Strategy which sets a new and more ambitious target for a net-zero carbon Cambridgeshire by 2045. We are also working on a Cambridgeshire Decarbonisation Fund and Local Area Energy Planning. We invested an additional £109K over last winter to undertake urgent repairs to various biodiversity sites, as well as to begin a biodiversity audit of the Council's land to set a baseline for our commitment to increase biodiversity in Cambridgeshire.

An issue dominating Cambridgeshire politics since the whistle was blown in 2018 is 'Farmgate'-the award to then County Council deputy leader of the tenancy of a County Council-owned farm in Girton. The new Joint Administration took office committed to publishing the facts, and this has now happened. The subject was found by independent investigators to have broken the councillors' Code of Conduct in seven different ways, including bullying and improper use of position for personal advantage.

The new Council is facing up to the many challenges left by its outgoing administration. Not least of these was the atrocious state of the county's 100,000 gullies, whose lack of maintenance contributed to the flooding of winter 2020/21. These are now being mapped and cleared, including one which was in such a bad state a metal detector was required to actually find it.

We have established a new funding pot for local communities to bid into for 20MPH zones, to make these more widespread and easier to obtain.

Turning to the Combined Authority a new Mayor was elected in May 2021 which led to the scrapping of the CAM Metro and the '£100K homes' project. The Combined Authority's Climate Commission published its ambitious report; the Government announced there would be no more money for affordable housing, and snubbed the Combined Authority's bus improvement plan.

I am also appointed to the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority where I chair the Scrutiny & Overview Committee. A recent Government inspection of the service looked at three main areas – how effective it is, how efficient and how well colleagues are looked after- and found the Service continued to be rated Good; putting us among the best performing fire and rescue services in the UK.



Locally I continue to attend Parish Council meetings as and when I can - they are an important place for opinions to be aired, information shared and problems solved. I have worked on a wide range of casework ranging from mud on the roads (of which there was a lot!) to public footpath issues to implications arising from new housing. I continue to campaign against the current favoured alignment of the Cambridge Oxford railway by East-West Rail and I am part of a team of local Councillors ensuring that Thakeham cannot proceed with its plan for a new town of 25k houses obliterating 9 local villages.

It has been a pleasure to work with the Parish Council on many different issues throughout the year and I would like to pay tribute to those Parish Councillors standing down - truly Local Heroes. As always I welcome feedback, casework and the opportunity to serve residents of the Parish as your County Councillor.

Sebastian Kindersley

### **Gamlingay Division Councillors Report - April 2022 - South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council**

The Gamlingay Division comprises the Parishes of Abington Pigotts, Arrington, Barrington, Croydon, Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Hatley, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Steeple Morden, Tadlow & 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!

Your Councillors are always ready to help. Please do not hesitate to contact County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley on 01767 651982 or [skindersley@hotmail.com](mailto:skindersley@hotmail.com) or write to the Manor Barn, East Hatley, SG19 3JA District Councillor Bridget Smith (Gamlingay Ward, SCDC) is on 07729 836449 or [Cllr.BridgetSmith@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.BridgetSmith@scambs.gov.uk) and District Councillor Aidan van de Weyer (Barrington, Orwell, the Eversdens & Wimpole SCDC Ward) can be called on 01223 870 869 or email him [aidan@mishmush.com](mailto:aidan@mishmush.com) You can also follow your councillors on Twitter: @CllrBridget, @SebKindersley @aidanvdew

### **New Affordable Homes for Gamlingay and the Local Plan**

At the time of writing we are not able to give you the full details but South Cambs District Council is in negotiation to acquire 34 new affordable homes in Gamlingay which will be exclusively for people with a local connection. To be able to bid for one of these homes you need to be registered on Home Link – please check [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk).

Just a reminder about the Local Plan process as some people (Election candidates, MPs) are getting their information wrong. The Local Plan running from 2011 - 2041 (i.e. 30 years) makes provision for 23,500 dwellings across South Cambs. This includes the 10% buffer required by government, but which is unlikely to be needed. Obviously 11 years worth has already been built and many more have been started or are already in the planning process. Of the rest, the vast majority are around Cambridge City or in the new Towns (Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach). Only 4% of new housing (about 350) is in rural locations - and only in villages with railway access.

Failure to plan for the housing numbers that are needed to support the people already living and working in South Cambs, would have dire consequences including the removal of planning powers by HMG and a free-for-all for developers. The last time this happened (for several years prior to 2018) (under the previous administration at South Cambs) over 4,000 homes were given permission which were not in compliance with our policy on protecting villages.

The proposals included in the forthcoming iteration of the Local Plan deliver sensible levels of sustainable housing - especially affordable housing - in communities which are themselves already sustainable by virtue of size, public transport links, public services and indeed local will. Should local communities want affordable housing there is provision in the policy framework to allow this to happen on 'exception sites' where the housing must be provided by a registered social landlord and be adjacent to the village framework.

Very comfortably the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service has now published data showing that there is sufficient Housing Land Supply to cover 6.5 years for the period 2022 to 2027. This means that this important policy position is improving under this administration and is protecting our villages from unsustainable developments.

**Resurfacing** Thank you to those people who wrote to express their thanks for the resurfacing of Blythe Way. It has been a problem for a long time but now resolved by the County Council. Just a reminder that the road between Litlington and Bassingbourn is scheduled for surface treatment starting 25<sup>th</sup> May and yellow lines around pot holes in Green End, Gamlingay indicates that work will be undertaken there soon too.

Many other roads are in a similar state and sit in a long queue – and the same goes for pavements. Please report faults at <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>, as this creates an essential public record. We understand that the wait can be frustrating but encourage people to continue doing so - it makes a difference even though the wait can be long.

Sadly, a negligent underinvestment in roads, pavements and drains by previous County administrations over a period of many years, due to an unwillingness to raise funds and poor management, has left the highways network in a crisis state that will take time to turn around, particularly given the state of public finances across the board. That said, new management systems are now being implemented, with a back to basics approach including annual attention to drains, which incredibly had been abandoned under previous Cambridgeshire administrations.

#### **Sheen Farm Litlington**

Development on site is scheduled to start date in June as there is an unresolved issue about drainage.

#### **Elizabeth Way**

Residents of Elizabeth Way were concerned when the field behind them was partially cleared and rumours were heard about 55 houses being built there imminently. There is no current planning application for this site and it is outside of the village framework which tends to constrain development. That does not mean that a planning application will not be submitted or that the site will be put forward as a late entry into the local plan. If that happens then it will be dealt with through the normal processes. 900 sites were put forward into the Local Plan and so far only 19 have been taken forward. None of the sites around Gamlingay which were proposed have been successful in making it into the local plan which has a strong focus on only building homes where there are good transport links.

Following resident's queries about the unauthorised use of fire hydrants at Elizabeth Way when the land adjacent was being cleared Sebastian undertook to raise this with Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire & Rescue Service. They have now come back to advise that fire hydrants are NOT available for public use. Cambridge Water issue permits to allow access but there is no permit issued locally. However, some national companies hold a national permit so it would depend on whether - in this case - anyone noted the name of the company accessing the hydrant. Sebastian has asked the company concerned for comment - silence.

#### **The Mordens, Bassingbourn & Litlington Mobile Warden Scheme**

Sebastian was delighted to see and support an application for the Village Warden scheme for funding from the County Council to review and relaunch the scheme covering Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden, Bassingbourn and Litlington, with an aim of increasing the membership by twenty. The scheme offers support for older people enabling them to live independently in their homes and in the community they know. The scheme has a board of pro-active Trustees who wish to promote the service to increase uptake. It is hoped that this promotional push will increase membership which has dipped following Covid-19.

#### **Footpath 10 Gamlingay**

We have made huge progress over the reopening of Footpath 10 which links Green End with Green Acres. Morris Homes has now submitted an application for a permanent route which you will be able to comment on and we are hopeful that by the time you read this a temporary route will either be open or just about to be open.

#### **Sewage problems in Stocks Lane Gamlingay**

There is a recurrent issue with sewage blockages in the old drains in Stocks Lane. The result is flooding at the bottom of Honey Hill and back flow affecting some of the houses in Chapel Field. Bridget has written to Anglian Water and they have now agreed to write to all affected residents to advice on what should and should not be flushed.

#### **Land South of West Rd Gamlingay**

We campaigned hard back in 2017 against a development for up to 30 houses on the Land South of West Rd. This site was outside of the village framework and not in the local plan. Even though it was rejected by the council it was approved on appeal by the government planning inspector because at the time the Conservative run council did not have a 5 year housing land supply. The surprising thing is that over 4 years on these houses are still to be built. We have asked the council to review this application in detail to ascertain if it is still valid.

## **Bin Collections**

Covid is still making it very challenging to run all the bin collections. As we write over 40 of the workforce of 150 are away. Despite this it is the council's intention to continue the green bin collection but if your bin is not collected at the normal time please leave it out and we will be picking it up as soon as we can.

## **Council Tax Rebate Scheme.**

The government's council tax rebate scheme goes live on 1st April. FAQs will be on the district council website. It is aimed at homes in council tax bands A-D. The amount of £150 is not repayable and will not show up on your Council Tax bill.

## **Zero Carbon Award**

South Cambridgeshire District Council has been recognised for its work to tackle climate change, with a Silver accolade at the 2022 Public Sector Transformation Awards. The Council's Green to our Core programme is supported by its Zero Carbon Strategy and Doubling Nature Strategy. Highlights of the Council's approach include Greening South Cambridgeshire Hall with a £1.8M energy efficiency retrofit to include a ground source heat pump, solar carport, upgraded lighting and other elements. We were one of the first Councils to adopt a fully electric refuse collection vehicle with more on the way, and we are developing a solar farm to power the lorries. We've upgraded 1,800 street lights with low energy bulbs and awarded £314,415 to 51 different community groups to support carbon reduction projects including setting up E-Bike schemes, installing infra-red heating panels in community buildings, holding sustainable food festivals, tree planting, energy efficient lighting and waste reduction.

## **Fitness and Wellbeing Grants**

South Cambridgeshire District Council is urging instructors to apply for up to £300 to lead fitness and wellbeing activities in their communities. Anyone who leads an existing group or who wants to set up a new initiative in the District, such as leading a walking group in their local park or running a weekly yoga class in a village hall, could be eligible for the small grant. Providers running multiple groups can also apply to fund multiple programmes. Activities could range from walking football/rugby/netball, to chair-based exercise classes, diabetes walking groups, yoga for the over 60s, baby yoga classes or more. The grant, which is funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, is to help deliver physical activity programmes provided by the District Council in partnership with Living Sport. It is designed to cover costs such as venue hire for up to six weeks, with new participants being entitled to four free sessions. Once the free sessions are complete, participants would be expected to begin paying a small fee to continue participation, meaning that the initiative should become a sustainable source of income for the instructor.

## **Better Connected Communities**

The Councils are urging residents and community groups to use a new personalised advice service which will identify free tools and funding to tackle local problems and create safer communities in South Cambridgeshire. Residents and community groups can complete a short online form outlining the initiative they want to set up or the problem they want to solve, and Council staff will offer tailored solutions. More on [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

## **Zero Carbon Communities Grants**

South Cambridgeshire's community groups can now bid for a share of more than £120,000 from the District Council's popular Zero Carbon Communities Grant scheme. The scheme has so far provided £310,000 to 51 grassroots projects that work to tackle climate change in South Cambridgeshire. The deadline to apply for the latest round of grants is Wednesday 1 June 2022. Full eligibility criteria and ideas for projects are available at [www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant](http://www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant)

The money for Zero Carbon Communities grants comes from business rates from renewable energy sites, like solar farms, in South Cambridgeshire that the Council retains and earmarks for use in green initiatives like this.

## **Ukraine**

The Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme, which asks people to offer space in their homes for those fleeing the war, has been launched (<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>). This will allow individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the UK to bring Ukrainians to safety – including those with no family ties to the country. Phase One of the scheme will allow sponsors to invite an individual or family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property. There will be no impact on their benefits as a result of doing so – for example, they would not lose their single person council tax discount. The Government will also be providing a full support pack for families hosting arrivals and a welcome pack for all new arrivals. Anyone who is interested in participating is asked to offer accommodation for at least six months and will be eligible for a 'thank you' payment of £350 a month.



FAQs are available here on the Homes for Ukraine scheme - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions> and also on the South Cambs District Council, website. We know some families in Gamlingay and elsewhere have already applied; and are delighted that the Trustees of the Almshouses in Church Street have agreed to offer a cottage to the scheme. If you would like to be put in touch with other people considering becoming hosts please contact Bridget.

### **County Underspend**

Amazingly the County Council has a forecast end of year underspend of £15.7m caused by short term implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is intended to use some of this in immediate and visible improvements to county highways including extra work in pothole 'hot spots', an increased programme to reduce surface water in locations highlighted by the community and improving lines and road markings in more rural areas to make driving safer at night and in bad weather.

### **Family Support**

Although Government-backed schemes set up to help struggling families during the pandemic ended on March 31, Cambridgeshire County Council's Joint Administration has agreed to earmark £3.6m to extend the Holiday Voucher Scheme for a further year.

We will issue each eligible child or young person a £30 supermarket voucher to cover the Easter holiday period. It will be sent by email and/or text to the nominated parent or carer. The voucher does not need to be used in a single shopping trip and once claimed will last for at least a year.

If your child is eligible for income-related free school meals as well as a number of other criteria, they will automatically receive a voucher for the Easter holiday period. Any children who become eligible up until 19 April 2022 will also receive a voucher. More at [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk).

### **Over 7.5T Lorry Ban?**

A neighbouring authority Councillor has asked us to enquire if our Parishes and residents would support a 7.5T weight limit covering a square bounded by the A505, A1198, A428 and the A1M. In the past Highways departments would not permit 7.5T limits but it has become clear that some - such as Central Bedfordshire - have now started to instigate 7.5T limits on some main roads.

It is understood the 7.5T limit cannot apply to any of the following.

- vehicles making deliveries or collections at premises within the restriction
- vehicles working on or near the roads in question
- emergency service and military vehicles
- agricultural vehicles
- vehicles involved with building
- buses, coaches and other public service vehicles

And thus such a limit is intended to be aimed only at vehicles trying to take a short cut through the area. Once satnavs are updated they would need to do this against the advice of such a satnav.

Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!

Councillor Kindersley did highlight the suggested lorry ban.

*A neighbouring authority Councillor has asked us to enquire if our Parishes and residents would support a 7.5T weight limit covering a square bounded by the A505, A1198, A428 and the A1M.*

The Clerk will add this to the May agenda.

### **Orwell Petersfield School report**



#### **Petersfield Annual Report- March 2022**

Pupil report - Mrs Meredith spoke to pupils this month during the latest virtual governor visit and asked them to contribute to this report.

The children were very keen to let you know what they like about Petersfield School, what they are learning, what helps them learn, and about relationships and opportunities. Important to the school are the school values: [peace](#), [trust](#), [friendship](#), [creativity and love](#). These values, although not exclusive, are the 'touchstones' of the whole curriculum and school ethos. The children told me that at any given time these values can be seen in school, for example: if someone falls over there is someone to help, children intervening in an argument as a peacemaker, asking someone on the

friendship bench to come and play, 'we include everyone and have lots of friends', 'trusting someone to help when you have fallen over', 'asking someone to look after my hairband', making an animal half dog/half cat in the Greek topic, in science inventing games, embroidering a pillow or card for Mothers' Day, 'I really enjoy Art lessons especially with pastels'. One child summed up the culture of the school 'I am proud of how well we play with each other and help people to be kind'. There are so many examples of the values in action, but also children could identify these at home: 'I trust my little brother to play with my toys at home', 'I like being creative at home', and 'I talk about these values at home with my family'. The school values are celebrated and reinforced with displays and posters in the classroom and around the school. If a child has demonstrated a value, then their name is recorded on the board and these names and examples of pupils and staff being a shining light to others are celebrated in Collective Worship. Many other Christian values are explored during Collective Worship and throughout the curriculum, to support the children's learning about themselves, the people around them and the wider world. They have been exploring the value of courage as part of Bishop Stephen's Lent Challenge and have been looking at the lives of children in other countries for example where children must walk six miles a day to collect water. The children realised how much courage was needed to drink the water and to walk that distance, with so many hidden dangers. One child said, 'we are proud of helping a school in Malawi' and continue to fundraise for our partner school for example through the School Council organised 2k sponsored run. Children have been discussing the plight of refugees and how brave they must be to leave their homes. Pupils could identify when they needed to be courageous, 'I get nervous when I go horse riding, but my mum gives me courage', whilst recognising the extent of their bravery in comparison to others in the world. During Collective Worship, emotions are explored: for example happy, sad, embarrassed. One child said 'It is fine to feel embarrassed, most people feel embarrassed at some time'.

One child told me 'We enjoy learning and finding out new things' and another said, 'We are always learning new stuff'. Other comments relating to the curriculum were that PE is really good and there are a range of sports, there is a lot of equipment to use and share, learning is fun and there are great places and fun things to play with. The children had the opportunity to plant trees at Wimpole Estate in preparation of the Queen's Jubilee, 'I am proud that we learned how to plant trees at Wimpole and we have used those skills to plant trees at our school'. Some of the topics that years 3 and 4 are currently studying include: Magnets and Forces, The Greeks and in RE, Christianity. To support them with their learning they use Knowledge Organisers. These are kept in their exercise books and include facts and vocabulary for reference. The children stated that these help them to work independently as it is not always possible to remember everything the teacher has said or use the correct spelling without this prompt. The Knowledge Organisers reinforce their learning, helping to bring about 'sticky learning' so that what is being learnt at a particular time is related to other knowledge and skills already held. In RE for example there is key vocabulary such as: Jesus, baptism, cross and terms such as love, sacrifice and commitment. The children all agreed Knowledge Organisers are a useful resource.

This year at Petersfield School we are developing our approach to learning that is helping boost the children's learning and progress. Metacognition and self-regulation strategies are about the children thinking about thinking, knowing what learning means and taking charge of their learning because of that knowledge. We have introduced the learning powers through animal characters and their associated behaviours. The children told me that each class has a display that is called 'The Learning Jungle'. 'Different animals show different learning powers e.g. the squirrel represents co-operation, the armadillo - resilience, the monkey - continuous improvement, the elephant - concentration and the koala - curiosity. Teachers will point us to the appropriate animal when a reminder is needed.'

Finally, to sum up and to indicate what a child's experience at Petersfield School is like, I was told we love: 'being able to all play together on the field now', books, clubs, art, the daily mile, electronics, friendship tokens, our field, different lunches and teachers and teaching assistants who always help us. They told me **'Petersfield is Special'**.

### **Headteachers' report**

Since our last report, a number of staffing changes have occurred. Mrs Peachey, our Co-Headteacher and long serving and very popular reception teacher, bid a fond farewell after relocating out of the county with her family. As a result, we are delighted to announce that Mrs Alison Chadwick joined our school team in January as Co-Headteacher alongside Mrs Penrose. In addition, Miss Huffer has returned to Petersfield as our new reception/year one teacher.

Our school priorities for the 2021-2022 academic year are:

1. To continue to improve the good behaviour choices made, and respect shown, through a focus on our school values and managing emotions.
2. Following the pandemic and new appointments, to further develop and clearly define leadership roles and responsibilities across the school through induction, coaching and training.

3. To ensure the percentage of pupils making accelerated progress continues to address the impact of Covid in all areas.
4. To modify the school curriculum where necessary to continue to promote recovery.
5. To enable pupils to reflect on what Collective Worship and reflective areas mean to them and to others.

We are delighted to report that whilst day-to-day in school we are still responding to the pandemic, remote learning for isolating children is now a part of everyday life and the whole Petersfield community continues to work together to ensure the safety, learning and enthusiasm of each individual. Following the staggered drop off and collection time changes, we have extended the school day to start slightly earlier permanently. The additional 5 minutes a day is making a positive difference to morning learning and this change amounts to over 15 additional hours of learning time over each academic year. Children are benefiting from additional small group and adult support as we have targeted the government funding to teach concepts and skills teachers have identified as needing future teaching following Covid.

Understanding and regulating our emotions continues to feature strongly in the school curriculum with our Collective Worship themes reflecting this focus as well through our exploration of respect and perseverance. Bishop Stephen's Lent challenge for 2022 has charged us to be courageous and brave in our own lives and through our support for others in the community and more widely. We are very proud of our pupils who continue to demonstrate our school values - **love, peace, trust, friendship and creativity** - in everything that they do.

We continue to adapt to the circumstances and celebrate the positives of technology in facilitating the usual calendar of events in a slightly modified format. Children and adults alike are very skilled now at using technology effectively. Please do look at the '[Latest News](#)' on the homepage of our school website [www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk) to view our school highlights which are too numerous to list. The website [Gallery](#) also contains many photos showcasing school life which we hope you enjoy viewing. Pupil highlights include the following: the Rocksteady concerts; Grafham water residential and day visits; Red Nose Day dress down fundraising; a whole school alfresco winter disco; World Maths Day; class assemblies; Bikeability; World Book Day, a very exciting visit from Father Christmas, a Young 'Uns concert where we were presented with our Heritage School award; joint services with Barrington school (thanks to Rev. Felicity); unveiling our Friendship bench in memory of Bob Bryant and awarding the new Hollands Trophy in memory of Mr Hollands; virtual visits to Ely cathedral; the Shoe Box appeal; and our recent 2k challenge resulting in over £1000 being raised for our school and the school in Malawi which the School Council continue to lead our fund raising for. If you would like to make a donation in support of Petersfield or our partner Malawi school, the children would be delighted to receive your donation via the school office.

Our grateful thanks to the local community for their generous donations which have included time undertaking a variety of tasks virtually and in person, physical donations of seeds, plant pots, stationery, books, cardboard and generous gifts of money. Each resource is gratefully received and enhances the education of the children at Petersfield. Thank you!

After Easter, we very much hope to be able to welcome volunteers back into school regularly. If you are able to offer a small amount of time e.g. listening to readers, helping in the library, weeding the school site or sensory garden, supporting the wider curriculum etc. please do get in touch. As a small rural school, we are also always looking to find extra funding schemes. If you have any suggestions as to how we can access funding sources, please do contact us. If you wish to contact us or find out more, please do not hesitate to do so by calling 01223 207382 or emailing [office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@petersfield.cambs.sch.uk). We very much look forward to welcoming you.

Linda Meredith, Laura Penrose and Alison Chadwick  
Chair of Governors and Co-Headteachers

**Croydon Reading Room Charity Number 1185668**

*Annual Review 2021/22 By Diana Walters.*

*It has been another difficult year for the Reading Room but we have had a Christmas Bazaar for the Church, a Table Top Sale which raised over £900 for The Reading Room.*

*There were also various get togethers, meetings and the occasional party. The Reading Room remains fully registered as a Charity. This has really helped applying for Grants.*

*The Web Site has made a good job of maintaining the profile of the Reading Room and payment details are available on booking. Our neighbours, Sam & Louise have continued kindly cut the grass as have other villagers. After our Survey, repair work on the cracks started and we have widened the hatch as planned. The entrance hall light had to be replaced as could not be repaired. We are in the process of*

*getting new architect drawings for the planning permission regarding the store room, French doors out through the chimney (to be dismantled) to a patio area suitable for outside activities and a Jubilee Garden at the front. The old shed will be looking for a new home! We are very grateful for the Parish Council's support in getting WI FI in the Reading Room & funding it for 2 years. We are hoping this will support plans for a Hybrid Working Hub.*

*We have a new flooring in the pipe line ..*

*We are hoping to have the trees surveyed & the building safety checked in the next 6 months.*

*We still hope to help clear up the moat which could be such a lovely area in time. The smell continues to be quite bad at times. We will need the support of Mr Farrer and The Fresh Waterways Trust, fingers still crossed. We hope 2022/23 will be a productive year in the long run.*

*I personally have been working long hours for the NHS and The Reading Room, and have two more Grandchildren and another due!*

*My thanks to all the Trustees, and the continuing support of the Parish Council, whose support is always welcome. Val and Judith have stepped down and we welcome anyone interested in becoming a Trustee to attend the AGM where a business plan must be developed. I wish all of you good health and safe passage through this next 12 months.*

*AGM 16th June 2022 - All welcome*

*Diana Walters*

**TRUSTEES**

*Chairman, Bookings Clerk and caretaker; Diana Walters*

*Secretary; Janice Horsford*

*Treasurer; Chris Elsley*

*Frank Sole*

### **Community Group report:**

#### **Mini Report for Croydon Parish Council AGM**

from the Group who made recommendations regarding Litter and Dog-waste bins - April 2022

In mid 2021, following complaints in the village regarding dog fouling, the Group agreed to review the provision of dog bins in the village. A survey was also carried out of provision of dog-bins in local villages, which clearly indicated that Croydon had a relative under-provision.

The Group also met with Sarah Philips, the SCDC representative, and reviewed the locations of existing dog-waste bins in Croydon, in the context of the local public footpath network and had a number of follow up communications with Sarah.

The Group put forward their report to the PC in January 2022 followed in February, by their recommendations. The recommendations were considered and agreed at the February Parish Council meeting.

- The recommendations included that any new bins would be "Topsy" combined litter and dog-waste bins, as per South Cambs' preference and comprised:
- South Cambs replacing the old picnic type-bin in Clopton Close for a new dual-purpose bin.
- Moving an existing under-utilised bin, to a new location by public footpath 19 and South Cambs installing dual-use bin label/sign.
- The PC purchasing new Topsy bins; one for Church Lane and one for Clopton Way footpath near the Croydon Hill lay-by.
- Installing the previously purchased dog-waste bag-dispenser adjacent to the existing dog-bin near to the Reading Room.
- It was noted that the new Topsy bins and the Footpath 19 bin could be relocated in the future if the need ever arose.
- The Group's recommendations also that small (A5) signs be located on some of the footpath sign-posts /or in appropriate locations to orient people to the nearest bin. Detailed proposals and graphics are now being drawn-up by the Group, for the PC to purchase.

In putting forward their recommendations the Group was mindful of controlling expenditure. Proposed purchases by the PC were restricted to the two additional bins plus limited directional signage. By



promoting that the PC directly purchase the Topsy bins from the supplier, rather than through South Cambs, considerable cost savings have been achieved. The Group also pushed-for emptying of the proposed Croydon Hill bin at South Cambs' expense as it was felt that this bin served the wider public utilising the Clopton Way.

South Cambs has now installed the replacement dual-purpose bin in Clopton Close.

In the near future, the Group proposes to request volunteers from the village to help to install the other three bins, the dog-waste bag-dispenser and the signage in the agreed locations.

The Group would like to thank the PC for their consideration of the Group's initial report and agreement to the subsequent recommendations, and for purchasing the Topsy bins.

We believe that once installed, the bins and signage should assist in reducing both dog-waste and general littering in Croydon and promote a better village environment.

#### **For Reference:**

#### **Full Detail of Agreed Locations:**

##### **Existing dog bin by Reading Rooms High Street**

No change except to site the dog-waste bag dispenser, purchased some time ago by the PC, adjacent to this.

##### **Existing wooden "picnic bin" Clopton Close**

Request South Cambs. via Sarah Philips to be replaced free of charge (at South Cambs' cost) with a covered-over dual-purpose dark green Topsy 2000 style bin with sticker(s) applied to clarify the dual use for litter and dog waste.

##### **Existing green combined waste bin in High Street by start of footpath near defibrillator:**

As this bin is currently close to the picnic bin (location 2 above), we recommend that it is relocated to Footpath 19 (see location 4 below). This bin is currently mobile /not fixed in position. New stickers to be affixed to clarify dual waste bin.

##### **Footpath 19 (opposite Puck's Cottage) High Street**

Re-site the existing under-utilised dual-purpose green bin (as per Location 3 above) on public and flat ground near to the existing footpath sign. This would then also serve the public footpath on the other side of the road which is reported to currently have a dog fouling issue. South Cambs agreed could adhere dual-use stickers, to bin - free of charge.

##### **Clopton Way Footpath Croydon Hill Lay-by**

P.C. to provide new dual-purpose dark green Topsy bin with dual-use sticker. Subject to PC approval & funding of the provision of this bin, S. Cambs. would agree to pay for emptying of the bin.

##### **Church Lane**

Adjacent to the existing salt bin, P.C. to provide new dual-purpose bin with dual-use sticker. This would also serve to collect litter and dog waste from visitors to the village who park/walk locally to this location from the direction of Arrington.

#### **Croydon Tree Warden report to PC, April 2022**

Prepared by Tree Wardens Maggie and Judith

Several landowners (both farming and commercial enterprises) have planted numerous trees and lengthy hedgerows recently and we are pleased to report that, on the whole, trees and hedges are thriving. It is evident that most native species are growing well, such as field maple, hawthorn, English oak, blackthorn, willow spp, rosa spp, hornbeam, whitebeam.

Anecdotal accounts suggest that Rowan does not do well on the clay soils of Croydon and, as this is a species often suggested for planting, we are monitoring the success of recently planted Rowans in order to offer advice.

We continue to encourage landowners and householders to plant one or more trees wherever possible. There is a dedicated WhatsApp group for villagers "Croydon Trees" to share advice, notification of tree planting schemes, photographs of iconic village trees etc and we would like to encourage more villagers to be involved through this group.



More specifically, one of the residents has set up and maintains an Excel spreadsheet and residents are encouraged to notify her of new plantings. By gathering these data we can demonstrate the village commitment to tree planting – see below comments on funding constraints.

With regard to tree planting funds, we record the funding of two crab apple trees from a SCDC parish allocation which were planted at the lower end of the new churchyard, following permission obtained by the secretary to the PCC. A further Acer sp. has been planted near to the Malus spp. All are well maintained including watering by villagers when necessary and are flourishing. Two cherry trees were also funded and are thriving in Clopton Close.

However, whilst there are numerous grants available for tree planting, we, as a village, are unable to the advantage of any further as the village has no public land, which is a pre-requirement for most grants. Similarly, whilst the PC has agreed funding to allow the village to plant a tree commemorating the Queen's Jubilee as part of the Queen's Green Canopy, we continue to seek a suitable location. The most promising is the glebe land and discussions are ongoing.

We are pleased to report that the tree planting in the new churchyard has helped us achieve the Wildlife Trust Bronze Award for conservation and biodiversity and further planting of a foraging hedge has been agreed and will be implemented shortly.

We thank the PC for sourcing and funding a large scale map of the Parish for our use.

Our aims for next year include

- a) a further village meeting on local trees and possible tree/hedge planting
- b) monitoring and recording tree health, and diseases
- c) encouraging further planting, from single trees in gardens to large scale planting
- d) to link into the tree warden network to increase our knowledge through training and communication

### **Chair of the Parish Council Report 2022 - Mrs Sue Slator**

As Covid restrictions eased over the last 12 months, meeting have been held regularly, in person. Members of the village community have also attended on occasion.

Membership of the Parish Council has remained constant, this year.

### **Planning**

The council has considered several applications this year and council made comments as appropriate. These included applications for Licencing and Retrospective planning permission to which many members of the community contributing their opinions. The council decided not to support these applications and await decisions by SCDC.

### **Website**

The new village website was launched in June and meets the legal requirements to have PC documentation freely available to the public. The website also provides information about the village including activities and events. The PC also adopted a website policy to regulate content.

### **Defibrillator**

A fully automatic AED (Automated External Defibrillator) has been installed in the redundant phone box in Clopton Close. Access to the AED is only via a 999 call, when the ambulance service will provide an access code, if appropriate. A dedicated team led by the Clerk provide regular monitoring checks to ensure it is always ready for use. During the coming year we will be able to arrange training for the community, so people will have confidence in its use. In the meantime, please watch the training video on the Defibrillator page of the web site.

### **Housing Needs Survey**

As previously reported Hastoe Housing Society is investigating the possibility of a small affordable housing development in Croydon. Sites originally identified are not available and an alternative site has recently been investigated but was deemed unsuitable. Hastoe continues to look at options.

### **Speedwatch**

For some time, the PC has discussed with the community group starting a Speed watch group. This was delayed due to covid and the resignation of the previous Police & Crime commissioner. However, in February 2022 Cllr William arranged a Speeding Forum to bring together the villages of The Mordens district to share speeding concerns. The clerk attended and the PC is supportive of working with the

Community Group to seek volunteers and a coordinator to get the scheme operational. This scheme can only work if sufficient people volunteer.

### **Review of Dog and Waste Bins**

A focus group was created by the community group, to systematically review the current and future needs for litter and dog waste in the village. The group liaised with residents and SCDC and presented their findings to the PC. The existing dog bin would remain outside the Reading room, but two new, a replacement and a relocation was proposed. The bins would have a closed top (Topsy) and would have stickers indicating the bins are for both litter and dog waste. Signs directing walkers to the bins are also being considered. The PC adopted the proposals and were grateful for the detailed proposals presented.

### **Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee**

The PC consulted the parish to gauge their interest in celebrating the Jubilee. In February a questionnaire was distributed asking the community if they were interested in a picnic, a village sign, general tree planting or a commemorative tree. The result was disappointing, only 18 were returned, a 19% response. Of the 19% the most popular suggestion was the village picnic (14 however only 9 could actually attend)) the second choice the village sign (8) and the third choice the commemorative tree (7). Based on these results Council felt there was insufficient interest to organise an event but would consider funding a commemorative tree and plaque if an appropriate site could be found.

### **Reading Room Development – WiFi**

In March the PC issued a grant to the RR for the installation of BT fibre broadband together with funds to cover the cost for two years.

### **Precept**

The Precept is a tax that Parish Councils charge their local electors to meet their budget requirements. Parish Councils do not receive any direct funding from central government so rely on their Precept. The Parish Council Precept is part of the Council Tax and is collected from local electors via their Council Tax payments. The Council has budgeted £4290, which is a rise of 3.6% on last year's precept for what it believes it will cost to manage the village for the next financial year (2022-2023).

This sum covers our costs which include for example Rent, Clerk's salary and expenses, website and cemetery grass cutting.

**Community Benefit Fund** The fund stands at £19,563-75. No further payments are due from the Solar Farm, so this fund is finite. The funds are available for the use of the community including Parish Council projects. Details of how to apply and the criteria for grants can be found on the Policy page of the website.

### **Thanks**

Many people contribute to the life of the parish and we are grateful for all your support.

Thank you to Malcolm, Judith, Maggie and Vivien for their work in various forms with the Community and Tuesday Groups. Additional thanks to Maggie and Judith for their efforts as tree wardens.

Thank you to all those who have joined the maintenance rota for the AED. Thank you too, to the Reading Room Trustees for maintaining the Reading Room. Once again, I want to thank everybody who has stepped up to support neighbours and the community spirit which has developed over the pandemic and continues through WhatsApp.

Finally, thanks to all the councillors and of course Marian for her tireless work as Clerk, for which we are all very grateful.

### **Parish Council Finance and Community Benefit Fund**

The Clerk gave brief details of the financial position of the Parish Council. The Parish Council had funded a Christmas tree for the village, and this will be done annually. The Community Benefit Fund had been used to pay for the development of the website, and the annual running costs will be paid from the precept. The Community Benefit Fund funded the cost of the defibrillator and installation.

#### **Accounts April 2021 - March 31 2022**

<b>Receipts</b>	
Precept	£4,140.00
HMRC VAT refund	£322.77
Interest - NSI	£2.21
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£4,464.98</b>

<b>Payments</b>	
Insurance	£401.53
Reading Room rental - PC	£143.00
Old website honorarium	£200.00
Churchyard Upkeep Croydon PCC	£500.00

<b>Restricted Funds</b>	
<b>Community Benefit Fund</b>	
Balance 1 April 2021	£20,424.54
Website - final payment	-£440.00
Defibrillator and associated items	-£423.00
NSI Interest	£2.21
<b>Balance 31 March 2022</b>	<b>£19,563.75</b>
<b>Balances at 31 March 2022</b>	
Investment Account	£22,137.63
Bank Account	£5,075.68
less unrepresented cheques (Sanders and Jay)	-£238.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>£26,974.51</b>

Clerk - salary	£1,210.00
Clerk - petty cash	£12.45
Clerk - IT allowance	£25.00
Clerk - Zoom subscriptions	£115.12
Internal Auditor	£50.00
SLCC Enterprises (courses)	£108.00
RBL wreath	£17.00
Village Christmas tree	£50.00
Subs to SLCC Association	£70.00
Sanders and Jay (annual website payment)	£238.80
Glasdon dual purpose bins	£425.71
Grant for Wi-Fi - Reading Room	£1,064.16
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>£4,630.77</b>
<b>Restricted Fund</b>	
Website developer (final payment)	£440.00
Defibrillator installation	£423.00
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£5,493.77</b>
<b>Balance at 31 March 2021</b>	£28,003.30
add receipts	£4,464.98
less payments	-£5,493.77
<b>Total</b>	<b>£26,974.51</b>

The Community Benefit Fund consists of the five Solar Farm instalments and the interest earned from the National Savings and Investment account. The Community Benefit Fund will close once the funds are exhausted. Applications should be made in writing in the first instance, to the Clerk. Applications can only be made once in a 12 month period.

### Community Benefit Fund - balance

Date	Organisation	Purpose	Amount
August 2015	Solar Farm	1st Instalment	£4,935.00
May 2016	Solar Farm	2nd Instalment	£4,935.00
November 2016	Reading Room	Improvements to exterior	-£1,222.00
	Church	Display stands	-£1,262.00
March 2017	Implementation Group	Litter pickers and rings	-£137.30
			<b>£7,248.70</b>
May 2017	Solar Farm	3rd Instalment	£4,935.00
October 2017	Reading Room	Lighting contribution	-£350.00
			<b>£11,833.70</b>
October 2018	Solar Farm	4th Instalment	£4,935.00
			<b>£16,768.70</b>
December 2018	Everett Training Services	First Aid Course (nett cost)	-£99.00
	VAT on above training	To be reclaimed	-£19.80

			<b>£16,649.90</b>
May 2019	Reading Room	Hire for First Aid course (3 hours)	-£19.50
			<b>£16,630.40</b>
	Solar Farm	5th and final instalment	£4,935.00
			<b>£21,565.40</b>
January 2020	NSI interest		£111.15
February 2020	VAT on First Aid training	VAT reclaimed	<b>£19.80</b>
	Interest from nominals added	Earned by CBF	£464.97
			<b>£22,161.32</b>
July 2020	Mrs J Grundy	50% of website cost	-£440.00
December 2020	Nett cost of defib and cabinet		-£1,415.00
			<b>£20,306.32</b>
January 2021	Nett cost of stickers		-£40.00
	NSI Interest	Annual receipt	£158.22
March 20201	Balance		<b>£20,424.54</b>
June 2021	Power2U	Defibrillator installation	-£423.00
July 2021	Mrs J Grundy	Balance of Website cost	-£440.00
January 2022	NSI Interest	Earned by CBF	£2.21
	Balance		<b>£19,563.75</b>

## Village Matters

### Church Restoration:

#### All Saints' Church, Croydon cum Clopton

#### Fabric Report to the Annual Parish Council Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022

Before he gave the report, Mr Ralph pointed out that he has permission from everyone who has been mentioned by name to publish them in the report.

In summary, after many difficult and disappointing years battling challenging structural issues and chasing elusive grant funding, the past year has been one of real progress with repairs to three ancient windows, the Downing Crypt saved from collapse, and building movement monitoring finally getting underway.

Last year it was pleasing to be able to report that offers of grant funding were accumulating and by year end approached £43,000 in total. The earliest offers came from four relatively small charities which, when combined, totalled £17,900. These contributing organisations were Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust, The National Churches Trust, All Churches Trust and The Garfield Weston Foundation. These grants together enabled a doorway to be cut to gain access to the Downing Crypt, also limited weatherproofing to several other windows, cracks and buttresses - thanks to John Hopwood for completing some of these works. As some of these grants were limited to 50% of costs, careful management has been essential.

The final piece in the jigsaw was the receipt of an offer from Historic England for £25,000 of support from the Dept of Culture Media and Sport's Covid Recovery Fund. This was for additional works totalling £27,000, with the £2,000 to come from PCC reserves accumulated from past fund raising. This crucial support enabled the Chancel Floor to be made safe by erecting an extensive support frame within the Downing Crypt beneath the Chancel; also major repairs to two of the most ancient windows on the south side of the Building, plus repairs to a previously propped window in the South Chancel.

So what lies ahead? Surveying fixings have been drilled and bonded into a large number locations inside and outside of the building, including within the Crypt, to enable a programme of precise building movement monitoring to be conducted for a period of probably two years. It is hoped that the results from this will help to prioritise future works. It is important to stress that due to funding constraints, this monitoring is being conducted not by an outside organisation but by this community. To date, Percy and

Graham Pledger (a volunteer Diocesan Structural Advisor), have hugely helped with this task and great thanks must go to both of them. A first set of reading was taken during mid winter, and a Spring set is due to be taken within the next month. The first set took three of us between four and five days of effort, though this included a considerable amount of learning, so it is hoped that this can be reduced to no more than three days in total. It would be really helpful if any other members of the community were minded to offer help. Any adult or youngster, with an interest in old buildings, surveying, structural engineering, or simply technical measurements who wished to be involved then please make yourself know to one of us. It will be fascinating to see how much movement occurs in various parts of this ancient building. For the distant future, at minimum, eventually a major permanent repair of Crypt roof will be required together with some very significant decisions about the burials within the Crypt.

Moving to the churchyards, many will have noticed how well maintained yet sympathetically managed are the cut areas and for this we must once again thank Michael for his dedication to the task. We also thank the Parish Council for continuing to contribute to the cost of churchyard maintenance, which is, of course, on behalf of the community. We are very happy to report that the project to improve nature conservation, wildflowers and biodiversity under the Wildlife Trust Scheme is continuing and has begun to reap benefits, indeed, a Bronze award was achieved during the year and a plaque will soon in place to mark this notable achievement. Plans are already coming together to push on towards a Silver award. Thanks go to Judith, Maggie and Val for coordinating this work. In any churchyard, there is a careful balance to be struck between the need to keep some areas tidy for visiting families while leaving others less controlled, and this needs sensitive cooperation between the PCC, Michael the project team, and members of the community. Some additional small trees have been planted towards the far end of the new churchyard and both parts, as well as the Church itself, are open to all to visit and perhaps sit, and enjoy these areas of calm and quiet beauty (the new and well-stocked book exchange is also to be found in Church). Efforts are underway to see whether it might be possible to acquire a Jubilee Memorial Bench to enhance the enjoyment of the new churchyard area. For the future, consultation will be needed about what to do with the very tall trees on the north side of the old churchyard which, if they were to fall, threaten the building itself.

Touching on finances for a moment, there is excitement that the Croydon Classic Vehicle Show is to return this year - Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September. Hopefully, the village will again pull together to make this an enjoyable and productive community event. For those who haven't been before, it is not to be missed!

Thanks also to several households who have joined the (national) Parish Giving Scheme which collects regular giving for Croydon, All Saints'. Anyone can join this scheme, particularly any new residents who missed this campaign. It is already making a significant difference to the survival of All Saints'. If you would like to know more, then please ask one of us.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this report and for your attention.

Malcolm Ralph and Carol McGeoch - Churchwardens

Further to the Bronze award achievement, the PCC is trying to obtain funding for an additional seat for the new churchyard, through the SCDC Community Chest to commemorate the Queens' Platinum Jubilee. Council is pleased to support their endeavours, and the Clerk will respond to the PCC secretary with this information.

**Website:** The website is working well and is meeting the legal obligations that all Parish Councils have to do - publish the minutes, agendas and financial documents. There are also news items and other helpful facts published, and it is well worth a look.

**Defibrillator:** The volunteer group monitoring the defibrillator appears to be working well. Clerk will have to order replacement pads in July. The group was thanked by both Chair and Council; it is good to know that the machine is available to anyone who may have need of it.

**Litter/dog waste bins:** Already discussed earlier in the meeting - the bins are being stored whilst awaiting installation.

**Wi-Fi in the Reading Room:** Following the grant made to the Reading Room for the installation of Wi-Fi, this has been done and



is working well. From their e-mail:- The Reading Room now has excellent Wi Fi! Thank you, Parish Council for your support! The Trustees also reported that various maintenance items required in the Room have also been completed.

**Car Show:** This will take place on 11th September - see the Church report.

**Speed:** Mrs Slator spoke about the volunteers required in order to staff the proposed Speedwatch group. Before any sort of speed sign can be erected, data needs to be collected to prove that one is needed. A reduced speed limit is not really the answer because, like all speed limits, it will be ignored. If you would like to volunteer to help, watch for the information that will shortly be circulated in the village.

**Elections:** Mrs Slator spoke about the forthcoming elections. Again, Croydon did not meet the required seven persons willing to stand for Council, so the election is uncontested. When the new Council holds the first meeting and the officers are elected, a decision will be made when to announce the vacancies.

**Cllr Williams** apologised for her late arrival, and gave a brief verbal report:-

**SCDC Accounts:** The accounts for the year 2018-2019 were finally signed off on 29 March 2022. The cost of the external auditors is (so far) around £216,000. Cllr Williams made it clear that in no way was this delay caused by the hardworking financial officers, but many other reasons.

**Discretionary Grants:** South Cambridgeshire District Council is administering the Discretionary Grants Scheme, aimed at the hundreds of companies who have so far not been eligible for support. The one-off payments range from £2,500 for small firms, £10,000 for charities and up to £10,000 for other businesses connected to the retail, hospitality and leisure industry.

As there were no further questions for her, she was thanked for her attendance and left the meeting.

**Public Session:** There were no questions from the public present, but they did want to thank the Chair, Councillors and the Clerk for their support and the work that they do.

#### **Any other matters requiring Council attention:**

**Planning Committee Representation:** The Clerk contacted the relevant officer regarding Planning Committee submission for the retrospective application at White's Carpentry. His response is below:-

*I can see in your original comments of 30 March 2022 that you have requested it go to Planning Committee so I can confirm this.*

*It will likely need to go through our screening Delegation Meeting though which is ultimately where the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee consider committee call in requests and determine whether they will or will not go to Planning Committee. If the outcome of this results in it not being due to be determined at Planning Committee I will inform you.*

The request has to go to a Delegation Meeting, and after this meeting Council will know if the application will go to Committee. It looks as though Council will not be informed unless it does not go to Committee.

#### **Bank Statement:**

The balance at 30 March 2022 is £5075-68. There is one cheque that has not been presented and the first instalment of the precept was paid on 11 April - £2145-00.

The Councillors gave a vote of thanks to the Chair, who did not stand for re-election.

**Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 18th May 2022 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 9.02pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

