

A meeting of Croydon Parish Council was held on Wednesday 15th February 2023 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mr Wheeler - away.

Present: Vice-Chair Mr Barnes, Mr Sole, Mr Buchanan, Mrs Sole, Ms Newland, the Clerk and Cllr Kindersley (later).

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

Declarations of Interest: None received

Matters Arising and Village Issues:

Community Reports: A village clean-up day will take place in March (date to be decided) and the event will be organised in line with previous events, under the auspices of the Parish Council insurance.

London Luton Flight Paths There is a public meeting being held in Little Gransden Village Hall, with several MPs in attendance, on 23rd February at 7.30pm. If you are unable to attend in person there will be Zoom attendance available, and the Clerk will circulate the link when she receives it.

Village Map: Mr Buchanan will look into the costs involved in compiling and displaying a map of the village, with house names on it. Hopefully this could help delivery drivers who cannot find properties.

SCDC Tree: Council secured one tree from the SCDC offer of 6 Free Trees. The six in the offer are whips, but there was an option for one large pot grown tree, and the wild cherry has been received and planted in the new churchyard. Thank you to everyone involved with this.

East-West Rail letter: SCDC has sent a letter to Huw Merriman asking him to visit the area and look at what the East-West Rail plans would do. All parishes were invited to countersign the letter, which Croydon, along with 28 other parishes, has done.

SCDC meeting - 9th February: Mr Buchanan and Mr Barnes attended South Cambs Hall, only to find that the meeting had been rescheduled to 23rd February at 4.00pm. Unfortunately, neither they nor the Clerk were informed.

Follow-Up information

Dog/Litter Bin signs: These have been received and now in place. Council would like to thank everyone involved in this venture.

War Memorial: The lady in the village who previously repainted the letters on the war memorial has been approached again and has estimated that to do this again it would cost £75-00 for materials with no charge for her labour. It was proposed by Mr Buchanan and seconded by Mr Barnes that Council should accept this. All in favour. Clerk will notify the lady concerned.

Platinum Jubilee Village Halls Fund: The application was turned down as not being high enough to qualify. The application was well inside the limits set out in the email, so this is being questioned.

Street Cleaning Machine: The information about the machine has been sent to the village clean-up group.

Gmail addresses: Clerk is still waiting for two Councillors to set up their g-mail addresses in line with the agreed address Council address and send her notification of this. Councillor's initials, followed by croydonpc@gmail.com.

Hastoe - Affordable housing: Brief report from a member of the PCC:-

Hastoe met with the "SCDC Housing Enabler", who suggested that a pre-application be submitted. The Housing Needs Survey will need to be "refreshed" so Hastoe intends to approach ACRE about this. Hastoe reported that SCDC will assume only 75% - 80% of the declared demand from the Housing Needs Survey findings. This means that to stay at the same number of planned homes as last time a greater demand will need to be found by the refreshed HNS.

For the pre-application, Hastoe intend to approach Planners keeping both field options open. There is no certainty that Planners will accept either of the fields.

Hastoe intends to stress to Planners that they have tried hard for more than two years to find sites and no other landowners have come forward.

Lower Road - accidents: Cllr Kindersley reported that nothing further had been received by CCC from either the Police or the Highways Team. A group in Potton has also been working towards safety measures on this road.

Parish UK Network: As the Chairman was not in attendance, it was agreed to defer this until March.

Correspondence:

Electoral Register: None received

CCC - Care Together: The CCC lady responsible for this initiative has offered to come to a meeting to expand on the subject. Clerk has already seen a presentation, and the main question from the residents of the Sheltered Housing scheme was:-

- Why isn't there one phone number to call, where advice on which of the many agencies would be most appropriate for their particular problem?

Clerk's comment: It would also be useful if the criteria for these services (Pension Credits etc) or personal savings would make a difference to which agencies could be accessed. Just letting people know what is available is a start, but most of the information is on-line and cannot be accessed by many older residents, Below is an extract from the CCC webpage:-

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Most people want to stay independent in their own home for as long as possible. You can do this by:

- using [equipment and technology](#) to increase your confidence around your home, and keep you safe
- adapting your home, for example swapping your bath for a shower
- moving to a more suitable home. This makes it more likely that you can remain independent for life
- getting help with things you find difficult. For example cleaning, gardening, or [making meal times easier](#)
- considering [personal care](#)

The [Housing Options for Older People website](#) can assess your current housing and you needs and make recommendations.

- Adapting your home to work for you
- Maintenance and assistance options
- Help around the house
- Moving to a more suitable home
- Supported, sheltered and extra-care housing
- Social Housing

There is a lot of help out there, just not available for those with just a landline.

Volunteering Fair at Long Road: This was circulated via Mailchimp and Clerk received one enquiry, to whom the information was given.

Cambridgeshire Matters: This month the South Cambridgeshire Think Communities team has been busy finalising a new fund for the developing town of Northstowe. The kickstart fund aims to remove financial barriers to setting up community groups and activities and help with start-up costs, such as renting a room or buying equipment. The team have been working with partners at South Cambridgeshire District Council and Northstowe Town Council to set up a funding panel and are pleased to also welcome two local residents onto the panel, who will be involved in assessing applications. If you would like to discuss an idea you have for Northstowe, please email northstowe.community@scams.gov.uk.

Combined Authority Report: New Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership

- Secretary of State Rt Hon Michael Gove MP confirms support for the establishment of an Oxford to Cambridge Pan Regional Partnership.
- The endorsement follows a proposal submitted to government by leaders from local councils, local enterprise partnerships, the Arc Universities Group and the area's transport body, England's Economic Heartland.
- Backing for the pan-regional partnership unlocks access to up to £2.5million government funding for the Partnership to support its priorities in delivering sustainable growth and environmental enhancements for the region.

Proposals for a locally-led Partnership for the Oxford to Cambridge region has been given the green light by government.

The Partnership's role will be to champion the region as a world leader of innovation and business, acting to achieve environmentally sustainable and inclusive growth. It will strengthen cross-boundary collaboration among its partners to focus on tackling the issues that matter to the people who live and work in the region.

The Partnership's initial programme is to:

- develop a set of propositions to attract international investment and profile the region on a global stage; and
- continue the work underway to embed shared Environment Principles.

Following the official commitment from government, the Partnership will begin active recruitment of an independent Chair. In the interim, a Shadow Board has been set up to oversee the Partnership's programme and agree governance and funding.

CCC Local Validation List Review: The Local Validation List and relevant guidance notes are reviewed biannually and the last review was in 2021. An initial review of the list has been carried out; guidance notes for 2023 and proposals to make minor revisions to update references to legislation and Local Plan policies that have changed or been updated. The consultation period will run for 6 weeks from 2 February 2023 until 16 March 2023. You may wish to view the existing Local Validation List June 2021 and accompanying Local Validation Guidance List, which are available on the County Council's website. Local Validation List Consultation 2023 - Cambridgeshire County Council

Please send any comments that you have on the guidance notes to:

mailto:planningdc@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can write to: County Planning, Minerals and Waste, Box No ALC2613, New Shire Hall, Enterprise Campus, Emery Crescent

Alconbury Weald, PE28 4YE

SLCC - Future of Local Councils survey: A very long report, which is being circulated to Councillors.

St Ives Greenway: An eight-week public consultation on improving links to the St Ives Greenway (Cambridgeshire Guided Busway path) from Fen Drayton, Over, Oakington, Westwick and Cottenham is underway. Encourage anyone with an interest in this to share their views on the proposed designs. These two St Ives Greenway projects will provide safer and better routes for people walking, cycling and, where appropriate, horse-riding.

The consultation begins midday, 6th February - and closes at midday on Friday 31st March.

Feedback will be considered as part of further design and planning work and ongoing engagement with landowners along the route.

To find out more and share your views please visit the following websites:

[Consultation on St Ives Greenway spurs to Over and Fen Drayton](#)

[Consultation on St Ives Greenway spurs to Oakington and Cottenham](#)

Circulated:

CCC Highway events

SCDC Parish e-bulletin

Any subsequent receipts:

Feel Brighter: The campaign aims to encourage older people aged 65 or over who have symptoms such as anxiety, loneliness, or low mood to reach out and access free NHS Talking Therapies and other support to help them feel brighter again. Activity also aims to reach out to family, friends and carers of an older person, who hasn't been feeling themselves recently and would benefit from accessing free support like NHS Talking Therapies. Local people can find out all the information they need on the campaign website www.cpics.org.uk/feel-brighter or phone 0300 300 0055 between 9.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday.

Cloudy IT: Offering Decisions Agenda Management for a cost of £625 + VAT per year.

Cambs and Peterborough Local Transport and Connectivity Plan: Transport is such an important issue for the region. Too many people in rural areas use cars, as there is no other option. It is important that the LTCP meets the guidance which is to be set down by the Government so that transport for the whole region is delivered. The aim is to present the final LTCP to the Combined Authority Board for approval in June.

Cambs and Peterborough Parks Partnership: Council does not have any community owned green spaces.

Footpath: It was reported that the footpath at the Solar Farm was blocked - however the footpath is now in a slightly different place and the reporter was unaware of this.

Waterbeach Waste Site: Community Groups and Schools may book to visit the site. To book or for more information e-mail WMT@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or phone Jon Crisp -7887 387977.

County Councillor Kindersley's verbal report:-

Little Gransden Meeting: This is a meeting about the proposed flight paths and stacking for London Luton Airport in the area. It starts at 7.30pm in Little Gransden Village Hall and the Zoom details are on the RELAS Facebook page.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/relas.ad6>

E-mail: info@relas.uk

Photo ID: From 4 May 2023 you'll need to show photo ID when voting in person in some UK elections or referendums.

You'll need it to vote in:

- UK Parliament by-elections
- local elections in England (including councils, mayors, the Greater London Authority and parishes)
- recall of MP petitions in England, Scotland and Wales
- Police and Crime Commissioner elections in England and Wales
- neighbourhood planning referendums and Business Improvement District referendums in England
- local authority referendums in England (including Council Tax increase referendums)

Potholes: The County Council is doing its best to get round to all the reported potholes. Potholes may be reported on the County Council website:- www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/highwayfaults. Don't assume that someone else has already reported it!

Lower Road: Cllr Kindersley has not received any reports from either Highways or the Police.

Nothing further can be done on this stretch of road until reports and recommendations are received.

Overhanging Trees: The County Council has been in contact with owners of problem trees, which need to be cut back to a height of 5.2m above the road, allowing a double decker bus safe access through the village. Most owners are happy to co-operate with the request.

Next meeting: Councillor Kindersley gave his apologies for the March meeting as he will not be available.

He was thanked for attending and left the meeting.

County Cllr Kindersley's written report to the meeting:-

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!

Making Connections Consultation: The Greater Cambridge Partnership Making Connections 2022 consultation closed on 23 December.

This was about proposals for public transport improvements, better cycling and walking options, and a Cambridge congestion charge. Around 23,000 responses were received, and the Greater Cambridge Partnership expects to publish a final report on the consultation outcomes and next steps for consideration by its Board in June 2023. Significant work in the coming weeks to take on board the consultation responses will then inform that report and it is hoped to have some detail by the end of May. A couple of people have said they did not know about this but we have been flagging it for some months in this column, there was a big article in the last South Cambs magazine as well as an accompanying flyer as well as considerable and widespread publicity in local media.

What it will mean for Gamlingay residents if it is approved will be a bus service that is a real alternative to the car - something we have never had but which many people need and want.

Meanwhile on the Combined Authority: A precept from the Mayoral Combined Authority of £12 per year per Band D property has been agreed, to ensure continued subsidy for bus services restored following the Stagecoach cuts last year. The Combined Authority was able to step in before Christmas to provide a 6-month subsidy for a large number of threatened rural service but this was from financial reserves and it was always known that a longer term solution would be required. The effort now needs to go into improving bus ridership so that in the longer-term large subsidies will not be required.

Key Amnesty campaign: People who are misusing Council properties are being offered a one-off opportunity to #DoTheRightThing and return their keys without facing criminal proceedings during a month-long crackdown by South Cambridgeshire District Council. The campaign targets people who have provided false information on application forms for housing; those illegally subletting, where the tenant moves out then rents the property to someone else - usually at a higher rent. In addition Right To Buy fraud is included where people do not meet the criteria to buy their property but make false

applications to benefit from a discount as well as tenants who fail to use the property as the only or principal home as well as those who abandon homes without following the proper process.

It is hoped the campaign will also provide an opportunity to raise awareness among people who moved out of Council properties to create a family bubble during the Covid pandemic, who wish to remain living with relatives. They may now realise they no longer require their Council home and wish to #DoTheRightThing by handing in their keys, enabling another family to come out of temporary accommodation or off the housing waiting list.

Additionally, the campaign is encouraging anyone who suspects housing fraud to #DoTheRightThing and report it to the District Council using the online form or emailing fraud@scambs.gov.uk.

#DoTheRightThing runs across South Cambridgeshire District from February 1 to 28. To surrender keys, people are asked to hand them in to South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne CB23 6EA, in an envelope containing the property address. No more questions will be asked.

Bins and Batteries: Over 99% of bins get emptied every month. However, we have been notified of some issues with collection at the new Downing Gardens development. This should have been resolved by the time you read this but if not please let Bridget know.

We have been able to make adjustments to our collection vehicles so that we are now able to collect household batteries for recycling on all of our waste streams. This means that effective immediately residents can leave out their batteries weekly on top of their green, black or blue bins. We now ask that residents place a small tied plastic bag containing the batteries loosely on top of their bin, rather than tying it to the bin handle.

Voting - You now need ID: Despite extremely little evidence of voter fraud the Government has seen fit to change the rules so you will now have to show Photo ID when you vote (unless using a postal vote). If you have no photo ID (passport, driving licence) you can apply online for a Voter Authority Certificate which is free and will require your name, address, date of birth and National Insurance number. Obviously this part of the government website is not currently working, as I type. Large groups of people especially the young and poor will be totally disenfranchised by these rules – and how many people will bother to go back to the Polling Station having been turned away once?

Drink & Drug Driving: The Police have asked us to publicise the confidential hotline to report suspected drink or drug drivers. Last month more than 80 drivers were arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence as part of a force crackdown. The hotline: 0800 032 0845 is available 24/7. If someone is in immediate danger, always call 999.

Council Tax: We reported on the local Council's tax-setting last month so can only add the news that the Mayoral led Combined Authority agreed to levy a 'Mayoral Precept' to help subsidise those bus services which were recently threatened with being axed by Stagecoach - this includes the 18 which many Gamlingay children rely on for school transport. The precept will be £12 per year for a band D household. The Combined Authority was able to step in before Christmas to provide a 6 month subsidy for a large number of threatened rural service but this was from financial reserves and we always knew that a longer term solution would be required. The effort now needs to go into improving bus ridership so that in the longer term still subsidies will not be required.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan: The First Proposals for the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan were published in 2021. Following a full consultation on these proposals, the planning authority has been moving towards producing a draft Local Plan this year. A report with an update on the development strategy has been published by the Joint Director of Planning, and considered by the District Council's Scrutiny and Overview Committee will be discussed by Cabinet on 6 February. This report confirms the development strategy from the First Proposals, with its focus on delivering the required housing and infrastructure in a sustainable manner, and on environmental protection, particular with regard to water supply. It confirms key strategic sites in Northeast Cambridge, East Cambridge and near the Biomedical Campus.

As required by the National Planning Policy Framework, the report includes an objective assessment of development needs for the plan period. This has identified an increase in the expected number of jobs of around 8000 over the First Proposals, principally due to the unexpected resilience of our local economy throughout the pandemic, with a corresponding increase in the housing requirement.

Potholes: Potholes have worsened dramatically following the December freeze and continuing wet weather, unsurprisingly given the effects of freezing temperatures and water on long neglected infrastructure resulting from decades of underfunding and a policy of 'managed decline.' Last summer's drought has had an additional impact on soil beneath road structures, causing further problems.

We have been working closely with our Local Highways Officer to log potholes for action and we would encourage everyone to please check on the 'Cambridgeshire Report a Fault' webpage (just google those words to find it) to find out whether potholes you are concerned about have already been logged. If not, please do log the pothole and note the reference number. If there is a problem with the reporting page do let us know. Please note that currently, when the subcontractors go out to fill potholes, they can only address what has been logged on the system, though the council is looking at whether this can be changed.

Believe it or not, for Cambridgeshire as a whole, this year has seen a reduction in the numbers of potholes, despite further real term budget cuts from Government. Over the past year the council has adopted the use of new scanning technologies to identify surface defects so it can intervene earlier and also have larger area patching systems – but it still needs sufficient people and funding in place. Our Local Highways Officer, who reads the log and creates the work list, manages a 'patch' consisting of 35+ villages.

You'll be interested to know that in one week in January 5586 potholes were reported - 2.5 times the normal. The dragon patchers (of which there are two) can do 100 every day, with manned teams able to do only 20 a day. We fixed more than 45,000 last year. Over 500 claims are made for compensation for vehicle damage every year of which the County Council settles approximately 85.

In general terms, if a pothole is large and deep, we will fix it within five days. If it is smaller and less of a hazard, we will fix it within 21 days. We mark up the potholes in different ways, those repaired in five days are not marked as our repair is immediate, yellow means we will repair it in 21 days. We always aim to fix potholes within five and 21 days. We aim to fix emergency faults as soon as possible, always within five days.

We always aim to repair potholes with a permanent fix first time, however, in the winter this can be difficult due to the weather and numbers of potholes. At this time of year, we sometimes have to make temporary fixes to keep people safe, to keep up with the numbers and because road conditions are too wet for permanent repairs. Permanent fixes will then be programmed in and delivered when the weather allows

The total amount of money we have specifically to fix potholes is £2.2m – this is part of a larger highway maintenance budget (which includes planned maintenance, patching, drain clearing etc) which is around £30million per year for maintenance of 4,500km of road. The average cost of fixing a pothole is £42. Looking forward, the County Council plans to fit street lighting with energy-efficient LEDs. The council spends £3.3M a year on energy for street lights, and investment in a programme of LED replacement would pay back in under six years. The Council is also proposing to recycle materials from road works, from asphalt and tar to gully water, with an estimated saving of around £250,000 a year.

Police information evening, Bassingbourn Old School: 22 Feb, 7:30-8:30PM – This has been specially organized due to the work of the Bassingbourn Practical Solutions Group. Chief Inspector Paul Rogerson will be speaking about community policing. South Cambs District Council Environment Enforcement Officer Ben Wilkin will also join to help untangle issues of joint interest. This will be Bassingbourn/Litlington oriented but all welcome.

Care Together - new care micro-enterprises, & survey

From CCC: 'You may start to see communications being circulated online and among local publications in South Cambridgeshire about our Care Together programme. This is about transforming the way older people are cared for in Cambridgeshire, which is being led by CCC. We will work collaboratively with partners and local communities and the aim is to help people live independently in their own homes for longer.

This programme will result in a switch from social care based on county-wide contracts to one in which people living and working in their own communities (micro-providers) will be empowered to support older and vulnerable residents. This will help people remain living in their own homes for longer as well as adding extra capacity to the local care market. Work to date has focussed on a pilot scheme in East Cambridgeshire but we are now expanding Care Together across the county, with an officer working specifically on South Cambs.

To help make sure we get the programme right, we are inviting residents over the age of 55, or looking after a person over 55, to complete an online survey and are sharing some communications with South Cambridgeshire residents to encourage this. Please do help us share the survey, which can be accessed by visiting: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/36MHL6/>.

Paper copies can be received by calling 01954 286 002 between Monday and Friday, 9am to 2pm, or emailing care.together@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. If you have any further questions about Care Together, please contact Graeme.Hodgson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Ivy Farm Bridge: We've now had an update from the Herts and Cambs officers who are working together on the Ivy Farm Bridge project, following the public consultation last autumn. This is an initiative of Herts County Council to realign Royston Footpath 17 around a railway crossing in Royston, and crucially, to create a safe pedestrian crossing over the A505 into Cambridgeshire by diverting the existing path to cross the A505 at the point of the Ivy Farm bridge. The bridge has never had a public right of way across it, having been created for agricultural purposes, but Herts County Council which owns the bridge would like to change this to meet an obvious public need. The consultation response was overwhelmingly positive (and over 100 positive responses from Cambs residents) with a strong indication that cycling rights are needed too.

Officers met with Network Rail on site at the railway in Royston in early January to look at detail of what's needed there and are moving next to the bridge itself and the Bassingbourn connection. They'd like to provide a more direct route to Bassingbourn village and will need to work with the landowner on this – the next step.

They are also looking at available public funds for bridge and path improvements – not all bells and whistles but a start on something workable. The overall new proposed route is seen as equally beneficial to Herts and Cambs residents and there is a real energy on both sides of the county border to make this work. More info to come.

Free School Meals: Requests for free school meals have increased by 24% in the past 16 months. Please just google 'Cambridgeshire Free School Meals' to find out more about support and how to access it.

Support Home-Start with the Turtles: Home-Start Royston, Buntingford and South Cambs provides vital support to young families in our communities. <https://www.home-start.org.uk/home-start-royston-south-cambridgeshire>

A fundraising swimathon takes place at the Royston Leisure Centre on the evening of April 23. Susan is organizing the South Cambs Turtles team for the event – please get in touch if you'd be up for taking part. 'We are swimmers of all abilities – a swim suit and enthusiasm for supporting Home-Start is all that's needed to join the Turtles.'

National Lottery funding: A reminder that funding of up to £10,000 is available for events and activities through the National Lottery Awards for All programme. www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k

A428: Highways England advise that the judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision to grant the A428 Development Consent Order has been reviewed and the High Court has refused permission for a judicial review on all three grounds. While this is positive news, the legal process is not complete as Transport Action Network has requested that its application for permission for a judicial review be heard at a High Court oral hearing. The High Court does not publish timescales and we are awaiting a date for the oral hearing.

Moving towards Net Zero: The County Council's Environment & Green Investment Committee received a report last month on the council's progress towards Net Zero for its own operations, and for the whole of Cambridgeshire. The focus of the council's activities in the next six months will be on:

Decarbonisation measures in eight schools for heating, hot water, and energy efficiency.

- 30MW of solar electricity generating capacity coming online from the North Angle Solar Farm.
- 100 homes connected to the Swaffham Prior Community Heat Network receiving 99 per cent decarbonised heating and hot water (and covered in depth in the Sunday Times 12/02/2023)
- 1,500 Cambridgeshire homes installed with solar and battery solutions by the end of May 2023 to add to last year's figures.
- Starting to retrofit a further five Council buildings (to add to the 22 already complete or nearing completion) to decarbonise heating and hot water.
- 30 businesses receiving low carbon business support to start their Net Zero journey.
- Decarbonisation plans for the Council's high emitting carbon sectors.
- A roadmap for the roll-out of county-wide electric vehicle infrastructure in partnership with the Combined Authority and district partners.
- Starting an audit of trees and significant hedgerows this month on the Council's assets to inform the Corporate Tree and Woodland Strategy and wider Biodiversity Strategy.
- Launching a new People Strategy to help bring the right skills and resources to the organisation for climate change and biodiversity crises.

- Developing and sharing best practice and case studies as part of the implementation of the Council's Climate Communications Strategy.
- Agreeing Net Zero by Design principles for all projects and services.
- Net Zero procurement guidance for commissioners of Council services.
- A further thirty council officers receiving Carbon Literacy training.
- A new corporate outcome for the Council starting April 2023 focused on responding to the climate crisis and achieving carbon net zero.

Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley on 01767 651982 or 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
We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can!

SCDC Williams' Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC - February 2023 (received after the meeting)

Budget 2023-24: The District Council has now set its budget for the forthcoming year. I have provided a table below showing the overall movements in department funding. The council has agreed an Authorised Limit for total external debt of £447.673m and forecasts external borrowing to be £315.1m by March 2026. The budget has a significant gap with £2.79m of savings/income identified. Council tax is to be increased by the maximum; unfortunately the amendment I proposed to freeze council tax was voted down. I raised concerns over the increased borrowing and council tax rises alongside the potential reduction of service quality as a result of the amount of savings made, I did not support the budget.

	Increased Resource £'s	Decreased Resource £'s
Resources		
Council Tax	511,000	
Business Rates	6,980,000	
Funding Guarantee Allocation	1,070,000	
Rural Services Grant/Services Grant/RSG	56,000	
New Homes Bonus		868,000
Net Increase in Resources	8,617,000	868,000

	Reduced Spending/ Funding changes £'s	Increased Spending £'s
Spending		
Chief Executive	442,000	
Climate, Environment and Waste Services		881,000
Finance Service		4,637,000
Housing Services		438,000
Planning Services	952,000	
Transformation, HR & Corporate Services		1,206,000
Interest Payable		1,713,000
Investment Income	1,548,000	
Other Levies & Contributions		333,000
Capital Financing & MRP	2,100,000	
Contribution to Earmarked Reserves		4,227,000
Contribution to General Fund	644,000	
Change in budget requirement between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024	5,686,000	13,435,000

Housing Budget: I was pleased to support the council's plan to increase the amount of council housing stock across the district. There was also a review of the Council house rents and shared ownership properties rates. The Council has decided to increase the rents and charges by 7%, this is the highest increase possible as the government has set a 7% cap. This is something that I did not support especially in the current climate with rising costs.

Accounts 2019-2020: On the 21st February the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee met to approve the 2019-2020 accounts. It is yet unknown what the final auditors' fee for this year's accounts will be.

Battery Recycling: There are changes to how the waste collectors will deal with batteries. Adjustments to the bin lorries mean that batteries can be collected every collection not just on blue bin days. All residents need to do is simply place a sealed or tied up plastic bag on top of any the green, black or blue wheelie bins.

Cllr Heather Williams
SCDC The Mordens Ward
Tel: 07885 774 775
Email: cldr.williamsh@scambs.gov.uk
Twitter: @Cllr_H_Williams
Facebook Page: Cllr Heather Williams
Website: www.cllrheatherwilliams.co.uk

Finance:

Bank Statement: Balance at the end of December - £5958-15.

Cheques: The following invoices were presented for payment:

SLCC - £141 - 80 (Charles Arnold Baker)
BCW - £170 - 06 (dog signs)
Gary Bissett - 480 - 00 (war memorial)
Traditional Flooring - £3420 - 00 (Reading Room flooring)

These cheques totalled £4211-86. It was proposed by Mrs Sole and seconded by Mr Sole that cheques for these amounts should be signed. The Clerk had forgotten to bring the cheque book as she was in the middle of dealing with a family bereavement. She apologised to Councillors and it was agreed that cheques could be signed out of meeting.

Precept Acknowledgement: Email confirmation has been received from SCDC of Council's precept request for 2023-24.

Bank Signatory: Clerk is still waiting for confirmation from Barclays that the third signatory on the bank account has been authorised.

Planning: None received

Items for next agenda: Coronation celebrations

Date of the next meeting: Wednesday 15th March 2023 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 8.52pm.

Signed

Date