

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on Wednesday 19th April 2023 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

Apologies: Mr Wenman - unwell (did send email before the meeting), Cllr Williams - may be able to attend, but would be late.

Present: Mr Wheeler, Mr Barnes, Ms Newland, Mr Sole, Mr Buchanan, Mrs Sole, Cllr Kindersley (later), four members of the public and the Clerk.

Declarations of Interest: Ms Newland - Coronation celebration

Reports:

Police: No report received.

District Councillor Annual report:

Awaiting receipt

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Cllr Kindersley - Cambridgeshire County Council - April 2023

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!

More Council Houses....: The next phase of 10 new council houses at Downing Gardens Gamlingay were handed over to their new owners at the end of March with further houses and flats due for release very soon. The new homes are built to high energy efficiency standards which makes them cheaper to run and have a very high quality fit out including very nice carpets and bike stores. If you have a local connection either by living or working here or by having close relatives in the village you can apply using the Council's Homelink service. If you are struggling to manage this, do make an appointment to speak to a housing officer at South Cambs District Council.

More Money to Decarbonise Council Houses: South Cambs has successfully bid for £1.7 million Government funding, to continue work to decarbonise Council homes. This will be added to the projects the Council has already started to improve the fabric of Council homes. It will also support other measures being put in place to help the Council achieve its own and the Government's Net Zero targets. The District Council owns and maintains around 5,600 Council homes in South Cambridgeshire. The new funding will go towards energy efficiency upgrades within these homes.

Energy saving measures such as exterior wall insulation, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, new windows and doors, draft proofing measures, as well as heat pumps and solar panel installation can be provided with the funding. These measures could save tenants between £220 and £400 a year on energy bills.

Zero Carbon Communities Grants: A grant scheme has opened for 2023 to encourage exciting community projects that reduce carbon emissions and engage local people about climate change. Community groups are invited to bid for a share of £125,000 with the scheme closing on June 2nd. Previous projects have included cooking classes that reduce food waste, tree planting, a community e-

bike rental scheme, solar panels for village halls and a men's mental health and wellbeing project that runs a mobile library for gardening equipment and tool hire.

Parish councils and non-profit groups or organisations that are based in the district can apply. Other groups, such as social enterprises and community interest companies can apply as part of a partnership led by a parish council or not-for-profit group. Groups can apply to the grant scheme by visiting www.scambs.gov.uk/zerocarbongrant

For further information contact Kath Sansom in South Cambridgeshire District Council's communications team on kath.sansom@scambs.gov.uk

Millbridge Brook Meadows Gamlingay: Thank you to the Parish Council for arranging to have the blockage in the stream cleared out thus allowing much freer flow of water. Congratulations to those volunteers who have replanted a lot of fruit trees - they look really good.

South Cambs Magazine: Many people tell us that they really value the magazine the council sends out at regular intervals which is why - despite many competing financial demands on our budget - we continue with it. It is disappointing though when something goes wrong with its delivery and people do not get it. We use a mixture of private delivery service and Royal Mail and we know there have been problems with the latter. If you have not recently had a magazine by the time you read this, please do report it on the council's website or let us know.

Paying Council Bills: Most people pay their council bills online or by direct payments. However, we know some people are not able to do this. Council house rents can be paid on the phone - if for some reason this is not working for you please let us know. We closed the cash payment office at South Cambs Hall ages ago because payment of invoices in cash was declining. However, provision was made to offer customers the opportunity to pay by cash at the Cambridge City Council cash office which remains open. There is also the facility to have a payment card issued which enables customers to pay at banks and post offices by cash or cheque. Just let the council know if this would suit you.

New Money for Planning Service: Government has given Greater Cambridge Shared Planning £290,000 of funding to improve feedback processes for its emerging Local Plan. Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) is a partnership between South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils.

The funding seeks to build upon the earlier work in producing a "digital" Local Plan by speeding up the processing and the review of the thousands of comments made by communities and developers through the process. This will shorten the time between people making comments and Councillors and communities being able to see who has said what about the emerging plan.

East West Rail: As the Leader of South Cambs DC, Bridget recently wrote to the rail minister to invite him to come to the district to see for himself what the impact the new railway would have on some villages. A number of Parish Councils co-signed the letter and were disappointed when the minister declined the invitation because apparently he had already been to South Cambs. Since then, we have had the announcement in the budget that the government is progressing this scheme. Bridget has therefore written again to ask him to reconsider his refusal to visit in the near future or alternatively for her to speak to him in London. We expect an announcement on the route in May.

Critical and difficult decisions: The recent County Council meeting on March 21st received a good deal of press coverage for the decision to create a public transport link connecting existing and planned settlements at Cambourne, West Cambourne and Bourn Airfield to Cambridge. These settlements are the best alternatives to development in the green belt, and this clustered development protects the vast majority of South Cambs villages from unsustainable growth. Public infrastructure including good transport links are necessary- and indeed this is a requirement of the local plan and without it the legal planning framework collapses.

The current Cambourne situation, with no decent public transport, is now urgent and critical for young people seeking access to post-16 education and training opportunities in the Cambridge area. The same is true for all those seeking access to jobs, including health and care staff where recruitment is hampered by lack of affordable housing with reliable public transport connections.

A key point of contention for the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Busway is at Madingley and Coton where different options have been debated. The eight years of consideration included a detailed independent audit in 2021. Officers have given a clear steer that the proposed on-road route was not good enough to meet the needs of Cambourne and further planned growth; and risks disturbing Madingley Wood, an ancient and hugely biodiverse site. The preferred route involving the loss of trees at Coton Orchard, a private site without public access, is regrettable. The final route will be aligned to reduce to a minimum the number of lost trees, almost or potentially all of which will be commercial fruit

trees around 30 years old, currently estimated at one-fifth of the total current area of the orchard. It is very likely that large replacement sites with a wider mix of native species will be able to more than replace the lost biodiversity, along with other benefits such as public access to wilderness. The next stage will almost certainly be a public inquiry at which the integrity of the scheme and objections to it will be tested.

After careful consideration of representations, papers and arguments made in the debate, a majority of County Councillors voted in favour of the proposal. You can watch the debate at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwbAi8Q9e5Q>.

The independent audit and other documentation is published at <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambourne-to-cambridge/cambourne-to-cambridge-independent-audit>

Taxis in South Cambs: Taxis registered in South Cambs will be required to have CCTV installed in the cabs. This is for the safety of the drivers and their passengers.

Cambridge to Cambourne Busway: The County Council has approved the application for C2C going to the Secretary of State for a Transport and Works Order. This is the next stage in delivering a fast, off-road public transport link between Cambourne and Cambridge which will provide a service every 10 minutes using electric buses. The medium term plan is that buses from Gamlingay and other villages will feed into this service which should be a game changer for young people attending 6th form and college in Cambridge and also for those of us needing to work there.

Civility in Public Life: 'There are growing concerns about the impact an increasing level of public intimidation and toxicity of debate is having on our country's democratic processes, particularly at a local level' - writes the Local Government Association.

Councillors at South Cambs District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council have voted unanimously to sign up to the 'Debate Not Hate' public statement on civility in public life and we have shared the initiative with parish councils. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/campaigns/debate-not-hate>

Safety Valve Funding: It is really good news that pressure on school places for children with additional needs will be eased after the county council secured millions in additional funding from the government. At the County Council we were facing widespread cuts in support for children with SEND due to a £58m budget gap. The extra money came through a process known as a 'safety valve' and is worth £49m to the council.

Under the agreement with the Department for Education, the authority will use the funds to balance its budget for children with additional needs by 2026/7. The government has also allocated a further £11.3m for capital funding to Cambridgeshire to support new SEND provision on mainstream school sites.

The funding will help tackle a gap in the budget for SEND provision which is expected to hit around £58m by the end of this month - caused by demand for services far outstripping government funding to Cambridgeshire for SEND services over the past six years. Requests for Education, Health and Care Plans in Cambridgeshire - the document which describes a young person's special needs and the support they will need to meet their educational goals - have more than doubled from 3,429 in 2016 to more than 7,000 currently.

Cambridgeshire has historically received less funding per child for education than other areas. This is while still responding to a rapidly growing population of children with special educational needs and disabilities who are presenting with greater complexities, some of which relates to young people suffering more with social, emotional and mental health arising from the Covid pandemic.

To meet these challenges, the council will use the new funding to create 463 new special school places. There will also be extra support for 105 pupils at mainstream schools by September 2026 through a programme of expanding current sites and building new schools. The council has also applied to the free school programme for two new special schools in Gamlingay and Fenland.

Some residents have commented that 'Special Schools' is an outdated and somewhat insulting term - and we tend to agree. However, the term has specific legal meaning and Government has not legislated for an alternative term as yet. So the plans for the old First School in Gamlingay continue to be for a rebuild as a Special School.

Royston Recycling Centre: There has been much press lately about the decision of Hertfordshire CC to restrict access to the Royston tip. Given that the alternatives in Cambs at Thriplow and Milton are miles further (with the consequent environmental impact) we have asked CCC to discuss options with Herts CC, who indicated there was scope for special arrangements. Cambs CC is in a minority of local authorities not to restrict access to non-county residents.

Easter Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme: Cambridgeshire County Council have received DofE funding until the end of 2024 to support children, in receipt of income-related free school meals, attend a holiday scheme for free during the Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays.

Cost of Living Support: Please continue to keep an eye on the home page at www.scamb.gov.uk (SCDC) where all schemes are kept updates - this includes govt funding dispersed via the County Council.

A428 Dualling: The Judicial Review has now failed to get anywhere so construction of the new A428 and Black Cat junction can proceed.

Making Connections update: The 24,000 responses to the Greater Cambridge Partnership consultation on the Making Connections proposals, consisting of a set of measures combining to bring new ways of travelling locally in, out and within Cambridge, are in the process of being assessed. It has been in the news lately due to a proposal to interrupt the consultation with a yes/no referendum on one aspect of it.

The combination of measures would mean the foundation of a significantly improved bus network with a wider reach, greater frequency, reliability, longer daily scope of operation and cheaper fares, and workable and safe active travel connections – together providing good sustainable access options into and around Cambridge, and alleviating vehicle congestion. Step two would be a proposed road charge for driving into and within Cambridge, the revenue from which would provide the primary revenue stream to run the bus network. The road charge would be predicated upon a successful new bus network provision being established first of all.

A recent motion at Cambridgeshire County Council proposing a referendum on the road charging component of the Making Connections proposals was not supported, as the consultation process is still live and those 24,000 responses need to be assessed and considered. As argued in the council debate <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwbAi8Q9e5Q> a referendum would disenfranchise people ineligible to vote, including young people and those travelling from out of county. It would fail to deal with a complex set of inter-related issues that require dialogue and cooperation to work through. The motion was lost.

Road Closures: Advance notice! Heath Road Gamlingay will be closed for one day on June 12th and Tetworth Hill will be closed for a week starting June 18th - both for repair.

Pot holes: We're extremely concerned about the state of the roads and know that our Local Highways Officers are currently overwhelmed with potholes, many more like craters. This is a matter of urgency with the council.

Sadly, the gradual deterioration of our road network has been unfolding over many years and strategic investment in maintenance did not happen in better times. Consequences of the political choice for 'managed decline' are with us now, making the job of getting on top of things that much harder. This has been exacerbated by drought and soil shrinkage, deep freeze and periods of persistent wet weather.

There are particular local hotspots which will be well known - thank you for highlighting and logging them and please don't hesitate to get in touch with your concerns.

EV charge station and solar park, Litlington: A planning application is expected shortly for an EV charging station and solar farm along A505 at Royston Rd Litlington. We have met the promoters and highlighted the tradition of community benefits paid to local Parishes by solar farms...

Care Funding: Cambridgeshire County Council is profoundly disappointed with the Government decision to not address pay and conditions for social care workers to help recruitment. Ministers have announced half the £500m promised to help address staff shortages would now be held back.

With an average 9.5% vacancy rate in the social care sector in large shire county areas such as Cambridgeshire - higher than the national average - tackling the challenge of workforce capacity is a key plank of the proposed reforms, and a reduction in funding coupled with a lack of focus on pay and conditions will ultimately make it almost impossible to drive forward improvements.

Public emergency alerts: The Government has now launched a new Public Emergency Alerts system which gives the Government and emergency services the capability to send an alert directly to mobile phones when there is a risk to life. There will be a national test of the new system on Sunday 23 April, which will consist of a loud, siren-like sound and vibration on mobile phones for up to 10 seconds.

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@scamb.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire County Council Annual Report 2023 Gamlingay Division

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

2022 will be notable as the year of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 8 September. The accession of HM King Charles III was proclaimed in Cambridge and Ely, and elsewhere in the county, two days later, and I was privileged to attend the Cambridge proclamation.

The composition of the County Council has changed since my last annual report following the death of Independent Chair of the Council Derek Giles who retired from that role as a result of his ill health, and another councillor switching parties. Cllr Doug Dew (Hemingfords & Fenstanton) left the Conservative Group in January 2023 and joined the Liberal Democrat Group. Cllr Geoff Seeff (Lib Dem) won the St Neots The Eatons seat in the by-election in February following Cllr Giles's death.

A County Council by-election will be held on Thursday 4 May, the same day as the District Council elections, following the resignation of Cllr Dan Schumann (Soham South & Haddenham).

Conservatives	27
Liberal Democrats	22
Labour	9
Independents	3

1. The Council

1.1 The three-group Joint Administration of Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent councillors continues to run the Council. The Agreement signed by the three groups in May 2021 is scheduled for a two-year review, which will take place after this May's elections.

1.2 I remain in the same roles as last year as Vice Chair of Council and Chair of the Constitution & Ethics Committee. I continue as a substitute on a number of other Committees including Planning and I am the Council's appointee to the Cemex Barrington Community Liaison Group (which I chair), East Anglia Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership and the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Community Covenant (Military) Board. I remain a Trustee of the CAM Academy Trust; the Sir John Jacobs Almshouses in Gamlingay and I continue to chair CamBedRailRoad. As Vice Chair of Council I participate in Citizenship Ceremonies where the County (and the King in the person of Deputy Lieutenants) welcome up to 30 new UK citizens every week at New Shire Hall – every one a joyous occasion.

1.3 The council's Chief Executive Stephen Moir carried out a reorganisation of the senior staffing structure, and the Council has been making senior appointments. The process of disentangling joint staffing structures with Peterborough Council set up by the previous administration has been very positive.

1.4 The council's new HQ at Alconbury Weald was formally opened on Friday 8 July. Regrettably, the location is entirely wrong given the non-existent public transport links.

2. Strategy & Resources

2.1 The high rates of inflation in the last year, and the turmoil of the Truss/Kwarteng mini budget, increased the costs of providing council services and therefore widened the budget gap.

2.2 The Council increased its portion of Council Tax in February, by 4.99 per cent in total-2.99 per cent for general services, and two per cent for adult social care. The opposition proposed an increase of four per cent instead, plugging the council tax gap by using up one-off funding meant for environmental projects, care, and strengthening council services.

3. Adults & Health

3.1 National changes in health and care decision-making took place during the year, with the creation of local Integrated Care Systems spanning health and social care. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough created a joint Health & Wellbeing Board to replace the previous separate Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Boards.

3.2 This year has exposed the vulnerability of NHS services nationally and also locally. A BBC investigation last summer of dental provision in the UK revealed that no dental practice in

Cambridgeshire was accepting new adult patients. Large numbers of patients are having to travel far afield, pay money they cannot afford for private treatment, or resort to DIY dentistry.

3.3 In addition to Covid, avian flu precautions were implemented across the UK during the year, with a particular protection zone centered round East Cambridgeshire after a confirmed case.

3.4 The provision of health services from across the county border - affecting the majority of the Division parishes - has been a source of considerable levels of casework and frustration! I have been corresponding with a number of NHS colleagues including the Director of Public Health to ensure this issue is not booted into the long grass.

4. Children & Young People

4.1 Funding of vouchers over the school holidays for families eligible for free school meals has continued, as has the Holiday Activity & Food programme for the children of eligible families. The cost of living crisis has seen many Cambridgeshire families reliant on such schemes.

4.2 The Council was praised by Ofsted for the work of senior leaders in Children's Services in responding to the challenge of Covid, and for maintaining continuity during structural change. Most children in need and those with a child protection plan were supported well.

4.3 The council is still seeking residents who would like to make a difference to the life of a child or young person by becoming a foster carer.

4.4 In a piece of good news for Cambridgeshire, the council and the Government reached agreement on the 'safety valve' process to resolve the escalating deficit in the cost of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities education. The deficit was expected to grow to over £90M by 2025/26 if left unchecked, and the council was not permitted to divert funding from other sources to fill the gap. Cambridgeshire has been awarded £49M which will be used to create 463 new special school places, with a further £11.3M in capital funding to support new SEND provision on mainstream school sites. Cambridgeshire has historically received less funding per child for education than other areas; and I am delighted that one of the Special Schools is planned for the derelict First School site in Gamlingay.

5. COSMIC

5.1 (Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee) has continued to oversee 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 are struggling financially at the moment. COSMIC agreed to use some of the money from the fund to give a 'payment holiday' to pensioners in arrears with their water bills.

5.2 A Warm Hubs programme over the winter was funded by the NHS and administered by Cambridgeshire ACRE with fantastic support from local parishes such as Gamlingay.

5.3 A review of the mobile library service resulted in a number of improvements, including more stops, more fuel-efficient routes, and local storage of vehicles. Cambridgeshire's Library@home volunteers were one of three voluntary organisations in the county to be given the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service - the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK.

5.4 The Government is introducing a requirement for photographic ID for voters at elections. This starts with the elections in May, and will cost up to £180M over ten years, despite cases of voter identity fraud at polling stations being almost non-existent. Around two million voters in the UK do not have the right form of ID to enable them to vote - they can apply for free Voter Authority Certificates, but applications for these are extremely slow and many people are likely to find themselves deprived of their right to vote on 4 May. We have been working with County Council officers on ways in which the council can support the effort to ensure the many people without the required photo ID apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate so that they are not denied their right to vote.

6 Environment

6.1 The Council awarded the first spending from its Just Transition fund, including £2.175M for a business case for the first phase of the Council's plan for Cambridgeshire to reach Net Zero carbon by 2045. £1.75M was also awarded for flood work and nature restoration.

6.2 On the hottest day on record in the UK, Joint Administration members of the County Council voted to sign Zero Hour's Nature & Climate Declaration, while the tarmac melted in the council car park outside the building.

6.3 The County Council is working with district councils on energy retrofits in homes with poor energy efficiency. A number of Cambridgeshire residents received individual invitations to apply for this.

6.4 The waste disposal contract with Thalia (formerly Amey) at Waterbeach has taken considerable amounts of council time. In addition to the odour emission works required by the Environment Agency, the new year saw new enforcement by the Environment Agency of rules on 'persistent organic pollutants

in waste upholstered domestic seating'. This led to a week of the council being unable to accept unwanted sofas, futons, gaming chairs, upholstered dining seats, and other similar items. These must now be incinerated not land filled. In addition to this, discussions are also ongoing with Defra regarding proposals to introduce weekly food waste collections.

6.5 The first households in Swaffham Prior are now receiving renewable energy from the new energy centre. Interest in this project has been considerable. Other energy projects (solar panels on Park & Ride sites, North Angle solar farm, and replacement of gas and oil boilers in schools such as at Comberton Village College and in the Council's own premises around the county) are continuing to progress. In conjunction with iChoosr the council ran another round of Solar Together, the group buying scheme for homeowners wanting to invest in solar panels and battery storage.

6.6 Anglian Water and Cambridge Water announced in the autumn their preferred location for a new reservoir in the Fens, north of Chatteris, to come on-stream in the late 2030s. A planning application will come in due course and progress through a number of stages. It will be a decision for the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate, as with other major infrastructure schemes.

6.7 The council has published an interim Tree Strategy, which it will revise once it has baseline information about what trees the council has, where they are, and how the council can expand and improve its tree assets.

6.8 We received details of the County Council's carbon emissions for the year. There was a significant reduction in the early stages of the pandemic, due to construction work ceasing, but this is likely to increase again in future years.

6.9 We agreed a motion to the Full Council calling for managed divestment by the council's Pension Fund from fossil fuels.

6.10 The council ran a #LetsGetOutdoors campaign over the summer to encourage residents to make use of Cambridgeshire's fantastic parks.

7. Highways & Transport

7.1 The condition of Cambridgeshire's roads and pavements remains a serious challenge. This situation has been building for many years in which the council's approach was one of 'managed decline'. However, recent extreme weather has speeded up that decline very significantly. The peaty soil (in the Fens and East Cambs) and clay (in southern Cambs) under the road surface has shrunk in hot dry weather, and expanded in wet weather, causing the surface to crater and split. Adding more tarmac to level the surface simply increases the weight and makes matters worse. The severity and extent of the problem is far beyond the maintenance budget of the council, so simply 'freeing up some money' is not an option. The council has been actively engaging with the Department for Transport to seek their support and funding.

7.2 The council used a data interpretation and modelling tool to identify a 'Safe and Dry' programme of 115 locations where work was needed to improve flood resilience, and work began on the first fifty of these locations including Station Road Steeple Morden. The council is also undertaking a two-year programme to clean and plot all gullies and surface drainage features to improve highways drainage management into the future.

7.3 The freezing spell over winter caused many road and pavement surface defects, and failure of pothole repairs. We encourage residents to report faults online.

7.4 The Highways & Transport Committee agreed a new Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

7.5 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 this sum will pay back in under six years.

7.6 The working group on Heavy Goods Vehicles produced a new policy and criteria against which to judge applications for weight limits in villages. A number of applications have already come forward. The new funding pot for 20MPH schemes has attracted a large amount of interest.

7.7 The county council and partners offered South Cambs District Council funding and assistance to help with the set up costs of joining the rest of the country in adopting civil parking enforcement.

7.8 Local Highways Improvement bids were successful for Gamlingay, Steeple Morden, Wimpole, Litlington carried over from 2021 and for 2022 the Panel approved schemes for Orwell and Litlington. The process for applications and assessments of Local Highways Improvement bids has changed, with bids categorised as complex or non-complex, and quicker routes to assess non-complex applications.

7.9 In autumn the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) consulted on its proposals for improved bus provision and active travel in the Cambridge area, which it proposed to fund through a charge for driving in a 'Sustainable Travel Zone' between 7:00AM and 7:00PM on weekdays. The results of the consultation will be published in the late spring, and the GCP needs to listen to the concerns of

residents. The current proposals are not fair or equitable for many residents, and are very unlikely to be implemented in the current form - after all that's what public consultation is for! Locally concerns are very much that it is wrong to penalise people who drive when there is no viable public transport alternative.

9. Combined Authority

9.1 The Combined Authority has had a somewhat turbulent year, including an attempt to depose the elected Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (dubbed the Fenpowder Plot) which was unsuccessful. More significantly, the auditors (EY) wrote to the Authority in June expressing concerns about the functioning of the Combined Authority, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has become involved, setting some clear requirements for improvement. The Combined Authority has agreed an Improvement programme with a package of external support, and an Independent Improvement Board has been established.

9.2 In September 2022 Stagecoach gave six weeks' notice of its intention to withdraw from a large number of bus routes. The Combined Authority pulled together a tender process at very short notice, and was able to find new providers for most of those routes, though there have been changes in frequency and extent of several of them. Additional funding was diverted to support these routes, and the Mayor has decided to levy a precept which will be added to the council tax to ensure the stability of these services for a further year. The Combined Authority really needs to move ahead with a system of franchising of local bus services, which would give democratic control of routes, timetables, and fares, but to do this it needs to find sources of large amounts of income, and in any case franchising would take around five years to implement. Meanwhile the Combined Authority is finalising a Bus Strategy for submission to Government. **9.3** The Combined Authority remains starved of resources by the Government compared to other Combined Authorities. It received no money for its Bus Service Improvement Plan, and very little active travel funding. The Government also decided there would be no more money for affordable housing for any Combined Authorities.

9.4 The Combined Authority's Local Transport & Connectivity Plan, on which many other local transport plans depend, is being finalised.

9.5 Now that it has no money for, and therefore no real role in, housing, the Combined Authority has reorganised its committees into new 'thematic committees' including (for the first time) the environment.

10 Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire & Rescue Service/Fire Authority

10.1 I am appointed by the County Council to the Fire Authority where I chair the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

10.2 The Committee has requested that Officers provide a gap analysis against the recent very adverse report on the London Fire Brigade and an overall position statement on culture at CFRS.

10.3 The first two of seven new appliances have been rolled out to crews at St Neots and Dogsthorpe where they are already in use. Over the coming weeks, five more will be delivered to crews at Cambridge, Ely, Huntingdon, Stanground and Wisbech.

10.4 Huntingdon Fire Station and Training Centre: the service has now completed a state of the art fire station and training centre at St Johns, Percy Road, Huntingdon and decommissioned the Hartford Rd site. I had a tour recently and it is a spectacular facility.

10.5 Because of the demographic changes locally Papworth Fire Station has moved to Cambourne into a purpose-built (paid for by the developers!) station.

10.6 The service is currently recruiting more on-call firefighters for stations including Gamlingay.

10.7 Lobbying of Government for a better funding deal has been partly successful with the final government financial statement, received in December 2022, confirming that we will receive sufficient funds to offset this year's deficit and if the economic situation improves, we will be in a good place to deal with any inflationary pressures we face next financial year.

11 East West Rail

11.1 We are advised that a route announcement will be made in May, after local elections. The sensible Northern approach - advocated by CamBedRailRoad and Cambridge Approaches - appears increasingly to perform better than the Southern approach favoured (so far) by EWR in terms of financials, sustainability, the environment and so on. It would also serve considerably more residents with a station at the new town at Northstowe. As ever, I am glad to hear from residents from across the Gamlingay Division parishes. I endeavour to attend all monthly meetings to present the written report I submit every month to PCs. I also occasionally post on Parish or community Facebook pages items of interest or notices of useful information. Somewhat of a double edged sword when it comes to potholes, to be fair.

Sebastian Kindersley

Orwell Petersfield School report



Petersfield Annual Report 2023

Pupil report – Mrs Meredith spoke to pupils this week and asked them to contribute to this report.

Some children from Year 3 (7 & 8 year olds) were very keen to tell you about recent highlights at school, for them. Top of their list was the recent Lent Challenge which took place before the Easter break. They told me that Bishop Stephen from the Diocese sets this, annually. The theme this year of 'Living Life to the Full' was explained by the children who told me about 'Filling Our Cup and Other's Cups'. It concerns being kind to each other and everyone having a good day. If someone is kind to you this fills your cup, but if someone is unkind it empties your cup. This had made a great impression on the children and one child said it had changed them and they now go out of their way to be kind to people. They particularly liked the stories about Jesus and what he did to help us and that we can help Jesus by helping other people. They confidently told me that the Lent Challenge showed all of the school values: Love, Trust, Creation, Friendship and Peace. I was very impressed with their knowledge and the sincerity with which they spoke. It was very moving.

When I asked them to tell me about other highlights, they immediately told me about a visit from GenR8 (Spoken as 'Generate'). This is a group of volunteers who give up their time to take a Christian message into primary schools. They do this through interactive activities, music, humour and other performance skills. They came into school just before the Easter break to tell the story of Good Friday and the Resurrection. The children thought it was strange that Good Friday was given that name but agreed that it was good 'because when Jesus died, he brought heaven to the world and the Holy Spirit'. One aspect that stuck in the children's minds was that they delivered 'Dad' jokes. When questioned further a child said the Dad jokes were bad puns. One child told me that 'Jesus guides us and he's the shepherd and we are the sheep'.

The next highlight was the REActive Church which is a programme delivered by Rev Felicity. Memorable activities are provided e.g. coins had to be washed in tomato ketchup. This represented Jesus going into the tomb dirty covered in blood and coming out again clean. Also, the children got to paint other children's feet so that they could then wash them as Jesus did. I was very impressed with their knowledge and the sincerity with which they spoke. It was very thought provoking, especially considering their age.

The other very exciting news was regarding the new toilets throughout the school. The children enthusiastically told me about new taps that required only a little pressure, more effective flushing toilets, smaller toilets for smaller children, cleaner and fresher walls and sinks. There are no longer any urinals and they approved of the cubicles, and they also pointed out that all toilets can now be used by anyone. They liked the new carpets in the library and corridors and tried not to dirty them with mud on their shoes. Other work they commented on was the new windows and new tiles on the patio. These improvements made them feel happy and felt the patio improvements provide a much better and safer play area. One child mentioned that a highlight for them was using the new PE apparatus last term. They went on the beam for the very first time.

The Easter Story and the renovations and new resources seemed to eclipse other highlights in school, but I know that there have been many other exciting events and activities over the last few months.

Headteachers' report

Since our last report, a number of staffing changes have occurred. Mr Gardiner has joined the teaching team and Mrs Little has recently joined our Puffins team as Playleader.

Our school priorities for the 2023-2024 academic year are:

1. Through training and induction, ensure the new SLT has clear responsibility and accountability.
2. Subject Leaders to ensure the rigour of curriculum skills and knowledge progression in all subjects, including embedding the new RE syllabus.
3. Through coaching and external support, further develop the quality of Teaching and Learning.
4. For all members of the school community to take responsibility for promoting dignity, respect and high standards of behaviour that encourages good mental health and allows all to flourish. Whilst illness has continued to be ever present locally and nationally, since the last report we have revelled in the return to pre-Covid norms, whilst also retaining the 'silver linings' of Covid such as the expertise in and access to

technology. The Queen's Jubilee heralded the return to community events with a School Council led whole school performance.

This year's Lent Challenge from Bishop Stephen happens to align perfectly with our school vision of 'Live Life to the Full'. This aspiration is based on a Bible verse in the book of John. We continue to strive to ensure all members of the school community flourish as they live life to the full. This has extended our ongoing focus on wellbeing across the school. We continue to partner with many local agencies for example the NSPCC recently worked with children highlighting their 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' campaign. Since January, we have introduced a new phonics scheme to support the teaching of reading. You can read more about it here:

<https://www.petersfield.cambs.sch.uk/site/pages/pageReact.php?page=phonics&t=1679613329>.

Supporting our phonics teaching is an increasing number of dedicated community members who are volunteering their time to hear pupils read and share a book with them. If you would like to be part of this dedicated group who generously offer us whatever time they have to spare, please do get in touch. Thank you also for each and every donation of money, resources, kind words and time. Each donation is valued and enhances the education of the children at Petersfield.

Please do look at the 'Latest News' on the homepage of our school website 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: Plough Monday; visits such as to Duxford and the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology to support our curriculum topic; visitors such as the Prehistoric lady, an animal experience, drama and sport, Our recent 2k challenge resulting in additional fundraising for our school and the school in Malawi which the School Council continue champion fundraising 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.

At the time of writing, the land allocated as a car park for the school as part of the housing development has not yet been transferred to us. We continue to work with the community and appropriate authorities to look for solutions to the challenge of traffic in the village and invite all members of our school and wider community to suggest practical solutions regarding parking – a dilemma which affects us locally and is a challenge replicated nationally.

If you wish to contact us or find out more about life at Petersfield, please do not hesitate to do so by calling 01223 207382 or emailing 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 2022/23

2022 was an interesting year for the Reading Room.

We have two new and excellent Trustees; Melita Brownrigg and Chris Sole and we have almost finished our renovation project! Bookings are slowly going up and we are planning a GRAND OPENING in MAY with press coverage! I have attached a progress report for your perusal. The Reading Room remains fully registered as a Charity. This has really helped applying for Grants. The Web site will soon be changing and it will allow online payments and accounting. Our rent cost will have to go up to cover our huge heating bills this winter. A total of £1617 for 12 months.

Our neighbours, Sam and Louise have continued kindly to help cut the grass as have other villagers. We are all very concerned about the falling trees in the moat which we have had to cut back. Everyone is concerned a tree will fall into or on a roof or person. We will need to approach Mr Farrer soon about this matter. Any support the Parish Council can give would be appreciated.

We are very grateful for the Parish Council's support in getting WI FI in the Reading Room and funding it for the last 2 years. Perhaps this could be continued? We would like the Dog Bin to be moved if possible. Happy for our black bin to be used for Dog Poo - a sign will be attached!

The new flooring looks good! Our thanks to the Parish Council. We are hoping install new Eco efficient heating soon and a play spot for children plus a changing table for babies. We are hoping to have the trees surveyed & the building safety checked this year. 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, the Parish Council and The Fresh Waterways Trust.

I personally have still been working long hours for the NHS and The Reading Room and I have five Grandchildren and another due in June, but I am semi retiring so will only working two days a week from May. My thanks to all the Trustees, and the continuing support of the Parish Council. I wish all of you good health & safe passage through this next 12 months; AGM - 15th June 2023 All welcome
Diana Walters

TRUSTEES: Chairman, Bookings Clerk and caretaker; Diana Walters.
Secretary; Janice Horsford.
Treasurer; Chris Elsley.
Frank Sole, Melita Hopwood , Chris Sole

Croydon Reading Room Refurbishment Budget 2022/23

Works Completed and Paid

Widening of kitchen hatch with fireproof doors.	
New kitchen worktop and secure cupboard.	£ 840
New slate roofed porch over main access.	£ 4,400
New steps and path widened.	£ 850
Dismantle garden shed. New concrete base & footings.	
Build new storage room attached to building.	
Re-roof with recycled slate and new underlay.	£ 9,800
Rain porch to protect side disabled access	£ 3,800
New storage room shelves, power and lighting.	£ 833
New sink in gents toilet.	
Varnish main hall ceiling.	£ 1,000
Remove redundant chimney.	
Open up north wall including steel lintels.	£ 4,500
New french doors and step.	£ 620
Repair, insulate and retile roof with recycled slate.	
Replaster and decorate.	£ 1,450
Repair and redecorate where necessary.	£ 3,580
New window blinds.	£ 912
New flooring.	£ 3,420
Landscaping and reuse ornamental stone.	
Clear rear garden and relay paving slabs.	£ 3,470
Installation of Broadband & Wi-fi	£ 1,056
Architect Fees	£ 240
Building regulations and engineer fees.	£ 285
Sub Total	£41,056

Work to Complete

Childrens' play spot safety flooring and wooden play frame	Budget	£ 1,000
Eco-friendly heating system.		£ 6,607
Garden	Budget	£ 20
SMART entry system	TBC	£ 340
External redecoration.	Quote	£ 2,000
Sub Total		£ 9,967

Total Project Cost £ 51,023

Clerk thought that perhaps the Trustees might consider providing a table trolley, and a chair trolley for stacked chairs. These would be helpful when moving furniture from the storage area and around the room and prevent damage to the floor through dragging.

Community Group report:

Litter Pickers' Report for Croydon Parish Council AGM

For the Easter Saturday tidy up there were less helpers on the morning than usual, nevertheless much good work was done. Thirteen black bags of litter were collected from the High Street, Larkins Road and top of Croydon Hill; plus a further six bags from along part of Lower Road, so nineteen in all plus a large sign and various parts fallen from passing vehicles. The extensive mud blocking the east end of Clopton

Close parking area was also dug out with the help of a Croydon youngster working towards their Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Encouragingly, several helpers volunteered to clear further areas after the planned morning event. These included additional parts of Lower Road, and further clearing beyond Croydon Hill. In addition a determined effort was made to clear the ditch east of Larkins Road at its southern end and for which a young Croydon Commando was enlisted, with the haul including a large television screen! While picking up, it was very cheering to receive thank yous from several random passing cyclists, and even from one Gamlingay motorist who took the trouble to stop and give encouragement. He remarked on what a bad state of littering existed all along the road to Gamlingay.

The two large roadside warning signs were used for the first time and seemed to make a significant difference to the speed of passing traffic. Consideration should be given to the purchase of two additional warning signs, plus a few longer pickers if some could be found.

Malcolm Ralph & Keith Buchanan per pro Croydon Community Litter Group

Croydon Café report:

The ladies opened the monthly café in June 2022, and it has proved to be doing very well. They are starting a Friday coffee morning on May 12th in the Reading Room and hopefully this will also be as successful. The ladies thanked the Council for supporting them by paying the Reading Room rental - there will be a Spring Buffet Lunch on Wednesday 26th April, to which the Councillors are invited.

All Saints' Church, Croydon cum Clopton

Fabric Report to the Annual Parish Council Meeting 19th April 2023

In many ways the most important event of the whole year was the five-yearly inspection which took place near the turn of the year. These inspections are a duty placed on Croydon Parochial Church Council. We have yet to receive a full report, but no doubt steady nerves will, as usual, be required as we work out how to tackle and remedy what is bound to be a long list of structural and other challenges.

The day to day life of the building has been calmer this year after a frenetic few years involving Crypt investigations and repairs to several ancient windows. A considerable amount of external crack repairs and stitching remains to be done, notably on the east and north sides and particularly to the Tower walls and buttresses. These cannot be done while frost threatens so it is hoped this work will re-start soon.

Our report last year recorded that concerns about the potential collapse of the Chancel Floor above the Downing burial Crypt had been addressed through the installation of a temporary support frame within the Crypt. This frame incorporates 9 supporting jacks with these being set with a 20mm gap between them and the Crypt ceiling, with these gaps then carefully monitored for any movements. Following last year's very dry summer, concerns deepened considerably when it was observed that most of the pre-set gaps had narrowed significantly and two jacks were in fact found to be in direct contact with the Crypt ceiling. Furthermore, the side walls had spread somewhat. These findings called into question whether it was safe to continue to enter and work within the Crypt. There was considerable relief, therefore, that after Autumn rains, the clearance gaps had partially re-opened above the jacks. The most recent measurements taken at the beginning of April 2023 provided a little more reassurance in that, while two of the jacks were still quite close to making contact, six others had clearances greater than the original 20mm setting. At the same time, the span between the walls of the Crypt had reduced by up to 7mm at some points, with this likely to be a key reason for the renewed clearances above the jacks.

Several tens of other monitoring stations have been established throughout the building both inside and out. After three attempts we now believe we have a consistent set of readings, so what lies ahead? The intention is to continue regular measurements across several seasons to better understand the movements and associated risks and then to begin to think about repair solutions, some of which could be extensive though it is too early to be sure. Due to a lack of funding the building movement monitoring is being conducted by local labour supported by Graham Pledger (a volunteer Diocesan Structural Advisor). We could do with more help in this area so if any other members of the community were minded to offer help please make yourself know to one of us. An interest or study of old buildings, surveying, structural engineering, or simply technical measurements would be an advantage.

A much improved cover has recently been fitted over the stairway, and while still not a permanent arrangement, will provide much easier access and will make the whole area much less of an eyesore.

The PCC is grateful for the forbearance shown by families with burials and ashes interments near this part of the churchyard while this work has been carried out. For the above works to the fabric of All Saints' we continue to acknowledge financial support from the Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust, The National Churches Trust, All Churches Trust, The Garfield Weston Foundation, and the Dept for Culture Media and Sports Covid Recovery Fund administered by Historic England.

The church is open every day for anyone to visit. All are welcome to visit, perhaps simply to sit for a moment of peace and reflection. A well-stocked book exchange (or to keep) library is flourishing and a regularly stocked food bank is also available and is being used. For donations to the food bank please contact PCC Secretary, Val Barnes.

Moving to the churchyards, many will have noticed how sympathetically managed are the cut areas and for this we must once again thank Michael Norie for his dedication to the task. A careful line has to be trodden between families wishing to make use of the churchyard to visit and maintain family graves, as against encouraging a more nature friendly approach. The PCC wishes to thank the Parish Council for continuing to contribute to the cost of churchyard maintenance, which is, of course, on behalf of the whole community as it is open to all for burials, ashes interment, or simply peaceful visiting. We reported last year that a Wildlife Trust Bronze award had been achieved and steps are being taken to achieve a still higher level in recognition of steps taken to improve nature conservation, wildflowers and biodiversity. Thanks go to Judith, Maggie and Val for coordinating this work. After considerable efforts, a grant from SCDC was awarded for the parish to acquire an engraved commemorative Queen's Platinum Jubilee Memorial Bench. This is now in place at the far end of the new churchyard for all to benefit from. A major challenge for the future is 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, the Croydon Classic Vehicle Show in September of last year was the most financially successful ever with over £3,000 going to both the Church and the Reading Room, and several very favourable comments have been received from visitors who attended. Unfortunately, with last year's show being held in September rather than July due to lingering Covid fears, it was felt that to move almost straight away to planning for 2023 was not possible given the lack of depth in the core team. Some discussion is needed about what might be possible in the future, and whether such an event is more manageable every other year.

More generally with respect to finances, the PCC continues to try to get the message across that All Saints' receives NO external financial support for running costs from any organisation and this includes the Church of England Diocese of Ely. In fact All Saints' is required to pay in to the Diocese to support clergy and other costs. All of the day to day running costs required to keep the church open and functioning come from local giving. As a Parish Church, All Saints' cannot benefit from HMG, SCDC, nor even Parish Council funding for such expenses. Several Croydon households have joined the (national) Parish Giving Scheme which collects regular giving for Croydon, All Saints'. This has become the key lifeline for keeping All Saints' open and functioning. So, whatever your reasons for wanting All Saints' to remain open and functioning, whether for reasons of faith, or births, marriages and burials, history, as a village asset, quiet space, or simply beauty please do consider joining the Parish Giving Scheme with regular giving, however small. Anyone can join and 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

Croydon Tree Warden report to PC - April 2023

The hot dry summer last year was not good for trees. Many tree planting programmes throughout the UK, including thousands of saplings planted at Wimpole, were lost. This underlines the necessity to not only plant trees in the right locations but also to provide aftercare with regular watering throughout the Summer months for at least a couple of years if not more. Sadly, we lost one of the crab apples planted in the new churchyard despite regular watering and a belief that the trees had established well. There may have been some damage to this tree in addition to the stress caused by drought.

However, the two cherry trees on Clopton Close continue to do well and we have a lovely new cherry tree in the new churchyard, courtesy of a grant from South Cambs. The field maple planted in the new churchyard was damaged by the grass cutting last year but may yet survive - it has buds! There is also a healthy oak sapling in the new churchyard which is fortunately well positioned and should be allowed to grow to maturity without disturbing the burial sites.

We struggled to identify a site for a celebration Jubilee tree as there is such limited public space in the village. However, we will persevere. Sites for more ambitious tree planting may emerge in due course as part of any new build projects in the village, or private landowners granting permission.

Small private projects continue to contribute to the welfare of trees in the village, such as the hedge laying at Croydon Hill farm, which will strengthen the hedgerow, and includes field maples, blackthorn and hawthorns, providing healthier growth and lower level cover for mammals, alongside mature wild and bird cherry, thus improving biodiversity.

The Rowan tree planted in a garden opposite Clopton Close, partly as an experiment to monitor the success or otherwise of this species in this area, continues to flourish.

Update on identified tasks from last year:

Further village meeting to promote tree planting and welfare.

This was not achieved as a specific event, but the wardens were actively involved in preparing the exhibition on conservation and biodiversity in the village for the Car Show last September, and were present throughout the day of the show to speak to visitors. The exhibition remained in place in the church until mid-December and provided information about our trees and other conservation efforts.

The tree wardens are actively involved in working towards the Silver Award from the Cambridgeshire/Bedfordshire/Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust which is working in association with the Diocese of Ely, having already secured the Bronze Award. Collaboration with the Church Wardens is highly valued and is working well, as this is a great opportunity for joint learning and understanding of the benefits and concerns relating to trees around the church area, for example the potential damage to church foundations caused by the roots from the lime trees planted to the north of the old churchyard.

A further exhibition in August this year to coincide with a planned visit from a church history group will include information on efforts to promote conservation at the churchyards and this will help to form the basis of a permanent exhibition in the church.

We hope to organise a village meeting later this year, and/or a walk through the village to identify and record the tree species, as there is clearly interest in tree planting and preservation given the growing awareness of climate change and the important role played by trees, particularly providing carbon capture. Trees, whether alive or dead, are a haven for a multitude of species and therefore promote biodiversity throughout their life cycle.

Monitoring and recording tree health

We hope to survey the trees of the village to establish basic records on what trees do well here and whether there is any disease. Ash die back is increasingly widespread and the fungal infection of Horse Chestnuts is also present. Beech trees do not cope well with the sort of intense heat we had last Summer.

It should be noted that dead and dying trees can be of great benefit to biodiversity; apart from the invertebrates, reptiles and fungi that will live well on dead wood, larger holes in trees can provide perfect nesting sites for raptors. We know there are tawny and barn owls nesting this year in and around the village.

A healthy ash tree has self-seeded by the fence in the new churchyard and this provides an excellent example of the best way to preserve the ash tree, as such indigenous self-seeding is considered to be the most hopeful way of producing disease resistant trees. However, the Church wardens are inclined to fell this tree as it may at some future point create a problem for the expansion of burials in the churchyard. This is an example of the conflict between different interpretations of optimal land management, a conflict which has become more serious given the concerns of climate change. The collaboration between the Diocese and the Wildlife Trust is precisely an attempt to recognise and resolve these conflicts. It is a nationwide initiative and we are all on a learning curve.

Encouraging future planting.

The area of land adjacent to the Solar Farm has been identified as a possible opportunity for more tree planting, including holding the owners of the Solar farm to their requirement to provide landscaping to conceal the solar panels and soften their visual impact. The tree wardens have raised this with local councillors and hope to make some progress this year.

There may be some scope for small tree planting around the Reading Room, and this is under discussion.

We will continue to encourage tree planting on private land and will update the data base which is already established.

Linking to the tree warden network

The wardens are connected by email and hope to extend involvement this year. Links with the local charity Cambridgeshire Past, Present and Future, which manages Wandlebury, have been made, and a tree identification talk was attended.

Aims for next year.

- Improve understanding of how to protect newly planted trees, and endeavour to involve villagers in watering new saplings for a longer period, especially over the first two Summers and during drought.
- Expand membership of the established WhatsApp group for Trees and Biodiversity.
- Conduct a survey of local trees and update the Excel spreadsheet which has been set up.
- Pursue grants for supplying saplings and young trees.
- Involve residents in activities to promote a better understanding of the value of trees to the community and continue to identify sites for planting, especially explore options for the area between Lower Road and the river where landowners are supportive.
- Work with the Local History Group to identify areas which have been woodland in the past in order to better understand land usage and the impact of change on the local environment.
- Contribute to exhibitions at the church promoting conservation and biodiversity.
- Consider whether a living Christmas tree can be planted for festive decoration outside the Reading Room or another suitable spot.

Maggie John
Judith Pillinger
Croydon Tree Wardens

County Cllr Kindersley arrived from his previous meeting, and was invited by the Chairman to address the meeting.

He stated that his reports were comprehensive and he would be glad to answer questions on anything in them.

Royston Tip: An area of concern to Councillors was the decision to close Royston tip to those living in Cambridgeshire. Cllr Kindersley reported that discussions are ongoing, and it is likely that those with an SG postcode will be able to use the tip, which was welcomed.

Mill Lane/Potholes: The road from Toll Bar to the Wendy-Shingay road is almost impassable, but has reopened. Cllr Kindersley said that the five pothole teams are so busy with the hundreds of other reported potholes that they have to deal with the worst first. In a row of potholes, two might be patched but others are left.

Police: The Clerk mentioned to Cllr Kindersley that she had been unable to obtain annual reports from the Police for the last two years. Cllr Kindersley will make enquiries on Council's behalf.

As there were no other questions for Cllr Kindersley, he was thanked by the Chairman and left the meeting.

Chair of the Parish Council Report 2023 - Mr Garth Wheeler

Membership of the Parish Council increased this year with the welcome addition of Keith Buchanan.

Planning: The council has considered several applications this year and council made comments as appropriate.

East West Rail: The proposed new East West Rail link continues to be an area of concern in our area. We are expecting publication of the preferred route for this to be announced in May

New Luton Flight Paths: Several parishioners have commented on the increased aircraft noise from the change in the flight paths for Luton Airport. This is the PIR (Post Implementation Review) period after which the CAA will consider the results. Our local MP, Anthony Brown secured an extension to the PIR period which will now run to the end of September so that summer flight activity can be taken into account.

Housing Needs Survey: As previously reported Hastoe Housing Society is investigating the possibility of a small affordable housing development in Croydon. Hastoe are currently looking at options on Glebe land.

Speedwatch: For some time, the PC has discussed with the community group the possibility of starting a Speed watch group. We still need volunteers to come forward to get this off the ground. If you are interested in helping out, please let me know.

Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee: The picnic on the green to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee was held in June on Clopton Close green and was a great success. Hopefully this year's Coronation Party will be as good!

Reading Room Development: This year the PC issued a grant to the Reading Room for the new flooring.

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 £5905 for what it believes it will cost to manage the village for the next financial year (2023-2024).

This sum covers our costs which include for example, rental of the Reading Rooms, Clerk's salary and expenses, website and cemetery grass cutting.

Community Benefit Fund: The fund stands at £16164.35. 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. This year has seen the new Community Café going from strength to strength and is appreciated by many. There is also a History Group which meets sporadically. Thank you to all those who are on the maintenance rota for the AED. Thanks to Di Walters and the Trustees for continuing to improve the building for the benefit of village. Additional thanks to Maggie and Judith for their efforts as tree wardens, and Malcolm and the litter pickers.

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, details of which are in the Receipts and Payments below. The Community Benefit Fund has been used to pay for the flooring in the Reading Room; before making a claim for this large amount of VAT (£570-00), the Clerk read a lot of "guidance" from the VAT publications and found it impossible to come to a decision on a claim. She contacted HMRC VAT office for advice and unfortunately the VAT on this purchase cannot be claimed by the Parish Council. Clerk will reclaim VAT on other eligible purchases.

Receipts	
Precept	£4,290.00
HMRC VAT refund	£128.75
Interest - NSI	£20.60
SLCC grant for CAB	£75.00
Total Receipts	£4,514.35
Restricted Funds	
Community Benefit Fund	
Balance 1 April 2022	£19,563.75
Reading Room flooring	-£3,420.00
NSI Interest	£20.60
Balance 31 March 2023	£16,164.35

Payments	
Insurance	£443.19
Reading Room rental - PC	£169.00
Churchyard Maintenance Croydon PCC	£500.00
Clerk - salary	£1,360.00
Clerk - petty cash	£48.08
Clerk - IT allowance	£50.00
Clerk - Zoom subs	£43.17
Internal Auditor	£50.00
WC Portables - Car Show	£282.00
Andrew Deptford -Defibrillator new pads	£81.54
SCDC Elections	£105.00
SLCC CAB reference book	£141.80
Reading Room rental - Café	£97.50
RBL wreath	£20.00
Village Christmas tree	£50.00
Subs to SLCC Association	£73.00

		Sanders and Jay (annual website payment)	£238.80
		BCW dual purpose bins signs	£170.06
		War memorial cleaning Revive and Restore	£480.00
		PCC shortfall on Jubilee bench	£111.90
		Sub Total	£4,515.04
		Restricted Fund	
		Traditional Flooring (Reading Room)	£3,420.00
		Total Payments	£7,935.04
		Balance at 31 March 2022	£26,974.51
		add receipts	£4,514.35
		less payments	-£7,935.04
		Total	£23,553.82
Balances at 31 March 2023			
Investment Account	£19,658.23		
Bank Account	£4,007.49		
less unrepresented cheques	-£111.90		
Total	£23,553.82		

Community Benefit Fund

March 2021	Balance		£20,424.54
June 2021	Power2U	Defibrillator installation	-£423.00
July 2021	Mrs J Grundy	Balance of Website cost	-£440.00
January 2022	Interest from nominals added	Earned by CBF	£2.21
	Balance		£19,563.75
January 2023	Interest from nominal added	Earned by CBF	£20.60
February 2023	RR flooring	Not eligible to reclaim VAT	-£3,420.00
	Balance		£16,164.35

Village Matters

Defibrillator: The volunteer group monitoring the defibrillator appears to be working well. Clerk ordered and replaced the 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: These are all in place, along with new signs attached to footpath posts indicating the nearest bin for dog waste and litter. Thanks to all those involved.

Luton Airport Flight Paths: The monitoring time has been extended to include the summer period - this will allow the busy holiday flights' impact to be seen, and if required, complained about. Please continue to send your complaints to London Luton Airport and for more information visit <https://relas.uk>, the group campaigning against the expansion of Luton airport.

East-West Rail: Extract from Anthony Browne's letter to a parishioner.

"My view on East-West Rail has been longstanding and consistent. There has to be a clear business case for me to offer support for East-West Rail; if there isn't a business case I won't support it. We don't want to build a white elephant. Whatever route is chosen should be the one that delivers greatest value to the taxpayer and causes the least disruption to my constituents."

Our MP is working hard with ministers to try and obtain clarity, and the results of the review which closed 18 months ago.

SpeedWatch/Speed limit: There are currently seven people on the list as volunteering for SpeedWatch. Two of these live on 50/60mph roads, and there is a chance that once they are aware that SpeedWatch can only operate on 30/40mph roads they may withdraw from the list. A co-ordinator is required from the volunteers in order to progress the scheme. An article in the latest South Cambs magazine indicated that most people speed in or around the area in which they live, so the opportunity to stop this is in local Speedwatch groups.

Royston Tip: Hertfordshire County Council is considering restricting access to the Royston tip (Recycling Centre), to those who live in Hertfordshire. This is not environmentally friendly given that the alternatives in Cambs at Thriplow and Milton are miles further. Cambs County Council and Herts County Council are currently in discussion on this.

Coronation Event: Several residents are organising a Bring and Share lunch to celebrate the Coronation to be held in the Reading Room on Sunday 7th May. Council was approached by one of the organisers for a grant of £150-00 towards Coronation memorabilia for each of the children in the parish. Council discussed this and it was proposed by Mr Buchanan and seconded by Mr Sole that a cheque for £150-00 be raised. All eligible for the vote were in favour.

Village PA: The village has been offered a complete PA system at a cost of £500-00. This would be very useful for events like the Car Show and church Tractor run; the PA for the Tractor run last year cost around £450-00 for one day. An offer to store the equipment inside has already been made. Councillors discussed this at length. It was proposed by Mr Buchanan and seconded by Mr Sole that the equipment should be purchased. One abstention, others in favour.

Cambridge Carbon Footprint: This course is relevant to Parish Councillors and residents who are interested in supporting their community's move to net zero but who are either unsure where to start or feel that they would benefit from gaining additional tools or confidence to increase the impact of their activities.

The course is being run by local charity Cambridge Carbon Footprint with support from the South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon Communities Fund. We have developed this course as nearly two thirds of the changes needed to reach net zero by 2050 will require changes to the way we live our lives. If you would like to be included in this free six week course, please visit <https://cambridgecarbonfootprint.org/what-we-do/net-zero-now/> by 30th April to enrol.

Public Session: As the public had been involved during the meeting there were no further questions but they thanked the Chair, Councillors and the Clerk for their support and the work that they do, which is appreciated.

Any other matters requiring Council attention:

Electoral Register: One addition to the register was received and circulated to Councillors.

Bank Statement and NS & I: Clerk apologised to Council as she had left the bank statement at home with the accounts she is busy preparing for audit. From memory, she was able to report to the meeting that the current account balance is £4007-49, with one cheque unrepresented.

Regarding signatures on the NS & I account, the previous Chair was still listed as a signatory, so Clerk had prepared a letter asking for the account information to be amended for three of the current Councillors. The Parish Council Investment Account is the same as the bank account - any two of the three listed signatories, the same on both accounts, may make withdrawals. Councillors involved signed in the places indicated.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 17th May 2023 in the Reading Room at 7.30pm.

As there was no further business, the meeting closed at 8.54pm.

Signed

Date