

Monthly update for parish councils: October 2009

County Council and Cabinet meetings

There was a full council meeting during October. It was a full meeting with motions on TIF, the minerals and waste plan and 1010 and on balance it was one of the better council meetings. The debate on TIF was largely constructive with most speakers in favour of the Council's proposal. There were also strong dissenters, and some who felt that the focus on TIF which may not happen obscured the many positive initiatives possible in the short term.

The debate on the minerals and waste plan was hardly a major event but David did point out that it depended on the approval of a new strategic freight network which had not at that time been released for consultation. Surprise, surprise: it appeared in a very flimsy form the next day and will do the rounds this month.

Finally the Lib Dems proposed that the Council sign up for 1010, a commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 10% in 2010. Despite this being a non-political initiative, David Cameron supports it, the Tories first tried to neuter the motion and then proposed to weaken it. The Lib Dems abstained on the amendment after which the motion was carried with only the UKIP councilor voting against.

There was a cabinet meeting later in the month. where updated accounts for the year were presented. There is not only a £5million black hole in Adult Social care (see below) but also overspends in several other directorates.

We also heard at Cabinet of a developer reluctant to make its contribution to the guided bus via its 106 payments. Its case seemed sound and maybe there will be others which will put more pressure on the busway's financing.

Environment and Community Services

The guided bus is still on for handover to the Council at the beginning of November. That's imminent so expect a congratulatory press release this week. We can expect to see buses carrying passengers in December albeit without cross operator bus ticketing, without the Swavesey 'kiss and ride' and without the cycle path. It will also just be the northern section, there are no forecasts about when the southern section will open. A 'governance committee' is to be set up to advise on the difficult negotiations with BAM Nuttall about who pays for what.

Stagecoach's new bus timetables came as an unwelcome surprise with services cut across the County; more on the specifics for this division below.

Draft orders for the A14 upgrade have been published and a series of public exhibitions have taken place across the county.

Children's Services

The results of the recent 'unannounced' OfStEd inspection were announced last week. This addressed services for safeguarding and looked-after children which were criticized last year. The Council is now rated 'adequate' in 26 areas and

'good' in 8 resulting it being adequate overall. OfStEd were positive about some changes which have taken place.

Adult and Community Services

The £5million black hole in Adult Social Care is refusing to go away. An action plan has been developed but we can expect cuts in services across the board as the Council seeks to balance its books.

Local issues

Sue and I met officers from the City North locality team. This team looks after children's issues and also covers Histon and Impington. We wanted to explore opportunities for increasing provision in the future and to get away from what seems today like an exclusively short term orientation.

We had a similar meeting with the County's waste disposal officers to investigate ways to improve the villages' recycling especially of commercial waste.

We also attended a second Histon and Impington cross council meeting (county, district and parish). The big topic this time was buses (see below)

Representatives from IVC and the H&I youth committee have looked at the gatehouse at IVC to investigate its potential use for the community

Sue and I joined parish councilors from Cottenham, Histon and Impington and met Stagecoach to protest about the scale of changes in its new bus timetables. Some progress was possible and this augers well for further meetings when we can explore opportunities to improve this service. At last Stagecoach is talking directly to people who represent users and not relying on officers at CCC.

Forthcoming meetings and events

24 Nov 09	Cabinet meeting
5 Nov 09	CCC development control meeting
TBA	CGB liaison forum

And finally ... the month began and ended with events reflecting the strength of our local communities. On 3 Oct 09 I attended Cottenham's annual Ploughing Association dinner. It's the 3rd time I've attended and I can see that it never changes and that's why it succeeds and survives. And on 30 Oct 09 I attended the Fen Edge Community Association Art Exhibition at CVC: wine, nibbles and surprising quality. It's good to see that this association also thrives.

Both this monthly report, and the ones for previous months are on our website.

David Jenkins on behalf of Sue Gymer and David Jenkins
County Councillors for Cottenham, Histon and Impington

contacts	email	mobile	home	website
Sue	suegymer@ntlworld.com	07919 036246	01954 252902	
David	ccc@davidjenkins.org.uk	07739 758859	01223 236232	www.davidjenkins.org.uk