

## **Monthly update for parish councils: April 2010**

Its election time and with us operating under 'purdah' Council activity has been limited.

### **County Council and Cabinet meetings**

There was no County Council meeting during April. However following questions which Sue and David posed at March's meeting about the process for securing better bus services an answer has been provided. In a nutshell it says that because funding is limited nothing will be done. However we will be taking this forward in other ways (see below).

There was a cabinet meeting during the month. Amongst other items the Cabinet agreed to adopt the newly developed Cambridgeshire Advisory Freight Map. This is good news because the B1049 is no longer a strategic route. This means that when the county in future is setting conditions for new developments it can require hauliers to avoid using the B1049. The Guided Bus was also on the agenda but since the press and public were excluded for this item what happened cannot be reported here.

And finally, for the County Lib Dem group, this was David's last month as group leader. He has stepped down for business reasons. He says he's enjoyed the experience but that it's time now for someone with more political ambition to take it on. He insists that he will remain active both within the group and as a local councilor for many years to come!

### **Corporate Directorates**

An agreement has been signed between the County Council, the city and district councils and Peterborough unitary council to 'share' their legal expertise. This is an excellent example of how councils should co-operate and should result in lower costs.

Note that David met the Council's HR supremo during the month to follow up answers which he'd recently received about the Council's employee performance management framework. Apparently it is felt that the necessary skills to conduct effective employee performance reviews are not well developed within the Council's management. This will be the subject of focused training in the current year.

### **Adult and Community Services**

There have been no significant developments.

### **Environmental Services**

The new speed limits from the county wide speed limit review are to be advertised in May so that any objections can be taken to the July AJC. It is intended to reduce the limits along the B1049 as follows: A14 to New Road 40mph, New Road to Histon Green 30mph, Histon Green to the village limit to stay at 40mph, Histon to Cottenham 50mph. The stretch north of the Green will be reassessed when the cycling improvements have been completed.

The Guided Bus missed the mid April dead-line for being able to give a new date for the start of trials. However progress on the big outstanding issues is said to have been good and new dates for these to be resolved have been published. Fingers crossed we may yet have the Busway open this summer.

### **Childrens' Services**

It has been announced that just under 95% of new pupils have been able to get into their first choice primary school. Given the recent concern about the shortage of primary school places this would appear to be a good result.

## Local Issues

We met members of Cottenham PC and county officers to review a number of highways issues. It was a constructive meeting. A similar meeting has been set for Histon and Impington PCs in May.

We met the manager responsible for buses and he has agreed to arrange a meeting with Stagecoach so that we can lobby directly for a bus service to Rampton and services to the north of Cottenham.

We met the management at Premier Foods in Histon because HCVs which supply its factory are driving down the B1049 at night and we hoped that we could persuade them to reroute them. Despite there being some cost penalty Premier Foods agreed to implement a 4 week trial. Feedback from local residents has been positive.

We brokered a meeting between the chairs of Histon and Impington parish councils and the Histon FC board. The meeting went well and will be repeated. The FC board told us of a new investor in the club who is very concerned that it develops along community lines.

We both attended annual parish council meetings in Cottenham, Rampton and Oakington and Westwick.

## Forthcoming meetings and events

6 May 10	Election day
10 May 10	Histon PC annual meeting
17 May 10	Impington PC annual meeting
18 May 10	County Council meeting
18 May 10	H&I highways meeting
20 May 10	Guided Bus local liaison forum
25 May 10	Cabinet meeting
26 May 10	Development control

And finally ... the month has of course been dominated by the general elections and let's not forget that there's also an election for one third of our district council seat. The big new thing has been the debates and we all know what they've done to change what promised to be a rather boring event into one in which any one of several outcomes is possible. I watched most of all three and must confess to not finding them compelling viewing. Perhaps it was all in the rules, I'm told there are many, but I did find them too 'presidential'. Did anyone else notice how not one of the three leaders mentioned others in their team? I would have expected Nick Clegg to be talking about Vince Cable during the last debate when the focus was on the economy but he didn't. And I don't recall David Cameron talking about any of his team or Gordon Brown any of his. Why not?

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

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