

Monthly update for parish councils: January 2010

County Council and Cabinet meetings

There were no County Council meetings in January. The Integrated Plan and this year's budget went to Cabinet mid-month. This plan, and the service budgets, will be scrutinized by various committees during the first week of February.

Public feeling about the budget options were tested in market research earlier in the year and the results of this were presented. The general findings of this analysis was that the public would not like to see a reduction in school support, adults remaining in their homes, road and path maintenance, and road improvements. They would prefer to see more funding – if the public purse allowed – for new school buildings, elderly staying at home and road and path maintenance. The lowest priorities were special educational needs, climate change, residential homecare costs and tailored agency foster care, and voluntary sector grants. 260 people were asked, approximately 50 from each of the districts. Interestingly, the least popular choice was for subsidised bus routes. Another thing to note was that many would not favour council tax cuts if that lowered service levels. 200 council employees suggested ways to save money: staff felt that money could be saved on travel.

As a new Councillor, I have been amazed at the amount of paperwork that the new budget generates, yet how little detail there is. I am concerned that we will only be agreeing a budget for each service area, and specific cuts or awards will only be apparent at a later date. David believes there will be a significant increase in borrowings to cover expenditure on roads and to cover problems with the guided bus.

Some good news: £2.2 million unexpected tax receipts.

Environmental Services

We said “goodbye” to Matt Pickering at the end of last year. Any enquiries from Parish Councils should now be passed to Keith Fauch, Highway Supervisor.

The general public should use Cambridgeshire Highways number Tel: 0345 045 5212 or street.scene@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

New HCV strategy: Comments on the published proposal are due by the 5 Feb 09. The relevant map is available online at:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/trafficmanagement/heavy/draft+advisory+freight+map+for+consultation.htm>

CCC has appointed NSL (www.nsl.co.uk) to run its parking enforcement activity in Cambridge City. The contract can be extended to other parts of the county.

Guided bus

The Guided Bus Forum met in January. There is very little to report. I am very pleased to hear that the fencing at Flack End has finally been put up. There was a useful discussion regarding lighting at the stops, and a way forward is being implemented. Bob Menzies is adamant that there is no date for opening.

South Cambridgeshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee (AJC)

We met in Cambourne. The 20mph limit which was due to be rolled out in Girton and then in Melbourne had been rejected locally, and this meant that the money for these scheme has been lost for this financial year. It is hoped to put Histon village (not the B1049) forward if this money is available next year.

The yellow lines in Station Road, Histon, were approved.

We received an update on the cycleway between Cottenham and the A14. The reworking of pedestrian crossings has started already, making it much easier for both pedestrians and cyclists to cross the road, leaving sufficient space for cycle lanes on the road. Progression on the cycleway between Cottenham and Histon is slower, as land has to be purchased.

Childrens' Services

St Neots Community School is proposed to be federated with Longsands, and this was sanctioned at a recent Cabinet meeting. It is hoped that this decision will be called in to scrutiny because few alternatives had been investigated and there was significant parental disquiet regarding a merger.

Although Cottenham Village College did well in exam results this year, the Centre School, which provides special education for approximately 50 children, has received a poor inspection. We wish Tony Cooper and staff well, in addressing the problems highlighted in the report.

IVC held its first public Governors' Meeting last week.

Local Issues

Northstowe is being proposed as an "eco" town. Congratulations to Tim Witherspoon as the new Portfolio Holder for Northstowe at SCDC.

A group met recently in Impington with officers from both County and District to discuss the proposed B1049 crossing options for pedestrians and cyclists over the busy A14. It was felt that the schemes to be pursued would be an interim step, of controlled ("Pelican") crossings, with two more "aspirational" schemes, of either a tunnel, or making an additional route by cantilevering off the present bridge structure.

David and I have been very saddened to hear of more accidents and incidents on the Oakington Road in Cottenham. It highlights the need for more effective traffic management in that area, and local residents feel that speed is an issue. This comes in addition to the inconsiderate parking at the Primary School.

The 3rd long term transport plan (LTP) runs until the end of March, with an exhibition at Cottenham Primary School: <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ltp>

Histon Neighbourhood Panel

This met in Cottenham: it was agreed to prioritise road traffic issues and Anti-Social Behaviour in Cottenham.

Forthcoming meetings and events

5 th Feb 2010	HCV consultation – last day
10 th Feb 2010	Northstowe Parish Forum
16 th Feb 2010	CCC Full Council Meeting
10 th Mar 2010	Long Term Transport Plan - exhibition in Cottenham Primary School 4-8pm

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

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

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