

Monthly update for parish councils: March 2010

County Council and Cabinet meetings

The County Council meeting was at the end of March. There was a motion proposed by David Jenkins and supported by the LibDem group, to take a longer term look at roads and footways, as it seemed to us that having good road surfaces in the first place would reduce the chance of problems with potholes. This was rejected by the Conservatives, stating that they already had a good system in place. Amazingly it was suggested that because other counties have similar problems we shouldn't be over concerned in Cambridgeshire!

A report from the Police Authority covered the budget, planning, and the retirement of the Chief Constable Julie Spence in Sept 2010. The Neighbourhood policing panels were discussed and all sides agreed that this was a good way of identifying and implementing targeted objectives for local areas.

We had a report from the Fire Authority. It is amazing that fire cover costs less than £60 per year per Band D property. The Fire Authority has made considerable savings by using the retained and volunteer fire-station system. The hope is that Grosvenor Estates (which developed the Grand Arcade) will take on the project of rebuilding both the police and the fire station on Parkside, adding residential accommodation – subject to planning approval.

Less than two years from the last change, the Council propose to make further changes to redundancy provision, effective from July 2010. The Liberal Democrats opposed this; we felt it was being hurried through with little thought for low-paid workers.

Sue asked a question about the local bus service, asking Cllr McGuire to review the bus provision in our division, in the light of two petitions presented from our area and further cuts to the 15B to Rampton and Willingham. Sue is concerned that the Council are showing no backbone when dealing with Stagecoach in particular. This is still ongoing. We note that new double-decker buses are now in use on the Citi7 route.

Environmental Services

We said 'goodbye' to Brian Smith after 26 years service, as he retired from being in charge of Environmental and Community Services since 2005.

The B1049 cycleway is progressing slowly, with land purchases being problematic between Cottenham and Histon. It is hoped that the new speed limits will be advertised shortly, and any complaints will be presented at the July AJC.

The proposed Milton cycleway will only be 2m wide - below Government standard - so is unlikely to result in the loss of the school bus service from Milton to IVC.

Guided bus

We had a Guided Bus liaison meeting on 11th March at which we had some of the update that was due to go to Cabinet on 16th March. It identified issues over the Great Ouse Viaduct, the St Ives Park and Ride, the maintenance track, the guideway foundations, the gaps between the guideway beams, and rubber tyre infill. After months of stalemate it was reported that a way forward had been found following a top-level meeting between the Council and BAM Nuttall. This would be reviewed at the end of March and will be closely monitored by the Chief Executives of both groups. It was reported at Council, however, that they were not optimistic

that they would be able to indicate a target date (hoped for mid-April) for announcing trialling the busway.

The graffiti in the underpasses under the B1049 and A14 (Orchard Park) has been reported but, as BAM Nuttall are still responsible for this stretch of guideway, we have not made much progress.

The promised toad crossings have not materialised, and we are grateful to the volunteers that have saved many of them.

Childrens' Services

The County Council has agreed to lease the gatehouse at IVC to the college at a peppercorn rent and will be used for school activities and Youth Services – more details to follow.

Local Issues

There was a poor turnout at the Minerals and Waste and Local Transport Plan (LTP) exhibition at Cottenham Primary School. The date has passed for replies to the Minerals and Waste Plan, but you can still give your views on LTP until 9th April 2010.

On this issue, I was grateful to the Design Group in Cottenham for inviting me to tour Donarbon's waste centre with them. Although this is accessed from the A10, the boundary of the site comes to Long Drove in Cottenham (parallel to the B1049 Twenty Pence Road). The employment of technology to deal with our waste is impressive. They go to great lengths to minimise smells and pest problems. I am still concerned about the amount of waste that is buried at this site, despite valiant attempts to recycle as much as possible. It made me think twice before putting a plastic bag into my waste bin, and I urge everyone to take reusable bags on shopping expeditions.

David met the 'new' management at Histon FC and a meeting to bring it together with Impington PC has been set for April.

Forthcoming meetings and events

9 April 2010	Local Transport Plan cut-off
13 April 2010	Neighbourhood panel at Impington Village College
19 April 2010	Area Joint Committee Transport 2pm SCDC
20 April 2010	Postal Vote cut-off

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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