

Monthly update for parish councils: January 2011

County Council and Cabinet meetings

There was no council meeting in January. There was a cabinet meeting at which the budget for 2011/12 was debated. The budget has been well publicised and a summary is on our web-site (<http://bit.ly/eXNmEX>). The next full County Council meeting is on Tuesday 15 Feb 11, with 18 Feb 11 as a reserve date, for discussion and approval of the budget and integrated plan. The Lib Dems have published an alternative budget (<http://bit.ly/gNnA3a>). This will be going to scrutiny 7 Feb 11 and will be presented as an amendment to the budget. Extra money has come in since the above and it seems likely that some at least of this will go back and reduce the worst reductions in post 16 provision.

The Library Service Review was also presented at the cabinet meeting. There are two parts to the county's proposals: the initial closure of a number of libraries and then later the 'externalisation' of the remaining service. Cottenham is one of the libraries at risk of early closure because it ranked poorly in both performance and 'community criteria'. An explanation of this scoring is available (<http://bit.ly/e3vO9N> appendix 5). Sue attended a meeting of the Friends of Cottenham Library Thu 3 Feb 11 to begin the fight against closure. There is more information on our web-site (<http://bit.ly/icnv3a>).

Environment Services

The South Cambs Area Joint Committee met this month. David and Sue both attended. Most of the discussion was about speed limits to the south of Cambridge with several being reduced further than the officers had recommended. There has been considerable, legitimate local pressure put on members of the Committee by members of the impacted communities and not just by parish councillors.

Sue attended the North Area Flood Meeting at the Meadows, where various interested parties presented to local people and parishes, mostly about the North West site, but the questioners made sure that the downstream aspect of the Award Drains were not ignored.

David attended the Northstowe parish forum. There was some debate at the forum about the '3+3' committee set up to inform cabinet members at CCC and SCDC about broad council and local opinion. The forum also received an update from the H&CA about plans to demolish and/or retain existing airfield buildings in the new development.

Children and young people's services

The cuts to this area will impact greatly on the children in the County. It has already been reported in the press that children with disabilities are no longer to have taxi rides to school, that some of the special schools will be closing. What has not been apparent is the cut to school services for children with special needs or different ethnic backgrounds. It is hoped that the schools will absorb the costs of these services.

Sadly the special unit at Histon primary school has closed. David met with officers to understand how this had come to pass and what could be learnt from the experience. He agreed that it was inappropriate for scrutiny but the Executive Director of CYPS has agreed to write to him summarising the mistakes made and the learning experience.

Adult and community services

The budget is promoting prevention and is predicted to save £2.9 million. 'Reablement' (ie helping people to look after themselves better at home) cuts a £4.75 million, and cutting high cost and complex placements will save £1.3 million.

David attended the South Cambs CDRP where there was a presentation of a CCC scrutiny report into 'integrated offender management'. The report made many sensible recommendations, such as 'don't release prisoners on a Friday when there's no support infrastructure available'.

Local Issues

There will be various work carried out to 'award' drains locally. There will be some brick repointing and steel pinning of the Great North Fen bridge in Cottenham.

The 106 and 110 buses are likely to be part of the rural transport cuts: as yet we do not know the timetable for this. At the same time however Stagecoach has indicated its intention to halve the frequency of the Citi 7 service. It cites commercial grounds related to inadequate cover for concessionary fares.

David and Sue have had various meetings regarding overhanging trees, potholes and general maintenance issues. We feel we are progressing especially when we saw the patching on the B1049 which needed attention after the removal of the white lines. If you see pot holes emerging report them on-line (<http://bit.ly/flNwgD>).

Cycle path work is progressing. The hold up on Cottenham to Histon is caused by land purchase. Note that work planned for this week (7 Feb 11) has been postponed so that it does not coincide with the closure of Oakington Road.

David joined officers at Rampton to review recent flooding and related drainage issues. It was a valuable meeting and an action program going forward was agreed.

David chaired the latest meeting of the guided bus local liaison forum. There is no new news but it seems that we are moving deliberately if slowly to handover. There will then be a definite program with the bus-way opening sometime in the summer.

Forthcoming meetings and events

7 Feb 11	(public) Scrutiny of Lib Dem budget amendment
10 Feb 11	Development Control
15 Feb 11	County Council Meeting
18 Feb 11	County Council Meeting (reserve)
22 Feb 11	Cabinet

This report and those for previous months are on our website www.chilibdems.co.uk.

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

Sue Gymer 07919 036246
suegymer@ntlworld.com
Home: 01954 252902

David Jenkins 07739 758859
ccc@davidjenkins.org.uk
Home: 01223 236232