

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

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

There was a meeting of full council 19 Oct 10. David was unable to attend but Sue was present and it was a full meeting with several motions. These have already been reported on our web-site <http://bit.ly/cuTNv3>.

Sue spoke in support of our neighbourhood panels and asked that the council think again about its decision to charge the over 60s for the rental of audio books.

Cabinet met 26 Oct 10. Sue presented the results of a scrutiny member lead review of integrating Children and Young People's Services and social infrastructural provision into the County's new communities, <http://bit.ly/cvgWwh>. Many sensible and low/no cost recommendations were made and accepted. This is particularly relevant for any Northstowe development.

There was also a paper on gritting plans, <http://bit.ly/dtNugC>, in which the request to grit the Cottenham to Landbeach road has been rejected. There are several reasons why this does not make sense and we will challenge this decision.

### **Corporate Services**

All is not going well with the Council's budgeting. A seminar scheduled for 26 Nov 10 has been cancelled. It looks like the first chance we'll now get to look at the Council's thinking will be mid December. The Comprehensive Spending Review announcement confirmed most of the council's worst fears but still leaves many questions unanswered. The bill for Cambridgeshire is reckoned to be about £135million over 5 years.

### **Police**

David attended the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meeting. The statistics presented tell a pretty good story of crime trends with some disturbing contrary trends. These include domestic violence and thefts from farms.

### **Environmental Services**

The work on the cycle way through Histon continues to be slow. David met with officers early in the month and this has already been reported, <http://bit.ly/avt82w>. Several potholes related to the development have been filled in!

It has been reported that the County's excellent P&R operation runs a deficit and that charges have in fact decreased over time.

The street lighting PFI project went to Cabinet. This is now a joint project with Northamptonshire and is waiting on an OK from the DfT which is expected 'any time'. If so work could begin by the contractor in Feb 11, <http://bit.ly/dlx86x>.

The Guided Bus saga continues but for the first time BAM Nuttal has stuck its head above the parapet with its chief executive claiming that the busway could be opened. We are now approaching the second anniversary of the date on which the busway should have started operations.

The government has approved the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEP (Local enterprise partnership). Given that we will have LEPs this is good news because the geography makes sense. There are some worries however about the LEP's role in

planning but there are also several 'carrots' which encourage local enterprise and house building. The relevant White Paper on Local Growth is available at <http://bit.ly/b6mZc6>.

## Childrens' Services

David and Sue met with officers from the youth service to review proposed changes which will go to Cabinet next month. We are very uncomfortable with the blueprint and feel that it has taken a narrow view of opportunities. Watch this space.

## Local Issues

Useful advice has been given by the government, <http://bit.ly/aZqA83>, about people clearing snow outside their properties. It basically tells people to go ahead, to use common sense and to be careful!

The Rampton bus leaflet has been delivered.

Sue attended the Northstowe parish forum. Given the axing of the A14 upgrade in the Comprehensive Spending Review it is unclear whether or not, and if so how, this development can now go ahead. It is needed by the county because without it we'll find developers resurrecting other less acceptable schemes to deliver needed houses.

We have now held 3 surgeries: 2 in Cottenham and one in Impington. Although we haven't been swamped with attendees some have come and the surgeries have proven so far so be useful opportunities for cross council approaches to issues raised.

The junction of Gatehouse Lane with Cambridge Road has been improved to make it safer for cyclists. That's good news.

## Forthcoming meetings and events

4 Nov 10	Donarbon liaison group
11 Nov 10	CCC development control
12 Nov 10	X council surgery Orchard Park Community Centre 7pm
16 Nov 10	Cabinet
24 Nov 10	Guided Bus liaison forum; Orchard Park Community Centre

And finally: number 1 son is moving out this weekend. He shares the problem of most young people these days: he earns a good wage as a policeman but it's not really enough to enable him to get on the housing ladder with even modest properties in and around Cambridge costing £200K and upwards. Fortunately he's a key worker so is able to access the shared ownership schemes that are available. The housing market is a classic example of a non-functioning market. Supply is simply not responding to demand and the Thatcher 'right to buy' council house policy is at the heart of it. However I gather that the Coalition is addressing this and we might see changes shortly. Not before time!

Go to [www.chilibdems.co.uk](http://www.chilibdems.co.uk) for his monthly report and those for previous months.

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