

I suppose one of the biggest headline grabbers this month was the County Councillors' vote in favour of a 25% rise in their allowances. Insensitive as this may be at a time when many council workers are losing their jobs and those lucky enough to remain employed will get no pay rise, I raise the subject here for a different reason. I was very sad to find that the day of the vote coincided with the visit to Cottenham Library of Julia Donaldson, the Children's Laureate. The Friends of Cottenham Library had worked very hard preparing for this and had hoped for some press coverage of the event but, thanks to the aforementioned vote, not a single journalist turned up to cover the event. They missed a great gig.

They didn't, however, miss the great evening that was had by all at the Chairman's Awards. I felt very privileged to be asked to join the judging panel for the Village Hero and Community Service awards and what a hard task it was to select the top 3. There were no local nominations despite the fact that I know we have some amazing Village Heroes working their socks off for our villages. We will hopefully correct that next year. 3 Parish Councils also received awards for their work in their communities. Please note for next year: these were self-nominated. Awards in several categories were also made by SCDC to gardeners among the residents of the authority's own housing developments. Well done to the Residents Association of Stevens Close, Cottenham who won Best Sheltered Housing Scheme Community Garden.

To prove that I've not just been enjoying myself this month here's some of the other meetings I attended with a few points of interest:

- 05/10: Planning Committee. I'm still getting used to having site visits the day before and I think I preferred it the way it was. Item of local interest: S/1608/11 Extension of time limit for implementation of planning consent S/0392/08/F: Approved.
- 06/10: Meeting with the Co-op, the planning case officer and a Highways engineer. Again David Mudd [CPC] and Mike Smith [CVDG] attended. It was very useful as Highways subsequently raised objections which could have delayed the application process. Fortunately I was able to talk to the Co-op to make them aware and they responded very quickly with a revision to the plans. The shop will re-open on 08 December.
- 07/10: Council Open Day: I was one of the councillors who volunteered to man the 'member stand' and talk to visiting members of the public about being a councillor.
- 07/10: Northstowe Exhibition at Oakington Pavilion. It was well attended but there were complaints that Royal Mail had failed to deliver the leaflets giving details of the event to all households in Oakington. Simon Edwards and I successfully petitioned for a further opportunity for residents to look at plans for South Cambridgeshire's first town.
- 11/10: Neighbourhood Panel at Impington Village College. I was able to clarify that SCDC do undertake the cleaning of graffiti on road signs. There is a condition, however. They will only do this where it is safe for it to be done; so no chance of having slogans removed from bridges over the M11.
- 12/10: Friends of Cottenham Library
- 13/10: Policy & Performance PfH Meeting. The review of SCDC's Comments, Compliments and Complaints policy was given further time. I am very pleased to have been invited by the PfH to submit my own comments and suggestions for consideration.
- 17/10: Meeting with residents living in close proximity to Co-op.
- 18/10: Julia Donaldson, the Children's Laureate, spent the morning at Cottenham Library. We had the most wonderful time with 2 classes from Cottenham Primary School enjoying the energy of the amazing author of The Gruffalo and 156 other books!
- 18/10: Finance & Staffing PfH Meeting. The PfH confirmed the Council's decision not to award a pay rise for staff this year.
- 18/10: Sustainable Cottenham. We started to plan our Village Energy Day. Watch this space!

Your councillors are here to help you. Please feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope we can help but, if we can't, we probably know a [wo]man who can.

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Monthly SCDC Report by Lynda Harford – October 2011

- 19/10: Meeting of the judging panel for the Village Hero awards.
- 19/10: Housing PfH Meeting. The venue for this had to be switched at the last minute to the Council Chamber such was the interest and the consequent number of attendees. The long awaited results of the Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment were presented in a report that received a great deal of criticism from those present. The PfH declined to accept the report nor to allow any of its findings to be used to formulate any policy until such time as he has been able to satisfy himself as to the accuracy of its findings.
- 20/10: Chaired the Task & Finish all day workshop on Learning from Feedback.
- 21/10: Chairman's Awards
- 25/10: Connections Bus Project AGM
- 26/10: Water, Water Everywhere – Briefing on water management by Mike Mason.
- 31/10: 2nd workshop for the Enforcement and Inspection Task & Finish Group.

Dates for Diaries:

- 02/11: Planning Committee – starts at 10.00am
- 04/11: Councillors' Surgery – Rampton Village Hall – 19.00 till 20.00
- 16/11: Northstowe Parish Forum – full details to be confirmed.
- 17/11: Leader's PfH – item of local interest: grant application by Cottenham Village College
- 24/11: Full Council Meeting

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