

District and County Councillors Reports for Parishes, October 2020 – Cllr Anna Bradnam, Cllr Judith Rippeth and Cllr Hazel Smith

The beginning of the school year has been busy for all of us, though this has been a strange summer.

South Cambs council offices had opened slowly in August and September, though not many staff had gone back in. The premises have been remodelled with one-way systems and meeting rooms set up for socially distanced meetings. The Council Chamber can now take a meeting of up to 15 people. However, the Council is not allowed to have ‘hybrid’ meetings (some attendees at home and some in person) under the Coronavirus Act, so all Council meetings have continued to be held online. Everyone had got used to working from home, though either because of home circumstances or the requirements of their normal job, some Council staff really did need to be in the offices. Now, however, following the advice from Government, South Cambs Hall is closed to members of the public again from 28th September, except for special appointments.

The Council has increased the size of the Cabinet, creating 2 new positions for Business Recovery & Skills and Community Resilience, Health & Well-being to respond to the challenges facing us all. There are new officers working on helping businesses to make the changes needed to become Covid-secure, and to help with opening up the High Streets in our villages. Other officers are in contact with the small and medium sized businesses and ensuring they get any support the Council can offer.

New Council Housing projects under construction have been back on-site, and some that were delayed by the lockdown have already been handed over to new tenants. We actually went out on-site at the start of September to see several sites where a total of 60 new houses are due to be handed over to the Council before the end of the year. As Lead Member for Housing I actually met my Head of Housing in person for the first time. We meet twice a week online, and he’s been in post since April.

We have had a lot of briefings on the new Covid rules and responsibilities. If people need supermarket deliveries for good reasons SCDC can facilitate getting Tesco and Iceland delivery slots, so do ask – the priority is now to key workers. If there are local outbreaks (defined as 2 or more cases in a “setting”) it is now expected that quick action may be needed, and SCDC is keeping in touch with the village groups in case some local help is needed. Milton P&R testing centre is operating, but limited to the number of tests the labs available can process. Cambridge University is organising its own tests, we’re told. The Authorities expect that large numbers of people who have been on furlough may lose their jobs before December – as ever, if people are in financial trouble they should contact the Council as soon as possible so that they can get support to put a plan into place to manage their outgoings.

The Council have some of the metal signs for village play areas, giving advice on hand hygiene, social distancing, etc, available free if any play area wants them.

At Waterbeach New Town Anna and I were invited to a socially distanced photo-shoot to celebrate the first equipment arriving on-site. They have now started the infrastructure works for Phase 1. In November there will be overnight closures of the A10 when the new road they are constructing is joined onto the A10 at the roundabout by the Business Park. This road should mean that no construction traffic will need to come through the village. For the time being the first access, just opposite Pembroke Way on Denny End Road is the only site access.

In **Milton and Waterbeach** the **Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust** have published their plan which is largely the same as the previous planning application, but also includes 2 possible routes for the CAM / GCP guided busway and cycle route (east and west of the lakes). Worryingly, at the Waterbeach end the Cambridge Autonomous Metro has to find an off-road route to Waterbeach New Town area, and an area of search was published about a month ago. The text for the GCP meeting 1 October for the first time admits that they can't do this without Compulsory Purchase of people's homes: on page 142 it states "*Space is constrained here so any transitway alignment may either require housing demolition or would encroach on allotments. Passes close to houses and may face opposition from residents*". The area in question is Glebe Road allotments and the junction with Cambridge Road, Waterbeach.

Hazel 27th Sept 20

Air Quality Liaison with FCC Environment Ltd (Landfill site) and Anglian Water (sewage works)

We set up the Milton Air Quality Working Party and Liaison meetings with operators in 2014 and since then the operators have made significant improvements in air quality. We have increased their awareness of odour complaints and increased activity from the Environment Agency. We are planning meetings in October with both sites, to bring odour reports to their attention again. The Wastewater Treatment Centre relocation plans are outside the remit of these meetings.

County - Environment and Sustainability Committee (17/09/2020)

The Milton Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Butt Lane is on County Council land currently operated by FCC Environment Ltd as a landfill site. The Committee was asked to recommend aspects of its ongoing operation, including expansion of the site, decoupling it from the landfill site making the HWRC permanent in this location, pre-consultation with the local community on the preferred site design and submitting a planning application to retain, expand and upgrade the HWRC. It makes sense to decouple the HWRC from the landfill site as that planning consent will expire in December 2026 and otherwise the HWRC would have to move in 2025 to allow that area to be restored. The location at Butt Lane was approved in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework, as convenient to serve the area north of Cambridge. Functions will remain broadly the same but it will expand to serve the growing population. The site needs to be split level to improve safety through separation. Three designs were offered but the proposal was to take only Option 3 forward for public consultation and planning permission. This proposed sinking the lorries and skips into a pit but the water table is high and surface run-off from the clay pile to the south could turn this into a pond. I persuaded them to bring all three options to public consultation and then back to Committee before a planning application is submitted. As the site is in the Green Belt, the decision could be called in by the Secretary of State.

Health - as children return to school:

Covid symptoms to look out for in children (from Professor Tim Spector of the Zoe Study)

According to research from the COVID Symptom Study app over half (52%) of children school aged children (those under the age of 18) who tested positive for COVID don't log any 'adult' classic symptoms (cough, fever, anosmia) in the week before and after the test. In addition, a third (33%) of children who tested positive for COVID **never logged any** of the 20 symptoms listed in the App, suggesting many children are asymptomatic.

The research from the Zoe app study highlighted that children display a different range of symptoms compared to the overall adult population:

Top five symptoms in school aged children who test positive for COVID	Top five symptoms in adults who test positive for COVID
Fatigue (55%)	Fatigue (87%)
Headache (53%)	Headache (72%)
Fever (49%)	
Sore throat (38%)	Sore throat (49%)
Loss of appetite (35%)	
	Loss of smell (60%)
	Persistent cough (54%)
Unusual skin rash (15%)	

Transport

Emergency Walking and Cycling measures

Tranche 1 – It seems that most of the initiatives installed under Tranche 1 came directly from the Officers without any local consultation. The southbound cycle lane in Milton seems popular with cyclists, but remains alarming for drivers. The Highway Code debars driving in a cycle lane marked by a solid white line and says you must not drive or park in a cycle lane marked with a broken white line unless it is unavoidable. I find this an uneasy decision – unless faced with oncoming traffic.

Tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund proposes a **modal filter** on Butt Lane. This means a block to all vehicle except bicycles and pedestrians. Many parents will remember how hard we fought in 2015 to point out the inadequacies of the cycle path along Butt Lane, in order to justify retention of the school bus, which otherwise the County Council would have withdrawn. I have asked County Officers if there are any details about this scheme but have so far had no response. I am very concerned that if the school bus is to be retained, as everyone (including the County Cycling Officer) wishes, this would need to be a **bus gate** rather than modal filter. I am trying to ensure this proposal is changed. Meantime, I am also trying to get the vegetation cut back and the pothole repaired.

Bus Services

The Mayor’s Bus Reform Task Force is considering how best to design and fund a network of bus services. Having conducted public consultation, was developing an outline business case. However Covid-19 has cut bus ridership by a staggering 70% from March to August 2020 and operators are being supported by government funding in 8 week tranches, making it impossible to plan long-term. So some funding has been released to investigate Demand Responsive Transport (DRT), such as apps to call up local minibuses and options for passengers taking folding scooters on the bus, to provide ‘last mile’ connections. These options might ultimately co-ordinate with the CAM and a good bus network to provide greater connectivity to villages - although not, it would seem, for the elderly or infirm.

School spending – a national report

School spending covers pupils in state-funded schools aged 5–16, as well as pupils aged 16–19 in school sixth forms. In 2019–20, total spending on schools in England represented about £51 billion (in 2020–21 prices), accounting for 17% of total public service spending in England.

Whilst total spending was largely protected in real terms, a more than 10% increase in the pupil population meant that spending per pupil fell in real terms. The present government has sought to reverse this by providing a three-year settlement for school spending, which will provide a £7.1 billion increase in spending in cash terms in 2022–23 compared with spending in 2019–20.

The government has committed to ‘level up’ poorer regions of the country, and schools seem likely to be a major focus of this commitment. Spending per pupil has changed for schools facing different

levels of deprivation over the last 20 years and changes under the government's new National Funding Formula is likely to change these patterns.

The closure of schools during lockdown in the COVID-19 pandemic will create immense challenges for schools and is likely to widen educational inequalities. The government plans catch-up and support activities for schools in England. These plans may target the likely challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as pre-existing challenges such as the teacher labour market and the state of school buildings.

Anna 28/09/2020

Disposal of PPE:

If you are using the disposable polypropylene masks rather than washable ones, please dispose of them in the black bin. They are not recyclable. Sadly many are littering the streets and parks which is not only unsightly but a real danger to wildlife both on land and eventually in the sea.

Zero Carbon Community Grant Scheme:

The second round of applications has now closed (30th September 2020.) Locally to the best of my knowledge two schemes have been put forward: In Waterbeach, the PCC of St John's Church have submitted an application for funds towards an Air to Water Heat Pump system. It would be linked to solar PV panels and a battery so the energy could be stored for when the rooms are in use. This would provide a low carbon alternative to the ageing gas boiler and also reduce reliance on the mains electricity grid. In 'normal' times the rooms are used by different groups of all ages and for larger events; currently the main hall is being used by C3 Churches for the food hub operating on Mondays and Thursdays. In Milton, an application has been made to fund installation of strategically placed cycle racks in the village to enable more people to make short journeys by bicycle be it popping to the shops or for leisure.

Whilst on the subject of the environment and zero carbon goals, SCDC and the County are working in partnership with **Solar Together Cambridgeshire** which is a group buying scheme for solar panels. So far 1000 residents in South Cambs (highest in the county!) have expressed an interest in the scheme with 'Milton and Waterbeach' ward currently the second highest ward for the number of registrations to date!! The deadline for expressing an interest is 6th October. Following this closing date all those who registered will be provided with a no obligation personalised recommendation. The panels are of high quality and competitively priced with battery storage systems. This might be of particular interest to those residents and businesses who already have solar PV panels and simply require a means of storing the energy for use on cloudy days.

The next local plan:

The Call for Sites information has now been released and maps showing the developers' 'wish list' can now be viewed on the Greater Cambridge Planning website. Only a small fraction of these will ever come forward and be built out. All of these sites need to be filtered and assessed for sustainability and so currently hold no planning merit. Many thanks also to all those people who responded to the first consultation – 'The First Conversation' – where nearly 9000 comments were received. This really helps to guide the plan-making process. Do get in touch with any thoughts and opinions on the local proposals from developers, both positive and negative.

Judith – 28/09/'20