

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

JULY 2018

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

We are establishing regular meetings with Longstanton and Oakington Parish Chairs & Clerks so we can update each other on news and issues and, where we think sensible, will be inviting James Stone the Northstowe planning officer to attend.

We are now splitting this report into two sections, the first will include local issues and updates the second, district and region wide issues that may impact our area.

CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC

There has been a number of complaints regarding construction vehicles using local roads. There are potentially two reasons for this; HCVs travelling to and from the Northstowe and the A14 improvement works. We met last week with fellow councillor for Willingham and Over, Dawn Percival, to discuss this issue and our response. The Northstowe Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) illustrates the approved construction routes and is clear that no construction traffic is permitted through the villages.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has requested that the Cambridgeshire Northstowe Transport Working Group (NTWG) be reinstated. This group, run by Cambridgeshire County Council, is a joint initiative between Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Parish Councils. This group will be responsible for monitoring the traffic connected with Northstowe. The group will consider what preventative measures can be put in place to avoid further worsening of heavy goods vehicles using local roads. Officers of the group will also be responsible for any surveillance where there is suspected breach of the CEMP. The Group will therefore be a mechanism for identifying any breach of the planning conditions (including the routing of HCVs), thus enabling the SCDC Enforcement team to take necessary steps.

Highways have advised that A14 construction vehicles have established routes for deliveries, of which the B1050 is not one of them. There are many A14 main suppliers who also deliver to numerous other locations within the area and therefore it may be unconnected to the A14 improvement scheme. Highways have advised therefore that evidence in the form of registration numbers of offending vehicles could assist with any investigation.

There have also been reports of increased HCV traffic through Oakington which we believe is connected to the development on the edge of Cottenham. Unfortunately, this route was approved as part of the planning conditions for the development. We understand that the Oakington Traffic Action group are monitoring the situation with HVC traffic through the village.

CONSTRUCTION NOISE

We have also received a number of reports regarding breach of planning conditions, with work beginning before 08.00 on both the Northstowe site and the site on Woodside in Longstanton.

Since raising this issue with Philip Harker, Homes England and the contractor Sisk, we have not been aware of any further issues on the Phase 2 site. There have been further reports of early starts on Phase 1 which we understand Libby has now raised with the contractor.

We contacted Beechdales, the developer for the Woodside site, who have also reminded contractors on site of the planning obligations that no work should begin on site before 08.00.

We will continue to monitor this issue and would be grateful if you could make us aware of further reports.

NORTHSTOWE BIN COLLECTIONS

As we reported at the last meeting there have been issues with bin collections for new residents of Northstowe. A great deal of good work has been done by Jon London and Kirstin Donaldson, officers from SCDC on this issue and we believe the situation has improved. We met, along with the council officers, with team leaders for the waste crews and the following has been agreed:

- Council officers will work on way to improve the data that is used to track which houses are occupied. There has been a lag between new occupations and data going into this system which has caused some of the issues. Jon London has now been able to consolidate all information on all new occupations at Northstowe into one database which is available to all relevant parties.
- Some houses will have a temporary collection point where residents are asked to wheel their bin for a limited time because access to their road is difficult or there is currently no way for the refuse lorry to turn around. This is temporary measure and crews will seek to ensure house to house collections as soon as possible.
- Jon London and Sarah Will, who is the New Communities Waste Project Manager, are going to be working together to improve processes going forward. This includes improving communication between refuse teams and residents, planning and scheduling temporary collection points and getting bins delivered in bulk to the developers. Jon also now has a 'hotline' to the waste crews to be able to report problems.

While we hope that these measures will improve the situation we are still encouraging residents to report any issues or missed bins so that we can quickly identify any ongoing issues.

NORTHSTOWE PHASE 3 CONSULTATION

On 3rd July we attended a council members' briefing on the early stage development of the master plan for Northstowe Phase 3. Some of the emerging concepts for the design of Phase 3 were presented. These initial concepts aimed to reflect the history and identity of the site. The designs are available to view on the Northstowe website. A further consultation event took place on Friday 6th for community groups, statutory consultees, officers and other interested parties. A public drop in was held on

Saturday 7th July. The next steps will be for further public consultation to take place later in 2018 and then in Spring and Summer 2019 on the outline planning application for Phase 3.

All plans and the questionnaire will be available on www.northstowe.com from Friday 6th 2018.

SECTION 106- MEETING WITH JAMES FISHER

We met with James Fisher, the SCDC Section 106 officer, who provided us with a very helpful background to the section 106 process. We were particularly keen to understand how we and SCDC officers can support the Parish councils in the 106 negotiations for Phase 3 of Northstowe. Homes England would like to begin these discussions as the earliest stage, as Philip Harker confirmed at the Phase 3 consultation meeting.

KINGFISHER POND UPDATE

We have been advised that the vegetation was cut back and removed from the pond on June 26th. This was carried out on the understanding that work was beginning on the drainage of the Barratts Home site (H7). Any groundwater they encounter will be drained into the pond via a settlement tank/silt trap as agreed with the ecologists. A concern was raised that they would not encounter any groundwater. We have asked James Stone to update us regarding the situation.

While we are pleased there has been progress on this issue there is still concern in Longstanton about water levels (particularly regarding Clive Hayden's well) and we have continued to pursue the need for an independent expert to review the situation.

NORTHSTOWE ALLOTMENTS

The Northstowe allotment working group have had two meetings since the last Parish Council meeting.

The allotments are for Phase 1 residents but because we are unlikely to have enough occupants for allotments in the beginning, these allotments will be made available to local, non-Northstowe applicants. Demand from Phase 1 residents however takes priority. Concerns were raised by Longstanton residents that they did not want to put initial effort into establishing allotments that they could then lose if there was subsequent demand from Northstowe residents. We have requested that the policy on allotment leases be reviewed by SCDC officers and we will feedback on this in our next report.

Residents who are interested in being involved in the working group or who would like to register interest in an allotment can contact: Northstowe.community@scambs.gov.uk

OAKINGTON VILLAGE STORES

After reports of a significant drop in business following the Airfield Road closure, we have put the owners of the Oakington shop in touch with a business mentor via a scheme hosted by South Cambs District Council. The mentor has had previous experience of running a post office and making efficient use of their business.

Longstanton Village Store have reported no change in business following the road closure.

COMMUNITY CHEST GRANTS

Oakington has been awarded £500 of the £1000 it sought for 22 flower planters for the village

The current grants scheme is under review to ensure that it is meeting needs of all residents and targeting the groups that need the most help. As a result, the Community Chest Scheme will not be accepting new applications until the review process has been completed. Sarah is on the advisory group for the Grants Committee.

OAKINGTON RURAL TRANSPORT HUB

Following public engagement sessions on the plans for the Rural Transport Hub, with pilot schemes in Oakington and Sawston, there are further rounds of consultation planned for 24th July 6pm-8pm.

Feedback for the Sawston pilot has been largely negative from residents and Councillors (District & County).

NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY FORUM

The next Northstowe Community Forum will be on the 16th July with a drop in 6-7pm followed by presentations from 7-9pm. Sarah will be chairing this meeting and an agenda will follow shortly.

COUNCILLOR UPDATES AND SURGERIES

We are planning to hold regular surgeries for residents who have questions or queries. The first is at Oakington Crossways Communitia Café, 13th July 3.30pm-5pm. We will be varying the location and the timings to suit residents throughout the year.

We will also shortly be starting email newsletters and already post many updates on our Facebook group. Details are here:

- Monthly email newsletter - with updates on local news as well as wider district issues which will impact us all. To sign up please go to: https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/email_signup_longstanton
(Note to help us manage GDPR it is easier for us to host from the LibDems webpage but we absolutely promise this link will NOT subscribe you to LibDem news)
- For all the latest news & updates so far please go to:
https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/longstanton_news
- For those on social media we have a very active Facebook group covering the whole ward here:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Parklife: South Cambs District Council's biggest family event was extremely well attended. Sarah and Alex donned lurid green t-shirts to volunteer at the event and had great feedback from families and children who took part.

Longstanton Youth Council Picnic in the Park: Alex and I were so impressed with the maturity of the Youth Council and our families really enjoyed the event. Thanks to Longstanton Parish Council for their support and encouragement to the Youth Council.

Longstanton Open Air Cinema: We were very sorry to miss this but have had excellent feedback from attendees – thanks again to Libby and other Councillors/volunteers for making it happen – the main question seems to be when's the next one?!

Oakington Village Day: Alex attended the village day with her family and was happy to be able to introduce herself to TAG and EAG members. Congratulations again to the Village Day committee for putting on such an excellent event, their biggest event to date.

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

COMBINED AUTHORITY

The political landscape in Cambridgeshire is getting more and more complex. As well as the County Council (responsible for education, health and social care) and the District Councils (responsible for planning, housing and waste management) we have the Greater Cambridge Partnership (formally The City Deal) attempting to deliver transport improvements in South Cambs/Cambridge and now the Combined Authority and the Mayor doing transport, housing and skills throughout the whole county and Peterborough. It will be no surprise that this is proving somewhat challenging to work with especially as there is overlap in what they are all wanting (and in some cases failing) to do.

The Mayor has recently taken over responsibility for the Local Enterprise Partnership which was responsible for the Economic Development Strategy for a very large area including all Cambridgeshire. This concerns us as we are very aware that South Cambs and Cambridge City are the power house driving the economy of the whole County and there is no guarantee that the Mayor is as committed as one would hope to ensuring the continued successful business growth of our area.

He has even more recently tried to halt the well-developed plans of the GCP to build some new park and rides and to put a Busway along the A428 corridor. This would not be a problem if it were clear that the CA was going to be able to solve the ever-increasing congestion problems facing us all (but especially people commuting in and out of Cambridge) in the short term, but that is not the case.

It's clear that the Combined Authority (CA) is beginning to flex its muscles. The Mayor and the CA would like to subsume the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) much as they did the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). At the most recent meeting it laid out its 4-year plan which encompasses several ambitious transport schemes (including the CAM metro and, worryingly, an extension of the M11 northwards to Wisbech) and began to consider the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review (CPIER). With five levels of government locally it's also clear that reform is needed.

In the meantime, James Brokenshire the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has written a letter saying he had seen "various statements and correspondence which have been critical of the level of collaborative working between local leaders".

Mr Brokenshire pointed out that the next tranche of up to £400m GCP funding is “not guaranteed” and said future money would depend on a gateway assessment. The assessment would look at progress on delivery, as well as government confidence in the “effective collaboration and delivery capability of local partners.”

A recent report into the proposed Cambridge Area Metro in the National Infrastructure Commission report has come into criticism for the full report go here: <https://t.co/uXyziAKomG>

Decisions taken by the Mayor must go to Scrutiny committee but unfortunately the last one was inquorate as a particularly large number of Councillors from the same political party as the Mayor did not attend.

Analysis has already shown that the Mayor’s running costs are over what was predicted with £1.18 million figures in March (election pledges of £850k) and staffing of 71 people (election pledges 20).

FIRE AUTHORITY

As you may be aware, the Police and Crime Commissioner has been attempting to take on the Fire Authority as part of its remit, despite strong opposition from Fire Services Unions and the Fire Authority. The Fire Authority is now pursuing a judicial review of the Home Secretary’s decision to allow the power grab on the basis that she did not meet the statutory criteria and secondly that she used an internal Home Office report to inform her opinion which the HO now refuses to share with us.

Our concerns are around further cost cutting to Fire services in the region and secondly, it might be argued that the PCC has enough to do already with a Police service which does not have a brilliant record with the public. Lastly the Fire Service is already extremely well run with a lean financial regime.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about these, or any other matters.

Alex Malyon and Sarah Cheung Johnson

District Councillors for Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe

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