

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT- LONGSTANTON WARD

MAY 2021

CLLR SARAH CHEUNG JOHNSON & CLLR ALEX MALYON

A reminder that information about South Cambs response to coronavirus can be found on the regularly updated coronavirus pages on the SCDC website: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

The council is still providing advice, grants and other support for businesses disrupted by the pandemic. For information, please go to: <https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Following the recent local election, the results were as follows:

Tom Bygott (Conservative) 1126 votes 35.5%

Maria Harrison (Green) 342 votes 10.8%

Firouz Thompson (Liberal Democrat) 1706 votes 53.8% (Elected)

We would like to thank Peter Hudson for his many years of dedicated service and hard work to the community as he stands down as our County Councillor. We would especially like to thank him for the advice and help he gave to us as new Councillors and wish him a very enjoyable retirement!

PHASE 2 HR WALLINGFORD REPORT INTO DEWATERING IN LONGSTANTON AND NORTHSTOWE

Concerns were first raised by residents and the Parish Council in 2015 regarding reducing water levels in the Kingfisher Ponds and other ponds and wells in the Parish. Concerns were continuously raised throughout the period until the end of 2017 when it was reported that the Kingfisher Pond had completely dried out. To our knowledge no action was taken regarding these declining water levels by our predecessors at the District Council. When we were elected as District councillors in 2018, we immediately sought to engage with residents and the Parish Council on this issue, arranging meetings with residents, the Parish Council, the developers L&Q and SCDC officers. At our request both the Leader of the council and our Chief Executive visited the Parish Council to speak on these issues. Initially we asked for a report to be prepared by an officer at SCDC. Finally, we fought for and succeeded in getting funding from SCDC for a fully independent report into the water levels, the results, and recommendations of which we have committed to act on.

The consultants HR Wallingford were chosen by the Parish Council and commissioned by SCDC. Their report is being prepared in three phases. Phase 1, which was delivered to LPC in February 2021, reported on the hydrology and hydrogeology of the area. Phase 2 was recently received by the Parish

Council and presents the consultants view of changes in the Kingfisher Pond and if the groundwater water levels and other hydrogeological features have changed. The final phase of the report will summarise the reasons for the changes that have been seen in the local area and the Kingfisher Pond.

We are committed to full transparency with these reports. They have been sent directly to the Parish Council and other contributors. Residents can obtain a copy of the Phase 1 and 2 reports on request from the Parish Council. We are expecting the Phase 3 report to be delivered soon.

MANAGEMENT OF THE KINGFISHER POND AND THE PIKE!

We absolutely understand the concerns of residents to see the pond managed and maintained. A plan for this will be part of the open space management for Phase 1. Open spaces management is overseen by a steering group, which Longstanton PC has sat on since its inception. The new Northstowe Town Council will now be represented on this group, so can input into this. Any plan for the pond needs to be made with input from professional ecologists, L&Q employ a firm of ecologists and SCDC ecologists can also input into this via the open spaces steering group. The opinion of the ecologists currently is that removing the self-set scrub in the pond would be detrimental as new habitats have evolved and this wet woodland habitat is something currently lacking in Northstowe. There will be lots of open water on the site. Some work was done last year to remove reedmace from other areas of the pond. We will also need to wait for the results of the report into the water levels in the pond to know what impact this will have on long term management.

We have also contacted L&Q and their ecologist regarding the pike which has been spotted by residents in the pond. We believe that this must have been illegally introduced to the pond as there is no other route for it to have got in. The following advice was presented by the ecologist:

The pike will feed on smaller fish and invertebrates in whichever water body it inhabits and will grow to a size that the food source can sustain at least in the short term. Eventually it is likely to exhaust the food supply in a small pond like the Kingfisher Pond.

If moved to the larger water body, you also add in the risk to all the waterfowl chicks plus water voles and the transference of disease and a disruption of the equilibrium of that ecosystem.

A capture and humane dispatch would possibly be one option in the appropriate season or with EA permission.

Given the difficulty of the situation and the risks of moving the pike, the decision has been made by L&Q to leave alone and let nature take its course.

WORK ON PHASE 1 WATERPARK NORTHSTOWE

Work has recently been carried out on clearing and re-planting at the Northstowe Phase 1 waterpark. We are disappointed that this work is being carried out so late and during bird nesting season.

This work was scheduled by L&Q to take place earlier in the season, unfortunately this was delayed by them. I spoke with officers at SCDC (planning and ecology) and there is nothing from an enforcement point of view that can be done to halt the work, as the necessary approvals from Natural England are in

place. There was an ecologist on site supervising the work and ensuring nests are not disturbed and as we requested a second ecologist was brought onto site today to assist. This work has now been completed and the waterpark is due to open early summer.

Homes England have also advised they are looking at opening the Phase 2 waterparks around the Education Campus. These waterparks will be zoned, with some for recreational use – canoes, kayaks – some for open water swimming and some for nature with limited access for people.

UPDATE REGARDING THE GP

A number of residents have contacted us with concerns about long waits for GP appointments at the Willingham and Longstanton medical practice. Please see the statement below from the practice. They are very aware of residents' concerns and are expanding staffing to meet demand. They have recruited 2 new GPs, giving them 6 extra sessions a week. This will include putting 2 GPs on some mornings at Longstanton Branch. They have also recruited new reception staff to deal with an increase in enquiries from patients.

Staff who are continuing to work incredibly hard, as the pandemic is ongoing. Recently the surgery has seen a spike in demand with people coming forward for routine appointments as lockdown is easing. Sadly, they are also seeing a spike in issues with mental health. They do not think that the increase in demand is related solely to new Northstowe registration.

It is important to emphasise though that people should still contact the practice if they need to see someone, please do not avoid making an appointment because you think they are busy.

A new Northstowe surgery is planned for Phase 2 of the town. Key NHS staff who were working on this project have been pulled into the pandemic response but are now beginning to work on this project again. They are looking at demand and will review if an interim service is needed before the new Northstowe practice fully opens- this is a decision for the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group. We will support this as far as we can, but this is not a planning issue that can be resolved quickly by the council.

The practice is working hard to expand resources as quickly as possible. Over the past few weeks, we have employed 3 receptionists, 2 GPs and extra administrative support to cope with the incredible demand. Please be mindful the pandemic is ongoing, and we are still governed by the stringent infection control procedures that were introduced last March, and every call must be telephone triaged by a clinician. With a practice list now over 10,000 patients, the rapid expansion coinciding with the vaccination programme has resulted in patient frustration and unprecedented pressure. Please be assured we are working very hard to increase capacity as quickly as we can. Please be patient, understanding and kind to our team who are doing their very best at an incredibly challenging time.

GYPSY ROMA AND TRAVELLER TRAINING AND TOOLKIT LAUNCH

Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, there has been a slight delay in delivery of the full toolkit for Gypsy Roma and Traveller Inclusion and the launch date will now be Tuesday 1 June 2021.

If, in preparation, you would like any of your Parish Councillors or Key Community Leaders, to complete the Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Cultural Awareness Training, please let us know and we can pass on their names to Linda Gallagher at SCDC who will arrange access to this online training for them. This was excellent training which really challenged our perceptions of the GRT community, and we would highly recommend doing it.

EAST-WEST RAIL CONSULTATION

A reminder that East West Rail has started its 10-week consultation on the emerging proposals for route alignments. The final decision will be taken by the Department for Transport as this is a national infrastructure project, but we continue to encourage residents to submit their responses to this consultation which closes on 9th June.

We have always been supportive of the need for a strategic railway line from Oxford. It has the potential to be a new green strategic route that improves links with other parts of the country and helps change the focus of the railway network away from London. In conjunction with the new Cambridge South station, it will allow the sustainable expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

However, we and residents have been concerned about the impact of the potential route options. This non-statutory consultation had been expected by the end of 2020 and thousands of villagers across the district have now had over a year living with this uncertainty hanging over their heads. Part of the delay was caused by the pressure to include an additional route in the consultation. MP Anthony Browne wrote multiple letters to EWR and lobbied the Minister for Transport to insist that a Northern route should be considered from Cambourne cutting between Oakington, Milton and Cambridge North station, a position he took with no consideration of residents living in the northern villages.

EWR provides reasons as to why such a northern route is not included in this consultation.

Mayoral candidate Aidan Van de Weyer is right that EWR must listen to residents and build a line that brings benefits to the whole region, undertake full environmental impact assessment of the options, and ensure that the rail is zero carbon from the outset and that means electrification, something which at the moment they are not planning, despite clear recommendations in Network Rail's new decarbonisation strategy.

You can find details of the consultation here: <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/bedford-to-cambridge>

PATH RESURFACING IN PIONEER PARK AND NEAR TO ALLOTMENTS NORTHSTOWE

Northstowe and Longstanton residents had contacted us regarding the safety of the gravel path in Pioneer Park. Several children have reported minor injuries (grazes and cuts) from falling on the gravel path in the park. We discussed options for resurfacing these paths with L&Q and they are reviewing these. They are also planning to resurface the path alongside the allotments with asphalt.

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL

Following the Community Governance Review, Northstowe and Rampton Drift have now officially come under the responsibility of Northstowe Town Council. The first meeting of the Northstowe Interim Town Council, comprised of Cllr Cheung Johnson, Cllr Malyon and Cllr Hudson took place on

28th April at 4pm. The minutes for the meeting can be found on the Town Council website. Cllr Cheung Johnson was elected as Interim Chair and will open the first meeting of the newly elected Town Council on 20th May. Details of the newly elected Town Councillors are the interim town council approved the recruitment pack for a new clerk- further details can be found on the Town Council website.

<https://www.northstowetowncouncil.gov.uk/default.aspx>

Following this election, the following candidates have been elected as Northstowe Town Councillors:

Jason Benedicic, Carla Bros Sabria, Naveen Castelino, Shola Delip, Louse Gamon, Maria Harrison, Paul Littlemore, Kathleen Males, Deborah Oluwasanya, Richard Owen, Amitkumar Panvekar, Sunny Pokala, Pradeep Susarla, Firouz Thompson, Ilse van der Meijden

We congratulate all the new councillors and look forward to working with them.

UPDATE FROM OUR SCDC DRAINAGE ENGINEER

Our SCDC drainage engineer Lee Hllam has been dealing with several issues in the ward.

SCDC have now completed all their drainage repairs to the Station Road culvert, J.Shevlin Ltd have replaced 6 metres of culvert and cleared all tree roots, ADC have also cleaned the culvert from Stanton House under the busway and all the way along past the allotments up to new farm.

ADC have also recovered their equipment which was previously stuck.

There is now just for our County to complete their works at Stanton Mere which we understand James Broder from Highways is looking into.

Lee is also chasing up the County Council to find out the progress on the repairs of the culvert on Longstanton Road in Oakington.

Finally he is checking on the condition of the awarded drain which runs behind Prentice Close as a resident had reported that this was 'smelly'.

ZERO CARBON COMMUNITY GRANTS

The next round of South Cambridgeshire's Zero Carbon Community Grants is now open. Community groups can now bid for a share of £100,000 from the District Council's Zero Carbon Communities Grant scheme, which has already funded more than 35 grassroots projects to tackle climate change.

The fund aims to support the district shift to a cleaner and greener future with the support of the community. Local groups can bid for cash to spend on ambitious projects that reduce carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels, spread awareness and promote behaviour change towards low carbon lifestyles.

Grants between £1,000 and £15,000 are available. The money comes from business rates from renewable energy sites, like solar farms, in South Cambridgeshire that the Council retains and earmarks for use in green initiatives like this.

Non-profit groups or organisations that are based in the district and parish councils can apply. Other groups, such as social enterprises and community interest companies can apply as part of a partnership led by a parish council or not-for-profit group.

Those interested in applying are being encouraged to sign up for an upcoming webinar run by the Council, titled, 'How to make a successful grant application' will be held on Monday 7 June at 7pm. It is free to sign up and take part. Sign up to the webinar here <https://www.scams.gov.uk/nature-and-climate-change/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-events/>

Applications are invited for projects under the three themes:

- Community buildings
- Tree Planting/Nature
- Other projects which reduce carbon emissions

The deadline for applications to be received by the Council is 5pm on Friday 30 July 2021.

The application form, guidance notes and details of previously funded projects can be found here:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/nature-and-climate-change/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant/>

UPDATES FROM THE NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY FORUM

We have forwarded our notes from the recent Community Forum with this report.

DISTRICT WIDE UPDATES

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS

Following the recent local elections, the results for each political party were as follows:

Conservative 28

Liberal Democrat 20

Labour 9

Independent 2

St Neots Independent Group 2

Because of these results, the council is now in no overall control, as no party got more than the 31 needed to claim a majority.

CAMBRIDGE AND PETERBOROUGH MAYORAL ELECTIONS

In the election for the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and electing a Mayor, after the first round, the results were as follows:

Nik Johnson (Labour): 76,106

James Palmer (Conservative): 93,942

Aidan van de Weyer (Liberal Democrat): 61,885

The third-place candidate is eliminated, and their second preference votes are then added to the totals above, giving a final result of:

Nik Johnson (Labour): 113,994

James Palmer (Conservative): 108,195

Therefore, Nik Johnson has been duly elected as the new Mayor for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

In the election for Police and Crime Commissioner the results were as follows:

Nicky Massey (Labour): 72,313

Susan Morris (Reform UK): 8,031

Rupert Moss-Eccardt (Liberal Democrat): 51,490

Darryl Preston (Conservative): 99,034

The third and fourth place candidates are eliminated, and their second preference votes are then added to the totals above, giving a result of:

Nicky Massey (Labour): 102,195

Darryl Preston (Conservative): 114,053

Therefore, Darryl Preston has been duly elected as the new Police & Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Note the Conservative Government has committed to returning to First Past the Post system for electing Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners so if this goes ahead, next election there will not be the option of second preferences.

COVID UPDATES

As we write there are only 22 people in hospital with Covid in Cambridgeshire with 3 in Addenbrookes. This is a huge improvement and will of course allow our hospitals get back to treating people with other conditions many of which are now very urgent.

The supply of Astra Zeneca, Moderna and Pfizer vaccines over May and June are limited but should increase significantly from mid-June to July. Over 90% of the over-75s have received their jabs and over 51% of the over 50s.

We have seen some increase in transmission in South Cambs and Cambridge City and there is still a possibility of further rise as lock down eases. South Cambs is currently at the national average rate of about 25 cases per 100,000 people.

BUSINESS GRANTS

The Business Support team at South Cambs have made an enormous effort to get over £11 million in grants out to 4834 businesses since November last year. These government grants can make the difference between life or death for a business and survival or despair for the owners of those businesses. If your business is in trouble and you have not been able to access a grant, please contact the council. Details of the support available for business can be found here:

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-businesses/>

HOSPITALITY

There has been some conversation in the media over the past couple of weeks regarding the use of shelters for use in outdoor areas at hospitality venues. The Councils' Covid Team would like to highlight that acceptable outdoor shelters (any shelter, marquee, or other structure) can have a roof but needs to have at least 50% of the area of their walls open at all times whilst in use.

WINTER SUPPORT GRANT: FAMILY FUND

Residents can now access schemes which can be used for those in need of urgent food or fuel. The vouchers are worth up to £49 (per scheme) for a family, or £29 (per scheme) for an individual. The first scheme allows a voucher for food or fuel, and the second scheme is for a fuel voucher only. The schemes are funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the national Winter Support Grant. The vouchers can help residents who find themselves in a desperate situation to address their immediate need. We then work with the resident and other agencies to provide longer term advice and support. If you come across a resident in need of urgent food or fuel, please consider referring them into this scheme by emailing duty.communities@scams.gov.uk (we will then send you a simple form to complete).

NATIONAL SURVEY FOR THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER

The Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has launched 'The Big Ask' – a survey to gather the views of children in England on what the government should prioritise in planning the recovery from the pandemic. Councils and schools are encouraged to promote the survey to as many students as possible and provide support to complete this survey. A range of materials have also been produced, including lesson plans and activity packs, to help teachers incorporate this into their lessons. Parents, care leavers and those working with children are also invited to complete the adults survey to share their views about the future for children and young people today, and what they think is holding young people back. If you ask any questions about the survey, please contact big.ask@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk.

Survey:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/>

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/adults/>

Materials:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigask/resources/>

WEBINARS AND VIDEOS FOR ORGANISATIONS THAT TRADE WITH THE EU

Webinars and videos about trading with the EU are available for councils to share with local stakeholders and businesses. Topics covered in the webinars include importing and exporting goods, moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and details of the government's cross-border trade forum, designed to help businesses and traders find answers to questions regarding the new rules on trading with the EU. Businesses can now access a calendar of upcoming webinars and sign up.

Webinars and videos:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-and-support-if-your-business-trades-with-the-eu>

Calendar and sign-up:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/organisations-that-trade-with-the-eu-webinars-calendar>

COUNCILLORS UPDATES

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 highly active Facebook group covering the whole ward here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>

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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