

Monthly update for parish councils: December 2011

County Council and Cabinet meetings

There was a County Council meeting in November. There were 7 motions:

Motion 1 (which Sue seconded) asked that Council move some of its meetings to the evening to accommodate people who could not attend day time ones. The Tories agreed that a committee would review this and report in public. The motion was therefore withdrawn.

Motion 2 was stickier and asked that the Council actually spend its £258K community transport grant on community transport. The Tories don't want to and are proposing several schemes for which there is little evidence base. David spoke to highlight the current bus consultation which should be gathering data to enable good decision making but is not. The motion was defeated.

The Tories then moved motion number 3 to 'delegate' remuneration to a national scheme. The Lib Dems proposed an amendment to not implement any increases until such a scheme was in place or until the start of the next council. David spoke to reinforce the reason for rejecting the proposed increases at the last council meeting and to support the breathing space afforded by the amendment. The amendment was defeated and the motion was carried on a free vote. David and Sue both voted against the motion on the grounds that the Council should have the confidence and independence to run its own affairs.

After lunch it was motion number 3 regarding press and PR costs. The Lib Dems have argued every year for these to be reduced but yet again they remain stubbornly high. The vote went along party lines. Motion defeated.

There was then a big debate on bus services and whether or not quality bus contracts should be considered as a means of fixing the county's 'good in parts' bus service. This Lib Dem motion was thoughtful and considered but attracted the usual knee-jerk Tory response. David challenged the cabinet member who led and made several unsubstantiated and/or incorrect remarks. David particularly highlighted the poor integration between rail and bus at Cambridge station. Another vote along party lines and the motion was defeated.

The penultimate motion called upon the government to give Cambridgeshire a fair schools grant which it manifestly does not. And the final one of the day for action to reduce child poverty. Sue spoke on the latter saying how important it was for young people from poorer backgrounds to be given access to opportunities. Both motions were passed with no votes against.

In oral questions David again asked for careful consideration of the 110 Freedom Bus and in particular that its contribution to the life style of the older people who use it be considered. And Sue asked that designs for street furniture be reviewed and updated in the light of the use of mobility scooters which are getting bigger. <http://bit.ly/xLnTVh>.

There was a cabinet meeting 15 Dec 12 at which a decision to extend civil parking enforcement to South Cambs was deferred, a 'two centre model' for the delivery of public services at Northstowe was agreed and it was agreed to pursue alternative operational options for the Park+Ride services. <http://bit.ly/x6q1rJ>.

Environmental Services

The Department of Transport is asking for ideas about improving the A14. <http://bit.ly/vCv1lc>

It has been confirmed that work on the final section of the B1049 cycleway will be undertaken in January. It has been agreed to pipe some of the ditch and the cycle path will be at least 2m wide. <http://bit.ly/yxX80Z>.

Officers will meet parish councils in January to talk about Cambridge Future Transport options relating to orbital bus routes connecting Bar Hill to Waterbeach station through our villages.

Bids for community improvement cash must be input by 1 Feb 12. These replace the previous scheme jointly funded by SCDC and are for minor highways schemes <http://bit.ly/wBieBE>

The bus consultation has finished. David again rode on the 110 Freedom Bus and encouraged passengers to fill in the Council's questionnaire. The Council's policy will go to pre-decision scrutiny 12 Jan 12. Papers are not yet out.

Children and young people's services

Impington Village College is in the final stages of decision making regarding conversion to an academy. There will be a final open meeting followed by the governing body meeting in public in January.

Orchard Park Community Primary School had its second Ofsted report; and it was very good too! <http://bit.ly/zcT9gp>.

Local Issues

Officers have come up with a good solution for the guided bus crossing time concern at Station Road, Histon. Check here for the details <http://bit.ly/Ae7zle>.

The bus stop between Histon and Cottenham has been reinstated <http://bit.ly/y5ousq>.

Although we have not had a severe winter some of our roads and footpaths are showing signs of wear and particular problems on the B1049 have been highlighted.

Section 106 money is available to improve access in the neighbourhood of the recent Brackenbury development. David and Sue met officers to confirm that no similar moneys would be lost.

Forthcoming meetings and events

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 10 Jan 12 | IVC academy open meeting and governors' meeting in public; IVC 7pm |
| 10 Jan 12 | Histon neighbourhood panel meeting (Oakington) |
| 11 Jan 12 | Northstowe parish forum (to be confirmed) |
| 15 Jan 12 | last date for primary school applications http://bit.ly/i5HEQ9 |
| 17 Jan 12 | Cabinet meeting |
| 19 Jan 12 | A14 B1049 crossing meeting (Histon Rec; 4pm) |
| 20 Jan 12 | Councillors' surgery; Histon and Impington Recreation Ground 7pm |
| 26 Jan 12 | CCC development control |
| 31 Jan 12 | Cabinet meeting |
| 3 Feb 12 | Councillors' surgery; Oakington Community Centre 7pm |

And finally... end of year and time to reflect. As a local politician I've got to recognise that the Coalition still troubles me. I am still convinced that it was the right thing to do but being associated with so many unpopular policies is not easy. The recession continues but there is a glimmer of hope from recent economic news in the US. And the German economy is so strong because of the Euro you've got to believe that it will survive. Locally the sad news was Histon FC's relegation but the ship appears to have steadied; the club is now winning matches and is developing a more secure mid-table position. And personally I triggered a speed camera doing 58mph in a coned off zone on the M6 where I should have been travelling at 50 so I experienced an afternoon of 'speed awareness training' on 31 Dec 11. It really was very valuable and although I've always been careful about not speeding I now am more aware of the dangers that result from 'marginal' speeding.

This monthly report, and the ones for previous months, is online at www.chilibdems.co.uk

David Jenkins on behalf of Sue Gymer and David Jenkins

County Councillors for Cottenham, Histon and Impington

Sue Gymer 07919 036246

David Jenkins 07739 758859

suegymer@ntlworld.com

ccc@davidjenkins.org.uk

Home: 01954 252902

Home: 01223 236232