

## **Gamlingay Division Councillors Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council – July August 2020**

The Gamlingay Division comprises the Parishes of Abington Pigotts, Arrington, Barrington, Croydon, Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Litlington, Hatley, Orwell, Shingay-cum-Wendy, Steeple Morden, Tadlow & Wimpole. This report is /for all Division Parish Councils but please be aware that it will include items that may have little or no relevance to your particular Parish. Apologies in advance!

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley on 01767 651982 or [skindersley@hotmail.com](mailto:skindersley@hotmail.com) or write to the Manor Barn, East Hatley, SG19 3JA District Councillor Bridget Smith (Gamlingay Ward, SCDC) is on 01767 650510 or [bridget@glockling.com](mailto:bridget@glockling.com) – twitter and District Councillor Aidan van de Weyer (Barrington, Orwell, the Eversdens & Wimpole SCDC Ward) can be called on 01223 870 869 or email him [aidan@mishmush.com](mailto:aidan@mishmush.com) You can also follow your councillors on Twitter: @Cllrbridget, @SebKindersley @aidanvdew

### **Coronavirus: Are you shielding or do you know someone who is?**

People who have been encouraged to register as shielding are being urged to do so before the 17 July deadline, **whether they need help at the moment or not**. Although the shielding programme will be paused on July 31st, people on the shielded list who register for support with essential supplies before July 17th **will still be able to access priority supermarket delivery slots from this date**.

If you've been previously contacted by the NHS and advised that you need to shield and have not yet registered, please think about doing so, whether you need help at the moment or not. Why? Firstly, registering will allow the County Council to keep in contact with you and provide support if there is a further lockdown. Secondly registering will allow you to access priority supermarket delivery slots, which may be useful to you in the coming weeks and months. To access these slots, please make sure you tick the box which asks for help with accessing essential supplies when you register. To register on the shielded list, or to amend your preferences, visit [www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable) or call 0800 028 8327.

### **Coronavirus: Financial Implications**

The County Council is going to suffer badly from the financial implications of Coronavirus. The latest estimate of the deficit due to the pandemic is £12.7m. This does not include the latest funding announced (£500m nationally + some support for lost Sales, Fees and Charges). Many of the cost consequences still lie ahead and remain uncertain, especially those in relation to Adults and Children's Services where developments to date may be leading to significantly increased costs in future.

### **Coronavirus: Libraries & Archives**

Nine libraries began to re-open on July 4<sup>th</sup> by offering a new 'Select and Collect' service where books can be chosen in advance and collected at pre-booked times. To combat digital exclusion, libraries will also begin offer public access IT services based on 45-minute pre-booked appointments, with machines being cleaned between each user.

Mobile libraries won't be able to restart immediately because of problems in maintaining social distancing in such small spaces. Archives will also begin to reopen from July on an appointments only basis to begin with, and all documents must be pre-booked to ensure safety and to minimise risk.

### **Coronavirus: Local Impact**

Of the Cambridgeshire districts, the cumulative rate of confirmed cases of Covid-19 per 100,000 population in Fenland (462.1) is statistically similar to the national average, whilst in Huntingdonshire (491.7) rates are statistically significantly higher. Bedford is one of the national centres for Coronavirus currently, so residents are asked not to visit unless absolutely necessary.

### **Coronavirus: COVID-19 used as click bait**

There has been an increase in attempted phishing attacks using Covid19 information as click bait. They are in line with the usual email scams, encouraging settlement of bogus invoices, suggesting payment for actions, prompting the reader to click on links and requests for a transfer of funds.

What should you do if you have received a scam email?

- Exercise caution when dealing with any unsolicited emails.
- Check the sender's email domain by hovering your mouse over the sender's name.
- Do not click on any links in the scam email.
- Do not reply to the email or contact the senders in any way.
- Do not open any attachments or download content or images if you are prompted to do so.
- Permanently delete the email.

### **Coronavirus: Return to School**

Education Leads at Cambridgeshire County Council have been reviewing government guidance around the re-opening of schools for all year groups in September, and are confident the necessary measures will be in place to welcome back all pupils. The guidance sets out the steps primary, secondary (including sixth forms), infant, junior, middle, upper, school-based nurseries and boarding schools need to take to ensure all pupils can return to formal education after the summer.

Schools will be asked to implement a new Public Health England-endorsed 'System of Controls', which build upon the protective measures that have been in place throughout the pandemic, helping to reduce the risk of transmission. Other updates include guidance on how schools manage their social 'bubbles' to minimise contact between pupils and staffing groups. The size of these bubbles may now increase to incorporate whole classes or even year groups, provided there is clear separation between these groups and others. The increase will allow teachers to work with more children, meaning no child should miss out on lessons.

Staggered start and ending times will help ensure bubbles are not mixing, with each school able to apply flexibility in a way that works for staff, parents and children. They will also be given freedom to adapt the curriculum, to ensure they can address any gaps in skills and knowledge of those pupils who have not been able to attend through the lockdown period.

Schools will be asked to revisit their risk assessments, giving careful consideration to what adaptations they may need to make to their buildings or teaching practices to safely accommodate their returning pupils.

Keyworker parents and those of vulnerable children who kept their children out of school through the lockdown have not been fined, but under the new guidance powers will be reinstated from September, giving schools the option to fine parents if they think a child's absence is not justified.

Most schools have remained open throughout the pandemic, so are experienced at this by now and are on track; and the NHS Test and Trace process is embedded in all schools.

While the County Council wants to make sure children get an education and for parents to feel confident about the return to school in September there are some very considerable hurdles yet to overcome – not least that of school transport; how children are kept in bubbles and so on. More advice will emerge, we assume.

## **Fostering**

We do write about this often – because it is so important. Cambridgeshire County Council wants to hear from anyone who is considering fostering in order to provide support, love and stability to children and young people. Every day over 300 foster carers from across Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council give over 1,000 fostered children and young people a safe and loving home.

During Covid-19 both authorities have been progressing enquiries over the telephone and by video call, but many more foster carers are needed to help support children over 10, teenagers and sibling groups.

If you are over 21 and have a spare bedroom in your home then you should not rule yourself out based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender identification, religion or sexual orientation. Carers can be single or in a relationship, own or rent their own home, have their own children or be child-free.

Carers receive payments and allowances to help cover their time and expenses, as well as advice and guidance so they are supported every step of the way. Email [fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or call 0800 052 0078.

## **New County Council HQ at Alconbury**

The building of the new HQ for Cambridgeshire County Council continues apace, and is over budget already, albeit due to Covid-19 related delays. However, despite the County's agreed position that we will have net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050 there is provision for only 20 electric charging points installed in the car park. While the design does maximise the number of Solar PVs on the roof of the building, the installation of a Solar Array in the car park and an Air Source heat pump the on-site renewable energy generation is only expected to meet up to 40% of the building's expected energy use. This is really poor; and compares very unfavourably with other civic buildings such as South Cambs Hall – built nearly 20 years ago. Very poor leadership.

## **Peterborough University**

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has announced that Anglia Ruskin University is the official higher education partner for Peterborough's new employment-focused university. The new £30 million university - which will be known as ARU Peterborough - is set to open its doors to

2,000 students in 2020. The curriculum will be designed to meet local economic needs, providing both opportunities for local residents to receive a top-class vocational education and a well skilled local workforce for businesses to employ.

### **Odsey Scrapyard**

Following concerns from local residents about the erection of a giant tent at the Station Scrapyard at Odsey County Council officers made enquiries of Vaux Spares who have provided further information and photographs confirming that they erected the temporary structure to create a covered area to prevent the mixing of oils and water which has been caused by water coming onto the site. An application for planning permission for a permanent shed at the site is likely to be submitted in due course. In the meantime the company have offered to add wood cladding to the temporary structure to improve its appearance, should this be considered preferable and provide better visual amenity in the short term.

### **Schools invited to join safety improvement scheme**

Schools in Cambridgeshire are being invited to join a new initiative aimed at creating a safe space outside their gates which encourages pupils to use active transport and maintain social distancing.

By creating a “school street”, schools can temporarily close a road outside their entrance, enabling it to become a pedestrian and cycle/scoot zone during the school’s opening and closing times. This will also help to implement social distancing and encourage active travel, with the added benefit of reducing congestion and pollution at the school gates and improving safety for children on their way to and from school.

Schools will need to put forward volunteers to help run the scheme and the council will provide full training and resources free of charge. The scheme will then be owned and operated by the school community, with support from the council.

### **Green End Fire Gamlingay**

Residents cannot have missed that on July 5<sup>th</sup> a substantial office block at Green End Industrial Estate Gamlingay was deliberately set alight. Firefighters from Gamlingay, Cambridge, St Neots, Kimbolton, Papworth and Huntingdon, along with crews from Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire attended. The water carrier from Ramsey, aerial appliances from Cambridge and Bedfordshire and the incident command unit from Huntingdon were also called. Apart from the destruction of property the knock-on impacts were substantial.

The County Council organised an assessment by an asbestos contractor to review the Montessori building, the school sports field and the Rainbow Pre-school. As a result of this assessment a deep clean of the above areas was undertaken at a cost of over £2,000. Many residents were concerned about the impact on their health and property from smoke, duct and possible asbestos contamination. Businesses on the site were forced to close. And all this during a pandemic where emergency services are already over-stretched; and those affected businesses already financially vulnerable. We understand two local teenagers have been arrested.

### **Wildlife Trust & Gamlingay Wood**

The Wildlife Trust own Gamlingay Wood and have a right of access to it along the track from Waresley Road but don't own the access track. Many years ago the owner of the track and adjacent arable land agreed to allow visitors to the wood to park their cars on the side of the track. Over the years the wood has got busier and some people have encroached further on the farmers field. The farmer has now taken steps to restrict use of the track and prevent encroachment. The track will soon be gated. There are no other public rights of way or access routes which reach the boundary of the wood over which the Wildlife Trust has control. Residents are asked to not park on the main road when visiting as this is incredibly dangerous; and to walk or cycle. The Parish Council is due to discuss this very shortly.

### **Lockdown loo**

Lockdown loo is a free website that encourages organisations and members of the public to provide information on which public loos are open. Do have a check of your local area and update or add information to help people find local facilities.

### **Road Closures:**

Royston Rd Litlington between 08/09/20 and 10/09/20 for new electricity connection works.

Your Councillors are here to help you. Please do feel free to contact us with comments, questions, problems or complaints. We hope we can help but if we can't we are likely to know someone who can! \*\*\*\*\*