

Gamlingay Division Councillors Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council – January 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 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 – 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 You can also follow your councillors on Twitter: [@Cllrbridget](https://twitter.com/Cllrbridget), [@SebKindersley](https://twitter.com/SebKindersley) [@aidanvdew](https://twitter.com/aidanvdew)

Greater Cambridge Planning Service (GCPS)

The performance of the joint planning service continues to improve as the service settles down after the re-organisation in 2018. The focus on improving the customer experience went a step up as a new service-wide performance officer joined the service in early December 2018, the focus is on making the service easier to navigate and friendlier to customers whilst ensuring national planning laws are kept! 85% of all householder applications submitted are approved and this has been consistent since 2016, even though there was a significant increase in the number of applications during the past few years. 83% of applications are also determined within the statutory time set by government. There's always room for improvement and the pre-app service is one of those areas of planning we need to improve on as well.

Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation

This consultation is running to 24th February 2020. This is an early stage in what will be a 4-year process. South Cambs needs to put together the foundation of the plan so it is important that residents engage and tell us your views and ideas. The government has set minimum targets for housing for all councils, and the plan must meet national policy guidelines too. So there's a lot to consider, to make sure the plan will pass examination. We want to build the foundation right so please spread the word to your community, friends etc., so we can reach a wide range of people. Use the hashtag [#GCLocalPlan](https://twitter.com/GCLocalPlan) if you talk about the consultation on social media.

Planning Scheme of Delegation

The Council was made aware of a letter from Fewes Lane Consortium to Parish Councils alleging that the Council was changing the way in which decisions were made about requests for an application to go to planning committee. This is not the case. The process remains the same as it is now.

Green to our Core

The Council has launched the Three Free Trees scheme in a bid to encourage communities to plant more trees to help tackle climate change. Did you know that South Cambridgeshire has one of the lowest tree covers in the country? Every parish is entitled to receiving a £60 voucher to purchase young trees to plant. Find out more on the website.

Other South Cambs news...

South Cambs are currently reviewing their Business Plan to identify the priorities for the forthcoming year and to ensure that we are monitoring our success. Our focus is still on climate change and business support as well as housing that is affordable for people to live in. The winners in our £120,000 Zero Carbon Grants programmes which has given money to parishes and communities for green schemes have just been announced.

The Council will be helping to establish a district wide Community Warden Scheme to help keep people well and happy in their own homes. Please contact the council if this is something you are interested in being involved in. We will be running a celebration event for community volunteers shortly; and District Councillors have been asked to nominate someone in their community who has made an outstanding contribution to their residents. Certainly in Gamlingay there are just too many to choose from so this is going to be a tough job.

There are now plans to establish a Business Support team at the Council which will fill the gap left by the loss of agencies such as Business Link in supporting grass roots business. This will consist of 4 people at a cost of £200,000. A big focus will be on getting our Enterprise Zones fully populated and in ensuring that our village based businesses continue to thrive – this will mesh with a 'single point of contact' for businesses at the council in response to feedback about difficulty in accessing services and in responsiveness.

Cambridge South Station

Please find a moment to respond to the consultation on the proposed Cambridge South Station serving Addenbrookes, Royal Papworth and the

Biomedical campus. It closes on March 2nd and you can find it at <https://consultations.networkrail.co.uk/communications/cambridge-south/>

Marshalls Relocation

It is very disappointing to report that Marshalls have decided very reluctantly to drop Duxford as a potential relocation site for Marshall Aerospace and Defence. The most significant issue was that the airspace above any new buildings would, for safety reasons, have to become a no-fly zone. This, along with the existing restrictions over Duxford village, would dictate flight patterns that would put undue stress on historic aircraft airframes making any sort of aerobatics from the airfield virtually impossible. Marshalls remain confident they will be in a position to confirm a preferred relocation option during 2020.

Climate Change

Cambridgeshire County Council plans to increase its commitment to dealing with environmental and climate issues by proposing a new strategic objective in its business plan of 'reaching a net zero carbon target by 2050. This is likely to include mitigating carbon emissions from our buildings and fleet vehicles – with a commitment to take all 69 of the buildings currently owned or occupied off fossil fuel heating by 2023 and to replace all fleet cars and vans with electric vehicles by 2025. Rather less specifically we will be "Managing changes to infrastructure to manage the risk of significant climate change" as well as looking after Cambridgeshire's air, water and soil to ensure the future health of Cambridgeshire people, flora and fauna.

Fire Authority

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority is proposing a two per cent increase to the fire service's proportion of council tax for 2020/21. This equates to an extra £1.41 a year for a Band D property, totalling £72.15 a year or £1.38 a week.

This is the most the Fire Authority is allowed to ask for due to capping restrictions. The Fire Authority's government grant for 2020/21 is remaining the same as this year so the small council tax increase will only cover inflation costs. This will enable the Fire Authority to maintain the current service but will not allow for any growth or additional investment. The Fire Authority would like to know if you support this proposal. Please click here to have your say <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/H5BWSBV>. You can also email enquiries@cambsfire.gov.uk.

Winter Gritting

A massive thank you to all the volunteers who already take part in our Community Gritting Scheme.

This is a scheme where local volunteers help to keep their community moving in freezing weather. The parish or town council agrees specific routes in their area which are important to the local community and agrees them with the county council. If you or someone in your parish or town council would like to join the scheme, please email highways@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

POTHoles TAKE A CHRISTMAS BREAK

Thanks very much to residents and parish councillors for reporting potholes and other highways problems on-line and alerting us to having done so. This really helps to get repairs into the queue sooner rather than later. Unfortunately, we continue to exist in reactive mode with emergency repairs and no prospect of any significant change to the status quo – we need much more funding.

The County Council now requires its employees to take off the Christmas to New Year holiday period, which means that there's no one in the office to process reports of Highways faults during that time, causing a backlog in January. Our Highways officers do their best in very difficult circumstances – and lack the resource to do their jobs to the standard they would like, and which people rightfully expect.

Gamlingay First School

We print here excerpts from the latest correspondence from the County Council:

“Following our meeting with regards to the Gamlingay First School site, I wanted to acknowledge that I recognise your frustration and apologise that the initial plans had not been considered when the Strategic Assets Property Board were asked to consider the site surplus to requirements. I wanted to reassure yourself and your constituents that no decisions have been taken on the future of the site.”

“To summarise the next steps, the Education service will liaise with the CAM Academy Trust about alternative educational uses resulting in a business case that considers the future sustainability of the site as an educational establishment... This discussion will take precedence over other options for development. Should the proposal be unfeasible, alternative proposals will be considered that conform to Planning, Listed Building and Legal restrictions that apply to the site.”

“In the meantime, a mobile building will be installed on site (subject to planning consent) to support the local Early Years provision. Due to the condition of the current accommodation of the Gamlingay Montessori, this type of unit is considered the quickest and most feasible solution in light of the timescales for them needing to move into alternative accommodation. Currently this is anticipated to be on site early 2020.”

A work in progress....

Village Design Guide

Congratulations to all those involved with the Gamlingay Village Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which has now been adopted following statutory consultation and consideration of representations. In particular, Kirstin Rayner has driven much of the work and a big thank you must go to her for all her hard work.

Green End Housing Gamlingay

Re: S/4085/19/RM- Application for approval of all matters reserved for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping following outline planning permission s/2066/15/OL- for the demolition of existing industrial and office units and 5 dwellings and the erection of up to 90 dwellings has now been considered and approved by the Parish Council with some suggestions as to how it could be improved. The developers held a public meeting explaining how they had ended up with the design principles. Residents had some suggestions and Sebastian has asked the developers to ensure local consultation takes place with regard to the new street names.

While the S106 contributions are not as significant as those for Station Road they do add up: £42k for community facilities, £240k for pre-school/early years provision, £513k for primary education, £53k for health and £94k for sports provision alongside 40% affordable homes.

Archer Bridge Barrington/Shepreth

We have been contacted by County Highways to advise that the Barrington/Shepreth Road will be closed at Archer Bridge between 24th February 2020 and 12th April 2020, although this may alter slightly depending on weather conditions and water levels over the coming weeks.

“Assessments and inspections have found the bridge to be substandard and requiring to be strengthened and refurbished to ensure the long term survival of this Listed structure. We are therefore looking to carry out extensive brickwork and mortar repairs to the external faces and cutwaters of the bridge as well as installing a concrete saddle over the bridge to protect the arch. This will therefore require a full closure of the road and a diversion will be in place throughout the length of the works”.

The diversion route is via the Foxton rail crossing on the A10 which is less than ideal at the best of times. However the County will install a temporary **footbridge** adjacent to Archer Bridge which will allow pedestrians and cyclists to be unaffected by the scheme.

We have written to ask if it might not be sensible to construct a permanent bridge as required by the S106 for the Quarry – we shall see.

Ashwell & Morden Station Car Parking

We are working with the landowner and his advisers to try and resolve this issue once and for all. Pre-app advice has been sought from South Cambs to establish whether a small residential development at Cheyney's Lodge could be used to fund the delivery of a 100 space carpark for the Station and – once opened – hard measures to stop all parking along the local roads. Initial feedback from South Cambs was not helpful so I have asked the Leader of the Council to intervene to help develop a sensible and extremely community-minded project that has wide local support.

School Funding

Very fed up to note that the County Council has asked the Dept of Education if it can remove 1.8% of the main schools budget and put it in the High Needs Block to help meet the extra cost of providing for the increasing number and proportion of children needing extra help (and also to help pay off the £16 m deficit carry forward). This will mean, if approved, that the per pupil allocation in mainstream schools will go down by £50 per head. A perfect example of how dreadfully central government view the education of our children.

THUMBS UP TO JOINING UP CROSS-BORDER BUS SERVICES

Following on from the recent Cam Vale Bus User Group meeting we're delighted to report unanimous support from all those present for amalgamating the 127 and 90/91 bus services, running in Cambs and Herts respectively. For the Bassingbourn-Litlington-Mordens area this would mean a link for 127 passengers over to Baldock and Letchworth Stations in territory currently covered by the 90/91. These are subsidized services – meaning that they are not commercially viable and require council financing - and these days Cambridgeshire subsidized bus services are never guaranteed funding from one financial year to the next. So it's hoped that this collaboration will make the services stronger together. Various options for the new combined service were discussed, including one option for connecting to Ashwell & Morden Station; council officers will now look at the detail and get back to us on the most viable routing (viability also including reasonable fares). The idea would be to commence the new service in July.

Meanwhile, upon request of the Cam Vale Bus User Group, the Combined Authority has agreed in principle to look at refurbishing bus stops along much of the route of the current 127 line. An inspection will be undertaken shortly. Thanks to our colleagues in Hertfordshire for their extensive interest and initiative in collaborating on what is a vital rural public transport route for our area.

If you'd like to join the Cam Vale Bus User Group mailing list, please get in touch.

Bus Passes

Unfortunately, the County Council no longer offers bus passes in paper form. To apply for a concessionary bus pass, you need to ring 0345 045 1367, or go on-line. To apply on line: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/buses/free-bus-pass/> The postcode field is designed to prevent non Cambridgeshire postcodes from being processed through the system. The postcode needs to be entered as three digits a space and then the last three digits, with the characters in upper case as it would appear on a postal address. Do please get in touch if you're experiencing any frustrations!

ELECTRONIC HEALTH CARE

Plans for digitizing many aspects of our health services have been set out by our local NHS 'Sustainable Transformation Partnership', a management group tasked with overseeing coordination of the many NHS partners that combine to provide our health care. These plans are aspirational and not set out in any practical detail, and yet the intention is for digital transformation to take place quickly – the call having been issued by Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

With the goal of reducing Outpatients face-to-face time by 30%, as patients we may be asked to engage in consultations by video link or email. This will work for some but not others, given the lack of access to the necessary digital technology by a significant segment of the population. Patients should also be able to access their records on-line, though even now many of our local health partners are unable to speak to each other digitally, because they use different systems – for example, Addenbrooke's and Royal Papworth Hospitals. And some GP practices are not signed up to the principle of making their own doctors' notes available to patients on-line.

Meanwhile, new health apps like the 'NHS App' and 'Doctorlink' are appearing on the scene. Only after one has registered is it possible to see what they're about and to examine the fine print – raising more questions, including that of scams.

Goals are ambitious, but reflect the urgent shortfall of resources seen across the NHS.

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!
