

Gamlingay Division Councillors Report – South Cambridgeshire District Council & Cambridgeshire County Council – February 2021

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 Cllr.BridgetSmith@scamb.gov.uk 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)

Covid

Very sadly we are still seeing at least 1 death a day in South Cambs and our incidence of Covid is decreasing only very slowly especially in the over 60s age range. We have to redouble our efforts to stay at home and to remain socially distanced. The vaccine programme is rolling out well and by the time you read this we are hopeful that all over 80s will be vaccinated. Vaccines were delivered in all our Care Homes except those with active outbreaks at the end of January. Sadly we have seen some very serious outbreaks in care homes and it will be a huge relief when all residents and staff are fully vaccinated.

If you need Transport to vaccination sites – please call the central booking point on 0345 045 5219 and please be aware for Gamlingay and the Hatleys the Car Scheme is there to help. Passengers need to be able to enter/exit the back seat without assistance, wear a mask and of course sanitise hands. If you need help with transport call 07519493701

Rapid Flow Testing

By the time you read this we will have begun the roll-out of rapid community Covid-19 testing, using lateral flow tests, in Cambridgeshire. These rapid tests are for people without Covid-19 symptoms, who are known as ‘asymptomatic’.

South Cambs are offering these tests because we know that around one in three people who are infected with Covid-19 have no symptoms and could be spreading the disease without knowing it. Broadening testing to

identify key workers showing no symptoms will mean finding positive cases more quickly, which helps break chains of transmission.

Tests will be offered at no cost to the public and the process of taking a test takes on average 15 minutes from arrival to departure. The site serving you is at The Hub, High Street, Cambourne, South Cambridgeshire, CB23 6GW. The site will be open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. To book a test, people need to visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting .

We are also reminding everyone who takes a test of the support that we can offer to anyone who needs help to isolate. More information about this support is available at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport

Vaccines for volunteers helping with Covid Effort

The NHS has now opened up access to the COVID vaccine to staff and volunteers from community groups currently directly working or having contact with people in priority groups. These include those involved in the direct supply of food and other goods, those supporting older people and those with long term health issues and those supporting vulnerable children and young people. In addition volunteer drivers involved in transporting people to vaccine appointments are also eligible.

If you believe you and/or volunteers you know meet the eligibility criteria please send an email to [enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk/](mailto:enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk)

Are you over 70?

All over 70s and those in a clinically extremely vulnerable group are now able to book an appointment for a covid vaccination. Please **DO NOT CALL** your surgery as they are unable to book these appointments and it causes delays for those patients trying access medical care.

Patients should go on-line or phone 119 to book an appointment. For Gamlingay residents appointments are released at the Weatherley Centre in Biggleswade on a weekly basis at present and alternative venues are also able to be selected. For residents of other Parishes locations include Royston, Grafton Centre Cambridge, Letchworth with more sites opening each week.

For Litlington and the Mordens Bassingbourn & Ashwell Surgery group currently say: “**Please do not contact Ashwell and Bassingbourn to ask when you will receive the vaccine.** The bookings are being made by a separate team so the admin staff that will be working on the front desks will not be able to answer your queries.” Updates: https://www.ashwellsurgery.co.uk/practice_news/covid-vaccine-delivery/

Royston Health Centre currently says: “If you are over 75 years old, a patient at our practice, and haven't yet heard from us, please now contact us to arrange your appointment. If you have received a text message

invitation, you can book through this. If you have received an invitation letter from the NHS, you also have to option to contact the phone number and arrange vaccination at one of the mass vaccination centres such as the Grafton Centre or Stevenage.” Royston Health Centre updates: <https://www.roystonhealthcentre.co.uk/page1.aspx?p=14>

Coronavirus: I NEED HELP

People continue to catch Covid-19 and will still need to self-isolate. To help make sure that residents know about the support that is available to help them with this, South Cambs District Council will post a Coronavirus-related direct mail to all households from next week. This will contain an A4 flyer, produced by the Council, that details the financial and practical support available to people who need to self-isolate. Information is also posted here: I need help – www.scambs.gov.uk

Cambridge Water Treatment Works

South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are urging local people to get involved in the next stages of the design and planning for a new plant, which Anglian Water says will support the local ambition towards net zero carbon, and also deliver wider benefits for people and wildlife.

Anglian Water have announced that the preferred site for their new plant is an area north of the A14 between Fen Ditton and Horningsea.

The proposed relocation would allow a new net zero carbon facility, meeting exemplar environmental standards, to replace the existing plant which is near Cambridge North railway station. This will unlock opportunities for future development on that site, as well as providing for planned growth in places such as Waterbeach New Town. The project means that no additional treatment facilities would be needed at the new town as wastewater would be treated at the new plant.

Fly Tipping

South Cambs reports that there has been no significant increase in fly tipping since the introduction of pre-book visits to Household Waste Centres. Tipping is incredibly annoying especially as we all pay for it to be collected via our Council Tax. If you see fly tipping please do report it straight away. Officers always sift through the rubbish and VERY OFTEN find personal information they can use to track the perpetrators. South Cambs always prosecute.

<https://forms.scambs.gov.uk/REPORTENVIROCRIMEWASTEINYOURARE/EA/launch>

Combined Authority Housing Programme.

The CA was given £100million 4 years ago to build over 2000 affordable homes in Cambridgeshire. For reasons that are difficult to untangle (though questions have been asked about the 'value for money') the last tranche of £45million has not been paid over as and when expected. This was discussed at the last Housing Committee Meeting and reassurance was given by the chair that it was just a formality and the money would arrive any day. Since then, The Chair has written to committee members to withdraw his statements as potentially misleading:

'At that meeting, I answered a public question [...] including the words "We have received no indication from MHCLG that we will not receive the outstanding £45m of funding for the remainder of our housing programme". Upon reflection, I personally do not consider that the response to that question demonstrated sufficient balance of the issues and I am concerned about how that was presented to the Committee. This was in light of an email from sent by MHCLG to the CPCA on 14th October 2020 which advised "that there are currently no guarantees of further funding" in respect of the CPCA Housing Programme.

This is a really worrying development as that money was destined to provide housing for those who suffer most from the extremely high house and land values in our area.

Caring for covid positive hauliers

You may have seen that the Department of Transport has taken over The Cambridge Hotel in Bar Hill to accommodate hauliers returning to France who had tested positive for Covid. Local volunteer groups are supplying them with welcome packs to make sure that they know they are welcome and that their stay is as pleasant as possible.

Business Support

Businesses in South Cambridgeshire can now apply for the latest round of Government financial help for closures during the post-Christmas period and through the Spring. There are several different Government grants available for these periods and different rules and timings apply depending on the nature of the affected business. South Cambs is anxious to help businesses navigate the application process so please contact the Council if you need to make a claim.

NATS Luton Stack

The consultation on the proposed changes to airspace for Luton Airport is now closed. Many organisations and residents have expressed considerable concern. Sebastian raised the issue as a concern at the County Council which has subsequently written to express concerns about the process and the potential impact on Huntingdon, Gamlingay and surrounding villages. South Cambridgeshire District Council has also

written to object and Bridget drew the attention of the Board of the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority (of which she is a member) to highlight local concerns about the stack being over rural villages such as Gamlingay in the Combined Authority response to the consultation. The CA accepted that the Luton stack was better placed over urban areas where the ambient noise was greater and therefore the impact on residents less.

Thakeham

Sebastian writes: “You may recall a proposal for a new town of 25,000 houses across nine South Cambs villages by Thakeham. The South West Cambridge Action Group submitted a number of Freedom of Information requests as part of its campaign against the development. The results make concerning reading. It is clear – as Thakeham itself has admitted – that the company wants to develop the town using some mechanism other than what everyone else is doing, which is submitting a site to South Cambs as part of the Local Plan process. Thakeham wants to run the process ‘concurrently,’ deploying national mechanisms too, although exactly what mechanism they intend to use is still unknown (at least to us).

In last year’s budget, the Chancellor announced the setting up of a Cambridge Development Corporation, but did not reveal any details, including where exactly the new town would be situated. There has been no engagement, nor any timeline published. SWCAG’s concern is that Thakeham and this “DevCo” are perhaps the same thing. So SWCAG asked. Worryingly its Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been denied, on the basis that information revealed would be a ‘distraction’ and that ‘it is not in the public interest to disclose this information at this time’. The FOI request was for information relating to a Cambridge ‘Development Corporation’ – a central government vehicle for creating new towns that bypasses normal planning processes.

It will not have escaped your attention that the Thakeham new town also sits on the approximate route of East West Rail’s first attempt at the Bedford-Cambridge section. So SWCAG asked for details of that relationship using FOI. The response was bland except for the following extract from an email from Thakeham to EWR which runs “We are in advanced discussions with Homes England to join us as our promotion and delivery partner”. The FOI submitted to Homes England remains outstanding.“

Census 2021

As if the prospect of the end of lockdown wasn’t enough excitement to look forward to, this year also sees Census 2021 on March 21st. Prepare for a blizzard of publicity! We would urge you to reply as soon as you can as otherwise you will be faced with constant reminders and – yes –

potentially a knock on your door asking for your completed form. Nobody wants that.

Our Fire & Rescue Service

As you may remember Sebastian sits on the Fire Authority. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (yes, not making this up) undertook an inspection of the Service to see how it was dealing with the pandemic and they came away "impressed" with how the service responded to the pandemic effectively, and how the health and wellbeing of our people was put at the forefront of decision-making.

While the service maintained its functions of prevention, protection and response it also provided additional support to the community. It used its wholetime firefighters to respond to emergencies, and used the increased availability of its on-call workforce to provide extra support, especially to its local ambulance trust. This meant the people of Cambridgeshire were better supported through the pandemic. Firefighters helped out with driving ambulances, training staff to drive ambulances, face fitting masks to be used by frontline NHS and clinical care staff working with COVID-19 patients, and welfare visits to the vulnerable who were shielding. Resources were well managed, and the service's financial position was largely unaffected.

What does my Council Tax buy?

Rubbish. It's quite an issue. When you put out your bin it is emptied by South Cambs (which has the duty to collect) and the bin lorry takes it to Waterbeach where it is processed by contractors employed by the County Council (which has the duty to dispose). The contractors (via a PFI) can do what they can with the rubbish – recycle (and sell), compost the organic waste or ultimately to tip into landfill (at a cost to you of £94.15 per tonne Landfill Tax). This is what happens now.

However, Cambridgeshire has declared a Climate Change Emergency and so we need to think about changing the way we treat rubbish from 'linear' (where you and I "take, make, use, throw") to 'circular' where we keep resources in use as long as possible extracting maximum value from them.

This has all sorts of implications as we head to 2050. For example in 2023 you can expect to see the potential roll-out of a deposit return scheme, legislation introducing mandatory separate food waste collection and extended producer responsibility for packaging coming into force – no more coconuts wrapped in clingfilm!

By 2035 we expect to have less than 10% of our rubbish going into landfill. So your Council Tax will not only continue to pay for the collection and disposal of your rubbish as it does today but it will also need to fund the new processes and kit required to reduce our consumption, increase our

recycling/reuse and to do our bit to protect our planet from more of our rubbish.

Drains: Surface and Foul water flooding

During January flooding we were alerted to a number of neighbourhood hot spots. Orwell and Guilden Morden have been particularly hard hit by foul water overflows. Anglian Water have explained excessive rain run-off and ground water has infiltrated their network and of course they are also dealing with the impact on Covid on team members.

Please can we encourage anyone concerned about foul sewerage issues on their own property to contact Anglian Water on 03457 145145 – it's really important to get this onto their list.

Flooding in Arrington on the A1198 has again been an issue with the road closed from time to time (although largely ignored by through traffic). Some residents have had to sandbag their properties with at least one garage flooded. The issue is getting worse and more and more people are being impacted. The Parish Council has asked for an emergency meeting with Highways, landowners and Wimpole Estate to try – again – to get to the bottom of why so much water rushes down the hill to the road.

In Gamlingay the blocking of a field ditch appears to be forcing field water onto Heath Road, which then freezes and is a highway hazard – this is part of a long running issue and we are looking at ways to resolve it. For any other flooding concerns please log here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/planning-and-development/flood-and-water/report-a-flood>

Field Footpaths

We've received a number of reports of ploughed-over footpaths in our villages. These should always be reported on the Highways reporting site: <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/> Please do try to keep to the paths – no matter how muddy – as crops are damaged by walkers heading away from the mud and – in woodland – new paths damage the flora.

Do please contact us if you have any concerns and we'll do our best to help.

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!
