

Joint District Councillors' Report July & August 2018

District councillors' monthly report for the communities of Histon & Impington, Orchard Park and King's Meadow.

Summer fun

Where did the summer go? Where did our July report go? There were holidays and some work travel, and August was a quiet month, so at some point we decided to do a combined report for July and August. We'll be back to a regular monthly cadence now.

The impact of the A14 improvement works.

There has been little let-up over the summer holiday with the noisy nightworks and, whilst the road is closed, there has been the added disruption of HGVs ignoring official diversions and driving through our villages at all hours. Members of the A14 Action Group have been very active in raising the issues on the Facebook page and through complaints to Highways England, South Cambs and our MP. Pippa has been having weekly meetings with South Cambs officers to push for a change in the Council's approach and to get greater attention to their mandate to monitor and enforce the conditions under which the A14 scheme is being undertaken. This includes the way that South Cambs is following up on complaints from residents, acting on the breach by HE of air quality monitoring conditions and, importantly, the request to Highways England for resources for SCDC so that the Council can bring in the right skills in order to fulfil its mandate. Pippa escalated all of this to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development for both City and South Cambs District Council who then wrote a formal letter to HE requesting, among other things, the funding necessary. See Pippa's blog post about this: <https://hiopcouncillors.wordpress.com/2018/07/25/south-cambs-clarifying-and-communicating-its-role-over-a14-scheme/> A dedicated page has been set up on the SCDC website with information on the complaints process and what South Cambs is doing. Nevertheless, being part of SCDC as Councillors, we realise that the officers are working under difficult circumstances with very few resources. SCDC has not been held to account before on its mandate to monitor such a large infrastructure project – and it doesn't have the resources to do so effectively. This is a complex infrastructure project and requires multiple and highly technical skills. It also takes place under different legislation from planning conditions for house-building. It is critical, therefore, to fight to get the funding needed to bring in the skills needed. We have discovered that Highways England does indeed fund local authorities to help them manage such infrastructure projects in their area. So, this could have and should have happened before the A14 Improvement Scheme started. A couple of weeks ago, Pippa escalated the problem once again within SCDC when it was clear that there had been little progress with the issues raised in the letter. A couple of days later, the meeting between HE and the Joint Director finally happened and, after negotiation, an agreement was reached to provide some funds for SCDC. These funds will be used to have a dedicated officer for all follow-up with HE and, critically, a framework contract that will enable them to draw down on the multiple expert skills needed to determine the specific mitigation measures that should be in place for noise, air quality, vibrations etc.

Pippa is also pushing now for South Cambs to apply these lessons – ahead of time - to the upcoming A428 and A10 works.

Meanwhile, Pippa co-facilitated the second meeting of the Engagement Group on Friday 31st July, which brings together HE, A14 Integrated Delivery Team, South Cambs officers and the A14 Action Group. This meeting focussed on the problems with air quality monitoring and set up a series of working groups that will enable residents, officers and the A14 sub-contractors to work in detail on the key issues: nightworks, noise, air quality and landscaping. Sign up for the A14 Action Group newsletter about such meetings and the working groups at: <https://a14actiongroup.wordpress.com/meetings-and-events/>

Community Rooms Review

A review is being held into use of the community rooms in the District's sheltered housing schemes to see if they can be more effectively used. Steve attended the meeting at St Audrey's Close, and Martin those at Kay Hitch way and Homefield Park. The meetings were well-attended by residents, and all three groups of users emphasised the value of the rooms as a community hub, and that they wished to keep them. There was a feeling expressed particularly strongly at Kay Hitch Way and St Audrey's that use would be more effective if there was an organiser on the ground since currently activities were dependent on the energy and enthusiasm of the residents. It was noted that the availability of rooms for external users is not widely known in the community, and that they should be better promoted and made easier to hire.

Planning

Two of the three "station sites" have now received consent. However, the station yard site is still dragging along due to continued concern regarding surface water drainage.

There will now be a new consultation period opened for the amended plans submitted for the proposed construction of 26 dwellings in the land North of Impington Lane. This follows concerns raised by residents that they were unable to access all documents on the Planning Applications webpage. Pippa followed this up with the caseworker and has also confirmed that the application will now be handled at the October Planning Committee rather than the upcoming September one, to allow for due process. See below for an update on the Local Plan status which has a direct bearing on this application.

The benefits of an integrated planning service for both South Cambs district and the City are acknowledged in terms of coordinated development allocations. This has been demonstrated in the Council's response to proposals by Uttlesford District Council in their draft local plan in which allocations are made by each district according to its own interests. All the new development in the North of Uttlesford District is proposed on a major site directly adjacent to the South Cambs boundary. South Cambs has made a robust response when consulted on this proposal.

Local Plan News

South Cambridgeshire District Council will publish the Inspectors' Reports on the Local Plan in early September. The Inspectors have concluded that the Local Plan is 'sound' subject to a number of requested modifications.

There will be a briefing for District Councillors on September 6th. The Local Plan will be presented to a Cabinet meeting in late September before a final decision on adoption is made at the full Council meeting on 27th September.

Climate Change

The new Climate Change and Environment committee will hold its first meeting on September 20th in which outlines of a forward strategy will be considered. Both the chair (Pippa) and vice-chair (Martin) are local councillors, and they welcome any views expressed by local residents on this key issue.

Full Council Meeting, July 19th.

Council agreed to introduce a 12-month pilot scheme whereby the public can make written representations at full Council meetings without prior notice. This is an attempt to address the problem that, at present, questions need to be submitted prior to the agenda being published, which limits public participation on matters related to agenda items. Under the pilot scheme, members of the public will be able to submit a written question relating to an agenda item up to 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. The question will be addressed during the discussion of the item concerned.

A motion that Council should continue to oppose congestion charging in Cambridge was defeated. It was felt by many members that any proposed scheme should be considered on its own merits, as part of a broader debate on transport policy, and that a blanket policy of opposing congestion charging was inappropriate and potentially restrictive.

A motion from Pippa to reduce the avoidable use of single-use plastics by the Council was agreed unanimously. The Climate Change and Environment Advisory Committee, in co-ordination with Officers and relevant Portfolio Holders, will now investigate ways to achieve this, with the aim of making evidence-based recommendations by the end of the year.

A motion that the Council should review the Council's activity to promote equality and diversity amongst its workforce and, in particular, actively seeks ways to make South Cambridgeshire District Council an Employer of Choice for people with disabilities, was agreed.

A motion was agreed that South Cambridgeshire District Council write to the Government Minister responsible requesting the suspension of the Universal Credit roll out in South Cambridgeshire, in light of the NAO report that raised the potential negative impact on the lives on claimants.

People's Vote

We have received a number of messages asking the Council to ask the Government to hold a People's Vote on any Brexit deal negotiated by the Government. It is likely that this will be considered in September. On another note, Martin, with councillors from Fulbourn and Milton, met Lucy Frazer at very short notice on July 6th to make the point that the South Cambridgeshire wards in South East Cambridgeshire constituency voted very heavily for candidates committed to remaining in the EU (as did Histon and Impington in the referendum).

Community Chest

As you may be aware, the Community Chest and Community Energy Grants schemes were suspended by the new administration to allow elected members to review the schemes' criteria. The Grants Advisory Committee did that in July and presented its recommendations to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 14th August, for examination prior to consideration by Cabinet.

Their recommendations may be viewed in full on the South Cambs website. A significant point is that Parish Councils will be ineligible to apply for grants, as they have the potential to raise funds by precepting. Small non-precepting parish meetings will, however, be eligible. Other changes are aimed at ensuring funds are prioritised for schemes that have wide community benefit and to replace the previous maximum of £3000 p.a. per parish with a formula based on size of ward.

Food Banks Collection Points

During the long summer holidays with kids not getting school lunches, some families find it harder than ever to make ends meet. Following an initiative by the Chairman of SCDC, we were happy to help get food bank collection points set up at Orchard Park One-Stop and Histon Co-op, and our thanks go to the management of those stores for agreeing to have them. Please donate something if you can.

Meetings held in July and August 2018

Date	Meeting	Venue	Councillor
1 st July	Assistance with Parklife Open Day	Milton	Martin
3 rd July	Weekly Delegation decision meeting of Chair & Vice-Chair Planning and Head of Planning	Cambourne	Pippa
3 rd July	Weekly A14 meeting with South Cambs senior officers to review progress on resolving problems at J32	Cambourne	Pippa
5 th July	Housing Training	Cambourne	Martin, Pippa
6 th July	Meeting with Lucy Frazer re Brexit	Fulbourn	Martin (plus 4 councilors from Milton and Fulbourn)
9 th -12 th July	Hosting of Work Experience student from Impington Village College.	Cambridge, Northstowe, Cambourne, Impington, Orchard Park.	Martin, Pippa, David Jenkins (plus others)
10 th July	Site visits for Planning Applications		Pippa, Martin
10 th July	Weekly Delegation decision meeting of Chair & Vice-Chair Planning and Head of Planning	Cambourne	Pippa

10 th July	Weekly A14 meeting with South Cambs senior officers to review progress on resolving problems at J32	Cambourne	Pippa
11 th July	Orchard Park Community Council	Orchard Park	Pippa, Martin, Steve
11 th July	Planning Committee (preceded by workshop on Self Build housing)	Cambourne	Pippa, Martin,
12 th July	Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cambourne	Martin
13 th July	Engagement Meeting with Highways England, South Cambs & A14 Action Group	Impington	Pippa
16 th July	Cambridge Carbon Footprint – presentation of Climate Committee	Cambridge	(Pippa via recorded video)
16 th July	H&I Parish Council	PC Offices, Rec	Pippa, Martin, Steve
17 th July	Weekly Delegation decision meeting of Chair & Vice-Chair Planning with Head of Planning	Cambourne	Pippa
17 st July	Weekly A14 meeting with South Cambs senior officers to review progress on resolving problems at J32	Cambourne	Pippa
17 th July	Environmental Health Training	Cambourne	Martin
19 th July	Full Council	Cambourne	Pippa, Martin, Steve
23 rd July	Camb and Peterborough Combined Authority Scrutiny & Overview Committee	March	Pippa (as substitute)
24 th July	Community Rooms Review Meeting – St. Audrey's Close	Histon	Steve
24 th July	Community Rooms Review Meeting – Kay Hitch Way	Histon	Martin
24 th July	Weekly Delegation decision meeting of Chair & Vice-Chair Planning with Head of Planning	Cambourne	Pippa
26 th July	Community Rooms Review Meeting – Homefield Close	Impington	Martin
28 th July	Weekly A14 meeting with South Cambs senior officers to review progress on resolving problems at J32	Cambourne	Pippa
30 th July	Member training in: Charing and Managing Case-work	Cambourne	Pippa
14 th August	Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cambourne	Steve
16 th August	Site visits and Planning Committee	Cambourne	Pippa

28 th August	Presentation: “Considerations of a Future Cambridge” looking at growth, housing and transport scenarios	Cambourne	Pippa, Steve
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Forthcoming meetings

4 th September	Civic Affairs Committee	Cambourne	Martin
6 th September	A14 Member Forum	Swavesey	Steve, Martin
6 th September	Local Plan briefing	Cambourne	Steve, Martin
12 th September	Planning Committee	Cambourne	Pippa, Matrin
12 th September	Cambridge Fringes JDCC	Guildhall	Steve
12 th September	Orchard Park Community Council	Orchard Park	TBD
14 th September	A14 Core Working Group meeting	PC Officer	Pippa
17 th September	Incinerator planning decision meeting	Shire Hall	Steve
17 th September	H&I Parish Council	PC Offices	TBD
18 th September	Scrutiny and Overview Committee	Cambourne	Martin
19 th September	Brexit Committee	Cambourne	Martin
20 th September	Climate and Environment Advisory Committee	Cambourne	Pippa, Martin
21 st September	A14 Engagement Group meeting	Orchard Park Community Centre	Pippa
27 th September	Full Council	Cambourne	Pippa, Steve, Martin