

County councillor's monthly report for April 2020

For the Histon and Impington (H&I) county council division of Cambridgeshire which also includes King's Meadow and Orchard Park.

Following the sudden close down of all council activity there's been a return with many committees meeting virtually this month. There's been some argument about how they should meet but despite the concerns about it's security Zoom is the application of choice with Microsoft Teams being used if meetings have to go into a secret session. Because such applications are being used all meetings are now recorded and broadcast on YouTube.

As a part of its role in the Strategic Coordination Group the Council has taken on the responsibility to make and stay in contact with people who are identified as shielded and/or in high risk of severe illness. It claims to be in contact with such people weekly and is making a push to maximise its coverage of these people during May.

It seems like we're getting too much Covid-19 information about what's happening globally and nationally; it would be useful to know what's happening locally. The Organisation for National Statistics reports deaths by district council ward and it seems that there's been just 1 for Histon & Impington (including Orchard Park). [Click here](#) for that information. As of last Wednesday there are reported to be 1152 cases in Cambridgeshire which is about 17.5 cases/10000 people. That puts the county well below the national average.

Full Council meeting

There was no meeting of Full Council but there will be a virtual one in May.

Committee meetings and other council matters

Most meetings seemed to be just a matter of starting up again with nothing substantive on the agenda and the only items of interest being the Covid-19 updates.

Adults, Children & Young People, Highways & Infrastructure, Health: these committees did not meet
Communities & Partnerships: this committee met. There were no key decisions but the committee agreed to support two applications for funding from the Cultivate stream of the Innovate & Cultivate Fund.

Economy & Environment: there was a key decision relating to the award of the Design & Construction contract for the King's Dyke project in Whittlesey.

Commercial & Investment: there were no key decisions but a secret session about a new This Land business plan.

General Purposes: this committee met. In its one key decision relating to various financial transactions it approved top-up and contingency funding for the King's Dyke project

The Planning committee did not meet. It has not met since Oct 19 and its next meeting has been further (again) pushed back to Jun 20.

There was a meeting of the Constitution & Ethics Committee which I do not generally report. Sadly the Committee agreed by a majority to wind up the Cambridge Joint Area Committee and to withdraw from the Cambridge Fringes Joint Development Control Committee. Both decisions were taken in the absence of any meaningful evidence and in defiance of much public and other council opposition. My take on the meeting is at <https://wp.me/p7tuu7-1VW>.

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Neither the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive nor the Assembly met.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority met virtually but this time it was allowed to make its own decisions and not be a repeat of March's Mayor James Palmer show. As usual it seemed to spend its time agreeing to spend money. Its Transport & Infrastructure, Housing & Communities and Skills Committees, its Overview & Scrutiny Committee and its Employment & Skills Board also met.

The Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel did not meet. Its end March meeting was cancelled and it has not yet set a next date to meet.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority did not meet.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Health & Wellbeing Board did not meet.

Consultations relevant to this division (and elsewhere)

Consultation	Purpose/object	Due date and link
There are no currently active consultations		

More local matters

Work will start on the Greater Cambridge Partnership Histon Road scheme next Monday (11 May).

I have been talking to the new head of the Libraries Service to make sure that the future of Histon Library is secured.

I have worked with County Officers to get the wooden footbridge by Girton Wood repaired. I have also chased up work relating to the already marked up potholes at the High Street end of Station Road.

And finally ... alongside my council work I still do a little business and I'm quite proud of what's happening at one of the companies with which I work. It's a small manufacturing operation with global sales and it closed its factory at the start of the Boris lockdown and asked those people who could to work from home and furloughed the rest. As orders continued to come in it arranged for some people to work part-time to keep shipments ticking over and last Monday it reopened having made the factory 'Covid-19 compliant'. Its sales team continues to work from home and I've been running this since the beginning of March.

Much has been said of the advantages of home working and of the wonder of the various apps that can be used. And free of distractions productivity can be higher. That's all true of course but there is something missing when you can't have a face-to-face meeting with someone and the dynamics of a team meeting are not the same when you're not in the same room. There's got to be a happy medium and I look forward to moving towards it later in the year.

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Diary (next public meetings)

5 May	1400	Health Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
7 May	1000	Highways & Infrastructure	Shire Hall, Cambridge
7 May	1400	Children and Young People Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
12 May	1400	Adults Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
14 May	1000	*General Purposes Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
19 May	1030	Full Council	Shire Hall, Cambridge
20 May	1000	Communities & Partnership	Shire Hall, Cambridge
22 May	1000	*Commercial & Investments Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
28 May	1000	Economy & Environment Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
3 Jun	1000	C&P Combined Authority	ECDC office, Ely
4 Jun	1000	C&P Health & Wellbeing Board	Shire Hall, Cambridge
4 Jun	1000	Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly	SCDC office, Cambourne
11 Jun	1000	Planning Committee	Shire Hall, Cambridge
25 Jun	1400	Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	Hinchingbrooke Park
no date	1400	Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Panel	HDC office, Huntingdon

*committees of which I am currently a member; these may change. Note that the Council's diary is online https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccc_live/Meetings.aspx.