

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER July 2021

We are writing to you, as councillors and campaigners for our interlinked cluster of villages, to keep you informed of local issues involving the District and County Councils. If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please reply asking to be removed from the distribution list. If you know of someone not receiving this newsletter who would like to do so, please ask them to contact sallyannhart@riskingonpurpose.com, jose@josehales.me.uk, susanvandeven5@gmail.com, or peter.mcdonald@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

THANK YOU

We'd like to thank residents for their support in the May elections, which saw Sally Ann Hart elected to the District Council, where she now works alongside Jose Hales representing the Melbourn Ward, and Susan and Peter re-elected to the County Council.

A historic change of administration has taken place at the County Council, where the Conservatives failed to gain enough seats to form overall control (28 of 61). The Liberal Democrats, Labour and Independents (with 20, 9 and 4 seats respectively) have formed a new Joint Administration, led by Liberal Democrat Lucy Nethsingha and Labour Cllr Elisa Meschini as Deputy Leader. A Joint Agreement sets out the council's aims and principles and can be read here: https://www.cambridgeshirelibdems.org.uk/joint_administration_agreement

Peter now chairs Highways and Transport and Susan chairs the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health and Wellbeing Board. The Lib Dems have increased their number of seats at the District Council to 34 (out of 41), where Sally Ann has joined the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Jose continues to chair the Grants Committee.

Most importantly we look forward to continuing to work with you, our residents, in our communities.

A1198 SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS: WHADDON APPLICATION SUCCESS

We're delighted to share Whaddon Parish Council's news of a successful Local Highways Improvement grant for a lower speed limit, supported by infrastructure adjustments, along the A1198 between Whaddon Gap and Kneesworth – an important stretch of road that includes the entrance to Bassingbourn Barracks, the key turn to Whaddon village, several residential neighbourhoods and the entryway to Kneesworth. Together with Bassingbourn Parish Council and Bassingbourn Barracks, Susan has been supporting the application with County Highways.

PLANNING CONSENT FOR BASSINGBOURN VILLAGE HALL

Bassingbourn Parish Council's planning application for 'change of use' has been unanimously approved by South Cambs District Council, allowing the old Limes Communal Facility, formerly Bassingbourn School, to become Bassingbourn's first Village Hall.

VACCINATIONS AND RAPID FLOW TESTS

Our Cambridgeshire Public Health officers are asking us to help support the current vaccination drive, as well as the opportunity for regular Covid home testing, at a time when Covid cases have risen sharply in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge, especially among young people.

Addenbrooke's and GP surgeries are working hard with long waiting lists and there is little if any extra capacity to deal with further pressures.

Free Rapid Flow Test home kits are available at many local pharmacies and also on-line:
<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

THANK YOU TO OUR GP SURGERIES

GP surgeries are under unprecedented pressure with an enormous backlog of patient need, in many cases with medical conditions having worsened through time and Covid-inflicted delay. We'd like to say thank you to everyone supporting our GP practices, from nurses and GPs and dispensary staff to receptionists answering incoming calls.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S MULTI-MILLION GOVERNMENT FUNDING GAP FOR SOCIAL CARE

Adult social care is overwhelmingly the biggest financial obligation of the County Council, with need steadily increasing as our population ages and requires more complex care.

"Cambridgeshire's Adult Social Care budget is dependent on over £25m in government grant funding that is not confirmed to be continuing in the long-term, which is nearly 10% of our budget. We are also seeing costs increase each year as demand for our services rises, with around £50m of additional funding needed over the next five years.

Despite being some of the fastest growing local authorities, shire counties have consistently received less funding from government than other types of council. In 2021/22 shire counties received between a third and a half less funding than other councils."

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/local-social-care-champions-support-national-plea-for-more-funding>

We're grateful to residents for contacting us when they experience a problem – please don't hesitate to get in touch.

THAKEHAM HELICOPTERS AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE THREATS

Here's a round-up of activity from the South West Cambridge Action Group in relation to the speculative developer Thakeham's proposal for a town of 25,000 homes between Meldreth, Whaddon, Bassingbourn, Wimpole, Orwell, Barrington, Shepreth, Foxton and Melbourn:

- SWCAG invited Thakeham to a public meeting to answer questions from the public, but Thakeham has so far declined.
- Thakeham has to date not lodged a submission to the South Cambs Call for Sites, the statutory planning process in the creation of a new Local Plan. The window of opportunity to do so is diminishing.
- A response has been received on an appeal to a Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's Freedom of Information Act refusal – the appeal was denied on the basis that it was not in the public interest. SWCAG has been seeking to understand Thakeham's relationship with Government ministers in relation to the new town proposal. The FOI

refusal has been posted on the SWCAG website under the News and Events page:
www.swcag.org.uk

- Thakeham have confirmed that it has commissioned surveillance work on its proposed new town site and anecdotal evidence suggested that the flurry of helicopters overhead in early June were part of this. Now in response to direct questioning by SWCAG, Thakeham confirm that at least 'one' the helicopters was part of their surveillance.
- A local landowner has shared a copy of a letter received from Thakeham in which the developer suggests that compulsory purchase will be deployed if the landowner chooses not to participate in the Thakeham project. A copy of the letter is posted on the News and Events page at www.swcag.org.uk.
- Given assurances by our MP that there is no support for Thakeham's proposed 25,000 home South West Cambridgeshire development at any level of government, SWCAG has asked for Mr Browne's assistance in writing to the NFU and the Country Landowners Association (CLA) in Cambridgeshire to confirm this is the case, so that they can advise their members accordingly. SWCAG feels this could halt Thakeham's alleged strong-arming of landowners. A clear and unequivocal message from Government to key landowners would be very welcome.

You can contact SCWAG at info@swcag.org.uk, or via
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/southwestcambridgeactiongroup>

DRAINS: MORE TLC NEEDED

Heavy rainfall in June demonstrated that more work is needed especially in Melbourn High Street between the car park and traffic lights, and Meldreth High St between Bell Close and Station Rd. Highways has been notified and the drainage team will be back.

Meanwhile, the drainage team has been tending to South End and Park Close Bassingbourn and is due to return to Bassingbourn-cum-Kneesworth for a general inspection later in the summer/early autumn. Details will be shared with the parish council as soon as we have them.

HOW TO REPORT AN ABANDONED VEHICLE

Any concerns about abandoned vehicles can be reported here – we've used this and it works!
<https://www.scams.gov.uk/environment/envirocrime/abandoned-vehicles-faqs/>

COMMUNITY CHEST AND ZERO CARBON COMMUNITIES GRANTS

As always the Community Chest Grant scheme at SCDC is running, the application page and criteria can be found here <https://www.scams.gov.uk/community-development/grants/community-chest-grants/>

In addition, SCDC are also running a Zero Carbon Grant scheme, for a share of the £100,000 – deadline is July 30. For details and application page the link is <https://www.scams.gov.uk/nature-and-climate-change/zero-carbon-communities/zero-carbon-communities-grant/>

COUNTY FARMS AND MEADS FARM FOXTON

A recent tour of Meads Farm Foxton, which is part of the County Farms Estate, highlighted the cutting-edge approach to sustainable farming right here in our neighbourhood, and the close collaboration of tenant farmers and the County Council – as well as the opportunity for learning and for attracting young people to farming.

VERGES – TO CUT OR NOT TO CUT

Thank you for messages we've received about poor visibility at road junctions – we are responding to these via County Highways' grass cutting team. We've also heard the view that some verges have been cut unnecessarily – for example New Road Melbourn between the A505 and Summerhouse Farm.

LITTLE LANE ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

We've received a number of reports of property damage due to oversized vehicles entering and travelling down Little Lane, which narrows as it goes along toward its Orchard Rd exit. While a width restriction is already in place, signage is confusing and ineffective. Therefore, old signage is to be removed and replaced with new clear signage, appropriately situated, after discussion with residents and property owners.

BEECHWOOD AVENUE AND ASSOCIATED ROADS

Line painting of junctions at Elm Way and the Beechwood cul-de-sac will be completed when the line painting team is next in Melbourn. Another sweep will also take place. Thanks to Melbourn Parish Council for cutting back the tree at the cul-de-sac, in order to expose the 'no through road' signage.

FOWLMERE AERODROME TRAFFIC OVER THE VILLAGES

In response to a number of messages from across the villages – some who love and some who don't love small planes overhead – Jose reports:

Following a conversation with an Environment Enforcement Officer at SCDC we have been advised any complaints relating to air traffic into and out of Fowlmere Aerodrome would fall under the remit of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and not South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC). Any complaints about this activity would therefore need to be reported to them using the link below: <https://www.caa.co.uk/Passengers/Resolving-travel-problems/How-the-CAA-can-help/How-the-CAA-can-help/>

915 ROYSTON-CAMBRIDGE BUS ROUTE TAKES IN FOWLMERE

Following discussions between Peter and Stagecoach, the Royston-Melbourn-Shepreth-Foxton-Harston-Cambridge run now includes a swing to Fowlmere, dramatically improving connectivity for a community previously rated one of the most remote in Cambridgeshire in terms of public transport.

A10 CYCLE CAMPAIGN MEETING JULY 12

The campaign meets next on July 12, via Zoom. Please contact Susan for the link. Updates on the Melbourn Greenway scheme, path maintenance and awareness ride planning for the autumn will be on the agenda.

LOCAL WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN CONSULTATION

This consultation closes July 13 – please consider responding, at a moment when the health benefits of active travel have been strongly recognised.

<https://consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/ccc-local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-consultation-2021>

‘COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP’

Sally Ann reports: The South Cambs Community Safety Partnership has launched a free toolkit to help local people keep caring for their community as the pressures of the pandemic ease. Areas included are:

- [Preventing anti-social behaviour](#)
- [Crime prevention in your community](#)
- [Reaching your community](#)
- [Combating loneliness and social isolation](#)
- [Tackling road related concerns](#)
- [Making the environment feel safer and greener](#)
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More information can be found via link below:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/community-development/crime-anti-social-behaviour-and-community-safety/community-safety-toolkit/>

ZOOM CUPPA SURGERIES: WEDNESDAYS 5-6PM

If you'd like to meet with your councillors by Zoom, to bring any concerns or ask any questions, please come along to our weekly Wednesday Zoom Cuppa Surgery, 5-6 PM. Please contact Sally Ann for a link: Sallyannhart@riskingonpurpose.com.

ANYTHING WE CAN HELP TO RAISE?

We would be delighted to address any concerns you may have or help raise awareness of issues affecting our community via this newsletter.

And any questions or concerns, please contact us any time – details below.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We aim to disperse power, to foster diversity and to nurture creativity. Join the Lib Dems at <http://www.libdems.org.uk>

Sincerely yours,

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