

## **Monthly update for parish councils: April 2008**

I apologise for a shorter report than normal but it's been a hectic month with the elections and I've been doing my best to spend time on them whilst not forgetting my day job.

A quick word on the election: the Lib Dems did OK and I'd describe our results as pretty much a 0-0 draw. I did a fair amount of canvassing and I got lots of responses to our election literature; it was interesting to note that the issue which still seems to unite everyone remains traffic: volume and speed. I continue to be of the opinion that we will not get a satisfactory solution simply by looking at speed limits here and traffic calming there but that we need a fundamental rethink about how we change patterns of travel.

### **County Council meeting**

There was no council meeting in April. There will be one this month and it will be a pretty full agenda with a new Leader (to be announced this Friday) and a host of new posts to be filled, items for determination and 2 interesting motions.

### **Environment and Community Services**

The Appointments Committee meeting to consider proposals to reorganize the Adult Social Care directorate was postponed to allow the new Chief Executive to develop a better understanding of the issues involved.

It appears that the Guided Bus project is a month or two behind schedule and I note that the track lying gantry has not moved for several days. There are reports of it being difficult to pour concrete for foundations because of local water.

The audit commission report on the financial performance at Hinchingsbrooke hospital is going to scrutiny 12 May 08.

The County Council has submitted its response to the Northstowe developers' proposal. It is broadly critical. I submitted my own criticisms and these were incorporated in the Council's final response.

### **Children and Young People's Services**

There is concern about a recent ruling in Essex which criticized the County Council for arranging the adoption of a child in care against the wishes of the father.

The NUT strike went ahead 24 Apr 08 and attracted little sympathy.

### **Corporate Services**

There has been a flurry of activity regarding the proposed 'eco-town' development at Handley Grange (near Duxford) which featured on a recent government list. It has united just about everybody (except the City labour group). The project makes no sense, would not be served by public transport and

would simply be a commuter town for London. Other local 'developments' including the one in Mereham did not make the list.

### **Police**

There has been an upsurge of silly teenage behaviour in Histon: graffiti, car windows smashed, election posts uprooted and street signs damaged/stolen. I understand that the identity of the culprits is known.

### **Local issues**

I visited the guided bus track in Histon with Bob Menzies and a concerned local resident. It was recognised, again, that communication with residents has left much to be desired. And on a Saturday towards the end of the month there were complaints about noise and fumes from the security unit. The 24 hour Nutthals hotline did not work but fortunately Cambridgeshire Direct did and an SCDC environmental health officer came out and shut down an offending generator!

I have had a number of contacts regarding the Anglian Water road closure in Cottenham. These relate to premature and unnecessary closure and inadequate signage. They bring to mind the closures related to the guide bus.

### **Forthcoming meetings and events**

6 May 08	TIF presentation
13 May 08	County Council meeting
14 May 08	Cambridge Guided Bus Liaison (Histon City)
21 May 08	Development Control meeting
TBA	Cambridge Guided Bus Liaison (Histon North)

And finally ...I visited Germany during the month to attend a trade fair in Dusseldorf. As is typical when such fairs are on I found a hotel about an hour away by train and stayed in Bedburg, [www.bedburg.de](http://www.bedburg.de), a town with about 30K inhabitants. It was nice that my train ticket was included in the admission price for the fair and that connections were effortless and efficient. It was also interesting to see that the main street of Bedburg was marked out to make it clear that cars had no priority. There were no footpaths but the street was colour coded with a main part for cars only wide enough for one way traffic. If cars approached each other they would have to encroach on the cycle path in order to pass. There were frequent obstacles and speeds were low. Continental Europe is full of innovative ideas for controlling traffic in towns and villages. Let's apply a few here!

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