

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

### **County Council meeting**

There was no council meeting in August; there won't be one until October. However the first cabinet meeting following the summer is set for 9 Sep 08.

Reading my report for June I realize that we would have expected the report of the IDEA peer review of the Council to have been published by now (it was expected in Jul). It has not been but is expected shortly. I have been assured that there is nothing sinister about the delay.

### **Environment and Community Services**

The Council has announced another round of bus cuts. These are routes which are subsidized but have little patronage. It's difficult to argue with the numbers which are a snapshot of the situation today but you can't help thinking that if the County is being more strategic in its behavior it needs to be taking a longer term view and building a network rather than always looking at individual routes.

The excellent news all round has been the withdrawal of Tesco's Hanley Grange ecotown proposal (no mention on their web-site though; sore losers?) and the Inspector's decision to turn down the Mereham application (again no mention!). This is good news because both schemes were ill-conceived and developer driven. However the demand for new housing (despite the credit crunch) will not go away and we have to get ahead of the game and have our own proposals which we are willing to take forward. This applies at the regional, county and parish level.

### **Children's Service**

Another sign of the times: as is now required the new primary school at Trumpington Meadows was put out to bid. There was only one bid (thankfully no bid from Tesco!), from the Fawcett Federation Group which comprises individuals who are also members of the Fawcett school governing body. Good luck to them and let's hope that support from the County is appropriate (see my report last month about the new school at Orchard Park).

### **Corporate Services**

A new Director of Press and PR has been appointed.

### **Local issues**

It wasn't surprising to see Impington Post Office on the list of those which the Post Office intends to close. Using the simple criteria which it uses it suffers from being so close to the excellent one in Histon. However this analysis fails on several grounds and Impington Parish Council has made a submission based on them which argues for retention of the service. I visited over 20 businesses as I supported this work and about 90% were in support. The only ones which declined to support were the big banks which felt obliged to 'refer it to head

office'. It would be a pity to see this post office close because the postmaster has worked hard over the last 2 years to provide a higher level of service to local people and the business community.

I have met residents in Cottenham and Histon who have raised the issue of the state of pavements and their ease of use by people driving disabled scooters. It's not just a question of cracks and potholes, it's also width and camber and as we see more developments of sheltered accommodation for older people we should maybe be thinking about how their residents can use local facilities: a sort of 'safer routes to shops' program?

Matt Bradney and I met officers to talk about the speed limits review and how this can be expected to turn out for the B1049. This review will be simply analytical and cannot be expected to recommend changes which would be needed to meet the needs of Cottenham (20mph through the village) and Histon and Impington (30mph). However it will provide a baseline.

And more good news: the Arbury Park section 106 money has been recovered. Despite earlier statements to the contrary it was simply 'lent' to the Milton P&R project. Impington Parish Council now needs to come up with a sensible way to spend it.

### **Forthcoming meetings and events**

1-5 Sep 08	Histon beer festival at the Red Lion
8 Sep 08	CCC Development Control
10 Sep 08	Crime and Disorder Partnership annual meeting
13 Sep 08	Rampton horse show
15 Sep 08	Northstowe Development Control
16 Sep 08	Guided Bus Liaison Forum (Longstanton Histon)
18 Sep 08	Cambridge Guided Bus Liaison (Histon City)
19 Sep 08	A14 progress review meeting
24 Sep 08	South Cambs 'in your patch' meeting

And finally ... South Cambs has just told me (born in South Africa) that I'm Guyanese. They've said the same about my wife (born in Indonesia) and my son (born in Switzerland). All very amusing and not a big deal but gives me two causes for thought. Firstly why didn't South Cambs simply say sorry we've made a mistake instead of blaming the software? And secondly it's another reason for not being in favour of ID cards. We simply cannot be confident that any data held by the government about us is secure, accurate and appropriate. For more reasons to not favour ID cards go to [www.no2id.net](http://www.no2id.net).

Both this monthly report and the one for last month are on my website.

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