

Monthly update for parish councils: October 2008

County Council meeting

There was a Council meeting in October. It was quite lively with an item for determination, the Council's new waste strategy, and 2 motions.

The Lib Dems voted against the waste strategy because we think that it's unambitious and that the focus on recycling alone is insufficient.

Motion number 1 was anti-ID cards and was proposed by the Lib Dems. Despite a Tory amendment everyone, except Labour, voted for it. Motion number 2 was moved by the Tories and criticized the government for cutting the grant to EEDA. The Lib Dems did not support this because we recognize that times are tough and that it was right to redirect this funding to housing.

Environment and Community Services

There have been applicants to take on the role of chair of the transport commission to review TIF options. The committee making the decision has met and decided but the results will not be announced until later in November.

Matt Bradney and I met officers after the AJC to find out why there had been no progress regarding the AJC's agreement to go ahead with an HCV parking ban in Histon and Impington. It is not as straight forward as was initially thought but that can hardly excuse 3 months' inaction. Subsequently I met officers together with parish councilors 23 Oct 08 where a program was agreed. It is to be hoped that a final scheme can go to the 19 Jan 09 AJC.

Children's Services

I reported last month on the Northstowe school decisions. Although perfectly legitimate and above-board it was felt that the process should be scrutinised to ensure that subsequent decisions, there will be many, can take place effectively.

Corporate Services

A final restructuring proposal has now emerged and is to be presented to the Cabinet for its approval in December.

Local issues

I attended the Histon police panel. This was a particularly emotional meeting because it came just days after a rather unpleasant incident at Brook Close, Histon. The police acknowledged some shortcomings in its response to the incident but appears to have recovered well. Note that it was 'announced' that police panels will change next year as a part of the Council's community engagement agenda. As long as that means 'evolve' that's fine but I would be sensitive to a wholesales change of something which works reasonably well.

Histon and Impington Parish Councils jointly ran a 20s plenty event on the Green 20 Oct 08. Despite the rain it was well attended and received good publicity.

Local residents' concerns about speeding in our villages will not go away! Note that the results of the B1049 speed limits survey will be available next year.

Following my reading of its latest Ofsted report I visited Cottenham primary school and spent a very uplifting hour or so with its Head and Deputy. Primary schools almost by definition are happy places and the enthusiasm of the children for their school was splendid to see. This school is at the forefront in helping travelers' children to integrate and it is seeing success in this regard. Well done!

I enjoyed a site visit to Northstowe. Once inside the perimeter the airfield site is really attractive parkland and it's sad to think that it will all be concreted over. And although it's not really local we should note that Tesco and Handley Grange are back on the agenda; but this time it's inside the planning process.

I have taken the opportunity to have a full briefing from officers about minerals and waste movements for the A14 and housing developments. Although the former should not be an issue we must be concerned about, and seek solutions to, the many HCV movements in both directions which the latter will generate.

Impington Village College, of which I am a governor, is proposing to become a Foundation school. Many other schools, including Cottenham, have already made this change. I am aware that many local residents are concerned about this change and am pleased to be able to advise that extra consultation is to take place to address their concerns.

Denis Payne and I met officers at the Milton Road P&R site. This will open shortly and there is concern that the exit onto Butt Lane doesn't do enough to discourage traffic from turning left and driving through Impington.

Forthcoming meetings and events

3 Nov 08	Orchard Park action group
13 Nov 08	CGB meeting: Longstanton all the way to the City

And finally ... one of my colleagues at Qi3, where I do my day job, is Russian and he's been getting rather agitated by the press coverage of the events on the Russian yacht off Capri. Alex says that the press is anti-Russian, it's always referring to 'Russian Oligarchs' whereas the super-rich from other countries are just 'billionaires'. Why are they so negative about Russians? I had to explain to Alex: don't worry it's not the Russian Oligarchs that nobody likes it's Peter Mandelson. Your guy is just making the mistake of being associated with Lord M.

Both this monthly report and the ones for previous months are on my website.

And ... I'll be away on holiday 5-22 Nov 08. I'm sure you'll do fine without me!

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