

Monthly Report for Parish Councils – November 2007

There has been an awful lot of change and political issues at County recently. We have had the resignation of our leader and the reinstatement of our previous leader, Keith Walters. Although there was no regular Full Council meeting this month there was an extraordinary meeting to approve Keith as our interim leader. He has made it clear that he will only be in post until next May and at that point a new leader will be elected. The decision of the group to elect Keith was made based on the need for an experienced old hand (not sure he would like me describing him as that!) at the helm, to steady the ship.

After Shona Johnstone's resignation we Alan Melton make a resignation. He has been very unfortunate to have a very sick daughter and made the decision to spend more time with his family. This meant that was a vacancy on Cabinet, and was very pleased when Keith asked me to fill it. The portfolio I was given is Planning and Regional Matters, as well as keeping my old responsibility of Performance Management, which leads me nicely on:

Performance Management

David mentioned in his report about the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the results from this. It is very disappointing to be rated so low again, but came of little surprise. This is one area I have been looking at very closely lately and there are action plans and a real desire to improve this score. The fact that it has sat so low for so long, makes the task of improving it that much harder, however the team looking at it are a very good capable bunch of people. With the plans they have put in place I am sure we will see the performance indicators improving.

Guided Bus

You will have seen by now that the Canopy of the Station has been removed. The Local Liaison forums continue, the agendas at both the Impington meeting and the Oakington meeting were short. Oakington was about the design of the station (or whatever you may call it) at the Longstanton stop and Histon was about Noise reduction.

Congestion Plans

Nothing new has happened to these plans. Keith Walters took the opportunity to reiterate that we have just put a bid in at this stage. Pretty much the whole conservative group have decided to wait and see what the public consultation reports before making any decision at all. If you would like to fill out a questionnaire then it is available at

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/strategies/tacklingcongestion/>

The questionnaire takes about 10 minutes to complete.

South Cambs Traffic Area Joint Committee (AJC)

There was a meeting of the AJC this month – initially I had thought I would not be able to make it, but it turned out I could. The meeting was the shorted agenda I have ever seen, and the point was made about wasting Members and officer's time on such

a short agenda. It was all over and done in 35 minutes or so, which apparently is a record. Not one was particularly happy to be involved in.

It was pointed out at the pre-meeting (and previously to me by Denis Payne) that there is a useful website showing when and where various road works will be taking place: www.elgin.gov.uk

Positive Inspection of Cambridgeshire's Adoption Service by OfSTED

OfSTED completed a weeklong inspection of CCC's Adoption Service on Friday 9 November. Verbal feedback from the Inspection Team rated the service as good and commented on how well the service has progressed over the last eighteen months. OfSTED will produce a written report by the end of November.

Budget

As I reported last month the budget time is upon us. I have had a slightly different view of the process this year, as I have been involved in the Cabinet meetings etc. as an observer... That will change now of course. As always it will prove a difficult process with some difficult decisions. The new process of budget against priorities is proving challenging but achievable.

Interactive Signs

I have got on my little soapbox this month regarding this subject. I have been complaining especially about the Oakington signs, but Cottenham has also been in my tirade. It seems a mess of different signs etc has been made; different contracts etc. depending on when they were installed and under which scheme. I have tasked the officers with finding out who should fund the completion of the installation in Oakington and a timetable of repairs. More when I get it...

As this is the final report before Christmas I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a great New Year. I shall be heading up to Scotland for my Christmas, for the first time, which I am looking forward to. I would like to thank all you Parish Councillors for not making any of the questions you have asked this year to bad, and hope we can continue that trend next year????

Many thanks

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Ps. Can I ask all of you to use my Council email address from now on. I am getting me one of those Blackberry things, and I will be using that email address rather than my personal one.