

**March 2008 Report to Parishes of Cottenham,
Oakington, Westwick and Rampton from Councillor Nigel Bolitho**

New Month – New Target

I have been asked by a few electric buggy users to help them obtain better access to shops and similar retail outlets in our villages. From October 2004 (and under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) it is necessary for businesses, public authorities and leisure providers to make it easier for disabled people to access goods and services. If there are adverse physical features then:-

- * That feature should be removed; or
- * Be altered so it no longer becomes a barrier; or
- * A reasonable means of avoiding the feature is provided; or
- * A reasonable alternative is offered.

Breaching these requirements may result in claims for compensation or other legal remedies.

I have asked the SCDC legal department for their view on this Act and how it can be sensibly implemented and whether there is any case law. I have also posed the question to a local solicitor. The big problem seems to be Cottenham with particular regard to large steps in front of the Co-op Pharmacy and the Cambridge Building Society. Small ramps should solve the problems in most of the often - used retail outlets. By far the best and most convenient outlet for disabled buggy users is the Co-op.

I don't want to upset local shopkeepers but hope to have largely resolved the problem by December 2008.

Bin Wars

I am also seeking SCDC advice following a dispute between two neighbours. I think that, within reason, bin-sharing (particularly at Christmas) is a reasonable way of removing rubbish as long as such sharing is agreed beforehand.

Parish Boundaries

I attended a meeting of the Electoral Arrangements Committee last month. The main topic discussed was the creation of a new SCDC Parish comprising the new Arbury estate. It was decided not to link that estate with Kings Meadows (chalk and cheese in terms of occupants so the Arbury newcomers say) and add a small portion of the Cambridge Regional College site to Milton Parish.

Many Parishes have odd boundaries and it seems that the 2007 Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIH) will make it much easier for Parishes to alter their boundaries if they so wish. The main aim of the Act is to devolve power from central Government to local Government and communities so enabling principal Councillors, such as SCDC, to put in place appropriate arrangements for the governance of their areas at

community level. As discussion of the SCDC Parish boundary review for the northern and southern fringe areas went on to say, the act provides for Parish Councils and groupings of Parish Councils to style themselves community, neighbourhood or village councils. Importantly, there are extensive new powers and duties for Parishes involved in conducting community governance – ie Parish boundary reviews – and to establish, amalgamate, alter or abolish Parish Councils. The Act is slowly being implemented and can be viewed on www.opsi.gov.co.uk although I found it quite difficult to understand the full ramifications of the Act,

But it's important. At the latest SCDC council meeting there was a presentation on LGPIH and other ramifications include a) SCDC moving to a 4 year election cycle for all councillors (but after May 2011 can move back to a third each year) and b) vesting all executive powers in the dear leader or mayor for a 4 year term and, like Ken Livingstone, presumably re-electable. Local residents will (it seems) be able to petition SCDC/ dear leader for action on a particular topic if they can secure 250 signatures... One possibility put forward at the meeting was to petition for parishes to be set up in Cambridge City.

Section 106 Review

All three of your Councillors, myself, Tim Wotherspoon and Simon Edwards, attended a Section 106 briefing late last month. We are the only SCDC area to be fully represented.

My fellow Councillors will have their own views on the usefulness and importance of the meeting but I was struck by what Section 106 payments it appears the Council has agreed with the developer of the Monsanto/Trumpington Meadows site. Apart from contributions based on the progressive occupation of houses to the guided bus and bus services, usual improvements such as a primary and secondary school etc, is the more mundane benefits which surprised me. They included, for example, a synthetic turf pitch, floodlit and maintenance, a contribution towards off-site swimming facilities, the provision of a tennis court and maintenance of it, maintenance of "pocket" parks, a financial contribution towards a sports development officer, maintenance of allotments, public art to the tune of £420,000 based on a payment of £350 per housing unit, a 5 year performance monitoring fee and air quality monitoring. There is also to be a £3.375m dowry for maintenance of Trumpington Meadows Country Park and an enhancement to a foul water drainage system.

Leading the charge for Section 106 payments is Eversheds and the head man has finished work on the London Olympics site in consolidating compulsory purchasing land necessary for the Olympics.

Another key matter discussed is the need for developers to contribute to road improvements. This point is often forgotten because there is no direct relationship to the need for road improvements on a modest sized development but those developments accumulate to a point where major road improvements are needed and nobody wants to pay for them.

From memory the potential development site between Oakington Road and Rampton Road could result in the building of more houses than at Trumpington Meadows and on a non – green belt site. So lots of section 106 deals (not just traffic calming) should be claimed.

Cottenham Street Lights

There has been a major reduction in the number of dud bulbs and I must thank the CCC Highways Department for responding so quickly to not only my but also requests for action from local residents. I will, however, be carrying out another survey in Cottenham and Rampton as I notice that there are one or two new duds or “red flashes” around.

NB