

Report to Cottenham Parish Council from Nigel Bolitho January 2008

Street Lights

At last I am beginning to understand how Cottenham's street lighting system works. CCC is only responsible for those which have a number on them. Others who have duds on their patch and are responsible for replacing them include:-

- CVC with 3 duds on white poles around the pond;
- George Wimpey with 2 duds in Brenda Gautry Way. CCC is responsible for the lights up to Sovereign Way but the rest have yet to be adopted;
- The owners of Appletrees Mobile Home Park are responsible for its 2 duds. One appears to be dud because a metal box has been attached to it to siphon off the electricity.

CCC's Lights

I am very pleased to report that CCC appears to have repaired three duds since by last report. Repaired lights (or those that have suddenly come back to life) are at No 1 Pelham Way, first one in The Rowells (although it has no number) and No 1 at the entrance to Coolridge Gardens. But the number of CCC dud bulbs is growing. The list is as follows:-

1. Entrance to Broad Lane off Tenison Manor. Both the street light (1A) and the light on the Give Way sign are duds;
2. No 3 in Broad Lane on the opposite side of the road is now a dud;
3. So is 37 in the High Street next to recently repaired 36 outside house 194;
4. No 13 in Corbett Street close to Denmark Road remains a red dwarf;
5. 17A at the bus shelter almost opposite Cottenham Convenience Stores near the Green remains a dud. Of all the duds in Cottenham, I think this light should have top repair priority;
6. No 4 in Orchard Close remains a dud;

7. Rampton Road now has a dull lamp (18) by the allotments and number 23 (last going out of Cottenham to Rampton on the left hand side) is a new dud;
8. In Harlestons Road No 25 is a dud and No16 has a dirty cover;
9. I previously reported that No 10 in Lambs Lane near the bus stop was a red flasher- it's now a dud. I would also suggest it gets top repair priority. There's a new dud in Lambs Lane – No 1 close to the Rampton Road junction;
10. There's a new dud (52) at Sames Court in the High Street;
11. And, indignity of indignities. No 42 in the High Street is a dud and its right outside Councillor Wotherspoon's newly occupied Three Horseshoes hostelry.

There are also one or two lights that remain on during daylight.

I have been asked to undertake a similar survey in Rampton.

Drains

In December I cleaned out a drain close to the junction of High Street and Broad Lane. The area is regularly flooded. I removed 2 green boxes on muck which was deposited on Cottenham forest. The drain is right by the telephone box. Previously I had discovered that this drain is hinged and find that there are a few others like it in the village- how clever of our (presumably) Victorian ancestors. What surprised me is that after I had removed the rotted leaf mould, the drain only had one pipe outlet going down to the roundabout. But when I removed the leaf mould, water ran back into the drain- ie it seemed to run uphill and not to the junction and presumably along Broad Lane. I was particularly surprised that there was no pipe from the drain next to it and a short way up the High Street towards the church which is blocked solid with leaf mould. It, unfortunately, has a modern drain cover with no hinges, so cannot be opened easily. I was also surprised that there was no other outlet from the hinged drain either onto the old village green or across the High Street.

Equality and Diversity Training

I was due to attend an equality and diversity training session at SCDC earlier this week but it was cancelled.

Scrutiny Committee

I attended a session of the scrutiny committee before Christmas. I am not a member but may volunteer my services after May as scrutiny means scrutinising lots of accounts and that's part of my day time job. Also the Audit Commission wants to hike its fees by 22% just to take into account the move towards International Accounting Standards – something that public limited companies have already done in the UK and, as far as I can tell, without a major increase in the auditing bill.

I also attended a meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee before the festive break. It looks at the big picture and I don't think I am a big picture man.

Unit J Broad Lane

As councillors may know, the appeal by Whitfields to keep extractor fans and fume cabinets secured illegally onto the side and back of Unit J has been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate. Grounds for refusal included:

- Flaws in the evidence submitted by the appellant, architect and acoustic consultant;
- Lack of confidence in measures taken to prevent noise nuisance;
- No consideration taken in terms of reducing the pitch and intensity of noise to nearby dwellings;
- Introduction of noise to a quiet area is in contravention of Planning and Noise guideline PPG24 (Google that to read all about it);
- No consideration taken of the noise from air condition units/controls and hisses from gas cylinders;

Owners Whitfield now have to decide whether to appeal in the High Court.

The success in overturning the appeal is most welcome. But it also illustrates the problem of sites where houses abut industrial units. And any trend to reduce carbon footprints etc is likely to increase the problem. This case and others in SCDC – and the delays in taking any restrictive action – clearly shows that the Planning, Legal and Environmental departments need to work much closer together and work much more quickly together. Whitfield put up the extractor fans in the summer of 2005.

I am, therefore, going to suggest to our dear leader that we have a working party or “Star Chamber” to deal with residential/industrial issues like this and make sure that there is early enforcement action. Delays cost a lot of time and money and encourage others (as in the Board Lane estate) to operate illegally.

Nigel Bolitho