

## Annual report for parish and community councils: 2014/15

For the Cottenham, Histon and Impington (CH&I) division of Cambridgeshire which also includes King's Meadows, Oakington & Westwick, Orchard Park and Rampton.

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There have been two major CCC developments in the last 12 months. Very different but both will prove to have longer term implications.

The first is the successful transition to the 'committee system' of governance which was flagged up 12 months ago and has now been operating for coming up to 12 months. There will be minor changes made to its operations in 2015/16 but the general impression is that it has worked well. It is certainly resulting in a more collaborative approach to running the Council and although there is still some evidence of tribalism, on all sides, there are also clear instances of alliances being forged and compromises being reached in order to secure agreements. I just wonder if the system would survive if a single party were to find itself with an overall majority again.

The other development is the continuing one of reductions in funding, one which is not exclusive to the County Council because it's also a South Cambs issue. This is resulting in cuts in services with some services being eliminated completely. The word has gone out that if communities want to preserve some services then they are going to have to fund them themselves. That means parish councils doing more and, perhaps, themselves collaborating if that's a way to gaining economies of scale.

To start with some good news ...

### Local schools are looking good

Building is underway to provide better facilities at Cottenham primary school and a planning application is expected shortly to enable Histon & Impington to be able to handle substantial demand for extra entry year applications. Last year a small number of local children were sent to schools outside their villages which was wrong. This year that will not happen.

### Histon Library secure

It was a big worry at the start of 2015 when it became known that the lease for the Histon library premises was up for renewal. It's quite an expensive lease and despite the success of the library there was concern that it would be an easy way to save a lot of money quickly. However good sense has prevailed, the library is not just a library it's also a key part of Histon's High Street offering, and the lease has been renewed. There's not a 'Friends' group in place and it will be addressing ways in which the library can become a more active community asset.

There's a broader review of the future of the library service and the related consultation has been extended to 10 May 15. Go to <http://bit.ly/1GRUig7> to participate.

### Transport schemes delivered

You seem to wait for ages to see them happening but at last previously agreed schemes, both Minor Highways Initiatives and Section 106 funded schemes, are being delivered. Histon High Street is looking good with improvements at School Hill and at the Station Road junction and traffic calming schemes are now in place in Rampton and Oakington & Westwick.

Histon & Impington continues to benefit from Northern Corridor Growth Funding and has secured two further projects going forward. Both relate to improvements to the B1049 so that although maybe Cottenham benefits there's unfortunately nothing for Oakington & Westwick

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And now for the rest ...

### Savings have been made

[www.shapeyourplace.org](http://www.shapeyourplace.org) is now dead.

The Council recommended and the Boundaries Commission has agreed that the number of county councillors be reduced from 69 to 63. The official lines have still to be drawn for the new divisions but it is likely that CH&I will split into two single member division: Histon & Impington with Orchard Park as one and Cottenham with Rampton and Oakington & Westwick as the other. This sensibly coincides with the South Cambs wards.

The 106 bus service from Rampton to Ely has been withdrawn as expected. However as some compensation the 110 service from Impington now runs twice a week and is now routed via Rampton.

### Northstowe stutters ...

After the long period of inactivity and then the approval of phase 1 somebody decided that it would be a good idea to accelerate phase 2 and to bring the application forward to Mar 15 from Jul 15. Unfortunately it was not ready and it's back on the agenda for July!

### Floods were the big news

The floods of last summer brought misery to many. Oakington was perhaps worst hit with many houses really badly flooded. Histon & Impington had its share of bad news but although roads were flooded and the B1049 had to be closed few houses suffered. There have been subsequent meetings with Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and our two councils and although lessons have been learnt it's not clear yet that if the rain recurs this year it won't have a similar affect.

Consultants Hyder conducted a review of surface water drainage and flooding risks in Histon & Impington. Its report was accepted by CCC and funding now needs to be secured to enable its recommendations to be implemented.

### Big changes in healthcare ...

It won't affect most of us but Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group announced the award of a mega-contract to UnitingCare Partnership (<http://bit.ly/1b2Ymb5>), a consortium of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust with Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. This will cover a range of older people's and other health (including mental health) and social services. UnitingCare made lots of claims about improved service and lower costs. I trust it will deliver.

### Guided Bus continues to cause headaches

There's a massive snagging list and the (latest) true extent became public and CCC resolved to 'carry out works to rectify all of the ... defects ... subject to securing funds from BAM Nuttall.' It looks like another protracted legal dispute and more money for lawyers. There was a team working on the guideway in Impington this weekend and recent press reports (<http://bit.ly/1D1hJHo>) suggest that a substantial rebuild might be necessary

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And of course just to make people feel really positive about the Guided Bus CCC has now resolved to introduce parking charges (<http://bit.ly/1FKhX7y>).

### And to pick up some of last year's themes:

The Balfour Beatty street lighting work lumbers on with continually low levels of community satisfaction. The lady who was doing her best to improve matters has left and not yet been replaced. There's more information at <http://bit.ly/1hqibsG>.

Orchard Park now has 'super-fast' broadband. There's more information about the Connecting Cambridgeshire roll out at <http://bit.ly/1oTMkFO>.

Phase 1 of Cambridge City's 20mph project which includes King's Meadow has now been completed

The proposed Ring Fort Path connection between Orchard Park and the B1049/A14 roundabout has been referred back to officers because it's perceived to be too expensive.

The City Deal phase 1 project list has been agreed and includes improvements along Histon Road.

Development of the new station at Chesterton is proceeding but it will not open until well into 2016.

The improvements to the A14 at the Girton interchange seem to have been going on for ever but the promised new lanes are open. Final landscaping etc remains to be done with an expected finish Jun 15 (<http://bit.ly/1D1iPD8>).

### And finally ...

I'd like to thank those who've made it possible for me to do my best as county councillor as I come to the end of my 10<sup>th</sup> year. These include officers at CCC and in the parish councils and other councillors especially Mike Mason. Mike brings two related assets. The first is his knowledge of the history of our communities. He knows how we got to where we are today. And the second is his understanding of drainage. He's forgotten more than I will ever know. Thank you Mike!

A collection of my 'and finally' items from my monthly reports of the last 12 months is available at <http://bit.ly/1FRAaW6>.