

Annual Reports

May 2019

Parish Council Annual Report

“Lest we forget” encapsulates why so many of us commemorated the centenary of the Armistice last November. We supplemented the usual Parade and service at the War Memorial with that lone piper at dawn and other activities during the day closing with the concert on the Village Green. May the oak tree and its bespoke guard remind us each time we pass.

Some results

It has, once again, been a year almost all about planning.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is now being examined by an independent NP Examiner – some policies have already resulted in planning permissions – our own Village Hall and Nursery and the Durman Stearn relocation to Hay Lane. Some of the objections will keep life interesting for a while yet.

Bellway and Persimmon are progressing their Oakington Road sites which will add some 171 homes to Cottenham. Neither Gladman nor the County Council have yet secured the “Reserved Matters” permissions they need to build their 350 planned homes.

- We helped Mr Miah of the Curry Palace thank his customers as he celebrated his becoming ARTA Champion of Champions 2018
- We have convened a multi-agency (Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, Anglian Water, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and ourselves) flood risk group to minimise flood risk to Cottenham from the various housing developments in Cottenham and to the south-west (from where the water in the Cottenham Lode comes).
- We thank David Mudd, recently retired from the Parish Council after many years service including several as Chair, and especially his work on the Ladybird pre-school and sports pavilion projects.

We are happy to engage with the community in many ways so you know how we are spending your money; not all of you will approve of everything we do or don't do.

There are always limits to what we and our sister District and County Councils, or even the Police, can do, especially about the annoying things but we will try to represent your interests and challenge incompetence, inertia on things that annoy us all, whether dog-poo, fly-tipping, potholes, anti-social behaviour, inappropriate speed, and avoidable traffic.

Our focus on a business-like approach and professionalism continues with both our Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer working with our support on CiLCA qualifications and all Parish Councillors undertaking basic training.

Our Committees

Much of our work is agreed within one of our five Committees which meet regularly in public:

- Planning Committee
- Community & Leisure Facilities Committee
- Finance Legal & Administration Committee
- Highways Committee
- Standards Committee

It's not all about formal Committees

We have several smaller, issue-focused informal Working Groups - Burial Grounds, Drainage & Flooding, Human Resources, Neighbourhood Plan, Sustainable Cottenham and the Village Hall. Our Play Area Inspectors and Trees Officer advise us, and our Groundsmen keep all our Open Spaces in order and help us save money. Thank you.

They work alongside our Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer, Assistant Clerk, Caretaker and several contractors who are all a pleasure to work with and enjoy working for you. Thanks to Jo, Debbie, Sam (do get well soon!), and Pete.

Some Councillors represent us on local charities, Cottenham United Charities, Cottenham Community Centre, Friends of All Saints' Church, and the Village College

We appreciate the contribution of our partners – Cottenham United Sports & Social Club, Kids Club, Ladybirds, the Cricket and Football Clubs, aerobics etc. who provide a social service for the boys and girls of our village as well as contributing to our finances.

And we do try to help you enjoy yourselves through communal events we support like the Carol Concert, Feast Parade and Remembrance concert last year.

Some disappointments

The village is not a perfect idyll. We have a small number of selfish residents who drive in the village, dog owners who fail to clean up their dog's mess or fly-post their events in the Conservation Area, and fly-tippers in the countryside. We also have a County Council which does not seem able to keep our roads in good repair; a District Council with a chaotic planning system and less-than-ideal waste management service; and a Police service which is rarely present when needed.

Traffic continues to plague many residents and may get much worse before it can be improved. Efforts to relocate some business from the village centre will complement the upgrading of the A10 and, maybe, we will reach a "zero pot-hole" day if we all keep reporting them to the County Council.

Taking control

The emerging Neighbourhood Plan sets out a vision and practical ways in which some of the challenges we face can be resolved. Regeneration of the village centre may create opportunities for improved business, medical and shopping facilities while making it safer by reducing HGV movements. The new Village Hall and Nursery will increase employment and reduce residents' need to travel out of the village while Cottenham CLT Limited's ambition to build some locally affordable homes will help plug a gap in Cottenham's housing ladder.

Financial constraints and inefficiencies are rendering County and District Councils less effective in delivering services we expect from them, forcing us to consider supplementing some of those services ourselves, even if we appear to be paying twice as a result.

Complementary to the Neighbourhood Development Plan is the Traffic & Transport strategy which will, once developed with your help, provide a blueprint for improvements over the next decade. Like all highways-related projects it will take time to understand the real concerns and what we might be able to do about them. The work we commissioned at Victory Way and Stevens Close showed it can be done but we need to find a more cost-effective way.

Our finances

Our £211,000 “basic” precept was augmented by the £118,000 “supplementary” precept for the Village Hall / Nursery project; adding to the “Capital Fund”. No S106 money was received.

Our outgoings increased slightly as we began design work on the new Village Hall and Nursery and projects like the Dissenters’ fence and Community Centre improvements paid out. Our cash reserves increased slightly despite designing the new Village Hall and Nursery.

Simplified Extract from Unaudited Preliminary 2018-2019 Accounts

Income	2018-19	2017-18
Precept	£328,934	£324,289
Recreation Ground Income	£35,293	£36,401
Project Grants	£0	£5,602
Other income (inc. s106 receipts)	£8,794	£8,669
Total Income	£372,021	£374,961

Expense	2018-19	2017-18
Office and admin	£86,885	£73,785
Professional services	£2,462	£26,779
Maintenance services	£41,482	£35,378
Donations & Grants	£3,425	£15,448
Facilities costs	£39,851	£67,329
Project costs	£176,445	£47,868
Finance charges	£6,331	£6,215
Accruals for committed projects (see below)	£0	£78,604
Total expense	£356,881	£351,406

Cash	2018-19	2017-18
Current year increase (decrease) in reserves	£16,039	£23,556
Previous Surplus plus reserves	£606,962	£583,406
	£623,001	£606,962

Net Short-term assets	31st March 2019	31st March 2018
Current cash assets (reserves)	£623,001	£606,962
Allocations (approx.):		
General Reserve	£100,000	£100,000
Capital Fund	£375,301	£400,000
Environment Fund	£411	£0
Loan Fund / Other reserve	£73,713	£28,390
S106 Community Facilities	£0	£0
S106 Open Space	£70,369	£71,345
S106 Public Art	£3,536	£4,364
Net short-term assets	£623,001	£606,962

Net Long-term assets (excluding land)	31st March 2019	31st March 2018
Total	£1,872,731	£1,865,757
Key elements:		
• Village Hall	£428,000	£428,000
• Ladybirds	£499,000	£499,000
• Sports Pavilion	£640,000	£640,000
• SkatePark	£75,000	£75,000

The following accruals have been formally committed against specific projects:		
Pavement project	£30,000	from Other reserve
Total	£30,000	

Looking back and ahead

Cottenham Parish Council first met in 1895. Cottenham residents – across the ages – continue to contribute to the community through churches, clubs, societies or individually; thank you all.

Cllr Frank Morris
Chairman

Community & Leisure Facilities Committee (CALF)

During the year, we have widened the non-Parish Council membership of the CALF Committee to include Rugby and Tennis Club interests: members of other community groups have been invited and it is hoped that we can significantly broaden the scope of the Committee.

On the Recreation Ground, the Tennis Courts are benefitting from an upgrade ready for the summer season, and the new mobile football goalposts are in place and well used.

The situation regarding the availability and siting of the current sports pitches remains largely unresolved due to the County Council's intention to sell part of the Rec to developers for building. There have been considerable discussions with both CCC and the developers but there is still no final agreement with an exact layout for the remainder of the Rec.

In view of this, plans are tentatively under way to identify additional sports facilities elsewhere to satisfy the needs of the village.

The Connections Bus continues to provide youngsters with worthwhile activities on Thursday nights, while baby-sitting and other courses are being supported again this year by CPC.

The installation of the new Defibrillator within the Phone Box by the War Memorial has been delayed due to mechanical issues with BT, but it is expected to be installed and operating shortly.

Regular monthly Health & Safety checks on all the play equipment are being carried out by Cllrs Wilson and Kidston. There will be a need to reconfigure and re-position the small children's play area when the new Nursery construction begins. Signage is being installed to discourage smoking on the Rec, and to limit long-stay parking at the Pound opposite the Post Office.

CALF has created a revised 4-Year Strategic Plan for village facilities. Obviously, the new Village Hall and Nursery projects are at the top of the list, but we are also planning forward for a feasibility study on a new Medical Centre, the additional Rec facilities and a MUGA, as well as other smaller projects.

John Wilson
Chairman, Community and Leisure Facilities Committee

Finance, Legal and Administration Committee (FLAC)

The Finance, Legal and Administration Committee (FLAC) have met monthly throughout the 12 months to consider the items that fall under its remit. Key highlights are as follows:

- Preparation of Parish Budget, Precept and Supplementary Precept for approval by Full Council.

- Consideration of the effect of the building of the new Village Hall and Nursery on the Parish finances and ensuring the Parish Council had sufficient income to cover the costs of financing and repaying the loan for the building work.
- Monitoring the income and expenditure of the Parish Council through the review of monthly management accounts prior to approval of accounts by Full Council.
- Undertaking risk assessments to protect the assets and property of the Parish Council including the management of the Council bank accounts
- Implementation of GDPR requirements
- Review of grant applications with recommendations to Full Council.

The Parish Council's books and records were subject to an Internal and External Audit which confirmed that there are good controls existing to protect the assets and property of the Council.

FLAC confirm the accuracy and completeness of the Accounts prepared for the APM.

Brian Smith

Chairman, Finance, Legal and Administration Committee

Highways Committee

The pavement project to improve section of pavement at Lambs Lane, Victory Way and Stevens Close was finally completed after several delays by CCC.

The speed limits were extended on Beach Road, and traffic calming in the form of speed cushions and road narrowing between the entrance to Coolidge Gardens and Brenda Gautry Way were put in place.

The speed bump was removed from outside the Wooden House to reduce the damage to the house from vibration.

Cottenham Parish Council made a funding contribution towards Rampton Parish Councils initiative to install lighting studs along the Cottenham to Rampton cycle path. This is of benefit to both Cottenham and Rampton residents.

The Zebra Crossing on the High Street opposite Wilkin Walk was installed as part of the safe route to school initiative funded by the developers of Race Course View.

We had a successful bid for speed reduction measures along Histon Road, which is intended to narrow the road at the entrance to the village and provide clear visual and physical indicators that motorists are entering a 30 mph zone.

In summary, the last twelve months have been quite a challenge to get approved projects completed because of changes in County Council contractors and volume of work across the county. Fortunately, as the year progressed projects that we had hoped to see completed in the previous year finally came to fruition and this was topped off with a successful bid for Local Highways Improvement Funding for speed reducing measures on Histon Road entrance to the village. We will be looking at possible projects over the next few weeks for the 2019 bid.

The Highways Committee have benefitted from valuable input from residents over the last two years in the form of the Transport and Traffic Working Group, and our Highways Clerk, Sam.

Martin McCarthy
Chairman, Highways Committee

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee meets to consider and make recommendations to South Cambridge District Council on planning applications mainly within the parish. Committee members also consider information reports and planning application decisions by South Cambridge District Council, applications for work to protected trees, and respond to consultations on a variety of planning, related issues affecting the parish. We also monitor and generate planning enforcement reports for the parish.

The Committee of up to ten councillors plus two ex officio members (Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Council) have met 24 times this year. They have considered in detail 116 applications for planning permission. The Committee recommended that South Cambridge District Council approve 69 applications, refuse 45 and 2 applications were noted as already decided.

Planning applications have varied hugely in size and potential impact on neighbours and the village environment. All applications, from single storey extensions to detailed follow up on large scale development on the edge of Cottenham (Bellway) have been considered with care. The Committee is particularly concerned to maintain the historic and physical environment of the village, avoid development that encroaches on the Green belt and its character, and opposes development in the open countryside unless there are exceptional circumstances involved. We try to bring to the attention of the District Council our local concerns about traffic generation, parking issues, impact on the conservation area and listed buildings, and loss of amenity to neighbours. We are also concerned about the loss of amenities in general and local employment premises.

The most controversial application we considered this year was the application by Amey for a Waste Recovery Facility at Levitt's Field, Ely Road, Waterbeach, outside the parish but potentially affecting residents in Cottenham, particularly in the Twenty Pence Road area. 26 residents attended our meeting in May 2018. Representations and consideration by the Committee took over two hours with the vote for refusal carried. This application was subsequently refused by the County Council, and we have recently received notice that Amey have appealed to the Planning Inspectorate against this refusal of permission. Watch this space!

The biggest single issue of detail on planning applications this year has been getting across our concerns about drainage provision on new developments. This has involved giving notice to South Cambridge District Council of our intention to seek a Judicial Review of the decision relating to conditions attached to reserved matters on the Bellway development. The notice was withdrawn following further discussion with SCDC about the effectiveness of their condition on drainage provision. We will continue to keep a close eye on this issue.

The committee has responded to consultations on: The Greater Cambridge draft Housing Strategy; Minerals and Waste Local Plan Preliminary Draft Consultation (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough); Waterbeach New Town SPD (South Cambridgeshire District Council) and proposed updated Village Design Statements. Committee members have drafted responses to the Planning Inspectorate on 2 appeals: on Beach Road and Oakington Road and been involved in the Planning Inspectorate Appeal consideration of the County Council's application for development of 154 houses N East of Rampton Road. We have delegated members to make representations on behalf of the committee and the

community at SCDC Planning Committee on major applications of concern to us. Last but not least members have been involved in the Liaison Group set up by SCDC to encourage community integration of major new development. Our Parish Clerk and helped produce a very impressive and helpful compendium of local groups and contacts to help new residents settle in (see Parish Council web site).

It has been a very busy and eventful year. Pressure for development in and around the village does not go away. We have done our best to represent your interests in the statutory planning well. We look forward to continuing the work in the coming year and hope more of you will join us at our twice monthly meeting to develop comments to the District Council and other bodies on what gets proposed in Cottenham.

Mary Kidston
(On behalf of) Planning Committee

Sustainable Cottenham working party

Sustainable Cottenham is a CPC Working Group comprising 2 Parish Councillors (Christine Ward and Tom Dewey) and approximately 10 Cottenham residents. Recent recruits to our group have brought added enthusiasm and skills enabling us to broaden our ambitions beyond litter-picking and thermal surveys.

Our aim is to encourage and help Cottenham's residents and businesses to make changes to their lifestyles and practices in order to improve the sustainability of the village and so make it a greener, cleaner and a better place for current and future residents.

The two main areas we are currently putting our efforts into are:

a) **reducing single-use plastics**. This is a globally recognised problem for the environment which communities around the UK are taking steps to address. We have an active sub-group putting effort into ensuring that Cottenham plays its part. We have signed up to the Plastic Free Communities network organised by Surfers Against Sewage www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-communities/. In due course we will be asking CPC to lead by example by not using single-use plastic on its premises. We launched the campaign at our 'Eco Fair' on 16th March which was attended by over 300 residents. The campaign is supported by articles in the Cottenham Newsletter and we are organising re-usable glasses for the bars at this summer's Fen Edge Family Festival. We are also liaising with Histon & Impington and Greater Cambridge Shared Waste under the aegis of Cllr Pippa Heylings (Chairman of SCDC Climate and Environment Advisory Committee).

b) **social inclusion** aimed at improving health and well-being and reducing social isolation. We continue to explore ways in which timebanking and other social enterprises could benefit Cottenham residents. We have begun liaising with GP surgeries and other bodies who come into contact with potential beneficiaries and are actively pursuing funding options. A Cottenham resident and youth worker is keen to initiate inter-generational skills swaps which could be one way of testing the feasibility of this approach – and which SusCott is keen to explore. If approved by CPC we hope to be able to collaborate to obtain funding for this project.

Other achievements since May 2018:

- revamped website <http://www.sustainablecottenham.org.uk/>
- new Facebook profile <https://www.facebook.com/suscottenham/?ref=bookmarks> (96 followers)

- 3 litter picks and 2 cycle path tidies
- marked up the non-functioning solar studs on the Histon Road cycle path following clearance by volunteers. Cllr Tim Wotherspoon is liaising with the Cycle Group at CCC to get them replaced.

Christine Ward

Working party member

South Cambridgeshire District Council

In May, it will have been a year since we were elected as members to South Cambridgeshire District Council and the control of the council shifted from Conservative to Liberal Democrat. We were elected with, among other things, a commitment to improve communication with residents. One or other of us has attended every full Parish Council meeting in Cottenham and Rampton as well as submitting reports ahead of time to every meeting. This makes sure that we meet our commitment to sharing information that is relevant to residents and answering any questions that arise. In addition, we have run a number of drop-in sessions through the year at the Community Centre and we are keeping residents up to date with regular posts to our Facebook page (Cottenham and Rampton). We hope you have noticed the difference.

So, what has the Liberal Democrat-led South Cambs District Council done in the last year?

Running the council

New Business Plan

Following a public consultation, a new Business Plan for 2019 to 2024 has been published, which changes the direction of the Council. We are committed to providing homes that are truly affordable for everyone to live in; to help local businesses to grow; to be green to our core and to create a modern and caring council. Check out the new Business Plan at: www.scambs.gov.uk/businessplan

Re-organising the Council

It became clear in putting together the new Business Plan that the departmental structure of the council would struggle to deliver on our priorities. Furthermore, studies of other district councils showed that South Cambridgeshire had fallen behind in the use of new technology and working practices essential to run a modern council. We have conducted an organisational review with the objective of business improvement and improved delivery, not cost-cutting. The process is well under way with the expectation that the restructuring of the two top tiers of management will be approved in the forthcoming May Council Meeting.

Around 40% of the Council's revenue budget and 52% of its services are delivered by shared services (in cooperation with other councils) and it is now abundantly clear that when some services were set up under the previous administration, insufficient attention was paid to the critical issues of performance management, governance and accountability. We are working with partners now to rectify this and ensure that these services deliver efficiently and to clear objectives.

Better Pay to Attract Staff

There is a relatively high number of unfilled posts within the council and recruitment has not been helped by a squeeze on staff pay put in place by the previous administration, putting us at a disadvantage in the Greater Cambridge labour market. We have introduced measures such as signing-on bonuses and introduction awards to increase recruitment in specific areas such as HGV drivers, planners and environmental health officers. We have also ensured that no South Cambridgeshire employee earns less than the real living wage.

Finance

For most of the first year in control of the council, we had to work with the budget set by the previous Conservative-led administration. In the past year, the inherited budget shortfall of £0.5 million turned into a £1 million surplus which has gone into the General Reserve to help prepare for future uncertainties.

The council has recently approved the budget for 2019-20, which sets the priorities for the Liberal Democrat administration. The council no longer receives central Government grants and the amount by which the amount of Council Tax the council can raise is also capped by the Government. Our five-year financial plan has been pivoted to deliver more income from investments and commercialisation.

Council Tax was increased by £5 for a Band D property which equates to a 3.8% increase in the District Council precept. The total Council Tax bill for a Band D property in Cottenham and Rampton is:

Council tax for a Band D property in 2019/20 £ per year	Cottenham	Rampton
Cambridgeshire County Council	1217.13	1217.13
Cambridgeshire County Council - Adult Social Care Precept	94.98	94.98
South Cambridgeshire District Council	145.30	145.30
Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner	222.66	222.66
Cambridgeshire Fire Authority	70.74	70.74
Parish Council	121.98	73.05
TOTAL	£1872.80	£1823.87

We introduced additional council tax charges for empty properties. Across South Cambridgeshire, there are 100 properties that have been empty for between two years and five years. These properties can become magnets for anti-social behaviour and vandalism and it is hoped that the higher rate will incentivise owners to bring these properties back into use. Effective April 2019, homes that are empty for two years or more will be charged double the regular Council Tax (i.e. an additional premium of 100%). In addition, from April 2020, homes that are empty for five years or more will be charged a 200% premium on top of the regular Council Tax. From April 2021, an additional premium of 300% will be charged on top of the regular Council Tax for homes that are empty for ten years or more.

We introduced a new charge for collection of green bins from the small proportion of residents who choose to use more than one green bin. The charge will bring us into line with Cambridge City and every other District Council in the County and will impact about 100 households in Cottenham and Rampton. The rate of subscription suggests that our expectation of raising £80,000 in a full year, will be exceeded – this is equivalent to 0.9% of SCDC's precept.

New Investment Strategy

Our new investment strategy is ensuring council taxpayers are getting the best return for the council's financial reserves. Incredibly, the previous administration did not have an investment strategy against which to judge commercial opportunities to ensure they are sound. One is now in place and, as a result, we have discontinued three proposed schemes promoted by the previous administration because we adjudged them to be too risky financially.

Cambridge Ice Rink is being built off Newmarket Road on the edge of Cambridge but in South Cambs district. Construction was underway when we took control of the council and last autumn the council approved an additional loan to cover increased costs and ensure the delivery of a high-quality community sporting venue that will benefit the health and wellbeing of residents.

We have also installed PV solar panels on the roof of the Waterbeach refuse depot to obtain the Government's feed-in tariff and purchased the freehold of an office block in the Cambridge Science Park which is delivering nearly a 6% net yield on a £13 million investment.

We have also refocused Ermine Street's (the council's trading company to let homes on the open market) investments towards South Cambridgeshire and the employment catchment of the Greater Cambridge sub-region to deliver properties that are not being supplied by current market conditions, such as rented homes for single people.

New Housing Strategy

A new strategy for Housing in South Cambridgeshire has been adopted to deliver homes that are affordable. We have shifted the focus from affordability being defined just by the cost of the property itself but also by the costs to live in it. That means an emphasis on ensuring new homes that are energy and water efficient and either accessible to places of employment by walking or cycling or in locations that are well served by public transport. There is absolutely nothing affordable about a home that is only practical if each occupier needs to own a car to get to their place of work or study.

One of our priorities is the provision of more council houses and an insistence on meeting agreed targets for affordable housing in new developments. In the last year we've completed 34 new council houses and 13 shared ownership homes and have another 61 council houses plus 24 shared ownership homes currently being built.

Syrian Refugee Program

The Home Office previously asked the council to help with the rehoming of refugees two years ago, and the then minority Lib Dem Group put a motion to Council proposing this but it was voted down by the majority Conservative Group. We are proud that we reversed that decision and we hope to be able to provide homes for these 5 families by the time of the end of the Home Office scheme in December 2019.

Grants

The committee that administers council grants has been refocussed to make it more responsive to a range of needs and interests across the district. We have put more money into the Mobile Warden scheme this year and another increase is promised next year. We have initiated a piece of work to look at extending the scheme across the whole district and commissioned a similar piece of work on community transport.

We have redirected the funding that the previous administration had allocated to the Elite Athletes scheme. These grants benefitted individuals but there was no evidence of positive impacts to the broader community. It is appropriate that this money is channelled to projects that will deliver direct benefits to the broader community.

In the past year, Cottenham United Colts and Ladybirds have benefitted from Community Chest grants.

Customer Service

The 'mysouthcamb's' customer portal is being rolled out, offering residents the means to access Council services 24 hours a day and 365 days of the year. As well as online forms to apply for council services, it allows residents to raise and report issues and provides a suite of bespoke FAQs and other sources of information and help. The service is evolving, with new services being added all the time and we strongly encourage all residents to register.

Planning

Soon after we took control of the Council, the Inspector determined that the Local Plan met requirements and we achieved a 5-year housing supply. This ended one of the longest Local Plan processes in the country and a chaotic period of speculative development in the District. Our ward suffered a disproportionate amount of speculative development and, in the coming years, we will have to deal with the consequences of the previous administration's loss of control of planning decisions. Work on a new joint Local Plan with Cambridge City has already commenced.

Soon after we were elected we were faced with an unacceptable number of issues relating to the Bellway construction site and incidents of non-compliance. We accompanied enforcement officers on a site visit to pursue issues relating to the inadequate management of dust, traffic movements and operating times. As a means of addressing these issues, we created a forum – the Community Liaison Group - to ensure compliance with planning conditions and in the longer term, assist integration of these new residents. The first meeting took place in November and included representation from the Parish Council, the District Council and Bellway. Persimmon attended the second meeting. The Liaison Group is proving to be useful in creating a regular forum to discuss current issues and future work that will impact the village e.g., road closures. We are very grateful to the support from the Parish Council in putting together a welcome pack that will be delivered to all new residents as they move in to their new homes. The South Cambridgeshire District Council Community Engagement Team have also offered to help facilitate the development of the pack.

We worked in support of some important planning decisions in Cottenham during the year. The decision to give Planning approval for the new Cottenham Nursery was received despite representing a deviation from Local Plan policies. More recently, the new site for Durman Stearn at Elm Tree Farm was approved. This was a brownfield development in the Green Belt. This will enable the relocation of Durman Stearn's operations from the High Street that will reduce HGV traffic through the village. A change of use application for the existing site will create a new strategic site for redevelopment in the heart of the village.

We also opposed Amey's incinerator planning application to the County Council. We felt strongly that Amey had failed to engage in good faith with residents; a situation exacerbated by the lack of information to residents from our County Councillor. The County Council rejected the application on the basis that there was an adverse impact on the important heritage asset of Denny Abbey. Amey have now appealed the County's decision and a Planning inspector will now assess the decision. We remain very concerned by Amey's approach to engagement with the community on issues such as odours from the in-vessel composting that causes significant inconvenience to the residents. We continue to encourage residents to report any incidents to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 (24 hour hotline) and to Amey on 01223 204085.

We have also been involved in increasing the oversight of operations at Cambridge Recycling which has had a direct impact on clean-up of the IDB ditch to the north of the site. We remain focussed on improving the general operation of this site that leaves much to be desired. In the future, any incidents should be reported via: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/planning-enforcementcomplaint/>. It is important that incidents are reported.

Cottenham and Rampton Parish Councils expressed concern to us about the deterioration of the listed Gothic House on Cottenham High Street and a listed thatched cottage in Rampton. Enforcement action was taken against the owners of the Gothic House and this resulted in a fine and work has been undertaken to make the property safe. Enforcement can be a slow, legal process but there are a number of actions that have been successfully pursued in the past year.

North East Cambridge site

Cambridge City Council and South Cambs Council are working together on a North East Cambridge Area Action Plan for development of the area west of the new Cambridge North Station. The plan considers options on how this area could be transformed into a pedestrian and cycle friendly district with new, energy efficient homes and jobs, supported by new community and leisure facilities, shops and green spaces.

Public consultation on the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan closed on 25 March. In the meantime, the Government has confirmed funding of £227million from the Housing Infrastructure Fund to relocate the Anglian Water waste water recycling centre from its existing site close to Cambridge North station. Anglian Water will soon begin a consultation process with communities and stakeholders.

We will work with partners and planning authorities to ensure that the process of deciding the relocation of the water recycling centre is robust and transparent.

Fly-tipping

We have initiated a District-wide initiative to combat fly-tipping in terms of increasing awareness of the problem, accelerating clearance and improving enforcement. In Cottenham, the focus has been on Setchel Drove which is a particular black-spot. Councillor Gough organised a visit to discuss long-term solutions to the fly-tipping issues on Setchel Drove. We were very encouraged that residents engaged actively in framing the ideas. There is no doubt that a co-ordinated initiative that includes enhanced enforcement, surveillance, warning signs and physical barriers will form the only sustainable solution. Surveillance cameras have now been installed together with warning signage. A process to install a gate is now underway and about to go out to consultation soon. There was a major clean-up conducted on Setchel Drove in April which led to one resident noting that this was the first time anything had been achieved since Councillor Collinson's achievements back in 2004. We are hoping that Cottenham will provide an example for addressing a problem that is a blight on the whole District.

'Green to our core'

Our administration has pledged to become a zero-carbon district by 2050. A working group of members and officers is preparing a high-level business case for a set of energy conservation measures (such as electric vehicle charging points, solar panels over our car park and on our waste depot) that are intended to make our Cambourne offices a showcase for a Zero Carbon Council, an exemplar to our residents. This program is a new initiative— the previous Conservative administration lacked ideas in this area and in the previous year actually wrote back a reserve of £117,000 that had been ear-marked for sustainability project initiatives. We have also revamped the Green energy grants program to increase the maximum grant available and we hope this will inspire innovation and ambition in the District.

We have adopted targets for increasing household recycling rates and reducing the total volume of black bin waste. Additional resources have been added to the waste service to deliver this through information campaigns and working with resident groups.

We also improved a program to focus on air quality in the District. While on average the air quality in the District is good, we need to ensure that it remains this way and that we are closely monitoring particular locations that may be experiencing particular problems e.g., schools by busy roads. We will be purchasing air quality monitors and have recruited new expertise to manage this program.

Transport

Councillor Wilson is a representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Joint Assembly and has raised a number of critical transportation issues that impact our villages. We held an initial meeting with members of the City Access Team working with the GCP on Rural Travel Hubs and Greenways. We intervened on the Oakington rural travel hub, to ensure that more meaningful engagement with representatives and residents of Cottenham and Rampton took place to give them an opportunity to have an input into the plans before they progressed too far. We invited the team to speak to the Parish Councils in Cottenham and Rampton in anticipation of further engagement activity with stakeholders and residents. Feedback from the consultation on the rural travel hub was mixed and it was recently agreed further discussions would be carried out with neighbouring communities.

Back in 2018, we were told about plans for a cycle path from Rampton to the Guided Busway and another cycle path from Cottenham to Oakington. Eileen asked for an update on these projects at the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly meeting in February. The Rampton cycle path is subject to discussions with local farmers about changing what is currently a farm track into a usable cycle path and we should receive updates on this work soon. On the Cottenham to Oakington cycle path, topographical surveys have been carried out and the GCP has appointed Bidwells as land agents for the project and is engaging with landowners along the route.

The GCP Joint Assembly meeting held on 15 November considered proposals on bus, pedestrian and cycling arrangements along the Histon Road. We received numerous representations from cyclists objecting to last minute changes to allow for shared cycle/pedestrian paths rather than the segregated paths discussed during consultation and raised the matter on behalf of local cyclists. The proposals have since been amended to provide the segregated provision that cyclists prefer as being safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

More broadly, we have watched as the GCP has focussed on transportation solutions to a limited number of villages in the District. Councillor Wilson tabled a motion on this topic for debate at the Full Council meeting in November to raise the need for integrated thinking on transportation. We have argued that public transport in many medium to large villages like Cottenham would not benefit from much needed improvement as a result of these plans and we appear to have had an impact. Peter Blake, the Transport Director of the GCP, has acknowledged that the needs of these villages have been overlooked in the past and has committed to address the "Cottenham Question".

We have highlighted the importance of extending the discussion to include other transport initiatives to encourage more use of public transport options. We spent virtually the whole year awaiting the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's report on bus transportation that turned out to be a damp squib. Buses remain an important element for our communities that do not interest our politicians at the County level and Combined Authority as much they should. The attractions of vanity transportation projects are unfortunately too strong. We have encouraged as many residents as possible to get involved in engagement opportunities on these initiatives so the voices of people in Cottenham and Rampton can be heard.

Sheltered Housing

We participated in a review of the use that is made of the Cottenham Community Rooms. We have been advised that, following open days held at Community Rooms in Stevens Close, Coolidge Gardens and Franklin Gardens, the positive response on the value of these rooms has resulted in a decision to take no further action with regard to closing or changing the use of any of these Community Rooms in Cottenham. The Team in charge of these rooms is now considering ways of promoting the use of these rooms and for engaging more with the community.

Assets of Community Value

We have been advised that South Cambridgeshire District Council has accepted applications to include the Free Church Mission Hall and the Black Horse Public House on the list of Assets of Community Value.

District Cllr Neil Gough and District Cllr Eileen Wilson

Cambridgeshire County Council

Finance

The County Council raised the Adult Social Care precept by 2% and the basic precept by 2.99%, taking the county element of Council Tax on a Band D property to £1312.11, an additional £1.20 per week for a Band D property. The Police and Crime Commissioner charges £222.66 and the Fire Authority £70.74. South Cambridgeshire District Council claims £145.31 and Cottenham Parish Council £121.97.

The government's provisional funding settlement for local government got a mixed reception. Supported by the county's MPs, the council countered a move to lose £7m but was disappointed that Cambridgeshire & Peterborough was the only devolved area not among the fifteen authorities to benefit from a Business Rates Retention pilot. A simultaneous announcement that the government was launching a more detailed consultation on its funding formula came as some consolation. The council has worked hard with other shire counties for a long time to highlight the funding inequality between different areas of the country. Based on our current levels of service and the expected national and local demand trajectory, Cambridgeshire County Council will need to make another £60m of savings over the next three years and we are proactively planning to meet the financial pressures ahead.

As the council continues attempting to transform the way it works, inevitably it must acknowledge that not everything it tries is successful. Removing charges for Park & Ride parking and using library computers recognizes this. The council strives to engage more closely with residents and to establish collaborative partnerships. This year we appointed two new directors shared with Peterborough City Council, and the Health & Wellbeing Boards of both councils have committed to joint working.

Members acknowledged the contribution that staff make to the council and, reflecting on the unpalatable one-off saving of £930,000 that was made this year by imposing three days of unpaid leave over Christmas on staff earning over £26,000 [or pro rata], rejected an officer proposal to repeat this in future years. As has been widely reported in the press, to show solidarity with staff, all but one county councillor has committed to giving up an equivalent proportion of 1.2% of the councillor's allowance.

Priorities 2019 - 2021

Outcomes

A good quality of life for everyone

Thriving places for people to live

The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

Themes

Embedding a demand management approach across the business

Developing a range of forward looking data and insight

Developing a place-based model of practice across all services

Developing a workforce that works in the ways and places that matter to citizens

Developing strength and depth in our commercial activity

Involving citizens in the design and development of our services

Taking a system wide and long-term view in everything that we do

What I do

The civic year started as always with the Annual General Meeting of the county council, starting with appointment of chairman and vice-chairman and some amendments to the council's constitution, and

moving on to its usual mix of general business and motions put forward by members. I am currently vice-chairman of the Economy & Environment Committee and a member of the Commercial & Investment Committee, both of which meet monthly. I am chairman of the Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly, which brings together three members each from the city, district and county councils, as well as three representatives of businesses and three representatives of universities.

I am also chairman of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Flood Risk Management Partnership, which meets three times a year, and a member of the Great Ouse Flood and Coastal Committee hosted by the Environment Agency, which meets quarterly. Heidi ALLEN facilitated setting up a Cottenham Flood Forum. This is now well attended by parish councillors and the county council, as well as the Old West Internal Drainage Board, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency. These meetings have succeeded in raising the profile of Cottenham (and Rampton)-related flood-risk matters. The Environment Agency seems to have been paying more attention to Cottenham Lode recently, for example.

Moving from Shire Hall

Strong arguments were voiced for and against moving the council's headquarters out of Shire Hall, but the majority of the council accepted the Commercial & Investment Committee's recommendation of relocating to Alconbury Weald (rather than Northstowe). Plans for the new headquarters building were published in February. It will be smaller and more flexible, with one wing accommodating 350 staff, a public reception area and informal meeting space. Council and committee meetings will be held in a multi-use 90-seater space which can be sub-divided for potential community use. A planning application will be submitted in April 2019. Construction is expected to commence late 2019 and be completed by December 2020. Net of building costs, the move is forecast to save the council about £46.5m over 30 years. Marketing the six-acre site at Castle Hill has produced some serious bids for the leasehold.

Two motions debated at March meeting sought to offer reassurance to the many Cambridge residents who had expressed concerns relating to the disposal, in particular public access rights which are afforded under the Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The motion put by the chairman of the Commercial & Investment Committee was passed. It confirmed that the council recognises the importance of the mound and civil earthworks to both residents and visitors and has as a consequence ensured that all bidders are clear that any proposal for the site's future use must continue to provide access to these historic features and enhance public experience of them.

Commercial Investments

The council's aim to become more commercial in managing its assets continued with the approval of outline business cases for two smart energy grids at the Park & Ride [P&R] sites at Trumpington and Babraham. These build on the development work for a smart energy grid at the St Ives P&R site which was scheduled for construction during 2018. The St Ives site is a demonstrator project for a new business model, whose objective is to generate income over the medium to long term as well as to address the challenge of the currently heavily constrained local distribution network.

Cambridgeshire Housing & Investment Company became This Land and twenty-one parcels of council estate, some with planning permission, were sold to it, producing capital receipts and the prospect of a future revenue stream. I had attended the hearing of the appeal against the district council's refusal of outline planning permission for 154 houses between Les King Wood and the Recreation Ground, at which I argued that the land was too precious to go for housing and should be safeguarded for

education and public open space. The parish council mounted a spirited case for rejection, with the district council a bit half-hearted (I felt) in defending its decision.

Nevertheless the inspector allowed the appeal in May 2018 and the county council sold its Rampton Road development site to This Land on Friday 12 April 2019. The land included in the sale excluded the piece currently leased to Cottenham Parish Council. However, This Land has an option to acquire that piece of land at a later date.

The Environment

Showing their green credentials in more than just financially beneficial projects, councillors approved unanimously a recent motion to address the issue of single use plastic through changing its own behaviour and influencing other organisations to act similarly. The same principle of protecting the environment underpins the council's partnership with Cambridgeshire Community Reuse and Recycling Network. Facilitating reuse of waste paint, the scheme benefits charities, community groups, schools, pre-schools and low-income households, provides work experience, volunteering opportunities and community payback placements, and almost halved the cost to council taxpayers in its first six months. The design of the proposed new headquarters building also demonstrates similar commitment. It will be energy-efficient and include elements of future-proofing. Car park ducting will allow electric vehicle charging right from the start and the scheme has potential to harness solar energy at a later stage.

The public consultation on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan opened on Friday 15 March 2019 – eventually to be adopted by the end of 2020. Sand and gravel sources are shifting from river valleys to fen edge. The only source of brick clay of sufficient capacity is around Whittlesey. There is some limestone north west of Peterborough. We need to safeguard sources and facilities, especially the March and Chesterton railheads, to ensure smooth delivery of hard rock. Assessing need for waste capacity is not easy. More than half is construction, demolition and excavation, with commercial and residential being about a quarter each. (Just 2% is hazardous – and most of the clinical waste is swallowed within the Addenbrooke's site.) By our own calculations we have enough capacity for the lifetime of the next plan. However, we need to make allowances for flexibility. So we will not be making any new allocations but adopting a criteria-based policy for assessing future waste proposal applications. While we have to make an allowance for a proportion of London waste, in practice most of that goes to Essex and Hertfordshire (and we experience a bit of knock-on from those two counties).

AMEY was close to the six-month deadline before lodging an appeal against refusal on 21 September 2018 of its Energy from Waste proposal. The Planning Inspectorate is expecting a two-week public inquiry. Because the officers were recommending approval the council has to appoint consultants to defend the Planning Committee's refusal, which was on landscape and heritage grounds. The appeal is estimated to cost the county council half a million pounds. Meanwhile, a link has emerged between air pollution and psychosis in children and young people, reinforcing growing concern about the deleterious impact of fine particulates, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds on a variety of health issues.

Education and Young People

The recent demonstration by school children during school time has attracted praise and provoked criticism. They may have been missing lessons, but learning can happen outside the classroom as well. On the subject of funding for education, Cambridgeshire remains a poor relation despite the recent increase of £1.4bn nationally. At the end of January the government finally published the breakdown by school of the funding announced by the Chancellor 'for those little extras'. Entitlement was calculated at £32.10 per pupil for primary schools and without special dispensation had to be spent by

the end of March 2019. The council continues investment in schools as the number of applications for secondary school places in Cambridgeshire continues to rise. 6,691 applications were received this year with 89.5% being offered a place at their first preference school. £200m has been allocated between 2019 and 2024 to increase capacity in existing schools and plan for new schools in areas of greatest demand.

In January 2019 Ofsted made an unannounced inspection of the council's children's services, rating them 'requiring improvement' but making a positive assessment of senior leaders. The report noted whole council ownership of the change programme that it had begun. It acknowledged that the council had itself already identified the same areas for improvement as the inspectors, and that the Children & Young People Committee had responded with investment to implement changes and boost staffing.

The Department for Education named the council a 'trailblazing authority' in the national rollout of an innovative approach to children's social care. This comes with a share of £87m of DfE funding. Cambridgeshire will take a leading national role in Family Safeguarding, an approach that improves outcomes for vulnerable children and young people through the work of multi-disciplinary teams.

Major Development

A £500,000 National Lottery grant will help the council's Active New Communities project support eight growth sites across the county between 2018 and 2021. The first year's focus will be on Northstowe, Alconbury Weald and Hauxton. The Chancellor's budget included £6.653m additional funding for road maintenance, augmenting the already increased budget of £2m allocated by the Council. The spring statement also signalled that Cambridge City Council and the Combined Authority had won a government grant of £227m to fund relocation of the sewage treatment works at Milton and pave the way for a new low carbon 5,000 – 7,000 homes community in north east Cambridge.

The Combined Authority meeting on 26 September had another agenda approaching five hundred pages, half comprising a revised constitution establishing three new committees, one for Transport and Infrastructure, one for Housing and Communities, and one for Skills (to which Eileen WILSON has been appointed by South Cambridgeshire District Council). The Combined Authority welcomed the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review, a widely-praised assessment of economic growth potential chaired by Dame Kate BARKER, and adopted all fourteen recommendations as the basis for composing a local industrial strategy, which will be owned by the Business Board.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Housing & Strategic Planning Working Group on Tuesday 22 January 2019 discussed what role (if any) the Greater Cambridge Partnership ought to play in the next round of Local Plan making for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The City Deal agreement committed the two district councils to producing a joint plan, incorporating the supporting transport infrastructure in conjunction with the county council. That was before the Combined Authority was set up. This is supposed to be producing a non-strategic spatial plan within which the new Local Plan for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire will sit, and the Combined Authority is now also responsible for the Local Transport Plan (which it has commissioned from consultants STEER). The two now adopted Local Plans, the one for Cambridge and the one for South Cambridgeshire, are well backed up by the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire which was adopted by the county council in 2014. Stephen KELLY and John WILLIAMSON produced stage 1 of the NSSP. Stage 2 is being led by Paul RAYNES and Adrian CANNARD. Exactly who will do what and when is not yet entirely clear.

Transport

The Ely Southern Bypass was officially opened to vehicles on 31 October. With the re-opening of the underpass, to one-way traffic at a time with improved provision for cyclists, all the works associated with the scheme were completed at the end of February. The walkway, giving what have been described as “stunning views” of the cathedral, was officially opened on 23 January. While this is the only instance in recent years where the advice of Historic England has been overruled by a Secretary of State, I believe that the beauty of the new structure, especially the way it hugs the low ground, is a positive enhancement to the setting of the “Ship of the Fens”.

The “informal” East-West Rail consultation opened on Monday 28 January 2019. There are five broad routes out for discussion, three of them via Bassingbourn and two via Cambourne. All enter Cambridge from the south. The CamBedRailRoad pressure group is campaigning instead to bring the route north of the A428, passing just south of Oakington and entering Cambridge from the north.

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Board meeting on Wednesday 30 January 2019 received the report of the Bus Review. While it took up the recommendation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Economic Review that franchising should be investigated, it took a broad-brush approach, being light on specifics. One suggestion was to set up a body called Transport for Cambridge and Peterborough. Some highlights from the covering report:

4.18. The fact that as many as half of the local population have never tried a bus, and examples such as the limited use of the busway by 16-24 year olds, gives an opportunity to develop a new and a more attractive offer, building on known success stories in the area.

4.22. The mode share targets for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough require a very significant increase in sustainable travel behaviours, which cannot be supported by the public transport network in its current form. The changes required are a step-change compared to present, and should be seen as revolutionary not evolutionary, posing significant challenges for stakeholders in terms of finance, resources, and organisational change.

5.4. Regarding frequency and routes of the network, the report proposes to enhance the existing bus network by: Establish a minimum level of service; Committed equity of access for areas of deprivation; Enhance radial bus services and evolve into a turn-up-and-go network; Consider the feasibility of providing targeted cross-city services for high demand movements; Merge Park & Ride services with the wider network; Adjust bus services to complement CAM proposals; Enhance bus service provision for key employment centres; Target bus priority: create quality bus corridors and limit motorised access to the city centres; Support demand responsive transport and first/last mile solutions; Support vehicle quality upgrades and new vehicle technology; Support multi-modal integration.

The Audit & Accounts Committee held a meeting in public to hang out some dirty laundry involving Fenland Association for Community Transport. The crux of the complaint was unfair competition relating to the requirement to hold a Public Service Vehicle Operators’ Licence by those who run a vehicle for hire or reward (payment or payment in kind) that can carry nine or more passengers or a smaller vehicle carrying passengers and charging separate fares for the journey.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board met at Cambourne on Wednesday 20 March 2019. With regard to the detailed design for the pilot Rural Travel Hub at Oakington, the Board resolved that option 1 (with parking) be considered, together with options for potential alternative locations and a further report be brought back to a future meeting of the Joint Assembly and Executive Board. It will

be particularly rewarding to see the Histon and Milton Road improvement schemes taken forward – though many speakers advised of the need to be mindful of the inter-relation between the two and the need for careful coordination during construction.

Cambridge Assessment generously offered £6,000 sponsorship for Bikeability, a national cycling proficiency scheme, so popular in Cambridgeshire that local demand exceeds the government funding allocation. The value of this scheme cannot be underestimated as a complement to the huge investment that the council is putting into cycling infrastructure across the county.

On Wednesday 6 February 2019 Cambridgeshire County Council created a Public Bridleway in the parish of Cottenham, providing a new link for non-motorised users between Broad Lane and Rampton Road through Les King Wood. An Extraordinary Meeting of Cottenham Parish Council on Monday 18 March 2019 gave a thumbs down to a county council proposal to construct a footpath along the west side of Twenty Pence Road from the church to the junction with Lockspit Hall Drove leading to Smithy Fen.

Awards

The council's efforts to deliver high quality services and value for money have resulted in a clutch of awards during the year. The Road Safety team's work with schools and its collaboration with Peterborough in the Road Safety Partnership both attracted awards. The Community Protection team was recognised for its work on the 'Friends against Scams' initiative. The Council's digital champion received a national Technology & Digital award from the Local Government Association, recognising that through his advocacy over 96% of the county is now covered by superfast broadband. The Council received a silver award in the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme for its support of the armed forces and their families. A joint piece of work by a team of staff from communications, transformation and adult social care picked up a national award for best research and evaluation process for its recruitment campaign for reablement staff, and the special educational needs disability summer programme won the National Citizen Service award 2018.

Thanks

I'd like to thank the Parish Clerks and all members of the parish council for stimulating engagement during the year. I very much look forward to working with you all again in the coming year.

County Cllr Tim Wotherspoon