

Girton Parish Council

Robert Stone
Clerk to the Parish Council
telephone: (01223) 472181
email: clerk@girton-cambs.org.uk

The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge CB3 0FH

Minutes of Girton's Annual Parish Meeting of 7th May 2009

The meeting was chaired by Cllr de Lacey and attended by approximately by 70 residents, County, District, and Parish Councillors, and representatives of Cambridgeshire Police. Andrew Lansley CBE MP.

Items

1.) **Welcome from the Chairman**

Cllr de Lacey welcomed everyone saying he was delighted to see so many residents attending the Annual Meeting. He was also particularly pleased to welcome and introduce Andrew Lansley as Girton's MP, and guest speaker.

2.) **Address by Andrew Lansley**

Mr Lansley thanked the Chairman and said he would be speaking about local problems in relation to national policy issues. For example dealing with the proposed animal laboratory on the outskirts of the village. His work as a MP was to ensure that all was well for Girton.

He acknowledged local concerns about the proposed expansion of the A14. His support for improvements to this major trunk road dated back to 1997 when he had secured a debate to highlight the issues. He acknowledged that good news for some would be bad news for others as regards noise and air pollution. He had written to Barbara Follett, the Government Minister for the East of England to invite her to visit Girton to see the problems at first hand. He had also been in contact with the Highways Agency, and said there was a possibility of a Public Inquiry. Whilst the new road works were necessary there was a need to ensure that its impact on the quality of life in the village was minimal.

Local authorities tended to take the view that they were experts on these issues. They were not. Independent experts were needed to advise on noise and air quality. These were also issues for Histon & Impington. Reducing and managing vehicle speeds could help. The answers were not yet known.

There was a tendency for people to resist new developments. Cambridge was a growing city. It was always going to be an economic powerhouse with housing needs. South Cambridgeshire had one of the best qualities of life in the country. This should not be undermined. Greenbelt and land had been given up but it was a case of this far but no further. At present regional planning overrides county planning. Government requirements have made South Cambridgeshire DC identify extra sites for development. What was needed was to relate this to quality of life, and available infrastructure. Whilst sites had been given planning permission projects like Northstowe were not proceeding. It was necessary to defend the integrity of Girton.

He was also concerned about the level of crime and anti social behaviour, and had regular discussions with Cambridgeshire police about these problems.

Issues were raised by residents about a number of issues, including monitoring pollution and noise from the A14; the rather dismissive attitude of the Highways Agency regarding these issues; the noise from the proposed raised interchange; problems with drainage within the village following field drains being cut off as a result of the A14 works; the opportunity to take the country forward in line with the Netherlands by addressing noise and pollution in line with current European standards. Noise abatement techniques had moved forward on the continent but not in the UK.

Mr Lansley acknowledged these points saying there was a need to explore noise abatement techniques for what was one of the biggest building projects in the country. The Transport Minister had promised to take a personal interest in these quality of life issues. We needed to be clear about the limits of development, and be vigilant. Cambridgeshire County Council was one of the most innovative authorities on public transport but this was not the whole answer. Traffic volumes were likely to increase and it may be decades before new vehicle technology reduced pollution.

3.) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Michael Wilson, James Ford-Smith, and Robin Hiley; Dr Jack Saunders, Noel Knights, and Roger Few.

4.) Minutes of Annual Meeting of 8th May 2008

The minutes had been circulated. Helen Wilson proposed and Eustace Bullman seconded their approval. No amendments were requested, and they were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record of the 2008 Annual Meeting.

5.) Matters arising from the minutes

Items	Response
Item 5 & 10 – Problems at Orchard Close	Situation now resolved.
Item 5 - Wellbrook Way cycle path	An ongoing concern.
Item 10 - SCDC 0845 telephone numbers	SCDC is considering moving to 0345 telephone numbers
Item 15 - Parking on the slip road to the recreation ground	The Parish Council is trying to negotiate additional parking with Girton Glebe School.

6.) Chairman’s Report on the Parish Council’s activities and accounts for the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 *(Circulated at the meeting)*

The Chairman gave parishioners a few moments to read and consider his report. A parishioner expressed concern about the percentage increase in the size of the precept.

7.) Report from County Councillor John Reynolds on County Council matters relevant to Girton *(Circulated at the meeting)*

A resident was concerned about the state of the A1307 at Girton Corner and was assured that works were scheduled to be done in 2009/10 as the condition of the road was deteriorating.

8.) Reports from District Councillors on SCDC issues relevant to Girton followed by questions *(Circulated at the meeting)*

Cllr Tom Bygott said he had tried to produce a balanced report. The key problem during the year had been the crime wave in the village. Planning had been the key issue. The Government was going ahead with its growth agenda which was likely to affect local quality of life. As a member of SCDC’s Planning Committee he was committed to retaining Girton’s identity, and helping it “weather the storm”.

Cllr de Lacey, as District Councillor, referred to his active membership of SCDC's Joint Development Committee which was considering the NIAB, and NW Cambridge developments. He was making monthly reports on the issues in the GPN.

Questions to Girton's two District Councillors, included:

- the planning application process;
- the Government's imposition of regional planning, and planning inspectors;
- the possibility of the Parish Plan (*when completed*) becoming part of local plan for the village; and
- the importance of sport, and verges for running.

9.) **Report on the Parish Plan** (*Circulated at the meeting*)

Jake Reynolds, a member of the Steering Group, gave an update to the meeting in the absence of Alex Duncan, the Chairman. The questionnaire had been delayed and was available for completion until mid May. Many issues were being covered by the Plan including the A14, the focus of 2009 Annual Meeting. He acknowledged a point raised from the floor about the need to re-examine the village report. His view was that the results of the village plan questionnaire would reflect the "here and now" issues in Girton, and hoped that the results would inform village planning over the next five years.

Alice Few thanked the Steering Group for all their work on behalf off the community. This was echoed by the Chairman who looked forward to the final report.

10.) **Police and Security Reports** (*This was brought forward to immediately after Item 2 to permit the police officers to resume their duties.*)

a) Police Report

Three representatives from Histon Police Station attended. Sergeant Rogerson reported that police panels were arranged every quarter to permit local concerns to be raised. A ten point pledge had been introduced to explain what residents could expect from the police. For example if anyone felt intimidated a police officer would attend within an hour. Positive management measures were being adopted. In the past complaints had been actioned depending on whether they were regarded as major or minor incidents. The aim now was to try to see the crime from the viewpoint of residents. A victim care team had been set up to review incidents daily.

b) Neighbourhood Watch and Police Liaison

The Chairman referred to Neighbourhood Watch report which had been circulated with the papers for the meeting; and advised that Val Godby now chaired Girton's group. In answer to a question about the local Neighbourhood Watch structure it was explained that Girton fell under Cambridge, and was policed by the nearest police officer. ASBOs were queried as being a "badge of honour". Sergeant Rogerson said there had been considerable research on ASBOs. They could be regarded a "badge" but in practice were the last warning prior to more serious action by the courts. One individual was currently the subject of an ASBO in Girton, and work was underway to serve another Order.

11.) **Girton Town Charity Report** (*Circulated at the meeting*)

Residents were also reminded that GTC reports were given every month in the Girton Parish News, and that seven sheltered housing plots at Wellbrook Way were at the planning stage.

12.) **Questions and comments from the floor**

Issues raised	Response
The proposed bowling green & community centre at Wellbrook Way.	The public space was being developed. Wimpeys were providing S106 monies to fund these facilities.
The replacement of the monkey bar play equipment on the recreation ground.	This would be taken forward as soon as possible.
The need to increase available places at Girton Glebe School	The Chairman said this was a sensitive point. Unfortunately no S106 monies had been allocated from the Weavers Field & Wellbrook Way developments.
The lack of facilities for swimming within the village	This would be explored.

Appreciation was voiced about the previous year's successful campaign to retain free buses for school children to Impington Village College; and the difference the planters had made to the appearance of the village.

The Rector thanked Councillors & Clerk for their efforts on behalf of the village during the past year.

The meeting closed at 9pm.