

**From County Councillor John Reynolds**

## **WINTER GRITTING REVIEW**

County Councillors will consider a review of winter gritting arrangements which will help keep the community and business in the county on the move – including for the first time arrangements to treat some cycle paths. Following last winter's severe weather a review was commissioned of winter gritting arrangements across the county including full consultation with district and parish councils.

The results of the review will be considered by the County Council's Cabinet on October 26 – including a proposal to trial the use of a quad bike and spray backpacks to treat cycleways in Cambridge and footpaths across the County.

The quad bike and brine sprayer will be used to treat the primary on and off-road network of cycle routes within the Cambridge ring road, with the knapsack sprayers used for selected footways across the county.

The precautionary network of roads – which are gritted when below freezing temperatures are predicted – has developed over many years with various roads being added or removed as their importance changed.

Now following the review and consultation a revised network is being put forward. For details go to [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk) and follow the links to the Cabinet report.

The Cabinet will consider a new precautionary network across the county consisting of all A and B roads; links to A & E hospital and other emergency services; Strategic locations as defined by Central Government; roads adjacent to major Fen drains; bus routes used more than five times a week; rural bus routes which link isolated hamlets and distributor roads to industrial estates.

## **BAM NUTTALL'S DELAYS STOPS ST IVES SECTION OPENING FIRST**

Both sections of the Busway are now certain to open at the same time as BAM Nuttall have backtracked on their previous promises to residents to fix the six defects holding up the opening of the northern section. In a Cabinet report published today updating residents and councillors, Council officers have said the contractor has still made "no meaningful progress" on fixing the defects contrary to commitments given by BAM Nuttall's Chief Executive in April. If the six defects on the St Ives to Cambridge section had been fixed as pledged, an agreement could have been reached so the St Ives to Cambridge section could have opened without having to wait for the southern section to be completed.

As BAM Nuttall schedule the southern section for completion at the turn of the year, there is now insufficient time for the contractor to rectify the six defects in advance of the southern link being complete. The Council has deducted over £8 million from BAM Nuttall for late delivery so far which Busway bosses have estimated is more than double what it could have cost BAM Nuttall to fix the defects months ago.

BAM Nuttall's latest programme shows the contractor now expects to complete construction of the route on 17 December, rather than mid-January as they stated less than one month ago.

BAM Nuttall was due to complete both sections of the Busway in February 2009 and the Council has deducted damages almost £14,000 each day.

## **HERITAGE LOTTERY AWARD FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S WIDE SKIES**

The Wide Skies project is due to create new opportunities for Cambridgeshire communities to learn more about their hidden heritage, at museums across Fenland and Huntingdonshire.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced an award of £164,000 to the project that will help local museums work with volunteers to open up their collections to people from across the community.

Artefacts not currently on display will be used to create imaginative new resources for new activities and special sessions for people of all ages. The award will fund new Learning co-ordinators who will help create new programmes for school children and young people, alongside adult learning activities, and reminiscence sessions for older people.

The "Wide Skies" project will involve collections from nine museums in Cambridgeshire, and will encompass local history, natural history, art and agriculture as well as collections based on local historic figures

The museums involved in the project will work in two clusters. The first, based at Wisbech and Fenland Museum will include March Museum, Chatteris Museum, Octavia Hill's Birthplace House and Whittlesey Museum. The second, based at St Neots Museum will include The Norris Museum St Ives, Cromwell Museum, Huntingdon and Ramsey Rural Life Museum. The project is sponsored by Cambridgeshire Museums Advisory Partnership (CMAP) which is a strategic partnership working with the Districts, to support museums across Cambridgeshire.

The Heritage Lottery Fund enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. From our great museums and historic buildings to local parks and countryside or recording and celebrating traditions, customs and history, HLF grants open up our nation's heritage for everyone to enjoy. For more information about Heritage Lottery Fund, please go to [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk) Additional funding has come from Renaissance East of England and Cambridgeshire County Council, Museum Development service.

## **WEB OF WALKS LAUNCHED**

Walkers and horse-riders can make the most of the Cambridgeshire countryside thanks to a new 'Route of the Month' feature launched on the County Council's website. Finding ideas for a walk or ride in the countryside has been made even easier by the council's Public Rights of Way and Access Team with a new section on the website at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/countrysideandrights/>

Cambridgeshire offers a wealth of opportunity for enjoying the outdoors, with 3,200 kilometres of public rights of way and a wide range of landscapes from the wide skies of the Fens to the rolling countryside near the Bedfordshire border.

The County Council website already provides an interactive map where people can find paths and natural sites near to where they live. The new Route of the Month feature has ideas from across the county, giving people the opportunity to try something a bit different, based on a monthly theme.

A new route will be available from the 1st of every month. For October, the theme is woodlands, with walk maps, walk suggestions and even downloadable recipe ideas. Upcoming themes include easy access walks, literary walks and even the science of walking.

## **ADDENBROOKE'S ACCESS ROAD TO OPEN**

A new £25 million road which will link major new developments and the internationally recognised Addenbrooke's Hospital directly to Trumpington / M11, is due to open on Wednesday, October 27.

The new road is part of Cambridgeshire County Council's commitment to manage and deliver the necessary transport links to support growth and new communities. The road will provide a vital link to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) which is home to Addenbrooke's and the Rosie hospitals as well as research and teaching partners including the MRC, CRUK and the University of Cambridge.

It will also help with the expansion of CBC into an international centre for patient care, biomedical research and healthcare education and will unlock land for major housing developments in the area around Clay Farm and Glebe Farm. It is expected the road, which is 1.5 miles long, will be open late in the afternoon on Wednesday and motorists are asked not to use it until it has been officially opened.

It is predicted that the new access road will carry 21,500 vehicles a day between Hauxton Road and Shelford Road in 2023 when all the developments in the area are completed. Some 10,200 vehicles are forecast to use it between Clay Farm and Addenbrooke's. The new route links Hauxton Road to Shelford Road, and onto the CBC using a new bridge over the London to Cambridge railway line. It includes both on and off road cycle lanes as well as facilities for pedestrians.

The cost of the road has been paid for by developers working in the area and out of Central Government's 'Growth Area Fund' – a fund set up by Central Government for projects which are essential to support development in growth areas, and secured by a partnership of the local authorities and Cambridgeshire Horizons.

To improve safety and limit rat-running through the site, a traffic order restriction will be in place from 27 October to stop drivers using the roads within the hospital campus as a short-cut to get from one side of Cambridge to the other. For example through-traffic from the campus boundary on Addenbrooke's Road to Long Road and Hills Road via the hospital site will not be permitted. The through-traffic restriction will prohibit drivers from using the campus roads to get to and from the new access road unless they have business within the campus itself. The restrictions only apply within the Cambridge Biomedical Campus boundary and start just before Addenbrooke's Road connects to Francis Crick Avenue. Signs will be in place at all entry points to the campus and on Addenbrooke's Road to warn drivers of the campus access restriction.

The traffic restrictions will not penalise anyone who has legitimate business on the campus, so if you have an appointment, you're visiting the hospital or you drop off a member of staff or a patient you will not be penalised. A camera vehicle number plate recognition system will be used to identify vehicles which breach the restrictions by using the road as a short-cut.

New road signs will also be in place directing travellers to 'Hospitals', 'A&E' and the 'Biomedical Campus'. 'Addenbrooke's' will be removed from all signs to reflect the decision by the hospital authorities that Addenbrookes and the Rosie hospitals are part of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

Addenbrooke's Road was designed and supervised by Atkins and constructed by Balfour Beatty and Jackson Civil Engineering.

If you would like any further information on the scheme, go to [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/accessroad](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/accessroad)

## **HUNDREDS OF LORRIES REROUTED THANKS TO LOCAL HAULIERS AND COUNCIL**

Hundreds of lorry journeys a week will be routed away from local villages thanks to new agreements and decisions made by major local construction and waste companies working closely with Cambridgeshire County Council.

Mick George Ltd., M.Dickerson Ltd and Donarbon Ltd, who between them have significant fleets of vehicles, have all agreed to re-route a significant proportion of their through traffic avoiding local villages including Sutton, Haddenham and Wilburton with the exception of servicing local deliveries and collections.

The move is in the response to the County Council's efforts to improve the lives of local communities by reducing the impact of heavy lorries transporting construction materials and waste across the county.

The locally based construction materials and waste companies were all keen to promote the new routes themselves or sign agreements to reduce the number of heavy goods vehicles going through villages.

Heavy lorry movements have become a major issue for local communities as the county's future growth agenda is expected to lead to an increase in the number of vehicles travelling through local villages bound for the growth areas within Cambridgeshire.

The County Council's minerals and waste planners have responded to the concerns of local residents by working closely with major local hauliers to agree the new routes which will help to reduce pressures on the environment in local communities.

Following an approach from Haddenham Parish Council in January we have agreed to re-route our larger waste transfer vehicles (220 a week) from the village, as well as Wilburton, although our smaller skip vehicles will still need access to continue to service local businesses and households."

## **SHIRLEY SCHOOL - A CHAMPION AT PROMOTING EQUALITY**

Shirley Nursery and Primary School in Cambridge has become the first school in the country to be given a special award for its commitment to equality.

The EQualities Award recognises exceptional effort and commitment in promoting equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and contributing to community cohesion. The award, recognised by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, is a national award which requires schools to put together a portfolio of evidence which recognises and celebrates the work they do to promote equality and diversity.

Shirley Nursery and Primary School was chosen to participate in a pilot scheme during the summer term because of its existing good practice – as identified by OfSTED and Cambridgeshire County Council.

The school has approximately 400 pupils, over 50 per cent of whom come from a variety of different ethnic backgrounds. About 22 per cent of children come from Traveller backgrounds. Many pupils speak English as an additional language and across the school over 20 different languages are spoken.

To achieve the award, the school had to provide evidence to show they meet 63 different EQuality indicators.

## **GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR LOW CARBON BUILDING**

Cambridgeshire has banked £430,000 of Government funding for a new exhibition space and passenger building at the Busway Park & Ride site in Longstanton.

The low carbon building will have a ground source heat pump for environmentally friendly heating and hot water, top specification insulation made of natural materials on the roof and walls, and there are plans for solar panels to generate electricity.

The new building will have a learning and exhibition centre to showcase low carbon living and environmentally friendly initiatives to encourage local residents to go green in their own homes. It will also include toilets for bus users and office space for park and ride staff.

Work on site will begin next year and contractors SEH French – the building arm of Jackson – believe construction will take around 6 months to complete.

Once complete the centre will help set a benchmark for low carbon properties on the proposed new town of Northstowe.

Funding for the building has been awarded to Cambridgeshire County Council following a bid to Government in partnership with Cambridgeshire Horizons and South Cambridgeshire District Council.

## **MILTON ROAD PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND PARKING IMPROVEMENTS**

Work has started to improve parking arrangements and to boost safety for pedestrians and cyclists on the southern end of Milton Road, Cambridge.

Currently residents, commuters and visitors to shops and businesses park on the footways which obstructs access for pedestrians and cyclists.

Around 45 formal parking spaces are now being created on the footways between Mitcham's Corner and Elizabeth Way and it will become illegal to park outside of the marked areas and motorists who flout the rules could get a parking ticket.

Contractors working on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council have started marking out the work area and the £120,000 project is expected to take up to eight weeks to complete.

The need to provide parking for residents as a priority will be the subject of further consultation in the coming weeks which may lead to some of the new parking spaces being reserved for residents parking permit holders only.

Local residents and motorists who use Milton Road could face some disruption and are being urged to find alternative routes or to allow extra time for their journey.

## **HIRE BICYCLE SAFETY HIGHER!**

A unique scheme keeping Cambridgeshire cyclists safe has found that bicycle hire shops continue to improve their service and safety.

Cambridgeshire County Council Trading Standards visited bicycle hire shops, Schools, Colleges, Language and Activity Centres in Cambridgeshire and looked at the condition of hire cycles.

Before the scheme was introduced in 1999, Officers carried out a survey of hire bicycles and found that more than 75% of cycles tested had at least one fault. As a result the Safe Bicycle Hire Scheme was launched in August 2000, with the aim of improving the condition of the hire cycles.

Subsequent checks have revealed that the number of safe cycles found continues to grow and now the vast majority are safe and fault free.

The results confirm that the scheme has had a significant impact on the condition of hire cycles and helps ensure that thousands of visitors to Cambridge can hire a cycle that has been serviced and is in good condition.

Officers from Cambridgeshire Trading Standards carry out a check during the summer, at traditionally the busiest time of year for hire cycles and almost 500 hire cycles were tested this year. Five traders throughout Cambridgeshire are approved to participate in the scheme.

Previous checks revealed some hire cycles had three, four or more faults affecting safety. Problems highlighted in earlier surveys ranged from loose and un-secure brake levers, or a mudguard loosely attached with string. Faults found this summer were generally minor such as a flat tyre or drained batteries where lights had been left on. Most of the City's language schools also actively endorse and "police" the scheme.

Details of the scheme can be found at the following link on the County Council's website: [http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/community/consumer/info/safety/bike\\_hire.htm](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/community/consumer/info/safety/bike_hire.htm)

A list of the approved traders who have signed up to the scheme can be found at the following link on the County Council's website:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/community/consumer/info/safety/cycleschemetraders.htm>

## **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 came into force, in part, on 1 October this year. This Act refines and extends existing discrimination legislation in order to provide a simpler, more consistent and effective legal framework for preventing discrimination. The Council has been preparing for the Act for some time and a number of steps have been taken already to ensure compliance.

All of the Council's employment policies have been updated to reflect the provisions of the Act and the implications for the services we provide are being considered by the Council's Diversity Group.

Government guidance on what the Act means for public sector organisations is available here; <http://tiny.cc/v1omv>

Remaining elements of the Act, such as the public sector equality duty, are still being considered by Government and are due to come into force from April 2011.

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