

A View from the District (December 2011)

Hardly had I sent my last month's report when I was informed that the Sustainability, Planning and Climate Change Portfolio Holder (who in February backed a motion to ban wind farms in South Cambs) has unilaterally thrown out the Solar PV project which, the Climate Change Working Group had argued, was still significant value for money even on the Government's reduced tariffs. So much for commitments to green government.

The Constitution Review Working Party met to discuss revisions to our Standing Orders, supposedly to clarify the question of whether use of social media is permitted, but via a document which to my mind simply added another level of confusion. I had submitted a detailed critique and the Committee agreed, deciding nothing needs to be done to our Orders, which do not prohibit use of social media as they stand.

After a frustratingly long period, Girton's Village Plan was finally considered and adopted by SCDC on 17 November. The Plan Committee put an immense amount of work into developing it: I hope we can now find other volunteers to help the Parish Council to implement its recommendations.

I have had a very large number of meetings this month concerning the Abbeyfield development at Wellbrook Way. They have included a tour of the site which has made me realise what a great asset it will be to Girton: however there is a problem with the boundary which I am working with officers and the Parish Council to resolve.

Council met on 24 November, preceded by three presentations including one to our Ecology Office Rob Mungovan who has won a prestigious national prize for his work to protect the largest colony of swifts in East Anglia when its home in Fulbourn was redeveloped, using a combination of nesting boxes and a CD of swift mating calls.

More prosaically we agreed the recommendation from the Constitution Review Working Party as above, and agreed in principle to the proposal from Histon and Impington Councils that they merge. We also approved enthusiastically a motion not to increase members' allowances in the coming year.

On 30 November SCDC hosted a transport modelling seminar in which we were introduced to the arcane delights of PARAMICS and SATURN and other attempts to predict the effects on traffic of new developments. Details were thin, and when I asked for criteria by which councillors could challenge implausible sounding results of the modelling the speaker replied 'yes, some criteria would be nice, wouldn't they?'

The next stage of the roadworks at the NIAB Site on Huntingdon Road has been published: a safety audit on the work so far. This will be used to inform further development here and I am pleased to see proposals that the sharp angles should be smoothed out, the white lining removed at the point where the cycle lane splits, and several recommendations to make travel paths clearer. The formal process for instituting a 30mph limit along Huntingdon Road from Girton Corner to the present limit has also begun.

If you would like a fuller monthly report emailed to you please contact me at scdc@de-lacey.org and I shall add you to the list of recipients. If you have any District Council issues you would like to discuss please don't hesitate to ask me.

Douglas de Lacey
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