

Girton Parish Council

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The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
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Minutes of the meeting of Girton Parish Council held via video conference on Tuesday 16th March, 2021, at 7.00 p.m.

Residents were invited to submit written statements on issues of concern to any Councillor or the Clerk for presentation at item 21/26.1, with video-conference details for the public open session available on request from the Clerk.

Present: (Cllrs) Williams (Chairman), Cockley, Dashwood, de Lacey, Griffin, Kettle, Mitchell, Rodger Cllr L Harford (Cambs County Council), Cllr T Bygott (South Cambs District Council) (until end of item 21/29.2)

1 member of the public

In attendance: S Cumming (Clerk), L Lawrence (Assistant Clerk)

21/23 Welcome from the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially County Councillor Harford. The Council has received Cllr Hickford's resignation and the Chairman expressed appreciation of his Parish Council service and regret at losing him. The Chairman will write formally to thank former-Councillor Hickford, particularly for his work on the Pavilion refurbishment.

ACTION: The Chairman

21/24 Apologies and Reasons for Absence. Apologies for absence had been received from the Chair of Girton Town Charity Trustees.

21/25 Members' declarations for items on the agenda. None.

21/26 Public Participation session on agenda items and matters of mutual interest:

1. Members of the Public. Written representations to be verbally presented by Councillors. The member of the public present was welcomed but did not wish to speak.
2. County Councillor's Report (*Appendix A*) Cllr Harford reported that she likes GPC to have a report from her which is as up to date and as informative as possible. She has one update to her written report relating to control of budgets for community transport and concessionary fares. Since the establishment of the Mayor's Office in 2017 this has been devolved but there is now confirmation that this will not be the case this year. Cllr Harford believes this will not make any material difference and she will keep us updated. Central government has allocated £3 billion to improve bus services and the Mayor has £100,000 for the Combined Authority. Cllr Harford has raised questions about policy and standards and will pursue vigorously regarding spending on Washpit Lane. Cllr Harford is to check about the work needed for a 2.5m wide cycle path at Weavers Field on the non-motorised unit. A response is awaited from Highways England re the offer of trees following A14 works. The Chairman thanked Cllr Harford.

3. District Councillors' Reports (*Appendix B*) Cllr de Lacey reported that the Mayor has spent £100 million on housing and central government is not sending the second tranche which will affect SCDC housing. Until the end of May, applications can be made for Community Chest grants for covid relief up to £2,000, and Cllr de Lacey is urging local groups to apply via GPN. Cllr de Lacey was questioned about the comments relating to the robustness of the ICT systems at SCDC. Although there have been very good measures to allow SCDC to continue operations during lockdown, 180 officers' computers stopped working for a fortnight after a Microsoft update. This being Cllr de Lacey's last report as a District Councillor, the Chairman spoke for all present in offering congratulations on his long Council career and in thanking him for all that he has done for the village of Girton. Cllr Harford also thanked Cllr de Lacey for all the work he has done in collaboration with her too. It was suggested that HGV traffic is becoming a problem in Girton but the 20mph zone may deter HGV traffic if it shows on satnav. Cllr Bygott commented that satnavs following the shortest route will make people go through Girton but they go out of date very quickly and have changed algorithms for speed limits by choosing the fastest route.

Cllr de Lacey was asked to circulate copies of the documents submitted to the Local Plan consultation on land for potential development to Parish Councillors and residents who have asked about them. The Chairman has already circulated copies to the PC of those he submitted

ACTION: Cllr de Lacey

Cllr Bygott gave thanks to Cllr de Lacey. They have been District Councillors together since 2008 and he is pleased Cllr de Lacey is staying on as a Parish Councillor. In response to a question Cllr Bygott stated that he is in favour of the current Council Tax system and would not support proposals for local income tax. Regarding the Hotel Felix planning application, the Council must bear in mind the risk of pre-determination as it is important for a public body decision not to show bias, and if we have concerns he recommends seeking professional advice on this. It was reported that although a groundswell of support had been shown against demolition of Hotel Felix, no members of the public were yet prepared to lead a campaign. The Chairman thanked the District Councillors.

4. Police Report. No report this month.

21/27 To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 16th February, 2021.

The Minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley and approved unanimously.

21/28 Matters arising from the Minutes (for information only) and review of action points

21/15.5 The Chairman and Cllr Harford have followed up regarding Washpit Lane. Issue of prevention of motorcycle used remains.

21/18.1 The Parish Council group's reports on proposed sites were forwarded to Greater Cambridge Local Plan on 1st March.

21/18.2 & 21/18.3 Contractors have been notified regarding grass cutting.

21/18.6 Previous Darwin Green proposals regarding accessibility to Thornton Road have been looked into. Cllr de Lacey has been in touch with Bidwells and asked them to look in their archives. Mrs. C Bromwich is to raise the matter at the Eddington/NW Cambridge Quadrant Group. It is thought unlikely

that they will know who owns the land.

21/29 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council.

1. To approve arrangements for the Annual Parish Meeting and possibly AGM to be held by video-conference at a date prior to 7th May, 2021. The current arrangements for online meetings run out on May 7th with the government unlikely to extend the legislation. With hybrid meetings also banned only face to face meetings will subsequently be allowed. June 21st is the first date when sufficient numbers can meet inside, which is beyond the date by which we have to hold Annual Meetings, being the end of May. The Chairman proposed that we stream our usual zoom meeting to the village, to be run as a webinar so that anyone can post questions. The Chairman proposed that the Annual Parish Meeting be held on Tuesday 27th April and the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 4th May, seconded by Cllr de Lacey and approved unanimously. The technical options for this will be investigated.

ACTION: Chairman and Clerk

2. To approve the purchase of a used shipping container for temporary storage on the car park and then permanent positioning on Girton Recreation Ground as replacement for a condemned container near St John's Field.. Three quotations have been received and one chosen on price, availability and location of provider as transport is cheaper for a local provider. A temporary location in the car park is not ideal but the container will be moved following works and currently no delivery company is prepared to take lorries onto grass, so it has to be placed on hard standing. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley and approved unanimously. Clerk to book delivery

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Bygott left the meeting at this point.

3. To approve Pavilion insurance be extended to cover forthcoming building works. Clerk to update.

ACTION: Clerk

4. To approve provision of secure externally accessed switching for outdoor facility lights. The Chairman spoke to the Tennis Club about this a long time ago and there is a qualified electrician in the club who could do the work. The switch will be in a padlocked box using the same key as the courts. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley, and approved unanimously.

5. Noting that Former Councillor Ray Gordon and his wife have recently left the village, to formally record the Parish Council's heartfelt appreciation of his services to the Parish over many years. Ray was a Parish Councillor for about six years and did an enormous amount for the village. We miss him and we are formally grateful. As it is not possible to use PC funds for individual 'gifts' a collection was proposed to buy and send a bouquet of flowers to Ray and his wife in appreciation. Approved unanimously. Donations to be provided to the Clerk who will arrange flower delivery.

ACTION: Clerk

6. To consider a list of additional maintenance issues raised by the Groundsman received by Cllr Cockley. The list includes vertidrainage to combat waterlogging, at £800 (AJ King), fertilisation of fields (Working Turf quotations are £1726 plus VAT for 5 hectares, £1147 plus VAT for 3 hectares) and £100 for spraying nitrogen for weeds. Proposed by Cllr Cockley and seconded by Cllr de Lacey that an 'up to' price be set and that further quotations be sought. Unanimously approved.

It was proposed that the Assistant to the Clerk help the Groundsman find further quotations.

ACTION: Assistant to the Clerk

21/30 Finance and Resource Management

1. To approve the payments schedule for the past month (*Appendix C*). Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley and approved unanimously. With the new financial year, the payments schedule will be presented as a spreadsheet to allow month by month comparisons.
2. To note any significant variance from usual levels of monthly income/expenditure. None.

21/31 Correspondence (to be received)

Circulated by email.

21/32 To receive reports

1. Chairman's Report (*Appendix D*) The Chairman had nothing to add to his written report.
2. Girton Town Charity Report. No report received this month.
3. Water Management Report. Nothing to report this month.
4. Pavilion Refurbishment Report. The groundsman and Mr P Clare have worked hard on removing scrap metal and items from the Pavilion. Storage is an issue, and a skip will be ordered for a month for the groundsman and users. The relocation of the Parish Office is being looked at: a portakabin would be very expensive, and we are exploring use of Cotton Hall and other possible premises in the village. It was suggested that if we purchased a portakabin this could be re-sold at the end of the works. The Assistant Clerk has asked users to remove items by the end of April. The defibrillator is to be relocated at Cotton Hall. The Task and finish Group will report progress to the Council each month.
5. Pavilion Finance Report (*Appendix E*) The Assistant to the Clerk was thanked for her very useful report on online banking, which will be brought to the next meeting for formal consideration and action.
6. Illegal Encampments Report. Cllrs Mitchell and de Lacey completed online training and then attended a workshop on issues surrounding illegal encampments. The main purpose seemed to be to challenge attitudes to such situations. Information was provided on sources of help and ways of reaching amicable solutions.

21/33 Items which the Council need to discuss at the next meeting.

Second-hand bicycles are reported to have been sold outside the Village Institute. Chairman to contact Social Club regarding this.

ACTION: Chairman

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

APPENDIX A

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report Girton Parish Council - 16 March 2021 meeting

Budget News The County Council held its annual budget meeting on 09 February. I am very pleased that the budget allocations that I had worked to promote, were included within the approved budget. Of all the services that the county council is responsible for, there is one that touches absolutely every resident,

whether they walk, cycle, drive, are conveyed through the good offices of someone else or receive delivery of goods and services. That service is Highways. There may be other services that, of necessity command bigger budgets, but every pound of the Highways budget is spent on delivering a service that is used in some way by all Cambridgeshire's residents. I am pleased to confirm that to augment the current footpath budget of £1.3m, an additional £20m has been allocated for footpath maintenance over the next five years. 50% of this will be spent on surface treatments with the other 50% being allocated for more radical work such as resurfacing and reconstruction. £2.73m additional funding has been approved for additional measures to prevent flooding and improve local biodiversity. This will include rapid gully clearing at all known risk sites and better verge maintenance on rural roads, some advance information about which I have previously reported in the hope that these proposals would be funded. £6.97m has been allocated for improvements to the B1050 Shelfords Road, Willingham. The condition of this busy route, one of only a limited number of river crossings, and a main commuter route from the fens to Cambridge, has been a cause for concern for some years. Despite significant work being regularly undertaken to keep it safe and serviceable, its historic construction, destabilised by poor ground conditions, dictates the necessity for a full reconstruction to prevent what otherwise would be its ultimate closure. These additional investments and closure of a predicted budget gap of £9.6m in the 2021/22 budget are facilitated through releasing an immediate £4.115m in revenue, by pausing further topup allocations to the council's Transformation Fund from its Minimum Revenue Provision [MRP]. Redeployment of £3.67m already allocated to the Transformation Fund closes the remaining gap and supports the council's objective of keeping any council tax rise as low as possible. Council tax for the next year has been set at 1.99% plus a 1% Adult Social Care precept. This 2.99% in total equates to an additional £40.59pa on a Band D council tax bill [78p per week].

County Council Covid Hub The council's hub is now back up to full capacity in response to the current lockdown. It has contacted over 32,000 shielding residents, offering a wide range of support to them, including provision of food and essential supplies, and help with shopping and household chores. There is also a befriending service to reduce isolation or anxiety and volunteers use phone, email and text to check in regularly on those in the shielding group. The county council has been working in partnership with the British Red Cross to provide food parcels. Each one is sufficient to last for seven days. Hygiene and play packs have been delivered through the council's Children's Services to more than 2,500 vulnerable families. Support, mostly financial has also been made available for those who are self-isolating, and links have been made through the district councils, to the excellent local community support groups to ensure that there is access to food and other essential supplies. The council is delivering the government's Winter Support Scheme, and provided 40,000 food vouchers to eligible families to help support them over the Christmas holiday period. The same offer will be made during the February half-term in addition to the direct allocation from schools of school meals vouchers. The council has also provided help for around 2,500 households with things like heating and water bills and other essential supplies. As the county moves into the recovery phase there will be many challenges. The additional support and resilience provided by parish councils and community groups will be vital to help that recovery. The county council's continuing shift of services to a more localised approach under the banner of Cambridgeshire Local will support engagement and allow all organisations to focus on local priorities. A local introductory event is planned shortly and I do hope you will attend to find out more.

Vaccination Programme Contrary to earlier advice anyone aged over 70 who has not yet been vaccinated is now being urged to contact the NHS to book an appointment. The easiest way to to arrange this is through the national booking system: www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination. The system allows patients to choose a time slot and location that suits them. Anyone unable to book online can call 119 free of charge, anytime between 7am and 11pm, seven days a week. If a suitable and convenient slot is not available people can also call their GP practice. Almost every resident and member of staff in care homes across Cambridgeshire has now either been given their first vaccination or had it offered to them. The small exception to this is a handful of homes where it is currently not possible due to there being a Covid-19 outbreak. Vaccinations will be offered at these sites once that situation is resolved.

Covid Testing The roll-out in Cambridgeshire of rapid community Covid-19 testing, using lateral flow tests, started with the opening of the first centre at Cambourne Hub on 03 February. These rapid tests are for people without Covid-19 symptoms [asymptomatic]. Using a new kind of technology, these tests do not require a laboratory for processing. Most people should be staying at home at the moment and limiting all contact with anyone they don't live with, but it is acknowledged that there are large numbers of people across Cambridgeshire who have to leave home to go to work. This is the group that this testing is particularly targeted at. Around one in three people who are infected with Covid-19 have no symptoms and could be spreading the disease without knowing it. Broadening testing to identify key workers showing no symptoms will mean finding positive cases more quickly, which helps break chain of transmission. Workplace testing will also be offered to organisations that have a large, site based workforce. Funding for this came from a successful £1.4m bid to the Department for Health & Social Care and covers a six weeks pilot with the potential for extension. Tests are offered at no cost to the public and the process of taking a test takes on average 15 minutes from arrival to departure. Each site will be open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. To book a test, people need to visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting. People who have Covid-19 symptoms will not be tested at the rapid testing sites and they should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119. However, it is not the testing that will reduce rates of transmission, but what people who are tested then go on to do. If people don't isolate after a positive result [and this is now a legal requirement] this won't help reduce the spread of the virus. To encourage people to do so, support is available. More information at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport

Wellbeing Loneliness is a continuing concern. Simple things like waving to a neighbour in the street, having a socially distanced chat, or making a phone call to someone, are just some of the ways we can all help to tackle loneliness during lockdown. The council's #50000reasons campaign was launched to encourage people to make contact with neighbours and friends. The name of the campaign comes from statistics that suggest that as many as 50,000 people who live alone across Cambridgeshire are at risk of experiencing loneliness. Isolation through lockdown restrictions can lead to people reflecting negatively on their lives putting them at risk of further ill health and suicidal feelings. Against that background small gestures can make a big difference. For more information:

<https://www.bewellcambridgeshire.co.uk/resources-and-campaigns/50-000-reasons>

Education Despite central government investment which has led to around 4,500 laptops being distributed to children in need, research shows there are around 8,000 children and young people across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough who are being severely disadvantaged because they do not have access to the IT equipment or broadband they need. The education service has set itself a target to secure sufficient funding to ensure that every child and young person in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has both the

equipment and access to broadband that they need to maintain continuity of their learning and education at home. To date £130,000 has been secured specifically to support maintained schools through increasing the number of laptops available to children in the two authorities. This is sufficient to purchase 400 Windows laptops and cover the distribution costs. A business case is in preparation for grant funding of another £130,000 from one of the COVID grant allocations managed by Public Health. A Peterborough company has already pledged a £100,000 donation to Peterborough schools and made a commitment to match fund donations from other businesses. A partnership has been established with the Youth Panel, Cambridge Digital Partnership, Cambridge 2030 and the Library Service for a campaign, Digital Drive Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which includes setting up a collection and distribution network for anyone wishing to donate used Windows laptops to schools. All donated laptops will be collected by the Library Service and delivered to the Youth Panel which will remove and destroy all hard drives [and data] and refurbish laptops so that they are in good working order. They will then be given to schools across the county for distribution to the children and young people who need them. This initiative launched on 06 February. Every library in Cambridgeshire is being set up with a simple drop box located in the entrance which can be accessed during the published opening times: <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/visit-a-library>

Anyone wishing to donate their old laptop[s] to a named school, or school serving a particular area, will be asked to include this information when they take it to one of the collection points. The service is also working to create an online system whereby businesses, other public bodies and individuals can make a financial donation in a fast, secure way. A dedicated enquiries inbox has been set up to manage any enquiries:

LaptopsForChildren@cambridgeshire.gov.uk. Other local charities and organisations that specialise in the recycling/reformatting of old laptops are also engaged in this initiative. A communications and engagement plan will aim to raise awareness of the initiative, share FAQs and key information, and direct the target audience to donate.

Local Matters I have responded to a few requests for clarification about the road closure in place at Washpit Lane. The application to close the road stated: “The historic carriageway for Washpit Road is in situ, albeit significantly overgrown due to decades of little use. Works involve clearing the site to a total width of 6m, planing existing surface, laying of new surface and the creation of a 3m grass equestrian verge. Works also include new signage and bollards.” It states that the affected location is the section that is closed [has been for some time] to vehicular traffic under a permanent traffic regulation order and is normally open only to non-motorised traffic. I understand that some concerns have been raised that the work being done will result in it being opened again to vehicular traffic. No such application has been made. The application stated that there is no suitable diversion during the closure for cyclists and equestrians and that therefore “works may be able to grant access on an ad-hoc basis” during their duration. However, the order that was subsequently issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Highways permitting officer makes no mention of this and I understand that, for reasons of health and safety, access is not being permitted. A good deal of concern has been expressed to me by residents in all the villages in Bar Hill division about the lack of sufficient trees to mitigate road noise following completion of the A14C2H project. Within the terms of the Development Consent Order, Highways England made a commitment to maintain all vegetation that was planted in connection with the scheme. That commitment continues for a period of five years after construction to allow it to fully mature. HE has also advised that the initial maintenance period is covered by its contractor and any tree that doesn’t survive will be

replanted. At the end of November, 2020 HE confirmed that a recent inspection had identified all areas where this had happened and stated its intention to plant replacements. On 21 January a Girton resident emailed me to say she was 'overjoyed to see many hundreds if not thousands of trees' had been planted the previous day. It is clear that these little plants will take a good many years to mature and provide the screening that so many residents want to see. I believe that all the villages in Bar Hill division might agree to get together and supplement what has been planted with some more mature specimens. However, I have been reliably informed that a previous approach to HE about the possibility of local intervention, was met with a negative response on the grounds of health and safety. That doesn't mean that I am not willing to make a new approach to HE. Girton Parish Councillors and some residents have already expressed a wish to progress this and I will follow up this month with the other parish councils in the division. I look forward to seeing you all at your meeting. Please do contact me at any time with any questions or comments either by email or phone.

Lynda Harford

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/lynda.harford>

APPENDIX B

i) District Councillor's Report from Cllr Douglas de Lacey

I much regret that this is the last report I shall present to you as your District Councillor. In order for my seat to be contested in May I shall have to resign no later than 26 March.

February is all about finance as we prepare the annual budget. It is clear that in a very difficult year the administration has managed to be a good steward of our finances, in no small part because of earlier decisions to invest heavily in property as central Government cuts our grants. So although we are putting 10p a week on our precept we should manage to survive the coming year without major cuts. Cabinet met on 3 February to finalise the figures, which had been through Scrutiny's January meeting.

Much of the full Council meeting on 23 February related to the budget and the setting of Council Tax for the coming year. But there were also three motions from members. The first focused on the problems caused by HGV, in the light of Government proposals to increase the maximum permitted axle weight:

<quote>

This Council requests that the Leader write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request that the government take fully into account the effects of HGV traffic on rural communities ... when considering changes to current regulations on weight, and include supporting evidence of the increase referred to.

This Council requests that the Leader also write to the County Council to request that it facilitates the use of measures set out above to make our village roads safer and improve the daily lives of our residents, along with supporting evidence of the increase referred to above.

</quote>

The second motion was to support the designation of the proposed Fens Biosphere as a UNESCO Biosphere; and the third asked our pension fund holders to assess the risk which climate change poses to their investments.

All were approved.

On 25 February the major item on Scrutiny's agenda was a report on our ICT data centre following a report on outages in the previous quarter. This led to a lively discussion on the robustness of our ICT with respect to a number of potential threats, including (since I was able to report a current ransomware attack on a University -- not in Cambridge) external attacks. We gave our ICT team a lot to think about. We then discussed report on how we should handle our housing repairs service; whether to take it back in-house, continue to contract it out or to have a hybrid service so that minor repairs could be better managed. Since this is a long-term issue the current contract has been extended for one year to allow a fully-informed decision.

Other than that the reports on our business plan, our covid-19 response task-and-finish group, and our anti-racism task and finish group were accepted without comment.

On behalf of the Parish Council committee delegated to comment on the sites proposed for development in Girton, I completed the form for site URN 52 (Site 40060, 'Land off High Street, Girton'. I have been asked to make this response public and see no reason not to do so; the Council may wish to advise on the best route.

Since I agreed to co-ordinate our litter picking volunteers I have given out on loan 5 pickers and 3 bag hoops. I have written an article for GPN with a photo of one picker very much in action.

Douglas de Lacey

ii) District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott - 16th Mar 2021

Demolition of the Hotel Felix on Huntingdon Road On February 26th, the property developers submitted their application to demolish the Hotel Felix (www.hotelfelix.co.uk). The application is currently being checked for validity before it can appear on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website at www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/view-orcomment-on-a-planning-application. The planning department has a backlog of about one month when validating applications, so the reference number won't be available for about another week. There will then be a public consultation period during which anyone can submit an objection and during which the Parish Council will be asked to submit its comments. I have requested a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) for a giant sequoia (*wellingtonia*) that stands right on the edge of where the new building is planned. It can be seen clearly from Whitehouse Lane. The tree is about twice as high as the hotel, so it could be quite old, but I will defer to the Council's tree officer to make a professional estimate. I have been campaigning to save the building and have written articles to this end in last month's and next month's Girton Parish News. Parish Councillors should maintain an open mind and judge the application on the facts presented, being careful to avoid pre-determination. More information on

predetermination can be found in chapter 6 on pages 36-37 of the Localism Act 2011:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/pdfs/ukpga_20110020_en.pdf.

District Council's budget agreed At February's South Cambridgeshire District Council meeting, the council's budget was agreed. There will be a £5 per year increase for the average band D home to £155.31. Adding the County Council, Police and Fire components brings this to £1,876.20, plus an extra £69.39 for Girton Parish. The cheapest Council Tax is for band A properties, which are always 2/3 of band D, and the most expensive are band H, which are always double band D. We are very fortunate to have this system of Council Tax. In many countries, such as the United States, councils charge "rates". If the value of your property increases by 35%, the rates also increase by 35%. Our MP, Anthony Browne, recently wrote an article in the Spectator warning of the dangers of that kind of tax:

www.spectator.co.uk/article/a-proportional-property-tax-would-be-a-disaster. Divestment from fossil fuels

Also at the last council meeting, a motion was passed asking for the council to write to the Local Pension Board and pension investment committees asking how they "intend to manage the effects of climate change as a financial risk to their investments, including the issue of divestment" from fossil fuels. My group fully supported this motion, not only because of our concern for the environment and our desire for cleaner air, but also because of the financial risks that these investments pose for the council's staff and retirees. In 2015, UK local authority pension funds lost nearly £700M when the value of shares in coal-related companies collapsed. The Greater Manchester Pension Fund alone lost £148M and Teeside nearly £47M. This month the UK's largest and most recently built coal-fired power station, Drax, shut down for the last time, leaving only three power stations burning coal. These are known as "stranded assets" and occur also in the oil industry. Last summer, BP wrote down \$17.5B (£14B) from the value of its oil and gas assets. Many people aren't aware that they have significant exposure in their pension savings or in a sharesbased ISA to fossil fuels. In the 1960s, research was published that most active fund managers were no better at picking stocks than choosing at random. This led in the 1970s to the introduction of tracker funds, where money is invested in every company making up a stock market index. Many people in the UK have pension funds invested in FTSE100 tracker funds, but may not be aware just how much of this is invested in oil companies. At the time of writing, BP and Shell together make up nearly 10% of the weight of the index; this means that someone with £100,000 in their pension invested in a FTSE100 tracker fund owns £9,365 of shares in BP and Shell. They also own £3,139 worth of British American Tobacco shares. Knowing what we know today about the future of these dying industries, people probably wouldn't make the same investment decisions if this were more visible.

Cllr Tom Bygott

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APPENDIX C

Payments Schedule for March 2021

(circulated separately)

APPENDIX D

Chairman's Report

10th March 2021

Progress to appoint a Project Manager for the Pavilion refurbishment project continues very slowly. The search for alternative Office accommodation continues, an agreement for use of a room at Cotton Hall having fallen through. A proposal for purchase of a replacement storage container will be brought to our March meeting.

Following the non-appearance of our full page notice about the project in the February edition of GPN we were very disappointed to see that the March issue only featured a half page rendition rather than the centre page spread we had subsequently requested. Copies have been placed on notice boards with directions to the web page for full details.

The works to Washpit lane are complete and amount to widening of the footpath/cycle way and provision of a wide verge for horses with traffic restricting bollards. It is not clear why restriction of motorcycles has not been included. The size of the budget for this work had lead us to believe that the whole of the Washpit Lane surface was to be renewed. These matters are being followed up by County Councillor Harford.

On behalf of the Parish Council task group delegated to comment on the sites proposed to the Local Plan Development process for development in Girton, I completed the on-line submissions for 8 of the sites, the others being submitted by Douglas de Lacey. Copies reproduced as pdfs will be circulated to all Councillors ahead of the next meeting.

Cllr Shahila Mitchell kindly volunteered to represent the PC in attending an SCDC workshop on illegal encampments on March 11th and will report at our meeting.

Confirmation of our undertaking of responsibility for street lighting from April seems still not to have been received by the County Council and SCDC are proposing to act as intermediary. Susie is attempting to get the matter resolved. We have confirmed to the A14 Legacy Fund that we will be responsible for the planned new lighting along Oakington Road to the Parish boundary..

Haydn Williams

APPENDIX E REPORT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO GIRTON PARISH COUNCIL BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Girton Parish Council currently banks with the Co-operative Bank with payments made by cheque only. The council does not have an online banking facility.

Making payments by cheque is becoming more problematic for several reasons:

1. An increasing number of suppliers are asking for payment to be made electronically now and some have indicated they will soon refuse to accept cheque payments.
2. Payment of staff salaries by cheque is unsatisfactory as it takes several days for cheques to clear.
3. It is extremely difficult to monitor income as we have to wait for our monthly bank statement from the Co-operative to reconcile receipts on QuickBooks. This delays outstanding accounts from being chased.
4. The Pavilion refurbishment project due to commence in Spring 2021, will increase the volume of payments that will need to be made to suppliers. To obtain best value we need to be able to pay for associated items by bank transfer or purchase card.
5. Some purchases can only be made by debit or credit card. Currently staff or councillors are having to use their own cards to make payments. This is unsatisfactory due to the delays in receiving reimbursement and makes it difficult to reclaim VAT.

The Parish Council's Financial Regulations, adopted in 2017 allow for the use of electronic payments and enquiries with other Parish Clerks indicate that an increasing number of parishes now use online banking. In fact, I have yet to find a Parish Council that doesn't.

Parish Councils are viewed as a fairly small and unprofitable sector for the large commercial banks, although the Co-operative Bank appear to still be committed to continue providing bank accounts for local councils. However, the Co-operative Bank is unable to provide an online banking facility that meets the requirements of Financial Regulations regarding the 'two signatory rule'

Unity Trust Bank offers an online banking facility whereby the clerk/RFO can set up payments online but then any two signatories on the bank mandate authorise them. The councillors nominated as online signatories can only authorise and view transactions – they are not able to set up third party payments. This minimises the risk of fraud.

None of the other major banks operate a system offering on-line banking AND a separation of the person setting up the transaction and the person(s) authorising it.

Cash and cheques can be paid in at the Post Office or cheques sent in a prepaid envelope to the clearing house, similar to the current arrangement with the Co-operative Bank.

The current account fee is £6 per month, charged quarterly and for councils with an annual turnover of between £100,000 and £2 million there is a 15p charge per individual debit and credit transaction. However, these charges would be offset by the reduced postage, stationery and staff time costs.

A pre-paid debit card or charge card is necessary due to the increase in internet purchasing to obtain good value and the requirements of maintaining operations, particularly during the Pavilion refurbishment works. The financial limit should be set by the Parish Council and a policy adopted for card use and security.

Typical example of a pre-paid debit card:

Optimum Mastercard

Card fee: £5

Monthly fee: £1.99

No individual transaction fee.

No charge for topping up by bank transfer.

An alternative option is:

Unity Trust Corporate MultiPay Card

They have partnered with Lloyds Bank and MasterCard to offer the Unity Corporate MultiPay Card – a charge card which is bespoke to customers of Unity Trust Bank.

You can tailor cardholder spend on goods and services to suit the requirements of the organisation, as well as individual cardholders

- Set single transaction, as well as monthly, spending limits
- Optional merchant category blocking available, at company and cardholder level
- Visibility of spend across all cardholders

Single online account management tool

- Amend individual card limits Update cardholder addresses and other personal details
- Extract transaction data
- View online statements
- Control access for audit purposes

Charges are £3 per month, per card plus a one-off set-up fee of £50.

I recommend and ask that Girton Parish Council resolves to:

1. Transfer current account banking arrangements from Co-operative Bank to Unity Trust Bank
2. Approve the issue to the Clerk of either a prepaid debit card or a Multipay charge card with a single transaction limit of XX

Laura Lawrence
1 March 2021