

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 19th January, 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 21/4.1, with video-conference details for the public open session available on request from the Clerk.

Present: (Cllrs) Williams (Chairman), Buckler, Cockley, Dashwood, de Lacey (from item 21/4.3 until the end of item 21/7.6), Kettle, Mitchell, Rodger, Thorrold.

Cllr L Harford (Cambs County Council), Cllr T Bygott (South Cambs District Council) (until the end of item 21/7.6)

Mrs A Bonnett (Girton Town Charity) (until the end of item 21/10.2)

1 member of the public (until the end of item 21/4.1)

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

21/1 Welcome from the Chairman. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially County Councillor Harford, the Chairman of Girton Town Charity Trustees and the member of the public.

21/2 Apologies and Reasons for Absence. Apologies had been received from Cllrs de Lacey (who later joined the meeting at item 21/4.3) and Griffin, and the Chairman accepted their reasons for absence.

21/3 Members' declarations for items on the agenda. None.

21/4 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 Chairman explained that discussion of the Council's support for Men's Shed had been adjourned at the last meeting due to misinformation relating to the size of facility envisaged. Mr Clift had therefore been invited to reprise his presentation on the matter at this meeting. He explained that Mens Shed is a movement set up to develop places where, primarily but not restricted to, men, can talk together. Talking about his presentation at the last GPC meeting, Mr S Clift explained that women were as welcome as men, and the website <https://www.mensshed.org.uk> gives more details. Plans to establish a shed at Abbeyfield site in Histon had been aborted due to the sale of the premises but it did suggest that the idea could be successful. Mr Clift would be prepared to work towards setting up Mens Shed rather than running it himself as he is in his eighties. If the Parish Council wishes to take it forward, it will go ahead but if not he is not prepared or able to take it further. Girton Parish Council would have full control of use. It was agreed that it is important to address mental health issues across the age groups. Cllr Bygott volunteered to help if there is a shed to be built. The Chairman thanked Mr. Clift who left the meeting at this point.

2. County Councillor's Report (*Appendix A*). Cllr Harford had been invited to meet with the Hotel Felix buyers and had been assured by them that any issues on behalf of Cambs. County Council, had now been resolved. She challenged them on their plans as it is a green field site. South Cambs District Council were not happy for it to be the sort of establishment which Abbeyfield is, as the need is for residential care. They would have to demonstrate exceptional circumstances and are trying to speak with the Chief Commissioning Officer. Cllr Harford suggests that those getting to their senior years are now trying to be more active than in the past, but their eyes are on the 80-85 years bracket. There will be 80 rooms, 40 on the ground floor and 40 living with dementia on the upper floor. Cambs County Council are having to cut their cloth regarding adult social care. The Chairman has spoken briefly with the developers and they will come to the February GPC meeting to present on their proposals. The existing building won't allow them to install lifts etc so they plan to demolish the building. Cllr Harford spoke about the accommodation of 50 lorry drivers who have tested positive for covid, at the Best Western Hotel in Bar Hill. The drivers are able to bring their cabs to Bar Hill and are not to park on the roads of nearby villages. The Department for Transport has entered into a contract with Best Western Hotels and other hotel groups and had asked for no publicity. Cllr. Harford commented on Cllr de Lacey's report in which he notes water works in February will close High Street from Woodland Park to The George pub, for 2-3 days. Cllr Harford and the chairman have attempted to persuade the authorities to mitigate disruption by use of two way traffic lights but this has been deemed impossible. Cllr Harford will forward drawings to the Chairman, who thanked her for her efforts on our behalf.

Tree replacement resulting from A14 works would need to be a parish initiative and need to look at whether tree offers are still available. Cllr Harford is concerned that if the project is over budget some promised projects may not come to fruition. It was questioned whether this could be challenged legally and if we should form a consortium with other villages. Cllr Harford suggests all villages who have asked about trees (Bar Hill, Girton, Lolworth) should have a zoom meeting. Mr G Thorpe had offered to get together a team to replant trees but this has been turned down for health and safety reasons. , The Chairman thanked Cllr Harford for her report.

Cllr de Lacey joined the meeting at this point.

3. District Councillors' Reports (*Appendix B*). Cllr de Lacey apologised for being late to this meeting because of the SCDC Scrutiny Committee Meeting. He has asked the Police about their presence in our villages. He has planted a tree at the entrance of South Cambs Hall to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. Cambridge Market reopened on 18th January. Regarding the pop up coffee stall that appeared in January, the chairman observed that there has also been an approach made about a mobile food business seeking a place to set up in the village. Cllr de Lacey was asked to establish what a trading licence allows and if planning permission is required to set up such trading from private property. Traders do need to come to GPC if they want to trade from the car park, for example. Girton Parish Council needs to issue a specific licence for trading in Girton , and the A10 Fish & Chip van and a wet fish van are the only ones currently in receipt of such. If traders apply to SCDC, GPC would be consulted. Cllr de Lacey agreed to check with the Licensing Department regarding trading on private land.

Cllr Bygott has put a Shop Local link in his report. None of the 90 businesses in the directory is from Girton so please tell businesses to join. Cllr Bygott has challenged Hotel Felix on whether they need to demolish the hotel or could use it for administration or visitors etc.

4. Police Report. There was no report this month.

21/5 To confirm the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 15th December, 2020 (previously circulated). The Minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Rodger, and approved with three abstentions.

21/6 Matters arising from the Minutes (for information only)

Regarding the car park bollards, each upright of the fence has a reinforced concrete beam foundation and there are several which were laid in error but left in place. An alternative might be a low rail which would require less digging of holes. The Clerk and Chairman will take an executive decision on furtherance of the project.

Regarding electric vehicle charging points, it was suggested that we should be encouraging electric vehicles, and noted that there is space behind the Atkins Building at Wellbrook Way. Although, technology is moving quickly, that any plans for charging points may quickly be outdated.

21/7 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council.

1. To approve a precept request to South Cambridgeshire District Council for the financial year 2021-22 (details previously circulated). Discussion centred on a choice between a 5% or 3% rise. Cllrs Cockley and Kettle suggested that the lower rate be proposed as residents' incomes have been affected by lockdown restrictions. A 3% with-inflation increase was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley and approved unanimously.
2. To approve additional costs for the Local Highways Improvements scheme to introduce speed restrictions in Girton (*Appendix C*). The cost of the implication of the speed limit has risen from £5k to £8k. The Chairman proposed that this rise be accepted, seconded by Cllr Rodger, and approved unanimously.
3. To approve proposals for a Litter Picking Scheme for Girton (*Appendix D*) The Council could advertise for volunteers on a street by street basis plus someone to co-ordinate litter-picking days, much like the operation of the Girton Green Team. Other local groups such as Oakington Environment Action Group are not litter-picking at the moment because of the restrictions. It was suggested to put an item in Girton Parish News regarding starting a group after restrictions are lifted. Cllr de Lacey agreed to be the contact address for people taking litter picking 'grabbers' on long term loan. It was noted that there are lots of medical masks dropped on the main route through the village, and we could put on the noticeboards not to drop masks. The Chairman proposed that a notice be put in Girton Parish News asking for volunteers and in the interim individuals can collect kit from an agreed location. Seconded by Cllr de Lacey and approved unanimously.
4. To reconsider the possibility of accommodation of a Mens Shed at the Recreation Ground. The Chairman proposed that we agree in principle to Mens Shed, seconded by Cllr Rodger. This could be accommodated between the tennis courts and the MUGA. . It quickly became clear that there was a considerable diversity of perception of what was meant by 'Men's Shed' and many Councillors were uneasy about making any commitment to use of such a prominent position for what could be seen as a niche facility to be used by an unspecified proportion of the population. Certainly wide consultation with the village would be needed to confirm that this might be acceptable and it is possible that alternative uses for this space could garner wider support. For this reason and with the Council's approval, the chairman withdrew the motion as it was felt that we could not approve it at this time.
5. To give preliminary consideration to the consultation documents received concerning development at the Felix Hotel site. The Chairman is to invite the developers to speak at the Girton Parish Council

Meeting in February. They are hoping to make the application in the next few weeks and individuals can make comments on their website. It was suggested that S106 monies should be asked for to support medical facilities and a new village burial ground. Cllr Dashwood agreed to contact the Victorian Society regarding the plans to demolish the building.

6. To approve an initial budget for the Rewilding Girton project. The project is going well but plans have had to be put on hold because working parties cannot be arranged at present. Individuals could plant plug plants under the trees at Mayfield Triangle. There are three possible sources of funding: Girton Parish Council, Girton Town Charity and the Co-Op. The Chairman has also offered to rotovate scrubland alongside Woody Green. Cllr Rodger proposed that the project be given £300 for seeds and materials for a trial run and will ask for more if the project takes off. Seconded by the Chairman and approved unanimously.

The Chairman thanked Cllrs de Lacey and Bygott who left at this point.

21/8 Finance and Resource Management

1. To approve the payments schedule for the past month (*Appendix E*). The payments schedule was proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Cllr Cockley, and approved unanimously.

2. To note any significant variance from usual levels of monthly income/expenditure. None.

21/9 Correspondence (to be received)

19/01/21: Residents' correspondence regarding churchyard management and verges.

Received by the Council.

21/10 To receive reports

1. Chairman's Report (*Appendix F*) The high water level in the Town End Close pond was noted.

2. Girton Town Charity Report. Mrs Bonnett reported that there have been two expressions of interest in becoming Trustees, one via the GPC Chairman. She has had phone conversations with both and they have the job description and details of legal duties. One has dropped out and the other is continuing in informal discussions. They are moving forward with the High Street development, and completion of Suffolk Terrace has been affected by the lockdown and weather, but families will move in in February. William Collyn Community Centre has closed except for education and medical groups and now has flexible furlough for staff. Although it had been agreed that contractors would park on Michael's Close there were concerns that they are parking closer to Suffolk Terrace and taking up residents' parking spaces. Mrs. Bonnett suggested this is because they now cannot car-share. Mrs. Bonnett left the meeting at this point.

3. Water Management Report (*Appendix G*) Cllr Rodger added that more heavy rain is expected in the next couple of days.

4. Pavilion Refurbishment Report. The Chairman had circulated the draft specification and planning details. Cllr Dashwood agreed to join the Task & Finish Group for the Pavilion Refurbishment.

5. Recreation Ground Signage Report. Cllr Cockley reported that costs would be slightly reduced by not having the two signs for the churchyard. The resolution level of the maps was not good enough. A sample sign will be requested from the cheapest of the three quotations received. It was queried if the message could be better-portrayed by pictures rather than words.

21/11 Items which the Council need to discuss at the next meeting.

It was noted that bicycles are being sold outside Girton Village Institute. The Chairman will check with the Social Club if they know about this.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm

APPENDIX A

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report Girton Parish Council - 19 January 2021 meeting

County Council Covid Hub The council's hub is now gearing back up to full capacity and contacting 32,500 shielding residents by letter. It offers help with food and fuel poverty, supports those who are self-isolating, carers and minority groups. It also co-ordinates volunteers for care homes with staff shortages, and stands ready to assist with vaccination roll out [providing transport and venues] and mass testing where needed. Free school meals vouchers will be available direct from schools. Vaccinations The news that there is not just one but three vaccines now approved for use in the UK is the chink of light that we have all been waiting and hoping for. The number of local vaccination centres is being increased from the 7 [13 January] including Addenbrookes and Peterborough City hospitals by a further 12 [by 20 January] including Royal Papworth and Hinchingsbrooke hospitals. I know that everyone is getting impatient for their turn to roll up their sleeve, and whilst it is tempting to do so, the NHS is asking that people wait to be contacted about an appointment and don't ring already busy GPs. The programme has been a little slow to get going in the east of England but I believe that two large centres [similar to the one at Stevenage] will shortly to be set up and these together with the ever expanding list of GPs and pharmacies, will doubtless allow the local CCG to catch up pretty quickly. There are two schemes in place to help residents with any difficulty in getting to vaccination appointments. Anyone who needs help can access the county council scheme by either calling the hub on 0345 045 5219 or by completing the "I need help" form on the council's website:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/covid-19-coordination-hub-yourcommunity-needs-you#i-need-help--covid-----0-0> The other scheme is being run by Panther Taxis.

Bar Hill Hotel Some of you may already have seen media coverage of the arrangement that has been made between the Department for Transport and Best Western Hotels, the group which owns the hotel at Bar Hill. The hotel is being used to accommodate HGV drivers who have had a positive Covid-19 test and cannot therefore continue on their journeys to France [and very latterly other countries that have imposed the same requirement of a negative test]. Presented to us as the fait accompli it was, it naturally provoked quite a lot of questions. Officers from both district and county councils worked incredibly hard in a very short space of time to put all the necessary public health and safety protocols in place to keep everyone safe. This arrangement is in place to stop the virus spreading and is a supplement to what we are all being asked to do: Full details and FAQs: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/local-councils-support-dft-s-scheme-to-help-lorry-drivers-to-isolate/>

Education Education Officers have responded to significant and frequent changes in guidance to support schools with the resultant challenges. The current situation broadly mimics the guidance for Lockdown #1 and allows for school attendance by vulnerable children and those of critical [in March it was key] workers. The number of children this time round is far higher than back in the spring. It seems that many more parents now wish to send their children to school and schools are having to make difficult decisions about whether or not the criteria are being met by all those wishing to do so. Staffing challenges still

remain and many teachers are tired, having kept schools open during holidays and balancing face to face teaching with providing on line lessons.

Adult Social Care [ASC] The impact of Covid-19 on ASC will be significant and the council is expecting to spend at least 10% more than budgeted for. A substantial proportion of this will be funded by the NHS, as part of national financial arrangements for hospital discharges. The Council is though having to make investment into the care sector to ensure stability and sustainability, the major element of which is a 10% resilience payment made to most providers of adult social care for much of the first quarter of the year. This money is intended to fund Personal Protective Equipment [PPE] and infection control measures. There have also been increasing demand pressures. Adults who were previously supported at home by friends, family and local community services have not been able to secure this support during Covid-19 due to the visiting restrictions that have been imposed during lockdown. This has increased reliance on professional services. In addition many vulnerable adults have developed more complex needs during lockdown as they have not been able to access the usual community-based support services.

Local Matters I have been asked by the ‘Rewilding Group’ about permission to plant wildflowers in the verges. I have confirmation from the relevant senior highways officer that, as Girton Parish Council currently cuts the verges on behalf of the county council, permission can be given for them to be managed differently. However, there will need to be some liaison with officers to ensure that the change of management style is supported by the majority of residents. It will also be the responsibility of the parish council to manage any adverse comment from residents who are perhaps not in the approving majority. As part of the new policy [once it is approved] support tools will be provided on the council website. In the meanwhile I have been told that if Girton wishes to progress ahead of these being available, advice on appropriate species for planting can be offered by the council’s ecology officer. Road works/diversions The first and regrettably long diversion that is to be put in place from 15-17 February 2021 is to facilitate installation of a new water connection and affects an area of Cambridge Road/High Street. My request to have traffic management put in so that closure isn’t necessary has been thoroughly investigated by highways inspectors and refused. I was advised that all possible options had been considered but “due to the width of the road and the really awkward location where the connection needs to be made, the only safe option is for a full closure”. The second is going to attract less in the way of adverse comment, I think. This is to facilitate site clearance; new signage and bollard installation; resurfacing and associated works including the provision of a 3m equestrian verge on Washpit Lane. It is anticipated that these works will be carried out between 1 February and 12 March 2021. Drainage I made a site visit yesterday with a senior drainage engineer who is a member of the team that delivers the county council’s responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authority. Concerns have been raised over recent months about the surface water run off from the A1307 and the adjacent NMU. The visit was a follow up to the concerns that have been raised. I also discussed with him the lowering of the invert at the Oakington Road bridge at the time when future work is carried out to reinforce the structure of the bridge. I have already discussed this with the manager of the council’s bridge team and was able to check with the drainage engineer that there would be no objection to this with regard to any increased flow having an adverse impact further upstream. I don’t have a date for when the work will be done but the project is now being put forward for funding. Thank you to everyone who has been in touch recently. Please do continue to contact me with your comments and questions.

Take care. Stay safe.

Lynda Harford

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APPENDIX B

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

Christmas is always a fairly quiet period, though this year we had to cope with rapidly-changing Government decrees; so I have very little to report. On 11 December I planted a tree to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of the war -- a Magnolia species 'Heaven Scent'. My Executive Assistant Suzanne Roy organised our annual collection for Christmas presents for Fulbourn: normally we encourage Councillors to offer gifts but this year the Hospital said it could not accept these so we had to ask for money. Suzanne then in collaboration with the Hospital bought and wrapped presents over the weekend before Christmas. We have had very appreciative responses.

I have been informed of two Temporary Traffic Orders. The first is to close Girton High St from the Woodlands Park junction to Cockerton Road during the February half-term (15--17 February). The official diversion is via Histon, Milton and Chesterton. The second closes the far end of Washpit Lane from 1 February to 12 March. Although described as a road closure no motor vehicles can currently use that part of the road (which is still officially a highway). Again the diversion is pretty long, though the application says 'works may be able to grant access on an ad-hoc basis during the works' for cyclists and equestrians.

Like many others I am concerned at the effect closing Cambridge Market will have both on traders and on customers who will now have to use stores for their food shopping. My (very limited!) experience of the market square before Christmas was of people being sensible about social distancing and Covid Marshals with nothing to do. I have written to the Portfolio Holder and to the Strategic Director expressing my views, asking for the data on which the closure decision was based, and asking for the decision to be reversed.

I have received reports of a pop-up coffee stall operating from the lay-by outside St Andrew's Church. I spoke to the owner who said she had applied for a licence; I informed her she should not trade until it was granted. However SCDC has no record of any application. If one is submitted the Parish Council will be consulted.

Douglas de Lacey

ii) District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott - 19th Jan 2021

District Council's commitment on £10 per hour minimum wage South Cambridgeshire District Council is making a commitment to pay all directly employed staff, as well as agency workers, at least £10 an hour. The pledge means the Council will pay all its workers (except apprentices subject to their own training agreement and wage structure) more than the Government's minimum wage. The figure is also higher than the Living Wage Foundation's Real Living Wage of £9.50 per hour. The arrangements will benefit 24 staff at the Council and cost only £13,300 for this financial year. I would like to add my support for this policy. Many essential services that we take for granted could not be delivered without the hard work

and dedication of the staff that provide them. People are better able to carry out their work if they do not have the problems associated with not being able to meet the basic costs of living. The notion that plentiful cheap labour is good for the economy has been a long-lasting yet false economic belief. Rising wages are an essential ingredient to economic progress, stimulating technological innovation. Employers have an incentive to develop new ways of doing things and to employ their staff in more productive, more fulfilling and higher value activities.

'Shop Local' Directory The District Council has launched a 'Shop Local' directory at www.scams.gov.uk/local-businessdirectory. The idea is to help local residents to support local jobs and businesses, as more goods are bought online. It also helps people to find which services are still available, and which have been altered to respond to the challenges of the pandemic. The directory lists many types of business, including local shops, restaurants, cafés and pubs, and for each business sets out what safety measures are being taken during the pandemic. Although, with changes in regulations, this information has been difficult to keep up to date, so should be interpreted alongside knowledge of current lockdown restrictions. More and more businesses are signing up (which can be done via the same link). Support and advice can be obtained from reopening@scams.gov.uk. At the time of writing, 90 businesses across the District have signed up, but none yet from Girton.

Beware of coronavirus scams and misinformation As expected, scammers have been active throughout the pandemic. One recent scam has seen residents being sent a text message from scammers posing as the NHS, which includes a blue link, taking them to a fake webpage with NHS branding. The resident is then asked to 'confirm ownership of address' by providing their bank details. Scammers claiming to be from NHS are also telephoning residents, instructing them to press a key to confirm they'd like to receive the vaccine or asking for bank details as affirmation to receive the vaccine. Other scammers are asking for payment to provide vaccinations. Everyone is entitled to a Covid vaccine free of charge, and as the vaccination programme is rolled out, local GP surgeries will play a key role. There is no need to pay or provide bank details and other private information. More information can be found at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/against-scams and on the official government websites at www.gov.uk and www.nhs.uk. Another problem is misinformation about the safety of vaccines. Some of this is easy to spot, with outlandish stories about microchips and mind control. However, there is a more subtle form of antivaccination messaging circulating on social media that is based on pseudoscience. Many of these stories start out with the claim that someone is a scientist, or knows a scientist, and begin with real scientific information that could be found in a biology textbook, before branching out into speculation and unsupported claims, while still maintaining an air of scientific plausibility. The more people who choose to be vaccinated, the more quickly life can get back to normal. If many people choose not to be vaccinated, this creates a reservoir within which the virus can continue to circulate. This gives the virus the chance of returning in future waves, and enables the emergence of mutations that lead to new strains of the virus. Not being vaccinated also increases the risk to those who, because of allergies or other medical issues, are genuinely not able to take one of the vaccines, putting further lives in danger.

Cllr Tom Bygott

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APPENDIX C

Correspondence from Cambs Highways regarding LHI costs

Dear Cllrs

I have received the Target Cost back from our contractor for the upcoming LHI works in Girton. We had agreed to increase the scope of the LHI from that originally approved by about 25% in area by;

1. Extending the 30mph on Oakington Road to the bridge
2. Additional area of 20mph zone on High Street to Manor Farm Rd
3. Additional area of 20mph zone on Cambridge Road (and any side roads) to the A14 bridge

The construction costs have increased to reflect this but as the a lot of these are fixed costs it has provided good value for money to do this. The costs of road markings can be absorbed into the resurfacing costs as there are still outstanding road sections of road markings to do. I had hoped to cover the majority of this within savings from the original feasibility by not having a full safety audit conducted on the new speed cushions, however this was not possible and this had to be completed. The additional signs that need to be installed will have to be funded by the Parish as we have gone over the maximum County Council contribution of £15000 for an LHI. The original contribution by the Parish was to be £5172, however to include the additional signs this will need to be increased to £8053.

Can you please confirm acceptance of this increased contribution to enable this to be progressed.

Kind regards

Highway Projects

Cambridgeshire County Council

APPENDIX D

Resident's Note re proposed Litter Picking Scheme

I think that a formal resolution should be made soon by the Council that a litter picking scheme for the village should be set up even though not implemented in practice until COVID regulations so allow Much if not all of the organisation of that could be done any time now; publicity asking for volunteers, getting a street map marked up showing who's volunteered for which streets/areas (I think Susie has that) and asking for a volunteer to run it (needs very little running! But good to have an 'open day' when volunteers get together for a 'pick' with tea and buns in a village hall afterwards— works well in nearby villages). I think Cedric from Histon briefed your Council on all that's needed.

APPENDIX E

Payments Schedule for January 2021

(circulated separately)

APPENDIX F

Chairman's Report

13 January 2021

The planning permission for our new Pavilion refurbishment and extension arrived between the writing of my last report and our December meeting. I mention it here for the sake of completeness. We have subsequently agreed that we should follow a two stage develop and construct procurement process appointing a Project Manager to oversee and provide staged sign off on the project. We are also seeking tenders for a Construction Traffic Management Plan which is a requirement of the planning permission. The project brief has been largely completed but does require additional sections on the refurbishment of the kitchen facility and provision of the stage and necessary accoutrements. If necessary these will be costed as provisional sums initially as it is possible that they will need to be funded separately from the overall project. Users have been requested to provide details of storage requirements so that use of the

space available can be suitably optimised. We have yet to sign the draft contract as we are not happy about the details of circumstances under which the County Council could default on the grant payment. Cllr. Harford has obtained verbal reassurance on these, but written confirmation is awaited.

Progress on bollard installation along the carpark footpath has again been delayed by uncertainty of the position of the concrete beams, (supporting the artwork fence), under the path. These need to be avoided to retain the integrity of the foundations and to avoid the excessive cost of drilling through them.

At our December meeting we were told about the aspirations for a 'Men's Shed' to be established on the Recreation ground, but when it was stated that the space required was 20m by 20m we agreed that this would not be possible. Since then we have learned that the figures were quoted incorrectly and the area needed is in fact 20 feet by 20 feet! This could be accommodated in the area behind the basketball court between the tennis courts and the MUGA. We shall discuss again in our January meeting.

Cllr Harford and I have continued our attempts to have the proposed three day closure of the High street changed to simple traffic light control but to no avail. The Water Company are adamant that the main must be laid at a point close to the entrance to the new Gretton School and that the only way of safely doing so is by full closure.

Cllr Rodger has reported separately on the high water levels experienced in the village on Christmas Eve. I attach some photographs I took of the bridges at Oakington Road and Washpit Lane on the 24th and of our 'Pond and Scrape' at Town End Close on Christmas Day.

Happy New Year to all.

Haydn Williams





APPENDIX G

Water Management Report, January 2021

Following on from the problems experienced on 4 December as reported in last month's water management report, on 20 December I walked the NMU with Councillor Lynda Harford, in order to look more carefully at the flow of water via the various drains and ditches. We were both concerned about how much water was still lying in the ditches. We hope to meet with one of the flood team officers in due course to discuss this further.

On the night of 23-24 December, a much more significant event occurred, due to heavy and consistent rain. At 7.30 p.m. on the evening of 23 December, I had a phone call from Harry Chalk (Environment Agency) saying that they were very concerned about the rising water levels, and expecting to issue a flood warning. This came at midnight. At first light I checked with vulnerable neighbours in Fairway and Dodford Lane. The water was very high indeed (see attached photo from my own garden). The recorded levels at Washpit were the highest since the monitoring equipment had been installed. I was advised by Harry Chalk not to go to the Oakington Road Bridge to check, due to safety concerns, but I imagine that the water had reached the capacity of the bridge, which then started to act as a dam, and sent the water back up the Beck.

One house in Dodford Lane immediately bordering Washpit, had water in their garage, and I understand a garden wall has collapsed. Thankfully no-one had water in their homes, bad enough at any time, but so much worse on Christmas Eve.

I have not had any contact with the Environment Agency since then, but I believe they have been working hard on our behalf, and this is much appreciated.

Mary Rodger

13 January 2021

