

GIRTON Annual Parish Meeting

William Collyn Community Centre

Wellbrook Way, Girton, Cambridge, CB3 0GP

Wednesday 17th May 2023

Convened by Daniel Carney, Parish Council Chairman

MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Apologies from Cllr Wright, Cllr Williams, Cllr Richard Stobart (SCDC) and Ann Bonnett (GTC)

2. Approval of Girton Annual Parish Meeting Minutes, 11th May 2022

Proposed - Cllr Carney. Seconded - Cllr Hayat. Abstained - Cllr Blom and Cllr Clare.

3. Matters arising from Minutes of 11th May 2022 - None

4. Guest Speakers

a) Hi Friends: Community Wellbeing - Neil Davies

Neil Davies from HI Friends gave an update on HI Friends and presented their Annual Report.

See website: <https://www.hifriends.org.uk>

b) GPC Committee & Community Engagement - Alison Giles, Nas Hayat, Stuart Marshall

c) Neighbourhood Plan

5. Chairman's Report on the Parish Council's activities: Cllr Daniel Carney

6. Finance Report: Cllr Ann Muston

7. Report from County Councillor: Cllr Edna Murphy (CCC)

Cllr Murphy confirmed it was a pleasure to be invited guest. She said it was her pleasure to be collaborating with Girton Parish Council.

8. Reports from our District Councillors: Cllr Corinne Garvie (SCDC)

Cllr Garvie confirmed there had been significant advances at SCDC this year.

9. Report from Girton Town Charity: Robin Hiley

10. Questions and Comments from the floor

The Annual Parish Meeting is an opportunity to ask questions that are important to you as a resident of Girton.

ALL ELECTORS ARE WELCOME

Cllr Daniel Carney

Chairman of Girton Parish Council

9th May 2023

Questions/Comments from Attendees

- 1. HI Friends - Was Neil aware of the Memory Café in Girton?**
- 2. HI Friends - Was Neil aware of the services of Care Network?**
- 3. What can be done to support local businesses in the village?**
- 4. Broken Kissing Gate at Girton Recreation Ground was highlighted.**
- 5. Councillors were thanked for meeting with members of public and discussing the danger of cyclists mounting the pavement from Gretton School past The George Inn. They were very grateful for the discussion and consideration of this issue by two councillors.**
- 6. Dangerous parking on Wellbrook Way was highlighted with pavements blocked and the danger of an Ambulance not getting through.**
- 7. Had Girton Parish Council considered the need for Recreation facilities for disabled children?**



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

For GIRTON 2022

**William Collyn Community Centre
Wednesday 17th May 2023, from 7pm**

WELCOME

- Every English parish must have a parish meeting.
- The meeting consists of local government electors registered for the area. If the Chairman of the Parish Council for the area is present, he/she **MUST** preside.
- The meeting must assemble between 1 March and 1 June and may be convened by the Parish Council Chairman or by 6 electors for the area for which it is held.
 - A minimum of 7 days' notice of agenda must be given.
 - The quorum of a Parish meeting is 2.
- Decisions are taken in the first instance by a majority of those present and voting. The Chairman, if an elector, has an original and casting vote, if not an elector, only a casting vote – voting does not need to be counted but can be based on overwhelming majority.
- A poll can be demanded not later than the end of the meeting on any question arising at it. Such a poll is held only if TEN or one-third of the electors present insist or if the person presiding at the meeting consents. The District Council would then be notified that a poll is required.
- In all but a very few cases, any decision reached as a resolution is “persuasive” only and may not subsequently be passed by the Council.
- The right of the parish meeting to discuss parish affairs extends to any public matter of a parochial nature and is **NOT** confined to the exercise of the statutory functions of the Parish Council.
- The press and public have the same rights of admission to parish meetings as they have to a meeting of the Parish Council. It is therefore advisable to set aside clearly marked places for electors and non-residents to avoid confusion when a vote is taken.

Girton Annual Parish Meeting
Wednesday 17th May 2023
Parish Council Chair's Report
Cllr Daniel Carney

COUNCIL

I am glad to report that finally all of the Council's committees are back up and running, some of which had not met for several years. Most of these now have updated missions, visions, and terms of reference, and are working on more robust action lists and budgets.

Unfortunately, this year has seen significant turnover of Parish Councillors. I would particularly like to highlight, and thank, long-serving councillors Douglas de Lacey, Gill Cockley, Andy Griffin, and Julie Dashwood for many years of service to the Parish Council. In addition, I extend my gratitude to councillors Angela Blackburn, Marcelo de Lima, who also have left the council since last year's APM. Since that time we have also been joined by new councillors Gary Betts and Patrick Linton.

We still have four vacancies on the Parish Council, and I would encourage anyone who wishes to volunteer to help contribute to the community by becoming a Parish Councillor to put themselves forwards for co-option.

I hope I can speak on behalf of the whole council in saying that we have been extremely grateful for all the hard work of the Parish Council's staff – Yvonne Murray, Angie Vidler, Chris Wilson, and Norman Lewell. Their contributions this year have been excellent in getting Parish Council operations back to a 'business as usual' state. I would particularly like to highlight that Yvonne and Angie have spent significant amounts of their time bringing the accounts finally up to date and maximising the usage of the Parish Council's facilities, as well as making great improvements in the Council's communication and engagement with residents. As well as carrying out maintenance of all the Council's sports pitches, Chris has been a valuable source of information highlighting areas around the facilities that the Council needs to address.

The Parish Council has supported their work by seeking third-party review of their pay, to ensure they are correctly remunerated, and with training through the Society of Local Clerks and the Grounds Management Association.

HIGHWAYS

Highway safety has been a key priority of previous councils, and I think it key that it remains so for this one. The past 12 months has seen some serious road accidents in Girton on the A1307, one warranting assistance from the air ambulance, as well as several on Oakington Road, including one resulting tragically in a fatality. These have increased the resolve of the council to push for increased safety measures in and around Girton.

Together with Oakington & Westwick Parish Council we have applied to CCC's most recent round of Local Highway Initiative scheme to implement a 30mph speed limit on Oakington Road, linking the 20mph zones in the two villages. Lowering the speed limit here is something that has been an aspiration for previous councils, repeatedly requested by residents, and now shown by consultation to be backed by a majority of responding residents. The proposal was presented to the CCC Highways committee earlier this month, and we expect to hear whether we have been successful in July. I would particularly like to thank Cllr Tony Starling of Oakington & Westwick PC for leading this application.

We have also applied to CCC's separate 20mph zone scheme to introduce a 20mph speed limit for all roads between Huntingdon Road and the A14 bridge on Girton Rd. The intention is to make almost the entire residential area of Girton. This too was an aspiration of previous councils, but CCC's guidance had indicated that Girton Road was not an appropriate road to be reduced to 20mph due to the limited number of houses on one side of the road, perhaps neglecting the 800 or so residents of Girton College. This policy has since changed, allowed the Parish Council to make this application. The public response to the consultation on this scheme was considerable, with a clear majority in favour of introducing a 20mph zone.

Safety on the A1307, at its junction with The Avenue, has been compromised by a previous accident completely knocking down the signs at the T-junction, resulting in driver confusion in low light. Getting these signs reinstated has been severely hampered by CCC Highways and National Highways both claiming that the road was not their responsibility. Following some diligent follow-up, in particular from Cllr Fiona Naughton of Madingley PC, the County Council have now conceded that this is their responsibility and that they will act to replace these signs.

A very recent accident, involving a small child and parent, has highlighted that the junction of Huntingdon Road and Eddington Avenue is unacceptably hazardous for cycling. Frequent illegal encroachment by motor vehicles into the cycle lanes in both directions can make this an unsafe stretch of road for vulnerable users. Our County Councillor is raising the poor road design with CCC's Highways department.

Many ongoing Highways issues have been slow to be resolved, in part due to problems with CCC's Highways department. Following repeated requests to CCC, the hedgerow obstructing the cycle path linking the two ends of Manor Farm Road has finally been cut back, as part of the hedgerow cutback campaign, which GPC has supported and publicised. Whilst some further volunteer work was necessary to finish the job off at ground level, this now allows the full width of path to be safely usable. There are further issues of hedges and trees encroaching onto pavements. Once nesting season has finished this year we intend to notify landowners whose foliage is causing difficulties that it is their responsibility to cut back accordingly. The Parish Council reserves the right, following sufficient notification, to commission cut back and charge the landowners for the work where necessary.

As was the case this time last year, many of the pavements in the village remain in a very poor state, with a number deteriorating further. We have continued to press Cllr Murphy regarding this, and she has spent considerable time liaising with Highways on this. She has been assured that repairs of the footway on Cambridge Rd/Girton Rd are scheduled and budgeted for, but we are yet to see any progress. We will continue to press on this and other pavements in the village, for example the very degraded patches on High Street, and encourage residents who spot any areas of concern to log them on the County Council's online Highways fault reporting system.

This year two Active Travel proposals have been put forward by the Combined Authority that affect Girton. The first is a change to the junction at Girton Corner that will involve narrowing the road apron to slow motor vehicles and a shared pedestrian and cycle crossing of Girton Road, linking to the Huntingdon Road crossing and on to the Ridgeway. The second, just outside the village boundary, is effectively a northwards continuation of the widened cycle and footpath on Oakington Rd, going from the junction with Gatehouse Road to the Oakington crossroads. Funding for the first proposal has been secured, and we hope that monies will also be found for the second.

SPORTS & RECREATION

See also separate report from Nas Hayat (Chair of Sports & Recreation Committee)

The Sports & Recreation Committee has made a point of trying to co-opt representatives from the various sports clubs that make use of the Parish Council facilities, and it is pleasing that the committee now contains representatives from Girton United FC, Girton Colts FC, Girton CC, Girton Tennis Club, and Girton Bowls Club.

Inspections of the football and cricket pitches have been carried out by the Football Association and the English Cricket Board and we now have expert guidance to help our groundskeeper, Chris Wilson, on how to best care and maintain for these facilities. A neglected mower has been overhauled to assist with this work, and some much-needed ditch clearing should assist with pitch drainage. Long overdue periodic maintenance to the tennis courts has been commissioned (and may have been completed by the time of the APM). Repairs to the basketball court have been scheduled – thank you to the pupils of Girton Glebe Primary School for their letter highlighting the problems at the court.

The Recreation Ground has returned to being heavily used for sports fixtures at weekends, resulting in equally heavy demands on car parking space. Thanks to the hard work of the Parish Council's Assistant Clerk, Angie Vidler, and the helpfulness of Girton Glebe headteacher Chris Butler, the school grounds are now available as overflow parking space for the busiest times. This relationship has also led to a future agreement whereby the playing field behind

Girton Glebe is to be improved by the Parish Council team to allow it to be used as an additional sports facility outside of school hours.

A long-term issue has been that of the provision of toilet facilities for users of the bowls green on Wellbrook Way and disagreements about how to resolve this. The Parish Council brought together a working group, including the Girton Bowls Club and Girton Town Charity, to try to move towards a solution that is satisfactory to all three parties. Whilst there is still some way to go, the group has made good progress with reaching an understanding that all are able to agree on.

In a further measure to improve cooperation across the village, the Parish Council has offered use of its online booking facilities to the Cotton Hall Foundation with the proposal of a single location in which users could book rooms, etc. at the Pavilion or the Cotton Hall. The Cotton Hall Trustees have decided not to implement this at the moment, but a good working relationship has been established between the two parties.

The Pavilion refurbishment project started in 2020 has been paused and is due to be re-scoped. The escalating cost of the project, mostly due to matters out of the Council's hands, led to the majority of councillors and co-opted members of the Pavilion Task & Finish Group concluding that an outcome that delivered good value for money and even a minimally satisfactory outcome could not be achieved within budget. Council reserves earmarked specifically for Pavilion refurbishment remain, and further public engagement will be undertaken to ascertain the post-Covid requirements for our main sporting hub.

FINANCE

See also separate reports from Ann Muston (Chair of Finance Committee) and Yvonne Murray (Responsible Finance Officer)

As noted earlier, a significant amount of work has taken this year to put the Parish Council's accounts into good order. Following many hours of diligent work we have no outstanding invoices and almost all outstanding debts and owings have now been rectified.

A very full set of accounts has been produced this year, with a great deal of granular detail which will help for budgeting and forecasting going forwards across the Council's activities. Unfortunately, as not all of the outstanding bills had been resolved in time for setting it, the Council again had to submit a request for a precept value based on an inflationary increase. Whilst the increase in the total precept is a little over 7%, the projected increase in households in the parish over the forthcoming financial year means that results in a very small annual increase of around 92p per Band D household.

Following a two-year freeze on hire charges, an increase of 10% has been applied to all fees. These are now set such that they came into effect on the 1st of April for most facilities but are delayed to June 1st for football so that it is not implemented partway through a season that has already been budgeted for by football users. It is intended that that arrangement continues in future years.

The year end report shows that expenditure slightly exceeded income, by approximately £1,200, but this has included paying off some significant outstanding debts. Council unassigned reserves are currently higher than most guidelines suggest, and it is planned to reduce this level over the coming years.

ENVIRONMENT

See also separate report from Alison Giles (Chair of Environment Committee)

An excellent development this year has been the first actions of the Local Nature Recovery Plan Working Group, formed at the tail end of the last Council. The group has held two well-attended public meetings and has already begun work, supported by the Parish Council, on improving the habitats for our resident flora and fauna with an aim of improving biodiversity in the village. The Parish Council is taking part in No Mow May, allowing long grasses and wild plants to grow at a number of our green spaces.

More recently, a group has been established to create a Neighbourhood Plan for Girton. This is independent from, but supported by, the Parish Council. The group will be collecting information from a wide range of sources in the village to create a plan for future development in the village which will be put to public referendum for approval once completed. Building on the previous Village Plan completed a few years ago, an approved Plan would be a legal document which must be consulted and considered in all Planning decisions. It is hoped that this will be a strong effective voice representing the views of Girton's residents for the future.

After some abortive efforts to convert the disused phone box at Girton Corner to an art space and then location for a defibrillator, the Parish Council is supporting an initiative by several residents to convert it into a book exchange, with a focus on books for children. A fundraising effort is underway, and staff at Girton College have offered their time for free to help repair the box and install shelving.

Some of the benches in the village have needed repair or replacement. Three new benches have been installed at the Pump Garden, Smithy Green, and on Washpit Lane. I would like to thank Girton's Neighbourhood Watch for their donation of the latter two, along with their installation. Through use of new software we have been collating an asset register in order that maintenance of all Parish Council assets can be better managed and scheduled. Some repair work that has taken place on the parapet of Beck Brook bridge on Oakington Road. Two courses of brick have been replaced on the parapet, and the crack that had developed is now less than 1mm wide. Whether this cracking, which had previously reached 11mm, reappears or not we will find out in due course. Further repair work on the bridge is planned and budgeted for by CCC.

Extra sets of litter picking equipment has been purchased and made available to residents, who have been doing great work helping to keep our village tidy. The Council has purchased extra litter and dog waste bins for the Recreation Ground and is looking at how to generally improve bin provision around the village.

Following a long period of opacity about ownership, a number of streetlights have now been adopted by the Parish Council, including the new ones on Oakington Road.

The appearance of a kebab van parked outside St Andrew's Church was a highly divisive issue, with many residents strongly in favour and many strongly against. The van was operating under a licence issued by SCDC, under their new street trading policy, but the process did not sufficiently notify neighbours or the Parish Council. Whilst the Parish Council sought to find ways in which the van could operate in the village in a way that was not contentious, the operators were found to be in breach of their licence, which was then revoked.

The substantial reduction in the bus service offered to Girton by Stagecoach, as part of their sweeping range of cuts across Cambridgeshire, was opposed by the Parish Council. Discussions with Stagecoach were not productive, with the company insisting that the route was not profitable. The only solution they were willing to countenance was that the village raise a precept specifically to fund extension of the Citi5 and Citi6 timetable, which does not seem to be acceptable. The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority have now passed the motion for a Mayoral General Precept to support bus routes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This is apparently only to support the status quo of the county's bus services, but we are seeking information via our County Councillor if there is any opportunity for these funds to help Girton's services return to a pre-Covid state.

PLANNING

The Planning Committee has been kept busy with a steady stream of planning applications throughout the past 12 months. The work has regularly been hampered by problems with the Greater Cambridge Planning Portal. It is not uncommon for documents to be missing, corrupted, or not accessible.

Two contentious applications from the previous year are still yet to be fully resolved. The proposed demolition of the former Hotel Felix was taken to appeal and then to a Public Enquiry. The outcome of this is yet to be published. The extension at 2 Duck End, for which planning permission was only applied for retrospectively, also went to appeal which the Planning Inspector partly upheld. We will be checking that this decision is appropriately enforced.

Another construction undertaken without applying for permission beforehand is a barn at a site referred to as Sloe Fen Farm, on Oakington Road. We believe that this Green Belt development should not be granted permission. At

time of writing, the planning application has been withdrawn and clarification on next steps has been sought from Great Cambridge Planning.

A number of substantial pieces of planning documentation for three plots of land in the Girton part of Eddington have been scrutinised. These are mostly reserved matters, with more detailed planning applications to follow. It is noted that in this there is a proposal at some point to close the Ridgeway temporarily. We will be pushing to ensure that this is for as short a time as is possible, and that any diversion is also short. The other major development planned is for Girton College, who wish to expand their student accommodation and facilities, as well as changing the site's vehicle access. The Parish Council has concerns about the possibly unnecessary felling of protected trees along with an increase in traffic along Girton Road, which both the Parish and County Council are planning steps to improve safety for.

RIGHTS OF WAY

A very productive Active Travel workshop was held, led by Camcycle, to help highlight the existing Rights Of Way, to show potential plans for possible Active Transport improvements, and to collect feedback on problems identified by the community where ways of getting about by foot, bike, horse, etc. could be improved. This information is currently being collated and we hope to use it to inform future schemes.

An issue highlighted by residents several times by correspondence, at the Parish Council's stall at the Girton Feast, and at the Active Travel workshop is that of Footpath #4, where it links Huntingdon Road with the A14 footbridge, down the side of Girton College. A first problem of hedgerow spilling over from Girton College has been addressed by the College, and they assure us that it is now listed in their routine maintenance tasks. More generally, there has been a strong desire from many parties for many years to upgrade and suitably improve this to a bridleway. This was supposed to be an outcome of the A14 works but has not occurred. It was previously understood that the landowners were proving to be an obstacle to this development. Thanks to follow-up on some discussions with the British Horse Society at the Active Travel meeting, we now have clarity from the landowners that they were prepared to facilitate this and that CCC had failed to progress the scheme. With the assistance of Cllr Murphy we are trying to progress this with CCC.

Earlier in the year I attended CCC's Highways Committee to ask about the stopping up of Bridleway #6, a part of the A14 upgrade works. This was done without providing a replacement, nor determining that one was not required, which we take to be in contravention of the Planning Act 2008 under which the A14 works were undertaken. Highways have acknowledged that they need to resolve this appropriately and have promised to meet us to try and progress matters. We still await this meeting being arranged.

After repeated pressure from a good number of people, including our Clerk and District Councillors, the lights along Footpath #13 (linking Thornton Close to Whitehouse Lane) were finally turned on a few days before Xmas. The path is now a lot safer to use in the hours of darkness. The ownership of these lights currently lies with the developers of Darwin Green but they are due to be adopted by, and handed over to, CCC Highways at a date to be determined.

Whilst there has not been any tangible progress on providing an equestrian link from Manor Farm Road to Bridleway #16 by Beck Brook, this is now being scheduled by CCC Highways.

EVENTS

The newly formed Events Working Group put together a very well-attended event for the Coronation weekend. The group made a deliberate choice to be a facilitator to allow for local organisations to come together in a way that suited them best. The group is now considering events for 2023-24.

FUTURE PLANS

Many of the Council's future plans remain issues that were hoped to be resolved in the past year, but a number of newer items are added to the to-do list.

Two key issues remain unresolved at the Recreation Ground car park – drainage, and safety measures by the pathway. The Trim Trail still requires improvement and will be considered more generally as how to help with

recreational activities for both older children and older adults. Improvements to the fencing around the MUGA are also required along with trying to improve drainage of Ten Acre Field.

A tree-planting scheme is ready for the upcoming planting season for increasing the existing canopy and replacing some trees more recently felled. With input from the LNRP group we hope to improve the management of the Council-owned parts of Wellbrook Way and a CCC-owned plot behind Girton Glebe school.

For the next round of LHI applications it is intended that another submission is made. Possible schemes include an improved application for double yellow lines at several junctions between the main roads and side roads, improvements to the Huntingdon Road/Eddington Avenue junction, or extension of the 30mph on the entrance to the village on Huntingdon Road. Pressure will continue to be put on CCC to improve footways and Rights Of Way across the parish.

DRAFT

Finance and Resources Report APM May 2023

This year has been one in which we have worked as a team to finally bring to a close finances outstanding from Covid and to understand where we need to invest in the village community. In this we hope that we have been open and transparent in how money is allocated and in attempting to be fair to all.

There has been much work done by the RFO and separate committees to create budgets and recommend spending for the financial year 2023-2024. These have been approved and work continues on detailed 3- and 5-year plans. Many thanks to all those involved in this time-consuming process. The Financial and Resources Policy has been updated but still requires some revision as we move forward in identifying what are operational costs which can be delegated to the Clerk and RFO and those which need full council approval.

It is now possible to drill down further on all costs and income so that GPC has a very accurate account of where money is spent and income generated. This has helped with understanding the needs of individual clubs and societies and debate about fairness to all and enables informed decisions to be made. GPC will use the figures it now has in a more meaningful way and although there will some one-off costs, future projected costs will be much more meaningful.

The unaudited figures for the year show a healthy balance sheet with total capital and reserves at **£1,328,383.44**. The profit in the annual running costs £6,876.38 reflects an estimate for Street Lighting which has not yet been invoiced by South Cambridgeshire District Council and income of £7,000 settled by Girton Town Charity for historic Heras Fencing in Wellbrook Way. Employee back pay and incremental changes were not able to be finalised until May 2023 and the resulting figures will be presented at the end of May. Recent payments made to cover these items will come from last financial year will come from reserves. The cost-of-living rise for 2023-2024 has still not been announced.

Working parties are being set up to discuss future capital spend. Anyone interested in being involved should contact the Clerk in the first instance.

A date for the internal audit has been confirmed in early June.

This report was compiled by Councillor Ann Muston (Chair: Finance and Resource Management), and the RFO, Yvonne Murray on Monday 15 May 2023.

Environment committee report 2022/23

This year the Environment committee has a new chair and new members, so we spent a lot of time towards the end of 2022 working on creating a budget and a list of projects. Some of these have been completed successfully and others are still in progress. In roughly chronological order, we have worked on:

- The LHI bid working with Oakington and Westwick for 30mph limit on Oakington Road - plans still in progress. Still working on bid for yellow lines in Thornton Road area for this year. Eventually we hope to have a list of plans ready for such schemes, please let us know how you think roads in the village could be improved.
- Plans for a bench which will be put up at Town End Close in memory of George Thorpe and his contribution to the village. We are also planning a survey of benches so that we can repair or replace them as necessary.
- The Local Nature Recovery Plan, which is well under way thanks to the working group - see separate report.
- Getting the Girton Green Team back in action, meeting at least once a month to work on green spaces around the village.
- Receiving a beech tree from the district council's free trees scheme, which has been planted at the recreation ground. We are hoping to plant more trees but this has been put on hold for now while we learn more about what would need to be involved.
- Ensuring that the litter picking group have the equipment they need and are up and running, including a special event to get the village tidy for the coronation. We are very grateful to everyone who is helping us to keep things looking good.
- A bid for a 20mph scheme for all streets between the A14 bridge and Huntingdon Road, after a great response to our survey about it. Thanks to Yvonne and her team for setting up the survey and processing the results so that we can be sure that we have public support for what we're doing.
- Looking into ways of providing larger dog bins for key areas around the village.



Local Nature Recovery Plan Working Group 2022/2023 Report for Girton Parish Council Annual Meeting

Local Nature Recovery Plans are long -term (usually 10 year) frameworks developed under the auspices of local councils for identifying priority sites, habitats, and species within a defined geographical area (usually a parish or local council boundary).

Following the inaugural public meeting in May 2022, there was a hiatus in the development of the plan for Girton caused by changes in personnel on the Parish Council.

The Group was reconstituted in the autumn of 2022 with some new members and is now quorate.

The Group has been collating existing data on sites, habitats and species in the village and drawing up maps of priority areas for conservation or with the potential for biodiversity gain. A draft Plan was prepared and presented at an open meeting for the village in March 2023, where participants were canvassed for ideas on priority projects to include in the Plan.

Several projects are now in progress including:

- Site management improvements for the Alice Hibbert-Ware Memorial Garden to showcase wildlife friendly approaches to gardening
- Surveys of priority sites in the village
- Data collection for wildlife groups where existing data on status is poor e.g. invertebrates • A programme of regular community events for the village
- Providing advice and encouragement for the submission of wildlife sightings in the village • Supporting species-specific initiatives such as 'hedgehog highways' and nest boxes for Swifts.

The next draft of the Local Nature Recovery Plan is being worked on, building in the suggestions made during the public meeting, the outcome of which will be a strategy for the village over a tenyear period. This will be presented at another public meeting in the Autumn. The plans also need to dovetail with the development of the village Neighbourhood Plan and an initial discussion with Andrew Muston has taken place to ensure the plans are aligned.

The group will continue to engage the village community via a webpage on the village website, a regular column in the Girton Parish News, and postings on social media via the 'Wild_Girton' Twitter and Facebook pages, as well as the aforementioned community events. An email address, lnrp@girton-pc.gov.uk set up with the help of the Parish Clerk can be used to contact the group.

Sport and Recreation Committee Report 2022/2023

PAST

I joined the Parish Council in May 2022 and immediately started talking to people in the Parish about the council and what they felt about it. Unfortunately, all I got was negative views from people who felt that their views did not count and were not being listened to by a council that was not approachable. This may only have been a perception of the few people I spoke to, however, I felt that I wanted to change this perception moving forward.

Having joined the Council, I choose to put myself forward for the Sports and Recreation Committee as my son plays for Girton Colts and I have been active throughout my life in all forms of bat and ball related sports (i.e. Squash, Cricket, Table Tennis, Badminton and Golf).

I was asked to chair the Sports and Recreation Committee in November 2022 when the previous chair stepped down. As chair my objective was to make the committee more inclusive and more representative of the users of our facilities. We discussed this as a team and decided to reach out to all the main sports groups and asked them to put someone forward to be co-opted onto the committee.

PRESENT

We have now managed to co-opt onto the Sports and Recreation Committee someone from all the main sports groups in our village and have also extended this to all the main facility providers in the village (i.e. WCCC, Cotton hall, Girton College as well as the schools in Girton and the GTC).

We are organising an open day where members of the Parish can come and talk to the Sports and Recreation Committee and Council about the current projects being looked at and any new projects they would like to propose.

We have started compiling a list of all the projects that have been identified so far and we are looking at putting this list online so that everyone can see the list and the status of the projects as they move forward.

The process that has been agreed to work on the projects is:

First we have passed all operational ongoing tasks and health and safety work to the Clerk and her team to look at and work with the Sports and Rec Committee to deliver and agree budget to be taken forward to the full council.

Then capital spend projects have then been split into categories, high, medium and low projects. The high projects are being looked at as projects that can be delivered in the coming year 2023/24. The medium projects are projects that can be delivered within the term of this council and the low projects are potential longer-term projects based on time and maybe dependant on funds available.

FUTURE

The Committee will split the projects amongst the team and individual members will work on building business cases for the projects (including looking at grants available) which will be discussed by the Sports and Rec committee and those approved taking to full council for final approval.

Additional projects will be added onto the list moving forward as these are identified. We intend to work closely with the community to understand their requirements and prioritise projects based on their input. The strategy is to work with the whole community and try and deliver projects that will help all age groups and all abilities, as well as make use of open spaces across our village, not just restricting our focus to activities on the Sports Rec around the Pavilion.

We are also looking to work closely with all the different stakeholders in our village in a collaborative way and try to deliver more through our existing facilities (no matter who owns them) as well as spending council money wisely to offer the highest quality solutions for the well-being of all in our community. Breaking down the silos and working with everyone will benefit all of us and hopefully mean we can deliver more by pooling all our resources.

The above report was written by Nas Hayat.

DRAFT

Dear Chairman, Clerk, Chair of Sports and recreation and all fellow councillors.

I am delighted to submit my report for presentation at tomorrow

Events Group Report.

How do we measure success? There are any number of ways. Financial, popularity, (ie Number of attendees). Targets achieved, and feedback.

I would like to suggest to the public and to full council that we consider two ways for the evaluation of the events group's collection of events for the coronation celebration.

First lets be objective and go to the data. Our R.F.O. and clerk, Yvonne Murray will kindly report the data as she is the expert in this field and will explain it a lot better than I.

Second, I will deliver a brief verbal report from the subjective.

In conclusion. It is and will remain, the decision of the participants as to whether or not the events were a success and more importantly what events they would like to experience in the future. We hope that this first exercise will have inspired more members of our community to come forward with initiatives of their own. The events group welcome all suggestions and we look forward to participating in, supporting and initiating many more events in the future.

I have two formal apologies to make.

The first is on behalf of Faye Traders. To anyone that was disappointed and inconvenienced by the late cancellation of the Saturday morning market. I issue an unconditional and unreserved apology. The cancellation was due to a significant number of retailers cancelling at short notice and unforeseen personal circumstances.

The second is to any person or organisation that may have wanted to be included but was left out of the events. No exclusion was intentional and for any offence caused I make a full apology.

In Conclusion. I have made my presentation as to why I believe the events group have been successful in the events that we provided. I can only leave it to you to make up your own minds and make suggestions on how and what we may do better. My personal next steps will be to recommend improved communication between participants. To recommend that the events group be made into a sub committee of the sports and recreation committee of Girton Parish Council. Potentially with its own budget, mission statement and terms of reference.

Thank you Stuart

During the last year the HR Committee has been involved in the following:

- Staff appraisals
- Reviewing job descriptions
- Running a workshop on Civility and Respect
- Adopted the Civility and Respect Code of Conduct
- Liaised with and consulted CAPALC and the Monitoring Officer regarding issues relating to the publication of material, conflict of interest, minute taking, resignations and acceptable behaviour
- Reviewed the HR Policy
- Set a budget
- Organised training for employees and councillors

As a council, we have recognised the commitment of our employees, enabling them to use their expertise and knowledge to support of operational decisions that are within their specific field and working with them as team members. If it were not for their dedication during the past twelve months, we would not have achieved so much.

Girton Parish Councillors, who all give their time freely, have been able to concentrate on decision making and getting to know what it is the village of Girton needs in the 21st Century. Most Parish Councillors also have a full-time employment and families who need supporting; this should be taken into consideration by the village when things do not seem to be moving quickly. As long as there are vacancies on the Parish Council, it will take longer to achieve our aims. If you have time to spare, consider joining us or volunteering for a role in an area that sparks your interest.

The CAPALC Help Desk continues to be used to clarify procedure and advice as we update our policies and procedures. Our Clerk, Yvonne Murray made many documents available to GPC via our SharePoint and we are grateful to her for guidance in matters where we are unfamiliar with protocol.

As a Council, we are much more aware of what is expected of us. Training has been arranged for Saturday 10 June for all Councillors. The work that has been done during the last year and into this is to enable GPC to achieve the Foundation Level of the Local Council Award Scheme. It is our aim to reach the Gold Award within the lifetime of this Council.

Foundation Award

The Foundation award is for councils who want to show they meet a set of minimum standards to deliver effectively for their communities. To meet this award the council demonstrates that it has the required documentation and information in place for operating lawfully and according to standard practice. The council also has policies for training for its councillors and officers and so has the foundations for improvement and development in place.

The Foundation award allows you to benchmark your performance as well as challenge you to consider your council's continuing development and improvement.



Quality Award

The Quality Award demonstrates that a council achieves good practices in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Quality councils go above and beyond their legal obligations, leading their communities and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

To achieve the Quality Award a council demonstrates that it meets all requirements of the Foundation Award and has additional evidence of good governance, effective community engagement and council improvement. Due to the level of this achievement, a council with a Quality Award can also be eligible to use the general power of competence.



Quality Gold Award

The Quality Gold Award demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Quality Gold councils provide leadership for their communities, bring people together, have excellent business planning processes, ensuring value for money as well as constantly seek new innovations and opportunities to improve. They highlight the very best we, as a sector, can achieve for our communities.



15 May 2023



Annual Report 2023



CLLR Edna Murphy

County Councillor for Bar Hill division

(including Bar Hill, Dry Drayton, Girton, Lolworth)

INTRODUCTION

2022 will be notable as the year of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 8 September. The accession of HM King Charles III was proclaimed in Cambridge and Ely, and elsewhere in the county.

The composition of the County Council has changed since last year following the death of Independent Chair of the Council Derek Giles who had retired from that role as a result of his ill health, and another councillor switching parties (Cllr Doug Dew, representing Hemingfords & Fenstanton, left the Conservative Group in January 2023 and joined the Liberal Democrat Group). Cllr Geoff Seeff (Lib Dem) won the St Neots seat The Eatons in the by-election in February following Cllr Giles's death. The composition now is:

Conservatives	27
Liberal Democrats	22
Labour	9
Independents	3

A County Council by-election will be held on Thursday 4 May, the same day as the District Council elections, following the resignation of Cllr Dan Schumann (Soham South & Haddenham).

1 THE COUNCIL

1.1 The three-group Joint Administration of Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent councillors continues to run the Council. The Agreement signed by the three groups in May 2021 is scheduled for a two-year review, which will take place after this May's elections.

1.2 I have worked on various committees within the Council: Adults & Health, Strategy & Resources, Pensions, and chaired the Staffing and Appeals Committee which oversees the recruitment of senior officers. I have also participated in Planning, Environment & Green Investment and of course Full Council.

1.3 I have also continued to Chair of the Fire Authority, and represent the Authority at the Mayoral Combined Authority's Board. I am the lead member for Governance and significant work has taken place during the latter half of the year. I report regularly to the County Council on the issues facing the Fire Service and have spent some time this year lobbying for additional funding for the Service.

1.4 The County Council's Chief Executive Stephen Moir carried out a reorganisation of the senior staffing structure, and the Council has been making senior appointments. The process of disentangling joint staffing structures with Peterborough Council set up by the previous administration has been very positive. The Combined Authority has also appointed a new Chief Executive and embarked on a new structure, having had interim management and governance reviews for most of the year.

1.5 The County Council's new HQ at Alconbury Weald was formally opened on Friday 8 July 2022. Whatever its merits as office facilities, it is a poor choice of location for a democratic body given the non-existent public transport links available and its inaccessibility for both councillors and most importantly the public.

2 STRATEGY & RESOURCES

2.1 The high rates of inflation over the last year, and the turmoil of the Liz Truss / Kwasi Kwarteng mini budget in the autumn, significantly increased the costs of providing council services and widened the already challenging budget gap for the coming year.

2.2 The Council increased its portion of Council Tax in February, by 4.99% in total, ie 2.99% for general services, and 2% for adult social care.

2.3 The Conservative opposition unsuccessfully proposed an alternative way forward in which the increase was only 4%, but plugged the large funding gap this created with one-off funding intended for environmental projects, care, and strengthening council services.

2.4 The committee has considered a number of significant procurement exercises and strategic initiatives, many of which are necessarily considered commercially confidential. It also scrutinizes the performance of the Council's property subsidiary, This Land, which is has a new senior team, and a revised strategy, and seems to be much improved.

3 ADULTS & HEALTH

3.1 National changes in health and care decision-making took place during the year, with the creation of local Integrated Care Systems spanning health and social care. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough created a joint Health & Wellbeing Board to replace the previous separate Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Boards.

3.2 This year has exposed the vulnerability of NHS services nationally and also locally. A BBC investigation last summer of dental provision in the UK revealed that no dental practice in Cambridgeshire was accepting new adult patients. Large numbers of patients are having to travel far afield, pay money they cannot afford for private treatment, or resort to DIY dentistry—and a resident of Ely was recently reported as having had to travel to war-torn Ukraine for dental treatment which was quicker and cheaper than that available in the UK.

3.3 Meanwhile the residents in Bar Hill's Maple Surgery heard the consortium of which they were members was ceasing to operate and were taken on by a Cambridge group in record time. Normally the transition to a new practice takes 3 months but the team had the surgery up and running with new management over a weekend. They will be spending more time in the next months completing the transition, as well as taking on additional resource to support the asylum seekers who have arrived recently in Bar Hill's hotel. This is not the only GP practice in the County that has had abrupt changes to its services, but the changes in Bar Hill seem to have resulted in an improvement which is welcome.

3.4 In addition to Covid, avian flu precautions were implemented across the UK during the year, including a protection zone in the County after a confirmed case.

4 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

4.1 Funding of vouchers over the school holidays for families eligible for free school meals has continued, as has the Holiday Activity & Food programme for the children of eligible families. The cost of living crisis has seen many Cambridgeshire families reliant on such schemes.

4.2 The Council was praised by Ofsted for the work of senior leaders in Children's Services in responding to the challenge of Covid, and for maintaining continuity during structural change. Most children in need and those with a child protection plan were supported well.

4.3 The Council is still seeking residents who would like to make a difference to the life of a child or young person by becoming a foster carer. Cambridgeshire is not unusual in having an ongoing demand for foster carers but it is important to keep raising the issue to encourage people to come forward if they are interested in this vital role.

4.4 In a piece of good news for Cambridgeshire, the Council and the Government reached agreement on the ‘safety valve’ process to resolve the escalating deficit in the cost of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities education.

4.5 The deficit for this funding stream was expected to grow to over £90M by 2025/26 if left unchecked, and the Council was not permitted to divert funding from other sources to fill the gap.

Cambridgeshire has now been awarded £49M which will be used to create 463 new special school places, with a further £11.3M in capital funding to support new SEND provision on mainstream school sites.

Cambridgeshire has historically received less funding per child for education than other areas.

5 COSMIC

5.1 COSMIC (Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee) has continued to oversee the Household Support Fund, which supports people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food, household energy or other essential items. An increasing number of families are struggling financially at the moment. COSMIC agreed to use some of the money from the fund to give a ‘payment holiday’ to pensioners in arrears with their water bills.

5.2 A Warm Hubs programme over the winter was funded by the NHS and administered by Cambridgeshire ACRE with fantastic support from local parishes.

5.3 A review of the mobile library service resulted in a number of improvements, including more stops, more fuel-efficient routes, and local storage of vehicles. Cambridgeshire’s Library@home volunteers were one of three voluntary organisations in the county to be given the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service—the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK.

5.4 The Government is introducing a requirement for photographic ID for voters at elections.

This starts with the elections in May 2023 (ie not in South Cambs), and will cost up to £180M over ten years, despite cases of voter identity fraud at polling stations being almost non-existent. Around 2 million voters in the UK do not have the right form of ID to enable them to vote—they can apply for free Voter Authority Certificates, but applications for these are extremely slow and many people are likely to find themselves deprived of their right to vote on 4 May. Young people are likely to be particularly disadvantaged, as most of the forms of ID related to older groups. County officers have been working on ways in which the Council can support the effort to ensure the many people without the required photo ID apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate so that they are not denied their right to vote. There was a Lib Dem motion on this topic which was fully supported by the Council as a whole.

6 ENVIRONMENT

6.1 The Council awarded the first spending from its Just Transition fund, including £2.175M for a business case for the first phase of the Council’s plan for Cambridgeshire to reach Net Zero carbon by 2045. £1.75M was also awarded for flood work and nature restoration.

6.2 On the hottest day on record in the UK, Joint Administration members of the County Council voted to sign Zero Hour’s Nature & Climate Declaration, while the tarmac melted in the Council’s car park outside the building.

6.3 The County Council is working with district councils on energy retrofits in homes with poor energy efficiency. A number of Cambridgeshire residents including in Little Downham received individual invitations to apply for this.

6.4 The public inquiry into the proposals for an incinerator at Wisbech took place in February. The waste disposal contract with Thalia (formerly Amey) at Waterbeach has taken considerable amounts of council

time. In addition to the odour emission works required by the Environment Agency, the new year saw new enforcement by the Environment Agency of rules on 'persistent organic pollutants in waste upholstered domestic seating'. This led to a week of the Council being unable to accept unwanted sofas, futons, gaming chairs, upholstered dining seats, and other similar items. These must now be incinerated not landfilled. In addition to this, discussions are also ongoing with Defra regarding proposals to introduce weekly food waste collections.

6.5 The first households in Swaffham Prior are now receiving renewable energy from the new energy centre. Interest in this project has been considerable. Other energy projects (solar panels on Park & Ride sites, North Angle solar farm, and replacement of gas and oil boilers in schools and in the Council's own premises around the county) are continuing to progress. In conjunction with iChoosr the Council ran another round of Solar Together, the group buying scheme for homeowners wanting to invest in solar panels and battery storage.

6.6 The Examination into the planning application by Sunnica for the large solar farm between Burwell and Red Lodge began in autumn 2022.

6.7 Anglian Water and Cambridge Water announced in the autumn their preferred location for a new reservoir in the Fens, north of Chatteris, to come onstream in the late 2030s. A planning application will come in due course and progress through a number of stages. It will be a decision for the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate, as with other major infrastructure schemes.

6.8 The council has published an interim Tree Strategy, which it will revise once it has baseline information about what trees the Council has, where they are, and how the Council can expand and improve the trees for which it is responsible.

6.9 We received details of the County Council's carbon emissions for the year. There was a significant reduction in the early stages of the pandemic, due to construction work ceasing, but this is likely to increase again in future years.

6.10 We agreed a motion to the Full Council calling for managed divestment by the council's Pension Fund from fossil fuels.

6.11 The council ran a #LetsGetOutdoors campaign over the summer to encourage residents to make use of Cambridgeshire's fantastic parks.

7 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

7.1 The condition of Cambridgeshire's roads and pavements remains a serious challenge and concern. In fact this situation has been building for many years, with the Council's approach being one of 'managed decline'. However, recent extreme weather has speeded up that decline very significantly. The peaty soil under the road surface has shrunk in hot dry weather, and expanded in wet weather, causing the surface to crater and split. Adding more tarmac to level the surface simply increases the weight and makes matters worse. The severity and extent of the problem is far beyond the maintenance budget of the Council, so simply 'freeing up some money' is not an option. The Council has been actively engaging with the Department for Transport to seek their support and funding. Clearly this is a significant problem that staff are working on intensely and looking at different options, while repairing as many potholes as they can physically get round (and commissioning Milestone to deliver as rapidly as possible).

7.2 The Council used a data interpretation and modelling tool to identify a 'Safe and Dry' programme of 115 locations where work was needed to improve flood resilience. The Council is also undertaking a two-year programme to clean and plot all gullies and surface drainage features to improve highways drainage management into the future. Plans for strengthening the Oakington Road Bridge are in place and the budget is committed.

7.3 The freezing spell over winter caused many road and pavement surface defects, and failure of pothole repairs. We encourage residents to report faults online as that is the only way they are logged and become translated into works commissioned from Milestone. Although it is difficult to keep reporting these problems, it is necessary.

7.4 The development by the council of a South Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy is pencilled in for 2023-2024. It has been a significant length of time since the previous strategy and so an update is long overdue. It will be an opportunity for South Cambridgeshire to embrace proposals which have been developed, for example in Bar Hill Division the agreed approach for NMUs and active travel schemes, so they are explicitly supported by South Cambridgeshire too.

7.5 The County Council plans to fit street lighting with energy-efficient LEDs. The council spends £3.3M a year on energy for street lights, and this sum will pay back in under six years.

7.6 The working group on Heavy Goods Vehicles produced a new policy and criteria against which to judge applications for weight limits in villages. A number of applications have already come forward. The new funding pot for 20MPH schemes has attracted a large amount of interest.

7.7 In autumn the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) consulted on its proposals for improved bus provision and active travel in the Cambridge area, which it proposed to fund through a charge for driving in a 'Sustainable Travel Zone' between 7:00AM and 7:00PM on weekdays. The results of the consultation will be published in the late spring. The GCP needs to listen to the concerns of residents. It does not seem likely that the proposals will go forward in their current form. What is needed is action to address the decades of decline in public transport inflicted by successive Governments and local councils.

8 COMBINED AUTHORITY

8.1 The Combined Authority has had a somewhat turbulent year, including an unsuccessful attempt to depose the elected Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Most significantly, the auditors (EY) wrote to the Authority in June expressing concerns about the functioning of the Combined Authority, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has become involved, setting some clear requirements for improvement.

8.2 The Combined Authority has agreed an Improvement programme with a package of external support, and an Independent Improvement Board has been established. I am the lead member for Governance and have supported the creation of a new constitution and governance structure, which will be much more fit for purpose and with a more thought through structure to support better decision making. There is still some way to go but there has been significant progress.

8.3 In September 2022 Stagecoach gave six weeks' notice of its intention to withdraw from a large number of bus routes. The Combined Authority pulled together a tender process at very short notice, and was able to find new providers for most of those routes, though there have been changes in frequency and extent of several of them. Additional funding was diverted to support these routes, and the Mayor has decided to levy a precept which will be added to the council tax to ensure the stability of these services for a further year.

8.4 The Combined Authority really needs to move ahead with a system of franchising of local bus services, which would give democratic control of routes, timetables, and fares, but to do this it needs to find sources of large amounts of income, and in any case franchising would take c 5 years to implement. Meanwhile the Combined Authority is finalising a Bus Strategy for submission to Government.

8.5 The Combined Authority remains starved of resources by the Government compared to other Combined Authorities. It received no money for its Bus Service Improvement Plan, and very little active travel funding. The Government also decided there would be no more money for affordable housing for any Combined Authorities.

8.6 The Combined Authority's Local Transport & Connectivity Plan, on which many other local transport plans depend, is being finalised.

8.7 Now that it has no money for, and therefore no real role in, housing, the Combined Authority has reorganised its committees into new 'thematic committees' including (for the first time) the environment.

9 Campaigns

9.1 I am pleased that campaigning has proved fruitful in some respects. For example 2 years of relentless campaigning has forced a re-think by National Highways in relation to the management of the A14 trees. Originally 860k saplings were planted, at least 70% of which died. Since it was made public, via a motion to Full Council in March 2022, National Highways struggled to justify the approach it had agreed to, as it was obviously not going to achieve positive results. Instead it has undertaken an honest appraisal, and proposed a new, more scientifically based approach. They have also undertaken to take on an additional 5 years of obligation, to ensure trees thrive and become established. This is a really important step. We are watching their progress closely. It is also important that their learning translates to other projects, where planting or biodiversity net gain is a key outcome.

9.2 Another positive initiative has been to persuade the County's Highways team to consider seriously the development of a path around the perimeter road in Bar Hill as part of its active travel plans. This is at an ideas stage only, but with the adoption of the idea there is now a possibility that the Council will be able to put forward well thought through proposals, for residents to consider. Obviously there is a long way to go before this can become a reality, not least the challenge of finding funding, but it is a start and at least gives us the chance to consider a clear proposal.

Cllr Edna Murphy
April 2023

District Councillor's Report for Girton Annual Parish Meeting

Councillor Corinne Garvie, Councillor Richard Stobart
District Councillors for the parishes of Girton, Dry Drayton and Madingley

The past year has been the first of a newly-elected District Council during which there have been significant advances in the development of the Local Plan; the tide has been turned in rebuilding our Council House stock; the Council has provided extensive support to local businesses, and brought much-needed relief to those most severely affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Both Councillors have District responsibilities: Corinne sits on the licensing appeals panel, is a substitute for the Joint Development Control Committee (JDCC) and is a District representative on the Adults and Health Committee, a scrutiny Committee. Richard is on the Scrutiny and Overview committee, the JDCC, Audit Committee and Staffing and Employment Committee and is an occasional substitute on the Planning Committee. JDCC is a planning committee that deals with developments that lie on the City – District boundary. JDCC is made up of City and District Councillors.

Our membership of JDCC allows us to be part of the scrutiny process for developments. It also gives us insights into the planning issues that may emerge for Parish Councils as they evaluate the impact of the bigger proposals. It remains our concern that Parish Councils are well equipped to comment on Planning applications and to clearly represent their communities' interests.

At the Parish Council level, we strive to have a good relationship with the three Councils so that we can help them achieve what they need to improve their communities. Here are a few examples of what we have been able to do over the past year:

- Supplied people and businesses with information about grants
- Dealt with planning inquiries and offered advice about compliance
- Discussed biodiversity issues with residents
- Dealt with fly tipping and stench from "bio" fertilisers
- Answered enquiries about signage including bus stop information
- Helped introduce Neighbourhood and Community-led plans
- Investigated the status of aircraft and helicopter noise and suggested how to complain effectively

Above all we work closely with Parish Councils and also in close collaboration with our Council Councillors, who also deal with roads, footpaths and cycleways. We also get called in by individuals to help with local questions and issues. We aim to do our best within the scope of what the Council can offer.

It is important to us that we have a good relationship with the council officers, and we are in communication with officers in planning, environment and community on a regular basis. While we can't guarantee an outcome, it is our intention to facilitate the connections between Residents and Officers and to make that the issue is understood and acted on.

In the following sections, we have listed and described some of the achievements of SCDC during 2022-2023, under the main lines of the Council's business plan: Helping Business to Grow, Building Homes that are truly affordable to live in, Being Green to our Core, and Being a Modern and Caring Council

Helping Businesses to Grow

The Business Support & Development Team has provided support and advice for over 100 local businesses in the past year and has established an up-to-date list of business premises to help local start-ups. They have also worked with traders, communities and businesses to help establish and expand local markets within the District. We created a specific Market Toolkit guide for anyone considering beginning a market in their village. Our online Trader Directory is designed to list the talented marketeers across the district whilst promoting shopping and supporting local businesses. The Council's annual Christmas Market was held again this year in Cambourne. In September, our Visit South Cambs tourism directory celebrated

its first year of operation, having promoted around 200 local venues and over 230 local events within the year. The web site has attracted thousands of visitors from around the world.

In December, the District Council was awarded money under the Government's Shared Prosperity Fund after a successful joint bid with other local authorities, receiving £1.76m towards improving our High Streets, business skills training, community green space improvements and funding for start-up companies.

At the annual Cllr Awards in October, our Cllr Peter McDonald (Duxford ward) won the Resilience and Recovery award, one of only six councillors in England and Wales to be recognised at this level. This was in recognition of his oversight of business grant funding which enabled Cambridgeshire's unique business growth fund, supporting 102 local businesses.

Actions already completed in 2022-2023 include:

- Implemented a new and improved policy to support the street trading sector across South Cambridgeshire. This policy will ensure high levels of safety compliance and enable the sector to thrive through the introduction of flexible trading models.
- Created an SCDC specific operational/implementation plan based on the Nov 2021 refreshed CPCA Employment and Skill Strategy.
- Provided business support advice to over 100 businesses.
- Completed a feasibility study looking at how South Cambs Hall could be used to provide workspace for businesses, including start-ups.
- Established an up-to-date list of Business Premises for start-ups.

Some actions that are on target to be completed by end of 2022-23:

- Expand our Visit South Cambridgeshire brand alongside wider collaboration with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough partners, to support local businesses.
- Deliver at least 8 Sector specific events/webinars/support initiatives as part of an ongoing engagement programme.
- Provide a new space for growing small businesses or shared workspace for start-ups or micro businesses.
- Appraise our own commercial inventory (including South Cambs Hall) and investigate meanwhile/partial let use for start-ups during void periods and/or designate space specifically for this purpose.

Building Homes that are truly affordable to live in

Starting with the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan, in June the results were published from the consultation on the First Proposals, which had included a range of new policies to meet the environmental challenges facing the area – including tackling carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity. The results included more than 9000 responses. This was followed in the autumn by an objective assessment of housing need, as required by government planning law, which identified a requirement for some additional housing over the First Proposals. A report with an update on the development strategy was considered by the Council in January. The strategy from the First Proposals was confirmed, with its focus on delivering the required housing and infrastructure sustainably, on environmental protection, particularly with regard to water supply, and on retaining existing policies that protect our rural villages. Three key strategic sites were also confirmed in Northeast Cambridge, East Cambridge and near the Biomedical Campus. The next stage in the process is the draft Local Plan, which is expected to be released for consultation later this year, although this may now be postponed slightly by delays in developing the regional water strategy. As well as

working on the Local Plan, the council has adopted three new Neighbourhood Plans for individual parishes in the past year, the highest number in a single year to date.

In the planning system, we introduced a new web site for reporting actual or suspected violations of Planning Permission with clear guidelines on the boundaries for compliance and ran a consultation on a new draft Planning Compliance Policy in January.

Our Council Housing stock has been reduced significantly over the years as Council Houses were sold without being replaced, and this has led to a shortage of Council Housing in the District. This year the council turned a corner by more than doubling its rate of council house building to 70 per year to boost our stock of around 5,500 houses. We successfully bid for £4.5m in January from the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund which will allow us to acquire an additional 30 homes, and for £1.7m in March from the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to upgrade the energy efficiency of our housing stock. This year we also introduced a new, simple online form for requesting repairs to council properties.

Some of the actions completed in 2022-23:

- Produced a report assessing feedback provided by local people from the first Local Plan consultation. This will inform the next steps in the Local Plan process.
- Produced an Asset Management Plan. This will improve the energy efficiency of existing Council housing to reduce carbon impact and running costs.
- Delivered 53 new affordable homes.
- Implemented new maintenance contract for all council housing stock. - Adopted an Empty Homes Strategy.
- We have installed solar Photovoltaic Systems on 60 Properties. Actions on target to be completed 2022-23:
- 74 New Homes Completed (acquired or built) this year.
- Continue to support the liaison meetings in Cottenham, Sawston, Hardwick, Caldecote, Swavesey and Barrington and community forums in Northstowe, Waterbeach, North-West Cambridge, Cambridge East, North-East Cambridge and Bourn Airfield and Cambourne.
- Approve a work programme for insulation measures over the next four years to narrow the gap on the zero-carbon target.

Being Green to Our Core

On the environment, the council has awarded £120,000 in grants to Parish Councils and other community organisations for projects to reduce carbon emissions or improve the natural environment. We have been working on the sustainability of our waste management, with a move to using electric bin lorries, the second of which was put into use in June. Plans have moved ahead this year for a solar farm at the waste depot at Waterbeach, which would provide electricity for 30 of the current 50 bin lorries in the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste fleet. We introduced used battery recycling with every bin collection and set up a new grant scheme to help provide more public charging points for electric vehicles (EV) at village halls and other community buildings.

For the third year running, the District Council offered Six Free Trees to every Parish Council in November. This has seen 390 trees planted across the district, providing homes and food for wildlife and helping to combat climate change. Dry Drayton opted for an oak tree which was due to be planted in early May.

Actions completed in 2022-23:

- Provided equipment and information kits to minimise waste and separate recycling at community events.
- Reviewed the impact and outcomes of the existing food waste collection trial and the future of the scheme including budget requirements.
- Two electric refuse collection vehicles to replace the diesel versions have been delivered.

- The annual Statutory Status report for air quality has been submitted to DEFRA and accepted. Actions on target to be completed 2022-23:
- Review community rooms and other small sites to identify and deliver opportunities for carbon reduction.
- Develop planning policies consistent with zero carbon by 2050 for adoption in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, in partnership with Cambridge City Council.
- Identify and deliver opportunities to invest in publicly accessible electric vehicle charge points in priority locations in the district, working with partners - pilot installations of fast EV Chargers at Sheltered Housing Schemes for public use, and install one rapid charger for public use.
- Identify and deliver new opportunities to plant trees, establish wildflower strips and in other ways enhance nature on our own estate, in consultation with residents.
- Work to ensure that development in South Cambridgeshire contributes to the goal of doubling nature by developing planning policies for adoption in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and by adopting a new Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document in partnership with Cambridge City Council.
- Work with partners to develop landscape-scale habitat creation projects.
- Define and implement required improvements at the depot to prepare for further electric refuse collection vehicle (eRCV) charging.
- Procure up to three more electric refuse collection vehicles to replace diesel powered vehicles.
- Develop an outline business case for on-site solar PV energy generation with partners to aid the charging of vehicles.
- Deliver fourth round of funding through our Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme, awarding grants totalling £100,000 to community-based projects.
- Continue to strengthen the Zero Carbon Parish and Community Network through our programme of workshops, web-based resources and e-bulletins for community-based zero carbon and nature recovery initiatives - at least 6 workshops to be delivered.
- Submit annual statutory reporting to DEFRA on-time; monitor air quality in at least 6 targeted areas utilising portable equipment; compile report following each monitoring period and publish this on the council's website.
- Provide required technical inputs to consultations on major developments to ensure air quality objectives are met.
- Subject to air quality monitoring results, explore the feasibility of creating a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) specifically targeting idling vehicles.
- Develop campaigns to improve recycling based on the outcomes of the waste composition analyses.
- Reporting of all sites (existing and new) that take up recycling / food bins & note our increased volumes / tonnes collected with associated savings.
- Install cameras at six locations and monitor numbers of visits required at those sites to establish a baseline to minimise fly tipping.
- Deliver targeted educational campaign in the area about fly tipping and increase awareness of responsible methods for disposal. To include the delivery of at least 12,000 leaflets.

Being a Modern and Caring Council

For many residents, the past year has been dominated by the cost-of-living crisis. At this time of increased need, the Council has focused more of its resources on support for those who are most severely affected by the crisis. In October, the first Warm Hubs opened up ready for the winter, and there is now a network of Warm Hubs across the district to support the most vulnerable members of our community. Warm Hubs are designed to offer warm, friendly and inclusive places with access to light refreshments. They provide somewhere to socialise, take part in activities and obtain help and advice on how to reduce bills, access financial support, and stay healthy and well.

In November, the Council agreed a support package worth £400,000, jointly with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care System, to help address the impact of the rising cost of energy and food bills on individuals, families, and businesses across the district. This was boosted with another £200,000 of support in February. We also set up a new emergency fund to provide help for those hit hardest and have given out cheaper products for cooking and staying warm, such as slow cookers and electric blankets. The

range of support initiatives set up by the District Council also includes Housing Payments, Council Tax discounts, Warm Packs for Council tenants, and food parcels for those most in need. The council's information on cost-of-living support has been brought together on our web site, with a range of advice and information on different support options.

The War in Ukraine has rarely been out of the news this year, and residents of South Cambridgeshire have responded very generously to the need to host Ukrainian families, with our district hosting more guests than any other district in the country. Six months into the scheme, our district had received 720 guests. The District Council has managed many aspects of the government's *Homes For Ukraine* scheme locally continue and has helped families to settle into life in South Cambridgeshire thanks to a range of grant-funded activities organised by the District Council including day trips, English classes, free laptops, books and bikes. Local partnerships have provided laptops, mobile phones and SIM cards. The Council has worked to keep hosts and guests in South Cambridgeshire connected with regular bulletin updates, social media groups, an online welcome pack for new arrivals, and a dedicated web page offering extensive information.

Many small grants have been awarded to local groups for improvements to village amenities through the Community Chest scheme, such as new equipment for the bowls club in Girton and repair to the drainage at Madingley Children's playpark.

Actions completed from 2022-23:

- Complete and analyse a staff satisfaction survey.
- Introduced hybrid working arrangements further increasing our attractiveness as an employer.
- Introduced a modular management skills program for middle managers.
- Completed a survey of all council tenants to better understand their priorities and to be able to compare satisfaction with other organisations.
- Refresh caravan site licencing policy, fees and charges. The new policy will ensure that caravan sites are inspected periodically and that residents have suitable housing provision.

Actions on target to be completed 2022-23:

- Use the Council's Community Led Plan toolkit to support local communities identify, plan and address the issues they identify in their communities.
- Support 150 new clients through the housing department's visiting support service.
- Spend £500,000 in total in the form of disabled facilities grant and repairs grant to allow people to live independently and safely in their homes.
- Prevent homelessness for at least 50% of the people who approach us who are at risk of becoming homeless throughout the year and offer support to those who are homeless.
- Continue the proactive working relationship with the job centre in delivering mentoring circles plus upskilling and cross training initiatives throughout the year.
- Ensuring 100% compliance with landlord safety checks to council housing including, electrical safety, gas installations and where appropriate fire risk assessments and water safety tests.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead to the coming year, the Council's key goals for residents include reducing fly tipping, bringing in Civil Parking Enforcement, introducing a new Mobile Warden scheme for elderly residents, support for local projects focusing on health and wellbeing, and to build at least 75 more energy-efficient Council Houses. Our business support goals will focus on more tailored business support, help for greener businesses, and more work in building up local markets. And our environmental goals are to address water scarcity while safeguarding our natural rivers and streams, boost local Zero Carbon projects, provide greener waste collection, and push ahead with our refurbishment of Council Houses.

A big change to our parliamentary constituencies is underway. This is the expected outcome: Girton, Dry Drayton and Madingley will all fall within a new constituency (*St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire*) that extends from Cambridge to St Neots and includes Cambourne and Northstowe. The newly constituted

South Cambridgeshire constituency lies to the south of the City and includes Queen Edith's – one of the City Council wards. The final consultations have taken place and the new boundaries will be submitted to Parliament in July 2023.

Finally

We are keen to help people in the Ward with the wide range of issues that relate to the District Council. We are always happy to hear from residents with questions or requests for help:

Corinne Garvie: cll.garvie@scams.gov.uk, 07780 932267

Richard Stobart: cll.stobart@scams.gov.uk, 07950 934793

DRAFT

Dovehouse Court increases Almshouses in Girton to 28

Ann Bonnett, Chair of Trustees, Girton Town Charity

Girton Town Charity has continued to steer a very busy programme with the opening of its major new Almshouse project at Dovehouse Court increasing Almshouses in Girton to 28; continuing to introduce new activities at the William Collyn Community Centre in response to community needs; and administering valuable Schemes and Grants which help Village residents with wide ranging needs.

There have been changes to our team of Trustees and staff and the need for flexibility in the day-to-day running of the Charity, with Rachel, Nicole and Gilly working from temporary accommodation in the Parish Office and new additions to the team at the William Collyn Centre.

Full accounts for the year to 30th June 2022 can be viewed on the Charity Commission website.

Trustees

There are normally seven Trustees who serve five-year terms. In consultation with the Parish Council, the balance of Trustees has been changed to five appointed by Girton Town Charity and two appointed by Girton Parish Council (GPC). We are currently in the process of appointing a new Trustee and we always welcome expressions of interest from residents of the Village and the wider community.

Charity Office and Administration

During the construction of Dovehouse Court, GTC Office moved to the Parish Office at 42 Church Lane. Trustees are very grateful to Rev. Michael Bigg and the Diocese for provision of this accommodation.

Trustees' Meetings

The Trustees meet monthly to consider the regular business of the Charity, in addition to an annual Strategy Meeting.

Almshouses

The Charity now has 28 Almshouses within Girton, occupied by residents over 55 and families from the community. Over 55's and anyone with a registered disability are appointed as permanent residents; families are appointed for three years. Currently 13 homes are managed on the Charity's behalf by the CHS Group, based in Histon and Trustees are in discussion with CHS Group regarding their ongoing support.

Centenary Court, Wellbrook Way

Seven family homes at Centenary Court provide a mix of permanent and three year appointments.

Suffolk Terrace, High Street

Three family homes at Suffolk Terrace on the High Street were completed in April 2021 and successful applicants are resident on three year appointments.

Dovehouse Court, High Street

The major project to redevelop the central Almshouse site on High Street, is now complete and provides a mix of bungalows and apartments for people over the age of 55, as well as a new office for GTC, all built to stringent passivhaus standards. The Trustees applied for a grant of £675,000 towards the building of these homes from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority which was successful.

CarePlus Grant Scheme

This Scheme helps Girton residents to live independently in their own homes by providing short-term care to suit their needs including assistance on returning from hospital. This grant is over and above any statutory care to which they are entitled. Requests for help are made by referral from GP, Social Worker, Age UK Warden or Older Residents' Co-ordinator or other Healthcare professional. During the period 41 residents benefitted from CarePlus.

Educational Grant Scheme

This helps with the costs of buying books and equipment for study in further and higher education; some apprenticeships and similar qualifications at NVQ Level 4 or above. Claims totalling no more than £300 per Academic Year may be made for up to four years of study. 31 Educational Grants were awarded during the year.

Hospital Taxi Scheme

This helps people go by taxi to outpatient appointments at Addenbrooke's Hospital the Rosie or Royal Papworth Hospital and some of the additional outpatients clinics, when alternative transport is not practical. The Trustees continue to be grateful to Nelsons for supporting this Scheme. The Scheme operates a 'membership year' with a single annual renewal date on 1st April.

Prescription Delivery Service

Run by the pharmacist at the GP practice serving Girton, the Prescription Delivery Service is available for patients who live within the Pepys Way dispensing area and are unable, through reasons of incapacity, to collect dispensed medicines from the Pepys Way or Huntingdon Road Surgeries.

Connections Bus Project Youth Group

In December 2021, Trustees were pleased to award the Connections Bus Project a grant to commence a weekly youth group. Whilst attendance is variable, Trustees are committed to provide this resource for young people in Girton

Relate Counselling Service

GTC continue to support Relate Counselling services for families and support for pupils at Girton Glebe School. In addition, a grant is awarded to relate to enable up to six sessions of Adult Counselling Services for Village residents.

Age UK Activities

GTC funds two Age UK activities. In the Community Warden Scheme, Sarah provides support to more than 20 villagers who subscribe. As Older Residents' Co-ordinator, Patricia continues to provide a number of initiatives to broaden provision and participation in a variety of activities across the Village.

Grants to local schools

Girton Glebe Primary School has received substantial grants for after school clubs, educational enrichment activities and funding of school trips that could not be met by the families of the children concerned.

Grants to individuals

Grants to individuals are given to cover costs such as modest fees for activities that were otherwise unaffordable, support for those in need of respite breaks and contributions towards household items such as support chairs, cookers, fridge/freezers and beds.

Future Focus

For the next year Trustees will focus on the completion of Dovehouse Court and creating a new community in this exceptional environment. It will be a year of consolidation as Trustees ensure that building blocks are in place to support the Almshouses developments, the William Collyn Community Centre and Schemes and Grants already established.

I'd like to thank all our Trustees for their huge voluntary contribution and also our Administrators who support us and run the office efficiently. We can't predict what challenges lie ahead but GTC is in a strong position, with a skilled, experienced and committed team to find the right solutions for us.

1st May 2023

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