

Draft until signed
Minutes of Dry Drayton Parish Council (DDPC) Meeting
Tuesday 2nd February 2021 at 7.30pm, via virtual Zoom meeting online

Present: S Lander (SL) (Chair), E Pyle (EP) (Councillor), T Houlihane (TSH) (Councillor), K Cullen (KC) (Councillor), S Aldersley (SA) (Councillor), E Wickham (EW) (Councillor)

Attending: S Etherington-Meech (SEM) (Clerk/RFO), Cllr L Harford (LH) (County Councillor), Cllr D Delacey (DDL) (District Councillor), Cllr T Bygott (TB) (District Councillor), Gareth Hawkins (GH) (Development Manager for Solarcentury for Item 4), 9 members of the public

1. To Accept Apologies for Absence

SL advised that Cllr J Dolan was not in attendance at the meeting as he has resigned from Dry Drayton Parish Council with immediate effect due to time restraints with other commitments.

2. To Accept Parish Councillors Declarations of Interest for Matters on the Agenda

No declarations of interests were declared.

3. To Agree to hold a Public Forum

The following points were raised by residents:

- To consider installing a dog waste bin at the entrance to the Duck End Farm footpath on Park Lane, SL advised this is currently in hand.
- Flooding in the parish, previously raised with SL and LH. It was requested that it was put on record that in the resident's opinion many of the flooding problems in the parish are due to lack of maintenance and a loss of drainage facilities that existed 50-70 years ago. Beck Brook and the lack of maintenance alongside Madingley Road, the filling in and loss of a reservoir pond where Beck Brook meets Madingley Road and along Oakington Road from the school all the way to Trinity stables. Ditches have been filled in and pipes have collapsed and blocked with the whole drainage structure that was put in by highways 50-70 years ago now failing and needing to be rebuilt.
- It was queried as to what DDPC were doing to push forward the cycle path project for the parish understanding that LH has assured that CCC monies are secured for the project but queried the protection of the Section 106 monies DDPC have due to time limits on spending these monies. SL confirmed the resident was correct that there is a time limit on spending, but it should be okay, and the big issue was the negotiations with the landowner to get the cycle path built. He explained this is a huge disappointment for DDPC that they have no influence in this matter as it is at CCC level and currently at an impasse. It was queried by the public if some form of publicity to the current situation may assist moving this issue forward.
- To raise concern that the heaviness of traffic going through the parish is contributing to the drainage damage and flooding issues and a request that this is pursued. SL advised that he has been gathering video evidence of issues and requested a Local Highways Officer (LHO) visited the parish on Friday for a face-to-face meeting to discuss issues and get a commitment for works to be done. LH explained that the LHO did visit on Friday but with short notice and a full schedule he looked at what LH had raised and was unable to meet face to face, however, he would be happy to meet face to face if more notice was given. SL advised LH that he feels Dry Drayton is not a priority compared to other areas that are suffering worse flooding and they have to wait for any action to be taken. LH advised that she does want residents to know that sometimes priorities are dictated when there is a risk to life and property and that has to take precedence and she understands this is a long outstanding issue but will continue to pursue on Dry Drayton's behalf.
- A resident was seeking confirmation and recognition that the Dry Drayton cycle path will be a path for shared use of both cyclists and pedestrians. SL advised that DDPC and LH support it being a shared path and it is just a use of language that is easier to use than the formal Non-Motorised User (NMU) but understands that the term cycle path does give the wrong impression. LH agreed to raise this concern and provide drawings of the path to the parish once they are available and the land acquisition is resolved.

4. Gareth Hawkins (Solarcentury) to provide a 10-minute presentation regarding the Stargoose Solar Farm Consultation

SL introduced GH and welcomed him to speak. GH explained that he is the Development Manager for Solarcentury responsible for the UK. He advised that Solarcentury are proposing to build a solar energy farm on two fields (Peacocks & Ewe fields) to the East of High Barns Cottages in Childerley. He explained the following:

- In 2015 a company called Belectric applied for planning at the same site and the reason that companies keep coming back to this site is due to a line of pylons going through the site and only particular pylons can be used for solar farms which are on this site.
- The site is not the best for agriculture as the soil is of a lower grade and currently hybrid maize is being grown on the site and changing the fields to a solar farm will be a cleaner energy production method.
- This is not a permanent structure, planning permission is just for 30-35 years and after that the land would be returned to agricultural land.
- 2015 application was a project covering 75 hectares, this project has a smaller footprint under 50 hectares.
- Solar will be combined with batteries and will enable an on-demand supply and supply power to the grid.
- If planning permission is granted likely construction will take place in 2022 over the summer with construction over a 4–6-month period with the first 2-3 months being the most noisy and disruptive.
- Solarcentury will pay business rates to CCC in the region of £150,000 and will allow local businesses to take parts, such as civil engineers and a community benefit fund will be set up to help local parishes.
- Solarcentury are in 18 countries with a turnover of 350 million a year and are a subsidiary of the biggest renewal energy producer in Europe. Solarcentury have not built in the UK for the last 5 years, however, they are currently developing 8 sites in the UK.
- Construction traffic will come off the A428 at the Childerley estate entrance and then goes through the Childerley estate.
- No public rights of way will be affected by the construction works.
- The only properties that may have some impact on their views are High Barn Cottages although they are shielded by trees and it is believed the visual impact of the countryside will not be affected.
- The batteries are not lithium iron but cobalt free lithium, they do not explode or catch fire if damaged and stored in containers – details will be online with planning application.
- Noise assessment and ecology report will highlight if any noise is to affect wildlife and includes details of habitat enhancement.

5. To Approve the Minutes of Meeting held on Tuesday 5th January 2021

It was RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed by the chairman as a true and accurate copy of the meeting.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes, Report of any actions and Resolutions from last meeting – See Appendix 1

6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.9, 6.10, 6.11

- 6.1 SL advised that the LHI application for Oak Crescent parking is to be discussed at a panel meeting on Monday 8th February 2021 which he will attend, and a schedule has been produced in case there are any technical issues on the day of the meeting.
- 6.7 SL expressed thanks to the residents who have tidied up the drift, he also advised that a young member of the parish has been helping with chores such as litter picking, tidying of paths etc around the parish to work towards a Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 6.8 Issue discussed under Item 10.1
- 6.12 EP advised that a main priority of the committee is to modernise the village hall and that they currently have no idea when they will be able to reopen.
- 6.13 KC and SA attended training the other week and EW is booked for training in March.
- 6.14 DDPC advised that works have not yet happened **Action** clerk to chase SCDC for update.
- 6.15 SEM advised that there is no urgency for this policy to be adopted and clerk will review when she reaches the appropriate module of her CILCA studies.

6.16 SL advised that all paperwork has been taken to Lloyds for account changes. **Action** – Clerk to chase Lloyds for progress.

7. Chairman's Report

SL highlighted that flooding is a serious issue for the parish and he does not want residents to think DDPC are not taking it seriously because they are, he has also received a report of verge damage from builders/merchants at the end of Pettitts Lane and how a drain is also a blocked.

8. To Accept a Report from County and District Councillors

For LH report see Appendix 3. LH also raised the following:

- LH highlighted that not all the responsibility for water belongs to CCC for instance the road in front of the Black Horse is not adopted highway, and the Black Horse should check with planning that they are satisfied that the runoff from neighbouring homes is adequately dealt with.
- LH knows that Dry Drayton have not been served well and resolution of water issues in the parish is taking a long time, however, LH believes that in order to reach a resolution the key is to establish responsibilities and she is chasing daily to get this resolved. LH wanted to make it clear that she has followed up that responses to resident may not have been adequate and spoken with the Director of Highways and told him that she is upset with the way residents of Scotland Road feel they have been ignored. LH advised that she is committed to try to sort problems out for Dry Drayton and that they have not been singled out and treated with disrespect, however, there is a priority of allocation of resources.

For DDL report see Appendix 4. DDL advised that he would contact Helen Taylor at SCDC to chase up the LED upgrade for Dry Drayton. He also advised that Covid-19 reports for last week in the Girton and Barton ward were down by ten from the previous week and he hopes that Dry Drayton residents are now receiving their vaccines.

For TB report see Appendix 5. The only item in addition to his report that TB highlighted was that DDPC would be contacted by a company called Shared Intelligence who have been instructed to carry out an audit for CC busway, TB to include the Scotland Road Park & Ride in his submission.

9. To Discuss Planning Matters

a. Applications received for consideration

- 20/05264/HFUL - 4 Cottons Field - Single storey rear extension, new front porch to replace existing, new replacement dormer and new end dormer – deadline for comments 15th February 2021**

RESOLVED by a unanimous decision for support of the planning application and no comments to be made.

SL raised with DDL at this point as to a number of applications appearing on our weekly report from planning that have been awaiting decision for a considerable amount of time, DDL agreed to investigate this.

b. Decisions received from South Cambs District Council – no decisions received

10. Matters for discussion/correspondence received

10.1 To discuss the letter received from planning regarding the Listed Buildings at risk register that includes The Old Rectory, 2 Old Rectory Drive

The letter has been circulated to all councillors. SL believes there has been some activity recently at the property and it is hoped that SCDC will now pay attention to this property.

10.2 To provide information in relation to the Dry Drayton Community Meal Scheme

SL advised that when the latest lockdown was announced he approached the Business Manager at the primary school regarding a community meal scheme for the parish and the Headteacher agreed to assist and move the scheme forward as the school was open and under capacity. Circulation of the scheme to the village was rapid and it has initially been providing two meals every day since starting and last week went to three and will run until half term and continue to Easter if feasible. SL explained that SCDC have provided a Covid-19 grant to DDPC which has been offered to assist with the scheme, however, one person is funding their own meal, £100 has been offered by the Dry Drayton School and Village Association and a number of residents are prepared to donate if required. SL wanted to

express his gratitude to Mrs Hegan, Mrs King and Ms Arnold for their efforts in getting the scheme set up and running.

10.3 For info – email received regarding the Planning Advisory Service report update

The email was circulated for information and no discussion was required.

10.4 Acknowledgment to villagers for works on footpath

DDPC expressed their gratitude to residents that have assisted in the tidying up of The Drift.

10.5 To discuss completion of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan – Site Information Survey – deadline for comments 1st March

It was agreed by DDPC that as twenty sites have been submitted in the Call for Sites they would need to be divided out between councillors, an extraordinary meeting was suggested by SL for the end of February in order for comments to be agreed and submitted before the March deadline. TB has commented on development proposals in the past and offered to review DDPC response and provide some advice on local planning law if required. **Action** – SL and TSH to divide up sites between councillors and arrange an extraordinary meeting for the end of February.

10.6 For info – email circulated regarding the new look letters for S211 conservation area tree work notices and TPO tree work applications

This email was circulated and was for information only, no comments required.

10.7 To discuss the upcoming East-West Rail Discussion with Anthony Browne MP on the 4th February 2021

SL advised that he is to attend a meeting on Thursday at 6pm and he will forward the details to TSH for him to attend also.

11. Consultations

11.1 Flightpath consultation for Luton Airport – deadline for comments 5th February 2021

SL submitted a response to this consultation.

11.2 Foxton Neighbourhood Plan – deadline for comments 23rd February 2021

DDPC agreed not to submit a response due to Foxton being some distance from the parish.

11.3 Stargoose Solar Farm Consultation – deadline for comments 5th February 2021

Further to Item 4 it was agreed by DDPC that as this is currently only a pre-application, DDPC will not comment until a formal application is received. LH highlighted that DDPC did support the previous application on this site.

11.4 Cambridgeshire County Council – Local Validation List Requirements – deadline 8th March 2021

DDPC agreed that no comments were required for this consultation.

11.5 Proposed June 2021 revisions to:-Our Local Validation List Requirements and Local Validation Check List – deadline 8th March 2021

This item is the same as 11.4.

12. Finance and Policy

a. To accept account review to date and bank reconciliation

Bank reconciliation (see Appendix 2) and finance spreadsheet were circulated to all councillors before the meeting, DDPC RESOLVED to accept and approve the accounts and bank reconciliation. SL advised that now all savings accounts have been closed DDPC only have one bank account for convenience and SL will regularly review any opportunities to transfer reserves to a high interest account.

b. To advise of payments received

i. **Closure of Cambridge Building Society Account - £7,082.99**

ii. **Allotment Rents for 2020/21 - £252.00**

c. Payments made between 30th December 2020 and 27th January 2021

i. **Brookfield Groundcare – Cut 10 of 10 (Inv.) - £360.00** - Payment was approved online by SL and JD. *Public Health Act 1875, s.164; Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10; Commons Act 1899*

ii. **Office 365 annual subscription - £59.99** – Payment was approved online by SL and JD. *LGA 1972, s.111*

- iii. **Dry Drayton Village Hall (Jan/Feb 20 Hall Hire) - £42.00** – Payment was approved online by SL and JD. *Local Government Act (LGA) 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 15*
- iv. **Haven Power – Streetlighting Energy - £30.16** - *Parish Councils Act 1957, s.3; Highways Act 1980, s.301*
- d. **Payments to hand**
 - i. **Clerks Overtime & Expenses – Period 10 - £52.72** - All councillors agreed payment RESOLVED. Payment to be approved online. *LGA 1972, s.112*
 - ii. **Cllr S Lander – Covid-19 PPE reimbursement - £69.63** – SL did not vote on this item as it is for reimbursement to himself. EP proposed, SA seconded, and it was RESOLVED by a unanimous decision to make this payment. Payment to be approved online *LGA 1972, s.139 (1)*
- e. **To discuss and finalise the budget for 2021/22**
Some figures were adjusted in the draft budget and final figures agreed, the budget was RESOLVED, SL proposed, EP seconded, and a unanimous decision was made by DDPC.
- f. **To arrange clerk’s annual appraisal**
It was agreed for the clerk’s annual appraisal to be carried out before the next parish council meeting at 7pm with SL, EP and SA.

13. To accept notices and matter for the next agenda

14. Date and time of next meeting – Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7.30pm

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw, Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

No confidential items were discussed.

Meeting closed at 9.44 pm

Signed.....Chairman

Dated.....

Appendix 1

Action Report/Ongoing Issues

6.1	2021/22 LHI Application for Oak Crescent (ongoing)	SL/LH
6.2	2020/21 LHI and Legacy Fund (Pam Hobson) update on progress of works	SL/LH
6.3	Park Lane Verges/Cycle path upgrade/line painting/drainage (ongoing)	SL/LH
6.4	Brookfield quotation/exact location/frequency & grass cutting reimbursement query (CCC)	SL/LH
6.5	Update on maintenance at Pettitts Close corner to Oakington Rd/Park Street/Footpath 8/flooding at bungalow outside the school	LH
6.6	Landowners contact re: allotment fencing	SL/JD
6.7	Tidy up at the Drift, fence at Pettitts Lane & footpaths – progress for working party	SL/JD
6.8	Old Rectory Windows concerns (ongoing)	SL
6.9	Recruitment of volunteers for village speed watch team (ongoing)	SL/JD
6.10	Draft and circulation of a complaints letter to planning re: processes	SL
6.11	Update on the Pegasus consultation for a new development	SL
6.12	Village Hall Management Committee Meeting Update and schemes for loneliness	EP
6.13	Arrangement of new councillor training (ongoing)	JD/KC/EW
6.14	Progress on LED upgrade to streetlights	DDPC
6.15	Review and adoption of the Lone Worker Policy	SEM/SA
6.16	Update on bank signatories	SL

Appendix 2

DRY DRAYTON PARISH COUNCIL
January 2021 Bank Reconciliation

	£
Lloyds current account on 31 st December 2020	£27,189.63
<u>Less</u> payments presented from 31 st December 2020 to 31 st January 2021 <i>5 online payments, 2 direct debits and 1 standing order</i>	£1,372.25
<u>Plus</u> , receipts presented from 31 st December 2020 to 31 st January 2021 <i>2 cheques received</i>	£7,334.99
Closing bank account on 31 st January 2021	£33,152.37
<u>Less</u> outstanding payments not yet subtracted	£0.00
Balance carried forward at 31st January 2021	£ 33,152.37

Notes:

Sarah Etherington-Meech

RFO

2nd February 2021

Appendix 3

Cambridgeshire County Councillor's Report Dry Drayton Parish Council - 02 February 2021 meeting

County Council Covid Hub

The council's hub is now back up to full capacity in response to the current lockdown. It has contacted over 32,000 shielding residents, offering a wide range of support to them including provision of food and essential supplies, and help with shopping and household chores. There is also a befriending service to reduce isolation or anxiety and volunteers use phone, email and text to check in regularly on those in the shielding group. The council has been working in partnership with the British Red Cross to provide food parcels. Each one is sufficient to last for seven days. Hygiene and play packs have been delivered through the council's Children's Services to more than 2,500 vulnerable families.

Support, mostly financial has also been made available for those who are self-isolating and links have been made to the excellent local community support groups to ensure that there is access to food and other essential supplies. Free school meals vouchers are being supplied direct from schools.

The council is delivering the government's Winter Support Scheme, and provided 40,000 food vouchers to eligible families to help support them over the Christmas holiday period. The same offer will be made during the February half-term. The council has also provided help for around 2,500 households with things like heating and water bills and other essential supplies.

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 has recently seen a big increase from the original 7. I know that everyone is impatient for their turn to roll up their sleeve, and whilst it is tempting to do so, the NHS is asking please that people wait to be contacted about an appointment and don't ring already busy GPs. The programme was a little slow to get going in the east of England but it really is gathering speed now. Invitations are being sent by letter, text or email by individual GP surgeries to all those who are registered with them. Those who are registered at one of the following: Firs House [Cottenham/Histon], Maple Surgery [Bar Hill], Milton, Over, Swavesey, Waterbeach or Willingham are currently being offered appointments at either Milton or Over Community Centres. Those registered at: Bridge Street Medical Centre, Huntingdon Road Surgery, Girton Branch Surgery or The Red House Surgery will go to Huntingdon Road surgery.

There are support schemes in place for those residents who may have difficulty in getting to their vaccination appointments. Anyone who needs help can access the county council scheme by either calling the hub on [0345 045 5219](tel:03450455219) 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> There is also a scheme that is being run by Panther Taxis and offers a £10 discount on both journeys to and from the vaccination centre.

Testing

The roll-out of rapid community Covid-19 testing, using lateral flow tests, begins in Cambridgeshire from 03 February. These rapid tests are for people without Covid-19 symptoms [asymptomatic]. Whilst most people should be staying at home at the moment and limiting all contact with anyone they don't live with, there are large numbers of people across Cambridgeshire who have to leave home to go to work. It is at this group that this new testing is targeted in order to help drive down transmission rates. The testing is being facilitated through a successful £1.4million bid for funding from the Department for Health and Social Care. It will initially run as a six-week pilot, with the potential for extension. Testing is also being offered at workplaces with significant numbers of site based staff, and in key sectors such as food production. Groups who may be more vulnerable and therefore more likely to catch the virus will also be offered rapid testing. Six sites are being set

up across the county initially at Cambourne, Soham, Arbury, Huntingdon, Peterborough and Wisbech, and there is the potential to set up pop-up sites in areas of high need if required. Tests will be offered at no cost to the public and the process of taking a test takes on average 15 minutes from arrival to departure. Each site will be open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. To book a test, people need to visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/rapidtesting. People who have Covid-19 symptoms will not be tested at the rapid testing sites and they should book a test at nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling 119. However, it is not the testing that will reduce rates of transmission, but what people who are tested then go on to do. If people don't isolate after a positive result [and this is now a legal requirement] this won't help reduce the spread of the virus. To encourage people to do so, support is available. More information at: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport

Bar Hill Hotel

Many of you will 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. The excellent Covid-19 support group set up in Bar Hill at the start of the pandemic has now raised funds and organised the provision of welcome packs and ongoing communication from the community to the drivers who are isolating there.

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 has also been a significant increase in demand. 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 been unable to access the usual community-based support services.

Local Matters

Some of you may be affected by the regrettably long diversion that is to be put in place from 15-17 February 2021 on a section of Cambridge Road/High Street, Girton. 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".

I am still getting lots of questions about the cycle path link from the village to the NMU. The acquisition of a small amount of land continues to be the cause of the delay. Please be reassured that county council officers are looking at all options open to them in order to overcome this obstacle. You can also be reassured that the funding is secured. Some of it is coming from Highways England designated funds and members of the Highways & Transport committee approved this allocation with several others at its January meeting. You can read the report to committee at: bit.ly/3qAhvaO

Flooding continues to be a concern in Dry Drayton and I confirm the action that I have taken in response to the concerns that have been raised with me.

Park Street/Oakington Road - jetting of drains ordered and I continue to chase for a date when this will be carried out. I and our LHO have looked very carefully at the accumulation of water at the truncated section of

Park Street [coming down from the school]. The drain at that location obviously requires jetting and this will be included in the work that has already been ordered. Some re-profiling of the location is also planned. My observation that water coming from that accumulation is not running into the drain further down [just before the lay-by] is due to changes in the profile of the verge at that point. Our LHO will seek to rectify this in the near future.

Scotland Farm Road - Both I and our LHO have been out to investigate what is causing the excess water run off onto the highway. I am now pursuing the matter with relevant officers including investigating the integrity of the culvert and who is responsible for its maintenance. As a result of the experience of one resident I am also now investigating how the highways service deals with complaints from residents.

Park Lane - request for further investigation to be undertaken as to the cause of the persistent flooding. I have emphasised that it is affecting the bus service at times. I have also complained about the manner in which contractors dealt with the large volume of mud remaining on the road after the water was removed.

I appreciate that all these issues are taking time to resolve but the increasingly frequent and heavy rainfall events that we are experiencing are affecting many areas of the county. The resources available must be allocated appropriately and priority given to areas where there is immediate risk to life and property. Thankfully, this doesn't apply to any of the issues in Dry Drayton. However, I appreciate that they need resolving and that resolutions have been a long time coming in some cases. I will continue to pursue all outstanding issues for which the county council has responsibility until they are satisfactorily resolved.

I look forward to seeing you all at your meeting when I can answer any questions you have. Take care. Stay safe. *Lynda Harford*

lyndaharford@icloud.com; 01954 251775/07889 131022; follow me on Twitter: @2whit2whoo



Appendix 4

The major item of Cabinet on 18 January was the annual Authority Monitoring Report which covers Greater Cambridge (ie Cambridge and South Cambs) and mainly covers planning issues. The Local Plan is on course and our construction of new homes matches expectations. However, the report is for the year April 2019 to March 2020; the effect covid-19 may have had is therefore not visible.

Cabinet will also meet on 3 February, with an agenda largely focused on financial issues to inform the setting of the 2021--2022 budget (at about £10M). It will be no surprise that covid-19 has greatly affected our spending in 2020 and will continue to do so in 2021, but officers believe the budget proposals are robust and the risks clearly understood. One aim is to support residents and businesses through the pandemic despite financial pressures.

Many of these finance issues had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee on 19 January, which received two proposed amendments to the budget (our Constitution forbids significant amendments to the budget unless they have first been considered by Scrutiny). One was for a new Welfare officer with a specific remit to help residents to access DWP financial support, and one for a new Planning Enforcement Officer. The former was accepted by the Lead Cabinet Member and will be automatically included; the latter will be debated by full Council.

The four Group Leaders also met on 19 January; a major item here was the status of the forthcoming elections for County Members, the Mayor and the PCC. Unless they are postponed I intend to resign in March to enable the seat to be contested at the same time. Anyone like to stand? Do let me know!

On 27 January I attended the (on-line) Excellence Awards ceremony, and presented the trophy for the best team. I was delighted that the whole Council had been proposed for this, and the judges awarded this nomination to the Highly Commended category, giving me an opportunity again to congratulate officers on all they are doing for us. Our CEO noted that she often has to ring round at 8am asking for a handful of volunteers for various tasks, and the Officers always rise to the challenge. The award itself went to the Business Support and Development Team; a team only set up in June but which has done enormous work in helping our businesses access all the help we can possibly give them to survive the crisis of covid-19.

I mentioned last month that Council has agreed that Parish Councils should be given an early chance to assess Local Plan proposed sites in the Parish, and I have already had some responses from residents (though none from Dry Drayton). I trust the Parish Council will be happy to consider them, but it can only do so if they are evidence-based.

Douglas de Lacey

District Councillor's Report - Cllr Tom Bygott 2nd Feb 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.scambs.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@scambs.gov.uk. At the time of writing, 90 businesses across the District have signed up, but so far only one from Dry Drayton.

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.

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