

Cllr Edna Murphy

MONTHLY REPORT OCTOBER 2023

ADULTS & HEALTH

Dentistry access crisis: The lack of availability of NHS dentistry has been well documented. It is of course a national problem but also affecting Cambridgeshire. There is due to be an urgent meeting of local care organisations to try to establish what improvements there could be to the current position. It is hard to see what can be done given there is no funding available from the government.

HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT

Winter gritting

Once again the County Council is inviting gritting volunteers for the winter season 2023-2024. Under this scheme, parish councils decide which routes in their area are important to the local community and agree them with the County Council. Local volunteers then grit these as required in freezing weather.

Parish councils looking to join the scheme should submit their completed form by 31 October 2023. Each volunteer will need to submit a form, including those who have volunteered before. The form is required annually to ensure health and safety standards are being met. Paper forms are also available on request.

<http://cambridgeshire->

self.achieveservice.com/service/Community_gritting_registration_form

Further information about the scheme is available online.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/gritting-roads-cycleways-and-paths/help-with-gritting-and-clearing-snow/>

Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)

Last Thursday's GCP Board Meeting considered the officers' recommendations to proceed with a modified version of the Sustainable Travel Zone, following extension consultation, and reflection on the feedback received. A modified proposal included several changes in terms of a reduction in hours of operation, a discount for local businesses and SMEs, also a discount for those on low incomes etc.

However the view of the representatives of all three councils was to not proceed with the proposals, given political support had been withdrawn by South Cambs District Council. Unanimous support would have been needed to progress the scheme. Work on the Sustainable Travel Zone will therefore stop.

There is however continuing work on other aspects of public transport improvement, for example, the Combined Authority is leading on bus reform, to introduce either franchising or an enhanced partnership, as a way of ensuring that the bus services that are provided are of higher quality. Also there is work on finding other ways of funding a more modest improvement in bus services, which may allow impactful support for improvements despite having lost the income generation from the congestion charge.

LHO / Parish clerks meeting

Neal Stevens and his manager Aaron Boddington attended a meeting of representatives from Dry Drayton, Bar Hill, Girton and Lolworth to discuss the key issues for each village, and also share information more generally. This is working well and another meeting has been fixed in November. There was a massive backlog of issues when Neal started but he is working through them, sorting out the duplicate ones and the ones that have actually been dealt with. The message came across that there is a new system operating by which LHOs are held to account for reported highways faults which are not dealt with within the time frame given and that they are now very much being actively managed on these metrics, as is Neal's manager. They know it is difficult to keep reporting these faults but they are looking at them and dealing with them. Neal states that the faults reported determine where he attends on site. He is out on the road looking at faults almost all of the week. He can interact with the contractor rapidly and is bringing experience with him of a much more effective online system he has used in another authority. Please do encourage report highways faults – they will get dealt with now.

Work on Dry Drayton drains

David Crowther and his team in the assets and drainage team have done a substantial amount of work which had formed a backlog which should be having an effect. Currently they are actively pursuing the owner of the unregistered land across which a large drain seems to run. Clearing this drain, which has been untended for years, could make a major difference to the Park Street/Oakington Road areas, as it seems to be the main drain leading away from the village. They are very conscious that work needs to be done on this before the winter sets in. They had had to wait due to the overgrowth being a place for nesting birds, but that season is ending and action can be taken now. They have not yet provided a date but are seeking the landowner's permission to act now.

NMU – National Highways

The project manager engaged in concluding the A14 project for National Highways has confirmed that there is no hold up on the negotiations with the County Council whereby the County would adopt a suitable piece of land as part of the CPO process. Discussions are constructive and take time simply because of the nature of the material. However the A14 project will conclude soon and this needs to be resolved as part of that.

Repairs on the Drift

Unfortunately there is no additional funding for any matters that are beyond what was originally agreed, but in terms of potential for funding repairs there may be some funding available towards the end of the year. There is a very small discretionary fund for small works and the officers are willing to consider applying it to repairs here if funding allows. We can raise with Neal Stevens in November to ensure it remains on the LHO radar.

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