**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Weston Colville Parish held on Wednesday 3rd May 2023 at 7pm in the Reading Room.**

Present: Ray Vidler (Chairman), Bridget Durham (Vice Chair), John Garrod, Constantine Pagonis, Jessica Ashbridge (clerk).

In Attendance: 5 Parishioners.

**Annual Meeting of the Parish**

1. **Chairman’s Welcome and annual report -**The Chairman welcomed those present and delivered his report, appended.
2. **Reading Room Trust –** A Report was delivered by a member of the Reading Room Trust about the Warm Hub:

The Warm Hub opened 14 November 2022. It had 81 openings up to today (3rd May). There had been 618 visits so far. The highest attendance day was the Bosnian Lunch (30), the lowest attendance had been zero! 16 volunteers had been running morning and afternoon shifts to whom the Reading Room Trust were extremely grateful.

The Scheme was funded primarily by SCDC via ACRE and the WCPC. Reading Room put up £500 and agreed to underwrite the project. Significant sums in donations from lunches and events. Over £600.

Had it been a success?

Yes and no.

It didn’t reach people who wanted to work in a warm place.

We know of some villagers who were still at home in the cold alone.

So, the Warm Hub concept may have been mistaken.

BUT

We have had some very important conversations with a few people 1:1 who were clearly lonely, perhaps depressed and in need of a friendly chat. This had included villagers who had been recently bereaved, or who had lost pets, and those that were carrying other burdens such as early onset, or delayed operations.  They just needed a listening ear. There had been a few regular visitors who didn’t join in the crowded events.

Several new ideas had really taken off: Eg, Lunches, IT Clinics and Vet sessions.

It had been cheaper to run than we thought.  RR was quite efficient to heat. Other new hubs had reported similar outcomes.

Looking to organise one or two more events/activities like health support with Linton Navigators and low impact exercise. ACRE came up with more funding sufficient to open on Wednesdays and Fridays - possibly until the end of June.

1. **Public comments and questions –** A Parishioner raised concerns about speeding entering and leaving the village at Church End. She was very concerned that vehicles were travelling at great speeds up and down the hill, as there were large vehicles exiting the property at the top of hill, and there was a dip in the road obscuring traffic. She asked about whether the speed limit could be lowered, it was advised that as it was the edge of the village that probably wouldn’t be successful. She asked about the use of a Speed Indicator Device (SID). It was advised that the Council had the use of the SID one week in eight, as it was shared with other PCs. It was suggested that a Local Highways Initiative (LHI) grant could be applied for, and the PC could investigate purchasing one. It was reported that the last time the SID was in Weston Colville it was placed up on the hill in Church End. The Parishioner was thanked for her comments.

A Parishioner raised concerns about surface water flooding, he advised that it had been the wettest March for 40 years. The Stour had flowed steadily through the ditch; however, it had looked high behind the properties at the junction of Common Road and The Green. The Parishioner was thanked for his comments. He asked whether the Council were aware of a hedge planting scheme by Highways on Common Road, the PC had not been made aware of the planting. He also raised concerns regarding planning enforcement, and was advised that the department is very slow in responding to queries.

A Parishioner asked about whether funding could be applied for to improve the playground on the Recreation Ground, as there were a lot of young children in the Village, and the current playground was quite tired. It was advised that funding could come from The Wadlow Windfarm, National Lottery, PC, it would be discussed further in the PC meeting, but it was hoped a working party could be put together. The Parishioner was thanked for her comments.

The Chairman closed the Annual Parish Meeting at 7.48pm.

**WESTON COLVILLE PARISH COUNCIL PARISH MEETING CHAIRMAN’S REPORT 2022/23**

I would like to start by welcoming you all to the annual parish meeting. In the last year the council continued to carry out a range of village maintenance and support activities including: -

**The Platinum Jubilee Celebration**

A notable success for the village which the Council was very pleased to be able to support were the Late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June last year. It was a attended by a large proportion of the village and the vast majority hailed it as a great success. I would like to pass on my thanks to ex-councillor Ashbridge who chaired the group planning the event. Unfortunately, there was insufficient support for a similar event for the King’s Coronation.

**Flooding in the village**

The Parish Council flood prevention working party have built on last year’s successful work program by updating the flood plan for the whole village and is still looking for support from riparian landowners and the County Council Highways department to ensure its actions are completed. Flood wardens are still in place to deal with any incidents. I would like to thank Councillors Garrod and Durham for their hard work in delivering this.

**Maintenance of Roads and Verges**

The Parish Council implemented its usual verge cutting program and continued to provide street lighting for the village. A notable success was the completion of the drainage work at Church and in getting a lot of the road gully pots cleared on both sides of Mill Hill. Progress was also made with getting potholes repaired and gullies and drains cleared. However, it seems a never-ending task and there are still many more potholes to fix.

**Grass and hedge maintenance in the village**

The Council continued with its program of grass cutting and hedge trimming around the war memorial, at the Church end playing field and the play area on The Green.

**Play Areas**

An annual safety inspection of this equipment has also been carried out by an outside expert to ensure it meets current safety standards with the recommendations he raised implemented alongside all other necessary maintenance work. I would like to thank ex Councillor Hubbard for carrying this out.

**Annual Budget for the parish**

I am pleased to be able to report there will be no increase in Precept for 2023/24.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking all my fellow councillors and our Clerk for their time and effort in supporting the work and objectives of the council. I would also like to appeal for new members of the council to fill the existing 2 vacancies to further the council’s work.

**District and County Councillor’s Annual Report 2023**

**County Council**

A1307

The upgrades to the A1307 have continued to be implemented over the last year. The ‘Greenway’ (a path suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horses), that will ultimately link Linton and the new Park & Ride site that is proposed to be on the outskirts of Babraham, has been steadily moving forward with the construction of the section between Linton and Abington progressing, as well as the new pedestrianised crossing at the Hildersham junction being finished and very much in use.

There was some good (we hope) progress made on the decision of where to route the Abington leg of the Greenway should go. The original plan was to direct the route along Linton Road, through the middle of the village and then out along Bourne Bridge Road. This option was met with some robust challenge locally, from residents, your councillors and the parish council. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) then went away and have decided to only look at the option that runs along the side of Pampisford Road. The downside of this is that it will take longer to construct, as there are compulsory land purchases required, which involve lawyers, and always take time.

The next, and final, phase of the scheme to upgrade the A1307 will be starting in May this year. This is to construct a roundabout at the end of Bartlow Road, Linton and also to remodel the highly dangerous Dean Road junction on the A1307. The work will run for just under a year, which will very likely mean some disruption to traffic, but the plan is to build a temporary road around the area that the roundabout is being constructed in to avoid any closures to the A1307. Some concerns that rat running will increase during this time has been responded to by the GCP with the reassurance that sufficient signage will be put up to inform people of the temporary road and to deter them to take more rural detours.

Full detail can be seen at - <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambridge-south-east-transport>

Greater Cambridge Partnership

The other big news that came from the GCP this year was that Cambridgeshire are being offered a large sum of money (many many millions) by central government to help improve the local public transport network in and around the city. The reason for this isn’t random - Cambridge scores very poorly on congestion and pollution metrics – some saying it is the 3rd worst city for congestion in England and that it emits over 25% more pollution that the national average.

A solution to this, that the government are looking to support financially, is get a very reliable and cost-effective public transport system, as we have seen works in other cities. This would eventually have to be self-funded however and a proposed way to do this would be to charge for road usage, a congestion charge, or what is being labelled as a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ).

The GCP published an initial proposal back at the start of 2022 which outlined which areas of the city could be affected by a STZ. This stretched to most of the city limits and also included Addenbrookes hospital. The GCP then ran one of the largest public consultations in Cambridgeshire’s history on the topic, to garner the thoughts of the public on this important decision. Some 24,000 responses were received, which equates to roughly 15% of all adults in South Cambridgeshire, an enormous response. The full results of this are currently being collated and will be available for viewing in the summer.

Personally, we aren’t against the principle of congestion charging as a medium to help fund a much-improved public transport system, however, the plans as they currently are need some improving before they can be in a supportable state.

This issue has, and will continue to, get a lot of media attention so you won’t have to look very far to get an update on this. We do always encourage people, when formulating a view, to look at the facts, as there is a lot of opinion out there which doesn’t always represent the full picture.

New HQ

The County Council’s brand-new purpose-built HQ, in Alconbury, was formally opened in July last year. This replaces the previous location in central Cambridge. Our view is still that it is in the wrong location, given the non-existent public transport links and the fact it is an 80ish mile round trip for us living in the south east of the county.

Waste issues

Back in the Autumn last year the governments various departments, DEFRA and the Environment Agency, informed local authorities that they would be bringing into force legislation that means some wholesale changes to the way that the County Council has to dispose of various things.

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) – these are essentially upholstered items such as sofas, chairs etc. The new legislation dictates that they can no longer be put into landfill and have to be incinerated. This causes a problem for the County Council as their contact with the waste disposal company doesn’t stretch to incineration, so this led to a week where the Council couldn’t accept these items at their recycling centres whilst they looked for a solution. They now have one and have been accepting the POPs at their recycling centres since January. The District Council also has a bulky item collection service, that is chargeable, if transportation is an issue.

Food waste – again, an announced change in legislation by DEFRA is meaning that, in a few years time, all food waste will have to be collected and disposed of separately to all other green household waste. Some of us have been taking part in a, District Council arranged, food waste collection trial for the last 3 years in preparation for this change. The issue the County Council has is, again, contractual as they will now have to renegotiate their current contract with their waste contractor, or find a new one, that has the capability to dispose of food in the appropriate way, which is different to regular green waste. This is ongoing to watch this space.

**District Council**

Local Plan

The District Council has been going through the process of looking at the next Local Plan – which is a blueprint for where development, both residential and commercial, will be happening over the next 30 years. This plan needs to be updated every 5-10 years as the local picture is constantly changing.

Currently the District Council have a very healthy ‘5 year land supply’ which means they have allocated, and approved planning permission for, enough houses to accommodate the growth of the area over the next 5 year period. This means that we only have controlled development and the Council don’t have to relax their planning rules to allow uncontrolled, unsustainable development – as they had to in 2014-18 and we ended up with a lot of unplanned and unsuitable developments, such as Horseheath Road and Bartlow Road in Linton, Linton Road in Balsham and Bartlow Road in Castle Camps.

The District Council are currently going through the process of allocating the sites for the next Local Plan, which we were all consulted on last year. Their current principle is to concentrate development into existing towns and larger settlements, such as Cambourne, Northstowe, Waterbeach New Town, Bourne Airfield etc and they will leave the villages as rural villages. We hope they continue with this principle and we know a lot of parishes wrote in supporting this concept.

This will be an ever evolving process, that we will keep you as updated on as possible, so please do watch this space.

Ukrainian Guests

More than 800 Ukrainian guests have been welcomed to South Cambs since the war started last year. This is the highest number of any District Council in the country. This is a great achievement and says much for the humanity of those who have opened their homes to these people in need. More hosts are needed as Ukrainians continue to arrive or move on from their current accommodation. If you can help just contact the team on: HFULiason@Scambs.gov.uk

Coronation Celebrations

If you are planning something or thinking about it, you might like to take a look at ‘The Big Lunch’.

There is lots information and materials to help you on their website: [www.thebiglunch.com/](http://www.thebiglunch.com/)

Or for parish councils try [www.edenprojectcommunities.com/biglunch/councils](http://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/biglunch/councils)

There are also grants available from South Cambs District Council, just check out their website.

Elections May 2022

The District Council Election saw the Liberal Democrats increase their majority. The current distribution of seats is as follows: Lib Dems 35, Conservative 9 and Independent 1. Thank you to everyone for voting to re-elect us both, we’re very privileged to continue to do this job.

We now only have elections every 4 years so the next District election will be in 2026.

The County Council is due to hold elections in 2025.

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