

## County Councillor report to Duxford Parish Council

June 2018

CLlr Peter Topping

### Roads and buses and transport

**Grass cutting at verges:** The county council has started the programme of cutting back the grass and vegetation at junctions – especially along the A10 and A505. Thanks to residents who emailed in in response to my request for information and so I now have a list of junctions that they appear to have missed or not done yet. I have asked Jonathan Clarke the highways manager to get these done asap.

**Changes at the depot:** Evan Laughlin, the highways manager, is leaving in September. I have written to the director of the highways department that there must be a replacement manager in post and an overlap handover period so that the new person can tap into the knowledge that Evan has built up in the two years that he has been with this patch, on the priorities for Whittlesford. Jonathan Clarke, Evan's boss, has replied and we are meeting to ensure this happens.

**Cereals 2018:** The A505 is busier than usual this week and next because of the Cereals Exhibition taking place at Chrishall between WEDNESDAY 13th – THURSDAY 14th JUNE (07:00 – 18:00) and the breakdown of the site through till the weekend.

Cereals attracts around 400 exhibitors and 26,000 farmers over the two days of the event. There is a routing and parking system to reduce the impact of the event traffic on local residents and commuting traffic. I negotiated this two years ago the last time the exhibition was in Cambridgeshire, and the same methods are in use this time round.

**Buses1: Cambridge Area Bus Users group:** I attended the first meeting of this new group on Saturday 2 June. The discussion – along with issues about whether the group could adopt a temporary constitution – focussed on how to broaden the support for improvement to all bus routes, through-ticketing, involving young people, exploring bus franchising, whether the proposed Cam Metro should be an either/or, or should be developed alongside buses (which I support). I was pleased that the new lobby group includes south Cambridgeshire villages in its catchment area and not just the City.

**Buses2:** the local science hubs have come together to form a transport working group – details still being sorted but the parish council will want to keep close to this.

**Local highways initiatives:** The bid deadline for LHI applications is Tuesday 31st July 2018. This is the annual opportunity for parish councils to bid for local highways improvements for which the county council will fund most and the parish council a minimum of ten per cent.

The ideas do not have to be fully baked because once the scheme is in, the bidding parish council will be contacted by a project officer to develop a Feasibility Study. This was introduced a few years back so that villages were not having to become fully fledged road engineers and find technical solutions overnight. Here is a link to the guidance on the county website

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/improving-your-local-highway/local-highway-improvement-funding/>

**Police issues:** I met our PCSO Chris Wiseman. There have been several incidents of forged £20 notes being passed, or attempted to pass, in local village shops and retail outlets. The forgeries are convincing. There are scanner pens that can be used to detect forged notes. It is hard that these forgeries are targeting small shops who are hardest hit by this sort of criminal activity and the ensuing losses.

**Travellers:** The landowners of the field along the A505 have until 16 June to clear the fly-tipping that has been allowed there during the illegal encampment otherwise they will be prosecuted. A summons notice has already been served.

I have written to the Minister, Dominic Raab, in response to the government consultation being run on the current powers in law to deal with unauthorised encampments. The consultation closes this Friday on 15 June. There is a simple online form if the parish council wanted to respond with its views. The link is <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/powers-for-dealing-with-unauthorised-development-and-encampments>

Over the past few weeks there have been two groups of travellers moving around villages in South Cambs - one in the south around Thriplow and Duxford, and another group that has moved in and around Cambourne. I have called for the councils and the police to consider applying for preventative injunctions on green spaces such as village greens and recreations grounds, as some councils near London have managed. Three villages near the travellers site at Thriplow Heath have written to the Chief Constable expressing their concern at recent incidents,

## Planning

There are a series of public engagement events being run by the Genome Centre at Hinxton at the end of June.

The proposals for a garden village at Gt Chesterford are likely to be adopted by Uttlesford District Council into their draft Local Plan. I have discussed with Cambridgeshire County Council's highways officers and their view is that the infrastructure proposed by the developers to cope with these new houses is not sufficiently clear.

**Five-year land supply:** For the last four years, since 2014, South Cambs District Council has battled to prove that it has enough land for new houses, against what the Government sets as a housing target. If a council can't prove that it has enough land allocated for housing, known as a "five-year land supply" then it makes it easier for developers to put in speculative bids for housing, and get them pushed through on appeal, even though the council's planning committee has turned these bids down. On 21 May South Cambs declared that it does meet Government targets for new housing land, following an updated assessment.

I'm pleased that it will be harder for developers to put in speculative bids to build houses where they are not wanted in South Cambridgeshire. But this respite will be brief if there is any trimming of the housing plans by the new administration at South Cambs, as the margin is very small. Put simply, if the new administration takes out some of the locations for houses, then the district will again fall below its housing targets, and it will again be open season for unwanted developments in our villages.

**Health and Well Being in Cambridgeshire:** I chaired the health and well-being board for Cambridgeshire last week. I supported a proposal for a review into bed-blocking to be carried out now, as although the situation is better than it was, there are still huge pressures on the system, and

the CCG, the body that contracts with the hospitals and holds the purse strings overspent by £48 million last year. I made the point that bed-blocking, also known as “delayed transfers of care” happens to real people and this is not just a numbers issue. We need to understand the impact of this on frail, often elderly people.

We also had a report on dementia and what communities could do to prepare for and be “dementia-responsive”.

**<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/health/nhs-bed-blocking-cambridgeshire-review-14731995>**

#### **Flats for nurses**

I have been working with health chiefs and Homes England to use some of the money won through the devolution deal with government to build affordable key worker flats for nurses at Northstowe new town, so that they could meet the needs of Addenbrookes Hospital – you can get the guided bus from Northstowe to Addenbrookes. I will be pressing the district council and the mayor to work together on this, for the benefit of all of us who might one day need to use our hospital.

**If you need to contact me, please use my email [peterwwtopping@gmail.com](mailto:peterwwtopping@gmail.com) or call 07825 876582 and leave a message.**

**Peter Topping**