

**THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF COTON
PARISH COUNCIL WAS HELD ON APRIL 16TH
2003 IN THE W.I. HALL, COMMENCING AT
8.00PM**

Members present: Messrs. G. Kinsey (Chairman), A. Davis, P. Burbage, J. Lewis, Mesdames. B. Smart, P. Brown, Ms N. Baumgarten, Councillor H. Reynolds, Councillor J. Hughes, Mrs D. Wilson (clerk) and 2 parishioners.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr G. Diplock and Mrs R. Darling.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman welcomed Dr Thorne and Mr Spencer to the meeting.

He reported as follows:

Your Parish Council has held 9 meetings during the past year, dealing with many issues relating to our village.

The Parish Council has had further discussions with the Cambridge Preservation Society regarding some of the proposals made for the Wildlife Reserve. I am pleased to be able to report that our concerns were accepted and have been deleted from the plans submitted to SCDC.

We will keep a close watch on this development to ensure we achieve the very best we can for Coton.

Bennys Way Play Equipment

The Parish Council were delighted to be able to complete the installation of the equipment, which we felt was badly needed.

WE thank Nikola Baumgarten and William Connolley for arranging the grants and obtaining the necessary funding. Also Johnny and Janny Boatfield who provided such good service on the opening day, which was very successful.

Crossing – Brook Lane

Having been requested to improve the crossing we met with the Highways Officer from Cambridgeshire County Council, who has advised us he maybe able to carry out some work during the current financial year.

M11 Exit

Having received complaints regarding vehicles leaving the motorway on to Grantchester Road we arranged a site meeting with the Motorway Engineer and an Officer from Cambridgeshire County Council. We explained our concerns and they appeared to accept our concerns, however we are still awaiting a report on any improvements they may suggest.

Cycle Path Cambridge Road

We have expressed concern regarding the position of the crossing and the crossing point on the A1303, unfortunately without success.

Whitwell Way/Silverdale Avenue Junction

WE have met with Mr Cooper of the Highways Department regarding the bus running on the edge of the green. Mr Cooper has suggested some small concrete posts be installed to overcome the problem. The Parish Council have agreed this and await the work

Roads/Paths

Again we hve met with Mr Cooper re the poor state of some of the roads in the village and our wish to see some improvement work carried out. He has advised us that due to funding problems the only work he is able to do at present is to carry out work on The Footpath road edge.

The Council had requested work on some footpaths, no action is proposed.

Flooding – Grantchester Road

WE received complaints about the flooding and the danger this was causing. Mr Cooper has cleared the blocked drain under the road and we wait to see if this solves the problem. The owner of the ditch has been requested to clear it to assist the flow of water.

Parking in Bus Lay-by

A meeting with Geoff Clark of SCDC and Mr Cooper was held regarding the use of the lay-by and road for parking causing problems. We have requested off street parking which he has agreed to do – we await action.

The Village Green

Your Parish Council are very pleased with the work being done by Gary Mitchell and we hope he will continue to do some for some time.

It is with sadness we have to say farewell to Mr Tony Davis who is standing down after over 30 years of service to our village.

Tony has been a very valued member who has quided us in may ways with his wide experience.

I am sure all of my fellow councillors will join with me in wishing Tony a long and happy retirement, and in recording our thanks for his service.

And finally to our Clerk who has worked extremely hard on our behalf, we are all grateful for her efforts.

To my fellow councillors thank you all for giving another years service to our village.

3. WORK PARTY REPORTS

- a) Finance Mr Kinsey reported as follows: Your Parish Council has set a precept of £16,000 for the coming year. This is an increase of £2,500 over the last year. Of this figure we have to pass to the Recreation Ground £9,500.

The finance Committee had to make some difficult decisions to be able to keep our precept as reasonable as possible.

- b) Planning Mr Kinsey reported as follows: We have again had many planning applications to consider. We have agreed to all without comment, with the exception of one house to which we objected. This is now subject to appeal.
- c) Footpaths Mrs Smart reported as follows: A grant was received last year and used for a contractor carrying out work on paths No 2 ,5, and 9 and also local labour for smaller maintenance work. It is hoped to receive a grant this year. All the nine footpaths are in reasonable condition. Work has been done by the Green Belt Project re painting two metal kissing gates. They still have work to do levelling the ground near three different gates.
Path No 4 which previously legally went through Mr Silk's garden into the churchyard, but had not been used, will have a legal diversion from 25th April if no objections are made. The path through the churchyard had previously been made a permissive path.
- d) Recycling Mrs Smart reported as follows: The kerbside recycling raised £92.91 for the period April 2001 to March 2002. This came from the rate of £5.71 per tonne of recycled material. No comparison can be made with other years as system is new.
There are still bottle banks in the village and paper banks at School but not sufficient material is collected to raise any money. There are plans for recycling garden and kitchen waste using Wheelie bins later this year.
- e) Allotments Mr Burbage reported as follows: The annual inspection has been carried out and the conditions of the cultivated plots are very good, about 98% are well maintained. One or two of the remaining ones are new tenants and they are trying hard but it is difficult going.

At present we have 37 plots, of these there are 24 whole plots and 14 half plots fully let, making 31 plots earning money. There are 2 half plots to let and 6 plots standing idle for various reasons, some left by the previous tenants in unusable condition. The rents are £15.00 per year for a full plot and £7.50 for a half. This has brought in an income of £465.00 of which we have to pay the Cambridge Preservation Society £360.00 leaving the P.C. with the sum of £105.00. Unfortunately the expenses do not finish there; we had a set-back with the large rectangle of land adjacent to the Plough. During "2002 the C.P.S. intimated that providing this piece of land was cleared and left in an arable condition, as agreed under the terms of our tenancy, they would take it back. However they insisted that it had to be completely cleaned up. The Parish Council allotted £1,000 to do part of the clearing up in 2001/2003, but this had already been spent and we were awaiting the next financial years budget. The C.P.S. told us to clear the rubbish etc. immediately or they would, and the Parish Council would be charged. Fortunately we were able to find another £2,000.00 and by June/July, thanks to the hard work of several PC members and friends of the Allotments, we completed all the clearing and with the hire of some skips removed the concrete. Later we were told by the C.P.S. they would not take the plot back immediately but probably next year,

also that we should level and grass the area until that time. We have decided to weed kill and retain as set-aside agricultural land as required in our deeds.

During the clean up part of the Plough fence was destroyed and required replacing, this work was carried out by 2 members of the Parish Council, Gordon Kinsey and Jim Lewis, thus saving the council a lot of money. It was the PCs responsibility to supply the new fencing, but Brian the landlord of the Plough agreed to pay half the costs, and for this on behalf of the PC and the village, we should thank him.

Finally, an item which has caused problems during the year concerning the footpath entrance to the allotments. We received confirmation that the right of way to the allotments is between nos 19 and 39 The Footpath, which the agents of Cambridge Preservation Society confirmed should be 15feet wide and able to accommodate agricultural vehicles or vehicles carrying items for or to use on the allotments. We felt a 10 foot width would suffice for normal traffic provided the 10 foot remains clear all the way through, at present this is doubtful The additional 5foot is to be marked out with painted posts, any plants etc. damaged within this area by vehicles passing through will not be the responsibility of the allotment holders or the Parish Council.

Thank you.

4. SCHOOL GOVERNOR'S REPORT

Mr Davis reported as follows: New extension had been built at the school to give better facilities and better security.

No of pupils 128 slightly less that last year. More from the village than had been but still if no pupils from outside the village there would be no school. Head Teacher had been away from school for a while due to her husbands illness, but now back. Mrs Brown also away ill.

School has strong Community links with PTA, Pre-School, Home Club, Youth Club, Mother and Toddler Group and After School Swimming .

He has resigned from School Governors as he will no longer be a Parish Councillor so there will be a vacancy for a Parish Council Governor.

5. COUNCILLOR REYNOLD'S REPORT

Councillor Reynolds reported as follows: It seems such a short time since my last report; I am pleased that there has been progress on a number of important issues affecting the area. However many of the issues I referred to in my last report are still ongoing.

I continue to be the deputy Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Member responsible for Strategic Planning, Waste and Minerals. I have also retained my position as a Vice Chairman of the Regional Planning Panel and as chairman of the Police Authority. The work of the County Councillors under the new system continues to grow taking up more and more of members time. I retired from Business at Christmas and this has allowed me more time to respond to this increased workload.

A14.

At long last Government has announced last month the funding for the A14 Multi Modal Study, a total sum with inflation of £494 million, but this will not be complete until 2011. There will be extensive consultation on the route including the Girton interchange alterations; these will affect all our villages. We still await the Government's agreement to fund the St Ives railway line for some type of Rapid Transport system. We must also maintain our pressure on Government to bring forward funding as soon as possible for A14 safety improvements which were proposed in 1990.

Housing Developments

The County Structure plan has been developed in line with Government's Regional Planning Guidance. The Inspector's report has been received which supports most of the county Council's draft. The plan includes; a new village of 6,000 homes proposed on the old Oakington airfield site, building more homes in the Green Belt, on Brownfield land and in larger Market towns and villages. The Structure Plan will be finalised later this year following more public consultation on the Inspector's amendments. We do need more low-cost and key worker housing, sustainable development, better education and health care, improved infrastructure and public transport, but this can only be delivered if we have the full support of the Government.

Education, Social Services

I am pleased to say that we have continued to see improved performance in the provision of Social Services and Education, but needs continue to outstrip the demand despite the County Council spending millions of pounds more than the Government assessment of spending need. It is only in Transportation & Environment that expenditure is below the Government suggested levels, here we have put additional spending into road maintenance to redress the reductions made in mid 1990's.

School Budgets

There is certainly a lot of fuss being made about school budgets in the past few weeks, particularly in the secondary schools area. Certainly there is no doubt that we "passported" all of the government's increases to our schools; we did not divert that money to other services. In fact, we more than "passported". Not only did we pass on the Formula Spending Share (FSS), we also passed on the additional £3.4M that we had been adding to previous inadequate government settlements. It included passing on that portion of the FSS for which the government has withheld the supporting grant. By the government's own calculation, therefore, we have passported 112% of the government's education increase to our schools – at considerable cost to our taxpayers.

Government Funding

The County Council has had to continue its policy of higher than average Council Tax increases to maintain services. However Cambridgeshire still has the 3rd lowest Council Tax at £797 compared to the average of £871 a difference of £84. The recent inspection of the county Council by

Government showed that our services all round were of high quality and we only were one point short of being ranked as excellent. During the past year both the county council and the Police Authority have been successful in securing increases in national funding from Government. However the over £9 million pounds for the County Council and £2.3 million pounds of this extra grant has been withheld. We hope that next year this money will be provided to ease our service pressures.

Policing

I was pleased to have been re-elected a chairman of the Police Authority and to have been appointed to the National Police Negotiation Board, Chairman of the Police Staff Support Council and as a Director of Police skills and Standard Organisation. Locally we have by the end of last year been able to increase Police Officer numbers to an all time record 1413 and have developed support services to prevent and reduce crime. Although our Council Tax has risen above inflation we are only levying a charge just above the national average.

May I express my thanks to all the Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their support and hard work in the past year.

6. COUNCILLOR HUGHES' REPORT

Councillor Hughes reported as follows: South Cambs didn't put up their Council Tax this year but it will go up next year.

There have been several interesting Planning Applications – the most exciting being the proposed Wildlife Reserve .

A certain developer is very anxious to build along Barton Road – Preservation Society are not in favour if it and will fight it.

Housing needs survey has shown there are 60 on the waiting list for Coton, including 30 single people

A study of Airey houses is going on at moment – if houses are demolished and rebuilt tenants will have to be rehoused while it is done. No decision yet.

A study of vacant is also ongoing in district.

At the end of summer wheelie bins will be introduced, 1 black one for kitchen waste and 1 green one for garden waste and cardboard. They will be collected black one one week and green one next week.

Election this year, and another one will be held next year in June when Coton will go into the Barton Ward.

Thinks its most important to support the New Village Hall.

Thanked Mr Kinsey and the Parish Councillors.

Mr Kinsey thanked everyone for their reports.

7. ACCOUNTS

End of year accounts were seen – no questions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Spencer asked about water on allotments and suggested hand pumps might work.

What about water extraction charge? Is a licence needed?

Put on next agenda to discuss.

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.26PM