

## Melbourn Parish Council March 2021 – County and District Councillors’ Report

**Gulley emptying:** The long-awaited Highways gulley emptying operation has been taking place this month and seems to be going well. Thank you very much to the parish council for assisting with the letter drop to residents. We’ve discussed with County Highways the protocol for return visits where any drains have been missed.

**Beechwood Ave and associated streets surface dressing:** Preparations started last week and actual surface dressing should start this week. Again thanks for help with letter drop to residents

**Less funding for Highways:** The recent announcement by the Government of the allocation of highways maintenance cash for the forthcoming year for each County indicates almost £7.5million less than last year.

**127 bus:** The current operator A2B has proposed to run the service commercially, which is its right to do. This means that the amalgamation of cross-county subsidized services, in which the 127 and the Herts CC 91 would join up and extend the service to Baldock and Letchworth, won’t happen. The timetable will remain roughly the same and the service will begin just after Easter, pending OK from the Traffic Commissioner.

**Fostering and Adoption campaign:** The campaign ‘Build Your Family’ encourages LGBT+ potential adopters and foster carers to consider expanding their family and sharing their life with a child or young person, either permanently through adoption or more short-term through fostering. The campaign seeks to tackle some common misconceptions surrounding the process, and raise awareness among people who identify as LGBT+ of the adoption and fostering parenting routes that are open to them.

There are around 745 children and young people in Cambridgeshire who need foster carers and the greatest need is for teenagers and brothers and sisters. LGBT+ Adoption & Fostering week is organised by New Family Social, a charity that supports LGBT+ Adopters and Foster Carers across the UK.

More information on fostering: call 0800 052 0078, email [fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/fostering); or for information on adoption please call 0300 123 1093.

**County Laptop Campaign:** Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council have launched the ‘Laptops for Children’ campaign in partnership with the Youth Panel, Cambridge Digital Direct, Cambridge 2030 and the Cambridge Culture Foundation, aimed at purchasing laptops and 4G routers for vulnerable young people. Around 8,000 children in the region do not have use of a computer or broadband, meaning they cannot access lessons and online resources, putting them at risk of falling behind with their studies. For more information on the campaign and to make a donation visit [our GoFundMe page](#).

**Resignation of County Council Deputy Leader:** As a result of an investigation into the tenancy awarded in 2017 and investment of £185k of funds from the County to this farm, the Deputy Leader of the County Council Cllr Hickford has resigned and left his farm. This is the statement from the Leader:

*“On Tuesday February 23rd I received a long and complex report which was the culmination of the Manor Farm Audit. The subject of the report largely concerns the Deputy Leader Cllr Roger Hickford’s occupancy of Manor Farm, Girton as a tenant of Cambridgeshire County Council’s Farms Estate.*

*The contents of the report are confidential at present, for legal reasons in order for the Audit and Accounts committee to fully consider and discuss the matter. But having read the report I had two meetings with Cllr. Hickford to consider implications for the Council, outside of the remit of the committee.*

*Subsequent to those meetings Cllr Hickford has asked me to accept his resignation as my Deputy leader and as a member of the Council with immediate effect.*

*I have accepted his resignation and confirmed this to Chief Executive Gillian Beasley.*

*I have also thanked Cllr Hickford for his years of service in his role as a Councillor and the support he has given me over the years as my deputy leader.”*

A report into the granting of the tenancy and subsequent actions were reviewed at the March 5<sup>th</sup> Audit & Accounts Committee. The timetable is here:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/manor-farm-audit-to-be-considered-by-audit-and-accounts-committee>

### **District Council**

**South Cambs Budget/Council Tax:** The Council agreed a £5 per year increase for the average band D home for the next financial year. The increase will see the average band D home charge for South Cambridgeshire District Council increase to £155.31 per year.

South Cambridgeshire District Council estimates that the cost of dealing with the pandemic so far has been approximately £2.35 million. This is mainly due to increased spending on PPE, additional staff members to help in several areas such as community response, processing business grants and Council Tax support and new software for administering grants. The Council has received £1.9 million in Government grants to help it deal with increased spending due to Coronavirus.

Due to the continuing financial pressure on the Council, the proposals include around £5.1million worth of savings during the next four years, with £2.2million in savings and income already identified. Around half of the Council’s annual budget of just under £20 million comes from local Council Tax.

**Covid 19 Support for Business in Lockdown 3:** Grants Status: £8,932,592 paid has been paid to 3,863 business since November+ grants opened. The majority continues to be the main LRSG schemes and the Closed Business Lockdown payments. Hardship: we are not yet seeing signs of hardship applications slow down, in fact, we had a flurry of 70 in first week of March. This week, we’ve had a flurry of activity from Taxi Drivers, Driving Instructors and Mobile Hairdressers in particular. Echoing last week’s email, there continues to be a wider variety of applicants in general, mostly micro businesses and many sole traders. For example, in March we’ve had a clinical psychologist who mainly works within education settings ask for help, as have we a bookmaker.

**Cambridge Water Treatment Works:** South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council are urging local people to get involved in the next stages of the design and planning for a new plant, which Anglian Water says will support the local ambition towards net zero carbon, and

also deliver wider benefits for people and wildlife. Anglian Water have announced that the preferred site for their new plant is an area north of the A14 between Fen Ditton and Horningsea.

The proposed relocation would allow a new net zero carbon facility, meeting exemplar environmental standards, to replace the existing plant which is near Cambridge North railway station. This will unlock opportunities for future development on that site, as well as providing for planned growth in places such as Waterbeach New Town. The project means that no additional treatment facilities would be needed at the new town as wastewater would be treated at the new plant.

**Bourn Airfield Outline Approval:** Plans for a new village of around 3,500 homes on the former World War Two Airfield at Bourn have been supported by South Cambridgeshire District Council's Planning Committee.

40% of the new homes will be classed as affordable – in line with the Council's Local Plan policies. These homes will be a mixture of affordable rent, shared ownership, rent to buy and discount market sale. A wide range of new community facilities will come forward, including a new secondary school, two primary schools, community centres and playing fields.

A £20-million package to support local transport upgrades is part of the plans and includes walking, cycling and bus routes and electric car charging points. There will be woodlands, wildlife habitat areas, grassland, allotments and community orchards.



The Committee met Friday 19 February to discuss the application from developers Countryside. They voted to support proposals for the new community on 210 hectares of land between Cambourne and Caldecote. The site is one of the new settlements that was allocated for development as part of the Council's 2018 Local Plan, with this application being the next stage in bringing the plans forward.

The area is a mixture of previously developed land and agricultural fields. As part of the development, there will also be shops, offices, healthcare, nurseries, library, place of worship and a hotel.

The development will be governed by a range of conditions covering transport, protecting the environment and ecology, the quality of the buildings and more. Additionally, the Greater Cambridge Partnership and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority continue to work on delivering a new public transport system that will link the development with Cambourne and Cambridge.

Earlier this year, the District Council's Planning Committee approved plans for new commercial buildings on the former Gestamp Factory on the airfield. The applicant estimated that the redevelopment of this old factory site would create up to 800 new, full time jobs.

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which gives more detail on how the new village should come forward, was adopted by the Council in September 2019 following a public consultation. The SPD says the new development should be well connected with traffic-free, active travel routes and high-quality public transport, both locally, to Cambridge and ultimately St Neots. It also outlines how it should be vibrant, prosperous and inclusive with housing for all, schools, sports and leisure, community uses, shops and jobs.

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