

Report from District Councillors Philippa Hart, Jose Hales and County Councillor Susan van de Ven

Beechwood Avenue and short-cutting: Lately Susan has received an increase in contact from residents of Beechwood Avenue and surrounding roads, on account of short-cutting especially to and from the Melbourn Industrial Site. There's further concern about potential traffic patterns to and from the new housing developments off New Road, adding to pressure along what is a residential road, unfit to serve as a main thoroughway. This is a well-known problem but a tipping point appears to have been reached, and I've passed on to the Melbourn Futures Group, of which I'm a member, my view that some kind of radical step is needed in order to protect what is a residential street not designed for commercial traffic. Advice will be needed from Highways but at the same time, it will be important to understand what level of intervention local residents would be prepared for

Orchard Road/New Road/Mortlock Street Junction: A road safety assessment has been requested and now carried out by the County Road Safety team. The results will be reported back to the Primary School in September.

New Road/A505 junction: There's no news on any potential intervention here, where there's a particular concern for right turning out of New Road. I will take this off my parish reports, but I know it's on the Melbourn Futures Agenda.

Melbourn Practical Solutions Group: Our once-per-term meeting at Melbourn Village College in July offered parish, district and county councilors the chance to meet MVC's new Head Girl and Head Boy, and to hear their ideas and priorities for the college and community next school year. We look forward to their visit to Melbourn Parish Council to hear more, in particular their ideas for the natural environment. Please can we put the September PC meeting in the diary as a definite date.

Station waiting room re-decorated: Thanks to gentle pressure exerted from Melbourn Science Park, and to GTR for prioritizing Meldreth to get the job done.

Blue Plaque Scheme: South Cambs has just launched this scheme which has been running in Cambridge since 2001. The first plaque was unveiled yesterday at Girton College to honour its two principal founders, Barbara Bodichon and Emily Davies, who were pioneers in providing education at degree level for women in this country. South Cambridgeshire residents are now being encouraged to nominate a person or event for commemoration. See www.scambs.gov.uk/blueplaques for further details and the nomination criteria.

NHS cuts and ending or decommissioning of services: In addition to its own responsibility for commissioning Public Health services, the County Council has a statutory duty to scrutinize the consultation process that accompanies any significant NHS service change.

Unprecedented Cambridgeshire NHS savings targets are forcing what are called 'difficult decisions' that look set to see the end of financial support a number of voluntary sector services, as well as some NHS services. Local NHS services are commissioned by the Cambs/Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The population area includes 950,000 people and is one of the largest CCGs in the country. But our CCG is the third lowest nationally in terms of funding. Its unique pressures include a rapidly growing population that is not calculated into its funding formula.

The CCG is required to 'consult' on its proposed service changes resulting from these funding pressures, so we'll be hearing more about this in September.

The CCG will also be reviewing its 2017 decision to pause Specialist Fertility Services, or IVF, and the recommendation will be that it does not reinstate service provision (as opposed to continuing suspension and reconsidering when financial position improves). Meanwhile Government which has not corrected the funding formula is strongly condemning those local authorities forced to cease IVF services.

Parking and Pavement Parking: Given that there have been complaints coming our way about pavement parking, we hope the following is helpful.

As of June, only 22 parking enforcement notices have been issued in South Cambridgeshire this year.

South Cambs has been under pressure from the Police and Crime Commissioner to agree a civil enforcement scheme for the district, but legislation makes this impossible, and responsibility for parking enforcement remains with the Police. This is because Council Tax cannot be used to fund such a scheme; rather, funds can only come from money earned from parking - car parks, fines, residents' parking schemes. However, there are no car parks and no residents' parking schemes in the South Cambs, so there's no appropriate revenue stream for a civil parking scheme.

The Police have reiterated that if regular offenders are reported to them three times, they will take action. This can of course be put to the test. On the subject of pavement parking there has been some discussion at government level about legislating but as things stand it is at the discretion of the Police whether they issue a penalty notice or not. The advice is that they will do so if the gap is not large enough for a wheelchair to pass through.

Reporting to the police: If you have access to the internet, you can report a crime on-line at <https://www.cambs.police.uk/report/Crime>. Or ring the Police for non-emergencies on 101. For emergencies, ring 999.

Planning department: The planning service at SCDC is merging with Cambridge City Council and is nearing the end of its transformation programme. The new shared planning is the first service area to receive the ICT hardware and telephony for the Council Anywhere Programme which will enable its staff to work between two offices but also out in the community. There is a national shortage of planners and areas of the planning department are running high vacancies: much is being done to recruit more planning officers but it has meant that some applications are failing to meet target deadlines and also that planning officers have not been as available to residents as they would like to be. Philippa is working hard with colleagues to improve the service.

Green to the Core - New initiatives at SCDC: Electric powered bin lorries? Some of you will have seen reports in the local media of the Waste Service (SCDC and City) investigating switching to electric powered bin lorries. The current fleet meets the highest environmental standards for diesel engines but the trucks only manage 4-6 miles to the gallon and the fleet of 50 bin lorries and 18 street sweeping vehicles costs around £46,000 every four weeks to fuel. The cost of their replacement by electric powered vehicles is high and the two councils are exploring how this might be best achieved.

Green energy initiatives - SCDC has pledged to generate 25% of its income from investments by the end of this administration. If we can do this and also tick our Green to the Core pledge then all the better. Green energy, be it battery storage, solar, EV charging points or others are all possible future investment opportunities for the Council. To this end, Philippa attended the Cleanpower and Smart Grids Conference in Cambridge earlier this week.

Our monthly surgery change:

We've decided to move our monthly 'Advice Surgery' at the Melbourn Hub to a 'Chat Anytime at the Hub' or wherever and whenever suits people best.