

# SUTTON ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ELECTORATE

## Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the electorate Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023, at 7pm in The Glebe Hall, The Glebe, Sutton.

Present: Mr M Inskip (Chairman of Sutton Parish Council)  
Mrs R Hughes (Clerk)  
Mrs M Wolland (Deputy Clerk)  
Cllr L Dupre (CCC and ECDC)  
4 Members of the public

**1. Welcome from the Chairman of Sutton Parish Council - Cllr Mark Inskip.**

Mr Inskip welcomed those present to the meeting

**2. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Mrs Partington, Mr Browne and Mr Goodjohn.

**3. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022.**

The minutes were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

**4. Annual Report from Chairman of Sutton Parish Council on Council activities during the previous year**

Welcome to Sutton's Annual Meeting of the Electorate. It has been another busy year for Sutton Parish Council, though it is worth saying that there is more that we would like to do and we are constrained by the number of parish councillors. As we head into the next four year term we have seven vacancies. If you want to become involved or know of others who might be persuaded, do get in touch with the Clerk. The time demands aren't huge and you can really make a difference.

Last year at this time I reported that we had ordered three commemorative jubilee benches as a permanent reminder of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and those benches were subsequently installed on The Row/Painter's Lane corner, by the Bellairs Primary School entrance and on the open space at Windmill Walk. A possibility for this coming year would be to look at Coronation benches to replace older benches elsewhere in the village.

At the end of spring last year improvements to the footpath along Bury Lane to Sutton Gault were completed with a new metre wide asphalt path laid between 4 Bury Lane and Holbrook Farm. Eventually our ambition is to find a way to restore the Bury Lane footpath all the way to the footbridge across the Gault.

Our Traffic and Transport working party is continuing to address traffic issues and we will hear more about some aspects of their work later this evening. Last year I reported we had been successful in our LHI bid to the county council for a safer way to cross the Brook just north of the junction with the High Street. The design of that scheme was approved by the Parish Council in January. Installation is likely to be combined with work by the county council to install a pedestrian crossing on The Brook by the school. Following the new policy from the County Council on HGVs, we have submitted a Local Highways Initiative bid for a weight restriction through the parish along the B1381 from the junction with the A142 to Earith Bridge. We are also submitting a bid under the County Council's new 20mph scheme for 20mph limits on The Row and roads off together with Mepal Road.

We are now in our third year of Sutton Timebank and that continues to go from strength to strength. One of the recent initiatives is to take on the phone box on the green outside Priors Field surgery, with this becoming both a book bank and seed bank.

Next week will be the fourth anniversary of the making of the Sutton Neighbourhood Plan. We continue to see the benefits of the plan, for example with the Section 106 agreement with Vistry Group (Linden Homes) that commits them to providing new playing fields, a new burial ground, a substantial sum to improve the MUGA, contributions to highways improvements, schools provision and more as part of phase 2 of their development off Mepal Road.

Only yesterday, two of the Neighbourhood Plan policies were crucial in East Cambs Planning Committee refusing an inappropriate planning application for land east of Garden Close.

Over the last two years the Parish Council has been working on a review of the Neighbourhood Plan and earlier this week the Parish Council approved the text of the new draft Neighbourhood Plan which is expected to go to Pre-Submission consultation in early June. This new plan builds on the existing plan, adding a Design Code, Housing Needs Assessment and new and revised policies for example to better address biodiversity and climate change. A drop-in event will be organised for June.

Finally, we have come to the end of the four year term for Parish Councillors. I would like to thank all those who have participated as councillors over the past four years and particularly to thank those retiring this time around. Brian Watson, Beth Skelham and Brett Collard. Particular thanks to Brett who has served on the parish council for over a decade.

## **5. To receive report from County and District Councillors**

### **County Councillor Lorna Dupre**

2022 will be notable as the year of the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 8 September. The accession of HM King Charles III was proclaimed in Cambridge and Ely, and elsewhere in the county, two days later, and I was privileged to attend both proclamations.

The composition of the County Council has changed since my last annual report following the death of Independent Chair of the Council Derek Giles who retired from that role as a result of his ill health, and another councillor switching parties. Cllr Doug Dew (Hemingfords & Fenstanton) left the Conservative Group in January 2023 and joined the Liberal Democrat Group. Cllr Geoff Seeff (Lib Dem) won the St Neots The Eatons seat in the by-election in February following Cllr Giles's death.

A County Council by-election will be held on Thursday 4 May, the same day as the District Council elections, following the resignation of Cllr Dan Schumann (Soham South & Haddenham).

#### **1 The Council**

1.1 The three-group Joint Administration of Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent councillors continues to run the Council. The Agreement signed by the three groups in May 2021 is scheduled for a two-year review, which will take place after this May's elections.

1.2 I remain in the same roles as last year, concentrating on Environment & Green Investment, Flood & Water, Strategy & Resources Committee, Highways & Transport and Constitution & Ethics Committee. working group on Heavy Goods

Vehicles which I chaired last year has concluded its work, resulting in a new policy. The County Council Farms estate work continues, as does the Green Investment Advisory Group and the Tree Strategy Working Group.

1.3 Once again I chaired the Combined Authority's Overview & Scrutiny Committee this year.

1.4 The council's Chief Executive Stephen Moir carried out a reorganisation of the senior staffing structure, and the Council has been making senior appointments. The process of disentangling joint staffing structures with Peterborough Council set up by the previous administration has been very positive.

#### **1.5 The council's new HQ at Alconbury**

Weald was formally opened on Friday 8 July. (I remain of the view that the location is entirely wrong given the non-existent public transport links.)

#### **2 Strategy & Resources**

2.1 The high rates of inflation in the last year, and the turmoil of the Liz Truss / Kwasi Kwarteng mini budget, increased the costs of providing council services and therefore widened the budget gap.

2.2 The Council increased its portion of Council Tax in February, by 4.99 per cent in total—2.99 per cent for general services, and two per cent for adult social care. The Conservative opposition proposed an increase of four per cent instead, plugging the council tax gap by using up one-off funding meant for environmental projects, care, and strengthening council services.

2.3 I chaired the first meeting of county farm tenants since the start of the pandemic, at Quy Mill. We received an inspiring presentation on regenerative farming from Hertfordshire farmer Paul Cherry, host of the annual Groundswell festival. There was lively interest in these techniques and in carbon sequestration and carbon credits.

### 3 Adults & Health

8.1 National changes in health and care decision-making took place during the year, with the creation of local Integrated Care Systems spanning health and social care. Cambridgeshire & Peterborough created a joint Health & Wellbeing Board to replace the previous separate Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Boards.

3.2 This year has exposed the vulnerability of NHS services nationally and also locally. A BBC investigation last summer of dental provision in the UK revealed that no dental practice in Cambridgeshire was accepting new adult patients. Large numbers of patients are having to travel far afield, pay money they cannot afford for private treatment, or resort to DIY dentistry—and a resident of Ely was recently reported as having had to travel to war-torn Ukraine for dental treatment which was quicker and cheaper than that available in the UK.

3.3 Meanwhile the 6,000 patients at Priors Field GP practice in Sutton heard in February that the practice would be closing at the end of March, with patients to be sent to alternative practices in some cases a thirty-mile round trip away. My Sutton ward district council colleague Mark Inskip and I set up a petition which attracted over 2,300 signatures, calling on NHS England and the Secretary of State for Health to intervene. A fortnight of intense hard work followed, including two public meetings organised by NHS Cambridgeshire, one online public meeting, and a special meeting of Sutton Parish Council.

We are delighted that the community campaign has been so successful, and that the NHS has contracted with Malling Health to provide services in Sutton for twelve months with an option to extend, while a more permanent local solution is found. I have now met on several occasions with the Patient Participation Group and NHS Cambridgeshire, and am continuing to do so as we work through the practical issues and support residents.

8.4 In addition to Covid, avian flu precautions were implemented across the UK during the year, with a particular protection zone centred round Pymoor after a confirmed case.

### 4 Children & Young People

4.1 Funding of vouchers over the school holidays for families eligible for free school meals has continued, as has the Holiday Activity & Food programme for the children of eligible families. The cost of living crisis has seen many Cambridgeshire families reliant on such schemes.

4.2 The Council was praised by Ofsted for the work of senior leaders in Children's Services in responding to the challenge of Covid, and for maintaining continuity during structural change. Most children in need and those with a child protection plan were supported well.

4.3 A number of schools in the Sutton division, including Sutton, Downham Feoffees and Witchford Village College received good Ofsted inspection results during the year.

4.4 The council is still seeking residents who would like to make a difference to the life of a child or young person by becoming a foster carer.

4.5 In a piece of good news for Cambridgeshire, the council and the Government reached agreement on the 'safety valve' process to resolve the escalating deficit in the cost of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities education. The deficit was expected to grow to over £90M by 2025/26 if left unchecked, and the council was not permitted to divert funding from other sources to fill the gap. Cambridgeshire has been awarded £49M which will be used to create 463 new special school places, with a further £11.3M in capital funding to support new SEND provision on mainstream school sites. Cambridgeshire has historically received less funding per child for education than other areas.

### 5 COSMIC

5.1 COSMIC (Communities, Social Mobility & Inclusion Committee) has continued to oversee the Household Support Fund, which supports people experiencing immediate financial hardship to pay for food, household energy or other essential items. An increasing number of families are struggling financially at the moment. COSMIC agreed to use some of the money from the fund to give a 'payment holiday' to pensioners in arrears with their water bills.

5.2 A Warm Hubs programme over the winter was funded by the NHS and administered by Cambridgeshire ACRE with fantastic support from local parishes.

5.3 A review of the mobile library service resulted in a number of improvements, including more stops, more fuel-efficient routes, and local storage of vehicles. Cambridgeshire's Library@home volunteers were one of three voluntary organisations in the county to be given the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service—the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK.

5.4 The Government is introducing a requirement for photographic ID for voters at elections. This starts with the elections in May, and will cost up to £180M over ten years, despite cases of voter identity fraud at polling stations being almost non-existent. Around two million voters in the UK do not have the right form of ID to enable them to vote—they can apply for free Voter Authority Certificates, but applications for these are extremely slow and

many people are likely to find themselves deprived of their right to vote on 4 May. I have been working with County Council officers on ways in which the council can support the effort to ensure the many people without the required photo ID apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate so that they are not denied their right to vote. I proposed a motion on this to the county council which was agreed. A similar motion to the District Council was defeated.

## 6 Environment

6.1 The Council awarded the first spending from its Just Transition fund, including £2.175M for a business case for the first phase of the Council's plan for Cambridgeshire to reach Net Zero carbon by 2045. £1.75M was also awarded for flood work and nature restoration.

6.2 On the hottest day on record in the UK, Joint Administration members of the County Council voted to sign Zero Hour's Nature & Climate Declaration, while the tarmac melted in the council car park outside the building.

6.3 The County Council is working with district councils on energy retrofits in homes with poor energy efficiency. A number of Cambridgeshire residents including in Little Downham received individual invitations to apply for this.

6.4 The public inquiry into the proposals for an incinerator at Wisbech took place in February. I attended and made a representation on behalf of the county council, urging that the application be refused.

6.5 The waste disposal contract with Thalia (formerly Amey) at Waterbeach has taken considerable amounts of council time. In addition to the odour emission works required by the Environment Agency, the new year saw new enforcement by the Environment Agency of rules on 'persistent organic pollutants in waste upholstered domestic seating'. This led to a week of the council being unable to accept unwanted sofas, futons, gaming chairs, upholstered dining seats, and other similar items. These must now be incinerated not landfilled. In addition to this, discussions are also ongoing with Defra regarding proposals to introduce weekly food waste collections.

6.6 The first households in Swaffham Prior are now receiving renewable energy from the new energy centre. Interest in this project has been considerable. Other energy projects (solar panels on Park & Ride sites, North Angle solar farm, and replacement of gas and oil boilers in schools and in the Council's own premises around the county) are continuing to progress. In conjunction with iChoosr the council ran another round of Solar Together, the group buying scheme for homeowners wanting to invest in solar panels and battery storage.

6.6 The Examination into the planning application by Sunnica for the large solar farm between Burwell and Red Lodge began in autumn 2022. I attended the Examination and spoke about the size and scale of the application, the impact on rural communities, food security, soil quality, biodiversity, transport, and public rights of way.

6.7 Anglian Water and Cambridge Water announced in the autumn their preferred location for a new reservoir in the Fens, north of Chatteris, to come onstream in the late 2030s. A planning application will come in due course and progress through a number of stages. It will be a decision for the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate, as with other major infrastructure schemes.

6.8 The council has published an interim Tree Strategy, which it will revise once it has baseline information about what trees the council has, where they are, and how the council can expand and improve its tree assets.

6.9 We received details of the County Council's carbon emissions for the year. There was a significant reduction in the early stages of the pandemic, due to construction work (in red) ceasing, but this is likely to increase again in future years.

6.10 We agreed a motion to the Full Council calling for managed divestment by the council's Pension Fund from fossil fuels.

6.11 The council ran a #LetsGetOutdoors campaign over the summer to encourage residents to make use of Cambridgeshire's fantastic parks.

6.12 Connect Fibre, Openreach, Trulli and others all expressed interest simultaneously during the year in cabling up Sutton and other villages with high-speed broadband infrastructure.

## 7 Highways & Transport

7.1 The condition of Cambridgeshire's roads and pavements remains a serious challenge. This situation has been building for many years in which the council's approach was one of 'managed decline'. However, recent extreme weather has speeded up that decline very significantly. The peaty soil under the road surface has shrunk in hot dry weather, and expanded in wet weather, causing the surface to crater and split. Adding more tarmac to level the surface simply increases the weight and makes matters worse. The severity and extent of the problem is far beyond the maintenance budget of the council, so simply 'freeing up some money' is not an option. The council has been actively engaging with the Department for Transport to seek their support and funding.

7.2 The council used a data interpretation and modelling tool to identify a 'Safe and Dry' programme of 115 locations where work was needed to improve flood resilience, and work began on the first fifty of these locations including Main Street Wentworth and Main Street Witchford. The council is also undertaking a two-year programme

to clean and plot all gullies and surface drainage features to improve highways drainage management into the future.

7.3 The freezing spell over winter caused many road and pavement surface defects, and failure of pothole repairs. We encourage residents to report faults online.

7.4 Various road works have taken place during the year, including repairs to Mepal Bridge which finally took place.

The demountable flood barrier at Welney was installed over the summer. West Fen Road was closed in March 2023 due to a collapsing culvert which will take a number of weeks to repair.

7.5 The BP A10/A142 roundabout is still impassable for people walking or cycling. The Combined Authority has made available a sum of money to assess options for safe crossing but the timescale is drifting which is disappointing.

7.6 The development by the council of an East Cambridgeshire Transport Strategy is penciled in for 2023.

## 7.7 The Highways & Transport

Committee agreed a new Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. The proposals in it are currently unfunded, but include options for cycling routes between Ely and Little Downham; from Sutton westwards along the A142 towards Mepal; and north of Witchford between the new developments and the A142.

7.8 The county council plans to fit street lighting with energy-efficient LEDs. The council spends £3.3M a year on energy for street lights, and this sum will pay back in under six years.

7.9 The working group I chaired on Heavy Goods Vehicles produced a new policy and criteria against which to judge applications for weight limits in villages. A number of applications have already come forward. The new funding pot for 20MPH schemes has attracted a large amount of interest.

7.10 The county council and partners offered East Cambs District Council £150,000 to help with the set-up costs of joining the rest of the country in adopting civil parking enforcement. This was declined by the current administration of the district council.

7.11 Cycle stands were installed at Sutton, Mepal and Witcham. Following an approach from residents I worked with our Local Highways Officer to put in place a better barrier arrangement between Windmill Lane and Windmill Walk in Sutton.

## 7.12 Local Highways Improvement bids in

2021 were successful for Little Downham (solar studs on B1411), Witchford (pedestrian crossing near the school), and Coveney (gates and signing on Jerusalem Drive). These have all now been installed—the solar studs in the last few days of March 2023. In 2022 the Panel approved Sutton's bid for a pedestrian crossing on The Brook near Cromwell Road. There will also be a crossing further along The Brook near the school, paid for by 'transforming cities' funding. The process for applications and assessments of Local Highways Improvement bids has changed, with bids categorised as complex or noncomplex, and quicker routes to assess non-complex applications.

7.13 Anti-social driving at the Elean Business Park in Sutton has recently spilled over onto the roundabout at the bottom of Mepal Road Sutton. I hope that the recently approved detailed planning application for a data centre at the Business Park will soon be built out and deter this.

7.14 We lost longstanding local highways officer Pam Joyce to retirement during the year, but she has been replaced by the excellent Phil Harty.

7.15 In autumn the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) consulted on its proposals for improved bus provision and active travel in the Cambridge area, which it proposed to fund through a charge for driving in a 'Sustainable Travel Zone' between 7:00AM and 7:00PM on weekdays. The results of the consultation will be published in the late spring, and the GCP needs to listen to the concerns of residents. The current proposals are not fair or equitable for East Cambs residents, and should not be implemented. It is wrong to penalise people who drive when there is no viable public transport alternative. What is needed is action to address the decades of decline in public transport inflicted by successive Governments and local councils.

## 9 Combined Authority

9.1 The Combined Authority has had a somewhat turbulent year, including an attempt to depose the elected Mayor of Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (dubbed the Fenpowder Plot) which was unsuccessful. Most significantly, the auditors (EY) wrote to the Authority in June expressing concerns about the functioning of the Combined Authority, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities has become involved, setting some clear requirements for improvement. The Combined Authority has agreed an Improvement programme with a package of external support, and an Independent Improvement Board has been established.

9.2 In September 2022 Stagecoach gave six weeks' notice of its intention to withdraw from a large number of bus routes. The Combined Authority pulled together a tender process at very short notice, and was able to find new providers for most of those routes, though there have been changes in frequency and extent of several of them.

Additional funding was diverted to support these routes, and the Mayor has decided to levy a precept which will be added to the council tax to ensure the stability of these services for a further year. The Combined Authority really needs to move ahead with a system of franchising of local bus services, which would give democratic control of routes, timetables, and fares, but to do this it needs to find sources of large amounts of income, and in any case franchising would take around five years to implement. Meanwhile the Combined Authority is finalising a Bus Strategy for submission to Government.

9.3 The Combined Authority remains starved of resources by the Government compared to other

Combined Authorities. It received no money for its Bus Service Improvement Plan, and very little active travel funding. The Government also decided there would be no more money for affordable housing for any Combined Authorities.

9.4 The Combined Authority's Local Transport & Connectivity Plan, on which many other local transport plans depend, is being finalised.

9.5 Now that it has no money for, and therefore no real role in, housing, the Combined Authority has reorganised its committees into new 'thematic committees' including (for the first time) the environment.

10 Finally

10.1 I have continued to hold regular surgeries in Sutton and Witchford, and attend the Book Café in Little Downham once a month. Meanwhile, residents can continue to contact me by email, on Facebook or Twitter, or by phone.

10.2 My monthly county councillor reports are at [www.tinyurl.com/lornasreports](http://www.tinyurl.com/lornasreports)

## **District Councillor Lorna Dupre and Mark Inskip**

Priors Field GP surgery

1.1 Without a doubt the biggest challenge facing residents of Sutton ward for some years was the shock announcement in February of the proposed closure of Sutton's GP practice at the end of March, and the 'managed list dispersal' of its patients to other practices in ten locations around the wider area—some as far afield as Ramsey. The practice serves 5,959 patients in and around Sutton, and the loss of such an important anchor for the village would have been significant.

1.2 The immediate and effective mobilisation by the community was a wonderful example of what we can achieve together. Our petition to save the surgery rapidly reached over 2,300 signatures. NHS Cambridgeshire attended three public meetings in a week. Sutton Parish Council convened its own special meeting and agreed to apply for the Priors Field building to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. The Patient Participation Group held a number of meetings with senior NHS Cambridgeshire officials. And as a result, together we saved GP health care in Sutton.

1.3 Malling Health, a national primary care business with experience of crisis support, took on the contract from 1 April, and the feedback from patients to date has been very positive. Malling are contracted for twelve months with an option to extend, and are currently operating from Priors Field. Work is ongoing to identify an alternative site for a permanent health facility in the village. Lorna has also asked the County Council's Adults & Health Committee to scrutinise how the NHS communicates practice closures, and how NHS Cambridgeshire monitors practices at risk of failure or closure.

Full council meetings

2.1 A special meeting of the Full Council was called to discuss the district council's response to the proposals for a Sustainable Travel Zone in Cambridge. Mark spoke in support of an amendment from our group which drew attention to the high level of carbon emissions from transport in Cambridgeshire; the need to provide car drivers with attractive public transport alternatives; that many residents cannot drive and need public transport to access employment, services and leisure activities; the significant congestion within Cambridge and on the routes into Cambridge, including the A10 and B1102 / A1303; and the urgent need for significant improvements to buses, given their continual decline since 1986 and the recent sudden acceleration of the decline. The amendment called for support for well-resourced demand responsive transport; extended hours and increased frequency for public transport provision; extra routes from Park & Ride sites; the need for rail improvements and fare reductions and integration of various modes of public transport; provision of 'PlusBus'

tickets; travel hubs along rural bus routes and key bus corridors; and provision for 'school student tickets' ensuring that rural school students pay no more than Cambridge school students for travel to school or sixth form college. The amendment also drew attention to the funding challenges, with Government refusing to fund bus improvements, and local political opposition in some quarters to investing in bus services. The amendment was defeated by the ruling group.

2.2 In February we proposed a motion expressing our concern at the rushed introduction of photographic Voter ID requirements which will leave many people refused their legitimate right to vote. The number of applications for Voter Authority Certificates is tiny in proportion to the number of voters without approved ID documents. The proposals cannot be justified by the risk of voter identity fraud, which the independent Electoral Commission reports every year is almost nonexistent. Again, as usual, this motion was defeated.

## Planning

3.1 East Cambridgeshire's Local Plan is now eight years old, after an update in 2019 was discarded by the ruling group after three years of work and an Examination in Public. It remains badly outdated, which brings with it the risk of losing planning appeals and control over development in the district.

3.2 A report prepared in October 2021 for local planning authorities in Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk said that from 2020 to 2040, 215 more East Cambridgeshire households each year will need affordable housing to rent, and that of these 75 per cent should be social rent. Meanwhile median house prices in East Cambridgeshire jumped over the last ten years by 55.4 per cent, compared to 27.6 per cent nationally and 42.5 regionally.

3.3 A report to the council's Operational Services Committee revealed that 16 per cent of properties in East Cambridgeshire have Category 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards. In privately rented properties this rises to 17 per cent. The cost of mitigating this was estimated at £20M.

3.4 The council's planning application to replace the popular Outdoor Centre with an unwanted crematorium was approved in October. The business case for the crematorium has still not been presented to the council for consideration.

3.5 The planning application for the second phase of the Linden / Vistry development at Mepal Road was approved in December.

3.6 The Abbey Homes application for the detail of its development at Garden Close remains unresolved. We are continuing to challenge the application on several grounds, including the proportion of two-story dwellings, the non-compliance of its small plot sizes, and the housing mix which doesn't meet the 2021 AECOM housing needs assessment for Sutton. We also have concerns about drainage and flood risk.

3.7 The former Deli@65 remains vacant, which is disappointing considering its central location in Sutton's High Street and the contribution it could make to the community.

3.8 Lasercharm was granted planning permission for the detail of its data centre at the Elean Business Park, along with a unit offering office space for small businesses. If this is built, we hope it will deter the anti-social driving there which continues to plague Sutton and nearby villages.

3.9 Lorna persuaded the Planning Committee to grant planning permission at Low Bank Farm in Mepal and at 127 High Street, after officers had recommended refusal.

3.10 We both continue to be actively involved in the revision of Sutton's Neighbourhood Plan.

3.11 Cambridgeshire's Local Heritage List, funded by the Government as one of twenty-two pilot projects nationally, was launched late last year. The current list for East Cambridgeshire consists of 85 assets, including a number in Sutton ward. Finance and assets

4.1 The Council once again froze its share of the Council Tax in its February budget. The plans in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy include an increase of £5 per annum at Band D, the maximum allowed, with effect from next year. Its proposed net operating budget for 2023/24 is £12,282,471.

4.2 We proposed an amendment to fund a new Local Plan, the implementation of civil parking enforcement, a doubling of the council's Environment Fund, and grant funding to parish councils and community groups to mark the Coronation, all of which was refused.

4.3 The council's East Cambs Trading Company continues to struggle. One of our colleagues from Ely asked the Trading Company at a council committee meeting why its Annual Accounts said that 'No liability to UK corporation tax arose for the year ended 31 March 2022 nor the year ended 31 March 2021'. The reason given for this by the company was that 'we have had losses—and cumulative losses'. In April 2022 the council approved a further loan facility of £7.5M to the company, including £1.7M to be provided in 2023/24, This is for developments at the former Paradise Pool site, and for phases 2 and 3 at the former MOD site in North Ely.

4.4 The Council's Finance & Assets Committee agreed unanimously a new *Interim Nature Recovery Network for East Cambridgeshire* report and *Biodiversity Net Gain* document. The former document identifies a number of priority areas for biodiversity, namely Wicken Fen, the Ouse Washes and surrounds, Newmarket chalk grasslands, Chippenham Fen and River Snail, Breckland Edge, Soham grasslands, Boulder Clay woodlands, Chettisham Meadows to Ely North Country Park, and the river corridors of the Great Ouse, Cam, Lark, Little Ouse, and Soham Lode.

4.5 Last year we drew attention to the lack of 'Changing Places' toilets in East Cambridgeshire for people with severe disabilities; and to the fact that East Cambridgeshire was the only district in the county not to even bother applying for Government funding to address the situation. This year the Government 'named and shamed' East Cambridgeshire among other authorities that had done nothing about this, and the council finally did apply and receive funding for Changing Places toilets in Ely, Soham and Littleport.

4.6 The council's 'levelling up' bid for refurbishment of eSpace North in Littleport and a cycle route from Littleport Station to the A10 BP roundabout at Wisbech Road was turned down by the Government.

4.7 A parish poll in Stretham resulted in a two-to-one majority for a pause on the parish council's plans for a multimillion pound community hub. The parish council and district council both ignored this poll, and the district council awarded the scheme almost £1.5M in public funding.

#### Operational services

5.1 The Council remains adamant that it will be one of the last councils in the country, along with Wealden and the Isles of Scilly, not to take on civil parking enforcement powers. It continues to press the police to run a bespoke system using community volunteers which no other council has done, but eighteen months since they started to push this it has still got absolutely nowhere. This refusal means that other powers being handed down from Government, such as enforcement of some moving traffic offences such as breach of weight limits, will also not be available in East Cambridgeshire.

5.2 The performance of the council's waste and street cleaning company ECSS in collecting the rubbish and cleaning the streets continued to languish throughout the year, and has not really recovered from the reconfiguration of the rounds a year ago. Six months after those changes the service continued to show—in the words of the council's Chief Executive—'failure to meet the usual standards [residents] should expect'. Mark's proposals for addressing the problems were eventually adopted by the council which made some improvement, but even by Q2 (July to September) waste collection performance had only recovered to 58 per cent against a target of 90 per cent, and street cleaning to 21 per cent against a target of 90 per cent. External consultants were brought in to advise. The company has overspent by around £500,000 in-year this year, which will be met by local council tax payers.

5.3 Recycling lorries in East Cambs will soon be running on vegetable oil. The council agreed unanimously to set aside £2M for ten new vehicles which will be run on hydro-treated vegetable oil. The current waste collection vehicles are the biggest contributor to the council's carbon emissions. The new fleet could be on the road in early 2024. Finally

6.1 We continue to offer in-person councillor surgeries in the Community Room at Sutton School, advertised on Facebook. Our monthly councillor reports are at [www.tinyurl.com/lornasreports](http://www.tinyurl.com/lornasreports)

It is a privilege to serve the residents of our parishes, and we thank them, the parish councils and their clerks, for the experience of the last year.

#### 6. To receive presentations from:

- i) **Sutton Speedwatch – Pete Gosnell – Speedwatch Co-ordinator**



I took over the co ordination of Sutton Speed Watch group in December 2022 and these are the statistics for that time period.

There are times when numberplates are unreadable so these vehicles are not reported.

There are times when we know the numberplate is correct when written down but when checked against the gov.uk website there is no such vehicle. These could be cloned plates and there is no reporting process for this.

|          |      |         |                         |           |             |     |    |             |       |        |        |                      |                      |                      |
|----------|------|---------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----|----|-------------|-------|--------|--------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 28.11.22 | Tues | 35EC080 | The America             | Westbound | 0800-0900   | 378 | 19 | 16 Reported | 50mph | 49mph  | 42 mph | <a href="#">3@39</a> | <a href="#">3@37</a> | <a href="#">2@36</a> |
| 27.01.23 | Fri  | 35EC081 | The Brook at Pound Lane | Eastbound | 0800-0900   | 441 | 2  | 1 Reported  | 35mph |        |        |                      |                      |                      |
| 27.02.23 | Mon  | 35EC080 | The America             | Westbound | 0800-0900   | 351 | 11 | 8 Reported  | 39mph | 38mph  |        | <a href="#">2@37</a> |                      | 36mph                |
| 28.03.23 | Tues | 35EC080 | The America             | Westbound | 0815 - 0900 | 218 | 7  | 6 Reported  | 39mph | 38mph  |        | <a href="#">2@37</a> | <a href="#">2@36</a> |                      |
| 25.04.23 | Tues | 35EC079 | The High Street         | Eastbound | 0815 - 0915 | 59  | 7  | 7 reported  | 2 @26 | 5 @ 25 |        |                      |                      |                      |

I live on the America and can verify that vehicles speed along this road at all times of the day which is clearly seen when the MVAS is visible but the Sutton Speed Watch group cannot be there 24/7 and for the 1 day a month that we monitor traffic I hope we do some good

**Date Location Direction Vehs recorded Vehs Speeding**

| Date     | Location                | Direction | Vehs recorded | Vehs Speeding |
|----------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 04.06.21 | Ely Road                | Eastbound | 371           | 2             |
| 04.06.21 | Ely Road                | Westbound | 276           | Count only    |
| 23.08.21 | the Brook at Pound Lane | Westbound | 267           | 6             |
| 23.08.21 | the Brook at Pound Lane | Eastbound | 318           | Count only    |
| 13.09.21 | The America             | Westbound | 235           | 20            |
| 13.09.21 | The America             | Eastbound | 512           | Count only    |
| 18.11.21 | Ely Road                | Eastbound | 456           | 0             |
| 18.11.21 | Ely Road                | Westbound | 451           | Count only    |
| 07.04.22 | The Brook at Pound Lane | Westbound | 373           | 4             |
| 07.04.22 | The Brook at Pound Lane | Eastbound | 338           | Count only    |
| 11.05.22 | The America             | Westbound | 481           | 6             |
| 11.05.22 | The America             | Eastbound | 301           | Count only    |
| 30.06.22 | High St Opp Lawn Lane   | Eastbound | 47            | 5             |
| 23.08.22 | The America             | Westbound | 292           | 11            |
| 23.08.22 | The America             | Westbound | 215           | Count only    |
| 25.10.22 | The Brook at Pound Lane | Eastbound | 324           | Count only    |
| 28.11.22 | The America             | Westbound | 378           | 19            |
| 27.01.23 | The Brook at Pound Lane | Eastbound | 441           | 2             |
| 27.02.23 | The America             | Westbound | 351           | 11            |
| 28.03.23 | The America             | Westbound | 218           | 7             |
| 25.04.23 | The High Street         | Eastbound | 59            | 7             |

In Dec 2022 we observed an HGV 1 vehicle doing 50 mph westbound out of the village along the America. This vehicle had dirty unreadable numberplates and could not be reported. As we need the plate details to be able to report to the Police.

**ii) Parish Council - Local Highway Schemes**

**Local Highways Improvement (LHI)**

- A means by which Parish Councils (and other groups) can address highways issues in their communities
- Local Highways Improvement (LHI) programme enables Parish Councils (and other local groups) to bid for funding for new schemes
- Schemes need to be community driven and with supporting evidence to enabling bids to be scored
- Applicants can apply for funding of up to either £25,000 for complex projects or £10,000 for non-complex projects, as a contribution to their scheme
- Applicant is expected to provide a minimum contribution of 10% towards the total scheme cost

- Parish councils can make one application per year
- Complex applications will be assessed by the area member panel with technical input from officers
- Non-complex applications will be assessed by officers using a prioritisation matrix

#### LHI: Complex Projects

- Complex projects are primarily those which will include physical traffic calming measures
  - Raised features, speed cushions, road humps or speed tables
  - Central islands
  - Priority build outs
  - Pedestrian crossings such as zebra crossings
  - Footpaths
  - Cycle paths
- Non-complex projects are improvements other than the physical traffic calming measures, and include
  - Parking restrictions, for example yellow lines
  - Street lighting
  - Speed limits, for example 40mph buffer zones
  - Passive calming measures such as village gateways, signs and road markings
  - Mobile Vehicle Activated Signs, (MVAS)

#### LHI Application Scoring

1. Does the application address a known safety issue?
2. Could the suggested scheme increase safety for highway users?
3. Could the suggested scheme contribute positively to public health?
4. Does the application have demonstrable local support?
5. Could the scheme potentially lead to any localised environmental improvements?

#### Privately Funding Highway Improvements

- An alternative to securing Local Highway Improvement (LHI) funding is to use the Privately Funding Highway Improvements (PFHI) initiative
- Funding could be from the precept or CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)
- There are three types of projects
  - Maintenance applications for small highway improvements
  - Traffic Regulation Order applications are for improvements or traffic restrictions that require a legal order.
  - Highway Project applications for large projects or safety schemes

#### New 20mph Funding

- County Council have created a new 20mph funding programme to install either 20mph zones or limits in local communities
- Once an application has been submitted it will be prioritised and scored by officers
- A 'long list' will then be worked through until all the schemes have been delivered

- Annual funding of £150,000 is expected to delivery around eight schemes per year

#### Past & Current LHI Applications

- 2013/14  
40mph and gates at Chain Causeway                    £ 800.00
- 2015/16  
West Lodge Lane Island    £3,388.96
- 2016/17  
Zebra crossing – High Street                                    £5,255.25
- 2017/18  
The America/High Street Island and chicane – unsuccessful application
- 2018/19                    PFLHI – 20mph High Street & Church Lane  
                                  £1,200.46
- 2020/21  
MVAS    £1101.00
- 2022/23  
The Brook – Pedestrian Refuge                                approx. £8326.00
- 2023/24  
HGV Weight Restriction – B1381                                awaiting decision  
  
20mph on The Row & Mepal Road                                application being prepared

#### Future Ideas & Plans

- Continued reduction of traffic speed and improvement of crossing points in the village
- Reduction of traffic speeds on The America
  - High speeds entering and leaving the village recorded
- A series of enhancements to routes and crossings to improve opportunities for safe walking
- Establishment of a cycle route between Sutton and Earith to connect with the cycle path into St Ives
- Parking restrictions at the junctions of road joining the High Street where there is poor visibility

### iii) Parish Council - Mobile Activated Speed Signs

#### What is MVAS?

- MVAS is a Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign
- Displays speed and indicates to motorists when limit is exceeded
- Can be attached to poles with mountings
- Logs vehicle speeds in both directions
- Useable by Speedwatch

#### Where can the MVAS be mounted?

- MVAS needs to be mounted on lamp post or sign post
- Cambridgeshire County Council needs to approve each location for safety etc.
- Need to also confirm that there are no obstructions

- Mounting brackets are fitted at each location
- Can not use 'swing down lamp posts'

MVAS in Sutton

- Sutton Parish Council owns two MVAS, purchased through LHI supported by CIL
- Mounting brackets on lamp posts
  - Ely Road
  - The Brook
  - High Street
  - The America
  - The Row
  - Mepal Road

MVAS Operation

- Parish Council staff regularly move the signs between locations and recharge batteries
- Traffic speed data logged on the signs is downloaded
- Data then shared with Traffic & Transport working party
- Data also shared with Cambridgeshire constabulary

Data gained from MVAS

- Maximum speeds grouped in a pie chart
- Average speed in both directions
- Maximum speed in both directions
- Vehicles per hours in both directions

iv) To receive any questions.

No questions received.

Meeting closed at 7.51pm

Signed.....

Cllr M Inskip  
Chairman of Sutton Parish Council

Date.....