

Cllrs Lorna Dupré and Mark Inskip

MONTHLY REPORT SEPTEMBER 2024

CHANGE TO COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

Cllr James Lay (Woodditton) has left the Conservative group and is now sitting as an Independent councillor. The composition of the council is now

Con	14
LD	13
Ind	1

Total	28

However, despite the Conservative group having only 50 per cent of seats on the council, the council is insisting that they should have a majority of seats on every committee. We are challenging this as it is totally undemocratic and not in line with the law as we (and most other councils) read it.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

The only meetings in August were two Planning Committee meetings, one of which agreed the Soham Gateway scheme and Soham medical centre.

Meetings due in September are

- Wednesday 4 September: Planning Committee
- Wednesday 11 September: Licensing Committee
- Monday 23 September: Operational Services Committee
- Thursday 26 September: Finance & Assets Committee

The Operational Services Committee is expected to discuss waste service performance, the council's strategic waste service and street cleaning reviews, and waste service standards. It will also consider caravan site licensing and licensing fees for houses in multiple occupation.

The Finance & Assets Committee is expected to discuss the council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, staff gender pay statement and equality policy.

BLACK SACKS

This year's black sacks for non-recyclable waste should all have been delivered by 31 August. Residents now have one month—until 30 September— to report sacks not being received. The calendar of collection dates will be delivered

separately by the recycling crews during the first two weeks of September. It will be attached to the handle of the blue lidded bin. (Residents on the alternative 'sacks only' service will receive a copy in the post).

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/east-cambs-street-scene/black-sack-annual-delivery-2024>

VISTRY DEVELOPMENT PHASE 2

The council has requested, and been granted, an extension of time to determine the reserved matters relating to Phase 2 of the Vistry development at the top of Mepal Road Sutton (reference 24/00340/RMM). This is to allow for the submission of revised plans to address technical and design concerns, formal re-consultation and determination of the application at Planning Committee.

The Middle Level Commissioners have expressed concerns about the ability of the receiving system to accommodate the proposed drainage flows from the development. The Engineer says:

The receiving drainage system drains via Mepal Road to “the Brook” which discharges to an open channel through Sutton Park and ultimately to the Catchwater Drain, an Environment Agency watercourse. In addition to the capacity of piped system between the development and Sutton Park, the capacity of the Catchwater to accommodate highland flows is also not clear. There are known issues along the Catchwater in the vicinity of Salmons Farm, A1421 Witcham Toll to Haddenham road, in respect of overflowing of the Catchwater drain.

The Commissioners suggest that the drainage flows from this development should be engineered towards Mepal and the Hundred Foot.

There have of course been ongoing drainage issues in this area, including internal and external flooding of surrounding properties.

Lorna has written to the County Council’s Flood & Water team and the district council Planning Officer to ask what weight is being given to the representation made by the Engineer.

The reply from the Flood & Water Team states that the Engineer’s proposed solution would require directing flows 'uphill' for a distance and would need further investigation to determine the route and capacity of the network in and around Mepal. The County Council team has agreed to support the Middle Level Commissioners in any future consultation responses, requesting the developer undertakes further investigation as a minimum.

SANCTUARY HOMES

We are concerned at the rising number of complaints about empty Sanctuary homes, and about tenanted Sanctuary homes in poor condition. We are working with newly elected MP Charlotte Cane to address this serious issue.

We reported some months ago that the district council refused our request to ask Sanctuary to attend a meeting of the relevant council committee to answer questions in public.

GRASS CUTTING IN VERMUYDEN GARDENS SUTTON

Following a complaint from a resident, Lorna pursued the failure of the district council to cut the grass in Vermuyden Gardens to the required schedule. The council has confirmed that this should now be back on track for regular cutting.

CIL PAYMENTS IN WENTWORTH

We are both continuing to pursue the district council over CIL which remains unpaid to Wentworth Parish Council from the construction of two properties in the village.

MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

Our next surgeries will take place on

- Monday 7 October, 6:30-7:30PM
- Monday 4 November, 6:30-7:30PM

in the Community Room at Sutton School. Between surgeries, residents can continue to contact us by email, Facebook, or phone.

Lorna also hopes to be at the Sutton Timebank coffee morning on Tuesday 10 September 10:00-11:00 (a special fundraiser for MAGPAS) and Nellie's on Friday 27 September 12:30-1:30PM (another special fundraiser, for Macmillan).

Cllr Lorna Dupré

Cllr Mark Inskip

District Councillors for the Sutton ward