

How **YOUR** Council is  
spending **YOUR** money.  
News of Council Meetings  
and events to come in  
**YOUR** village in your  
local newsletter

## The POST<sup>62</sup>

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### **Letter from the Chair**

**Lisa Wiltshire**

Welcome to the first edition of Parish Post in 2020!

The members of Litlington Parish Council wish you all a Happy New Year. As we start the New Year, if you'd like us to look at something that you think would be of interest to the Parish, please come to a Parish Council meeting: an agenda is always placed in the displays cabinet at the shop and outside the Village Hall.

The Parish Council is increasingly working to deliver improvements across the village. We have been working to create a safe walking and cycling route along Bassingbourn Road for children and adults. The Parish Council will be planting wild flowers around the village, adding a touch of colour to the Cage and Village Green this summer.

In the New Year we will be looking forward to the hugely popular Village Fayre; the summer fayre is put together by bands of enthusiastic volunteers who give up large amounts of time and often physical energy to get the show on the road.

### **Now on to other news...**

#### **Recreation Centre Future**

Following on from the survey carried out at the Village Fayre this summer, where the majority of those questioned were in favour of a new Recreation/Village hub, the Recreation Centre Management Committee has decided to pursue a complete re-think of the Centre and the Recreation Ground layout.

This will involve knocking down the existing Recreation Centre, which is not fit for purpose, and building a new hub in a different position on the Recreation Ground. The new hub would eventually be able to accommodate all village activities including those currently carried out at the Village Hall. The sports pitches and children's play area would also be repositioned.

The cost of this project would be funded by a Public Works Loan which would be repaid from the parish precept. The cost for each household is anticipated to be around £75 per year over 50 years.

Unfortunately this looks to be the only option to maintain a Recreation Centre in the village as the existing building is not fit for purpose and, due to the requirements of sports clubs for changing facilities, there is not room to refurbish internally. If nothing is done the Centre will close!

The Recreation Centre Management Committee would like the support of residents in principle and would welcome help in forming a working group to get this project underway. If you would like to volunteer, or if you have any comments that you wish to make, please let the Parish Council Chairman/ Recreation Centre Chairman, Lisa Wiltshire or Sally Walmesley, Clerk to Litlington Parish Council, know. Contact details can be found in the Parish Post.

*Litlington Recreation Centre Management Committee*

**WANTED IMMEDIATELY!**

A volunteer to help manage the bookings for the Recreation Centre  
The task involves keeping a diary of bookings and the sending out of invoices

If you can help please contact:

**Lisa Wiltshire (Recreation Centre Chair) 852551**  
**Sally Walmesley (Secretary and Treasurer) 852137**  
who will be pleased to give you more information

**Christmas Celebration December 2019**

Thank you to everyone who came along before Christmas for the village Christmas tree light 'switch on'. I hope that you will agree it was lovely to see so many families at the event, and a special thank you to 'Father Christmas', the neighbours of the village green for the use of their electricity and land, and to the mystery parcel-hangers!

As you will see the Parish Council has planted a live Norway Spruce tree on the village green which will hopefully survive and grow, and can be decorated as the village Christmas Tree for years to come. Thank you to the Village Fayre committee for their donation towards the cost of this.

Unfortunately we are limited by the location to using battery power for the lights: lights working from a mains electricity source would be a lot brighter but due to the cost of a completely new power supply, this is not possible. However thanks to the generous donations of £140.00 collected on the day – in addition to the collection by the Round Table - we will be able to investigate more and more powerful tree lights for this coming year.

The date for this year's 'switch-on' depends of course on Father Christmas's schedule and we have not yet managed to tie him down to a firm date, but Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December looks likely. The diary elf is working on it!

**Mobile library**

The Mobile Library visits Litlington (Church Street) on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, 2.00pm-2.15pm. It carries up to 3,000 items of stock including fiction, non-fiction, large print, audiobooks and children's books. It has a lift for wheelchair users or those who find stairs difficult. It has access to all the books in Cambridgeshire and you can request items to collect from it on the next visit.

## **Heron Self Help Scheme**

This is a volunteer scheme for Cambridgeshire residents, offering emergency transport to the doctor, hospital etc. The user pays 30p per mile to the driver and CCC contributes the balance to bring the total mileage allowance to 44p. Insurance cover is provided. The Heron scheme is well-used by the village, and urgently needs additional volunteer drivers. There is no commitment to a regular day: volunteer drivers are rung on a rota basis and are free to accept or decline a job depending on their availability. So all a driver is contributing - to a very worthwhile scheme that makes a real difference to local people attending hospitals and doctors' surgeries - is their own time. If you can help, please contact Hilary Sharp (01763 852272).

## **Potholes**

Potholes are starting to appear on some of the busier village streets (Meeting Lane!). The best way to get something done about these is to report them via the CCC website: <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/> Using this website really helps to get repairs into the queue sooner rather than later. It also gives you the opportunity to check back and see when the work has been scheduled for attention.

## **Dog Fouling**

The majority of dog owners behave responsibly and clean up after their dogs. However, a small minority fail to do this.

Dog faeces is the most unacceptable and offensive type of litter on our streets. Dog fouling is not only deeply unpleasant, it is dangerous. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement can cause toxocariasis – a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness and seizures.

Leaving dog faeces in public areas is extremely unpleasant and totally unnecessary. We have bins all around the village including a new one on the Steeple Morden Road. There really is no excuse.

While many dog owners are caring, responsible individuals, there are still some people who do not clean up after their pets, and it is the responsibility of the dog owner or the person in charge of the dog to clean up any dog faeces left by their dog. To highlight this, we have a team of dog walkers with Bio Degradable spray spraying unwanted dog fouling.

While there has been a reduction in dog fouling in recent months, we would like to remind residents that throwing bags along the country paths or hanging them from bushes and trees looks unsightly and is not a solution.

The Forestry Commission has produced a poem in an attempt to spread the message about the stick and flick method. It includes the lines:

*If your dog should do a plop.  
Take a while and make a stop.  
Just find a stick and flick it wide.  
Into the undergrowth at the side.*

## **Trees – why do we need them?**

It's a good question. In fact, trees are crucial to the natural environment and hugely important for humans in everyday life. Our earth has an amazing ability to maintain a natural balance, and trees play a central role in this process. Trees are able to remove excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and convert it, via a process called photosynthesis, to oxygen that is then released back into the atmosphere. Global warming is heavily linked to increasing levels of carbon dioxide, and human activity is the main driver of this. Since trees specialise in removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, it becomes increasingly important to both plant more trees and to maintain those trees we already have. There is also clear scientific evidence that trees have a benefit for our personal health, reducing stress levels and adding colour, interest and beauty to our environment.

The estimated tree cover in the whole of the UK is calculated at 16% of the total land area. The government's target is to increase this to 20% via large-scale planting, improved grants to landowners, and the promotion of agro-forestry schemes. Cambridgeshire is one of the least heavily wooded counties in the UK, and currently has only approximately 9% tree cover – this becomes clear considering the amount of virtually treeless fenland to the north and east of the county. Closer to home, although there are large woods to the north and west of our area (Hatley, Waresley, and Gamlingay) much of the land is intensively managed for conventional agriculture, and Litlington parish itself contains only approximately 5% tree cover. This percentage is calculated using a 'mapping tool' that uses aerial photography and random 'plots' on the map of the parish. Those who have seen pictures of the village in the years immediately following WWII – or who have long memories! – will appreciate the difference in the 'skyline' between then and now: the village has lost the majority of the large elms that used to be a notable feature, and ash trees, common around the village, are now also threatened. Note however that even this relatively low level of tree cover has a major financial benefit: the trees in the parish remove an amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere 'worth' £20 000 annually, and store a total of just over £500 000 'worth' of carbon dioxide (these values are calculated as the cost of removing this amount of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by the next most economic method). The Parish Council has a three-fold approach:

- to encourage home-owners to care for existing trees on their land and to plant more;
- to maintain and care for the existing trees on parish land
- to plant more trees!

## **Tree planting**

Currently we are exploring areas where significant numbers of new trees could be planted in the village. These would be trees 'for the community', with open access to all, and to be cared for by all. If you would like to be involved in this plan at this very early stage, please contact either Nick Jones or Geoff Barlow. As a very small beginning, we will shortly be planting a number of trees provided free by SCDC as their 'kick-start' to the tree-planting programme – hopefully the small acorn from which larger trees may eventually grow!

### Existing trees in the parish

The Parish Council recently commissioned a professional survey of the trees on parish land within the village. This showed that many of the trees are nearing the end of their natural life, or are dying back, often from the effects of Dutch Elm disease or from the more recent outbreak of Ash Die-back. We will be monitoring the health of the affected trees in particular to ensure they present no risk to public safety.

Two trees by the recreation centre were unfortunately identified in the survey as being in dangerous condition: one was dead and liable to shed branches at any time, and the other was completely rotten as a result of rainwater entering the trunk and 'liable to catastrophic failure without warning'. Both had to be felled as a matter of urgency. Before they were felled they were cordoned off with cones and hazard-warning tape, although some people chose to disregard these warnings. Please do treat any future such warnings seriously: to ignore them carries a huge risk, and may transfer the responsibility for injury or damage to property to yourselves.

There will be a programme of ongoing tree works in the village over the next year to deal with other issues identified in the survey: be assured that these are carried out for public safety and for the health of the trees themselves - nobody likes to see trees felled for no good reason.

### Trees in gardens

Trees are living beings, and as such need maintenance and care. For trees in homeowners' gardens this is the responsibility of the property owner. However, if the property lies within the village conservation area, permission must be sought from South Cambridgeshire District Council before work on trees can start. This applies to **all** trees in the conservation area that have a trunk diameter of 75mm (or more) at a height of 1.5 metres: in crude terms, larger than a normal can of baked beans at average waist height. Despite an 'urban myth' to the contrary, this includes conifers - and even leylandii! The only work permitted without planning permission is the routine and regular trimming of hedges. SCDC have the power to levy penalties for tree work carried out without permission. Applications for tree work are free, and are not difficult to complete: they can be submitted on paper or online, or via a tree surgeon (see below), and are they of course favourably treated where the application is made for sensible reasons. The extent of the conservation area is shown on the map on the South Cambridgeshire District Council website:

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/planning/search-by-map/>.

On this page enlarge and move the map to put Litlington in the centre, and then click on the blue search box at the left of the map; from the drop-down menu, check the box 'conservation area' to show the boundary of this in pink.

Alternatively, check with any member of the Parish Council whether your property lies within the conservation area.

### Tree surgeons

There are many companies operating in our area: how do you know which one to choose? As a guide, you might want to check the following points. Does the company:

- have full insurance cover (both for employees and public liability) in case of accident or damage?

- work to a recognise standard (eg: BS3998)?
- hold professional accreditation (eg: Arboricultural Association membership)?
- ensure training and qualification (eg: to City and Guild qualification level) for all employees?
- guarantee to remove all waste?

Using a reputable contractor is always a wise choice and carries benefits for both you and the trees involved. The ARB website (<https://www.trees.org.uk/ARB-Approved-Contractor-Directory>) includes the facility to search for accredited contractors in the local area. Alternatively the tree warden may be able to provide a list of local companies.

As a bonus, many tree surgeons now have the ability to complete the tree work application on your behalf at the time of estimating, via an app that communicates directly with SCDC. All you need do is wait, and within a short period – up to six weeks but often sooner – you should receive a notification of SCDC’s decision. If permission is sought to take down a tree completely, it may help the application if a firm commitment is made to replant a tree, preferably one of native origin. There are many native species suitable for even small gardens: consideration should be given to the eventual size of the tree, the spread of its canopy and the suitability of the soil for the species. It’s also a good idea to check where the tree has been grown: there is evidence that both Ash Die-back disease and the new threat of oak processionary moth disease may be due to infestation on imported trees. But suitably-sized native trees with modest growth rates, attractive foliage, decorative flowers and fruit are an asset to any garden!

### **Wildflowers**

As mentioned in the Chair’s introductory letter, we will be planting a small trial plot of wildflowers this spring, on the village green. The first step is to remove the grass and all roots etc, and this will be followed by multiple weeding sessions to ensure the ground is as clean as possible before the fun part of planting later in the Spring! Please avoid walking on – or letting your dog foul – the newly-exposed soil. This planting is intended for the benefit of everyone and is in the nature of an experiment to see if people are prepared to contribute time and effort to help make the village more attractive - so it would be great to have some offers of help so we can expand the idea!

Contact Lisa Wiltshire or Geoff Barlow.

### **Litlington Speed Watch.**

As you are all aware the village has been using a speed monitor in several locations throughout the village. The intention is for the monitor be relocated every 4 – 6 weeks.

After studying the data, we are pleased to advise that the device appears to be calming the speed of most of the people driving through and around the village. However there are always exceptions to the rule. There remains an average of 13% per month who persist in driving above the speed limit.

We would like to thank the 87% of drivers who keep the village safe and request the 13% of offenders to please respect the speed limit.

### **East-West Rail station announcement**

The preferred route has been announced for the part of the planned East-West rail link between Oxford and Cambridge which will pass through South Cambridgeshire. The preferred route – route option E – includes a new station at Cambourne. Our leading Councillors have welcomed news that the environment was a top consideration in deciding the route. The route via Cambourne was the option South Cambridgeshire District Council said should be chosen when asked during a consultation. Alternatives through the district were via Bassingbourn. Cllr Aidan Van de Weyer, Deputy Leader and lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure at South Cambridgeshire District Council, said: 'We are pleased and relieved that an announcement has finally been made on the route of East West Rail. We are also supportive of the decision to run the new railway from Bedford to Cambridge via Cambourne. We were told that one of the key factors in determining the route was the environmental opportunities that this option offers. Any project of this size has an impact, but overall it will offer huge scope for environmental enhancements, much of which will be in South Cambridgeshire. The decision on whether this will be an electrified line has not yet been made but we are told that it will be a net zero carbon railway which is exactly what we would want as we move towards being a zero carbon district by 2050.'

### **Concessionary Bus Passes**

The County Council no longer offers bus passes in paper form. To apply for a bus pass, you need to ring 0345 045 1367, or go on-line. To apply on-line:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/buses/free-bus-pass/>

The postcode field is designed to prevent non-Cambridgeshire postcodes from being processed through the system. The postcode needs to be entered as three digits, a space and then the last three digits, with the characters in upper case (as it would appear on a postal address). Do please get in touch if you experience any frustrations!

### **Ashwell & Morden Station Car Parking**

We are working with the landowner and his advisers to try and resolve this issue once and for all. Pre-app advice has been sought from South Cambs to establish whether a small residential development at Cheyney's Lodge could be used to fund the delivery of a 100-space car park for the station and – once opened – hard measures to stop all parking along the local roads.

### **Changes to street sweeping**

SCDC have recently overhauled the organisation of their street-sweeping programme and have introduced zonal working, so residents can easily see when their area is due a visit, and the days each week that the litter bins in their village are emptied. You can find out your zone and street-sweeping schedule on the SCDC website. For Litlington (zone 4) the next dates for street-sweeping are between 17 February and 1 March, and then between 27 April and 10 May.

## **South Cambs District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council**

Your Councillors are always ready to help. If you have any questions about these - or indeed any other - matters, please do not hesitate to contact South Cambs District Councillor Nigel Cathcart (01763 243637 / e: [cllr.cathcart@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.cathcart@scambs.gov.uk)) or County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley (01767 651982 / e: [skindersley@hotmail.com](mailto:skindersley@hotmail.com)) or write to him at The Manor Barn, East Hatley, SG19 3JA).

### **Your Parish Councillors**

|                 |              |                |                      |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Geoff Barlow    | 01763 852841 | Sass Pledger   | 01763 853615         |
| James Bathmaker | 01763 852435 | David Sharp    | 01763 852425         |
| Stephen Gray    | 07931 706375 | Linda Williams | 01763 852809         |
| Nick Jones      | 01763 852037 | Lisa Wiltshire | 01763 852551 (chair) |
| Ralph Parker    | 07968 158347 |                |                      |

### **Other Useful Numbers (01763- codes unless otherwise stated)**

|                                      |                               |              |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Clerk to the Council                 | Sally Walmesley               | 852137       |
| Church Warden                        | Sue Jenkins                   | 852974       |
| Congregational Church (secretary)    | Peter Shoard                  | 853427       |
| Village Hall Booking Clerk           | Linda Williams                | 852809       |
| Recreation Centre Bookings           | Heather Williams              | 07885 774775 |
| Toy Library (Secretary)              | Lorraine Baker                | 852414       |
| Pre-school                           | Yvonne Rolfe / Debbie Windsor | 07984 935193 |
| L.J.'s (7 to 10yrs Youth Club)       | Cathy Smith                   | 853997       |
| L.J.'s Plus (10 to 13yrs Youth Club) | Jonathan Burgess              | 853365       |
| Badminton Club (Treasurer)           | Vera Webster                  | 241022       |
| Football Club (Secretary)            | James Evans                   | 07834 813854 |
| Bowls Club                           | Ann Cannadine                 | 853205       |
| Gardening Club                       | Sue Davies                    | 852852       |
| Evergreens                           | Pamela Sharp                  | 852425       |
| Post Office / Shop                   | Dilshan Johnpillai            | 852221       |
| Bassingbourn Primary School          |                               | 242460       |
| Steeple Morden School                |                               | 852474       |
| Bassingbourn Village College         |                               | 242344       |
| Bassingbourn Surgery                 |                               | 290555       |
| Ashwell Surgery                      |                               | 01462 417377 |
| Royston Library                      |                               | 243292       |
| Police, Cambridge H.Q.               |                               | 101          |

### **New MP**

The new MP for South Cambridgeshire is Anthony Browne. Contact details are:

Constituency Office

Broadway House

149-151 St Neots Road

Hardwick

CB23 7QJ

t: 01954 211 444 / e: [anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk)

We hope that Mr Browne will continue the excellent and committed work of his predecessor on matters of concern to the local community.

If any of the above details are inaccurate, please advise the editor.

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