

Impington Council - Summer 2008



June 2008

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Thanks to contributors to this issue including:

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The Probation Service

Working locally for the benefit of our community.



Before....

Ivy grows vigorously in both The Copse and The Coppice and although it provides a good wildlife habitat, it has, however, been necessary to remove it from some of the trees which have become a little top heavy. The dead ivy still has value to wildlife, so it has been used to create habitat piles nearby. The Copse has also benefited from having several self set Sycamore saplings dug out to allow more light into the woods; this will encourage the recently planted native species to thrive. These unwanted saplings have then been used to create a dead hedge alongside the "new" hedge. This will not only protect the hedge but also provide some visual and acoustic protection from the B1049, whilst still providing a suitable habitat for small birds and mammals.

Hopefully these will only be the first of several projects they will be working on within our community during the course of the coming weeks.

Having discussed several possible projects, Impington Parish Council and the Enviro Volunteers have recently agreed to use the services of the Probation Service. Teams of approximately 10 people, working under close supervision, will be fulfilling their community service obligation by assisting the Enviro Volunteers with some of their environmental projects within the village.

Recently the Probation Teams and the Enviro Volunteers have been making areas safer for pedestrians and cyclists by clearing a large section of brambles from the corner of New Road, alongside the B1049 bridge and beside Cambridge Road, near The Coppice.



.....and after

Annual Parish Meeting - Annual Report

The Impington Chairman, Denis Payne, reported to the Annual Parish Meeting:

At a time when local government is seemingly in a continual state of flux, unitary councils, boundary changes, the changing balance of political power I believe that the parish council sector, and our Parish Council in particular, is a point of stability for residents, and continues to provide a valuable service.

However, some of those changes affect even us, and the work to give birth to the new community at Arbury Park is moving towards the creation of a new Parish, and new Parish Council. The remaining parish will be smaller, but more focussed north of the A14.

In addition, the District and City Councils are planning a review of their boundary. This will take some time - the relevant national body is busy looking at all of the unitary bids. The current proposals will take Kings Meadows into the City, a move Council recommended last year. This nibbling away at Impington's boundary has been going on since the 1930's - but the A14 will eventually form an effective barrier for further City expansion plans!

The Council has many component parts - and I'd like to comment on the contribution from our Councillors. Councillors are volunteers - they do not get any allowance, unlike District & County Councillors. They're here because they want to make a difference in our community.

I am constantly amazed by the rich variety of skills, knowledge and background experience that our Councillors bring to Council. On top of that is the commitment to the role and the considerable number of hours put in, going to meetings, working in

the community, preparing papers. I haven't totalled that - and I don't intend to try. I will say just two things - firstly, whilst the figure that is often quoted is "3 hours a week" - I believe that Impington Councillors put in a great deal more than that! And secondly, it's an honour to be part of that team, and to have been the chairman - thank you for everything that you do.

It is unusual for the work of the Council to be noticed or commented upon, so I make no excuse for quoting from the Interim Report of the District Council's Scrutiny Task & Finish Group looking at Arbury Park. The chairman of the group, Cllr Tony Orgee (and, by the way, Chairman of the County Council) said:

"Equally I need to pass on our admiration of the work of Impington Parish Council in supporting the emerging community. The workload has been far greater than they, or the District Council had envisaged and the residents of Arbury Park have much to thank them for."

We will certainly second the comment about workload.

Our elections have just passed - we did not have a contested election this year - to the regret of many, including myself. Some Principal Authority Councillors believe that you need that to confirm the democratic mandate that we do have from the process. We did, however, have nominations for all of our seats, and I'd like to welcome our new Councillors Chris Creasey and Jens Kirschner, both from Arbury Park, to the team.

Of the matters that have occupied much time in the last year there are a number of common themes:

Transport is one of those. Of course, it links in with planning, as well, and I'd highlight:

A14 - This continues to be a major issue for the whole area. Not only are many of us dependent on it to get to work and more general travel, we are also very conscious of the times when there has been an accident causing traffic levels to rise dramatically through the village and residents (myself included) have queues of vehicles outside our homes for hours. At least the design contractor for the widening has been appointed, but there are confused messages from Government and DfT as to the will to get on with this work;

The Guided Bus continues to impact on our lives. Most of the road works are now complete, and the impact on businesses and residents alike is reducing. However, there will be short term



The guideway reached Histon Station, June 11

impact on residents as the build of the guideway, and the stop itself, is completed. By the way, it took a surprising amount of effort, but it has been agreed that the stop will be named Histon & Impington.

When the service will start running, and what the impact of the buses using the guideway will be, are two of the unknowns. This scheme is unlike anything else in the world, and we have to hope that teething problems are few, and that we will see the promised reduction in road traffic.

The efforts to 'Save the Station' have had partial success - the building is still standing, and whilst it is obviously different without the canopy, it is worth preserving. We continue to do what we can to ensure that that is the case, and hope for confirmation later in the year of the forward plans for the site.

Works to date have had well publicised impacts on our traders, a vital part of our community, and I would like to congratulate them for a very successful event on April 12th - the village was filled with activities and people - it would certainly get my support if it turned into an annual event.

Residents continue to be concerned about traffic speeds - the County's calming measures having less impact than we had hoped. Whether we can do something to make a real difference in our community is another question - the costs of works on our roads are phenomenal. However, we will try!

Policing - Councillors regularly attend the Neighbourhood Panel meetings - and Anti-Social Behaviour in Histon and Impington has been a hot topic at most of these. It truly became a priority earlier in the year, and after much work by the Police, has been brought under some control. It is recognised that this sort of thing goes through peaks and troughs. What we need to do is to put in place the action necessary to reduce the size and number of peaks and keep the troughs lower. That's going to need input and support from County, District and Parish Councils - and is going to take real work.

Planning - as always a major topic. I'd highlight the Unwins application. Whilst everyone objected to the proposed scheme there were some positive points.

- we were able to meet the applicants beforehand - and they did listen to our points
- their willingness to organise a public exhibition of the plans for all to see. We did our best to ensure that all residents who would be immediately affected knew of that, and knew of the District Council's willingness to change the closing dates for comments
- many residents commented to the District Council, and many also came to the Council's Planning Committee meeting.

Based on all of that work, and taking comments from a number of expert residents into account, a full objection from the Council was submitted, and most of the points were carried forward to the District's refusal.

It would be great if more applicants, particularly for major schemes, were to take such an approach to working with the community and Council.

And so to the future:

"Business as usual" - of course - it may be that we could work smarter, but normal business is a significant load, and leaves little time spare to move forward. We look forward to a breathing space, perhaps when Northstowe, Arbury Park and the A14 widening are finished.

Working with Histon Parish Council - we continue to try to find ways to work more closely and effectively with Histon whilst juggling the very real workload that large scale development planning applications and creating and mentoring a new parish bring.

The work on planning will continue. There is a clear short term downturn in the housing market - and that is impacting the speculative developers, nevertheless major applications will continue - particularly Northstowe, given the massive

investment that has been made in land. The application for Unwins will surely return, in a revised form - the land cost Luminus almost £4,000,000.

Of course, we hope that residents of Arbury Park will take on the work in their community through their new Parish Council.

Planning comes in another guise as it is our intent to conduct a "Parish Plan". This will look at a wide range of issues across Impington (& Histon) to help us (and District and County Councils) better meet the community's needs and shape how and where the village changes.

Whilst this is being led by Parish Councillors now, it must have community input/leadership - and it needs a team to make it happen. Anyone (and everyone) can contribute to that, all sorts of jobs will need to be done - and knowledge of, and caring for the future of, our community is the only qualification needed.

I'd like to thank Councillors who have left us this year - Steve Unwin, Jo Teague. I'd also like to thank the Councillors from the rest of the local government family that work for our residents along side us - Cllrs Chatfield, Davies and Mason at District and Bradney and Jenkins at County

Last but not least I'd like to thank our staff Angela, Lynda, Sarah, Steve, Terry and Trevor - without whom we'd not be able to do anything.

Make a Difference – Become a School Governor



Histon and Impington Junior School is looking for people to join its Governing Body who can help to maintain the high standards the School has achieved to date. As a group, governors have responsibility for matters such as planning the school's long term future, allocating budgets and appointing senior staff. Thus, the role of school governor is one of the most important in education, and governors are crucial to the effective running of local schools. Serving as a school governor role not only benefits the education of potentially thousands of children, but also provides you with opportunities for self development and training.

School Governors form the largest volunteering force in the country and anyone over 18 can apply. You don't have to work in education, or have any experience of school governance, as training is available, and the Governors are particularly looking for people from the community at large rather than just parents of children at the School to join them. The only requirement is that you want to make a positive difference to the education of children within the two villages. So if you have 6-8 hours a month to spare and would like to help Histon & Impington Junior School continue to deliver the highest possible standards of education, the school would like to hear from you. Please contact the School Office on 01223 712192 or by e-mail to: office@histonimpington-jun.cambs.sch.uk



Don't be a Victim This Summer

Here is some Summer Security advice for your homes—and don't forget the security of your sheds/garages.

The summer months are fast approaching and as the warmer weather comes upon us, we often see an increase in dwelling burglaries, as homeowners, trying to get some fresh air into their homes, become a little less robust with their home security measure.

Fortunately, the area in which you live has low levels of reported burglaries, however, even the few that do occur could be prevented by Homeowners taking care when leaving, or even sitting in, their home. Few burglaries occur by forced entry, instead the majority are opportunist and are committed via insecure doors and windows, where homeowners have left windows in unlocked positions and/or doors ajar or unlocked. No-one wants to live like a prisoner, but a few simple steps could help you to feel better in the knowledge that your house is well secured.

If, therefore, you are leaving your house unattended, or are simply indoors or in the garden, look at your house through the eyes of a potential opportunist burglar and consider the following:



Are your windows closed and locked or open in a locked position; doors closed and locked at all times; side gates and garage/shed doors locked or bolted?

Have you left any tools or equipment that would aid an offender, e.g. have you left ladders or other potential climbing aids next to your property? Does your property look occupied?

Although the lighter evenings are here, it is still worth using timer switches to turn on a radio and/or lights when your house is unattended. Don't use them to turn a light on in your hall as no-one lives in their hall! Instead, use one to turn a light on in a room at the back of your property where people are less likely to walk by and see into your rooms, for example, a rear bedroom or rear kitchen/dining room etc.

Key Security:

Where do you leave or hang your car keys as you go back into your house? Many people place them on a windowsill or on a key rack next to a window or door; this could place your house and vehicle at risk. Continuing advances in vehicle security means that newer vehicles are much harder to break into. As a result, we are seeing increases in burglaries where vehicle keys have been targeted and stolen, resulting in the theft of the owner's vehicle. Please consider where you leave your keys - never leave them in a visible position next to a window or door.

Please also review the position of your key rack - are your keys stored right next to a window or door and could an arm or object reach through your letterbox to grab your keys? A vehicle is probably the 2nd biggest investment that a homeowner will make, so please keep its keys secure.

Spending and budget

Last year the Council spent a total of £130,314 providing services to Impington.

The forecast spend for this year £211,682. This can't be compared with last year - it includes £82,000 of spend in Arbury Park, most of it from the lump sums that will come when facilities are transferred, and the rest from the Council Tax contributions from their residents.

In addition, we are putting aside sums of money now for spending that we can anticipate in the future. This will help spread the load of the costs of these items, reducing the Tax

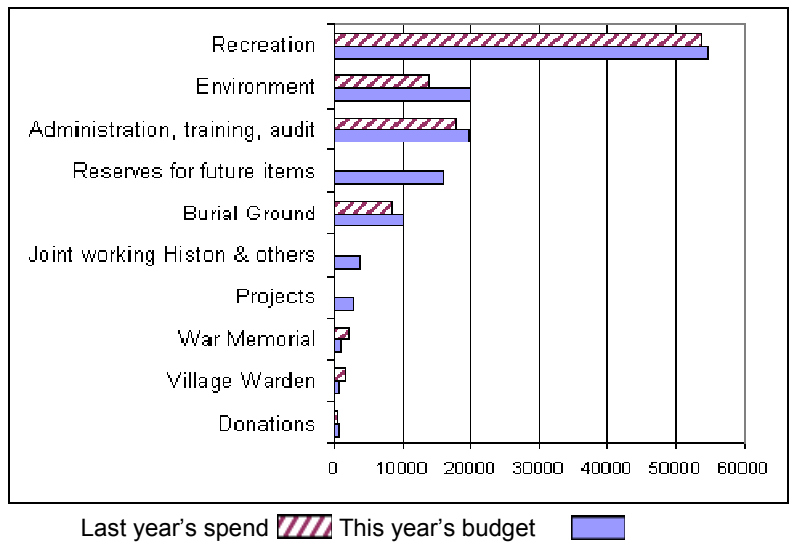
in future years. As a result, the level of Parish Council tax has risen again.

This year it is £69.84 for a Band D property . To put this in context the **increase** in tax from County, District, Police & Fire was £61.17

The chart on the right does not show spending on Arbury Park, or on Youth Work. The spend on Arbury Park, (£82,000, compared with last year £4,966) will cover staff, running and maintenance costs associated with the new community centre and other facilities.

On youth work, there's an expected spend of £19856, compared with £27557 last year, but there is no call on Parish budget because of established reserves.

More details are available from the Parish Office.



The Enviro Volunteers 'Green Gym'- Working Out for Our Village

Find out about some of the Enviro Volunteers projects by visiting our NEW website:

<http://www.hisimp.net/enviro/index.htm>

The group regularly helps to maintain and enhance our public open spaces. We have primarily been working in The Copse and The Coppice woods, but we've also been active at Doctor's Close, Clay Close Lane, The Crescent and South Road Play Area. Soon we'll also be assisting with Homefield Park too!

Future projects may include: preparing various sites for wildflower planting; filling holes in the woodland footpaths; ivy clearance; repairing, renewing and rewiring the boundary fence posts; removing unsafe paving slabs; creating a new planting bed at the entrance to the village; creating a grass maze etc. There are many ways you can help with a whole variety of activities to choose from.

We usually meet up at 10:00 am on Saturdays - join our mailing list to be notified of dates. If you'd care to join us we'd love to see you!



All tools and refreshments are provided, however, stout shoes & gloves are recommended plus a sense of humour! Join the 'green gym' and have some fun whilst helping to improve our environment! Everyone is welcome. You don't need to be fit, so please come for as long (or as little) as you like.

All help is greatly appreciated! Even just simply offering moral support or a restorative cuppa is welcome!!

Hope to see you some time!

The enviro.volunteers can be contacted directly by email: enviro@hisimp.net or tel: 237155 or via the Parish Clerk clerk@hisimp.net tel: 235906

Cash Available for Good Causes

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation awards grants to voluntary and charitable groups in Cambridgeshire. We are able to award grants from the Funds that local individuals, companies, and local and national government set up with us. The funds have different criteria (including the amounts they give out) and on receiving your application we will match your request to the most appropriate fund (unfortunately we will not be able to find a match for all requests received).

Over three quarters of the grants we have awarded to date have been for amounts up to £3,000 and many successful applications are from user-led, self-help projects that are tackling disadvantage and can show real community support and demonstrable benefits. We particularly like to see applications from groups working in the following areas:

Children and young people – groups and projects that help children and young people who are considered hard to reach and those who face disadvantage; projects where young people have access to activities and services where they play a key role in the decision making; or enable young people to make a positive contribution to their communities.

Vulnerable adults – groups and projects working with disadvantaged people, in particular services and facilities for people with disabilities, the homeless and the elderly.

Sport and exercise – local groups using sport and exercise to tackle the needs of their communities.

Projects that enrich the lives of people who are disadvantaged through provision of cultural/educational events or experiences

Community development – local community and voluntary groups improving the quality of life by improving access to services, tackling social exclusion, building capacity and confidence of local groups.

More information (and the application forms) can be found on www.cambscf.org.uk or by calling CCF on 01223 421588

What do you think?

The feedback we've had from previous issues has been greatly appreciated and very valuable - we've done our best to act on it - and take up issues with the relevant authorities.

We'd be delighted to hear from you on any other topics raised, or other matters of concern. Do remember also that all Parish Council meetings are open to the public.