

Impington Council - Autumn 2008



Impington Post Office – Closed for no reason



Brian Ing, one of the team of Parish Councillors working against the closure, writes: On September 17th the Post Office announced that it was to close the Impington Post office. This despite the Parish Council demonstrating by a petition with over a thousand responses (equivalent to more than a third of the adult population of the Impington - more when responses from individuals actually represent couples and families) and 36 businesses responding that they would have to consider alternative suppliers of postal services.

Furthermore, the Parish Council submission showed that the business case did not take into account future growth from new businesses, passing trade from those using the new guided bus to travel to work in the village and the growing awareness of the lunch time opening of the PO counter.

We pointed out that the excellent facilities at Histon were not suitable for vehicular access for disabled persons (there is no car parking or legal stopping place within 50m which does not require the disabled person to cross a road), and that the excellent service from the Histon PO meant that it was already overcrowded on many days. The full submission is at tinyurl.com/4owvca. A submission that was prepared with the support of all our District and County Councillors (especially David Jenkins who assisted our team directly). All to no avail. The government had decreed the number of post offices to be closed and, from the safe distance far away from the village, the post office officials could see two relatively close offices and the quick opportunity to get one into their target number of closures. Of course, this did not take account of the village circumstances, and we are all the losers.

The process was flawed. There is no independent effective input. There is no appeal. The Post Office are both proposers and deciders. Our thoughts are with Mr Athithan who has had his business arbitrarily taken from him after serving the village well, including having to confront armed robbers. Instead of being full time campaigning for his future in the consultation period, he had to attend court as a witness for the trial of the robbers, not only taking his time but also bringing back painful memories. We note that ahead of the announcement of the decision they were asked when the Post Office could collect the safe. This is a shameful way for any service company to treat someone who has invested their own money in providing their service and defended the Post Office assets from armed robbery.

Impington Parish Council still maintains that as the National Audit Office is currently undertaking a "Value for Money" study in which it is looking at the Post Office closure programme (and is aiming to complete this study and to report its findings in Spring 2009), it would appear proper for the Post Office to delay any intended closures, including that of Impington Post Office, until that report is published.

There appears to be no more action that we can take. It is clear that the views and feelings of us as residents are irrelevant. The Post Office has acted with an arrogance normally expected of a uncaring company unconnected from its customers, not a public sector service supplier. We could all write to them and tell them of our disgust but we all know that these letters would not, in all likelihood, even be read. A black day for Impington.

"Not in My Neighbourhood" 2008

Hopefully you were aware of last year's very successful "Not in My Neighbourhood Week". The week showcased the work being done by the police in our area to make our communities safer - in particular the work they do to address anti-social behaviour and drug misuse. The Home Office will be sponsoring another "Not in My Neighbourhood Week" this year from 13th - 17th October.

Cambridgeshire Police are supporting the initiative again this year and will be holding an open surgery in their mobile unit in Histon High Street during the week



October 2008

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commencing 13th October 2008. The focus will be on the measures being taken to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in our village. The police will be pleased to meet residents and to answer any further questions on the work of the police in our community.

Summer Reading Challenge 2008

The Summer Reading Challenge is a massive national promotion of reading for 4-11 year olds organised by The Reading Agency. Run by public libraries, it involves 650,000 children, encouraging them to read more books during the long summer break from school. It is a superb way to connect children to the inspiring, fun reading that will turn them into readers for life and keep literacy levels up in the holidays.

Every year the Challenge has a new theme. Last year the Summer Reading Challenge was called "The Big Wild Read". This year we celebrated our 10th Challenge at Histon Library with a sporting theme - "Team Read". Youngsters were challenged to read six books over the



summer holidays. They were given a special pack and a set of stickers to collect as they read.

Over a hundred and twenty youngsters

participated in the challenge this year at Histon Library. Library staff were on hand throughout the summer to talk to children about the books they had read and to hand out reading logs, stickers and activity sheets. The library also hosted two reading related events - Andy Hawkins, storyteller and local author David Chandler.

Histon Library held a presentation ceremony on 16th September. Many medals and certificates were presented by Parish Councillor Brian Ing to excited children who had completed the challenge this summer. Cambridgeshire Libraries gratefully acknowledges the support given to the Summer Reading Challenge by Impington Parish Council.

Orchard Park Community Council to be Formed

On 25th September SCDC Full Council agreed, on the recommendation of the Electoral Arrangements Committee, to the creation of a new Community Council for the development at Arbury Park and for it to be called Orchard Park Community Council (OPCC).

Creating OPCC from the Arbury Park development, currently part of the parish of Impington, makes a lot of sense financially, culturally, geographically and governance-wise. Orchard Park is separated from the rest of Impington (including Kings Meadows) and is bounded on all sides by major roads or the Guided Busway.

Financially, Orchard Park should have funding provided from the S106 agreement with the developers, which is designated for the maintenance of the public facilities being provided in the development. As this funding is contractually ring-fenced, the financial arrangements with the rest of Impington's joint budget are complex!

Culturally, Orchard Park is a new, developing, urban community - vastly different from the rest of Impington, which is either a long established village community in the case of Impington 'north' or a long established 'confined' community in the case of Kings Meadows. In either case there is no real synergy with Orchard Park.

From a governance perspective, the issues facing Orchard Park are specifically about creating and developing a new community. These are unique concerns which need dedicated resources and time to ensure that they are well managed, particularly through these early years, when minor issues can become significant problems. It makes eminent sense for a separate council to take charge, so that it can be focused on, and dedicated to, the needs of the residents of Orchard Park.

So, having expounded on the reasons "why?", the big questions are "what?" and "when" and "who?"...what needs to be done, when will it happen and who will be doing all of this?

What? What is happening at present is that IPC are working closely with South Cambs DC to make the arrangements for the new Council, including: publicity, nominations, elections, training, legal and financial framework, responsibilities etc etc... there is a LOT to be organised - of course, some of it can be 'copied' from existing councils, but Orchard Park is quite unusual in South Cambs, being both a new community and an urban

Histon and Impington Crier

Histon and Impington Crier Folds

Contributors to the Histon & Impington Crier received an e-mail from Nigel Brookes, Editor, last week as follows: "I write to inform you that the monthly Histon and

Impington Crier has ceased publication with immediate effect. At the same time, I would like to take the opportunity to record my thanks to all our readers and advertisers and to send my appreciation to those who have regularly contributed articles and photographs to the publication over the last six years. I hope that you will continue to send your contributions to the newsdesk at the Cambridge News and am sure they will be gratefully received there as much as they were at the Histon and Impington Crier. Please email them to newsdesk@cambridge-news.co.uk Thanking you again for all your past support."

There's no more information - no reason given - but the economic downturn, particularly in housing, is going to have an impact in lots of ways. The Crier ceasing publication is going to leave a hole. Many have contributed news over the years, and a number of local businesses have used the Crier to advertise. Some of those businesses have already offered to support a community newspaper - if we can make it happen.

Would you help make that happen? No particular skills are needed - just a willingness to put a little time into our community. We'll be getting a meeting together to see whether this will work - please let us know if you'd be happy to come and talk.

community, so there are quite a lot of 'customisations' to work out!

When? The election of the nine new Community Councillors will be notified in the middle of October, with nominations required by 4th November. If there are only nine or fewer nominations, then the election will be uncontested and the election results will be announced on the 5th November. If there are more than nine nominations, the public poll will be held on 27th November. The first council meeting will be held either in mid November or mid December dependent upon whether there is a public poll or not.

Who? Well that's down to the residents of Orchard (Arbury!) Park as it's they who will elect and form the new council. IPC and SCDC will provide support through the transition, but IPC in particular have their own community to be governing, so OPCC will have to quickly learn to stand on its own two feet!

If you want to know more about what is planned for Orchard Park, why not come along to any of the four events being run at the Orchard Park Community School in October:

"What is the council?" 11th Oct 10.30am or 14th Oct 7pm

"What is a councillor?" 22th Oct 7pm or 25th Oct 10.30am

Or contact the council clerk at clerk@orchardpark.cc

Village Speed Watch



If you are concerned about speeding on Histon and Impington's roads, you may be interested to hear about a new Speedwatch scheme which the County Council and Police are considering.

The scheme would involve supplying one Speedvisor radar unit to each Police Neighborhood Panel area in Cambridgeshire (the Histon Police area extends out to Oakington, Cottenham, Waterbeach and Milton). Here in Impington, this would enable us to carry out frequent and regular speed checks whenever necessary.

Speedvisor shows the speed of an approaching vehicle on a high visibility display screen; it runs on 12v batteries and can be set up anywhere, any time. It requires minimal training to use. In a 30mph zone, speeds between 37mph and 50mph are recorded by hand and given to the police, who then send an advisory letter to the registered owner. If speeds over 50mph are recorded, the offender receives a visit from the police instead. And the mere idea that a Speedvisor unit may be just round the corner has been seen to deter speeding in other villages.

Speedvisor would allow us to pinpoint hot spots in the village (the junction of the B1049 and the Green, for instance) and provide us with valuable data when it comes to arguing the case for speed limit reductions. We could even record types of vehicle users and establish whether it's local residents or long-distance commuters who are speeding in our community. With huge, new developments planned at Northstowe, NIAB and NW Cambridge, and their armies of construction lorries, the more we know about the nature of the traffic on our roads, the better.

Hopefully Speedvisor will soon be a reality, but in the meantime it would be good to find some volunteers keen to run it. Please get in touch if you might be interested!

Youth Activities

Histon and Impington Youth Committee are very pleased to be working with the County Youth Service to provide opportunities and activities for our young people. Our senior youth worker, Andrea Cramp, has returned from maternity leave and is now back working in the patch.

Sophie Lucas, who stood in while Andrea was away, is still involved but now mainly looking after the growing number of young people in Arbury Park and other local villages that feed into IVC. The youth team provide youth clubs, sports clubs and do special project work within IVC.

Over the summer holidays, the organised youth clubs took a break, but several events for the junior and senior club members were arranged and enjoyed. Junior trips to Mepal and Pleasurewood Hills and senior trips to Mepal and Thorpe Park were enjoyed by young people from Histon and Impington (including Arbury Park) and some from Cottenham Village College. Additionally, six Year 11 students from Histon and Impington obtained their Level 1 youth work qualification over the vacation.

By the time you read this the youth clubs will have restarted for the autumn term. We are very pleased to announce that we are once again able to run these clubs at IVC.

Junior Youth Club: Monday 3.35pm – 5.15pm

Senior Youth Club: Tuesday 7pm – 9pm

The Junior Sports Club has moved from the Recreation Ground to IVC on the big playground between the sports and music block. Football, basketball, kwik cricket - all kind of sports on offer. It is open to all young people in Years 7 and 8 and runs on Wednesdays 3.45pm - 5.15pm.

The Senior Sports Club remains at the Recreation Ground and runs on a Thursday evening from 7pm – 9pm. For more details about these clubs or any other youth matters e-mail youthcommittee@hisimp.net

Get Fit at the Recreation Ground

THE REC MONDAY CLUB

An activity club for older and less mobile adults

Want something to look forward to each week? A really friendly club; do join us, we will make you welcome

The club includes gentle exercises with a mixture of seated and standing positions to promote flexibility, mobility, circulation, balance and posture. The exercises also improve muscle strength. All taken by our friendly and supportive fully trained instructor.

A great chance to meet weekly and make new friends and includes a cup of tea to finish. Cost £3.00 per session

2.15pm to 3.45pm in Recreation Ground Centre

Free lifts available – phone Vernon C 515867

FITNESS WALKING FOR 50s +

Meet outside Recreation Ground Centre at 10.00am on Fridays. All levels welcome. Exercising outdoors gives a wonderful feeling of well being! 10.00am to 11.00am Cost £2.50 per session

Run by our qualified instructor Jackie Constable.

Any questions please contact Diane on 07833 538105

Parish Council Vacancies

WANT TO LEARN MORE?



From time to time casual vacancies arise on the Parish Council, and in November it is anticipated there will be 3 such vacancies, due to the formation of a brand new Council, Orchard Park Community Council, for what is currently known as Arbury Park.

This will mean that Impington Parish Council will be looking for 3 new members to take up the challenge of helping to represent

the community effectively in a wide range of topics, whilst also focussing on provision of facilities such as recreation, play areas, youth provision, open spaces, allotments. Managing the annual precept allowance received from South Cambridgeshire District Council via Council Tax payments, is an interesting challenge facing the Parish Council. This year the sums received amounted to some £133,000.

You may not know too much about the work of the Parish Council but the remaining 8 members (5 men and 3 ladies) and office staff would be very glad of the chance to meet residents informally and without any commitment, and talk them through the sort of work carried out, responsibilities and sense of achievement that come with the "job" so you can decide if it is something with which you would like to become involved.

The Council is organising a "drop in" session at the Parish Office, at the Histon & Impington Recreation Ground in New Road on Wednesday 15th October from 6pm to 7.30pm. Why not drop by for coffee and biscuits to see what we do and where we are based? Our local Police Community Support Officers are keen to come along too, to share in discussions and meet residents at this informal session.

If weekdays are difficult for you, no need to worry, the Council would be looking to repeat the session on Saturday 18th October from 10am till 11.30am. When the vacancies arise, some time after November, we could then organise a more focussed session for serious candidates.

If you are interested in coming along on the 15th or 18th, do give the Parish Clerk a call in the office a ring on 235906, or just turn up on the day. We look forward to welcoming you!

Beware of Fake Charity Scams

A fake charity, claiming to be "SOS Clothes" has been collecting clothes in the area. Their leaflet states they are

SOS Clothes but the charity number is fake (these can be checked on the government site: tinyurl.com/4gju7tx)

The director of SOS says that they have had a lot of problems with this fake charity and asked that people contact Mike Enderley of Cambridge Trading Standards on 01954 284619 and let him know if there are people in their area collecting.

Histon FC - New Parking Arrangements

The football season is now fully upon us, and following the success of the parking arrangements used last season, the local police will again be placing bollards in New Road on the days when the matches are expected to attract large crowds and extensive parking by visiting fans is expected. This will maintain access for emergency vehicles, both to the ground and to surrounding premises.



For these games, the Friends of Histon and Impington Rec will also be providing car parking on the office space car parks kindly lent by the owners. Consideration is being given to more permanent parking restrictions on the eastern side of the southern end of New Road, but this will not happen in the immediate future.

Even with the current restrictions, there were delays for through traffic on New Road on all match days, especially when two Citi 7 buses had to cross. All residents in the villages are asked by Impington Parish Council and Histon FC to avoid driving down New Road on match days within an hour of match start and finish times. Using Impington Lane and Water Lane is marginally longer, but will be time-saving for drivers, and will ease the problems on New Road.

The relevant fixtures will be notified in the local press and on advertising boards at the entrance to the ground. Inspector Chris Savage of Cambridgeshire Constabulary commented, "We have found that the vast majority of drivers have been tolerant and considerate within New Road on match day. We would appreciate all efforts by drivers around match times to make it easier for all concerned".

Additionally, all supporters travelling to the ground will be asked to park with consideration for others, leaving enough room for through traffic and access to people's driveways.

As Gareth Baldwin says "We often put these requests in our match day programmes. We are rightly proud of the local community support for the football club, not just from football supporters, and ask all our fans to be considerate of others. In the past most have done so, we thank them and earnestly want this to apply to all our fans."

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 topics raised, or other matters of concern. Do remember also that all Parish Council meetings are open to the public.