

## **Chairman's report - 15 May 2006 - 18 May 2007**

I'd like to welcome everyone to this 113<sup>th</sup> Annual Parish Meeting. I only mention "113<sup>th</sup>" to make the point that Parish Councils have been around for a while, longer than our current District and County Councils, and we plan to be here for a bit longer yet.

I'd also like to stress why we are here - we are here to serve and represent you, our residents. All of our meetings are open to you, and we welcome you to come to meetings, raise questions, and challenge us to do better.

I don't intend to review the year in detail - our annual report is available, and is on the web, its 3000 words and 6 pages - and still isn't as detailed as it might be - but please do read it, it will give you a good flavour of the work that we do.

However, I will pick up some of the areas where councillors are working for our community - Arbury Park, Burial Ground, Environment, Finance, Guided Bus, Mobile Warden Scheme, Newsletter, Planning/Arbury Park Planning, Playground Inspection, Poores Land Charity, Recreation Ground, Website - [www.hisimp.net](http://www.hisimp.net), Youth.

From these, I'd like to highlight a few:

Planning - is not just commenting on applications, but a whole range of topics, largely invisible to residents. New homes bring traffic and demand for services - where we are sometimes critically short - and we continue to raise these issues. We look at every Arbury Park application - and only those where our recommendation is different to officers are taken to SCDC Councillors. NIAB - David Wilson Estates, for the first time not only a lot of paper, but also several CDs worth of reading for councillors. At times we seem a lone voice - and welcome your views as well. We endeavour to ensure that Impington grows in a managed manner, and retains all that makes it Impington, and not a Cambridge suburb.

Affordable homes - a recent application for building in the Green Belt has raised the profile of affordable housing. Obviously there are at least 270 (and possibly more) at Arbury - but the question I have is whether we should be seeking to meet local needs of about 70, or the demand from across South Cambridgeshire - which is greatly more. The Council's ever growing concern about roads, services, schools, doctors etc suggests the former - but we are being asked to contribute to the latter!

Save our Station - over 2,500 signatures (paper and electronic) - and more still coming in - shows that the community does care, and does have a voice. We wait to see what the County Council does as a result - but surely it can't continue to ignore the vote of its residents. What else matters to you? What other issue would you sign your name to? Please let us know!

The Recreation Ground - we've spent a great deal of your money on the Rec, and have, and still do, put a great deal of effort into making that work. For those who don't visit the Rec regularly, the success that it is, the use that is being made of the facilities is an unknown. All I can say is that I'm amazed at the regular use, including throughout the winter, of the floodlit facilities - usually up to the 10pm closing time. And the stream of youngsters turning up on Saturday mornings is also a pleasure to see.

And look to future:

"Business as usual" - of course - it may be that we could work smarter, but the normal run of business is a significant load, and leaves little time spare to move forward

Working with Histon Parish Council - in his report, Max Parish covered the questions that have engaged both Councils for a considerable period of time about how we can work together. We take these very seriously, but remain concerned about the costs, and other implications, of some of the ways forward. Both Councils are already stretched to do what they are with the number of Councillors that we have. Were we to reduce that number, as might be required, that would have some painful consequences.

Nevertheless, we have invited Histon to work with us to explore further this area, both at the strategic and operational levels. Whilst waiting for their response, we continue to explore possibilities and will bring these back to a future Parish Meeting for your views.

Last year I referred to the "excitement of Histon Football Club" - and this year, of course, we must congratulate them on their success and achieving promotion. We meet with them on a regular basis to discuss obvious common issues, and will be covering how travel and transport will be sorted. Obviously, we will be looking for the support of the County Council to exploit wider P&R resources, and the Guided Bus, in order to manage the travel needs of away fans. We hope, of course, that local fans will continue to walk to the ground.

Parish Boundary changes - many are surprised to know that Arbury Park is in Impington. It will become a community of at least two thousand people - the 20<sup>th</sup> largest parish in SCDC on its own! It will also have all the facilities that you could wish for - play areas, recreation space, community centre, shops - we will have "given it birth" - but its residents need to manage their own destiny. SCDC are about to consult on proposed boundary changes - and the creation of a new Parish Council - and therefore the loss of this land from Impington. This will be the 5<sup>th</sup> boundary change since the Parish was created - and hopefully the last.

Elections - 2008, before our next APM, will see Parish Council elections. Many Councillors are likely to stand again, but we always welcome those who share our vision

of making a difference for the people of the village. It is often challenging, but we try to make it enjoyable, and there is considerable satisfaction when it comes together. Please, if you might be interested, talk to Angela, one of the Councillors, or just come to some of our meetings to see how it all works.

Lastly I'd like to thank:

All of our current Councillors - we can be proud of the standard of our Members, and the work that they put in. They bring a diverse set of experience and skills to the work of the Council - what we would expect for a Quality Council. I'd also like to thank our three new Councillors, who've willingly thrown themselves into everything, particularly the complex area of planning.

Councillors who have left us this year - Mark Lawton, Mick Withers - we wish them well as jobs and/or house moves take them away from us. I'd particularly like to thank Trevor Silk who gave 27 years of service to the community as a Councillor - we wish him well in his retirement.

All our District and County Councillors who work alongside us

Our staff - Angela, Lynda, Steve, Terry and Trevor - without whom we'd not be able to do anything.

*Denis W Payne*  
*18<sup>th</sup> May 2007*