



**hi** Histon and Impington | Parish Council



# Annual Report May 2017



01223 235906



[www.hisimp.net](http://www.hisimp.net)



[clerk@hisimp.net](mailto:clerk@hisimp.net)



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## Parish Councils - the wider view

Parish Councils are, by definition, parochial - looking after their "patch". But there are 10,000 parishes in England and Wales, and 8,000 parish (and town and community) councils. We are part of a something much bigger than Histon and Impington.

Locally we are a member of the professional body in Cambridgeshire - CAPALC (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils). Via CAPALC, we are members of (and supported by) NALC - the National Association of Local Councils. Angela Young, our clerk, is a member of the professional body for Parish Clerks - SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks).

Across the country local councils are using their powers to take on wider roles within the community. That covers everything from taking over and running buildings, to providing innovative services for residents - at times, taking over what was previously the responsibility of District or County Councils.

Whilst South Cambridgeshire District Council have made it clear that they do not expect to devolve services to Parishes, the County Council is asking for help.

Locally we are:

- In a long running discussion with County Council officers about opportunities to improve services for older people. Included in this are potential innovations in how services are made to happen that can both save money and improve results
- Initiating a "Health and Wellbeing" group that will work with all the groups across the community in this area, helping to co-ordinate initiatives, and factoring in professional advice as to new areas to explore

Across the County:

- We're looking at how we might benefit from the County Council's Innovation Fund. This fund has been set up to help get new ideas off the ground, particularly new ideas that will reduce demand for County provided services
- Working as part of the "Stakeholder Group" for "Support Cambridgeshire" - an initiative bringing together CAPALC, ACRE and SLCC (and Hunts Forum and CCVS) that is aimed at strengthening and developing community bodies and particularly Local Councils.

This initiative has already led to the first annual conference for Local Councils, where a number of our Councillors were involved. A survey of Councillors (and Clerks) has also raised a number of key learning points.

*Denis Payne*

*CAPALC representative*

## Environment Committee

The Committee consists of 6 Councillors who are joined at meetings by the Chair and Vice Chair and also co-opted members from the Sustainability Working Party and the HICOP (Histon & Impington Community Orchard Project). All our minutes are on the website and residents are welcome to attend any of our meetings.

We have met 7 times this year and considered a varied agenda including:

- Village Green management. A never ending task to keep our Green looking as good as we can whilst ensuring reasonable use is always allowed. We are interested to see how the newly introduced Artisan Markets will take off, which are currently on trial
- We also welcomed Pinders Circus back to Homefield Park, another of our open spaces

- Brook Improvements. There is an amount of money received from the County Council which must be spent on mitigation works at the Brook. We are now nearing the time when we can proceed with some works designed to make the watercourse easier to maintain whilst adding to the aesthetics
- Grass cutting – the contract with our grass cutters is regularly reviewed and changed where appropriate. The trial verge wildflower scheme at 4 areas was successful and will continue this year
- Our members have attended a couple of cycle-arounds of our open spaces this year
- Dog Bins. We have approached SCDC to request additional and replacement bins and are waiting for their response.
- We were delighted with the reaction from the residents on the new lights around the corner tree on The Green at Christmas
- Tree works. Our own Tree Warden is invited by SCDC to comment on applications received. We try at all times to ensure that suitable replacements are requested wherever possible. Regarding our own trees (we own several wooded areas) we have had professional surveys carried out and any high priority work has been carried out during the year, with constant reviews held
- We have an Allotments Officer and are pleased to see a recent up-turn in interest
- Public Art. We hold a healthy fund of Section 106 moneys which must be spent on Public Art, or returned to the developers. Several schemes are under discussion or underway.
- A further working party is looking at Drainage issues and meets regularly with the District and County Councils
- Volunteer groups in the villages supplement our work – there is the enviro.vols who spend countless weekends on improving open spaces, and also the Big Tidy Up Group who carry out quarterly litter picks. Additionally a team of people have adopted roads and report back on any problems.

We look forward to next year when we hope to firm up on arrangements for replacement roses at the war memorial, tidying up the area near the youth shelter on School Hill, and planting schemes elsewhere in the villages. All plus continued improvements at our open spaces.

*Elaine Farrell*

*Chairman, Environment Committee*

## **Finance, Legal and Administration Committee**

The successes of the Finance Committee are not immediately visible. There are two parts - firstly meeting our legal and accounting requirements. And secondly, the setting of budgets so that the other committees of the Council can deliver their plans.

We have an *internal* auditor, who checks how the Council and office works - that everything is being done properly and to best practice. We also have an *external* audit, which is a much more conventional, if light touch, audit. The report from the internal auditor is passed to the external auditors.

The committee are grateful that Max Parish has continued to fulfil the role of internal auditor. He has again done an excellent job.

The work of the office team has regularly ensured that our accounts pass external audit with flying colours.

No “planning gain” cash (to cover some of the costs of open space, recreation, facilities) has come in since the ending of the S106 arrangements. Slow progress on the SCDC Local Plan means that CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) is still not in place. We cannot expect any financial gains from development until at least 2018-2019.

The District Council has continued to deliver services, and will not be delegating anything to Parishes. However, the County Council is in a different situation. It has even set up a fund that can assist the start-up of schemes - as long as they offload County services.

We continue to explore opportunities to work with County. This is mainly in the area of Social Care. A number of opportunities are coming forward, some of which offer cost savings with no loss of service or quality. Whilst we are at the forefront of this work, it is taking time.

The past year has been marked by more than the usual level of vandalism. Whilst the Council is well insured, it is not always possible to get back all of the associated costs.

The possible costs of a Parish Council election was avoided by some careful planning by Councillors - without any impact on democracy. We had candidates for all vacancies - no poll was therefore necessary. The Council will again meet this challenge in 2018.

The work on the Neighbourhood Plan continues - with a current target of a vote next year. This continues to be funded from reserves, though a generous grant (over £8K) from the Government has helped.

Looking forward, the provision of youth services is changing. Andrea Cowley is moving to the Connections Bus Project - and will be continuing to provide youth work in the village - but via a contract rather than directly.

A further cost increase this year is the funding of the mental wellbeing champion. The cost of this service alone is around £2.00 on the parish council tax.

The Council, having looked, as always, with care at all of its budget and plans decided to increase the parish Council Tax rate by 4.48%. This gives a Band D rate of £97.18, an increase of £4.16 (8p per week for a Band D household, and similarly being £2.77 a year/5p per week for Band A; and £8.32 a year/16p per week for Band H)

Key objectives for 2017-2018 include:

- 1) continuing working with committees to ensure that projects and spending plans are effectively delivered and met through the year;
- 2) continuing to manage investments prudently whilst maximising returns;
- 3) introducing decision making systems to effectively prioritise Council projects;
- 4) establishing alternative pension provisions for new staff.

Council Standing Orders (rules of operation) say that the Council and Committee Chairman must stand down after a period of time. This is common practice, and there are lots of good reasons for it. I will therefore be standing down as Chair of this committee. I would therefore like to thank staff and Councillors who have made the work of this committee a success, and wish the new Chairman well in this fascinating and rewarding role.

*Denis Payne*

*Chairman, Finance, Legal and Administration Committee*

## **Highways Committee**

My first year as Highways Chairman has been a mixture of enlightenment and frustration. The new Committee brought together a combination of new and experienced councillors and has been excellently Clerked by Mrs Chelsea O'Brien.

I soon realised that with each and every decision made, an adverse effect may be felt. The initial solution may resolve a real issue, however, the solution may cause another. An example of this is the effects of parking restrictions around the Junior School having caused parking issues in the surrounding residential streets. The "knock on effect" is being considered by the Committee as part of all decisions made.



With Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) deciding to overturn an initial decision not to award the 2016/17 Local Highways Initiative Scheme grant for improving the Baptist Church junction, we received the news that extra funding had been awarded and that we were now successful. However the finalising of the scheme has been slow progress, but the Committee is hopeful that this can be completed this financial year.

Throughout the year, the Committee also received a rise in the amount of reports from residents and local businesses of inconsiderate/increased volumes of parking around our schools, the guided bus stop and Vision Park. It has also been made aware of increased speeding down the B1049, which has ignited the Committee's desire to reinstate the local Speed Watch initiative.

On a more positive note there has been a number of successes to mention, firstly the successful grant as part of the 2017/18 Local Highways Initiative Scheme from CCC for improving our priority footpaths. This work will include resurfacing a number of our key footpath/passages which link our most vulnerable residents to our amenities for example young and old to our schools, High Street and residential homes. This sees a slight change in direction for the committee, with focus being given to pedestrian movements with the emphasis on removing the need for unnecessary car use within the village(s). Secondly, an internal grant has been awarded for the installation of a number of additional cycle stands throughout the village. The initial phase will see extra cycle provisions for the High Street, namely outside of the Co-Op food store and the Post Office.

Progression of the Northern Corridor funded projects can be seen with the approach to the A14 being remarked into 2 lanes. Plans for an additional pedestrian refuge island on the B1049 (opposite a Coppice entrance) and improvements to the Junction at the Green are still progressing.

Moving forward the Committee is looking to review and develop a Transport Strategy which will take into account the increase in traffic and people from new local developments. The Strategy will intend to address all aspects of people and vehicular movements, as well as current and future issues with regards to congestion, parking and speeding throughout the village(s).

*Andy Butcher*  
*Chairman, Highways Committee*

## **Planning Committee**

The Planning Committee have met 16 times this year. We considered 51 plans for Impington, 58 for Histon and one for Longstanton. Of these, we recommended approval of 78, refusal of 14, no objection to 6, 12 were for information only.

The team of Councillors responsible for commenting on these plans were: Denis Payne, Aga Cahn, Brian Ing, Steve Carrington, Marian Cleaver, Christine Hertoghe, Simon Jocelyn, Josephine Teague and Nick Wood. David Jenkins and Andy Butcher were ex-officio members of the Committee.

In addition, thanks are due to Chelsea O'Brien, Clerk to the Committee, for her commitment to ensuring everything runs smoothly.

The Parish Council is a consultee on all planning matters affecting the parishes. The Planning Committee makes a *recommendation* based on the plans provided. The final decision is with South Cambridgeshire District Council. When responding, the Committee tries to ensure that character and local history is maintained. Key issues often raised are parking provision, character of the street and loss of amenity to neighbouring properties (this often means loss of light). We are also committed to affordable housing - though often can do little to ensure that we get it.

All meetings are open to the public. We welcome both applicants and those with views on applications to attend meetings and take part. If a planning application affects you, we encourage you to make your views known to the planning authority, SCDC (South Cambridgeshire District Council) and the Parish Council.

As well as attending fortnightly Committee meetings, members also attend Northstowe Forum and public meetings, SCDC Planning Appeals and Local Plan Hearings. Members continue to attend SCDC Liaison Sessions and the Parish Planning Forum.

As part of our commitment to work with applicants, a significant number of meetings have been held with the developers of the Station Area - i.e. Bishops, Histon Station and the Clark Brothers' yard. These plans have also been review by SCDC officers, and the Planning Committee.

The first two of these have now been processed. The first, for the old Bishops site, generated a lot of community interest. Residents were particularly concerned about the design (including brick colour). There were very specific concerns by residents in Villa Road, and by all on parking given the use of the area by people taking the Guided Bus. The proposals for the Station site raised far less interest. There were very real concerns about potential competition from the proposed retail site. In both cases there was no affordable housing component. That was perhaps more understandable for the Station application, since vandalism and years of neglect whilst owned by the County Council have added significantly to costs.

The Committee has continued to respond to consultations throughout the year. Much of the work is done by members and the clerk prior to being reviewed and approved at a meeting. In addition, the Committee is very much outward looking - planning decisions elsewhere will impact our community. We looked at a number of matters, making appropriate formal responses (in some cases, waiting for more details). These included: Local Plan Examinations (Land north of Impington Lane, Bypass Farm), Waterbeach, Northstowe, Cambridge North West, NIAB Park Farm, City Deal Consultation and CCC Devolution.

It has been a very busy year for Planning Committee. I would like to record my thanks to Committee members for their contributions and regular attendance at meetings.

*Denis Payne*  
*Chairman, Planning Committee*

## **Recreation Committee**

The Recreation Committee has operated smoothly over the last 12 months thanks to the effective partnership working of the staff, Committee and the sports clubs.

As ever the Recreation Ground is a thriving area of sporting, wellbeing, leisure, play and community activity building on the original vision of the Recreation Ground redevelopment completed in 2006.

The Committee continues to focus on the facilitation and operation of the Recreation Ground facilities. The Recreation Ground Manager and Groundsman have the day to day management responsibility and Councillor support is provided in partnership when requested and with the larger projects like the recent MUGA refurbishment and cricket nets. The system of working has evolved over recent years learning from past mistakes and obtaining professional advice when necessary and any fundamental change to this system would be detrimental to the Parish Council in my view.

The Recreation Ground play area continues, with the aid of much work, to be a place of enjoyment for children of all ages. Through the efforts of Lynda, Trevor, Alex and Steve the grassed mound has been completely transformed. We are now working on an idea from a Parish Councillor for a new bridge at the entrance from the car park to make that area more attractive and help with drainage. The play area on The Green continues to be well used and maintained.

There will be progress this coming year on the restoration of the old Bamford Agricultural Pump at the bottom of the Ground – our thanks to Friends of Histon & Impington Recreation, Co-op and Village Society for funding this. The hope is that this area of the Rec will become quite distinctive and valued by a wide range of users of the Rec.

The Recreation Ground continues to be responsive in meeting the needs of the residents and the sports clubs and encourages facilities to be used in new initiatives. The role of the Committee is to facilitate and not organise- there is not another recreation ground in the District that facilitates the range of activities that are seen on the heavily utilised Histon and Impington Recreation Ground. The sports clubs and a village based charity promote sports and community activity on the Recreation Ground. Again this approach works and will continue to evolve and develop. For example the Friends of the Rec engaged a Sports development consultant to develop new sports activities this summer including summer camps for primary aged children

The Recreation Ground hosted the first Rec Summer Festival in July 2016 attended by 4000 people and only last week 530 participated in the Impington 5k Running Festival.

The Recreation Ground does face challenges such as car parking, insufficient football pitches and open space to facilitate new activities and sports. The Committee will need to work extremely closely together with the Community Park Working Party over coming months.

We have a unique set up at the Recreation Ground. The Parish Council, through the Committee, will continue to work together with our partners to develop the use of the Rec for the greater benefit for our community.

*Neil Davies*  
*Recreation Committee Chairman*

## **Histon & Impington Mobile Warden Scheme**

The Mobile Warden Scheme is designed to help older people who may need some support, to live at home independently, for as long as possible. The warden keeps in contact with clients by regular visits and phone calls. She helps in practical ways, such as shopping or collecting pensions, giving help with forms or putting them in touch with other agencies. She also provides much needed personal and moral support.

This scheme is working well in our villages. It is funded by contributions from the County Council, SCDC, the Parish Council and the contributions paid for the service by the clients. It is managed very efficiently for us, at the moment, by Age UK.

We are very fortunate in still having Mrs Gillian Berry, a village resident, as warden. She has a good working relationship with Jean Newman, the Older Persons' Co-Ordinator, the Firs House surgery and those who run the Mini-bus and the Day Centre. This means that she is often informed of people who might need her services. Others learn of the scheme by word of mouth. At the moment she has nineteen households under her care. A mild winter meant that there were fewer critical issues during the colder weather.

Even so, bed-blocking is still a problem at Addenbrookes and there were incidents of patients sent home with insufficient warning and inadequate care in place. Some Care Agencies, and Care Homes, will not now take on care of clients who are funded by Social Services as the Local Authority grant does not fully cover costs. This adds to the problems of setting up adequate care packages before patients can be released from hospital. The situation can only get worse as the number of vulnerable older people who need financial assistance for their care increases.

The Histon and Impington scheme account still has a balance which allows for an increase in clients to a maximum of twenty five. As this balance has been decreasing year on year, it has been necessary for the Parish Council to increase its contribution for the current year. We have budgeted for an increase again for 2018-2019. SCDC have decided that there should be a small increase in the Client fee to ensure there is a fair distribution of costs across the whole County. It is

clear that numbers of those needing the service are rising, gradually, but steadily and it is unlikely that two wardens would be funded by the scheme. We should be aware, that if the need for a second warden arises, we might have to meet the increased costs ourselves.

The Link Committee for the scheme is comprised of the Age UK Co-ordinator, the Mobile Warden, the Older Persons' Co-ordinator, two representatives of the Parish Council and two village residents

*Marian Cleaver*

*Mobile Warden Scheme Representative*

## **King's Meadow Working Party**

The King's Meadows estate, just south of the A14, is in the parish of Impington.

This Working Party aims to meet three times a year and members comprise of at least 2 members/officers of the Parish Council, together with resident members, and reports directly to Full Council. During 2016-17 the Council members were Cllr Denis Payne, Aga Cahn, and the clerk Angela Young. There are currently 4 residents on the Working Party all of whom live on the King's Meadow estate off Kings Hedges Road.

Work has been carried out this year to improve the areas of open space, and has included replanting of tired areas with shrubs and trees, painting the benches, and the installation of Welcome Signs at each of the 2 entrances to the estate.

One of the residents has taken on the role of organising local litter picks to try and give the area more of a sense of identity.

There is an objective to continue to determine the best way to address the needs for local representation for the residents of King's Meadows, and more resident membership is positively encouraged to this end. The Working Party is continually looking into more ways of harnessing community engagement.

Working Party meetings are held at The Meadows Community Centre and are advertised on the Parish Council website calendar. It would be great to see some new faces from the King's Meadows area.

*Angela Young*

*Working Party Member*

## **Youth Task & Finish**

Towards the end of the last council year, the Parish Council took the decision to extend the 12 month contract of our youth worker and also employ her two assistant youth workers. This proved to be a prescient move as by the end of the summer term the County Council had largely withdrawn from providing any sort of open access youth work and were reducing their pool of youth workers. We were in the fortunate position that last year we had read the runes and decided to take on the direct employment of our lead youth worker, Andrea Cowley; many other parish councils were turning to each other to find support and answers. At about the same time, the Parish Council agreed to set up the Youth Task and Finish (T&F) group to look at the different ways the Parish Council could continue to provide activities and opportunities for our young people as well as supporting our youth workers both on a day to day basis and with their own professional development since this would no longer be available through the county council channels.

For the T&F group this has been the main focus of the year: the village churches were approached to discuss joint working, a proposal for a working partnership with IVC was written and discussed with the executive principle but not pursued; several meetings were held with adjoining parishes and an option for support from the YMCA was considered,



but proved to be too expensive. An approach was then made to Alan Webb from the Connections Bus Project (CBP), to see if they would consider supporting and running funded “on premises” activities and projects. These discussions were successful and shortly after Christmas the Parish Council and the CBP agreed a way forward and signed a Service Level Agreement which in effect means that our youth provision is secured and will deliver much the same set of activities as it has done over the last year. We feel sure that this will be a good partnership bringing benefits to both parties. The CBP, who are based in the village and are well known to the Parish Council, will gain the expertise and enthusiasm of Andrea Cowley, and she and her team will get the support of an organisation whose main objective is to “support young people ... through the provision of free recreational, educational and personal development opportunities”. This new arrangement started on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and Andrea is really excited about the new arrangements, working alongside Alan Webb and the possibility of extending her work into other villages. The T&F group are really pleased to have found a way of retaining all our youth provision, keeping Andrea in the village, for the foreseeable future at least, and finding a way to help the role to grow and develop.

The objectives of the T&F group have been met and so it, like the Youth Committee before it, it will be wound up at the end of April.

Whilst all this was going on, Andrea and the team have continued to run the regular youth clubs and well-established projects, such as the baby-sitting course, as planned. Andrea has also planned and delivered 2 new projects this year. The first project, enabled via grant funding from the High Sheriffs Award, Cambridgeshire Youth Social Action Programme and the Seymour Charitable Trust, saw a 14 of our young people qualify as Junior Youth Workers. Their achievement was published in the Cambridge News. The second project was a collaboration between Andrea, Care Network Cambridgeshire and Jean Newman, our Older People’s Co-ordinator, to put together an exciting new intergenerational project “The Generation Game” which has attracted grant funding from Cambridgeshire Community Foundation and much interest, including from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite. The range of opportunities and experiences this project is giving our young people and our older residents is exceptional. It is hoped to build on this success by continuing the project next year.

Additionally the mindfulness and teenage yoga sessions have continued to be popular and we would like to thank Pauline Reay for working with us to make these possible.

Unfortunately, the Youth Lounge, held on Wednesday’s for older students wasn’t well attended and so the decision was made to close it mid-year. We would like to thank the management team at Histon Football Club for making their space available for us to use.

The Parish Council endeavours to communicate with and consult our young people through the regular page in the quarterly parish newsletter which shares a name with our Facebook page [HI Youth Noticeboard](#). All information about current and new activities will continue to be posted here by Andrea.

Once again this year there have been issues with young people misbehaving on the recreation ground. Andrea and the Parish Council have been working with the Groundsman, IVC and our PCSO to combat this.

Finally I would like to thank

- Andrea for her commitment and enthusiasm for our young people over the past year,
- our youth workers Sarah Cloughly, Debbie Orton and Dan Benstead
- all the office staff for their support
- other members of the Task & Finish group
- and the many others who support our young people in one way or another.

*Hooda Abdullah*  
*Youth Liaison Officer*

## Drainage Working Party

This Group was resurrected in 2016 and I was asked to be its Convenor.

People with experience of these issues were approached to ask if they would like to participate in looking at and resolving certain long term issues. Mike Mason (CCC Councillor), Rob Mungovan (SCDC Ecology expert), Brian Heffernan (Cambridgeshire County Council), Pat Matthews (formally SCDC Awards drains officer, now retired) and Robin Barrett (former Parish Councillor and resident of the village and a long interest in drainage). All have given an input either at the two meetings held in July and November 2016 or I have met them on site to discuss concerns. Denis Payne was a welcome addition to the working party from November as he had convened the Group in the past.

Areas of concern were:-

1. South Road
2. Merrington Place
3. The Brook
4. Park Lane

In early 2017 SCDC organised the removal of Silt and debris from a channel in the Brook, and the deposits were put in the margins of The Brook (south side).

Angela, Denis and I met several Contractors at The Brook, to see how they could improve the Brook and come up with their ideas. We then sought the advice of Rob Mungovan and it was decided to opt for a fairly local contractor who appears to understand what we are trying to achieve. This will entail firstly determining the level and depths of the silt, then produce a design for necessary works, followed by undertaking necessary consent from County Council and finally undertake the work to implement the approved drawings. If spare funds were available from the £20k we hold for this project, then we might consider a floating reed bed at the eastern end for aesthetic and interest, but would need to be permanently protected against ducks sitting on it!

The Park Lane stream from the Brook is looking to be redesigned to improve its flow.

The Culvert at Abbey Farm is quite old, sits high and ideally needs to be taken out and replaced. This would be a big job and could cost approx. £75k.

The Ditch and Culvert at the end of South Road/Villa Road has been cleared by myself of debris and water is now running freely. The adjoining area was cleared of vegetation by the landowner in readiness for the sale of the land for a small development.

Surface water flooding is usually the result of rainstorms and the inability of Road gullies to cope, and is a continual problem. We are continually monitoring road gullies by the road adoption scheme where residents report their concerns. As a result we have managed to get all road gullies in Pepys Terrace and Old Farm Close cleaned out during the past six months, outside of the normal annual maintenance, as these roads have been a cause of flooding concern by residents.

*Cedric Foster*  
*Working Party Convener*

Some of the photographs used in this report were supplied by Barry Starling, resident of Histon