

Girton Parish Council

The Clerk to the Parish Council
telephone: (01223) 472181
email: clerk@girton-cambs.org.uk

The Pavilion
Girton Recreation Ground
Cambridge Road, Girton
Cambridge CB3 0FH

Minutes of the Meeting of Girton Parish Council on Wednesday 19 January 2011

at St Vincent's Close Community Centre at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs de Lacey (Chairman), Ash, Cockley, Garner, Godby, Johnson, Noble, Taylor, Thorrold, Bromwich

County Councillor Reynolds (to item 11/05) 4 members of the public.

SCDC Councillor Tom Bygott (to item 11/05)

Youth leader Tim Shuker-Yates

Pc Soni

4 members of the public

In attendance: Sam Clift (Temporary Clerk) and Natalie Stone (PFO).

11/01 Welcome from the Chairman

The Chairman opened the meeting by asking all present to stand for a few moments to remember James Ford Smith who had been a Parish Councillor until his very recent death. James although in ill health was extremely interested in the welfare of the parish and was at pains to do what he could for the village and the parish right up to his death.

The Chairman then welcomed all Councillors and members of the public to the meeting and made special mention of Suzan Ziobro who was shortly to be co-opted onto the Parish Council, Tim Shuka Yates a youth worker and Sam Clift who is the temporary Parish Clerk

11/02 Apologies and reasons for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs. Knoble and Martin. The Chairman accepted their reasons.

11/03 Members' declarations of interest for items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest at this point of the meeting.

Note 1:

At this point in the meeting the Chairman moved to item **11/07 item 1** on the agenda and Suzan Ziobro was co-opted onto the Parish Council.

11/04 Public Participation session on agenda items & matters of mutual interest

1. Members of the public

David Ward of January's estate agents spoke about the proposed purchase of a small strip of land in Weaves Field that was for all intents and purposes a 'ransom strip' preventing further development there. This matter had been brought before the Council during 2010 and Mr Ward told councillors that he had been in dialogue with Mr and Mrs Grove over the last few weeks and months and could put an improved offer on the table. The Parish Council would receive £21,000 and Mr and Mrs Groves would pay the Parish Council's costs up to £500 plus VAT and if the sale went through another £500 plus £500 surveyor fees.

Francis Hookham told Councillors that he was helping ACRE to make people aware of the switchover of television from analogue to digital. He asked that Councillors be aware of the situation so that they

could help the vulnerable deal with the situation. There were a number of help schemes and he handed out a note with the following telephone numbers where people could seek help.

For those eligible BBC Switch over Help Scheme 0800 40 85 911

For those ineligible telephone Digital UK or anyone not clear about which category they were in UK 08456 50 50 50

2. County Councillor's report

Cllr Reynolds spoke at length concerning the financial problems facing the County Council.

Report at Appendix A

3. District Councillors' reports

Cllr de Lacey's report had been circulated

Report at Appendix B

Cllr Bygott gave a brief report pointing out that SCDC also face similar financial constraints as outlined by County Councillor Reynolds he did not produce a written report

4. Police Report

Pc Soni reported that there had been 33 calls to the Police for service over the last month, 7 of those related to road traffic matters, 3 were related to violence mostly of a domestic nature that spilled out onto the street or public place, the remainder related to things such as lost and found property and a sudden death. A surgery was held at Girton on the 9th January and a number of people used it mostly on matters relating to crime reduction. A suspicious vehicle seen in Girton was checked and the occupants were found to be in possession of the drug Cannabis. A shoplifting incident at Girton Co-op was related to similar incidents in other areas. A good description of the culprit was available and as a result a man was arrested in Ely and admitted a number of offences.

At this point Cllrs Reynolds and Bygott together with Pc Soni left the meeting

5. Youth Report

Tim Shuker-Yates reported at length to the council and the basis of what he reported was pleasing. He said that numbers had gone up from an average of 17 attending his sessions to 32 and that he now had 72 youths on his books. They had made a good connection with the glebe school and the Girton Glebe goose Club. Activities and trips were arranged and he thought that it might be possible for the 16 to 19 age group to build their own shelter but he did not know how, when or where. One 17year old youth from his scheme was employed as his helper and a 14 year old girl helps with the Goose Club 4 times a week.

Cllr Taylor asked that it be recorded that it was a good report and thanked Tim for the work he is doing.

11/05 To confirm the minutes of Parish Council meeting of 17th November 2010

1. The Parish Council Minutes of 17th November which were not confirmed at the December 2010 had now been published on our website and all members had had the opportunity to read them.

Cllr Godby proposed that the minute be approved - seconded by Cllr Garner

Carried unanimously

2. The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of the 15th December 2010 had been published on our website and all members had had the opportunity to read them.

Cllr Thorrold proposed that the minute be approved - seconded by Cllr Godby

Carried unanimously

11/06 Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Note: 2

At this point in the meeting the Chairman moved to item **11/08 item 5** to approve the budget for 2011/2012.

Cllr Garner explained the budget proposals that she had produced and which had been published on the parish webpage. This had given councillors the opportunity to read and digest them.

In discussion it was noted that a tracking system should be put in place for our monthly spend so that any over or under spends would immediately become apparent. It would be easier to see the cash balance.

Cllr Garner also suggested that our fixed assets be checked and updated to make sure we had no moveable liabilities

It was proposed that this budget be approved

Proposed by Cllr Garner Seconded by Cllr Johnson

Carried with 9 votes for and one against

The Chairman thanked Cllr Garner for her excellent work in producing this budget.

11/07 Business items requiring a decision, or consideration by the Council

1. To Co-opt a Parish Councillor to replace Cllr Michael Wilson – (see Note 1 above)

At this point Cllr Hiley joined the meeting

2. To approve a contract for Grass Cutting of Recreation fields 2011 to 2014

Tenders had been received for this work and some discussion took place about them.

It was proposed that the contract be awarded to CGM Landscapes for the three year period but that it be subject to performance after one year.

Proposed by Cllr de Lacey Seconded by Cllr Godby

Carried with 9 votes for and one abstention

Note: Cllr Garner suggested that CGM's Certificate of work and Insurance should be checked for Health and safety purposes

At this point Councillor Taylor left the meeting

3. To approve a contract for cutting the hedge between the Ten Acre Field and the Kennedy bungalow

Again tenders had been received for this work and some discussion took place about them.

It was proposed that the tender from Agriplant Ltd be approved and that the hedge, when cut, is sawn rather than flailed .

Proposed Cllr de Lacey Seconded by Cllr Cockley

Carried with 9 votes for and one abstention

4. To approve a contract for the mandatory five year inspection of the Pavilion electrical Circuits
- It was noted by councillors that this work, although a regular 5 year mandatory inspection had not been budgeted for and that this was to be addressed for the next five year plan. Sport and Recreation committee councillors should note this and make sure that it is in their budget.
- It was proposed that the tender submitted by Munro should be approved for this work.
- Proposed Cllr de Lacey Seconded by Cllr Cockley
5. To approve the Parish Plan and recommend it to the County and District Councils
- Proposed Cllr de Lacey Seconded Cllr Cockley
- Cllr Cockley proposed an amendment which the Chairman accepted:
- The Council accept the plan as a set of goals; the actions will be reviewed as an ongoing Parish Council objective. It should be recommended to the County and District Councils.
- Carried unanimously
- 6 That the Council decide on the offer made by January's for the Ransom Strip at Weavers Field, the income to be placed in the general reserve.
- Cllr Hiley declared a prejudicial interest as Trustee of the Town Charity which also employs Januarys, and left the room for the duration of this item
- Propose Cllr de Lacey Seconded by Cllr Godby
- Cllr Cockley proposed an amendment that the offer be accepted and the chairman accepted this amendment
- The chairman noted that opposition had been expressed by villagers in the Parish Plan to back garden development, and by neighbours specifically to this development. Other councillors noted that the budget for next year was extremely tight but also that this strip was a significant fixed asset and an amenity to the village
- The motion as amended was approved 6 to 2

11/08 Finance & resource management

1. To approve payments from 16 December 2010 to 19 January 2011
- .Proposed. Cllr Garner Seconded. Cllr Godby
- Carried unanimously
2. To approve the balance sheet at 31st December 2010 (attached as Appendix D)
- . Prop. Cllr de Lacey. Sec. Cllr Garner
- Carried unanimously
3. To receive the finance report from 1 April to 31 December 2010 (attached as Appendix E)
- . The report was received.
- 4 To transfer monies to the Parish Council's hypothecated reserves of:
- a) to Pavilion Fabric: £1000
 - b) to Play Equipment Replacement: £2000
 - c) to Games Surfaces: £5000
- in line with the 2010 - 2011 Parish Council budget

In view of earlier discussions about budgeting this matter was deferred to either the March or April Council meetings.

5. To Approve the Budget for 2011/12

See Note: 2

- 6 To appoint and approve new bank account signatory/s

The currant signatories are:

Cllr. de Lacey

Finance Officer Natalie Stone

Cllr. Bromwich

Cllr. Thorrold

Chairman Proposed and Cllr Cockley seconded that Cllr Godby be appointed a signatory

Approved with 1 abstention

11/09 Correspondence received:

1. Letter from Post Office 4.1.2011 re Branch relocation to George Pub.
2. Letter from Januarys 7.12.2010 re building plot at rear of 121 Girton Road.
3. Letter from Royal British Legion re its 90th Birthday celebrations June 2011.
4. Letter from Bradshaws (Estate Agents) re Sponsorship of Flower tubs.
5. Letter from Cllr A J Barnard concerning his resignation.
6. Letter from Parish Chairman to A J Barnard accepting his resignation.

The correspondence was received

11/10 To receive reports:

1. **Chairman's Report**

Attached at Appendix C

2. **Girton Town Charity**

Cllr Hiley said there was nothing new to report

3. **Girton Youth Club**

see item 11/04 item 5

4. **Footpaths and Rights of Way**

Cllr Bromwich reported that the youths organised by the Probation Service had begun to repair footpath 13 between Thornton Close and Whitehouse Road – at the time of this meeting it had not been fully completed but work was hopefully ongoing. A mixture of sand and fine gravel is being used to surface the footpath. With regard to the previous minutes it was footpath 10 that required surfacing not footpath 7.

Cllr Bromwich to send letter of thanks to Steve Summers of David Wilson Homes

11/11 To receive unconfirmed Committee minutes from:
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes of 4th January 2010 (Appendix F)

Received

11/12 Matters raised by Councillors and:

To include items for the Agenda of 16th February 2011.

- 1 Cllr Hiley reported that severe ponding was still occurring in Duck End
To be investigated
- 2 Cllr Cockley is to investigate and report back to the council about any necessary response to a Pamphlet received from Cambridgeshire Community Services – Provide a Lifetime of Care. She will report back to the council.
- 3 It was noted that the income from the Pavilion and recreations fields will not reach £29,000 as previously suggested.
- 4 The Chairman reported final confirmation of the Councillor Training was:
To be held at St Vincents Close, Community Centre, Girton
from 6.30pm for 7pm till 9.30pm.

Meeting Closed at 9.58pm

APPENDIX A

County Report January 2011

County Councillor John Reynolds

4 Hollytrees Bar Hill

Cambridge

Tel: 01954 200571

E-mail: john.reynolds@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

NEW VISION REVEALED FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES

Communities will be at the heart of running and managing libraries to help protect Cambridgeshire services.

The Library service is having to find £3.2 million in savings over the next five years. The proposals are based on the feedback given by thousands of Cambridgeshire residents. They emphasise that library closures will only be considered as a last resort but these can be avoided if communities come forward and help support their local services. The plans include the setting up of a Cambridgeshire Trust to look after the running of the libraries, but still the responsibility of the County Council. This would unlock funding and savings the Council currently does not have access to.

Libraries will be reorganised into groups with a main library supporting the others in its area and sharing a reduced level of staff. This will also see the roll-out of more self-service technology and more community engagement and volunteers in libraries. This idea is also backed by the public in the recent consultation. Some 69 per cent of respondents in the public consultation said they support an alternative Service Delivery model rather than closing libraries. This would maximise the use of self-service facilities in libraries, while reducing staff and increasing volunteers. Where it is already used in Cambridgeshire, self-service accounts for more than 85 per cent of normal library transactions.

Libraries have hundreds of volunteers as well as friends groups. The new model would extend this and see communities helping to manage the library as well as support initiatives such as IT buddying or children and older people's activities. Nearly half (48 per cent) of the 5,600 survey respondents said they would volunteer to help libraries, and 1800 people have already registered their interest in volunteering. Cambridgeshire will also join up with four other local authorities to provide backroom library services to drive down costs. Communities with least need will be approached to see if they could run the service

themselves, with the support of the Council and the new Trust. This would be similar to the library access points which are already run by volunteers. Libraries could also look to merge or share facilities with other services to reduce costs or move to other, more cost effective, buildings in the same area.

Some 77 per cent of survey respondents said they wanted to see libraries used as community hubs where various agencies and community groups could use the buildings. Communities are asked to take the lead in helping support their library to meet the savings targets.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "Cambridgeshire County Council is clear that libraries are vital community hubs that we need to support as much as we can and work together to keep them open. That is why we have come up with proposals that are based on what residents have said to us, that keep services but still make the savings needed. "There are much we all can do together to reduce costs and transform the library service but communities must be encouraged to continue to play their part if they want services to remain. Due to the tremendous challenge we are facing we could have made the decision to close libraries but that would not be the right thing to do. We have put forward a plan that will change the delivery of services and put communities at the heart of that transformation.

COUNTY ON LINE PLANNING COMPLAINTS FORM

Cambridgeshire County Council, as the local minerals and waste planning authority, has recently introduced an on-line form for reporting breaches of planning control. You can use this form to report breaches of planning control which relate to minerals or waste activities, and County Council developments within Cambridgeshire. To access the complaint form please follow the steps below. Log onto the County Council's web site at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/> Alternatively click on the following link or copy it into your web browser

<https://forms.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/customer/servlet/ep.app?ut=X&type=404092>

You can still report breaches of planning control which relate minerals or waste activities and County Council developments by telephone or in writing using our contact details below.

ZERO COUNCIL TAX INCREASE AND A RADICAL NEW APPROACH TO SERVICES IN COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET

There will be no increase in the County Council's element of Council Tax in the next financial year, and probably no increase for a further four years, proposals released have reveal. The County Council has unveiled its budget plan covering the next five years, which aims to save £50.4 million in 2011/12 and £160.6 million over the life of the plan. The proposals were considered as the Council's answer to the most difficult financial situation in its history as the Council deals with the increasing pressures of demand, an increasing and ageing population and inflation coupled with a 14 per cent reduction in the core funding received from Government.

They are defined by a new set of Council priorities - supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most, helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities, and developing the local economy for the benefit of all. The proposals also contain radical changes to the way the Council works. Four principles will guide the way the Council work - being a genuinely local council, making sure the right services are provided in the right way, investing in prevention, and working together. Savings proposed cover all aspects of the Council's business.

In Children's Services, 2011/12 budget £121 million, a fundamental shift from universal to targeted services, which over the next four years would save £1 million from youth services, £761,000 from home to school transport and £600,000 from children's centres. Direct support to some children and young people will end, saving £1 million from disability services, £527,000 from specialist teaching, £315,000 from budgets for educating looked after children and £301,000 from the Racial Equality and Diversity Service. The Council aims to save £950,000 from children's social care, £240,000 from early year service, and £3 million from mainstream and special educational needs school transport.

In Social Care, Libraries & Community, 2011/12 budget £195 million, promoting prevention and localism will save £2.9 million, adopting reablement approach a further £4.75 million, and decreasing the cost of high cost and complex placements will save £1.3 million.

In Environment Services, 2011/12 budget £42 million, a restructuring of Trading Standards will save £641,000 over four years, reducing spending on environment and climate change £492,000, a restructuring of waste services will save £159,000 and a reduction in senior management will save £100,000. Further efficiencies from the highways services contract will save £2.4 million, and restructuring Highways and Access £1.1 million. In public transport, phasing out subsidised bus services will save £2.7 million but there will be an extra £1 million invested in supporting community transport schemes over the next five years as well as a summit on how to make public transport more locally focussed and value for money. There will also be a £1.4 million saving in revenue funded highways maintenance but an extra £3.85 million investment in this area from capital funds.

In Corporate Directorates, Shared and Professional Service, current budget £43 million, over a four-year period, reducing properties and maximizing office space in retained buildings will save over £1 million, reducing the contact centre opening hours and moving more services being accessed and delivered online £426,000, reducing IT functions and delivering services in different ways will save £989,000 and reducing communications and marketing activity will save up to £550,000. Budget decisions have and are being made in conjunction with Community Impact Assessments, which consider the impact of our services on communities, with particular reference to ensuring equality and cohesion. These will continue as changes are made to services.

Councillor John Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance, said: "These are unprecedented times. We know that rises in VAT, fuel prices and living costs in general are impacting on family budgets. So the first thing to get right is to make sure we don't add to that, and so we propose not to increase our portion of council tax in the next year. To deliver our proposed plan, The Council will have to work in a completely different way. We will be a genuinely local council. We'll hand decisions about spending and service provision to people at the most local level wherever possible. We know that a lot of people are already actively involved in their local areas, and we want to free up communities to do even more and support themselves. We will focus on prevention - helping people early on, increasing their independence and choice, and helping them to help themselves. We will make sure that every

penny in every pound counts. We will protect the frontline and will be as efficient behind-the-scenes as possible. We will work even more closely with voluntary organisations, and communities to make sure we're joined up and providing the best value possible."

"The reduction in our grant reflects the part public services have to play in repaying the nation debt. There is no escaping the fact that there will be cuts to services. Cambridgeshire was already a lean authority and that has made for difficult decisions. "We will focus more than ever on our priorities, so our proposals will protect the most vulnerable, help people to live independent and healthy lives, and promote economic growth."

COUNCIL PLANS IN PLACE TO FIX BAM NUTTALL'S BUSWAY DEFECTS

The Council plans to fix defects on the Busway and charge the cost to BAM Nuttall if it continues to dispute there are problems between St Ives and Cambridge. Busway contractors BAM Nuttall were notified of six defects on the route more than a year ago and despite a public statement by the firm saying the problems would be fixed months ago they still remain.

BAM Nuttall's own surveys have shown some of the gaps between the guideway beams that allow them to expand during hot weather are narrower than the contractor's accepted design - one of the defects.

BAM Nuttall's view is the narrow gaps are not a problem but refused to carry out calculations to show this. As a result the Council has had to carry out independent surveys which have shown that the narrower gaps could cause damage to the beams. To correct the problem the Council plans to grind fractions from the ends of the beams where necessary to even up the gaps.

BAM Nuttall has failed to document that the use of shallower foundations than specified on some short sections of the route will not cause the track to move over time affecting the ride quality. BAM Nuttall will be liable for the defect if any work was needed in the future. If BAM Nuttall fails to rectify the defects to the Council's satisfaction after the contract has been completed, and they have had a period of 28 days as set out in the contract, the Council can bring in a new contractor as planned. BAM Nuttall will be liable for the Council's costs which will be deducted from monies being held back from BAM Nuttall (called retention) that should be paid to them after completion. Bus operators who will run services have echoed the Council's view that defects that could cause the Busway to close again once it is open need to be rectified before passenger services begin. The Council will continue to deduct almost £14,000 a day from BAM Nuttall for late delivery of the project until the contractor completes the contract - almost £9 million has already been deducted.

Local County Councillor John Reynolds said: "Whilst we would still welcome BAM Nuttall making good on their earlier pledge to residents to fix all of the notified defects, they have had months to get the work done and I would be shocked if they had a change of heart now. We now have plans in place to correct BAM Nuttall's defective works and the costs of doing this will be deducted from the contractor and not paid for by taxpayers. It is frustrating that the Council has had to do extra checks on BAM Nuttall's works, and correct what they have got wrong - but the route will be in tip-top condition when it opens. All residents really want to see is construction completed so the rest of the process to open the route can finally begin - that entire process hinges on BAM Nutall at this stage and the Council will keep residents up to date with their progress."

ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES PERFORMING WELL

The annual assessment by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) has concluded that Adult Social Care Services in Cambridgeshire are performing well above expectation and in some cases have been rated as excellent. The CQC report praises staff at all levels for their 'clear vision in respect of adult social care' and the authority's commitment to tackling inequalities across the county and its work with partners to provide services and support to the diverse Cambridgeshire community. Of the seven assessment areas, the services provided by Cambridgeshire County Council and in partnership with other agencies were universally rated as performing 'well' with two highlighted as excellent.

Performing well ratings were achieved for:

Improved health and well-being - Increased choice and control
Freedom from discrimination and harassment - Economic well-being
Maintaining personal dignity and respect

Excellent ratings were awarded for:

Improved quality of life - Making a positive contribution

The CQC reports states: "The Council has a clear vision for the delivery of adult social care services and has made significant progress on transformation (of services).

RECYCLING NEWS

New banks to collect old CDs, DVDs, PC games, hard and soft backed books and board games for reuse and recycling have just been put in place at all 9 of the County Council's household recycling centres across Cambridgeshire. The recycling centres are now operated by Waterbeach based waste management company Donarbon Ltd, as part of the Council's 28 year PFI household waste management contract, and a section of the contract requires Donarbon to establish new recycling facilities where ever possible.

The new large blue 'media banks' have been delivered to all the recycling centres. Residents are being urged to put as much material in the banks as possible. The banks will be emptied by West Midlands based company Wilcox Reprocessors, who trade extensively in north east and north west Africa, where the books are used mainly in education, and the CDs, DVDs and the computer and board games are sold for reuse where possible. Any materials not suitable for reuse are shredded in the UK and paper from the books is recycled into new paper, and the plastics from the CDs, DVDs etc. and their cases are recycled into new items.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONTINUE TO PERFORM WELL

Children's services in Cambridgeshire are continuing to perform well, according to Government inspectors. The team from OfSTED - the Office for Standards in Education – said the large majority of services, settings and institutions were found to be good or better. "The local authority fostering and adoption agencies are good, as is much of the early years and childcare provision. Provision for children in council care has improved over the last year and now five of eight local authority homes are good," said their assessment.

Inspectors found a very large majority of the county's nursery and primary schools to be good. They said secondary schools and sixth forms do not do quite as well - apart from one sixth form college which was outstanding and another which was good. However, inspectors also reported that "Standards continue to rise in secondary schools and by the age of 16 more than half of young people gain five or more good grades at GCSE - this is better than elsewhere. Those from most minority ethnic groups often do well," they added. They praised three out of the county's four pupil referral units, but said the fourth - which was judged as inadequate in 2009 - was not improving quickly enough. The assessment found that parents of disabled children showed higher than average levels of satisfaction with local health services.

Cambridgeshire has a low rate of teenage conceptions, and the number of young women under the age of 18 who become pregnant is falling at a faster rate than nationally," it added. Safeguarding was also praised - inspectors said ongoing improvements to safeguarding arrangements and service delivery had impacted positively on outcomes for children and young people.

Inspectors also said child carers, nurseries, secondary schools and colleges were good at helping children and young people do well and enjoy their learning. The assessment said the number of students achieving good qualifications is similar to elsewhere, but noted that young people from low-income families do not do as well at the age of 19. "Almost all outcomes for children and young people are good or improving," the assessment concluded.

Yours John Reynolds

Should you have any queries on the above or if I can help with any local issues, please contact me at the address below.

County Councillor: John Reynolds, 4 Hollytrees, Bar Hill, CB23 8SF. Telephone 01954 200571

john.reynolds@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

John Reynolds Jan 2011

APPENDIX B

Report from District Councillor Douglas de Lacey
12. 1. 2011

A very quiet period in which, I suspect, all local authorities are trying to come to terms with what the Coalition's approach to local government is going to mean on the ground. The cynical will be convinced that the main effect will be that many of the cuts will appear to be administered by Districts and Counties rather than central government; realists will be looking to ensure that Localism does not mean that pressure groups will be able to wield undue influence. It is too early to say what the effect will be on the big issues which affect Girton: Northstowe, the NW Cambridge developments, Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, the A14; as well as less obvious issues of infrastructure.

A little before Christmas there were 3 significant PFH meetings.

1. Planning. As the Coalition envisages significant changes in Planning policy, a draft Service Plan was adopted. This had quite a bit in it about cooperation with Parish Councils, something which has not been very obvious in the past, and I hope this will turn out to be more than just token meetings at inconvenient times and place to discuss nebulously broad issues.

We also looked at 'Service Improvements & Performance Indicators', a heading which included a report on the new planning website. I had to say that I simply did not recognise our system in the anodyne report offered ('a number of teething issues ... the vast majority ... resolved ... [only] three issues that remain outstanding ...') and I hope that will be minuted. But as the meeting had already over-run and the New Communities PFH was champing at the bit I had to let it go.

2. New Communities. The first issue here was the massive report into finding new areas for accommodating Gypsies and Travellers. Since the Government has not yet published its policy on this issue, the only decision taken was to remove a few of the proposed sites from consideration.

We then looked at a proposed Water Cycle Strategy, which will be the blueprint for the infrastructure of all the proposed major developments. Councillors pushed for clarification and more details in some key areas, and the strategy will come back for further discussion next year.

3. Northstowe. This was a real damp squib: if the PHh did not have a rag-bag of other responsibilities he'd have nothing to do. The best he could manage was to endorse the Northstowe element in the Planning policy mentioned above.

There was also a meeting of the Housing PFH which I could not attend, but the current financial situation had made a difficult situation here worse. We wasted a huge amount of money trying to persuade council tenants to sell out; now there is that much less money to spend on our tenants' needs. It is still too early to assess the change I mentioned last month which should reduce our outgoings, I hope to have more details next month.

A Conservative Councillor has resigned owing to pressure of work. This means that the Council is technically No Overall Control with the Conservatives holding precisely 50% of the seats. In turn that means that the electors of Cambourne will not simply be voting for a local Member. The outcome will affect the whole of South Cambridgeshire.

On 12 January there was the Corporate Governance Committee meeting which among other things was presented with the formal Letter from the external auditor, who noted that there had been an enormous improvement over the past 12 months and the letter consequently had a very different tone from last year's.

After the meeting I was able to talk to the Head of Planning about our planning database and the ongoing problems. we discussed the needs of Parishes and I am promised a meeting with all the relevant staff in the near future.

Douglas de Lacey

APPENDIX C

Chairman's Report to Girton Parish Council
11. 1.2011

Councillors will be aware that Councillor James Ford-Smith died on December 28 after a mercifully short illness, and that his funeral will take place at St Andrew's Church on Thursday 13 January at 2pm. In James the Council loses a dedicated, enthusiastic and experienced Councillor, and his loss reduces our number to 12. I am grateful that three members of our community have already expressed their willingness to serve on the Council.

South Cambs DC has set up a Parish Forum to help officers make the new planning system provide the needs of Parishes. I was disappointed that we were given a bare 24 hours' notice of the first meeting and no-one from Girton could attend, but I hope this forum will enable us to press for appropriate functionality: at present the software is frankly disappointing.

On 10 January I met the rump of the Parish Plan Committee to explain the delays in the adoption of the Plan by the Council. I am grateful that there are still members of that committee who wish to see the project out, and hope we can reward all their hard work.

I have been asked to meet members of the Village Feast committee to discuss funding and other issues. I hope to be to report further on this at the Council meeting.

Finally I would like to thank everyone for the informal meeting at which I believe we achieved a great deal. I certainly found it a great help in my efforts to lead this Council for the good of the Village.

Douglas de Lacey