

### A View from the District (May 2011)

As I mentioned last month, I missed the last Council meeting; but from the minutes not a great deal affected Girton. An explanation of the promised consultations (which never happened) over recycling was requested. The laconic response was 'that all parish councils had been e-mailed in February 2011 with details of the review' – not quite the same thing. The Council approved a modification which will mean that the NIAB developments (including NIAB 2, which is wholly in South Cambs) will be managed by the City's planning office. I had already argued against this at earlier stages, but to no effect. Cllr Kindersley moved that we spend no more money on Northstowe as there is no prospect of progress in the foreseeable future, but with a vote predictably split along party lines the motion was lost.

I am still working with the Parish Council to encourage SCDC to offer to the Parish the land South Cambs owns at Wellbrook Way. SCDC has agreed to re-value the land with some or all of it coming to the Parish and we are exploring possible funding options. I was pleased that at the Annual Parish Meeting Cllr Bygott announced that he supported the idea, but the Portfolio Holder has yet to be convinced.

The planning application for a block of flats at Mayfield Road has been approved by the Planning Committee. There is enough evidence of irregularity in reports of the meeting for me to wish to take this up with the administration and if necessary with the Ombudsman.

The Climate Change Working Group has had its last meeting of the year, to appraise the results of the forum I mentioned last month. CCWG has been a good talking shop and has some significant results to its credit – most notably the Sustainable Parishes Energy Partnership – but some of us feel that the time has now come for more concrete action. The forum was a start, and indicated clearly how important it is that the Council take a lead in encouraging and harnessing low-carbon development.

The same day I attended a forum to discuss our planning IT. The addition of a mapping module to the planning site has been a great improvement, but almost all the original problems remain (together with a few newly-discovered ones). We discovered that officers had little understanding of the specific needs of Parishes from a planning database, and much useful ground was covered. We shall of course need to monitor any resulting progress. However, the mapping module (which is much more under SCDC control than the main database) is likely to be expanded in a number of useful ways if we can get permission to add layers such as flood plains and archaeological sites. It is well worth exploring at <http://plan.scambs.gov.uk> where you will find a link to the maps.

If you would like a fuller monthly report emailed to you please contact me at [scdc@de-lacey.org](mailto:scdc@de-lacey.org) and I shall add you to the list of recipients. If you have any District Council issues you would like to discuss please don't hesitate to ask me.

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