

A View from the District (June 2012)

The first Council of the new session is largely housekeeping. The three Group leaders had met beforehand and two of us had reluctantly accepted the Leader's plans for committees (he now has a majority of 9); but Cllr Kindersley and I both objected to them being presented as 'recommended [*sic*] by political group leaders [plural]'. From Girton's perspective the most distressing result is that I was not appointed to the JDCC, the committee responsible for all aspects of the North-West Cambridge development. As Cllr Bygott is not on the committee either this means that a development, half of which is in Girton, will proceed with no local representation at all. It is hard to see how this is in the best interests of our residents. I shall of course attend meetings and expect to be permitted to speak.

A joint Village Plan was received by the Council from the parishes of Barton, Coton, Grantchester and Madingley; and pressed by a local councillor the PFH affirmed that it is without doubt a material planning consideration. That adds significant strength to our own Village Plan as we face further possible development in Girton.

The Council has held a further briefing for the Northstowe development, which served to indicate the significant problems we shall face in the light of the proposed phased development, which blows away all the carefully-planned infrastructure for schools, retail and industrial units. It is proposed to provide only 20 Traveller pitches – a minute proportion of the number needed in South Cambs – but even these are now deferred to the indefinite future. I asked again whether we could trade off the building of truly carbon-zero homes against the obligation to provide renewable energy and was told this was too much of a moving target. On transport issues we were informed that the A14 improvements at Girton interchange amount to signing & lining – and very expensive signing and lining – and that a survey is being done on CGB's effect on A14.

I am now on the Scrutiny Committee as well as Corporate Governance and a to-be-modified Climate Change Working Group. I am also our Group's substitute on the Licensing and Employment Committees, and have attended training sessions on each. One rather startling datum to come out of the training is that human rights legislation trumps all other, so that licensing (and indeed planning) regulations could be overturned if either side could persuade a judge that its rights in some area are likely to be infringed. Possible, but probably very expensive.

If you would like a fuller monthly report emailed to you please contact me at 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.

Douglas de Lacey
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