

## A View from the District

I must begin with an apology. The Council's approach to funding and financial cuts (which I do not share) has meant that there is now absolutely no slack at the lower echelons of our staff. So when the refuse department suffered some absences over Easter, the staff who empty our public waste bins and dog bins had to be redeployed on the dust carts, and for two weeks our public bins were not emptied. I regret this. But, come on dog owners, surely you don't need instructions on what to do with your offerings if the bin turns out to be full? The answer is **not** to create a little pyramid on the ground beneath the bin. I do hope that responsible owners will be able to shame the others into acting responsibly and taking their offerings home for their own black bins rather than creating an ugly health hazard around the village.

I recently received an email entitled 'The Wolf at the Door in [a local Girton postcode]' describing the horrors of children being evicted from council homes. On contacting the writer for fuller details I discovered that the postcode had been filled in at the suggestion of the Children's Society; and I have confirmed that there is no hint of such problems in South Cambs. If you have real concerns about our Council's activities I want to know them, but please don't just pass on scaremongering.

The Joint Development Control Committee on 18 March began with a useful briefing on 'affordable housing'. There are up to six different ways of calculating the 'local market rent' even before one begins to ask what proportion of that counts as 'affordable'. It was noted that the private rented sector does not work in the Cambridge area as a means of keeping prices down. The only substantive items on the agenda were the construction of a building for the Wildlife Trusts at Trumpington Meadows, and continued use of parts of Marshall's land for parking. This was followed by a presentation on the market housing for North-West Cambridge which should be built to a very high standard.

Otherwise, Northstowe again featured large. On 25 March after a morning site-visit we had the long-awaited meeting to decide the future of Phase 2. To do him credit, the Chairman allowed all members of the public who wanted a say a full three minutes, plus the possibility of answering questions from councillors. We began at 2pm, and the last speaker stood down at around 7.45, when the Chairman abruptly closed the meeting. This has left us in confusion, unclear whether the meeting was closed, postponed or simply abandoned. It has now been decided to re-run the meeting in June, by which time I hope that the developer and officers will have addressed many of the concerns raised. These include the amount of green open space, the amount of money (Section 106 money) for developing the community, a burial ground and much more. There is still a lot to do.

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.

*Douglas de Lacey*