

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

LONGSTANTON, NORTHSTOWE & OVER

COVERING OAKINGTON & WESTWICK

APRIL 2022

CLLR FIROUZ THOMPSON – COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

HIGHWAYS

There have been a number of complaints about the state of the roads across the county that are in a similar state and sit in a long queue – and the same goes for pavements.

We'd like to thank everyone who takes the trouble to report faults at <https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/> as this creates an essential public record. We understand that the wait can be frustrating but encourage people to continue doing so – it makes a difference. Sadly, a negligent underinvestment in roads, pavements and drains by previous County administrations over a period of many years, due to an unwillingness to raise funds and poor management, has left the highways network in a crisis state that will take time to turn around, particularly given the state of public finances across the board. That said, new management systems are now being implemented, with a back to basics approach.

MEADOW FARM CLOSE: Following the recent resurfacing on this road, it was highlighted by the Local Highways Officer that the large tree roots have damaged the surfacing of the footpath. Following conversation with Oakington & Westwick Parish Clerk, we are proposing that we remove the area of hard surface around the tree and replace with grass seeds but still have a hard surface smaller footpath. We hope that the Parish Council approves of this proposal.

OVER DAY CARE BIKE RIDES – 12 JUNE

I am working with the Cllr Adrian Tranter from Over Parish Council to start a 2nd starting point for residents taking part from Longstanton, Northstowe and Oakington for the bike rides, in the hopes of raising more money and the profile of Over Day Care Centre in our community.

COUNTY WIDE NEWS

COVID-19

Free lateral flow and PCR tests ended from 1 April. Vaccinations: the roll out of vaccinations for 5 to 11 year olds will begin from 31 March. Advice at this point is that children will be vaccinated in pharmacies and mass vaccination centres rather than in primary schools. Mobile vaccination centres are still in operation—see the schedule at <https://www.thevaccinators.co.uk/>

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS – A14 TREES

A motion at the County Council was brought by my colleague LibDem Cllr Edna Murphy from Bar Hill relating to the lack of maintenance and care over the thousands of trees planted alongside the A14; many of those trees are now dead. I have been campaigning alongside Cllr Edna Murphy and Cllr Ros Hathorn from Histon & Impington to hold National Highways to account.

The motion called on the County Council to ask National Highways to publish facts and figures on a regular basis about the tree planting work - including how many are alive and how many have been replanted - as well as report regularly on the progress of the initiative to councillors. One of the legacies of the major A14 project was for tens of thousands of trees to be planted, but that risks being spoiled unless National Highways makes sure the trees are maintained and replaced when necessary. It was hoped the tree planting would create noise barriers for people who live by the busy road and would also make a positive environmental contribution. However, the council has said the initiative is failing in both these areas. National Highways is responsible for the A14 and agreed the tree planting program with the County Council. Following the motion's success, it is gratifying to note that National Highways have reacted positively to address the issues.

JUST TRANSITION

Budget proposals agreed by Cambridgeshire County Council at Full Council (on 8th February) to create a Just Transition Fund, which as well as funding key priorities of the council, will offer money directly to local communities.

"A 'just transition' means moving to a more sustainable Cambridgeshire in a way that's fair to everyone." said Cllr Tom Sanderson, Chair of the Council's Communities and Social Mobility Committee. "So over the next five years, we want to use the Just Transition Fund to continue to tackle inequality, improve residents' lives, and care for the environment." Following the decision by Full Council, £1.5m will be invested in the Think Communities team, with around £1m of that coming from the Just Transition Fund.

The Think Communities approach works with communities to develop services that people need in their own local area, and they can take control of themselves, building resilience and independence. These projects could include:

- Local projects supporting more vulnerable residents living alone or in isolation – particularly after coming home from a stay in hospital.
- A 'care micro enterprises' scheme to help adults and older people to have greater choice and control over how their care needs are met.
- Local 'repair cafes' making use of the skills of the 'repairer' as well as households in need.

Further information will be made available to communities to allow them to apply for funding to get projects off the ground, or to increase the reach and impact of local initiatives which fulfil the needs of residents at a very local level.

COUNCILS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND KEY GOVERNMENT FUNDED ORGANISATIONS

If you have a problem or concern do not worry too much about who can solve it just ask the question and we will endeavour to signpost to the right person. The organisational structure of Cambridgeshire is complex, but it is important to identify where responsibility lies.

<p>County Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Education, Transport, Highways, Heritage, Social care, Libraries, Trading standards, Waste management, Maintaining their estate.</p> <p>Some of these services are shared between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council but any concerns should be directed to the county council.</p>
<p>District Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Council tax payments and benefits, Household bin collections, Housing and housing benefits, Council leisure facilities, Environmental health, Residential planning.</p>
<p>Parish/ Town Council</p> <p>Responsibilities: Looking after community buildings, Open spaces, Allotments, Play Areas, Bus shelters.</p>
<p>Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)</p> <p>'The local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government worth up to £500 million over 15 years, to vital improvements in infrastructure (decarbonising transport), supporting and accelerating the creation of 44,000 new jobs, 33,500 new homes and 420 additional apprenticeships.'</p> <p>Partnership between Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, University of Cambridge.</p>
<p>The Combined Authority, Cambridge and Peterborough, our elected Mayor</p> <p>'A combined authority (CA) is a legal body set up using national legislation that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.'</p> <p>What our mayor does – Business support, skills, housing, transport, environment, international, digital connectivity, resilience, research, and strategy. New homes.</p>
<p>Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridge, and Peterborough</p> <p>To support and challenge the Chief Constable to provide effective and efficient policing services for the area.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority</p> <p>The Fire Authority is the governing body responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is made up of Cambridgeshire County Councillors and Peterborough City Councillors.</p>

COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Monthly email newsletter - with updates on local news as well as wider district issues which will impact us all. To sign up please go to: https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/email_signup_longstanton

(Note to help us manage GDPR it is easier for us to host from the LibDems webpage, but we absolutely promise this link will NOT subscribe you to LibDem news)

For all the latest news & updates so far please go to: https://www.sclibdems.org.uk/longstanton_news

For those on social media we have a highly active Facebook group covering the whole ward here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2066298150052161/>

Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about these, or any other matters.

Firouz Thompson, County Councillor for Longstanton, Oakington & Westwick, Northstowe & Over

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