

4 Clerk's/Chairman's report

Quality Status – the chairman and clerk have sent in the application for Quality Status.

(469/06)

(70/2-07)

Meeting Chesterton Fen

“OLD CHESTERTON RESIDENTS’ ASSOCIATION

Note of a Meeting concerning Chesterton Fen at St Andrew’s Hall, Chesterton, on 16th January, 2007.

Present:

OCRA: Clive Brown (Chairman), Sarah Woodall (Vice-Chairman), Michael Bond (Secretary), Shah Meftah, Ann Stockford, Joy Voisey

Milton Parish Council: Jane Coston (Chair), Hazel Smith (also SCDC), Richard Summerfield (also SCDC), Paul Oldham

Fen Ditton Parish Council: Mark Cullen

Fen Ditton Village Society: Lindsay Stuart-Green

Cambridge City Council: Jenny Bailey, Marian Holness

Cambridgeshire County Council: Julian Huppert

Cam Conservators: Dr Philippa Noon

Save Our Green Spaces: Peter Constable

Clive Brown welcomed everyone to the meeting and following introductions outlined three themes that OCRA had identified as being of mutual concern to Chesterton, Milton and Fen Ditton:

- Development of Chesterton Fen and along Fen Road
- Proposals in the Cambridge East Transport Strategy paper
- Relocation of the sewage works.

Chesterton Fen is part of the Cambridge Green belt. It is an area bounded by the river, the A14 and the railway line. Whilst a small part falls within the City boundary, most of it falls within Milton Parish but is cut off from Milton by the A14. A large part is flood plain for the River Cam.

There has been a consistent pattern of unauthorised development which has later been approved retrospectively, occasionally with limiting conditions to protect the flood plain. Recently there have been two appeals on unauthorised waste treatment operations which have resulted in conditional approvals in both cases.

A substantial part of the development has been new travellers’ sites, for example at the large new Sandy Park development. This is subject to a further retrospective planning application, despite previous applications having been refused and the refusals upheld on appeal. No enforcement action had been taken by the District Council. Further tipping and building up of nearby sites indicated an intention to add further unauthorised sites to the Fen. If, as seems possible, Sandy Park is eventually authorised, those at the meeting were generally agreed that no further development was desirable, not

just to preserve the character of the area, but for the benefit of the people already living there, and that steps should be taken to prevent it.

Road access to the area was discussed. The only present access is over the railway crossing on Fen Road and this is unsatisfactory and potentially dangerous. It produces a large volume of traffic along Fen Road west of the crossing, Water Lane, and Green End Road. A link road from the Fen to Cowley Road/Milton Road has been dismissed as too expensive, but such a link is suggested in the transport strategy document for Cambridge East. It is unclear whether this would be busway only, or mixed transport. Jenny Bailey said it was unlikely that such a road, if built, would be mixed transport because of the cost, but that the viability of such a link would be increased if there was some housing development in the area between Fen Road and the railway line.

There are plans for a new railway station at Chesterton Junction and a decision is expected shortly. It is not clear what impact this will have on the traffic using the level crossing at Fen Road but the presumption is that the crossing will close for longer periods to accommodate trains using Chesterton Junction Station.

A transport strategy for the Cambridge East developments had been published and included proposals for new bus and cycle routes some of which would impact on Ditton Meadows, Stourbridge Common and Chesterton Fen. The long-standing need for an alternative vehicular access to the Fen which would allow the level crossing to be closed permanently was acknowledged in the report. The strategy indicated that this could be part of an extended bus roadway network.

A particular problem is the lack of infrastructure in the area. There is no foul sewerage. Most of the travellers’ sites depend on self-contained holding tanks which have to be emptied. An exception is a site opposite Sandy Park where permission was given for a private sewage treatment plant. This has not been satisfactory, and there has been sewage contamination of ditches near the river at Grassy Corner which is thought to originate from that site. Further incidents of this nature are a real potential problem.

Another issue is that of security and policing. Some parts of the Fen are perceived by local residents to have become a no-go area and that is not acceptable.

The River, Ditton Meadows and the Halingway: the stretch of river from the railway bridge down to Fen Ditton is a lovely rural aspect which could easily be ruined by development. This is a heritage we need to be careful to preserve. Matters of concern that were raised were (a) unsightly buildings on land beside the Halingway (e.g. the three storey buildings recently erected), (b) the proposed new bridge over the river beside the railway bridge (although it is cautiously accepted that if this is sympathetically designed and restricted to buses only it may be appropriate) and (c) upgrading and lighting of cycle paths detracting from the rural nature of the area, and causing light pollution (it was put that low level lighting would not be intrusive).

The river is an important amenity for the city and the preservation of the rural aspect from the Haling Way was seen as an important outcome of any proposals for new development. Chesterton Fen did not appear to rate highly on any official agenda and had not initially featured in the draft biodiversity strategies of either South Cambridgeshire District Council or Cambridge City Council.

The movement of the Milton sewage works had been proposed in order to release a major area of land for redevelopment. The suggested site at Honey Hill has met with strong opposition locally. Many people have expressed the view that the proposed location is inappropriate in terms of location with regard to existing villages and the proposed leisure route from Cambridge to Wicken Fen.

It was noted that the redevelopment of the area released for housing created a need for open space that could be met in part by Chesterton Fen but only if suitable access was provided. An all-traffic bridge over the railway into Chesterton Fen was essential. Without it the Fen Road level crossing could not be closed.

The above topics were discussed at length and a consensus was that Chesterton Fen was an important part of a green lung for Cambridge, Milton and Fen Ditton that should be actively supported and protected. Proposals for new bus and cycle routes should minimise their impact on green spaces. It was accepted that where possible existing routes and transport corridors should be used and encroachment onto open space kept to a minimum.

Those present agreed that further meetings should take place, possibly by way of smaller working parties, to progress joint local responses to the various pressures for development of this area and to develop a positive strategy for it. Such a strategy would need to be developed with due regard for and input from the people living in Chesterton Fen.

Michael Bond Chesterton Fen Strategy Meeting 7th March 2007.”

(84/2-07) CCTV - This link <http://www.milton.ukshells.co.uk/opus1762.html> will take you to the Information Commissioner's guidance note on CCTV. My conclusion from having read it is that Milton PC doesn't need to add CCTV to its Data Protection Act Register entry as this does not apply. The paragraph number 4 is the relevant one. (PKO)

(88/2-07) Horse grazing rights – I have spoken to Judy Westwood (JW). Our agreement is with Judith Ostler (JO). JW tells me that the original CCC agreement was with the two of them. (I suspect that arrangement was unofficial between JO and JW). JW tells me that JO's pony has died and that her (JW's) pony is 35 years old and that she would like to continue keeping it there for its last few years and is willing to pay the £400 this year and £500 next year. Her grand daughter also has a pony and may like to keep it there.

Should I write to both JO confirming the dissolution of her agreement and also to JW to prepare a new contract with her?

(107/3-07) Highway matters:

- cycle / foot bridge over A14:
CCTV, double yellow lines, morning burger van (chairman to report)
- Fen Road pot holes - I have asked Bob Howard to deal with these (copy MW).
- Ely Road bollards – I have asked Bob Howard when these are going to be re-instated (copy MW).
- North Lodge path – I have asked Bob Howard to look at the path which is being encroached by undergrowth. (copy MW). We are still concerned about the state of North Lodge (chairman will supply photographs). Please take a look if you have the time.
- Damaged fence High Street – RCTA has cleared away the damaged fence on behalf of the Milton Court Residents' Association.

(108/3-07) Graffiti service – there has been a spate of graffiti again – usually happens on Thursday afternoons/evenings.

(109/3-07) Land adjacent A14 – nothing received.

(111/3-07) Milton Charities – the Charities have given us £500 towards the cleaning of the war memorial and £1,000 towards the Community Care scheme (see 121/3-07).

Bus services – new timetable published. Sunday Citi 2 service as from 1 April.

(114/3-07)

Crime – From Chris Burns: “Reference: Neighbourhood Resources.

A resources meeting was recently held by the Senior Management Team (SMT) based at Parkside Police Station which included reference to Neighbourhood Policing within the South Cambridgeshire Sector.

It was decided that with effect from April this year, there would be a change in available resources within the teams which I supervise. With reference to the Histon Neighbourhood the following changes will directly affect the parishes:

The post of a dedicated Neighbourhood Officer for the villages of Histon and Impington will be withdrawn and at the same time, we will have another PCSO recruited to the Histon Neighbourhood who will be dedicated to Histon and Impington. In addition to this, the SMT have authorised the creation of an additional Sergeant Post for the Sector.

In effect this will mean that the Histon Neighbourhood resources will comprise of two police officers and four PCSO's, those being:

PC Paul Rogerson: Cottenham, Oakington, Rampton, Westwick and **Histon**.

PC Phil Shulver: Waterbeach, Landbeach, Milton and **Impington**.

PCSO Jackie King: Cottenham beat.

PCSO Scott Evans: Milton beat.

PCSO Karen Mahoney: Histon/Impington. (Currently in training and available from 23rd April)

PCSO Lee Page: Specific responsibility for IVC yet to assist with Histon/Impington.

The creation of the additional Neighbourhood Sergeant post will allow for more direct supervision of the Community Team and in essence enable the local officers to work closer with an operational supervisor.

In consultation with the Sector Commander Paul Ormerod, it was decided to split the Histon and Impington parishes between Phil and Paul. The main reason being that if either one was to take on both villages, then that would considerably increase their beat size and in doing so, we might be placed in the position where that beat would be unmanageable. On top of this, I was also keen that an officer would not be responsible for looking after two Village Colleges at the same time hence Phil will look after IVC with Paul continuing with CVC.

I think that it is also worthwhile to know that with effect from April, the community officers will also be working a new shift rota which will allow for better Team working to target local priorities such as those set through the regular Panel Meetings.

Whilst I acknowledge that the Parishes will be disappointed by the withdrawal of the Histon and Impington post, I would like to reassure you that there is not an actual reduction in available resources and with the inclusion of the sergeant's post, I believe that the team will be able to impact on local issues more effectively.”

(132/3-07)

APM – Simon McIntosh is coming to the APM but he is not sure whether a district councillor will attend (as it is in the pre-election period). The meeting will be in the main hall of the Community Centre at 7.30pm and Simon will attend at 8pm. This has been advertised in the Village View.

(133/3-07)

Colts Football – Landbeach PC thanked IFM for attending their March meeting and asked to be kept informed of progress with the development of football pitches adjacent Landbeach Road. IFM had asked for financial help towards new goal posts at Landbeach – to comply with new regulations. Landbeach PC felt unable to justify any expenditure towards these goal posts but did still support Milton Colts' use of their recreation ground.

(135/3-07)

Junior netball – a letter from the secretary of Milton Netball Club was received thanking Council for the contribution towards new kit for the junior section of the club. Letters received also from some of the netball players.