



GAMLINGAY PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

held at

Kier Suite, rear of The Eco Hub, Stocks Lane, Gamlingay
On Tuesday, 23rd April, 2019 at 7.30 p.m.

Minutes

1. Welcome and to note the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on 24th April 2018.
2. **Chairman's Report** – (Appendix 1)
3. **Audited Accounts of the Parish Council** for year ending 31st March, 2018. Copies provided.

4. To receive reports from County Councillor Mr. S. Kindersley – Chief concern at County level this year has been finance. In 2013-14 the Council got £86million for services but in 2019-20 it received nil. In the next 3 years a further £69m of savings need to be made. 2% increase on adult social care element of council tax and 2.99% (maximum permitted) on the rest. Result is a £1.15 increase per week on a band D property. Voluntary sector will be heavily relied upon. People in general are living longer and therefore pressure on all services is increased. CCC looking to create income – realizing/maximizing its assets as landowner. Gamlingay's First School site has been put forward for development – SK feels this is “bonkers” – important that local use of the site is long established. As site was compulsorily purchased, the original owner (Merton college) will benefit from any future sale. Education – schools funding overall slightly improved but Cambridgeshire's funding is reduced. Local government in Cambridgeshire now has 5 layers – too many, will need to be addressed and reduced. CCC HQ moving to new location in Alconbury – will cause access issues – poor public transport links. From a personal perspective, the East West Rail issue has dominated – SK feels the authorities have “rolled over” the logical routes. District Cllr. Mrs. B Smith(Appendix 2)

5. **Presentations :-**
 - a) Mrs A Webb -Chair of Gamlingay Community Safety Group. -introducing
 - b) Mr Jason Ablewhite- Police and Crime Commissioner- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough. Approach needed to ensure services provided are delivered cohesively. He has no operational say on how Police business is run. The Gamlingay Community Safety Group is an exemplar –

bringing local crime watch type schemes up to date and the emphasis on crime prevention is absolutely correct. The Police are looking to generate income from existing land holdings and by collaborating with other forces to make savings. Challenges – Cambridgeshire Constabulary gets 350 000 calls per annum. Officers spend 80% of their time dealing with non crime related issues. An aging population and vulnerability plays a large part. Mental health issues are involved in 6% of calls – in Cambridgeshire this percentage is twice the national average. The preservation of life is first and foremost in Police priorities. Good news is that by the end of 2020 there will be record numbers of constables – 1496 compared to 1342 in 2004. There will also be 220 specials and 80 PCSO's. People are more likely to be victims of cyber of cyber enabled crime than any other type. Crime locally has seen a slight increase but lower than national average – Gamlingay reports between 5 and 10 crimes per month. One street in Peterborough reports 220 in same period. South Cambs remains one of the safest places to live – 31 crimes per 1000 households compared to national average of 71. Wants to see new constables taking on community crime preventative roles. People rarely realise that over ½ the officers in Cambridgeshire will be in plain clothes. Questions:

1. Can we get speed monitoring equipment on Station Rd?
Advised to contact his office with details of request.
2. What is law on parking on pavement?
Not illegal but obstruction is – officers make judgement and can issue fixed penalty if a wheelchair could not pass. Obstruction of visibility is also an offence.
3. What evidence is there of cross border collaboration – Gamlingay suffers from being on the border of two counties?
Lots of different arenas in which best practice is shared. New Chief Constable and Deputy bring fresh perspective.
4. Resident was mugged in village – can we have CCTV? Can we have Police presence at certain times of week?
Should not be seen as a panacea. Lots of places have different systems. Police resources are always stretched, but he hopes that as the service grows, Gamlingay will see better service.
5. A resident had difficulty using the online reporting system and 101 were not helpful.
Will feedback the issue.
6. Why don't the Police take shoplifting in the local Co-op seriously?
Shoplifting is not a huge priority – large retailers make allowances for loss and must take their part and could perhaps employ private security. It is important that each incident is reported to the Police. Mr Ablewhite invited Parish Council Chair to come for a tour of the force control.

c) Mr Neil Muirhead- Gamlingay Community Centre Ltd. Gave a presentation illustrating how GCC Ltd is fulfilling its objectives in delivering a facility for the community – 93% community use. Loss of revenue from Day Nursery has been replaced due to hard work by management, staff and volunteers. Lots of varied use in the building. Need to increase corporate use to maximize income. Need to attract and

recruit more volunteers for general duties and trustees – all present asked to spread the word.

7. Questions from the Public

1. Could Church Street only have parking on one side at certain times?
Scheme was drawn up by expert transport consultants and each measure had to be approved by County Highways. Resulting measures were the best that could be provided. SK added that the opening of the new A14 and A428 improvements may help alleviate rat running through villages. A lorry ban had been proposed in the past but would be very problematic due to the large numbers of local drivers and businesses using HGV's.

2. Stocks Lane/Church Lane junction is worse since it was narrowed – drivers still try to turn there.

Narrowing was done to try to prevent u turns blocking up Church St and to make it safer for pedestrians to cross. Drivers need to be more patient.

7. To transact such other business as may be incidental to the Meeting.
None. Closed at 21.30.

GAMLINGAY PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018 – 2019

Good evening and welcome again to our Annual Parish Meeting. My name is Colin Smith and I am Chair of Gamlingay Parish Council and tonight as I said earlier we will be covering a number of themes including the Eco Hub, and the newly formed Gamlingay Community Safety Group followed by Question and Answer sessions.

We have had a very busy year in which we have met for :-

- 11 Full Council Meetings
- 20 Planning Meetings
- 86 Planning Applications
 - 3 Public Meetings – EW Rail, West Rd Planning & Neighbourhood Plan
 - 8 Neighbourhood Plan Meetings
 - 3 PCLC Meetings
 - 9 Finance & G.P. Meetings
 - 4 Publications Meetings

With the Council Elections last Spring we, for the first time in a number of years, were able to start the year with a totally elected group of Parish Councillors, with the later resignation of one Councillor (Jackie McGeady – past Chair) and one Co-opted replacement (Adrian Foster) over the year. A full list of Councillors and their profiles are available on our Web Site and, due to recent relocation of one of our Councillors will shortly be looking to fill one more vacancy.

Also re-elected were our District Councillor Bridget Smith (now the leader of SCDC) and our County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley who are an asset connecting us to higher authorities and who endeavour to keep us fully informed on everything that is happening outside our village.

Other projects this year have seen the disposal, with development planning approval of the W.I Hall enabling us to reduce by £187,740 our Public Works Loan Board Commitments on the Eco Hub and, more importantly, helped us to set a 2019/ 2020 Precept (Budget) with no increase which is actually a reduction per household in the Parish Council element of your Council Tax.

The parking improvements scheme in Church Street, long delayed by highways and regulation issues, and getting the County Council to join us by finally repairing the Potholes in the road at the same time, are now complete and we will shortly be supporting the re-surfacing of the car park at the back of the cross to provide additional parking during the day time.

Substantial improvements to the playground in the Stocks Lane recreation area including new steps to the hub and ongoing refurbishment, with the much appreciated team of volunteers, to the bike track.

The funding and provision of a Footpath on Everton Road, albeit shorter than ideal at present but we will continue to strive for more funding to make it safer for local residents to walk their children to school in Everton. Sadly, although this is primarily on the Bedfordshire side of the road no funding was forthcoming from that direction.

The Solution Gamlingay App has been developed and launched with extensive input from Bridget Smith as the Project Manager and was wholly funded with a grant from the European Leader Programme and by the community development charity Forward Gamlingay. The App promotes economic growth and jobs in connection with Businesses and Groups in Gamlingay with c.50 Companies/ Traders now involved and advertising and is already proving to be a great success in bringing together Business and Jobs

The Remembrance Service was held at the new Cemetery beside the re-located War Memorial commemorating 100 years since the end of World War One and was well attended with representatives laying Wreathes from the Parish Council, County & District Councillors, The Scout Movement, Hilary Young from St Mary's Church and Adrian Semerene from the Baptist Church as well as a number of other organisations and individuals. Much appreciated also is the super new bench celebrating 100 years of peace which was kindly donated by a resident.

Christmas Lights were again a success and I must give special thanks to all the volunteers for their assistance in putting them up and later removal, to the traders on Church Street for their active participation, and to Peter Middlicott of Allgrowth for once again providing and setting up the Xmas Trees – Three this year PLUS we had a Snow Cannon from Dave Twydell. For the future we have been hit by new regulations which suggest our highly trained volunteer fire fighters in the village are not qualified to climb a ladder and put these up for us now so perhaps those always helpful folk at Broghans may be able to help with a cherry picker (if we ask nicely) and of course we are granted the annual licence now also required to do so – red tape and health & safety rolled into one bit I am sure Leanne will overcome it as usual.

Twice a year we welcome local village groups and organisations to apply for grants and have supported projects to the sum of £9,500 this year including the following:-

Forward Gamlingay
Wildlife Trust
Magpas
Gamlingay Day Centre
Gamlingay W.I.
British Legion
Gamlingay Schools Out

Gamlingay Football Club
Friends of Gamlingay Village Primary School

Included in these is the Village Charity Forward Gamlingay who continue to thrive running the Youth Café and Youth Club, which are extremely well supported and engage in many ways with the youth of the Village and I would like to thank their totally committed team for all their hard work and enthusiasm. They also run events for those experiencing isolation in our community with art projects – a super example of which can be seen with the sculpted Church Street scene hanging in the main hall of the Eco Hub.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is progressing well with a lot of hard work from Samantha Martin and Rachel Lee and the Village Design Guide is currently out for consultation until the end of May and is one of five guides that have been supported by South Cambridgeshire District Council. A group of residents have been involved with the Citizens Design Bureau, to produce the document which identifies the main characteristics of our settlement and is essential for our ongoing future development and will influence planning decisions affecting our village. We have a consultation day here at the Eco Hub on Tuesday 30th. April between 3.30 pm and 7 pm and there is information available to you this evening also.

The Village Design Document is a key document that will support Gamlingay's new Neighbourhood Plan which should be available for consultation over the summer and if you have any questions about this please do speak to one of the Clerks or to Councillor Sam Martin who is here this evening.

With regard to Planning our Chair, Tony Goss and his Planning Committee have had to weather quite a mass of applications designed to benefit from the lack of an acceptable Local Plan and some applications outside the Village Framework regrettably were approved at higher levels than we could influence. Fortunately SCDC have now had the Local Plan adopted and we are starting to see more sensible and appropriate decisions being made, with many planning appeals in the open countryside being refused.

Green End Industrial Estate redevelopment has now exchanged contracts and S.106 contributions for additional local resources have been agreed on the basis of 90 houses. We expect some time to elapse before building can commence because of the environmental issues likely to be encountered due to the industrial nature of the site over many years but will be holding a further public meeting once the full planning application is submitted.

Meanwhile we are aware of the extra load on Station Road with the re-location of the School and the dangers of speeding traffic and must urge drivers to recognise this – our Speedwatch team have been out monitoring and reporting back to the Police and we have arranged and paid for a Highways Officer assessment and made a formal application to County to re-assess the speed limits and any forms of traffic calming there as well as alerting the PCSO who I understand has been attending to aid in traffic control. We are also working closely with the School to combine our efforts in this direction.

Matters for the future include both the planned re-routing of the A428 and the proposed East West Rail Oxford to Cambridge routes, both of which could affect life as it is in our Village and we have been actively engaged with other Councils, consultation meetings and holding public meetings to ensure our voice is heard and, from the response at the last public meeting, have recently voiced support for the CBRR proposals led by County Councillor Sebastian Kindersley.

Other duties and regular tasks carried out throughout the year have been listed before so I won't bother you with a full list suffice to thank all those involved including our handyman Keith Woolcott, our Library Manager Kate Laugharne, cleaner Karen Woods, Leanne and Kirstin our Parish Council Clerks, whose professionalism and expertise is so essential to what we do, and not least my great team of Councillors with a wide range of skills and abilities – thank you all for your continued help and support throughout the year.

Finally, I feel I must express dismay at what appears to be happening more and more in our general society and now seems to have reached Gamlingay, and that is a real or at least a perceived increase in crime. Councillor Mark Brown has worked hard to build a team of volunteers to re-establish Neighbourhood Watch in the Village and, more recently Alison Webb has been instrumental in setting up the Gamlingay Community Safety Group with which we are co-ordinating our efforts. To this end Alison and her group have promoted a number of initiatives and have secured meetings with the Police Commissioner Jason Ablewhite who has kindly accepted our invitation to present to us later tonight.

Thank you all again for attending this evening, I shall be pleased to try to answer any questions relevant to this report now and we will be holding a full Question and Answer session after all the presentations are complete.

Colin Smith
Chair Gamlingay Parish Council

Annual Parish Report April 2019 – district wide

In May, it will have been a year since we were elected as members to South Cambridgeshire District Council and the control of the council shifted from Conservative to Liberal Democrat. So, what has the Liberal Democrat-led South Cambs Council been up to in the last year?

Governance

The Liberal Democrats won control of the Council in May 2018 and is now a 30-strong group (previously 14). There are 11 Conservatives, 2 Independents, 2 Labour. In a spirit of co-operation, we appointed an Independent Councillor as Council Chairman, and for good governance, appointed a Conservative as Chairman of the important Scrutiny and Overview Committee. A 7-strong cabinet is made up of 4 women and 3 men.

New Business Plan

Following a public consultation, a new Business Plan covering the period 2019 to 2024 has been published, which changes the direction of the Council. We are committed to providing homes that are truly affordable for everyone to live in; to help local businesses to grow; to be green to our core and to put customers at the centre of everything we do as a modern and caring council. Check out the new Business Plan at:

www.scambs.gov.uk/businessplan

Re-organising the Council

It became clear in putting together the new Business Plan that the departmental structure of the council would struggle to deliver on our priorities. Furthermore, studies of other district councils showed that South Cambridgeshire had fallen behind in the use of new technology and working practices essential to run a modern council. Management consultants were commissioned to carry out a review of the council and to recommend what would need to change to improve business delivery and it was made clear to the consultants that business improvement was their brief, not cost-cutting.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

For most of the first year in control of the council, we had to work with the budget set by the previous Conservative-led administration. The council has recently approved the budget for 2019-20, which sets the priorities for the Lib Dem administration. The council no longer receives central government grants and the amount by which the amount of Council Tax the council can raise is also capped by the government.

Our five-year financial plan has been altered to deliver more income from investments and commercialisation with the aim of having 25% of £20 million income coming from these sources by 2024. The previous administration's plans were to reduce general reserves to less than £3 million by 2023 while we are aiming for reserves of £4.5 million by then. An inherited budget shortfall of £0.5 million has already been turned into a £1 million surplus which has gone into the General Reserve to help prepare for future uncertainties.

Housing

One of this administration's priorities is the provision of more council houses and a resolve to meet agreed targets for affordable housing in new developments. We are aiming to build 70 new council houses per year, and even more where possible. So far in 2019, we've completed 28 new homes, adding those plus 6 purchased council houses to our stock. We also completed 13 shared ownership houses for sale in the last year and have another 61 plus 24 shared ownership currently being built on site.

A new strategy for Housing in South Cambridgeshire has been adopted to deliver homes that are affordable, not just to buy but to live in. In addition to delivering new homes, in the right place and at the right price, we will strive to keep utility bills low by ensuring that they are as energy efficient and water efficient as they can be. We also strive to build close to places of employment to encourage walking and cycling to work as well as using public transport.

New Investment Strategy

Our new investment strategy is ensuring council taxpayers are getting the best return for the council's financial reserves. The previous administration did not have an investment strategy against which to judge commercial opportunities to ensure they are sound but one is now in place. One investment; Cambridge Ice Rink is now close to being completed. Located off Newmarket Road on the edge of Cambridge but in South Cambs district, last autumn the council approved an additional loan to ensure the delivery of this high-quality community sporting venue that will benefit the health and wellbeing of residents. The ice pad will meet the requirements of the International Ice Hockey Federation, allowing visiting teams from around the world to play ice hockey there. South Cambs Council Tax payers will benefit from returns on the investment.

We moved quickly to put PV solar panels on the roof of the Waterbeach refuse depot to obtain the Government's feed-in tariff and purchased the lease of an office block strategically placed in the Cambridge Science Park which is delivering nearly a 6% nett yield on a £13 million investment. We have refocused Ermine Street's (the council's trading company to let homes on the open market) attention on South Cambridgeshire and the employment catchment of the Greater Cambridge sub-region to deliver properties that are not being supplied by current market conditions, such as rented homes for single people.

Better Pay to Attract and Retain Staff

There are a relatively high number of unfilled posts within the council (which affects customer service) and recruitment has not been helped by a squeeze on staff pay put in place by the previous administration, putting us at a disadvantage against neighbouring councils as well as the Greater Cambridge labour market. We have increased pay by 3% over the past three months, while ensuring that no South Cambridgeshire employee earns less than the real living wage. We are also considering improved non-pay employment packages. Some of the initiatives are listed below:

- Apprenticeship schemes.
- Negotiating discounts for staff, for example on public transport.
- The council has become a Disability Confident employer and an officially recognised disabled friendly employer.
- We have agreed to better maternity leave rates for staff who have premature babies.
- We are starting regular staff surveys to gauge employee satisfaction and encourage ideas to improve the working environment.

Customer Service

Our administration has set a target of improving complaint-handling by 10% and it is hoped that this will be exceeded. The 'mysouthcamb's' customer portal is being rolled out, offering our customers the means to access Council services 24 hours a day and 365 days of the year. <https://tinyurl.com/yxscn8rf>

Although digitising council services such as 'mysouthcamb's' will lead to a lower footfall at the Council offices, we have not forgotten customers who do not have access to, or cannot use, the internet and who prefer to speak to our officers. The visitor experience at the Cambourne offices is therefore to be improved and, at the same time, measures also taken to address issues that staff have raised about their personal security.

Shared Services

Around 40% of the Council's revenue and 52% of its services are delivered by Shared Services (in cooperation with other councils) and it is apparent that when they were set up under the previous administration that insufficient attention was paid to details of governance and accountability. We are working with partners now to rectify this.

'Green to our core'

Our administration has pledged to become a zero-carbon district by 2050. A working group of members and officers is preparing a high-level business case for a set of energy conservation measures (such as EV charging points, solar panels over our car park and on our waste depot). We intend that our Cambourne offices will be a showcase for a Zero Carbon Council and an exemplar to our residents.

A council with a heart

Our administration is determined to find homes in our district for 5 refugee families fleeing warfare in the middle east. The Home Office previously asked the council to help

with the rehoming of refugees and two year ago, the then minority Lib Dem Group, put a motion to Council proposing this but it was voted down by the majority Conservative Group. The current Home Office scheme runs until December 2019, and we hope to be able to provide homes for these 5 families by then.

Council grants

The committee that administers council grants has been refocussed to make it more responsive to a range of needs and interests across the district. We have put more money into the mobile warden scheme this year and another increase is promised next year. We have initiated a piece of work to look at extending the scheme across the whole district and commissioned a similar piece of work on community transport.

Member Development

After the 2018 election, two-thirds of councillors were new to the role. Working with Democratic Services, a comprehensive programme of training has been delivered. The council holds regular Member briefings and Officer-member workshops. A series of Staff Workshops have been held, asking officers for their views and for ideas about improving the council which were very well received. Many of our members attended these events which send a powerful message that we are seeking to work together as one team to deliver the aims of the whole council.

Our first year in headlines

- Given more money for mobile warden schemes
- Increased Council Tax for empty homes
- Supported local businesses to get council work
- Tailored the Localised Council Tax Scheme for Universal Credit
- Offered homes for five Syrian refugee families
- Provided Brexit help to local businesses
- Sold land for self-build
- Identified sites for more new council houses
- Produced a new homelessness strategy
- Made available a 3-year £400,000 fund for community groups
- Published a new tool kit for loneliness
- Commenced the preparation of a new joint Local Plan with Cambridge City
- Saved X3 bus service from the chop

Signed.....

Dated.....