

A1307 cycleway

Following several years of negotiation and the completion of a planning application, works commenced on 26 September 2016 to build a new foot and cycleway through Babraham Research Campus. The new facility will give public access through the site, and will link Babraham village and recently built cycle routes to Sawston and Abington with recently built routes alongside the A1307, to give a very good connective network in this part of South Cambridgeshire. This will encourage cycle commuting to Granta Park and other employment hubs in this area, as well as providing a great local facility for runners, leisure cyclists, walkers and wheelchair users. Works are due to be complete by Christmas 2016.

District Council wards

Last week the Local Government Boundary Commission for England announced its final recommendations regarding district council ward boundaries for elections from 2018 onwards.

Little Abington and Great Abington move into the two-member Linton ward which also contains Hildersham, Linton and The Camps. The geographical area of this ward covers part of the A1307 between Fourwentways and Haverghill, with the other part of this stretch of road falling in the single-member Balsham ward. I am pleased therefore that there will be three local members covering the A1307.

Local Plan update

All parish councils should have received information from the District Council about the next round of hearings of the Draft Local Plan Examination in Public. Hearings focussed on specific housing allocations in the District will be held in late November and early January. The information sent out by the District Council states on which dates there will be hearings on specific sites.

On a related note, on 5 October the District Council's Planning Committee approved the planning application for 20 dwellings at the top of the High Street / Pampisford Road.

Devolution update

I reported in detail last month on the devolution proposals, and stated that all the councils involved were organising special council meetings about the devolution proposals towards the end of October.

Since then, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has written to the local councils involved to advise that they will not be able to make available until the middle of November the necessary draft orders that need to be laid before Parliament. This is slightly later than DCLG originally planned.

The special council meetings that were originally planned for late October have therefore been moved back by two or three weeks.

Waste Transfer Station, Worsted Lodge

Concerns were expressed some time ago at a meeting of Babraham Parish Council about the height of stockpiles of material at the Waste Transfer Station at Worsted Lodge. I checked with the decision notice to see the conditions imposed on the application, the relevant condition stating that the height of stockpiles of material should not exceed 4 metres. Babraham PC were also concerned about the route heavily laden lorries used to reach the site – the narrow road from the Babraham crossroads to Worsted Lodge.

The operators of the site became aware of Babraham PC's concerns and invited me to visit the site in late August. They told me that they were aware that the stockpiles were higher than 4 metres and were going to address the issue by proposing to expand and redesign the site, and would be putting in a planning application to this effect by the end of the year.

I stressed that it was important to keep the relevant parish council's informed - Babraham PC because of their concerns and also Little Abington PC because the site was actually located within Little Abington parish.

The matter was discussed earlier this month at Babraham PC and I have included it in this report to ensure that Little Abington PC is aware of what is going on.

South Cambridgeshire District Council – External Audit

I am a member of the District Council's Audit and Corporate Governance Committee. On 21 October the Committee received and discussed the External Auditor's Report for the 2015 – 16 financial year. I am pleased to report that the External Auditor gave the Council an unqualified audit.

Parish Councils Capping Consultation

National government is currently consulting on whether parish councils should be subject to capping regulations similar to district and county councils. However, the consultation centres only on parish councils with an annual precept of over £500,000 so does not apply to any of the over 100 parish councils in South Cambridgeshire.

Tony Orgee
District Councillor for Little Abington