**2023 Parish Meeting Reports**

**Chair’s report 15th May 2023 West Wratting Parish Council .**

Good evening everyone and welcome to the 2023 West Wratting Annual Parish council meeting.

Firstly as announced formally at the last PC meeting, I am standing down as Chair and councillor. I have been a councillor for 10 years and Chair for 3. I joined the PC to make a difference to our community. I would like to thank my fellow councillors for all their hard work and support much of the work goes on in the background but ensures we have a wonderful community.

Since our last meeting there have been several changes to the membership of the council. Councillor Locke has resigned. On behalf of the PC and residents, I thank her for the excellent work she has done and made our community a better place. She will be greatly missed. We have a new councillor, Cllr Parsons, Welcome. Cllr Williams Grey is elected as vice Chairman.

The last year has presented many challenges. WWPC has been in constant discussions with relevant authorities to provide a community communications hub. The council seeks to support statutory and emergency services in the local community through the provision of information, local social assistance and communication. Contributions are made to local charities such as Age Concern and the air ambulance which was recently called to two emergencies.

The PC has continued to carry out a range of village activities including maintenance of verges, the Pocket park and the recreation ground.

There is liaison with the relevant authorities to repair pot holes and clear gullies and drains.

The PC is in continuing communication with SCDC regarding planning applications.

Many residents volunteer in different ways examples include litter picking, tidying verges, helping those in need, raising funds for charity and more. We are so lucky where so many people have a sense of community. West Wratting Parish Council (WWPC) would like to say thank you to all those in our village and beyond for all the good neighbour acts helping those who are in need.

As you can see from the agenda sheet, the Parish Council holds a large number of properties and lands in the village some of which are small, two noticeboards, benches and the Pound etc. and some of them very large including the Sports pavilion and Village hall. A risk assessment was carried out and it was noted that repairs are needed on the pump and stand and the village sign. Quotations are underway for this.

The Village Hall is such a valuable and important asset and my thanks go to the Village Hall Management Committee. Not only have they maintained the fabric of the hall but improved it. The Hall is now fully operational and in a strong financial position. Mr Davey and Mr Bonfield have agreed to be the representatives on the Village Hall Committee on behalf of the PC. Mr Davey is exploring installing Broadband in the hall. A full Report of the AGM is available.

The recreation ground and Sports Pavilion are excellently managed by the Sports Pavilion Committee and Football club. A grant was obtained to refurbish the changing rooms. There are proposals for solar panels and a change of use for the no longer used bowling green. I have resigned as Representative. Cllrs Roberts and Parsons have been nominated. The AGM is due to take place on the 17th May.

Cllr Parsons, on behalf of WWPC, is now maintaining the Defibrillator at the Sports Pavilion.

The PC has a wonderful refurbished playground, much admired by several villages and well used and is well maintained. A safety inspection by ROSPA has taken place and some minor issues will be addressed. A request is made to replenish the bark.

Over the last year the PC has taken the step again of raising the precept by the RPI. It is important to note that it is recommended that the council hold at least a year and a half’ precept in reserve.

The financial position is good with adequate reserves of money.

Road safety is taken very seriously by the PC and there are current projects that involve Highways road safety measures to bring awareness of speeding. The PC had purchased its own Speed devices and now poles to support these devices. The PC would like to thank Mr M Davey and Mr T Bonfield and other volunteers for their continuing work on speed watch. I am sure we all agree that speeding and traffic management is of great concern to the residents. Thus the PC has applied for a Local highways Initiative grant to purchase further speed restriction, e.g., sharks teeth and gating. Cllr Chandler is working with SCDC to restrict the speed in the village to 20mph. County Cllr Batchelor is investigating signs saying Not suitable for HGVs. In the roads approaching the village. At the request of residents, The PC, with the SCDC has now dedicated spaces for parking for residents of Hayter Close.

There are proposals to continue with maintenance and improvement of the Pocket Park to promote a wildlife habitat.

The Challenge is supported by your Parish Council and is very useful resource for all. Thank you to the editors and all other contributors. A thank you also to Mr Mike Rowland for volunteering to manage the village web site.

I would like to thank all the Parish, District and County Councillors and C McCall, as foot path officer, for their generous time and effort that they give so freely to the West Wratting Parish.

Congratulations to Rachel and Pete for their hard work of running The Chestnut tree, not just as a successful business but as a community hub. Their hard work is greatly respected and held in high regard.

Lastly but importantly I would like to give my personal thanks and on behalf of the PC , to Jenny Richards, the Parish Clerk, for all her assistance, advice and professional expertise.

Mira Nichols (Chair of Parish Council)

**Chairman’s Report at the**

**West Wratting Village Hall Management Committee AGM 2023**

The management committee has held 5 face-to-face meetings this year.

Village hall use returned to normal with the resumption of Tai Chi, FitSteps and the Saturday Café. Sadly there was a mid-year break in the Keep Fit sessions, due to the personal circumstances of the leader. These are now back on track. We also have new regular bookings for dog physiotherapy sessions.

At the start of the year we reinstated our normal hall hire fees. Despite the recent substantial rise in energy costs we decided not to increase our fees this year, but we will keep this under review. Our bank balance is lower than this time last year because of increased maintenance expenditure but our financial situation remains healthy.

Maintenance issues have kept us busy. Following a number of remedial measures the 5 year Electrical Installation Condition Report (NICEIC) is now satisfactory. Subsequently a defective ceiling light and emergency light have been replaced. Sticking fire exit doors have been eased. The Internal kitchen door and bi-fold doors continue to stick intermittently as the building moves, probably with changes in the weather. This is not new and we don’t have an answer to the problem.

We are still collecting quotes for painting the north façade of the hall.

The faulty front door lock has been replaced and the 13 key-holders have been issued with new keys.

Routine servicing of the fire alarm system and of the boiler has been completed. We have had one oil fill of 800 litres.

Externally, we now pay for grass cutting and hedge cutting and these have been well maintained. A deficiency in the rear boundary fence was allowing adventurous children to access the Lamb Yard. This gap has now been boarded up.

Once again I thank the committee for their continuing support and decision making during the past year. Maggie Attewell and Mick Lock have again kept bookings and financial accounting on an even keel. Diana Edwards has produced excellent minutes of our meetings and ensured that all our technical servicing and inspections were carried out in a timely manner. Again, I thank you all for your inputs.

**Chairman, West Wratting Village Hall Management Committee**

**West Wratting Cafe**

This is held in the village hall on the first Saturday of every month 10.30 - noon
Fresh coffee and homemade cakes are prepared and served by a rotating group of helpers.
Toys are available in the hall for children.
Donations for coffee and cake provide the cafe with funds to support local causes, most recently the Granta School garden.
There is usually a good turn out and a buzzing atmosphere.

**d’Abo Tennis Club**

Jan and Sherry

The Club continues to thrive with the court being used on a regular basis by a strong family membership. The Club’s finances are sound with a reserve being built up to pay for a new court in the future. The court surface has been recently cleaned and will be repainted in the coming year. It continues to play well with a convenient online court booking system. New members are always welcome and existing and new members can sign up and pay online via our website.

Further information for prospective members is available on our website –   <http://www.westwrattingtennis.co.uk/>

**Lunch Club**

Peter at The Chestnuts has continued to provide us with scrumptious lunches every third Thursday of the month.  This service is much appreciated and valued by all attendees.  Thank you to Peter and Rachel for all the good times we have had and in particular, for the huge effort they put in through lock down to ensure we were able to deliver hot meals to so many in our villages.

Suan Rowland

**West Wratting Football Club**

.Seniors report – Lee Miller Manager of the First Team with assistant Shaun Sowdon are very pleased and very proud with the Team winning the Cambridgeshire Senior League and was presented with the Trophy last week an amazing achievement

Andrew Gage & Brian Holmes – Reserves Managers are also very pleased and proud with the Reserve Team winning the Cambridgeshire County Division 1A League too and have yet to be presented with the Trophy.

First Team and Reserves both also won the Leagues in 2017 under Michael Bavester

**Blanche Miller**

**District and County Councillor’s Annual Report 2023**

**County Council**

A1307The upgrades to the A1307 have continued to be implemented over the last year. The ‘Greenway’ (a path suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horses), that will ultimately link Linton and the new Park & Ride site that is proposed to be on the outskirts of Babraham, has been steadily moving forward with the construction of the section between Linton and Abington progressing, as well as the new pedestrianised crossing at the Hildersham junction being finished and very much in use.

There was some good (we hope) progress made on the decision of where to route the Abington leg of the Greenway should go. The original plan was to direct the route along Linton Road, through the middle of the village and then out along Bourne Bridge Road. This option was met with some robust challenge locally, from residents, your councillors and the parish council. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) then went away and have decided to only look at the option that runs along the side of Pampisford Road. The downside of this is that it will take longer to construct, as there are compulsory land purchases required, which involve lawyers, and always take time.

The next, and final, phase of the scheme to upgrade the A1307 will be starting in May this year. This is to construct a roundabout at the end of Bartlow Road, Linton and also to remodel the highly dangerous Dean Road junction on the A1307. The work will run for just under a year, which will very likely mean some disruption to traffic, but the plan is to build a temporary road around the area that the roundabout is being constructed in to avoid any closures to the A1307. Some concerns that rat running will increase during this time has been responded to by the GCP with the reassurance that sufficient signage will be put up to inform people of the temporary road and to deter them to take more rural detours.

Full detail can be seen at - <https://www.greatercambridge.org.uk/sustainable-transport-programme/public-transport-schemes/cambridge-south-east-transport>

Greater Cambridge Partnership

The other big news that came from the GCP this year was that Cambridgeshire are being offered a large sum of money (many many millions) by central government to help improve the local public transport network in and around the city. The reason for this isn’t random - Cambridge scores very poorly on congestion and pollution metrics – some saying it is the 3rd worst city for congestion in England and that it emits over 25% more pollution that the national average.

A solution to this, that the government are looking to support financially, is get a very reliable and cost-effective public transport system, as we have seen works in other cities. This would eventually have to be self-funded however and a proposed way to do this would be to charge for road usage, a congestion charge, or what is being labelled as a Sustainable Travel Zone (STZ).

The GCP published an initial proposal back at the start of 2022 which outlined which areas of the city could be affected by a STZ. This stretched to most of the city limits and also included Addenbrookes hospital. The GCP then ran one of the largest public consultations in Cambridgeshire’s history on the topic, to garner the thoughts of the public on this important decision. Some 24,000 responses were received, which equates to roughly 15% of all adults in South Cambridgeshire, an enormous response. The full results of this are currently being collated and will be available for viewing in the summer.

Personally, we aren’t against the principle of congestion charging as a medium to help fund a much-improved public transport system, however, the plans as they currently are need some improving before they can be in a supportable state.

This issue has, and will continue to, get a lot of media attention so you won’t have to look very far to get an update on this. We do always encourage people, when formulating a view, to look at the facts, as there is a lot of opinion out there which doesn’t always represent the full picture.

New HQ

The County Council’s brand-new purpose-built HQ, in Alconbury, was formally opened in July last year. This replaces the previous location in central Cambridge. Our view is still that it is in the wrong location, given the non-existent public transport links and the fact it is an 80ish mile round trip for us living in the south east of the county.

Waste issues

Back in the Autumn last year the governments various departments, DEFRA and the Environment Agency, informed local authorities that they would be bringing into force legislation that means some wholesale changes to the way that the County Council has to dispose of various things.

Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) – these are essentially upholstered items such as sofas, chairs etc. The new legislation dictates that they can no longer be put into landfill and have to be incinerated. This causes a problem for the County Council as their contact with the waste disposal company doesn’t stretch to incineration, so this led to a week where the Council couldn’t accept these items at their recycling centres whilst they looked for a solution. They now have one and have been accepting the POPs at their recycling centres since January. The District Council also has a bulky item collection service, that is chargeable, if transportation is an issue.

Food waste – again, an announced change in legislation by DEFRA is meaning that, in a few years time, all food waste will have to be collected and disposed of separately to all other green household waste. Some of us have been taking part in a, District Council arranged, food waste collection trial for the last 3 years in preparation for this change. The issue the County Council has is, again, contractual as they will now have to renegotiate their current contract with their waste contractor, or find a new one, that has the capability to dispose of food in the appropriate way, which is different to regular green waste. This is ongoing to watch this space

**District Council**

Local Plan

The District Council has been going through the process of looking at the next Local Plan – which is a blueprint for where development, both residential and commercial, will be happening over the next 30 years. This plan needs to be updated every 5-10 years as the local picture is constantly changing.

Currently the District Council have a very healthy ‘5 year land supply’ which means they have allocated, and approved planning permission for, enough houses to accommodate the growth of the area over the next 5 year period. This means that we only have controlled development and the Council don’t have to relax their planning rules to allow uncontrolled, unsustainable development – as they had to in 2014-18 and we ended up with a lot of unplanned and unsuitable developments, such as Horseheath Road and Bartlow Road in Linton, Linton Road in Balsham and Bartlow Road in Castle Camps.

The District Council are currently going through the process of allocating the sites for the next Local Plan, which we were all consulted on last year. Their current principle is to concentrate development into existing towns and larger settlements, such as Cambourne, Northstowe, Waterbeach New Town, Bourne Airfield etc and they will leave the villages as rural villages. We hope they continue with this principle and we know a lot of parishes wrote in supporting this concept.

This will be an ever evolving process, that we will keep you as updated on as possible, so please do watch this space.

Ukrainian Guests

More than 800 Ukrainian guests have been welcomed to South Cambs since the war started last year. This is the highest number of any District Council in the country. This is a great achievement and says much for the humanity of those who have opened their homes to these people in need. More hosts are needed as Ukrainians continue to arrive or move on from their current accommodation. If you can help just contact the team on: HFULiason@Scambs.gov.uk

Coronation Celebrations

If you are planning something or thinking about it, you might like to take a look at ‘The Big Lunch’.

There is lots information and materials to help you on their website: [www.thebiglunch.com/](http://www.thebiglunch.com/)

Or for parish councils try [www.edenprojectcommunities.com/biglunch/councils](http://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/biglunch/councils)

There are also grants available from South Cambs District Council, just check out their website.

Elections May 2022

The District Council Election saw the Liberal Democrats increase their majority. The current distribution of seats is as follows: Lib Dems 35, Conservative 9 and Independent 1. Thank you to everyone for voting to re-elect us both, we’re very privileged to continue to do this job.

We now only have elections every 4 years so the next District election will be in 2026.

The County Council is due to hold elections in 2025.

**Contact Details**

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