

District Councillors Report to Lolworth Parish Council

November 15th 2018

This is my first report as your District Councillor and I will try to follow the excellent service I know you have had from Bunty Waters and Roger Hall, but if you have any concerns please feel free to phone me on 07774146331 or email cllr.ellington@scams.gov.uk

I tend to do verbal reports for Swavesey and Fen Drayton Parish councils as they are monthly and it is often a matter of updating one or two issues but your meetings are less frequent so a more substantial written report may be more appropriate, but we might discuss this.

Anyway - an update of Council since May 2018. As you know the Liberal Democrats took control of the council with 30 seats leaving Conservatives with 11 and 2 independents, 2 Labour. Obviously it has taken time for them to settle in and there are many ongoing reviews and changes in the pipeline.

Mrs Bridget Smith from Gambingay is the leader with Aidan Ven de Weyer as her deputy. There are lead members for various service elements including Mrs Hazel Smith for Housing and Health, Mr Neil Gough for Environmental services, and Mrs Tumi Hawkins for Planning. It has been decided to change the powers of delegation and all decisions have to go through Cabinet rather than being delegated to portfolio holders. Also all decisions have to be taken through Scrutiny before going to cabinet - thus the whole machinery of governance has been slowed down considerably.

However the corporate plan for 2018/19 was agreed before the elections so the planned implementation is being rolled out including some of the Health and Wellbeing plans I had got included.

The Parish Council Tool Kit is designed to enable small groups, villages and individuals to have access to advice and guidance if they want to start a community activity. e.g it will provide a link to somebody who has first hand experience, guidance about H&SE, costs, sources of grants etc.

There is also a project to start Time Banks across the district. Swavesey is linking with Longstanton, Over and Fen Drayton to look at viability.

The council has sponsored and obtained a grant to fund a social prescribing post in Sawston GP practice for 2 years.

The Local Plan has finally been agreed and has been passed through the council. This means there is protection for your village envelope again and some of the new rules about room sizes and open space are enforceable. I am surprised that the new lead member for planning Mrs Tumi Hawkins was unable to vote to accept the plan at full council.

The Environmental Lead Member Mr Neil Gough has decided to introduce a charge for a second green bin. This will be £45 per year and come into effect next April.

There have been several changes to the community grants schemes including the decision to exclude Parish Councils from applying for community grants on the basis that Parish Councils can raise the precept to pay for community items. Some concern was raised that very small parishes do not have the capacity to raise significant funds so it is worth talking to the community development officers if you have a proposal.

Early review of council finances has shown that the plan was to reduce expenditure this year by £500K in order to comply with the reduction in Government grant allocation. This reduction in spending need to continue next year as the Government grant continues to reduce. The new

leadership is looking at its options however the Finance Director is taking early retirement in December. A Consultant finance director will manage the post for an interim period.

The new Leadership has decided to bring in a team of consultants to review the management structure of the organisation. This will report in summer 2019 and will cost £50K.

I know you have all been suffering with the A14 development but I also know John has been in touch with Mr Pettifer and sorted many of them. I am a permanent member of an A14 group which meets on a Tuesday to raise serious issues, so if I can help, let me know

Sue Ellington

District Councillor Swavesey, Lolworth and Fen Drayton.

If anybody wants further explanations please contact me on 07774146331.