

0222.433

Cllr Ian Gardener report - Alconbury Parish Council Meeting – February 2022

The County Council is proposing a Pedestrian and Cycle zone for School Lane between its junctions with The Paddocks and Spinney Lane. Motor Vehicles will be prohibited between the hours of 8.30 and 9.30am and 2.45 and 3.30pm on Monday to Friday during Term Time only. Objections to this proposal need to be made on the Councils website by using the feedback form quoting reference PR0777 Alconbury.

I have requested again that the gullies on the High Street under the A1 and B1043 are cleared.

The County Council is now proposing a revised acoustic fence adjacent to Lordsway Park that will go to a height of 2m above the deck level of the B1043 giving an overall height for the fence of 7.15 metres. The Highway's Bridges team are awaiting clarification from Planners that this is within permitted development and that the EA Have no objections to the proposals.

At the Full Council Meeting on 8th February Cllr Stephen Ferguson who is an Independent and represents St Neots East and the Gransdens was elected as the New Chairman of the County Council, following the retirement of Cllr Derek Giles due to ill health.

The New Chief Executive for Cambridgeshire County Council, Stephen Moir took up his role on yesterday 21st February.

The Demand Responsive Bus Service for West Huntingdonshire, known as Ting has commenced. It is a service for all residents. The cost of the service is £2 per trip and £4 return as is free for all Bus Pass Holders.

At the Full Council meeting on 8th February, the Liberal Democrat led Administration put forward a budget that would increase General Council Tax by 1.99% along with a 3% increase on Adult Social Care. From which £6.878 million will be put into reserves and not into frontline services. A Band D property's County Council element of the Council Tax will be £1,469.61

The Conservative proposed alternative Budget would have seen no increase in General Council Tax and reversed the decision to put £6.878 million into reserves. In addition the Highways maintenance grants from government would be ringfenced for additional expenditure on Highways, its intended purpose. Unlike the Lib Dem Administration who have left this open, possibly to use it to reduce borrowing.

The Conservative alternative budget would also see £4.1 million made available for flood prevention measures which could have been used in our Villages and Towns such as Alconbury & St Neots, which suffered from extensive flooding in December 20

The joint administration are expecting an underspend in the Capital Programme budget of 11 million, and they are also expecting an underspend on the Revenue budget of 7.66 million at the year end.

The County Council has decided to provide everyone on Universal Credit some 39,000 recipients with an additional £20 to help them manage rising costs of living this winter. Since launching the Household support fund with 2.4million of Government funding in October 2021 some 11000 have received payments. Going forward in order to stay within budget the fund will support those in immediate and urgent need with regard to food and household energy bills. The fund will no longer accept multiple applications or offer financial help for water bills, other essentials and white goods.

This year's Huntingdonshire LHI meetings will be on 28th February and 2nd March between 8am and 5pm.

The County Council is preparing a Flood Risk Management Strategy for Cambridgeshire and the County Council Climate Change Strategy as produced by the previous administration came second in a National award. The strategy has now been updated, which was agreed at yesterday's full council meeting.

The Administration now appears to recognise that Children's health issues are not being fully represented at the Adult & Health Committee. Therefore they are looking at ways of improving this – I would suggest the reintroduction of the Health Committee. Areas of Children's Health that are being neglected are Mental Health issues.

The District Council is holding its budget meeting tomorrow night where it is proposed to increase the Council Tax by £5 per annum, in order to maintain services.

This year saw the relaunch of the Think Local communications campaign across HDC's social media channels. Over the coming weeks the campaign will be focused on activities and events to bring residents and visitors into our town centres such as a Spring Food Fayre on Saturday 12th March in Huntingdon's Historic Market Square.

This May will be the District Council Election when all 51 seats on the District Council will be up for election, along with all Parish Council seats.

Cllr Ian Gardener

County & District Councillor for Councillor for Alconbury

Alconbury Brook Flood Group report for February 2022



A little more volunteer work has been done near the ford in Alconbury Weston. Volunteer work will be limited from mid-March because fish spawning and water birds nesting.

The brook is running too fast at the moment, but we hope to have one more volunteer event before early March. We now have permits to remove silt from where road drains are depositing sand and silt into the brook. Also work on the gardens of High Street properties in Alconbury and Alconbury Weston.

We have a small yellow boat for work in the brook when safe!

Generally we are very positive about the work done by the EA since Christmas particularly in Alconbury Weston and downstream of the A1 flyover. Some debris still to collect. The flood group has volunteered to do this but we await a reply. Between Polecat Lane and Alconbury Weston there is still some work to do, but volunteers could do this.

The Flood Group committee have met and agreed to hold an AGM in May, which will be open to volunteers and the community generally.

On behalf of the Alconbury communities and having consulted the PCs, the Flood Group have signed off the new improved brook CCTV agreement with the EA.

Progress is being made with the Flood Alleviation modelling. On request from the EA the Flood Group have consulted the PCs with regard to (statutory) access arrangements for a future public consultation. The main issue will be ensuring everyone, including those without internet access, is aware and people in the communities with special needs will be able to participate if they wish.

A disappointment has been that LENS, who had been very positive about funding all of our upstream NFM, have withdrawn their offer. They had wrongly assumed that some of the land was in Northamptonshire. As Cambridgeshire does not subscribe to LENS, we do not qualify for financial assistance from LENS. Much effort has been spent this month looking at alternatives to overcome this problem. We are seeking alternative sources of funding. CCC officers have organised a meeting in early March with Think Communities to assist with this.

Before seeking funding elsewhere, we have had to ask landowners to ask the RPA to calculate any losses that may occur as a result of us installing NFM. This is likely to be quite small, but we are committed to ensuring farmers will not lose out. We now have potentially projects on 4 farms and we hope to have feedback through the landowners from the RPA shortly.

Through countryside stewardship we have acquired free ADAS hydrology/NFM consultancy which will enable us to understand the optimum positions (on watercourses) for the projects we have agreed. We were pleased that 3 landowners have authorised us to have this work done. Reporting will occur in May/June which is in good time for construction in the summer/autumn. In the meantime, further design work has been done.

We remain vigilant. Some very high rainfalls have occurred previously in March and April. Our measurements suggest the soil is now full. We are measuring flow at Alconbury. There appears to be a small flow improvement but our comparison may not be like for like.

0222.444.2 Bank reconciliation

Alconbury Parish Council
Bank Reconciliation

Total of balances in bank accounts at
31.01.22

Instant Access	34886.67
Unity T1 Current Account	26874.29
Lloyds	0.81
Total	61761.77

Less unrepresented cheques:

Payee	Ref	Amount
C Copley - Wages and expenses	BACS	353.52
HMRC PAYE - Clerk	BACS	5.00
Mr & Mrs Ayres Allotment rent	CHEQUE	1200.00
Human Capital Department Ltd	BACS	138.00
	Total	1696.52

Net bank balance at 31.01.22 £ **60065.25**

Cash book

Opening balance	54250.07
Add: Receipts	43811.24
Less: Payments	37996.06

Balance as per cash book at 31.01.22 £ **60065.25**

Signed *A Brown*

Responsible Financial
Officer