

## District Councillor report to Parish Council May 2020

### Update from Cllr Cone

I would like to start by thanking the huge effort from voluntary organisations, Parish Councils, charities and individual residents within the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward during the Covid-19 outbreak. Given the difficult circumstances that this pandemic has put individual residents in (whether that be because of social isolation, difficulty in accessing food or prescriptions, the stress of being furloughed, the pressure on business, not being able to see relatives, events being delayed, and the distress caused by caring for friends and family with Covid-19) it has been hugely important that the community pulls together and we all play our part in helping each other.

My main role as District Councillor has been to answer resident correspondence signposting them to the relevant information. This has not always been easy because the information that Central Government is putting forward is ever changing as the science and evidence base moves forward. I have been in regular contact with MP Lucy Frazer to try and make sure residents have the information they need to best cope with the current situation. I have worked with the other District Councillors within the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward to ring vulnerable residents and businesses that are yet to make applications for grants that could potentially be eligible. I have met with fellow Councillors, the leader of the Council and the CEO over Zoom once weekly to make sure that I am up to date with the work SCDC is undertaking and to make sure I am fully briefed from a District perspective.

As Parish Councillors will be aware, my proper job is at Addenbrookes Hospital treating cancer patients. My priority currently has to be at Addenbrookes Hospital making sure patients that need radiotherapy continue to be treated despite the pandemic. Due to spacing patients out throughout the day, additional hygiene and PPE requirements, managing patients that have tested positive to Covid-19 that still require treatment and how this is achieved to safeguard other patients, my working hours have increased into evenings and weekends. If Parish Councillors do need to get in contact with me please feel free to ring me and I will always get back to you on the day. If I am not able to answer because I am at the hospital please leave me a message with your phone number and I will ring you back ASAP.

Over the next few months I may struggle to Zoom in or be with you at Parish Council meetings due to work pressures but I will do my best to attend where I can. I will continue to do reports for Parish Councils however a lot of what I am doing as a District Councillor is Covid-19 related and the District Council should be sending regular updates to Parish Councils with the information they need relating to Covid-19 but any bits that I think need highlighting or other news stories, planning issues etc that come up I will do my best to keep you updated with.

### Quick grant funding for small businesses

The Government has made around £20 million available for small businesses to help them weather the Coronavirus outbreak, this money has been processed and distributed by the District Council. It is estimated that around 2,000 businesses in South Cambridgeshire will be eligible for this pot of money that the Chancellor Rishi Sunak has provided. SCDC believes that 75% of businesses that are eligible have been awarded grants. The grant takes two forms, the first being a Small Business Grant Fund that is applicable to businesses that pay little or no business rates, their grant is for £10,000 to meet ongoing business costs. The second is the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant again for businesses with a rateable value of under £15,000 a £10,000 grant is available. For businesses with a rateable value of between £15,000 and £51,000 they will receive a higher grant of £25,000.

Businesses that have not yet applied for this grant and we as a Council believe may be eligible are being contacted by District Councillors within their wards to make sure they know the grant is available. More detail on who is eligible for grants and how to apply can be found on the Government website (link below).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-grant-funding-guidance-for-businesses>

These grants are on top of the Government money provided to District Councils to enable businesses to benefit from rate relief so that retail, hospitality and leisure businesses that are eligible and due to pay business rates in 2020 and 2021 pay nothing over the next year, the Government is really trying hard to make sure that the economy can bounce back after Covid-19 thus giving businesses the support they need now to tide them over so they are strong enough to weather this storm and return to business once we come out the other side of the pandemic. Inevitably there will be businesses that can not survive this hugely difficult period and will go bust and no doubt like every other area in the UK this will impact the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward which is why it is hugely important that SCDC and the Government work together to prevent this wherever possible.

### The Abbey Chesterton Bridge

The Chisholm Trail project which is being delivered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership of which SCDC is a member will take a big step forward in May. The bridge will be delivered on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May on two wide load lorries which will be escorted by the Police. The bridge will be lifted and fixed into place later this summer. This will result in some roads needing to be made clear of cars between 5am on the 4<sup>th</sup> May and 6pm on the 5<sup>th</sup> May. The roads that will be affected will be Green End Road, Water Lane, Water Street and Fen Road. Letters are being issued to residents in that area. Construction of the Chisholm Trail Project is being carried out under the Government's social distancing guidelines. I have always been a big advocate of cycle greenways and additional cycle routes connecting Cambridge's surrounding villages to the City Centre. I spent many years lobbying for the route linking Fulbourn to Mill Road in Cambridge. I have attended meetings at the County Council, consultations and with cycling lobbying groups in Cambridge to try and drive these new cycleways forward. As someone myself that cycles into work from Fulbourn to Addenbrookes, I know how important cycle infrastructure is in getting people out of cars and onto other modes of transport. I was pleased to see the funding for this bridge being put forward by Cambridgeshire County Council. I believe this bridge will really benefit cyclists travelling in and out of Cambridge.

### Green bin collections phased back in

The Shared Waste service that covers Cambridge and SCDC has not been collecting green bins during the Covid-19 pandemic due to social distancing measures and staff self-isolating. It is hoped that the service can go back to collecting some green bins over the next month and going forward so residents are asked to put their green bins out as indicated on the SCDC website for your particular village and the Shared waste service will do all it can to try and get them collected. It has been the case, not just with bins but with buses for example that it is difficult to run services in the normal way given the pressures of Covid-19.

## Cambridge and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership (CAPASP)

CAPASP are urging residents to be vigilant as in the UK the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau has reported that victims have lost over £800k to Coronavirus related scams. These scams can involve criminals contacting victims via email, phone or text message posing as an organisation such as a bank, Council, health provider, Police etc. Often the fraudster will claim that they require certain information relating to health, investment grants, benefits etc and then use this information criminally. There have also been incidences in Cambridgeshire of doorstep scammers claiming to be from the Red Cross and offering to provide Coronavirus test kits for a fee. There is a lot of information on the CAPASP website which is worth having a look at to familiarise yourself and your residents within your parishes of the scams that are currently taking place. The website details the following scams:

- Flight cancellation scam
- Fake email and website scams
- Online offers for vaccinations scam
- Bogus charity callers
- Tax refund scam
- Good neighbour scam

More information can be found at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/scams-partnership-urges-people-to-be-vigilant-against-covid-19-scammers/>

## New 100% Government backed loan scheme for small businesses

There has also been a bounce back loan scheme announced by the Chancellor which will allow businesses to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000. The loans will be delivered quickly (within days of being processed) and will be interest free for 12 months. Businesses can start to make applications for these loans from 4<sup>th</sup> May and the forms have been kept as short and simple as possible to make them as accessible as possible at this difficult time.

*Thank you for taking the time to read my report; if you have any questions or want to discuss any of the issues raised email me on [graham.cone@councillor.online](mailto:graham.cone@councillor.online) or ring 07595 361 285 (please leave a voicemail if I am unavailable).*

**Councillor Graham Cone**