

7. DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

District Cllr Pauline Wilson gave the following report:

The Community & Environment Committee deals with many different services; the Market, Oliver Cromwell house, tourist information and the Maltings to name a few. The Committee gives grants to Citizen Advice, Care & Repair and I did try to reinstate some money for the Dial-a-Ride. There is a pot of money (£187,000) that I wanted £10,000 to be taken from when we discussed the Council budget in February. The small amount of £10,000 would help Dial-a-Ride to continue to provide the much needed and wonderful service for the housebound, elderly and disabled residents but unfortunately my proposal was rejected. Grants to leisure centres around our District area are still given, despite the 11% cut last year. Community & Environment also gives grants of Section 106 money to villages. Aldreth has had two grants for flooring and safety surfacing at the Village Centre, the Arkenstall Centre has received a grant towards new flooring and the Parish Council has secured a grant towards the refurbishment of the play areas.

The planned new leisure facility to be built on the A10 appears to be on hold at the moment due to lack of funds to go ahead.

Neighbourhood Panels continue to meet, normally every three months and are a great success. Everything from anti social behaviour to speeding and dog fouling is actioned and a wide variety of issues are raised. Last month I raised the issue about bus cuts, which seems inevitable once the County Council has stopped the subsidies to Dews. All relevant partnerships; East Cambs District Council County Council, Police and Sanctuary attend.

Shape Your Place is a follow-on from the Neighbourhood Panels, which gives people who are unable to attend the meetings a chance to raise their questions on line. The East Cambs Shape Your Place went live at the beginning of April.

Personnel have merged with Corporate Services. It's been another year of frozen salaries for all staff at the District Council. There was a suggestion from government that all staff earning less than £21,000 should have a one off payment of £250 but some Councillors said it should not be given to staff earning more than £17,161 and rejected the proposal for staff earning less than £21,000 despite the money having been put aside in the budget.

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee meets more or less monthly to scrutinise policy papers before they go to the relevant committees and sometimes after they have been too. It does, at times, seem to be a farce as the administration group chairs the committee and all decisions agreed are theirs anyway. I do try to make amendments and suggestions to improve decisions but these are often not adhered to.

We continue to assist residents with planning problems. This involves meeting and helping them through the process, including consultation with planning officers and attending planning meetings to speak either for or against the planning application.

If residents and constituents contact us we visit them as soon as possible and can help with a variety of problems, including financial, housing requirements, noisy neighbours and anti social behaviour. We are happy to help in any way we can.

District Cllr Gareth Wilson gave the following report:

Following one year of the system of constitution changes introduced by the previous administration it transpired that there was much duplication of reports being discussed several times at different committees and from May the new system of committees will be much like it was before the constitution changes.

I have continued to attend the Haddenham Drainage Board representing East Cambs District Council. A new pumping station has been installed, which was officially opened last September.

The Council received a petition of more than 10,000 signatures against car parking charges. The administration persisted in their scheme until a mix up at a committee meeting and some Tory councillors were punished for not following the party line. It will be necessary to start again, because the car parking income is included in the budget.

