

Are you a star recycler?

If you care about the environment and are keen on recycling, then your City Council needs you! The Council is recruiting a team of Community Recycling Champions to pass on news and tips on recycling to friends and neighbours.

Every bottle, paper or potato peeling that isn't recycled has to go to landfill. Methane from landfill sites escapes into the atmosphere and contributes to climate change. Meanwhile, more energy is used making new things.

Landfill also costs us money – £40 a tonne and rising. Last year, over 25,000 tonnes of rubbish from Cambridge black bins was sent to landfill. We are burying over a million pounds a year in the ground.

About 80% of this rubbish could be recycled, but many people find recycling difficult or confusing. That's why the Council is looking for enthusiastic people who can encourage everyone to join in. Activities are up to you, but might include leafletting, putting up posters, running a stand at events or giving talks.

You don't need any special experience or knowledge to be a champion, as free training will be provided. People living in flats or shared premises are especially welcome.

For more information, please telephone Mark Buckton on 457673 or email mark.buckton@cambridge.gov.uk.

YOUR FOCUS TEAM



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Councillors' surgeries

We are at Rock Road Library on the third Saturday of every month, 10-11 a.m. Please come and see us!



A plague of potholes

This has undoubtedly been the hot story of the winter so far: as you can see from our Snippets, we are finding far more potholes than usual.

I and other Lib Dem councillors will carry on asking questions about the standard of repairs and the frequent repeat visits made to ensure holes are properly mended. I am not convinced the current methods are either cost-effective or 'getting it right first time' – obviously the best solution for everyone, road users and taxpayers.



A 20mph speed limit trial has been approved for the Wulfstan Way area. The trial will start in March and last for 12 months.

It will cover Wulfstan Way, Gunhild Way and Godwin Way, and the three cul-de-sacs within that area.

The Wulfstan Way area was chosen because it has a high number of pedestrians and cyclists, and several community facilities – schools, doctor's surgeries, churches and shops.

Although there is another trial in the city centre, this is the only one in the suburbs of Cambridge: Queen Edith's is leading the way!

Interested in local issues?

Come along to the South Area meetings, which cover a range of issues including grants, planning applications and policing. They start with an Open Forum when you can question councillors.

The next three meetings are:

Thursday 11th March

Thursday 13th May

all 7 p.m. at Hills Road VI Form College

For an agenda, see the City Council's website:

www.cambridge.gov.uk



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FOCUS

on Queen Edith's

February
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Welcome to Jean

Your FOCUS TEAM is pleased to introduce a new member. Jean Swanson has lived in Queen Edith's for nearly 18 years and in the Cambridge area for 35 years. She works, part time, as an Educational Adviser for the Open University in Hills Road.

Beyond the workplace, Jean is a member of Holy Trinity Church, a trustee for Crossroads Care Cambridgeshire (a charity which provides, offers, supports and delivers high quality services for carers and people with care needs) and enjoys going to Australia to see her son and York to see her daughter, with a baby grandson in each place!

Jean is a keen recycler, pothole reporter ... and always cycles on the road/ cycle path!



and a new police sergeant too!

We also welcome Sgt Gavin Townsend as the new Sergeant for the City South Neighbourhood Team.

We are looking forward to meeting him soon and to discussing items of mutual interest. Our former sergeant, Gordon Morgenthaler, has transferred to Peterborough: we wish him all the best for the future.



VIEWPOINT

from Cllr Viki Sanders

The problem with the lack of gritting isn't just the difficulty for those using the roads.

For all of us trying to get out of homes, or even walking to the shops, was difficult.

Imagine then, the difficulty for our older residents. Keeping stocked up with food was difficult; walking to and from the shops treacherous. The number of incidents/ accidents leading to fractures may have increased over those times: making it more difficult for people to manage at home, leading to more hospital stays and more need for social care.

All this due to the Conservative-run County Council not gritting our roads and paths. I hope they and central government learn from these mistakes.

Snow laughing matter

Cambridgeshire County Council is the authority responsible for roads, cycleways and footpaths and should ensure the safety of all road users. This includes routes to work for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. It also includes shopping areas, schools and other community facilities.

The Conservative-run County Council's response to the snow and ice over Christmas was not at all satisfactory. It neglected its responsibility for gritting most areas in the city.

The City Council, run by the Liberal Democrats, is responsible only for gritting cemeteries, the crematorium, sheltered housing and car parks. The City Council offered its staff to help the County deal with icy conditions on the city's pavements and cycle paths before Christmas and officers from both councils are continuing discussions.

Hills Road verges

Early last year, the South Area Committee agreed to fund the re-seeding of damaged verges on Hills Road, because it is a major entry route into the city. Unfortunately, the work was not carried out until November and the very wet and very cold weather will have delayed or even prevented germination. Some verges will have to be treated again in the spring.



But I am also shocked that some re-seeded verges, although protected by temporary plastic fencing, have again been damaged by uncaring car and van drivers.

It is frustrating that the City Council has to spend money repairing needless damage to the environment: clearing up litter, cleaning away graffiti and re-seeding verges are all expenses that could be avoided if we all took more care.

National support for green ideas

Cllr Amanda Taylor reports

Cambridge has won important support from the Local Government Association (LGA) for its ideas on housing.

Thanks to a new law passed in 2006, the Government has a duty to consider ideas from the public to make their communities more sustainable. In Cambridge we have supported this Act for some time: our Council voted through my motion supporting it, all part of the campaign to get the Government to get behind it too.

Last year, Cambridge City Council put forward four changes to the law, all with a common theme of 'greening' our community.

Of the councils in Cambridgeshire, only the City Council put forward any suggestions. One assumes the Conservatives on the County and District Councils are happy with the way things are!

Cambridge City Council involved a wide range of groups and individuals in generating ideas, from small pressure groups to businesses, schools and colleges. The ideas were narrowed down to four and the LGA is backing two – one to allow the council to keep money raised from council house rents and sales to build new green housing, and another to encourage higher energy efficiency in buildings.

The next step is for the LGA to negotiate with the Government on how the shortlisted proposals can be implemented. So we are not home and dry yet but we have passed the first hurdle! If you visit www.amandataylor.mycouncillor.org you can see our proposals in full, as well as the report from the LGA on all the proposals from councils all over the country.

Parking porkies – out of touch

Two IN TOUCH claims made by the Conservatives recently have been totally wrong.

1 Your local Liberal Democrat councillors are not trying to force a residents' parking scheme on anyone. Consultation by the County Council showed that 4 out of 5 households in Rathmore Road and 3 out of 4 in the western (Hills Rd) arm of Hartington Grove wanted such a scheme. We have been supporting the majority view of residents in those roads.

2 The December 2009 issue of the Conservatives' leaflet praised the Conservative County Council's 'sensible policy' for controlling on-street parking. Your Lib Dem councillors have for a long time opposed that ridiculous policy. And on 21st January 2010 the County's policy development group agreed that the policy is not working and needs to be thoroughly reviewed. So, what was a sensible policy in December has been abandoned in January as being not fit for purpose!

More parking controls

As a result of strenuous efforts by your Focus Team over more than two years, there will at last be some more on-street parking restrictions in Queen Edith's.

The Conservative-run County Council has severely limited the funds available for new controls in the city this year but almost half of the sum will be spent in Queen Edith's.

New yellow lines have been approved for safety reasons to stop parking near some key road junctions in Almoners Avenue, Glebe Road, Rock Road, and Wulfstan Way. The County's policy does not allow new yellow lines just to reduce commuter parking but these additional lines will be an environmental improvement.

Cllr Alan Baker



Geoff's Column

Care cuts

Adults receiving social care in Cambridgeshire face a pretty miserable time.

Over the coming year, the Conservative councillors who run the County Council want to save several millions of pounds – by cutting back services. Where the County itself provides services, this may mean fewer hours of care for vulnerable people. Where independent care firms do the job, the County will freeze contract prices – putting on the pressure when many homes are already running on skeleton staffs. Who will suffer when it all goes wrong? Not Tory councillors making the cuts, but the people who need the care.

If you feel strongly about these cuts, write to:

Cllr Jill Tuck- Leader of the Council, Shire Hall, Cambridge CB3 OAP

Rail franchise

I warmly welcome the consultation now underway to look at how a future rail franchise to be awarded from April 2011 will provide services from Cambridge to London, Kings Lynn, Norwich and Ipswich. Some serious thought should be given to looking at the level of service quality being provided, particularly in the evenings and at weekends – when we still see far too many services being provided by bus or they get cancelled because of poor planning by management to ensure sufficient drivers are available to work services. This is 2010 and we deserve better and should demand it.

For up-to-the-minute information on my activities, see www.geoffheathcock.mycouncillor.org.uk

Primary school expansion

Parents of young children already know that the local schools are short of places. More and more children have been born, or moved into the area in recent years, leading to schools being oversubscribed and parents having little real choice over which school to send their children to.

The Conservative County Council, which runs schools, is proposing to give Queen Edith's Primary School an extra class, and create a new school on the site of Netherhall Lower School in Gunhild Way.

The management of the new school will be decided by a competition, a big challenge for our local schools. The extra places are, however, greatly needed, so we look forward to an exciting time ahead.

Cllr Geoff Heathcock said, 'It is absolutely essential that we do all we can to protect the medium and longer term future of the existing QE Primary School, which continues to offer residents such a marvellous rounded education and is much applauded for its results.'



Snippets

Addenbrooke's

Liaison with the hospital and County Council to improve signage to the Rosie – Amanda and Geoff

Blinco Grove

Tree branches interfering with telephone lines reported - Alan Hills Road

A clean-up of the slip road organized – Geoff Potholes outside nos 263 and 280 reported - Alan

Various streetlights reported – Geoff

Manhole cover near Homerton College reported – Geoff

Repairs requested for bus stop timetable displays – Amanda Graffiti removed – Amanda

Hinton Avenue

Discussions with County Council about replacing broken paving slabs with tarmac – Amanda

Queen Edith's Way area

Works to install a new water main damaged many of the yellow on-street parking control lines repainting requested – Alan

Worts Causeway

Verge sections reported for repair – Geoff Queen Edith's Way Three very bad potholes reported – Geoff

Wulfstan Way

Potholes reported – Amanda