

Longstanton Parish Council
District Council Report 2015 / 2016

This is a brief summary of the past year's activities, which have already been covered in the emails I send out and in the notes published by Longstanton Life.

The extraordinary decision was made last summer to axe the Northstowe Committee. This decision appears to have been made by officers who were fed up with being asked awkward questions by members of the committee. No replacement mechanism has yet been put into place to enable elected members to determine important Northstowe decisions and I am not currently a member of the South Cambs Planning Committee.

Without the Northstowe Committee, the only means any of us have to keep in touch with Northstowe developments is the Northstowe Community Forum, which meets here every 3 months, the last meeting having been five days ago. This has proved to be a surprisingly useful meeting, because all the relevant players turn up and it is a real opportunity for residents to ask questions and get proper answers.

The A14 project is currently on hold for the next 2 weeks or so because it is waiting for ministerial approval. Assuming that comes through, the project will start in earnest. They still reckon it will complete during 2020.

The Outline planning application for Northstowe Phase 2 was agreed by the Northstowe committee in June last year. The intention was that the Section 106 agreement would be signed off by October or so last year. This still has not happened.

There have been encouraging signs of joined-up thinking happening within the government about Northstowe. For example, the Phase 2 development schedule is now being connected to that for the A14 upgrade. Also, the Bar Hill roundabout to be built as part of the A14 upgrade will now cater for the whole of Northstowe, not just Phase 1 (as was the situation a year ago).

The B1050 road works alongside Northstowe Phase 1 are complete. The B1050 is already overloaded and I just don't see how it will be able to handle the traffic from Phase 1 on top of the through traffic. We just have to hope that before there is any serious development of Phase 1 the Southern Access Road from the South of the site through to Bar Hill will have been completed so that the Phase 1 traffic can use that.

It has recently been announced that Bloors will develop the small site to the West of the B1050 at Crabtree Corner, with the intention of delivering the first Northstowe housing in the first quarter of 2017. Given the project history of continual slippage it is hard to have any view about when this housing really will happen.

In the past week the work has begun to shift all the spoil from the huge balancing ponds to the East of the B1050 onto the Phase 1 site. The aim is to raise the level of half the Phase 1 site by between one and one and a half metres. This work will continue for six months. The new ponds will considerably reduce (but not eliminate) the flood risk faced by parts of Longstanton.

As before, residents need to be alert to the works being carried out sensitively by the contractors, and within the agreed hours. The permitted times for on-site work are:

Mon – Fri 8am – 6pm
Sat 8am – 1pm

The permitted hours for delivery and collection are Mon – Sat 7am – 7pm.

No activity is permitted on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

The next activity connected to Phase 2 will be a consultation process for the Phase 2 Design Codes.

The Government has recently been supporting a hare-brained scheme to devolve power to the area incorporating Norfolk, Suffolk, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, with a mayor pretty much in complete overall control. Almost every council involved in this project has decided they are very unhappy with the proposal but the Government is still determined to impose its will. I will keep you informed about future developments.

South Cambs recently raised its Council Tax by £5 for band D homes. This still means we have one of the lowest Council Taxes in the country.

In conclusion, I have an email list of local residents containing some 600 email addresses. I use it to send out informative emails but it is also there to alert local residents to forthcoming events. If you want to join the list or to publicise an event, just email me at alex@alexrileywines.co.uk and ask!

In 10 days' time, on Thursday 5 May, I will be standing for re-election.

Alex Riley 25 April 2016