

Longstanton Parish Council District Council Report 2013 / 2014

For me the past year has been dominated by Northstowe-related activity. Before I deal with that I will cover a couple of other items.

The A14 upgrade which has been necessary for the past 20 years is at last going through the necessary consultation process. At the start of the year there was an informal consultation in which many local residents took part. The clear message to the Government was that the proposal to toll the new section between Swavesey and Huntingdon would not only be unpopular. It would also fail to bring in the hoped-for revenue because all of us local people would find alternative, untolled routes. It was a major success when the Government listened to us and dropped the tolling proposals. It is my view that the currently-proposed scheme, whose consultation goes on till 15 June is a good one, given the tight financial constraints which have been laid down. The proposal is to start work in 2016, finishing by 2020.

Whereas I'm sure that all residents would welcome a larger village shop than we currently have, the arrival of a Co-op store will almost certainly result in the loss of our Post Office, which itself provides an important local service. I wrote to the Co-op and explained how well situated their store would be to service the initial housing in Northstowe, and how much goodwill they would generate locally if they incorporated a Post Office in the store. I received a constructive reply back which said that they had originally decided against incorporating a Post Office in the store but that they would review that decision in the light of the points I had raised. However, I recently received another letter from them indicating that they had decided against incorporating a Post Office into the new store.

Northstowe Phase 1 does actually seem to be happening, as is evidenced by the recent wholesale destruction of hedgerows along the B1050. The golf course was shut down last summer, completely unnecessarily it would seem. Last September the plans were to have first housing completions around the end of 2014. In November that was adjusted to late 2015. I have not seen a more recent estimate. Work is planned to start shortly on the investigation of potential archaeological sites.

The Northstowe Secondary School is due to open in September 2018, with some initial capacity for Secondary School children to be made available in the Phase 1 Primary School. The County Council Education Department announced last September in a high-handed manner that as of September 2015 local children of Secondary School age would all use classrooms within the Phase 1 Primary School. Swavesey Village College (SVC) skilfully defused the situation by making arrangements for local children to move on to SVC, at least in September 2015 and September 2016. They also set up meetings between themselves and local parents, not involving the Education Department.

South Cambs promised to find out villagers' views by the end of last year on when different parts of Longstanton should become part of Northstowe. It emerged that what they were looking for was a "big bang" approach in which the whole of the eventual Northstowe site switches over to being part of Northstowe at the same time. I was completely opposed to this and attended the SCDC Civic Affairs Committee meeting in March with Gill Ashby. We successfully argued that a Parish Council for Phase 1 of Northstowe should be set up at the earliest opportunity. This is expected to be in April 2017 or 2018. It simply does not make

sense to my mind for our village to run Northstowe, when even Phase 1 of that town-to-be is bigger than our village.

Northstowe Phase 2 will include the Town Centre and also requires the construction of a new dual carriageway road to Bar Hill. This will at least relieve some of the additional burden on the B1050 which is already at capacity and will not manage to cope with the addition of the traffic from Phase 1. We have been told to expect a Phase 2 Outline application in May or June. However, the Highways Agency has made clear that no more than 1500 houses can be accommodated on the Northstowe site before the A14 upgrade is completed.

I have been a very active member of the Northstowe Joint Development Committee for the past year and will continue to look after our village's interests over Northstowe during the year to come.

In conclusion, may I remind you all that I have an email list of local residents containing some 550 names. I use it to send out informative emails but it is also there to alert local residents to forthcoming events. If you want me to publicise something, just email me and ask!

Alex Riley 28 April 2014