

Annual District report to Parish Council 2024

I have been a District Councillor since 2015, first representing Fulbourn and then from 2018 the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn ward which covers eight villages Fen Ditton, Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham, Horningsea, Little Wilbraham, Six Mile Bottom, Stow cum Quy and Teversham.

At South Cambridgeshire District Council my role is as an Opposition Councillor and Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

I continue to answer resident emails on a whole range of issues locally (maintenance, housing, benefits, speeding, flooding, youth projects, planning – big and small etc). I continue to regularly attend Parish Council meetings across the ward. I also continue to attend community events across the ward such as Patient Participation meetings, library coffee mornings community markets, litter picks and resident group meetings on a range of issues. I continue to do a monthly report to highlight consultations, grants that are becoming available and any information that will benefit residents or Parish Councillors. I am always happy to send these reports out to residents on request.

At the council I continue to work on the following big issues:

Planning issues

Major planning applications within the ward and making representations on the Local Plan. I have made representations on a number of developments such as Marleigh, Cherry Hinton North, Teversham Road (Castlefield site), Ida Darwin, the Water Treatment Plant and the development on Manor Farm in Horningsea. I have chaired every other meeting of the Liaison Group comprising of Morris Homes and Hill (developers), Parish Councillors and Planning Officers to best coordinate the two new developments in Fulbourn and feedback local concerns.

Four-day week data finally published

On 22nd January 2024, the administration finally published the four-day week performance data on the council's website that is being sent to government under the Best Value Notice.

This data can be found by following this link <https://www.scams.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/best-value-notice-data-requests/#doc-list-53840-53842>

The publication of the data follows a hard-fought battle to gain access to this information for residents and councillors.

At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 20th November 2023, we (the opposition group), asked to see the business case for the four-day week. In January, we still had not had a response to our request to see the business case and followed up on this request. We then learned that there was no business case – only the original proposal agreed by Cabinet on 12th September 2022. Everything the council does has a cost attached – any time spent on projects by council officers is time being paid for and costing residents, which is why it is so concerning that the Cabinet paper said there was no cost associated with the trial.

With no business case to underpin the trial we are very concerned that the true cost of this trial has not been properly considered.

On 4 January 2024, we received word that the Cabinet had decided they would not publish the data until the Best Value Notice was withdrawn. This worried us as we did not know how long this would take and proper scrutiny of the data should be made in a timely manner.

On 8 January 2024, Conservative councillors requested to see the four-day week data under their rights as a member of the Scrutiny committee – to help them properly scrutinise the administration.

It was confirmed that we had a right to see the information being sent to government and following our request, the administration finally agreed to publish the four-day week data on the council's website.

While we have succeeded in getting the administration to share the data they are sending to government, we will not stop here. We will continue to push for more transparency in relation to the four-day week to enable residents to see where their money is going.

We also asked to see how much money the administration has spent on legal advice relating to the four-day week. We are still awaiting an answer about this.

Civil parking enforcement

I have worked with and supported the council in bringing in civil enforcement throughout South Cambs.

Campaigned against Congestion Charging

I have been firmly against the proposals to have congestion zones within South Cambs and the city that would directly affect people in the Fen Ditton and Fulbourn Ward. I have had a huge amount of correspondence from residents regarding this issue. I have done my best to represent resident views on this issue, asking questions at the Council, putting down motions against Congestion Charging and attending and speaking at resident group meetings on this issue. I was very glad to see these proposals finally put on

ice. Let's hope they don't re-emerge in anything like the way that they were proposed.

Cycle Greenways

I have continued to be very vocal on pushing for the Cycle Greenways to be started especially the route between Fulbourn and Mill Road which has taken far too long. I have held meetings with officers from the GCP on this issue and I will continue to push for spades in the ground as soon as possible, for which the funding was agreed in 2016.

Investment

As Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview committee, I have been involved in scrutinising major investments that the Council has made throughout the year including the Council's private housing company Ermine Street Housing, investing in commercial space, re-utilising space within the Council and their investment partnerships.

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 or ring 07595 361 285 (please leave a voicemail if I am unavailable) Councillor Graham Cone