

## County Councillor Claire Daunton: Annual Parish Report 2023

I have represented the Fulbourn Division since May 2021, thus am about to complete two years in this role, having previously served as a District councillor. The County Division includes seven communities: Fen Ditton East (Marleigh and Quy Waters), Fulbourn, Great Wilbraham, Little Wilbraham, Quy, Six Mile Bottom and Teversham.

I have attended all relevant meetings and events throughout the year, alongside being active and engaged in my several areas of non-council (non-stipendiary) activity, including charity trustee roles and academic work.

I liaise closely with my Ward colleagues and with the wider District and County team of colleagues, as well as with the clerks and chairs of parish councils across the division. I thank them all for their excellent, generous cooperation over the year. In the context of Fulbourn, I would like to thank **particularly the Chair, Mary Drage and Clerk, Trish Newman** for their support throughout the year.

Cambridgeshire County Council is run by a Joint Administration (JA) with Liberal Democrats now having 22 seats, Labour 9 Seats and Independents, 3. The opposition Conservative group has 27 seats.

The JA agreement is

here:[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cambridgelibdems/pages/5179/attachments/original/1620984611/County\\_agreement\\_2021\\_FINAL.pdf?1620984611](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/cambridgelibdems/pages/5179/attachments/original/1620984611/County_agreement_2021_FINAL.pdf?1620984611)

This year the Council increased its portion of Council Tax in February, by 4.99 per cent in total—2.99 per cent for general services, and 2 per cent specifically for adult social care.

Throughout the year I have served on the following committees and working groups:

- Adult and Health Committee, member
- Children and Young People Committee, member
- Communities and Social Inclusion Committee, member
- Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Trust, as County-appointed governor  
This trust includes Fulbourn Hospital and I am glad to have a voice here
- Cambridgeshire Schools Forum, observer
- Libraries Working Group, member
- HGV Working Group, member
- Marleigh Steering Group, member
- Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly, member

The committees have met regularly, with briefings on particular topics and training sessions in between formal meetings. I will write a little more below about their work, but first a word or two concerning the working groups on Libraries and HGVs. I have been pleased to

take part in these groups both because of their interest and importance but also for the opportunity of close cross-party working.

There is much innovative work going on in the library and information sector to cater to a wide range of needs and interests and to make relevant the service, without losing its original ethos and purpose. The County has been at the forefront of innovation, in spite of restricted financing and we have some excellent library staff who are constantly seeking ways to improve the service and reach out to a wider audience. The 'Library Presents' scheme has brought to libraries a range of learning and cultural activities which have encouraged users.

On the HGV working group County Council officers and members worked closely with a range of partners to devise and implement a new HGV policy, bringing together a range of diverse information concerning legislation and regulations. This will make it easier for communities to deal with HGV traffic in their locations, whether that be the volume of traffic, type of traffic, parking places or other issues. We know that this is an issue across the county but it has different impacts and thus different approaches in different places.

### **Adults and Health Committee**

The County is responsible for children's and adult social care and public health commissioning. About 80% of the revenue budget goes to social care: much of this expenditure is tied up in long-term care contracts; individual care packages which can be highly complex.

**The County's policy programme focus:** support for the workforce (introduction of real living wage, apprenticeships, career progression); a range of initiatives centred on prevention of ill-health and community level support for people to live independently in their own homes; and greater levels of support at 'independent living' schemes.

**Under government health and care reforms,** as of July 2022 CCC is a member of the Integrated Care System, the new framework for the local NHS which includes local authority social care in its decision-making for collective forward planning. Ours is the Cambs and Peterborough ICS.

**Like all local authorities CCC has been required to adhere to and prepare for government mandated reforms.** This has required considerable resource; though some reforms have now been delayed until after the next general election. From April local authorities will fall under a new CQC framework. The County has worked hard to establish good collaboration with its district and Peterborough partners, and the local NHS. All come together in the Health and Wellbeing Board and Integrated Care Partnership. District councils are recognized as holding important levers for positive change at community level, for example housing.

**Significantly increased government funding support and certain reforms of the sector are needed** to enable CCC to achieve its aims of keeping people well in their own homes.

In scrutiny sessions our committee has looked at a very wide range of issues: NHS dentistry; children's hospital; major trauma centres; Royal Papworth Hospital; autism services, to name but some.

### **Children and Young People Committee**

This committee is concerned with children's welfare (including foster care and children in care where the county is the corporate parent) and education provision across the county. We have been particularly concerned this year with helping families deal with the increase in cost of living and the challenges that is posing. We have provided holiday vouchers to help families and worked with the Communities and Social Inclusion Committee on the Household Support Fund. In education we have been particularly concerned with significant budget shortfall in the area of special educational needs and disability (SEND) and have just received a significant grant from government to deal with the deficit and bring in new arrangements. Also in the area of education we have been looking at the challenges facing small schools where resources are stretched; and the challenges to the capital programme for new schools posed by the significant rise in the cost of building materials.

### **Communities and Social Inclusion Committee**

During the year this committee has dealt with: the Household Support Fund for struggling families; grants for a wide range of groups and communities to help them with projects that support community welfare and cohesion; library provision across the county, both in new buildings and new services; the archives and local history service which has supported many individuals and groups; the coroner's service; the registration service; Cambridge Skills, providing training and lifelong learning. The remit of the committee is wide and our meetings have dealt with a range of interesting issues, including the provision of Warm Hubs, improvements to the mobile library service and the move to Voter ID.

I do NOT serve on the Environment and Green Investment Committee nor on the Highways and Transport Committee, but my work as a county councillor has been affected and helped by decisions taken at these committees.

The **Environment and Green Investment Committee** has been working with landowners to encourage regenerative farming and it has also undertaken a tree survey and inventory across county-owned land. It has been occupied with looking at new waste contracts alongside green energy projects such as the Swaffham community heating system, the installation of LED lighting, the use of county buildings for the installation of solar panels. The Council awarded the first spending from its Just Transition fund, including £2.175M for a business case for the first phase of the Council's plan for Cambridgeshire to reach Net Zero carbon by 2045. £1.75M was also awarded for flood work and nature restoration. On the

hottest day on record in the UK, Joint Administration members of the City Council voted to sign Zero Hour's Nature & Climate Declaration, while the tarmac melted in the council car park outside the building. The County Council is working with district councils on energy retrofits in homes with poor energy efficiency.

The remit of the **Highways and Transport** committee is vast and complex, including not just the maintenance of roads and footpaths, but also civil parking, drainage, signage, active travel, park and ride, speed limits and speed restrictions. This year several new policies have been introduced, including those on 20mph schemes and on HGV traffic; and a new local walking and cycling infrastructure plan has been agreed.

\*The condition of Cambridgeshire's roads and pavements remains a serious challenge. This situation has been building for many years in which previous councils' approach was one of 'managed decline'. However, recent extreme weather has speeded up that decline very significantly. The severity and extent of the problem is far beyond the maintenance budget of the council, so simply 'freeing up some money' is not an option. The council has been actively engaging with the Department for Transport to seek their support and funding. The freezing spell over winter caused many road and pavement surface defects, and failure of pothole repairs. We encourage residents to report faults online.

\*A recent report, published in the cross-party Local Government Association (LGA) journal, *First* (Issue No. 682, April 2023, p.8) showed that government allocation of funding for motorways is 31 times higher than that made available to local councils to repair local roads. The LGA, representing all local authorities, of whatever party, has called for increased spending on local roads. Additional funding is now needed more than ever as the cost of road-repair materials (including repairs to potholes) has risen by up to 22%.

### **Greater Cambridge Partnership Assembly**

This year, in addition to running a major consultation exercise 'Making Connections' on improved public transport and active travel, with the possible introduction of road pricing, the GCP has been engaged on a number of other consultations. On 'Making Connections' it is good to see the significant response (over 24,000) and this has meant that detailed analysis is taking some time. We are expecting to debate the outcome of the consultation at the Assembly meeting in early June. Other consultations include: the Eastern Access project – to improve access to the city from areas to the north and east of Cambridge, including villages in this Division; and a number of Greenways linking villages to the city. Some of these – notably the links to Horningsea, Fen Ditton, Quy and Fulbourn – are in this division. Some of these consultations have already taken place and we are grateful to parish councils and residents for engaging with them, both in person and online. Others, including the consultation for the **Fulbourn Greenway are due to take place in the near future.**

We are fortunate live in an area known globally for its success in education, innovation and invention, across the spectrum. It is an area to which people are drawn to live and work. But with that success come challenges of housing, transport, access to facilities. There is no easy solution; but calm discussion, attention to facts and evidence, are good starting points.

### **The Community of Fulbourn**

LHI Bids: the County provides significant funding for local highways improvement initiatives (LHI) and I have supported the parish council in its bid to access this funding.

20mph funding: I am supporting the bid for funding from the County Council to introduce a 20mph zone/limit in the village. These bids do not require parish matched funding.

Footpaths: In the past year repairs to footpaths have taken place on School Lane, Haggis Gap, Cow Lane, Pierce Lane. Some further work is needed; and there is outstanding work for Station Road. It should be noted, however, that the cost of materials (bitumen for example) has risen by ca. 20% over the past year and some scheduled repairs have had to be put back some months whilst awaiting further decisions on financing.

White Lines: following the painting of the white lines in the centre of the village last June, the roundabouts at Haggis Gap and Shelford Road were repainted early this year. There is still work to be done on white lines at other junctions and I have requested this for the new budget year.

Speed Cushions: the speed cushions on High Street/Manor Walk/School Lane are due for repair in the coming weeks. The County Council, through the LHI programme, is funding speed restrictions on Shelford Road, with input from the parish council, following the outcome of a bid.

Roman Road: I have liaised with residents and county officers on the maintenance of the Roman Road, particularly on keeping overgrowth cut back.

Drainage: I have helped resolve the problem of poor drainage on Home End where flooding has occurred in the past. Improvements in other areas have been made but there is still work to be done – the area of Station Road/Wilbraham Road needs investigation. We must have a careful eye on the gulleys and keep them clear. Residents will let me know if further work needs doing alongside regular maintenance.

Holes: this year has been particularly bad for potholes, with a series of unusual weather patterns across the country having a particular effect in Cambridgeshire. Although this county is by no means the worst affected, we have certainly seen some major problems and Fulbourn is no exception. Central government has made some additional funding available, but given the size of the national problem, this can only help to a modest degree (see above\*). Here, locally, resources have been put to bringing in additional crews and

machinery and to start 7-day working. There are still several areas to be tackled and a plan in place for work to be carried on throughout the late Spring and Summer.

School: I have liaised with the school on a County scheme which is designed to help schools with learning projects related to road safety and safe walking and cycling to school and being road-safety aware in and near the school.

Library. I was pleased to be asked to present holiday reading certificates in August 2022 in the Fulbourn library and to see the excellent work done there by volunteer staff, including those helping directly with the reading challenge.

FA4Y. I have taken part in discussions of the Fulbourn Action for Youth Group and help with recommendations concerning county funding and advice, working with trustees and alongside an experienced county officer.

Neighbourhood Plan. I was pleased to be a member of the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan group (from 2018) and to help bring the plan to a successful conclusion on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

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