

AGM REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCILS
COUNTY COUNCILLOR SIMON BYWATER SAWTRY & STILTON

As another financial year comes to an end I thought it was timely to give you a brief overview of what has been, for me a very busy year. Most of you will have seen me around the ward tackling local issues that affect residents, such as pot holes, dangerous trees, road signs, fly tipping, liaising with Highways officers and assisting in the Local Highway initiatives.

I have spent many hours with residents and community groups helping to address concerns and anxieties over large scale planning applications in Sawtry, Stilton, Holme and the 2x Crematoriums in Kings Ripton. I have attended many HDC District Planning committee meetings raising concerns over the impacts on our communities and in particular infrastructure pressures. I will continue to support Parish Councils and communities during this complex and very often frustrating process.

I have worked tirelessly to help many local residents with a variety of issues that are important to them which includes health and social care issues, housing worries, school places, school transport, special education needs care plan support and some very complex disputes involving a wide variety of agencies from Police, Environment Agency, Fire Service Planning and the Health and Safety Executive. One such issue has taken me to the highest level of Government and was duly supported by our MP Shailesh Vara for which I and the residents are very grateful.

My District Councillor colleagues, Cllr Tim Alban, Cllr Marge Beuttell and Cllr Dick Tuplin have supported me with many issues this year and continue to work for their communities, for which I am very grateful.

At Cambridgeshire County Council as an elected member I hold additional roles and responsibilities. **Chairman of the Children and Young Peoples Committee (CYP).**

This is by far my biggest commitment at the County Council, for which I was selected for by Full Council. It is a role I am very passionate about and take extremely seriously. It is a statutory and County wide responsibility for Children's Social Services and Local Authority Education services. This involves meeting a wide variety of partners and stakeholders to ensure the CC are doing their very best for all young people in Cambridgeshire.

You can see the work we have been doing in the committee here:

https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccclive/Committees/tabid/62/ctl/ViewCMIS_CommitteeDetails/mid/381/id/4/Default.aspx

During the past 12 months the CYP committee has looked at and made a huge number of decisions relating to policy and strategy. One such complex item was the way CCC delivers Children's Social Care known as the Change for Children Programme, developed in order to address some long-standing challenges in delivering children's social care services in Cambridgeshire. Children's Social care is very expensive but also vital to those children requiring help. The change to a district based model was implemented in December 2018. A recent Ofsted report of children's Social Care found Cambridgeshire to have "good leadership" but agreed that we required improvement in other areas which we had previously identified as part of the change programme. Following this report, and due to some great work by our officers, the Department for Education has awarded Trailblazer status to Cambridgeshire County Council. This will allow us to implement the Family Safeguarding

model, which will allow us to share in a significant amount of additional funding to help us to implement the approach. This is fantastic news for the Council, our staff and, most importantly for our most vulnerable children and young people. (See more details here)

<https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/28085-new-84-million-project-to-strengthen-families-and-safely-reduce-the-number-of-children-entering-care?fbclid=IwAR1gtpK9031Xc-IJ-VppV-1LqopsLFoA8AGA2C9GxeAKODCNN7MoCJM1HaU>

Board member on Shared Services education Board

This board looks at how we can work more effectively and collaboratively in education with Peterborough City Council and thus recommend improvements & savings where appropriate.

Lead member on The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board (CPCSB)

This is the key statutory body overseeing arrangements for safeguarding children and young people across the county

<https://www.peterboroughlscb.org.uk/children-board/>

A Member of Cambridgeshire Fire Authority

The Fire Authority is Responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to the 805,000 people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

<http://www.cambsfire.gov.uk/about-us.aspx>

In Feb 2019 Cambridgeshire full council set its budget. Members heard that despite investing in a range of innovative, ambitious, transformation and efficiency plans, the situation could have been much worse. The County Council was still projecting a budget gap for 2018/19 of £4.3m even after including a proposed 2% Adult Social Care Precept. Debate had seen unity from all parties about the increase in council tax, but divided opinions on how the money raised should be spent.

The Adult Social Care Precept increase of 2% and the Council Tax increase of 2.99% will add £23.76 annually (46p weekly) and £35.64 annually (68p weekly) respectively to a Band D property, before other precepting authorities such as city and district councils, fire and police add their amounts.

At the meeting the Council's bid to achieve a fairer funding deal from government was further discussed, as despite being the fastest growing county in the UK, Cambridgeshire is the 3rd lowest funded. Members heard that if the County Council was funded at the same rate as an average London Borough it would receive £75m a year more in Revenue Support Grant from central government, and if it was funded at the same rate as an average UK County Council it would be £13.7m a year better funded. So needless to say I will continue to do all I can to push Government for fairer funding for our Council and our schools in Cambridgeshire.

Finally without your commitment as parish councilors it would be impossible for the local issues that are important to us all get done. I really do appreciate this knowledge and support and on behalf of everyone in our community I wholeheartedly thank you. This is just a brief summary of the work I have been involved in this year but hope you find it useful. As you can appreciate it is also sometimes very difficult to get to every meeting given the times pressures, but please feel free to contact me should you need to discuss anything at a more specific local level.

Best wishes & hopefully see you soon

Simon

April 2019

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