

# Cabinet and Corporate Management Team

## Portfolio Holder Briefing Report

August 2013

**NEIGHBOURHOOD  
PLANNING**



 **OPEN**  
for Business

 **LOCALISM**

 **QUALITY  
ORGANISATION**


**STREETS ahead**

# Cabinet Members


	<b>Councillor Alan Melton</b>
<b>Leader of the Council</b>	

	<b>Councillor Christopher Seaton</b>
<b>Deputy Leader of the Council</b>	

	<b>Councillor John Clark</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

	<b>Councillor Ralph Butcher</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

	<b>Councillor Steve Garratt</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

	<b>Councillor Pop Jolley</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

	<b>Councillor Simon King</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

	<b>Councillor Peter Murphy</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

	<b>Councillor David Oliver</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	

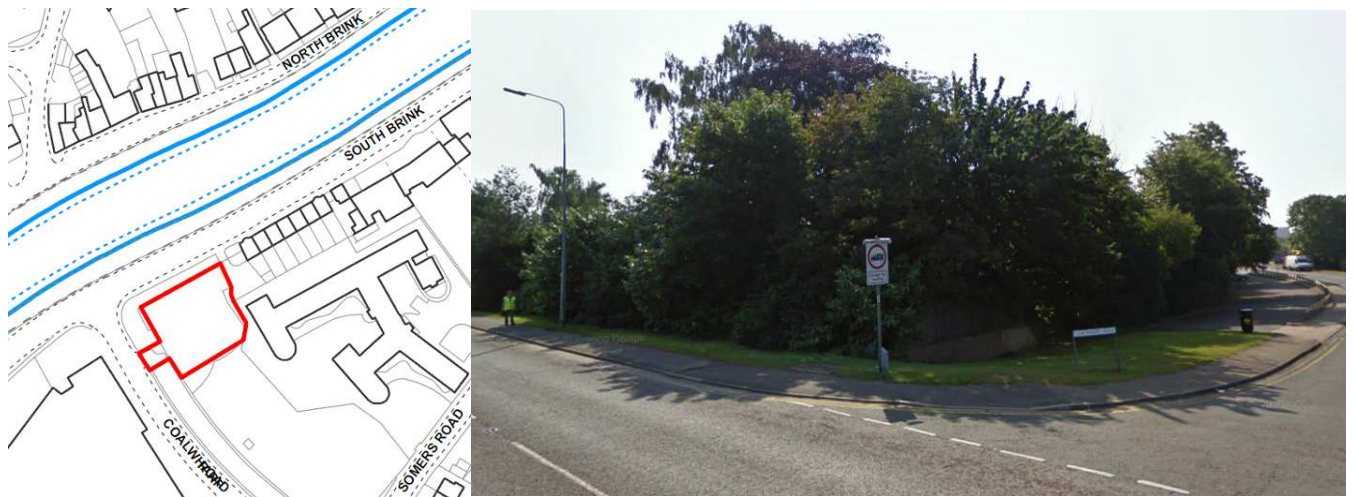
	<b>Councillor Mac Cotterell MBE</b>
<b>Cabinet Advisor</b>	

## Neighbourhood Planning

### NP1 Growth and future shape of Fenland

#### Coalwharf Road, Wisbech – Design Competition

Following Cabinet approval in July, the Coalwharf Road Design & Development Competition was officially launched earlier in the month. The competition seeks to deliver an innovative and sustainable development upon the Council's land at Coalwharf Road in Wisbech. One of the main requirements of the competition is to ensure that the winning design is financially viable, and thus actually deliverable. It is anticipated that the winner will be announced at the Building Design Awards on 9 December.



#### Belt Drove, Elm, Sewage Treatment Works

The Capital programme project to replace the Sewage Treatment Works at Belt Drove, Elm has now been completed and became fully operational on 31 July 2013.

The new plant will provide future reliability for connected customers, ensuring compliance with the Environment Agency discharge consent and thereby reducing the risk of potential prosecution to the Council from polluting.

In addition, the need to undertake expensive routine tankering operations from what was a previously an unreliable and failing plant has now been alleviated.



**New STW Plant at Belt Drove, Elm**

### **Whittlesey Station Masterplan Consultation**

The consultation closed on 12 July 2013. Consultation events were held in Whittlesey at the Town Council Office and the train station. The events were well attended and around 70 written responses have been submitted, with people taking time to provide very detailed comments.

The draft master plan forms part of the Council's work on the Hereward Community Rail Partnership and the Fenland Rail Development Strategy. In order to make improvements at the station we need a clear plan of what will be delivered and where it is to be situated. The Project Steering Group is meeting in August 2013 to review the consultation responses and to make any amendments to the masterplan, along with considering the next steps.

### **Core Strategy Update**

The six week public consultation on the Addendum to the Proposed Submission version of the Core Strategy continued throughout July, closing on 7 August. The Addendum removes the North-East March allocation from the plan, with the proposed 450 dwellings relocated to the south-west of the town (200 dwellings) and to "windfall" sites in and around the town (250 dwellings). The total number of dwellings to be built in March over the plan period to 2031 remains at 4,200, with the Council's overall target of 11,000 also remaining unchanged.

Representations received about the Addendum will be forwarded (together with comments received during the Feb- April consultation) to the Secretary of State on 6 September in preparation for a Public Examination to be held by an independent Inspector towards the end of the year / early 2014.

## **NP2 The built environment**

### **Wisbech Dilapidated Buildings**

A Confidential Report was considered by Cabinet in July. Members were able to consider the complexities of each of the four main properties: 1 Nene Quay (Constantine House), 6 North Brink (The Phoenix); 11/12 High Street & 24 High Street. The report also detailed the extensive work already undertaken by FDC Officers. In addition the report sought to set out the necessary actions to ensure that FDC continue to seek tangible improvements to these properties, whilst acknowledging the unprecedented nature of the circumstances.

Allied to the work already undertaken by Officers, a project group has been established to pursue a Funding Bid to secure a Grant from the Heritage Lottery. If successful, the Grant would fund a Conservation refurbishment and regeneration scheme within Wisbech. The scheme would focus primarily upon the dilapidated buildings within the High Street and Market Place areas. Support has been pledged from the likes of the Wisbech Society and English Heritage, both of whom welcome the proactive approach adopted by FDC in pursuing such funding.

### **Building Control**

July was a successful month for the Building Control team in terms of gaining new inspection work against strong competition from approved inspectors. Examples included the forthcoming refurbishment of the D block at the College of West Anglia and a new scheme for 39 dwellings at Manea on behalf of Crestel Partnerships.

Overall work received by the team this year has exceeded projections, as has fee income. A high throughput of application checking and site inspections has been maintained by the team over the summer months. The team will continue to compete strongly against external competition for new work in the future.

## **Localism**

### **L1 Supporting vulnerable members of our community**

#### **Homelessness Prevention**

The Council funds an advocacy service, known as a Court Desk, at Peterborough Court. Rural Fenland Citizens Advice Bureau assists people in Court, on the Council's behalf, to help prevent them from losing their homes.

A gentleman who has 2 children was in court in July. His relationship broke down some time ago and he has been unable to work because he has had to look after his children. However, he has now resolved his childcare issues and has been able to return to his job. Because he is now able to work again the Judge suspend the Possession Order as he felt that the mortgage was once again affordable.

Since April 2013 the Court Desk has assisted 11 families to keep their homes. In comparison at the same point last year the service had also assisted 11 households.

#### **Community House – Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Debt Advice**

Approximately 35 clients have been supported at Community House over the past year by CAB, most of whom have attended multiple sessions.

The following outcomes have been achieved:

- Assistance with benefit claims and benefit entitlement checks= 13% (4 people)
- Assistance with clearing debts 'once and for all' either by way of bankruptcy or Debt Relief Order = 34 % (12 people)
- Established successful debt repayment schedules = 53% (18 people)

Of these, 10% of clients (3 families) have avoided repossession of their properties once finance plans had been established.

Over the past two years this service had been funded by the Roddons Community Fund which has now ended, however, the Making Money Count Big Lottery Funded project will provide financial help and support for the local community.

#### **Operation Pheasant – Ministerial Task Force**

The Council was invited to attend a meeting chaired by MP, Mark Prisk, (Housing Minister) and MP, Mark Harper, (Immigration Minister) at the House of Commons. The ministerial task force received a presentation on housing related issues in

Fenland and how the Council and Police, in partnership with broader Operation Pheasant partners, are tackling issues around rogue landlords and the migrant population.

The approach to tackling issues was well received and will be used nationally as good practice. The Metropolitan Police and London Borough of Newham have already been in contact to share good practice.

### **Rural Capital Grants Update**

Eastrea Village Hall is now officially open for public use. The committee has drawn down all of their funding allocation (a total of £50,000). The opening event was attended by Cllr Butcher and the Duke of Gloucester made the opening speech.

The hall has provided the local community with an essential community hub and is already being booked by mother and toddler groups, art groups and events.

Newton Play Area Phase 2 is now officially open. Fenland District Council awarded the group £11,985 for additional play equipment, which is now being fully utilised by the local community.

### **Benefits**

The Benefit Cap continues to be implemented across our caseload. 19 claims have are now affected by the Cap, with reductions in Housing Benefit ranging from £164 to £12 per week. 8 claims have a reduction of £50 or more per week. The Benefit Cap is part of the Government's Welfare Reform program and although those customers who are affected in Fenland will find it a significant burden, the majority of the impact is being felt in other areas of the country.

We are continuing to hold our position with regards to new claims. Processing times dipped under 25 days for the first time this year. An excellent effort considering that this time last year we were at 36 days! But the challenge that faces us remains a significant one as we hit the heights of the holiday season and continue to juggle our priorities, meet our targets and prevent unnecessary overpayments. Changes in circumstances processing also continues to hold up well and currently stands at 9.4 days, which is within our 10 day target

There was a doubling in the numbers of Discretionary Housing Payment claims received following our recent publicity campaign and surgeries at the shops. The amount of money we have paid out in the past few weeks has increased considerably. A quarter of the £146,000 available to us has now been spent or committed to being spent. DHP money helps Fenland residents alleviate the risk of homelessness by either assisting them to remain in their current homes or move to more suitable accommodation.

## **L2 Promoting Cohesion throughout Fenland**

### **Unauthorised Encampments**

During July 2013, the Council became aware of 5 unauthorised Gypsy Traveller encampments in the district. Four of these encampments were in the Wisbech area and the other was in Whittlesey.

After conducting the required statutory health and welfare enquires, the Council was able to move on those encamped via negotiation. This prevents the need to take protracted legal action or be involved in expensive clear up costs often incurred with encampments elsewhere.

### **FDC managed Gypsy and Traveller sites**

FDC manage 5 Gypsy and Traveller sites across the district, comprising of 64 pitches. Following feedback from tenants, a pitch conditions stock survey has been conducted. The feedback has informed the development of a planned scheduled of programmed maintenance that will present FDC with an opportunity to increase efficiency in dealing with repairs, alongside improved customer service for the residents. All the funding for work on the sites comes from the income generated from the sites.

### **Big Lottery Fund, 'Making Money Count'**

On 31 July, the new Making Money Count project received its initial launch and was attended by Cabinet Members, Councillor David Oliver and Councillor Ralph Butcher. The project has been funded through £1m of the Big Lottery Fund's 'Improving Financial Confidence' fund. The project will be delivered by a partnership consisting of FDC, Roddons, CAB and CHS Group (formerly known as Cambridge Housing Society).

Funding will be used to work with Social Housing tenants living in Fenland. They will be able to access a number of different services that seek to improve financial capability across Fenland.

Funding has enabled FDC to remodel the Crimebuster bus to create a mobile ICT suite with confidential 1-2-1 space. This will be used to conduct ICT courses, financial peer support groups as well as referrals and signposting.

### **Healthy Homes Service**

This year to date The Healthy Homes Service, delivered through Age UK and funded through the Council, supported 31 vulnerable households in minor works to make their home environment more comfortable and reduce the risk of



accidents from slip trips and falls. In 2012/13 the service undertook works to assist 85 vulnerable households.

100% reported improvements in their daily lives as “better” or “much better” as a result of the assistance given.

### **Community Navigators**

Community Navigators are local volunteers who help / signpost older and vulnerable people access local community activities, services or statutory and voluntary organisations which they would enjoy or find useful.

The Council has been promoting awareness of the Cambridgeshire County Council funded Community Navigator Project throughout Fenland via the media, publicity posters and leaflets. The project aims to help older people find their way to activities and services such as:

- Joining a local friendship club, lunch or activity group
- Modifying their home or getting mobility aids
- Obtaining a financial health check to maximise income
- Getting help at home to support them through an illness or with one off tasks
- Accessing a community car scheme for a lift to activities and appointments

## **L3 Supporting our ageing population**

### **Golden Age**

As a result of the taster session for New Age Kurling at the Golden Age Surgery event in June, the over 60s club in Christchurch has decided to set up their own group of taster sessions.

12 people attended their first session and the Council has agreed to lend kurling equipment to the group initially and if it continues to grow they will look for funding to buy their own kit.

Kurling is seen as a great activity to encourage social interaction amongst older people and also as a form of physical recreation

## **L4 Promote healthy lifestyles**

### **Sportivate Funding for Fenland**

The Council is working alongside Living Sport (Cambridgeshire County Sport Partnership) to host 4 'Sportivate' funding workshops in the Fenland market towns, for local sports clubs and community groups to help them access this £32 million Lottery programme provided to give 14-25 year olds improved access to sports and physical activity opportunities.

In partnership with Living Sport, a workshop was delivered at the new All Weather Pitch pavilion in Chatteris. Five sports clubs were represented at the workshop which follows the previously successful workshops in both Wisbech and March.

Any successful sports clubs or community groups who achieve this funding will continue the development of Sport and Physical activity in Fenland and could create a significant benefit to the sustainability of the club/ group.

### **Fitness Classes**

Group fitness classes appeal to many people because of their diversity and variety. Each week within the four Fenland Leisure Centres there are over 100 fitness classes which around 1,500 customers take advantage of.

To compliment the existing classes of Circuits, Body Pump, Pilates, Group Cycling and Body Combat, the team is now introducing new programmes such as:

- 'Body Attack' a class that improves your speed, strength and agility,
- 'Bosu' helps develop balance, strength and core stability,
- 'Bootcamp' the latest outdoor fitness craze; a military style circuit class designed to encourage our customers to train that little bit harder.

Keeping the programme fresh and replacing underperforming classes with new ones is essential in maintaining and growing the membership base at each centre.

Group fitness also creates a better sense of community amongst members and assists in engaging and retaining our customers.

### **Building Improvement Works**

The building improvement plan for leisure centres ensures that the facilities maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and remain safe and as energy efficient as possible.

Essential repair works this year total just over £100k, with planned projects benefiting from more efficient energy output when complete. One of the larger

projects, taking place at the end of August, will see the swimming pool filter at Manor Leisure Centre refurbished. When complete, this work will ensure that the pool filtration system is clean, efficient and fit for purpose for the next 15 to 20 years.

### **Health & Wellbeing Board**

The Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board brings together representatives from local organisations who have a strong influence on health and wellbeing, including the commissioning of health, social care and public health services.

The work of the Board is guided by the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-17. The Strategy sets out the priorities the Health and Wellbeing Board and Network feel are the most important for local people.

Recent changes to the constitution of the Board have widened its membership and now each District Council is able to nominate a member representative. Councillor Ralph Butcher has been appointed to represent Fenland District Council on the Board, supported by Councillor Steve Garratt.

A development day for new Board members will be held on 30 August, followed by the next Board meeting on 17 October.

### **Clinical Commissioning Group and the Older People Programme**

From 1 April 2013, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) took over responsibility from NHS Cambridgeshire and NHS Peterborough (the Primary Care Trusts) for buying health services; serving a population of over 860,000 and with a budget of £854 million.

The CCG is made up of eight local commissioning groups (LCGs), which are groups of GP practices that have come together to commission/buy the day to day health services for their local populations. The role of the CCG is to support the LCGs in doing this.

The CCG is currently in the process of letting a large 5 year contract for services for older people across the area. The CCG's intention is to commission an improved and integrated system of health and social care services for older people at the local level.

As part of this process, the CCG has recognised the role of district councils in terms of supporting the health and wellbeing of older people and inputting into helping to maintain their independence in their own homes and communities.

In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health & Wellbeing, FDC has provided headline information regarding our area and Council services to prospective

bidders, along with identifying a number of key issues that they should address as part of the outline submission process.

FDC will continue to support the development of the older people programme, with the successful bidder being appointed by the CCG early in the New Year.

### **British Heart Foundation (BHF); Harty Lives Project**

The Harty Lives Fenland project was set up to reduce incidents of cardiac events within the population by educating people about healthy lifestyles. As part of this project, a Lifestyle Coach was employed to carry out lifestyle checks for older people. Funding for this role came from a successful bid to the British Heart Foundation, with the project running from 2011-2013.

Members of the community attended 12 week exercise programmes which improved fitness levels, allowing otherwise sedentary people to increase their activity levels and cope with daily tasks. This has improved their quality of life, reducing the chance of injury and prolonging independent living in their own home.

Over the life of the project the Lifestyle Coach has interacted with over 5,000 individuals offering brief intervention advice on heart health, blood pressure, weight, body fat percentage, smoking cessation and advice on how to increase activity levels. Several members of the public have been referred to their GP as a result of the Lifestyle Coach's assessment of their health.

Measurable physical outcomes that the project has noted include a reduction in average blood pressure of exercise class participants, increased mobility with regard to moving from a seated position, as well as limited weight loss in participants.

More importantly, the social aspect of the project has meant that participants felt more included in their community, less isolated and felt part of a group. This reduction in social isolation of the elderly participants is as important, if not more so, than the physical improvements measured.

Although the funding from the BHF has now ended, the Council continues to support older people by running Cardiac Phase IV classes three times per week and falls prevention sessions twice a week. Additionally, the groups that were established by the project can receive support from a Council instructor to ensure that the exercise element of the sessions continues at the appropriate level.

## **L5 Engaging young people**

### **Youth District Council (YDC)**

The YDC held their first meeting since their AGM on 17 July at the Thomas Clarkson Academy. The YDC discussed ideas around raising their profile and a rebranding exercise. This will include greater use of social networking and the production of a newsletter (to be produced after each meeting).

The YDC also awarded grant funding to 4 organisations, including the C4 Basketball project based at the Queen Mary Centre, Wisbech whose young members delivered an impressive presentation in support of their application. The funding will assist the communications work promoting the benefits of the club and train the young people in first aid.

### **Children's Trust meeting – July 2013**

Councillor Garratt attended the latest meeting of the Children's Trust on behalf of Cambridgeshire District Councils.

Key highlights:

The Board received an overview of the learning from three serious case reviews and points were discussed in detail. The lessons learnt help inform workforce development of all organisations supporting the Trust's work.

An update was received from the Together for Families programme. There is a target of 805 families to identify and work across Cambs by March 2015. To date 270 families have been identified using a combination of data matching and professional identification.

Prior to the meeting, partners provided information on their key areas to drive improvements forward, these were collated and discussed in three focus groups. The headlines included:

- Poverty & Welfare reforms
- Keeping children safe
- Mental Health
- Family resilience & community capacity
- Attainment and health outcomes
- Early Years
- Voice of the child and family

This will inform priorities and focus moving forward for the Trust.

## **Streets Ahead**

### **SA1 Maintain current levels of waste, recycling & cleansing**

#### **Recap Advanced Joint Working**

All of the authorities in Cambridgeshire, and Peterborough, are involved in a key work stream within the Recap Partnership's Advanced Joint Work that could see the first jointly procured contract for recycling services across Cambridgeshire.

The joint procurement of the sorting of some 55,000 tonnes of recycling materials, materials collected in customer's blue bins, is progressing to timescale and a paper will be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn.

Jointly procuring waste services such as this creates opportunities for cost savings for all authorities and contributes to the original aims of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership (Recap), which has been in place as an effective partnership since 1999.

#### **Overheating Refuse**

The refuse team continues to show its dedication to customers by maintaining good quality services, despite having to cope with the recent hot weather and overcoming breakdowns due to vehicles overheating.

The recent heatwave was the longest since 2006 and has resulted in some delays to normal collections, but the team has made sure these were caught up as early as possible the following day. There were 13 occasions during July when the team could not complete rounds due to heat related problems and breakdowns, but they still achieved a 97% performance, despite feeling 'hot under the collar'.

### **SA2 Delivering community projects that improve the environment and our streetscene**

#### **Glassmoor S106 Funding for Local Groups**

This month local groups in the Whittlesey area received just over £22,000 for environmental projects that will enable them to enhance their neighbourhoods. The winning bids included energy efficient Christmas lights and a wood burning heating system for a community building.

The Council is committed to providing opportunities for residents to improve where they live. Indeed, these fantastic neighbourhood projects have been made possible as a result of a Section 106 agreement that was jointly negotiated

by Fenland and Huntingdonshire District Council with the developer of the Glassmoor Wind Turbines.

To date the committee, which includes local residents, has awarded over £80,000 to enable local groups realise their aims. The fund will continue to provide essential financial support to local groups for a further 25 years.

### **Renaissance Funding**

This month Guyhirn Village Hall Committee received a grant of £400 from the Council's Renaissance fund to improve the appearance of the hall. The group has already installed hanging baskets and will be soon erecting a new sign too.



The Renaissance Scheme is intended to assist local communities who wish to improve dilapidated buildings and the visual amenity of towns and villages. It was therefore felt that this was a project well worth supporting, as the hall is on a major road through the village. It is envisaged that continuing to support improvements to focal buildings in this way will lead to increased pride in the local area as a whole and consequently a reduction in anti-social behaviour, which is a key priority for the Council.

### **March Open Spaces**

This summer, local people have been making the most of green spaces in March. Well known spaces such as West End Park are set to host open air concerts, craft fairs and markets supported by the Council; but the lesser known spaces are proving to be great places to visit too, thanks to local volunteers.



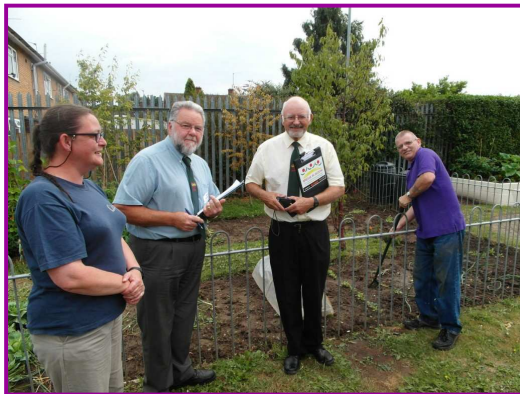
The friends of Norwood Road and Rings End Nature Reserve have recently hosted family activities at the reserves, including pond dipping and a dawn chorus walk. March Wildlife Group will be taking a walk on the wild side by holding a bug hunt at Gault wood.

Supporting community groups to deliver events within their local areas in this way is a Council priority as it will help to promote personal responsibility and foster community pride in our local areas. Future events will continue to be promoted on the Council's website and through Cambs.net to continue to support this important community participation.

### **Anglia In Bloom**

Anglia In Bloom judges came to Fenland during July to see some of the outstanding work that the Bloom groups have been involved in since last year.

**March in Bloom** were hard at work with the Street Pride group in transforming the overgrown shrub bed owned by West End DIY at the main entrance to their March Store. Community payback were utilised to clear the old bed. The In Bloom volunteers were then able to landscape the bed with the plants supplied by the DIY store.



**Waterlees in Bloom** decided to tie in their new project to the 50<sup>th</sup> Rose Fair Anniversary. They created a fabulous rose bed entrance to Waterlees on the Lynn Road/Waterlees Road junction. The small group worked hard throughout the year. The Gardens at the Community House also saw a fantastic improvement with new grow your own plots and a dedicated team of community gardeners taking ownership of the site.

**Parson Drove in Bloom** showed judges this year what big improvements had been made, including the works to restore the pond area which had received voluntary support and funding. The judges enjoyed an excellent tour around the village, including the award winning Payne Junior School with their outstanding environmental project.



**Whittlesey In Bloom** was the first to be judged and in the very hot weather the judges were treated to a tour around much of the town, taking in projects such as the refurbishment of The Memorial Gardens, Lattersey Nature Reserve, the allotments site, a large number of Street Pride projects,



the cemetery and also visited two schools; The Community College and Aldeman Jacobs.

**Benwick in Bloom** – Fenland’s first entrant into the Village category where a small group of volunteers have made a big impact in the village, with many new oak barrels and also existing ones refurbished, the group have work with the local school on projects and also encouraged many residents to become involved in their area and also to adopt a barrel for watering, the judges were very impressed with the work they have done in such a short time.



**Chatteris in Bloom** have worked hard to improve and enhance the local area for the benefit of the local community and visitors alike. They have improved grot spots and brightened up the streets.

**Wisbech in Bloom** has worked with several partners this year, including Delamores who are promoting a Horticultural apprenticeship scheme, and the students designed a Herb Bank at the Boat House, which compliments this year’s EDIBLE BRITAIN theme promoted by Britain In Bloom.



**The Herb Garden**

A second project undertaken was a new ‘bee friendly’ garden in Somers Road, designed by Jenny Windsor, Head Gardener at Peckover House. An over mature shrub bed was removed by Community Payback in cooperation with The

Landscape Group. The design was planted by Wisbech in Bloom and the new area is now maintained by the group.



**The Bee Garden**

The annual judging is just the culmination of all the hard work carried out by the groups during the year. The many projects, flowers displays and hours put in by the groups help to transform the towns and bring the local communities together.

The results will be announced on 10 September at the annual awards ceremony.

### **Whittlesey Garage Site Improvements**

In cooperation with Street Pride, the Probation Service and CCORN, security at a garage site in Whittlesey has been improved and the risk of anti social behaviour reduced.

The area of garages had become unsecure and young people had been reported as causing anti social behaviour.

As a result, a project to tidy the area and make the garages secure was coordinated.

Together with the help of Street Pride, the Probation Service and the Council, an action day was held. Paint was provided by a local paint reuse charity, CCORN, who were also keen to help the community.

The area is now secure and the risk of anti-social behaviour has been reduced in this area ahead of the school holidays.

### **Streets Ahead Project Group**

A new cross Council project group has been formed with the aim of tackling hot spot areas across Fenland. The group includes officers from streetscene, environmental health, legal, community team, planning and engineers.

The group is developing an action plan in consultation with key portfolio holders, which includes areas for initial focus, training opportunities,

information sharing and a process for communicating to Members, Town Councils and the community about actions taken.

The group's aim is to make enforcement action more successful by taking a joint approach to hotspot issues thus applying appropriate powers quickly and with faster and more sustainable outcomes.

The main hotspot areas for initial focus will include areas where dilapidation is evident.

### **SA3 Promote a Safer Fenland**

#### **Fenland reduces crime, again!**

Through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) coordinated action and the positive scrutiny to improve Community Safety the CSP meeting in July chaired by Councillor Oliver were appraised of the following impacts from the partnerships work as at the end of June 2013:

- All crime currently down 14.2% (1194 incidents in Fenland against 1352 from Apr - Jun 2012/13)
- Reduction in violent against a person by 13.9% (204 incidents in Fenland against 237 from Apr - Jun 2012/13)
- Reduction of shoplifting offences by 9.4% (126 incidents in Fenland against 139 from Apr - Jun 2012/13)
- Reduction in theft from vehicles 37% (58 incidents in Fenland against 92 from Apr - Jun 2012/13)
- Reduction in ASB against 12/13 figures (950 incidents in Fenland at the end of June puts the partnership on track to reduce the total ASB incidents down over the year from 4019 incidents in 2012/13 (no quarterly comparison available))
- Public perception of ASB being a problem (0.7% against the 1.5% target set)

#### **Fenland Community Safety Partnership takes on the challenge**

At the July meeting of the partnership, evidence was presented which highlighted a need for awareness and preventative projects for children and young people.

The CSP has taken on the challenge to develop fresh ideas for projects within schools and support the children and young people service to deliver against domestic abuse, road safety issues, bullying, improving cohesion and reduction of risk taking behaviour. Below are some of the challenges:

- Overall, under-reporting to the police may be as high as 87% for 10-15 year olds in Fenland.
- 24% of Fenland pupils (year 8 & 10) reported experiencing bullying
- 27% of Fenland pupils (year 8 and 10) reported that they experienced forms of domestic abuse
- 6% of year 8 pupils surveyed, and 11% of year 10 pupils, responded that they had experienced "a past or current boyfriend or girlfriend had threatened to hit them".
- 42% of under 18 victims experienced a violent offence (excluding sexual offences).
- 40% of under 18 victims experienced an acquisitive crime.

The CSP plan is being reviewed to tackle these statistics with a view to compare the figures against next year as these will be baseline targets

### **CCTV Partner Liaison Meeting Update**

Local partners and stakeholders were given the opportunity of a comprehensive CCTV update during the latest CCTV partner liaison meeting. Partners were given feedback on the CCTV services being delivered within each town.

Partners were presented with a full performance update which highlighted the record breaking figures (reported in May's portfolio holder report) the Council's CCTV service delivered during 2012/14 in both incident detections and positive outcomes.

Partners were also informed of the new projects being delivered during the year, including the replacement and upgrade of both the video wall and operator consoles with new LED energy efficient screens to allow the service to deliver its vital function and allow the system to meet local need in the future at a reduced running cost.

The feedback from partners was very positive and complimentary, with no issues or concerns being raised about the CCTV service. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled to be held in September.

### **Wisbech Safety Zone**

In partnership with the Fire Service, Police and local schools, the street scene team have been talking to local children about the importance of looking after their local environment.

Children from the local primary schools came along to Wisbech Fire Station for their Safety Zone event. At the event, school children took turns in spending time with representatives from the Council and its partners.

Street Scene held a stall to promote awareness around litter and ensuring that all litter is deposited in the bin. This was carried out in a fun interactive way all designed around the consequences of litter on our environment.

14 schools attended the Safety Zone event and in total around 400 young people were spoken to. Working with our young community is important and we will continue to support events which enable us to engage with young people about local environmental issues.

## **SA4 Provide quality parks and open spaces in Fenland**

### **'Spider Park' Benches Set For School Holidays**

New benches have been installed in a Walsoken open space in time for school holidays with support from Cllr Alan Melton, who kindly agreed to fund the project in this small, but well used local open space, from the Leader's Discretionary Fund.

The work was quickly arranged to ensure all was in place in time for the school holidays.

The new benches now enhance the Spider Park and give families a welcome place to rest and watch their children play.



### **Chatteris Open Space Investment Update**

Furrowfields Recreation Ground has become the regular location for the Chatteris Mid-Summer Festival and seen previous investments of a new play and multi-use games area (MUGA). This previous investment and the now increased public knowledge of the site have improved the area's appeal and usage.



Before the Mid-Summer festival further investment was made to add a new bench to Furrowfields to enable visitors to enjoy the view across the fens and a second bench in Wenny Road Recreation Ground.

Furthermore the route in from St Stephens Drive was enhanced by repairing and improving the footbridge.

Additionally, drainage was installed alongside and across walkways and around the MUGA to reduce the likelihood of flooding.

## Open for Business

### OB1 Develop business and employment in Fenland

#### Economic and Business Estate

July was a busy month at South Fens Business Centre, with tenants relocating from the centre. These included the relocation of CN Technical Services, who have moved from the Business Centre into the adjacent South Fens Enterprise Park. In addition Stephen Barclay MP has vacated and moved to March. Occupancy at The Boathouse has decreased slightly following the vacation of Centrica; however the reduction was mitigated by Bantoft & Co. taking the vacated space. This is the company's 3<sup>rd</sup> internal move for additional space since moving to the centre in 2008. Overall combined occupancy stands at just over 74%.

Despite July being traditionally a quiet month, both centres hosted over 80 meetings and conferences, generating a combined income of just over £10,900.

The promotional and marketing works being undertaken by Tinfish Creative continue to gather momentum. Tinfish have provided a detailed Marketing Plan and are beginning to identify and make improvements to the way that The Boathouse is marketed to prospective tenants and conference customers. It is intended that such a programme is rolled out to include the South Fens Business Centre.

#### Turbine Transfers using Crab Marsh Boatyard

The LINCS wind farm is now nearing completion and this has seen the decrease in wind farm vessels using the standby moorings at Sutton Bridge, from ten vessels down to five. These vessels that have been off hired from Centrica have made use of the facilities in Wisbech Marina, including using the marina while they await their next contract, plus all five of them have made full use of the Crab Marsh boatyard for general maintenance.



#### Visit from the Sail training vessel TS Jack Petchey

The Sea Cadets Offshore Power Training Ship "TS Jack Petchey" called into Wisbech on 5 August 2013. Arriving on the morning tide, she stayed over in Wisbech Yacht Harbour for 24 hours and departed on the morning tide to carry on its passage from Hull to Ipswich.

The "TS Jack Petchey" offers powerboat experience at sea, focussing on deck work, navigation, bridge watch keeping, cook/steward and a taste of marine engineering for groups of 12 cadets aged 12 to 18 on each voyage.

Local groups of young people took the opportunity to visit the vessel.

Everyone onboard had an enjoyable trip to Wisbech, and the organisers said they will be returning.



### **Fenland Enterprise & Business Awards**

FDC, along with previous winners and potential entrants attended the Fenland District Council sponsored Fenland Enterprise and Business Awards [FEBA] networking evening held at the Boathouse. The evening was an opportunity for new award entrants to discover more about the 2013 FEBA Awards, which also saw presentations from previous nominees sharing their experiences on how winning an award has improved their business marketing, development and opportunities.

The event was attended by over 40 businesses and this year's awards ceremony will be held at the March Braza Club on 11 October.

### **OB2 Promote the economic profile of Fenland**

#### **Business Connector Project**

FDC attended a conference in London as part of a team working with senior colleagues at Anglian Water and Business in the Community to develop a 'Business Connector' project in Fenland – which aims to promote connections between businesses and community projects/initiatives.

HRH Prince Charles is President of BITC and attended the conference. The Fenland stand was one of three that he chose to visit during his time at the event and the project team had an opportunity to highlight the importance of the business connector project in tackling economic issues within a rural setting.



## **OB3 Raising aspirations and improving learning opportunities**

### **Job Centre Plus (JCP) Work Experience Scheme**

As part of FDC's support for the JCP work experience scheme, an individual was recruited on a placement to support the ED team at the end of June. After four weeks' working in the team, the individual was successful in gaining temporary employment in the FDC Customer Access team. Her success was partly due to the experience that she had gained in the ways of working in the Council. Another placement in the ED team, which offers the opportunity for a young person to get involved in a range of tasks with internal and external colleagues, will be offered in September.

### **Fenland Enterprise & Education (FEE) Project**

The last event for the FEE project in the academic year was an activity day for year 9 at Cromwell Community College. 200 pupils were involved in four different sessions throughout the day which involved them learning about teamwork, transferable skills, communication skills and matching their personalities to careers and activities that would interest them. Positive feedback was received from business people who ran the sessions as well as pupils and teachers. The event rounded off a successful year for FEE – with 1,700 pupils engaged in activities, 400 hours donated by businesses and 75 staff involved from 43 different businesses.

## **OB4 Promote Fenland as a tourism and visitor destination**

### **Fenland Tourism Board (FTB)**

The FTB has supported the leisure strategy to further develop markets and events. As part of the pilot initiative 'Sell your Own', a local produce market was held at Oliver Cromwell Hotel in March, with an estimated 200-250 attendees who enjoyed the market. The market offered an enhanced local opportunity for local growers, traders and charities to sell their own produce, flowers etc.

The FTB, in partnership with the Council, delivered a marketing campaign to attract additional visitors to Fenland. Wisbech Yacht Harbour opened its gate to visitors who wished to visit the Yacht Harbour coinciding with the Rose Fair parades. There was a number of visiting vessels for people to enjoy including Port Authority Craft, Local Fishing Boats, Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Vessel and some Berth holders were also in attendance. The FTB members held a tourist information stand to provide visitors with tourist information for Fenland. The day was a great success, with an around 300 visitors to the Yacht Harbour.

## **Cycling in Fenland**

There is a growing interest in cycling after last year's Olympics, the recent Ride London event and the Circuit of the Fens race in and around Whittlesey. Next year the Tour de France (TDF) comes to Cambridge and the Whittlesey cycle event is already in the planning stage, with FDC support early on.

To ensure that Fenland benefits as much as possible from the wider effects of the TDF event next summer, the county Olympic Legacy group will focus on the Tour, ensuring that a wide range of events are available to highlight the benefits of cycling and increase the number of people using this form of transport and recreation. In addition, it is expected that the TDF will be a considerable tourist attraction, and ensuring how Fenland businesses benefit from this opportunity is under consideration.

The Council works in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council's Cycling Projects Team to help promote the cycle routes within Fenland by having information on our website and providing leaflets within One Stop Shops. Additionally, it is anticipated that the County will contribute to the improvement of paths within West End Park March, as they form part of a marked cycle route.

## **Quality Organisation**

### **Q1 Providing good quality customer services that are accessible to the community**

#### **Contact Centre and Fenland @ Your Service Shops**

The performance of our Contact Centre was affected by a combination of 9,500 calls received in July, compared with 8,500 for the same month last year, as well as sickness absences. This meant that we answered 57.5% of calls within our standard of 20 seconds (which is 80%), and 12% of calls were abandoned (our standard is 5%). Additional temporary resources have been recruited and are currently being trained, the effects of which will start to be seen in the August performance report. At the same time, robust work is being undertaken to resolve sickness issues and allow the return to work of staff.

At the same time, our Fenland @ Your Service Shops have seen comparable customer footfall to this time last year, although our Wisbech Shop has helped 7,200 customers this July compared with 6,200 for the same period last year. Despite this increase, for all of our shops in overall, 95% of all visitors to our Shops had their enquiries resolved at the first point of contact which ensured high customer satisfaction but also saved un-necessary repeat visits.

### **Q2 Continue to use our resources effectively**

#### **Council Tax**

In July, 1,695 reminders were sent out to customers and 564 summons for non-payment of Council Tax. Collections rates continue to remain strong, which is a credit to hard work of the team in discussing the debt with the customers at an early stage. Due to changes in the court dates at Peterborough Magistrates' Court, Summonses will not be sent out in August or December and a revised recovery calendar is being produced for the rest of the year

#### **Corporate Governance**

The Corporate Governance Committee has been fundamental in the review and maintenance of the Council's Governance Framework including reviewing the Annual Governance Statement and internal audit outturn report. The work of the Committee is summarised in the annual Corporate Governance Committee report, which demonstrates its commitment and effectiveness.

#### **Energy Management**

A number of actions to ensure energy consumption is effectively managed in the Council's leisure centres are being developed. These include:

- Training for key staff on Smart Meter monitoring and the identification of potential day to day savings by educating the wider team
- An audit of building management systems to ensure that equipment is working effectively and set points are as economical as possible
- Communicating energy consumption to teams at each leisure centre to ensure that everyone knows the part they can play in controlling energy costs

Leisure Centre energy cost monitoring is an important part of the service management strategy to deliver financial targets.

### **Q3 Deliver regulatory services in a customer focused way**

#### **Cumulative Impact Zone Policy – Wisbech**

Full Council was presented with the Cumulative Impact Zone (CIZ) Policy for approval on 25 July 2013. Members resolved to approve the CIZ for 0.3 miles from Wisbech Town Centre. A communication plan is underway to ensure the understanding of the policy for local businesses and residents in the area.

#### **Communications**

The Fenlander monthly page continues to keep residents up to date with news about Council events and services. Recent key stories on the monthly page included the Armed Forces Day event ('Terrific tribute to veterans'), and details of the Discretionary Housing Payments ('Struggling to meet your housing costs?'). Briefs included;

- More consultation on March plans (Core Strategy)
- Help to stay fit and healthy (Exercise Referral programme)
- Good news on broadband
- Get your dog microchipped (supporting Petlog campaign)

In addition to the Monthly page, 21 further new stories were added to the Council's news and events pages in July including:

- CCTV helps track cigarette smuggling suspects
- Fendis Give it a Go sports day
- Staying safe is child's play (Safety Zone)
- Care home sings praises of health and safety training
- Here come the blooming judges (Anglia in Bloom)
- Ministers briefed on Operation Pheasant success

These stories were further promoted via social media on Facebook and Twitter.

### **Food Safety and Health and Safety Service Plans 2013-15**

The Environmental Health team has recently developed service plans detailing how they will undertake their inspection role and provide business support for our registered food and health and safety businesses.

The team's work continues to focus on supporting and giving advice to local businesses in relation to how they can achieve nationally set standards in the most cost effective way. Examples include regular training courses and the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

### **Individual Electoral Registration (IER) Results**

The Electoral Administration and Registration Bill has introduced Individual Electoral Registration, which will go live during 2014 in preparation for the Parliamentary election in 2015. A key element of the project is to validate the electoral registration data for all Councils to check the accuracy of current electoral records against those held by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). Those individuals who match with records held by DWP will automatically transfer to the new electoral registration system.

Electors who do not match with DWP data or are not currently on the register or have moved address in recent months will be required to provide additional information in the form of their national insurance number and date of birth in order to register under the new scheme. Individual Electoral Registration will require each individual to register as opposed to the current scheme which enables one member of the household to register all eligible electors.

All councils have recently undertaken a dry run of data matching. Of the 74,165 electors currently registered in Fenland, we achieved an extremely positive 82.31% match rate which significantly exceeds the national average.

### **Civic Reception**

The Council holds a Civic Reception in honour of each new/newly elected Chairman. This is an Annual event which gives the Chairman a chance to showcase Fenland and to network with other Chairmen and Mayors. This year the event was held on the 12 July at the Function Suite at The Manor Leisure Centre, Whittlesey with 148 people in attendance. Feedback from the Civic Dignitaries, members of the Business Community, Armed Forces and personal guests was very complimentary with all lauding the event a success for another year.