

Kingston Parish Council

Minutes of Meeting held at 8.00pm on 10 November 2011

Present:

Simon Draper, Chairman
Tim Fitzjohn
Katherine Stalham
James Clear
Tumi Hawkins, SCDC
Peter Stokes, Clerk
Suzan Griffiths, Chair of Friends of Comberton Area Library (FOCAL)

1. Apologies

Julie Conder, Fiona Whelan

2. Minutes of meetings on 8 Sep and 10 Oct

Accepted.

3. Suzan Griffiths, Chair of FOCAL

Suzan explained the current achievements of FOCAL, summarised in her report (see Appendix A). She then left the meeting.

4. Community Plan

Tim Fitzjohn reported on current progress:

- 4.1. The steering group members are Paul Wheeler, Melanie Owers, Alison Greenwood, Paul Wright, Julie Conder (parish council rep) and Tim Fitzjohn (parish council rep).
- 4.2. The group held a meeting earlier in the evening
- 4.3. A 'teaser' flyer will be prepared and distributed to all households next week
- 4.4. A questionnaire will follow

It was agreed that the group could make expense claims to the parish council for miscellaneous administration expenditure such as stationery, photocopying etc.

5. Matters Arising from meeting on 10 Oct

- 5.1. **3.1 Rights of Way meeting at County Hall:** this was attended by Tim Fitzjohn and Tumi Hawkins. Although further information was obtained regarding the bridle path beyond the end of Field Road it was still not clear whether this was 'highway' or not. Tim Fitzjohn has been given details of two contacts at CCC and has emailed them for further information. No further action until Tim receives a response and requests the Clerk to put back on the agenda. **Action: TF.**
- 5.2. **3.2 Visit by SCDC Chief Executive:** Possible dates have been provided by the Chief Executive's P.A. Clerk to circulate to members to find a suitable date. **Action: Clerk.**
- 5.3. **3.3 Review of bus service changes:** An on-line survey has been provided by CCC and details provided to villagers by a mailing-list email. The survey closes on 9 Dec. Agreed to put reminder in the December magazine. **Action: Clerk.**
- 5.4. **4.4 Ownership of land bordering bridle path beyond Field Road:** see minute 5.1.
- 5.5. **4.5 Volunteer playground reports:** A resident has offered to carry out inspections. KS to contact her to arrange a meeting at the playground, with PS also attending, and also contact other possible candidates. **Action: KS.**

- 5.6. **4.8 Moving of 30 mph speed limit sign on Bourn Road:** even if KPC is supplied with the signs 'loose' it would still be obliged to use a CCC-approved contractor to install them, so there would be little cost saving. See minute 6.3.
- 5.7. **7.3 Playground:** covered under Clerk's report – see minute 10.3.
- 5.8. **7.4 SCDC planning training session:** SD gave a brief summary of this which was attended by him and the Clerk. He has since tried to find a definition of 'sustainability' in the planning consent context, and also to find copies of policy documents. Tumi Hawkins to send them to SD. **Action: TH.**
- 5.9. **3.6 30 mph stickers** – now distributed. It was noted that they seem to be not fit for purpose – despite careful cleaning of the bin side, they come unstuck after a while.
- 5.10. Reports of actions completed or ongoing (no discussion unless requested):
 - 5.10.1. **4.1 Emergency plan:** list of contact numbers has been supplied to Lawrence Green

6. Correspondence

- 6.1. **Email from SCDC re maintenance of footway lighting:** Cllr Sue Ellington, the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder, is proposing that instead of Parish Councils being responsible for finding their own contractor to maintain footway lighting, the responsibility for this is borne by SCDC. Final decision awaited.
- 6.2. **Letter from Kingston PCC requesting grants for Churchyard maintenance and the parish magazine:** the PCC has requested a grant of £642 for churchyard maintenance, representing a 10% increase over last year. Agreed that as this increase could not be justified or supported by the PCC a grant of £614, as budgeted, would be paid. Agreed that the £400 requested for magazine expenses would be paid, and that future requests for this grant can be made, as this year, at the same time as the request for the churchyard maintenance grant. **Action: Clerk.**
- 6.3. **Email from CCC re local highway improvements:** a new scheme for works up to £10,000 is announced. Agreed to submit a claim under this scheme for the 40mph speed limit zone on Bourn Road (see minute 5.6). **Action: Clerk.**
- 6.4. **Email from SCDC regarding Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment:** a large number of sites has been submitted – many more than will be needed for known housing needs. The initial sifting of sites for suitability has been carried out and the sites can be viewed at www.scambs.gov.uk/ldf/shlaa. It was noted that there are no sites in or near Kingston. Cllr Hawkins advised that if KPC wishes to submit sites in the parish it should do so now, unless they are already in the strategic plan. It was agreed that although some 'affordable housing' would be welcome in Kingston, KPC did not own any suitable land and it was normally up to landowners to highlight potentially suitable plots. KPC is unwilling to pro-actively suggest that there is land suitable for housing development within the village.
- 6.5. **Various emails from Fiona Whelan about the proposed 25% increase in CC Councillors allowances:** the proposals have now been dropped as they did not follow proper procedure.
- 6.6. **Emails from Peter Reynolds and others regarding willow tunnel and trees in orchard:** it was agreed that:
 - 6.6.1. Peter Reynolds would be asked to plant new willow whips as required, for which KPC will pay. **Action: Clerk.**
 - 6.6.2. An arrangement must be made for volunteers to water the whips for the next two or three years during dry weather. Katherine Stalham to ask regular visitors to the playground. **Action: KS.**

- 6.6.3. Mrs Venn will be approached to see if a hose can be made available, connected to a water supply in their property. KPC to buy the hose if necessary. **Action: Clerk.**
- 6.7. **Email from Julie Conder proposing 'Open Spaces Officer':** James Clear has agreed to be the Open Spaces Officer, with a brief to keep an eye on greens, hedges, trees, the recreation ground, and any other open spaces owned by the Parish Council, and make recommendations for any maintenance or other work considered necessary. **Action: JC.**
- 6.8. **Letter from NALC with booklet 'How to respond to planning applications':** passed to Simon Draper for inclusion in the circulation folder. **Action: SD.**

7. County Councillor's report

See Appendix B.

Re item about grants for events celebrating the Olympic Games, agreed to forward details to Katherine Stalham. **Action: Clerk, KS.**

8. District Councillor's report

See Appendix C. Agreed to put article in the magazine regarding home insulation deals. **Action: Clerk.**

9. Village Hall upgrade project

- 9.1. Katherine Stalham reported that:
- 9.1.1. The four people on the Working Group were looking at possible sources of funding.
 - 9.1.2. Torrie Smith, Chairman of the group, is to meet with the Planning Department at SCDC to get a preliminary ruling on the proposals.
 - 9.1.3. Cambridgeshire ACRE has carried out a survey of the building and submitted a report, according to which the hall does not meet current DDA legislation.
 - 9.1.4. The group is looking for an architect, preferably one with village hall experience.
 - 9.1.5. When a short list of funding sources has been established, they will look at the application forms to extract a generic set of questions that need to be answered, tying this in with any preferences regarding the future of the village hall that appear in the emerging Community Plan.
- 9.2. Simon Draper pointed out that while the main project cost is likely to be a large sum funded by grants, a much smaller sum of money may be required at an earlier stage to pay for professional fees such as architects or structural engineers. The Parish Council may be able to fund these costs.
- 9.3. Simon Draper also pointed out that in regard to village hall projects in general, there was a view that since the upgraded facilities would be enjoyed by future residents as well as present ones, it may be appropriate to for the Parish Council to take out a loan to provide for a grant to the Village Hall. The Parish Council would repay the loan over a long time scale, so that the financial burden is spread and does not fall only on the current residents.

10. Clerk's report

- 10.1. **Bi-monthly report** – see Appendix D
- 10.2. **Invoices for payment**
- 10.2.1. Buchans monthly charge for August £411.13
 - 10.2.2. Buchans monthly charge for September £411.13
 - 10.2.3. Cambridgeshire ACRE quarterly inspection of playground £92.04
 - 10.2.4. Kingston VHMC charges for 2010 £110.19 (already paid)

10.2.5. CPALC membership fee £72.65 (already paid)

All agreed.

10.3. **Playground**

10.3.1. **Cambridgeshire ACRE playground inspection on 18 October 2011:** the Clerk reported that all was satisfactory apart from:

10.3.1.1. **The mound:** the inspector noted that a large amount of soil had been added but a small area needs further soil. James Clear, who provided the additional soil, advised that it would be difficult to carry out similar work in present conditions as the ground is too soft, but that he would look to adding further topsoil in the spring.

10.3.1.2. **Retaining boards:** the inspector reported that one of these is loose and needs re-fixing. In fact the retaining boards are not loose.

10.3.1.3. **Embankment slide:** Water is accumulating on the slide surface. Not considered risky. Drainage holes to be drilled at the next suitable opportunity.

10.3.1.4. **Willow tunnel:** a number of whips have died. See minute 6.6.

10.3.1.5. **Tree trunk:** hollow cavity could lead to problems – not considered risky as it has been like this for a year without problem.

10.3.1.6. **Climber:** soft-fill surface has become compacted and unevenly distributed. This has now been raked over to loosen and re-distribute.

10.3.2. **Area under old swing:** The contractor that carried out recent work to grass over this area has, at no charge, applied more soil and grass seed.

10.4. **Parish magazine**

Peter Stokes has taken over the role of Compiler from David Coombs. Linda Rimmer wishes to step down as Acting Editor after producing the January 2012 issue, so a new Editor is required. PS has drawn up a recruitment flyer including a job description, and this is to be distributed with the December magazine.

10.5. **Meetings for 2012**

Agreed dates are:

12 January	Parish Council meeting
8 March	Parish Council meeting
10 May	Parish Council AGM
17 May	Annual Parish meeting
12 July	Parish Council meeting
13 September	Parish Council meeting
8 November	Parish Council meeting

Action: all. To be copied to Cllrs Whelan and Hawkins. **Action: Clerk.**

11. **Planning**

11.1. **S/1578/11 Throckenholt:** permission has been granted for alterations and dormer roof extensions.

11.2. **S/1745/11 Former United Reformed Church:** application to replace a window with french doors and install internal partition to form wc and stores. It was noted that there is no change of use – the building will continue to be used as a studio. Agreed that KPC supports this application.

11.3. **S/1442/10 Church Cottage:** the applicant has appealed to the Secretary of State following refusal by SCDC of an application to build a side and rear extension.

- 11.4. **S/2246/10/F Kingston Barns:** the applicant has appealed to the Secretary of State following non-determination of an application for change of use to holiday accommodation.
- 11.5. **S/1904/11 Thatches:** permission has been granted for re-location of vehicular access and alterations to existing outbuilding.
- 11.6. **S1732/11 The Old Rectory:** the applicant has amended an earlier application to change the use of part of a paddock to enable the drive to be re-routed. The amendment is minor. Agreed that KPC has no comment to this application.

12. Items for next meeting

- 12.1. Katherine Stalham is to have the use of a thermal imaging camera and intends to use this, with the permission of householders, to take thermal images of houses in the village. This will enable householders to see where their houses are poorly insulated, resulting in high heat loss. She intends to put an item in the parish magazine explaining this.

Meeting ended at 10:50pm
Next meeting: 12 January 2012

Signed.....

Date.....

Chair of FOCAL
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Cambridge
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Website <http://friendsofcombertonlibrary.wordpress.com/>

Parish Councils including Kingston were informed in the summer that the current running costs of Comberton Library are £24,500 and that supporters of the library were looking at ways of keeping it open, by fundraising, providing volunteers to support library staff and seeking support from Parish precepts.

24th October David Harty, County Councillor responsible for learning and Libraries, Christine May, Head of Library and Information Services and Marjorie Smith District Library manager attended a FOCAL meeting in Comberton Public Library. The meeting was publicised on parish websites, magazines and by email to registered supporters but only 9 people attended. David and Christine are keen to explore community involvement in delivering the library service in the future and are meeting with Friends Groups and Parish Councils throughout the County.

A reduction of £3.2 million in the County Library budget means that staff restructuring and reduction of opening hours will go ahead. Comberton is currently open for 19 hours a week with 27 hours of staffing; this will be reduced to 15 hours opening, self-service terminals and 1 library assistant during opening hours. The Library is used by the College on days when it is not open to the public and rent has been paid until April 2012. A reduction in charges paid to the College appears unlikely.

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Some Parishes have already offered some level of financial contributions:

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Other communities have set up Friends groups such as Comberton, Cottenham, Sawston, Milton Road, Rock Road and Yaxley

Great Shelford Discussions about the possibility of raising the parish precept will take place at a later date, when more definite plans about the future for the service have been revealed. There is resistance from residents to 'paying twice' for services.

Linton Library is located in a building owned by Linton, for which the Parish Council granted CCC a rent-free lease running until 2099 for the premises. The Parish Council therefore feel that they currently make a considerable and continuing financial commitment to the cost of the library.

Sawtry Community College will, from April 2011, be employing library staff to support a fully integrated library service serving both the school and public hours.

Within the Comberton area there are over 50 people willing to support the library by fundraising, organising events or volunteering. Brenda Brown is offering the profits from the next Cantabile Concert on Friday 2nd December at Comberton Village Hall to the Library Fund and an opportunity to run a raffle. The acting library supervisor has requested that a magazine display rack be purchased when funds become available. The social programme will start with a talk from a Cambridge author, Rose Melikan, next Monday evening 14th November at 7.30 in the Library

The roles for volunteers are currently being defined, and will be better known when new staff structures are in place. Extension activities, making better community use of the premises, will incur expenses and it is at this point that there may be appeals to Parish precepts for support.

There are jobs descriptions for the following posts:

Library visitor for the doorstep service
Engage in the afternoon helper
Craft volunteer
Computer buddy with family history option
Rhymetime assistant
Reading challenge assistant
Craft Assistant
Homework helper

and Lynda Martin from the Library service is working on other roles.

The library has been shut this week whilst self-service terminals are installed and I am encouraging everyone to visit when it reopens next week.

Suzan Griffiths

Report from County Councillor Fiona Whelan for the November 10th 2011 Kingston Parish Council Meeting.

Minor Highways Improvements Projects

Further to my recent email about the Minor Highways Improvements Projects that had to be submitted during November, I've had an update on the process - albeit a somewhat woolly one - from Richard Preston.

"the area managers who will manage the bid process, are preparing a letter to go to all parishes and members explaining the bid process and setting out the timescales involved. The letter will also include a bid template for prospective bidders to complete and return.

Depending on the complexity of the bid it may be necessary for officers to check back with bidders on details including costs ahead of presenting the bids to the member panels.

Regards

Richard Preston

Head of Road Safety and Parking Services"

This doesn't give us a date in November yet - which is somewhat concerning given the tight time frame. My suggestion is having something ready to go that can be cut and pasted in to the template once it is received.

The Library

Congratulations to all who have worked on this with Steve, Tumi and myself since the summer. It looks as though our Library is safer than at first thought. Special thanks and admiration go to Suzan Griffiths for taking on the job of setting up and running FOCAL - Friends of Comberton Area Library. She has done - and continues to do - a fantatsic job leading the group.

The Friday Night Bus

I've included below District Cllr Steve Harangozo's report for Comberton PC:

"Members will recall in my last report that I submitted a petition to ask for the County Council's support for re-instating a bus service on Friday night, with particularly strong support coming from the pupils of Comberton VC who live in Comberton and all the surrounding villages. CCC are now tendering for this service to determine the cost. The difficulty in getting this service up and running is not that it won't be used and hence not generate a significant revenue to probably pay for most of the cost. Rather it is that CCC is saying it won't help with the upfront cost of the initial contract which operators seem to insist on. It's usual to have a 6 month contract at least. Operators will not invoice for the outstanding cost after fares have been collected.

So how do we deal with this issue of upfront cost if CCC stick with their current policy position? Obviously, if the service does produce a good fare revenue then parish councils along the bus route collectively could I'm sure meet the balance. Annually, I foresee the cost of meeting this balance being just a few thousand pounds which could be manageably spread over 7-8 parish councils. As the service becomes re-established it's expected passenger levels will rise so any shortfall should decrease further."

We are looking to organise a meeting with someone from each of the Villages along the route shortly to discuss finance etc. Could we have a volunteer from Kingston to attend please? Date and time to follow ASAP.

Rights of Way Workshops

Tim attended this with me – very useful session. I'll leave Tim to feedback.

Councillors' Allowances

As the Independent Review Panel wasn't properly convened by the County's Standards Committee the process has been ruled as not being proper and therefore the review has been thrown out. There is no talk at the moment of convening a new panel to look at the issue.

Pavement Issues in the village

I'm bouncing between CCC and SCDC at the moment with several villages reporting the small pavement sweeping machines actually damaging the pavements when they sweep them. CCC say it's the fault of the sweepers, SCDC say it's the fault of the underlying state of the pavements.

Could you let me know if there are any particular pavements you have a problem with - both Councils are working with me to sort this out.

Street Lights

In a very surprising and frankly unusual disagreement between County and South Cambs. we were told late last night that South Cambs will be responsible for the maintenance of all Street Lights and that Parishes will just be responsible for the electricity cost. That's all I have so far - Tumi may be able to elaborate.

Community Grants to help celebrate the Olympics and Paralympics

Not often that I get to advertise this but – free money!! Grants of up to £500 from Cambridgeshire County Council are available for community groups wanting to run events to celebrate the Olympics and Paralympics. There are 3 deadlines – January 20th, February 29th and April 9th. Please contact Denise Evans for an application form (denise.evans@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or go on www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/olympics2012/

Fiona Whelan

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor's Monthly Report
Month of October 2011

1. Rural Rate Relief

Rural rate relief is still available to local businesses. Some businesses qualify for 50% relief such as the sole Post Office, or sole Petrol Stations, or sole General Stores and Public Houses, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (must be registered with Inland Revenue Sports Club Unit, call 0845 302 0203), or anywhere people come together as part of the community. Other small businesses can get temporary relief provided they meet the criteria, and government has extended the period of this relief to October 2012. For further information or applications please contact the business rate section on 01954 713112.

2. Housing Revenue Account – Financing the debt

In September, Members were given a briefing about the options available for financing the £206 million debt we'll be taking on from central government. The options were (1) borrowing from the markets, (2) borrowing from the public works board and (3) raising its own bonds. Option 3 was seriously considered as favourite but has now been ruled out since the government has improved the borrowing rate from the Public Works board. Therefore, it is likely that the Council will be taking this option, and not considering issuing its own bonds anymore.

3. Housing and Rough Sleepers

SCDC is be trying to get a clearer picture of the number of people sleeping rough in the district on the **evening of Tuesday 22nd November 2011**. Rough Sleepers are as "people sleeping, or bedded down, or about to bed down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes' etc.etc.). It will be helpful to the officers to know where the rough sleeper is actually located, so as to prevent double counting. If you are aware of anyone sleeping rough on this evening, please contact [Sue Carter](#), Housing Advice and Options Manager at SCDC on 01954 713044 or 03450 450 051 out of hours.

4. Going Green – Gone With the Wind

Plans to install solar panels on up to half of the 5000+ homes owned by SCDC have now been shelved. This is because the government recently announced that it would be reducing the feed-in tariff (subsidy amount paid by government for surplus energy from the panels to the energy grid) is being reduced from 43.3p to just 16.8p, with effect from 12 December 2011, as compared with the previous date of 31 March 2012. In view of the change, and the fact that it is not possible to install all those panels by the new date, it means that the company that was going to pay for the project now find it is not viable for them on those terms.

5. Home Insulation Deals

SCDC will shortly run a campaign encouraging residents to take advantage of heavily discounted home insulation. Apparently, this will be the last year that this national deal will be available. With energy costs so high now, the cost of the insulation will be easily recouped by energy savings in a short period of time. Please pass on the message. If anyone is struggling with their heating bills please contact me and I'll be happy to assist in navigating the red tape. Applications can be made on the website www.Government-grants.co.uk

6. South Cambridgeshire Housing Repair Service

SCDC put the repairs service for its 6000 houses out to tender and to the dismay of some of us, as the in-house service is currently receiving very good ratings from tenants. The tender was won by Mears, on a very small 2.5% margin. By going outside of the organisation we potentially lose some control both over the quality of service and over its costs. The Council has also lost an opportunity for generating income that would have helped to balance its books and make up shortfall in government grants. Obviously we hope that this is a success for the sake of our residents but we shall be watching closely and will be very interested in any feedback from you.

7. Bus Service Cuts – Bus No 18

In October, Cllr Harangozo and Cllr Whelan submitted a petition to Cambridge County Council, to ask for support in re-instating the Friday night No.18 bus service. The proposal requires only a small subsidy from the County. However, the issue in getting the service going is that the bus operator requires 6 months upfront payment which the County is being asked to fund. If however the County refuses, perhaps the Parish Councils along the route could fund it collectively. Cllr Harangozo and I will be meeting with SCDC on 9-Nov, to discuss the proposal in more detail and the funding options that might be available. This Parish Council may want to discuss the level of funding that it might be able to provide.

At the SCDC Scrutiny Meeting on 3-Nov-11, I had the opportunity to question Cllr Steve Criswell (Community Infrastructure Portfolio Holder) about the cuts to bus services. (County is proposing that Community Transport replaces these services). I asked Cllr Criswell if the services that were illegally cut earlier this year (I had Bus No 18 in mind) would be reinstated during this assessment period, and the answer though expected was never the less still disappointing. He hid behind the “legal advice” that the County had been given, saying they could not do anything until after the current judicial review was over. He also said that the current consultation was for those who had bus services only! Where that leaves those whose service was taken away this year, is unclear.

8. Casework

Your Councillor is here to help you. Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints. I can be contacted by phone, email or via my website. I hope I can help but even if I can't, then it's highly likely that I know someone who can!

9. Dates for your diary

Tuesday 22nd November 2011 – Count of rough sleepers in the district

Tumi

Tumi Hawkins
10-Nov-11

Email me @:	tumi@tumihawkins.org.uk
Follow on twitter:	http://twitter.com/CouncillorTumi
Facebook share:	http://www.facebook.com/CouncillorTumi
Read my blog at:	http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk
Call me on:	01954 210840

Appendix D

Financial report: 5 Nov 2011

N.B. All figures exclude VAT

Item	Budget 2011-12 £	Expenditure YTD £	Budget minus expenditure YTD £	
Grass and Hedge cutting	1768.00	1370.44	397.56	August and September invoices not paid
Insurance	744.00	744.39	-0.39	
Clerk's salary	1005.00	0.00	1005.00	
Grants (section 137)	614.00	0.00	614.00	
Audit fees	165.00	347.00	-182.00	External audit fee higher than usual due to high expenditure on playground
Village asset maintenance	1351.00	293.11	1057.89	
Subscriptions	160.00	104.95	55.05	
Parish Magazine	601.00	762.00	-161.00	2009 and 2010 payments
Footpath lighting	214.00	0.00	214.00	
Miscellaneous and expenses	150.00	191.24	-41.24	includes VH rental
Income other than precept	-8.00	-86.67	78.67	Allotment fees, interest
To reserves	284.00			
Total	7048.00	3726.46		

Bank balances	Current account:	1846.37
	Deposit account:	10215.98

Chair of FOCAL
18 Barrons Way
Comberton
Cambridge
CB23 7EQ
01223 263390

Email FriendsofCombertonLibrary@gmail.com

Website <http://friendsofcombertonlibrary.wordpress.com/>

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Sawtry Community College will, from April 2011, be employing library staff to support a fully integrated library service serving both the school and public hours.

Within the Comberton area there are over 50 people willing to support the library by fundraising, organising events or volunteering. Brenda Brown is offering the profits from the next Cantabile Concert on Friday 2nd December at Comberton Village Hall to the Library Fund and an opportunity to run a raffle. The acting library supervisor has requested that a magazine display rack be purchased when funds become available. The social programme will start with a talk from a Cambridge author, Rose Melikan, next Monday evening 14th November at 7.30 in the Library

The roles for volunteers are currently being defined, and will be better known when new staff structures are in place. Extension activities, making better community use of the premises, will incur expenses and it is at this point that there may be appeals to Parish precepts for support.

There are jobs descriptions for the following posts:

Library visitor for the doorstep service
Engage in the afternoon helper
Craft volunteer
Computer buddy with family history option
Rhymetime assistant
Reading challenge assistant
Craft Assistant
Homework helper

and Lynda Martin from the Library service is working on other roles.

The library has been shut this week whilst self-service terminals are installed and I am encouraging everyone to visit when it reopens next week.

Suzan Griffiths

Report from County Councillor Fiona Whelan for the November 10th 2011 Kingston Parish Council Meeting.

Minor Highways Improvements Projects

Further to my recent email about the Minor Highways Improvements Projects that had to be submitted during November, I've had an update on the process - albeit a somewhat woolly one - from Richard Preston.

"the area managers who will manage the bid process, are preparing a letter to go to all parishes and members explaining the bid process and setting out the timescales involved. The letter will also include a bid template for prospective bidders to complete and return. Depending on the complexity of the bid it may be necessary for officers to check back with bidders on details including costs ahead of presenting the bids to the member panels."

Regards
Richard Preston
Head of Road Safety and Parking Services"

This doesn't give us a date in November yet - which is somewhat concerning given the tight time frame. My suggestion is having something ready to go that can be cut and pasted in to the template once it is received.

The Library

Congratulations to all who have worked on this with Steve, Tumi and myself since the summer. It looks as though our Library is safer than at first thought. Special thanks and admiration go to Suzan Griffiths for taking on the job of setting up and running FOCAL - Friends of Comberton Area Library. She has done - and continues to do - a fantatsic job leading the group.

The Friday Night Bus

I've included below District Cllr Steve Harangozo's report for Comberton PC:

"Members will recall in my last report that I submitted a petition to ask for the County Council's support for re-instating a bus service on Friday night, with particularly strong support coming from the pupils of Comberton VC who live in Comberton and all the surrounding villages. CCC are now tendering for this service to determine the cost. The difficulty in getting this service up and running is not that it won't be used and hence not generate a significant revenue to probably pay for most of the cost. Rather it is that CCC is saying it won't help with the upfront cost of the initial contract which operators seem to insist on. It's usual to have a 6 month contract at least. Operators will not invoice for the outstanding cost after fares have been collected."

So how do we deal with this issue of upfront cost if CCC stick with their current policy position? Obviously, if the service does produce a good fare revenue then parish councils along the bus route collectively could I'm sure meet the balance. Annually, I foresee the cost of meeting this balance being just a few thousand pounds which could be manageably spread over 7-8 parish councils. As the service becomes re-established it's expected passenger levels will rise so any shortfall should decrease further."

We are looking to organise a meeting with someone from each of the Villages along the route shortly to discuss finance etc. Could we have a volunteer from Kingston to attend please? Date and time to follow ASAP.

Rights of Way Workshops

Tim attended this with me – very useful session. I'll leave Tim to feedback.

Councillors' Allowances

As the Independent Review Panel wasn't properly convened by the County's Standards Committee the process has been ruled as not being proper and therefore the review has been thrown out. There is no talk at the moment of convening a new panel to look at the issue.

Pavement Issues in the village

I'm bouncing between CCC and SCDC at the moment with several villages reporting the small pavement sweeping machines actually damaging the pavements when they sweep them. CCC say it's the fault of the sweepers, SCDC say it's the fault of the underlying state of the pavements.

Could you let me know if there are any particular pavements you have a problem with - both Councils are working with me to sort this out.

Street Lights

In a very surprising and frankly unusual disagreement between County and South Cambs. we were told late last night that South Cambs will be responsible for the maintenance of all Street Lights and that Parishes will just be responsible for the electricity cost. That's all I have so far - Tumi may be able to elaborate.

Community Grants to help celebrate the Olympics and Paralympics

Not often that I get to advertise this but – free money!! Grants of up to £500 from Cambridgeshire County Council are available for community groups wanting to run events to celebrate the Olympics and Paralympics. There are 3 deadlines – January 20th, February 29th and April 9th. Please contact Denise Evans for an application form (denise.evans@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or go on www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/leisure/olympics2012/

Fiona Whelan

South Cambridgeshire District Councillor's Monthly Report
Month of October 2011

1. Rural Rate Relief

Rural rate relief is still available to local businesses. Some businesses qualify for 50% relief such as the sole Post Office, or sole Petrol Stations, or sole General Stores and Public Houses, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (must be registered with Inland Revenue Sports Club Unit, call 0845 302 0203), or anywhere people come together as part of the community. Other small businesses can get temporary relief provided they meet the criteria, and government has extended the period of this relief to October 2012. For further information or applications please contact the business rate section on 01954 713112.

2. Housing Revenue Account – Financing the debt

In September, Members were given a briefing about the options available for financing the £206 million debt we'll be taking on from central government. The options were (1) borrowing from the markets, (2) borrowing from the public works board and (3) raising its own bonds. Option 3 was seriously considered as favourite but has now been ruled out since the government has improved the borrowing rate from the Public Works board. Therefore, it is likely that the Council will be taking this option, and not considering issuing its own bonds anymore.

3. Housing and Rough Sleepers

SCDC is be trying to get a clearer picture of the number of people sleeping rough in the district on the **evening of Tuesday 22nd November 2011**. Rough Sleepers are as "people sleeping, or bedded down, or about to bed down, in the open air (such as on the streets, or in doorways, parks or bus shelters); people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes' etc.etc.). It will be helpful to the officers to know where the rough sleeper is actually located, so as to prevent double counting. If you are aware of anyone sleeping rough on this evening, please contact [Sue Carter](#), Housing Advice and Options Manager at SCDC on 01954 713044 or 03450 450 051 out of hours.

4. Going Green – Gone With the Wind

Plans to install solar panels on up to half of the 5000+ homes owned by SCDC have now been shelved. This is because the government recently announced that it would be reducing the feed-in tariff (subsidy amount paid by government for surplus energy from the panels to the energy grid) is being reduced from 43.3p to just 16.8p, with effect from 12 December 2011, as compared with the previous date of 31 March 2012. In view of the change, and the fact that it is not possible to install all those panels by the new date, it means that the company that was going to pay for the project now find it is not viable for them on those terms.

5. Home Insulation Deals

SCDC will shortly run a campaign encouraging residents to take advantage of heavily discounted home insulation. Apparently, this will be the last year that this national deal will be available. With energy costs so high now, the cost of the insulation will be easily recouped by energy savings in a short period of time. Please pass on the message. If anyone is struggling with their heating bills please contact me and I'll be happy to assist in navigating the red tape. Applications can be made on the website www.Government-grants.co.uk

6. South Cambridgeshire Housing Repair Service

SCDC put the repairs service for its 6000 houses out to tender and to the dismay of some of us, as the in-house service is currently receiving very good ratings from tenants. The tender was won by Mears, on a very small 2.5% margin. By going outside of the organisation we potentially lose some control both over the quality of service and over its costs. The Council has also lost an opportunity for generating income that would have helped to balance its books and make up shortfall in government grants. Obviously we hope that this is a success for the sake of our residents but we shall be watching closely and will be very interested in any feedback from you.

7. Bus Service Cuts – Bus No 18

In October, Cllr Harangozo and Cllr Whelan submitted a petition to Cambridge County Council, to ask for support in re-instating the Friday night No.18 bus service. The proposal requires only a small subsidy from the County. However, the issue in getting the service going is that the bus operator requires 6 months upfront payment which the County is being asked to fund. If however the County refuses, perhaps the Parish Councils along the route could fund it collectively. Cllr Harangozo and I will be meeting with SCDC on 9-Nov, to discuss the proposal in more detail and the funding options that might be available. This Parish Council may want to discuss the level of funding that it might be able to provide.

At the SCDC Scrutiny Meeting on 3-Nov-11, I had the opportunity to question Cllr Steve Criswell (Community Infrastructure Portfolio Holder) about the cuts to bus services. (County is proposing that Community Transport replaces these services). I asked Cllr Criswell if the services that were illegally cut earlier this year (I had Bus No 18 in mind) would be reinstated during this assessment period, and the answer though expected was never the less still disappointing. He hid behind the “legal advice” that the County had been given, saying they could not do anything until after the current judicial review was over. He also said that the current consultation was for those who had bus services only! Where that leaves those whose service was taken away this year, is unclear.

8. Casework

Your Councillor is here to help you. Please do feel free to contact me with comments, questions, problems, reports, suggestions or complaints. I can be contacted by phone, email or via my website. I hope I can help but even if I can't, then it's highly likely that I know someone who can!

9. Dates for your diary

Tuesday 22nd November 2011 – Count of rough sleepers in the district

Tumi

Tumi Hawkins
10-Nov-11

Email me @:	tumi@tumihawkins.org.uk
Follow on twitter:	http://twitter.com/CouncillorTumi
Facebook share:	http://www.facebook.com/CouncillorTumi
Read my blog at:	http://www.TumiHawkins.org.uk
Call me on:	01954 210840

Appendix D

Financial report: 5 Nov 2011

N.B. All figures exclude VAT

Item	Budget 2011-12 £	Expenditure YTD £	Budget minus expenditure YTD £	
Grass and Hedge cutting	1768.00	1370.44	397.56	August and September invoices not paid
Insurance	744.00	744.39	-0.39	
Clerk's salary	1005.00	0.00	1005.00	
Grants (section 137)	614.00	0.00	614.00	
Audit fees	165.00	347.00	-182.00	External audit fee higher than usual due to high expenditure on playground
Village asset maintenance	1351.00	293.11	1057.89	
Subscriptions	160.00	104.95	55.05	
Parish Magazine	601.00	762.00	-161.00	2009 and 2010 payments
Footpath lighting	214.00	0.00	214.00	
Miscellaneous and expenses	150.00	191.24	-41.24	includes VH rental
Income other than precept	-8.00	-86.67	78.67	Allotment fees, interest
To reserves	284.00			
Total	7048.00	3726.46		

Bank balances	Current account:	1846.37
	Deposit account:	10215.98