

## STETCHWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

**7PM**

**AT THE ELLESMERE CENTRE**

#### **Minutes**

Present: Councillor Bell (WB) Chairman, Saunders (PS) and Kempton (LK). District Councillor Lay (JL) and County Councillor Jonny Edge (JE)

**1. Chairman's Welcome**

The Chairman of the Parish Council welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending.

**2. Approval of Minutes - Annual Parish Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

The Annual Parish Council meeting minutes were **APPROVED** unanimously as a true and accurate record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman of the Parish Council. Motion carried. **Proposed WB Seconded PS**

**3. Chairman's Report**

This is my second annual report, having been elected to the Chair in May 2023. Thank you, to our Clerk and all our Councillors for all their work over the last year. And thanks to Michael Whymer for his work on checking the playground equipment at the Ellesmere Centre and for spreading woodchip on our footpaths. And to Councillor France for raising the flag at the appropriate times during the year.

All the trees within our responsibility have been surveyed this year and all the recommended works have been completed.

All the play areas have also been inspected and all the repair works completed.

We have also contributed to the village newsletter, the Church portable toilet and the maintenance of the defibrillator at the Ellesmere Centre.

The Village Green at Church Lane has been formally dedicated as a village green and confirmed on the definitive map.

We have now installed the portable speed indication sign, with brackets and poles at both ends of the village. The battery is regularly re-charged as and when necessary. There has been positive feedback from a number of parishioners, all stating that drivers are slowing down before the sign. Thanks to Councillor Sharp for his work on this matter.

**4. District and County Councillors' Reports**

District Councillor Lay provided a brief verbal summary highlighting the Local Authority re-organisation and the importance of retaining staff, Mepal Crematorium and the success of the Woodditton Ward Defibrillator training.

## County Council

This year, the County has encountered several issues, and my report provides a summary of the key points relevant to Stetchworth residents.

## Highways

### Swaffham Heath Rd/A 1303 Crossroads

After four years of waiting, the new staggered junction was opened towards the end of 2024. I am aware of one accident since, involving a motor cyclist and a car. We just need to keep vigilant and ensure that the safety of all road users is paramount.

### Capital Maintenance of roads programme

The County Council has introduced a new system for the major resurfacing works which uses a scoring matrix to assess the roads most in need of major work. That sounds a good idea, but I believe that the scoring matrix is very biased towards urban areas, leaving an unlevel playing field. The normal pothole repairs come out of the revenue budget, but there needs to be better workmanship on those repairs than currently is the case.

### Mill Road Bridge

Back in October 2024, the Highways & Transport Committee voted to restrict Mill Road bridge in Cambridge to taxis, buses, and blue badge holders. I am opposed to this scheme, as no account of the effect on side roads off Mill Road, such as Tennison Road and Coleridge Road, together with the extra traffic created on Cherry Hinton Road and Coldhams Lane was considered.

### Highways Weedkilling

Our group opposed the Council's decision in 2023 to stop chemical weedkilling to save money. I believed this to be a false economy and in 2024, the County Council were forced to reintroduce the chemical weedkilling, due to the state that it left our roads in. Parishes and areas were able to continue without chemical weedkilling, which Cambridge City decided not to use. The state of roads such as Trumpington Road shows this to be an incorrect policy.

### Busways – Cambridge to Cambourne and CSET

The Council voted to proceed with the busway from Cambourne to Cambridge going through an ancient orchard in Coton at a cost of £200m, as well as another busway going into Addenbrookes going over open countryside and the Gog Magog Hills at a cost of £162m. I opposed both of those schemes, as there are much cheaper on-road solutions, which do not carve open our countryside.

### Council Reorganisation

The County Council held a special meeting on 18th March to agree the Council's response to the Government's Council reorganisation, which Government requested for 21st March, with East Cambridgeshire District Council meeting on 20th March. The response to Government consisted of a joint letter from all of the Councils within Peterborough and Cambridgeshire excluding Fenland. The response was very much a holding response and Government are stating that the final decision from the councils is sent by 28th November and if the tier 2 authorities, i.e. District Councils cannot agree, then the County Council makes the decision. Whilst I agree that there was a need for a reorganisation, this has been imposed by Government with little discussion and no opportunity for residents to comment.

#### Buses

The mayor, as his last act before announcing that he was not standing for election, decided to implement franchising. I have huge concerns on how this will be financed and could cause a huge financial burden on residents for many years to come. The extra buses promised as part of the precept increase in 2024 had to go out to tender again, with it looking likely that those services will happen sometime during the summer, a year after residents were paying for them. This will include a direct service from Bottisham to the sixth form colleges and Addenbrookes.

#### Education

The County Council is currently spending £25m on taxis to transport pupils around the County. Whilst a lot of the costs is unavoidable, I have raised concerns in the Education Committee about those costs and how we need to reduce them. The availability of school places is another issue, as seen in Cambridge, where several secondary schools are full to new pupils, causing those school with places, such as Bottisham Village College, to take those pupils, with pupils having a longer than desired journey to school. It is a difficult balancing act, but there is a need to look at the location and capacity of schools around the County.

#### Kingsway Solar

Kingsway Solar is a proposed 3,700-acre solar farm, which will encircle West Wratting and Weston Colville, whilst taking the resulting electricity ten miles on pylons across the countryside to the Burwell substation. I spoke as the local member at the Environment & Green Investment Committee at County Council to express my concerns about the proposed application. The application is in totally the wrong position, and I will continue to push for a decision that thinks about residents rather than those of opportunistic applicants.

#### East Cambridgeshire District Council

#### Waste Services

The system of collection will change from April 2026 to a four-bin system of different sizes. Part of this has been determined by Government legislation, which demands that general waste is put in a bin, rather than the bag system that ECDC uses and the weekly collection of food waste, which currently goes into the green

bin. More details will be shared of these changes later in the year to prepare residents.

#### Council Tax – Nil Increase

For the eleventh year running, the ECDC portion of the Council tax bill has been frozen, and this is managed with no external borrowing, which is a testament to the way that the Council's finances are managed.

#### Planning

The planning team have had a year of challenges, and a reshaping of the department has been undertaken to make it more responsive and less bureaucratic.

#### East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC)

The wholly owned trading company (ECTC) continues to perform to a high standard. The grounds maintenance team continues to win new contracts and recently won a major academy trust contract, not on price, but on service. Ely Market continues to thrive with a waiting list of traders wanting to join it. Palace Green Homes continues to build good quality homes, including £100k homes and a good percentage of affordable homes, whilst contributing back over £6m in saved costs to the council over the life of the Company.

5. Report from Ellesmere Centre Trustees  
No report was received.
6. Matters raised from the floor.  
There were no matters raised.

Meeting closed at 19.14

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To be signed by Chairman of the Parish Council in May 2026