

# **Little Abington**



**Review  
2010-11**

# Little Abington Parish Council

## Annual Report for 2010-11

Parish councils are the first tier of local government. Little Abington Parish Council comprises seven elected parish councillors and a salaried parish clerk. Contact details are given later in this document. Little Abington is a Quality Parish Council and has a fully qualified clerk, who supports the Council to manage the finances and ensure that we comply with the regulations. There is a separate Parish Council for Great Abington; we liaise regularly and work together on many issues.

We have a duty to perform a few functions and the power to perform several more, though most of the work of local government for the village is carried out by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) or Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC).

Little Abington Parish Council meets every month except August and December, usually on the fourth Monday of the month. The date sometimes varies a little due to bank holidays and other reasons. The schedule for 2011-12 is shown later. Members of the public are welcome to observe our meetings; time is reserved for public discussion.

We try to represent the village viewpoint in any consultations and in particular put the local view on planning matters. We receive details from SCDC and discuss them at a public meeting, usually one of our regular parish council meetings.

We report back on our meetings through the *Abington & Hildersham News* and by publishing minutes on our notice-board outside the Pottery at the junction of High Street and Church Lane.

The District and County Councillors who represent Little Abington are:

South Cambridgeshire District Council:

Tony Orgee 8 Bourn Bridge Road, Little Abington, Cambridge CB21 6BJ  
[Tony.Orgee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tony.Orgee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Cambridgeshire County Council:

Tim Stone 4 Church Lane, Whittlesford, Cambridge CB22 4NX  
Tel: 01223 836527 [timothy.stone1@virgin.net](mailto:timothy.stone1@virgin.net)  
Website: [www.timstone.mycouncillor.org.uk](http://www.timstone.mycouncillor.org.uk)

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## Little Abington Parish Council Members 2010-11

<i>Chairman</i>	Peter Brunning	47 Church Lane	Tel: 891 960
<i>Councillors</i>	John Ellis	6 Church Lane	Tel: 07802 537 513
	Graham Wigley	2 Church Lane	Tel: 07514 293 294
	Roslyn Hedge	41 West Field	Tel: 893 321
	June Waring (until May 2011)	32 West Field	Tel: 891 752
	Christopher Nutt	43 Church Lane	Tel: 897 868
	Robert Chesham	1 High Street	Tel: 07950 262 447
	Julia Gunning (from May 2011)	37 Cambridge Road	Tel: 891 338
<i>Clerk</i>	Genevieve Dalton	27 West Field <a href="mailto:clerk@littleabington.clara.co.uk">clerk@littleabington.clara.co.uk</a>	Tel: 893 332



**Parish Councillors in the Abington Institute Committee Room for the October 2009 meeting**

***From left:***

*Peter Brunning (Chairman), Graham Wigley, Christopher Nutt, John Ellis, Bob Chesham, (seated) June Waring (resigned May 2011), Genevieve Dalton (Clerk)  
Roslyn Hedge was absent; Bob Chesham joined the council that day.*

## Parish Council Meetings 2011–12

The schedule of Parish Council Meetings for the coming year is shown below. Meetings are held in the Abington Institute and start at 7.15pm. Meeting notices, agendas and draft minutes are displayed on the Parish Council notice-board on the corner of Church Lane and the High Street and also on the Council web-site <http://www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/littleabington>.

Tuesday 26 April 2011

Monday 24 October 2011

Monday 16 May 2011

Monday 28 November 2011

Monday 27 June 2011

Monday 23 January 2012

Monday 26 July 2011

Monday 27 February 2012

Monday 12 September 2011

Monday 26 March 2012

The Parish Council also represents the parishioners on:

- Abington Recreation Ground Committee
- Abington Institute Management Committee

### Public Participation

All Parish Council meetings are held in public. People are welcome to observe all meetings. The agenda for each meeting includes time for public participation when members of the public may raise any topic they wish.

### Planning Meetings

Planning applications are dealt with at Parish Council meetings unless the reporting deadline necessitates interim meetings. These meetings are advertised on the Parish Council notice-board.

### e-LAPC



We publish our minutes and agendas on the Parish Council website. You can also join e-LAPC. If you would like to be included on the distribution list, please e-mail the Clerk ([clerk@littleabington.clara.co.uk](mailto:clerk@littleabington.clara.co.uk)) heading your message e-LAPC.

We will send you Parish Council minutes and agendas and occasional reminders about Parish Council events such as Litter Picks, Village Maintenance Working Parties and bus trips.

## Little Abington Parish Council

### Chairman's Report 2009–10

The last year has been a fairly quiet but successful year. There have been only two planning applications in the parish, one of which was withdrawn! There has also been a planning enforcement, causing the removal of an unapproved structure.

We have had a good and stable team of parish councillors, which has just been re-elected unopposed, with the exception of June Waring, who has decided to call it a day after 5 years. Hers will be a difficult act to follow after 5 years of hard work, in particular the supervision of the village maintenance contractors. *Late news is that Julia Gunning of Cambridge Road was co-opted at the first meeting of the re-elected parish council.*

During the year, we welcomed the Cambridge International School to the Temple on the old A11, hopefully soon to be renamed (and signed) "Old London Road".

The village is looking good after two recent working parties, which were well supported by residents. We have replenished the gravel on the footpaths and done the annual litter pick-up.

We have seen progress on some of the major projects and concerns mentioned last year. The allotments are thriving. The threats of Hanley Grange and the Linton Wind Farm have receded. The volume and speed of traffic on the A1307 remain concerns but the pedestrian crossing by the bus shelter has been improved.

#### **Allotments**

An open day and barbecue in September showed the great progress at the site. A broad spectrum of village residents, including several generations of some families, spends a lot of time at the site. Several people have commented on how the work promotes social cohesion. The parish council was pleased to fund the water supply and more recently hedging to the site. Great Abington parish council and Granta Park also made contributions.

#### **Linton Wind Farm**

South Cambridgeshire District Council refused a planning application for eight turbines at Little Linton Farm. Enertrag, the developers, appealed against the decision and an inquiry took place.

This inquiry, headed by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, ruled in the council's favour in late October. The Inspector, Philip Major, also granted full costs to the council, meaning that public money spent on the appeal will be reimbursed.

#### **Hanley Grange**

The immediate threat of a major development at Hinxtton has receded but Tesco is still keen to go ahead. All the local parish councils, together with the district and county, continue to oppose this. We need to stay vigilant!

## **Highways, including A1307**

Speedwatch volunteers continue to monitor and report speed limit infringements to the police. The police have been following up with their own checks and surveys. Results from a survey in April 2010 are shown on their website: [http://www.cambs.police.uk/roadsafety/speed\\_surveys/survey\\_results.asp](http://www.cambs.police.uk/roadsafety/speed_surveys/survey_results.asp). These show the alarming figure of 52 MPH for the average speed heading north-west, with 84.11% over 46 MPH. Southbound (from Cambridge) figures are a little better.

We have concerns that traffic on the A1307 will increase further with the anticipated expansion of Haverhill.

We have seen progress on the cycleway, with a very good path now from Sawston to Babraham. Progress on the remaining part of the cycleway from Babraham to Abington has been very slow – the route through the farm is usable and we hope to see progress this year!

## **Parish Plan and Housing Survey**

It's time to revisit both of these. We plan to send out a housing survey in May and seek input for an updated Parish Plan over the summer. The Housing Survey should help us argue for more affordable housing for local people.

Many of the priorities identified by residents and incorporated in the parish plan five years ago, most notably the Abington Institute, have now been achieved, so it's time to consult again. We do look at the plan as a list of actions on which we try to make progress, so this is your chance to influence our priorities for the next few years. We can't promise to deliver all you want but we will take all your ideas seriously!

## **Emergency Plan**

The district council is keen to have a register of emergency planning arrangements, in the form of a Community Risk register. This would list useful local assets and people for emergency support in case a major incident occurs in the area and the usual emergency services are not immediately available. We will be consulting to decide what might be possible.

**Peter Brunning, Chairman, Little Abington Parish Council**

## **Planning Committee**

The Parish Council is consulted on all planning applications in the parish and some others in the local area, such as Granta Park. Decisions are determined by the District Council, with the help of their expert team. It has been a very quiet year for planning in Little Abington with only one or two applications.

There were complaints about a construction on Cambridge Road, built without planning permission. The District Council issued an enforcement order and the structure has now been removed.

**John Ellis, Chairman, Little Abington Planning Committee**

## **Review of Accounts for 2010-11**

The Parish Council has ended the year with a balance of £15,529. This is more than last year but it includes funding set aside in reserve for various projects. Given the uncertainty about costs in the coming year and the impact of new legislation such as the Localism Bill on Parish Councils, it provides some contingency funds, if needed.

The Parish Council agreed the budget for this year in November. They agreed that the prudent approach was to plan for a worst case scenario, increasing the precept for 2011-12 by £1000 to £14,800. We still don't know if we will continue to receive grants for footpath maintenance and for roadside verge cutting or what the cost of the County Council's new contract for footway lighting will be in 2011-12.

Almost two thirds of the Parish Council's budget is spent on four items – employing the Clerk; contributing to the cost of maintaining the Recreation Ground; the village maintenance contract and the costs of maintenance and power for street lights in the village. We are building up a fund for maintaining the footbridge to the football pitch, replacing office equipment and for the excess on our insurance policy should a claim be made. The reserve we set aside for setting up the allotments last year was used for water connection and for hedging. Speeding traffic has long been a bug bear and some funds have been held in reserve for projects to help to reduce the problem.

Looking at outgoings compared to the plans we made 18 months ago, there have been some savings. We are very grateful to the Welding Institute for printing the Annual Review without charge. CGM did not increase their charges for village maintenance and street lighting cost less than expected. Little general maintenance was needed and, thanks to volunteers, tasks like repainting the bus shelter were done at minimum cost. Gravel laying was deferred until April so that cost will appear in the 2011-12 accounts.

As usual the accounts are subject to audit and they will be reported to the Audit Commission in June. I am pleased to report that the 2009-10 audit return was agreed without qualification and, as in previous years, the Internal Auditor's recommendations were acted upon.

Last year I mentioned that the Parish Council would be applying for reaccreditation of its Quality Status. We were successful and the certificate was awarded in October.

**Genevieve Dalton**  
**Clerk to Little Abington Parish Council / Responsible Financial Officer**

**Little Abington Parish Council**  
**Receipts & Payments for the Year Ended 31st March 2011**

	YR 2009-10	YR 2010-11	PLAN
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Precept	£13,500.00	13800.00	£13,800.00
Cambridge water refund (allotments)	£0.00	659.77	£0.00
CCC verge cutting allowance	£645.75	645.75	£645.00
VAT refund	£783.63	645.13	£0.00
Footpath grant	£350.00	400.00	£350.00
Footpath upkeep	£0.00	100.00	£60.00
Gt Abington PC ford maintenance	£40.00	40.00	£40.00
Bank interest	£13.14	9.65	£12.00
Misc and grant income	£1,021.85	0.00	£0.00
Inland Revenue computer rebate	£75.00	0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>£16,429.37</b>	<b>£16,300.30</b>	<b>£14,907.00</b>

<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
Clerk salary costs	£3,028.25	3160.08	£3,261.00
Allotments (from reserves)		2713.72	£2,400.00
Recreation Ground precept	£2,430.00	2430.00	£2,430.00
Contractors -village maintenance	£1,962.19	1958.16	£2,867.00
Footway lighting	£1,443.90	1219.80	£1,250.00
VAT	£885.65	622.80	£0.00
Donations	£400.00	500.00	£700.00
Section 137	£358.25	367.44	£485.00
Insurance	£302.96	321.23	£318.00
Audit	£221.50	243.00	£368.00
General administration	£258.27	233.45	£850.00
Subscriptions	£192.95	225.37	£228.00
Institute and room hire	£133.00	157.00	£195.00
Village and footpaths maintenance	£3,445.42	7.00	£350.00
Training	£163.64	0.00	£250.00
Information and publicity	£43.70	0.00	£200.00
Transfers	£734.35		
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>£16,004.03</b>	<b>£14,159.05</b>	<b>£16,152.00</b>

<b>SUMMARY</b>		
Brought Forward	£12,962.62	13387.96
Add Receipts	£16,429.37	16300.30
Less Payments	-£14,159.05	-14159.05
<b>Carried Forward at 31st March</b>	<b>£15,232.94</b>	<b>£15,529.21</b>

Represented By:-	Bank Current Account	£3,886.66	5178.26
	Bank Deposit Account	£574.45	574.71
	Building Society Account	£8,941.85	9800.41
		<b>£13,402.96</b>	<b>£15,553.38</b>
	plus credit due		£0.83
	Less cheques drawn	£15.00	£25.00
		<b>£13,387.96</b>	<b>£15,529.21</b>

	YR 2009-10	YR 2010-11	PLAN
<b>ALLOCATED RESERVES</b>			
Computer Hardware Fund	£379.00	479.00	£400.00
Footbridge repainting	£0.00	500.00	£500.00
Allotment set up	£2,400.00	0.00	£0.00
Bus trips		645.00	£375.00
Insurance excess		250.00	£250.00
Interactive sign (50%)		2500.00	
Legal fees ( Affordable housing)		1000.00	
Minor Highways schemes	£860.00	0.00	£0.00
<b>Total Allocated Reserves</b>	<b>£3,639.00</b>	<b>£5,374.00</b>	<b>£1,525.00</b>
<b>Unallocated Reserves</b>	<b>£9,748.96</b>	<b>£10,155.21</b>	<b>£5,799.00</b>

## Community Orchards



South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has an initiative to help local people to establish or restore community orchards. These are local projects set up and run by local people. There is more information on:

<http://www.scams.gov.uk/Environment/Conservation/WildlifeAndEcology/communityOrchards.htm>

We have no orchard so it would be good to plant one. Finding a site might be a challenge, especially one avoiding exposure to the wind, frost pockets, or water logged land. *Ideas welcome!*

Ideally, the site should be near enough for people to access it easily and regularly without using a car. A well used site is likely to become a well-loved site in years to come.



## Reports from representatives

### Police Liaison Report

We attended quarterly Neighbourhood Panel Meetings where priorities are jointly agreed. These meetings present an excellent opportunity for local concerns to be brought to the attention of the Officers responsible for policing our neighbourhood. The Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) Team continues to hold Surgeries at the Institute on Saturday mornings approximately every six weeks and villagers are encouraged to attend if they would like to discuss any matters of concern and report any potential problem areas.

Information and updates can be found on the E-cops website <https://www.cambs-police.co.uk/myneighbourhood/ecops/>.

Priorities for the local Policing Team over the past year have included: to address road safety concerns relating to excess speed and obstructive parking across the neighbourhood, including near schools; to reduce thefts from vehicles, focusing on vehicles parked at recreational areas and commuter parking locations; and to tackle incidents of rogue traders and bogus callers.

The number of distraction burglaries has gone down recently but it is still necessary to be vigilant when answering the door to unexpected callers. We are reminded to always make sure callers have the necessary ID to prove they are genuine. PCSOs are continuing their work in raising awareness of the risks posed by unsolicited callers who may not be legitimate.

Incidents of harassment and anti-social behaviour as well as reports of rogue traders have occurred in Little Abington. The police team has been working with Trading Standards to address the problem of rogue traders.

Speeding on the A1307 through Little Abington continues to be a problem and is being monitored closely - Speedwatch surveys show that a high percentage of vehicles are exceeding the 40 mph limit, especially those travelling north towards Cambridge.

The neighbourhood policing team welcome feedback and for non-urgent matters can be emailed at [sawston.npt@cambs.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sawston.npt@cambs.pnn.police.uk). For all non-emergencies, general enquiries and to report crime, please call 0345 4564564. To give information anonymously about crime, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111. In an emergency, when life is in danger or there is a risk of violence or serious injury or when a serious crime is being committed, please call 999.

**Roslyn Hedge**

### Recreation Ground Committee

The committee manages the ground on behalf of the two Parish Councils. Members keep an eye on the condition of the ground and equipment and arrange for maintenance and bin emptying and also minor repairs.

The football pitch is in better condition than for some time, thanks to hard work by David Boughtwood of Abington Football Club and investment in materials by the committee. This work will continue next year.

This year, the storage container near the multi-sport area has been repainted. It is available for local groups such as the football club to store equipment. Arrangements have been made to make it more accessible to people who wish to use the tennis nets that are available for use in the multi-sport area.

We had hoped to install a new gate to provide occasional vehicular access near Great Abington church, and may be eligible for a grant towards this. We have provisional agreement from the land-owner of the farm track but also need to arrange it with the Recreation Ground land-owner, South Cambs District Council.

They are not keen to get involved with these discussions but are prepared to give the land to the parish; we would have to pay legal costs on both sides. It seems likely that one of the parish councils will go ahead with the purchase and legal agreement, so that the work can then proceed.

We have discussed the possibility of installing further equipment on the Rec. and hope to progress these ideas further this year.

**Peter Brunning**

## **Village Maintenance and Footpaths**

CGM have continued to keep our village environment in good order over the past year, visiting at regular intervals according to seasonal needs.

As ever we are indebted to Roy Boughtwood for tending the area around Lady Cambridge's seat on the corner of Church Close and Church Lane. This is a very attractive part of our village and always looks well cared for.

Thanks are due to the volunteer working party, led by Parish Councillors, who recently laid extra gravel on the footpaths. This is heavy work and we are very grateful to those who come forward to offer their services.

The annual Litter Pick early in April was organised by Great Abington this year and, as always, produced a mountain of rubbish from all areas of the villages. Graham Wigley organised a working group for the bus shelter.

We are very fortunate to live in a pleasant environment with the added benefit of a good community spirit and we hope that everyone will continue to help on a daily basis to maintain the attractive appearance of our village.

**June Waring**

## **Abington Institute**

The Institute continues to function well and is the venue for many varied activities with talk of more, including a film club, this year. Many groups who use the main hall have enjoyed the restored floor. A disabled parking bay has been created in the car park and the entrance to the car park has also been resurfaced.

The café continues to thrive and in four years has raised almost £15,000 for the Institute! Many thanks are due to the café volunteers and all the other people who tirelessly give their time to ensure that the Institute is a success.

The Institute Management Committee is seeking someone who has a bit of flexible time on their hands to take over the regular management of the building and its equipment. If you can help, please contact someone on the committee!

**John Ellis**

## **Protected Road Verges and Naturewatch**

The programme for the protection of flora-rich road verges (PRVs) is administered by the Biodiversity Officer of the County Council with the technical support of the Wildlife Trust. On-site care and monitoring of the verges is entrusted to volunteer wardens, and in 2002 I was appointed warden for Little Abington on the recommendation of the Parish Council.

At that time there was only one PRV (No. S36) in the parish: a stretch of flat verge and bank on the east side of A1307 to the south of the road to Hildersham. While there is a continuing need to combat shrub overgrowth to protect a fairly interesting community of native chalk-turf flora, the civic value of the site is severely limited by its position on an increasingly busy road.

Shortly after the foundation of Abington Naturewatch in 2004, I suggested that part of the stretch of Bourn Bridge Road which runs between the fields should be designated a PRV. After inspection by the Wildlife Trust this was agreed; both sides of the western end of the road are now designated as PRV S52.

In 2009, a rapid increase in the amount of invasion by nettles inspired me as warden of the verge to set up a site meeting with the County Biodiversity Officer and the chairman of Little Abington PC, Peter Brunning. As a result, the County Officer agreed to enforce the correct regime for cutting the grass (which has so far since then been done). In addition, Naturewatch has worked to control the nettles, by strimming and weed-killing, over a valuable stretch of the verge.

These measures contributed to an excellent season for the chalk-loving plants. We somewhat regretted the mowing of the front metre or so of the verges to the east of the PRV. They are virtually as good as the protected ones, and a second mowing as early as this seems quite unnecessary on such a straight road.

In spite of two periods of drought the condition of the dicot plants was remarkably good, helped partly by the poor growth of the grasses.

On the whole, PRV S52 has been a success; and there is every hope that this will continue. The verges are easy to come by and walk along, and the display of chalk-loving plants in July and August can be inspiring.

**Pat Daunt**  
**Coordinator, Abington Naturewatch**

# District Councillor's Annual Report

South Cambridgeshire District Council is responsible for planning, council housing, licensing and waste collection. This report describes some general and some local issues.

## **Blue bins and recycling**

Prior to October 2010, the District Council itself collected black bin waste, but recyclable material from the green bin and green boxes was collected by a contractor. The District Council then introduced a third (blue) bin, for dry recyclables, and at the same time brought the green and blue bin collections back in-house.

The revised collection arrangements cost less than the previous system, and with increased income from the greater tonnage of recyclables collected, the net cost of the waste and recyclables collection service has been reduced by £300,000 in the first six months of operation. Recent figures indicate that the District Council's recycling rate is now over 60%.

The increased amounts of dry recyclables collected not only means more income for the District Council, but also reduces the amounts of material to be land-filled by the County Council, thereby saving the County Council landfill tax. This is a win-win-win situation as it also benefits the environment, in particular saving on land-filling of plastics which would take decades, if not centuries, to decompose if dumped in the ground.

## **Abington Recreation Ground**

Great and Little Abington Parish Councils have leased the Recreation Ground from the District Council since 1980. A few months ago the parish councils wanted to improve the access to the ground, but had to seek permission for the work proposed from the District Council as owner of the land. Clearly it is much better for there to be local ownership of this land, and so, in keeping with the idea of localism, the District Council has offered to pass ownership of the Recreation Ground to the Parish Councils at no change, except for meeting the District Council's legal fees. The District Council may even offer a grant towards the cost of these fees.

## **Abington Allotments**

I am very pleased that the District Council was able to give some money towards the cost of setting up the new allotments, and the Chairman of the Council, Charlie Nightingale was able to attend the opening ceremony.

## **Local planning**

Planning policies for South Cambridgeshire are set out in the various South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework documents relating to development in the district up to 2016. The District Council is now just starting the process of planning for the longer term – up to 2031 – to create a new South Cambridgeshire Development Plan.

The new plan will need to identify an appropriate housing growth target.

A range of studies needs to be undertaken to help prepare the new plan. A key study will be a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This will be a technical assessment of sites to determine whether they have the potential to be suitable for housing.

The District Council has therefore issued a 'Call for Sites'. Anyone (for example, an individual, a developer, a parish council) can put forward sites for consideration. The deadline for responses is noon on 29 July 2011.

Sites suggested must be:

- able to accommodate 10 or more dwellings and be at least 0.25 hectares;
- within or adjacent to one of the larger better served villages in the district or adjacent to Cambridge.

*A separate plan making process will decide which sites should be put forward for consultation.*

The first stage of public consultation on potential policies and site options for development is likely to take place in mid to late 2012.

## **Housing**

Since 2003, the District Council has paid over a proportion of its council house rents to the government for redistribution to other local authorities in areas of greater deprivation.

In the last four years, this 'negative housing subsidy' paid over by the District Council has risen from about £8.5 million to about £12.5 million per year (out of a total rent income of £23 million).

Following a government consultation that took place before and after the 2010 general election, this system will change from April 2012. From that date, the District Council will be able to retain all its rent income in return for taking over a proportion of the national housing debt.

The District Council will have to borrow money to pay off this debt, but the interest will be fixed over the borrowing period, as opposed to the year-on-year increases in the 'negative housing subsidy'. Hence, over a period of years, the District Council will have more money to spend on maintaining and updating its council houses.

## **The Budget**

The economic slowdown has seen a considerable reduction in the number of planning applications submitted to the District Council, a reduction of about 35% in the last two years. This reduction in workload, coupled with the much slower progress than anticipated with major new developments such as Northstowe, has enabled the District Council to reduce staffing and expenditure in the planning and new communities departments.

These changes, together with the reduced costs of waste and recycling collections (see above) and using some money from reserves, have enabled the District Council to maintain services for the 2011-12 financial year without cuts or redundancies.

In fact, the Council has been able to marginally increase its support for organisations such as the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, and to maintain its level of funding of Community Facility Capital Grants (£100,000).

**Tony Orgee**



## **County Councillor’s Annual Report**

### **The Budget**

We can't go on borrowing £400 million every day. The coalition government has made our national financial situation its first priority. And that has hit the County Council hard.

Excluding the money the County spends on schools, the County will get £17.6 million less from Westminster than it did last year. Inflation, a growing and ageing population and an increase in the number of things the County is expected to do add to the impact. All in all, the County believes it has to make savings of £50.4 million during the coming year. And that means cuts.

### **Buses**

Bus subsidies will all be phased out over the next four years. At present this has no effect on Little Abington because bus services on the Cambridge to Haverhill corridor are run commercially without a subsidy. However six of the ten villages I represent will be without buses if no solution is found so the challenge is quite exercising.

The County’s professed desire for “modal shift” – from private cars to buses and other forms of transport – rings rather hollow at the moment.

### **Roads**

I have been busy with the annual pothole saga. Things are bound to get worse and the County admits that the road network will continue to deteriorate. I have helped people from all our villages trying to get potholes fixed quickly. The grass-cutting schedule has also been reduced. Mike Cooper from Cambridgeshire Highways remains a key ally. We keep reminding the County that it already has figures showing that it is a false economy to cut back on road maintenance and at last they have announced a review. The government has also announced that Cambridgeshire is to get an extra £2,680,000 to help with the cost of mending potholes.

The County's pothole reporting system has suffered from teething problems. I joined your Chairman in a visit to Cambridgeshire Highways in Whittlesford to demonstrate the failings. People have been given messages that potholes have been fixed when they haven't. The system should be fixed by the time of the next pothole season.

The A1307 continues to be high on the agenda. Earlier in the year I attended a presentation in Haverhill entitled Haverhill Vision 2031. It is possible that 2500 houses could be built on the Cambridgeshire side of Haverhill. Unless there are jobs created in Haverhill then it is highly likely that the intensity of commuting to Cambridge will increase. St Edmundsbury Council has conceded that there should be a contribution to improving matters on the A1307 in Cambridgeshire but I get the impression that they haven't thought very closely about what improvements would need to be made and how much they would cost.

Meanwhile the County's Cabinet is being asked to leave the speed limit on the A1307 from Four Wentways to after the turning into Babraham as it is while the Area Joint Committee had argued that a 50 mph limit should be introduced.

The cycleway from Sawston to Babraham has at long last been completed. It is a great success. Negotiations proceed extremely slowly on getting the next stretch from Babraham to Little Abington agreed and built.

### **Little Abington Parish Council**

With the Big Society on its way it is likely that both the County and the District will be looking for parish councils to be even more active in areas such as planning, social services and transport. I am keen to ensure that parish councils are given the freedom to decide what extra duties they perform. A large village has more capacity than a small one – regardless of the quality of individual parish councillors. One possibility could be grouping villages together to take on larger tasks, as is done quite successfully in France. Meanwhile, as the Halifax has just reported, we are all very fortunate to live in the best area in England.

### **I'm here to help**

My first job is to make sure that your voice is heard at the County Council. You can contact me with your concerns on 01223 836527, e-mail at [timothy.stone1@virgin.net](mailto:timothy.stone1@virgin.net) or write to me at 4 Church Lane, Whittlesford, Cambridge CB22 4NX. My website is at [www.timstone.mycouncillor.org.uk/](http://www.timstone.mycouncillor.org.uk/)

**Tim Stone**

