

Meldreth – District and County Councillor Report October/November 2020

With additional reports on Community Rail Partnership and Meldreth Coronavirus Community Support

Covid-19 and recalibration of District and County Hubs

The District and County Councils are poised to support community Covid support groups once again, and virtual meetings with community groups are continuing to take place. Meanwhile everyone is being asked to help disseminate public health advice on hand hygiene, social distancing and staying home as much as possible, plus guarding against complacency. Update: with the lockdown announcement, systems are being activated.

Again, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Public Health Intelligence detailed updates on Covid-19 cases and settings are here:

https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/

District and County Council finances

We will have more to report in the near future on the impact of Covid on district and county council finances, ahead of the 2021-22 budget setting.

South Cambridgeshire Hall – SCDC offices

Having just re-opened South Cambs Hall it has now been closed again as part of our efforts to do all we can to minimise the spread of Coronavirus locally. Residents and businesses have been able to carry out the vast majority of transactions without visiting and for the small number of tasks that have required people to visit in-person, such as pension verification, we have made arrangements to continue delivering them in a safe way. Please check the website for further details.

Road surfaces, Fenny Lane and High Street

We've received complaints from local cyclists that many stretches of through roads are dangerous to ride, due to proliferation of ruts. An urgent request has been made to Highways for an inspection of Fenny Lane and the High St, with a view to remedial work. With government encouragement to get around locally as much as possible by bike and on foot, there's a new angle of concern in the mix.

Drains:

Highways drainage contractors have now been out to jet drains in problem areas identified and reported long ago. Jose, Susan and Pat are meeting the Local Highways Officer for the annual drainage tour, postponed from April, on Nov 3. We will check on work done on Friday.

Update from Connecting Cambridgeshire

Following recent activity by BT Openreach in the village, we asked Connecting Cambridgeshire for an update. They report that the neighbourhood between The Maltings North End, Stone Lane and Meldreth Rd Shepreth, consisting of 25 Meldreth properties, where speeds were falling below a certain level, was earmarked by Connecting Cambridgeshire for FTTP, provided by BT Openreach. It's estimated that completion will take place by early December. If there's any further information before the parish council meeting, we'll forward that to you – we've asked a number of follow-up questions.

Melbourn Division Oil Club – household heating oil

The Melbourn Division Oil Club, working with local oil supplier Agricole Oil, exists to help householders access the best available prices.

There is no joining fee and no obligation to make more than one order – please simply contact Jeremy Cole at Agricole Oil if you'd like to know more about how things work or how to make an order: Jeremy@agricole.co.uk, tel 01954 719452.

Every year, Agricole Oil gives us a rebate which is based on the volume of orders made, and the Oil Club in turn donates this to a community group. Last year the rebate went to Royston and District Community Transport.

Difficulties with Water bills?

Cambridge Water is offering help for people struggling to pay their water bills because of COVID-19. Please contact Cambridge Water via the website, by Facebook or Twitter or give call 0800 587 7701. More information can be found online at <https://www.cambridge-water.co.uk/covid-help>. Tailored support including the Assure social tariff (for customers whose household income is less than £16,380 a year); the Assure Covid-19 tariff, which is available for a 12-week period for customers whose household income has been impacted by the Coronavirus outbreak and is temporarily less than £16,380 a year; as well as a number of other plans.

Community Rail Partnership News

Rail User Group meeting November 18

A virtual meeting will be hosted on Zoom for rail user group members and any interested residents, to hear about the current state of play around rail services.

Turning the tubs around for winter on the station platforms

In spite of the pandemic, local volunteers have been continuing to work behind the scenes to ensure our station garden remains cheerful and well-tended, for which many thanks.

Meldreth Station priorities

Susan and Sarah Grove will be meeting our MP on site at Meldreth Station on Nov 6, to discuss our priorities, particularly around station access. GTR will be coming along too. This meeting was meant to have taken place in the spring but was postponed due to lockdown 1. Update: we now hope that this meeting will take virtually.

Passenger Benefit Fund

While the Community Rail Partnership submitted its priority list for the £80K PBF, based on consultation with rail users and the local community, the Dept for Transport held the final decision on approved projects to be covered. We had put in a strong request to part-fund the ramp from the Melbourn path to the London platform, for which a Melbourn Sec 106 agreement with TTP at Melbourn Science Park is already in place. We said we didn't feel that improving the existing toilets was a priority, as these seem to be in good condition. Unfortunately, the DfT has not taken our request on board. We are in discussion with GTR about other sources to match fund the S106 sum.

New and restored art work at Meldreth Station waiting room

We'd like to thank Tim Gane for all his work and patience in preparing historic Meldreth photographs and artwork for the Station waiting room. The CRP was very pleased to be in a position to cover the costs.

Amazon locker at Meldreth Station

Amazon lockers are being rolled out at a number of railway stations, and one has been offered for Meldreth. This would serve as a collection point for Amazon packages. The Community Rail Partnership had only 24 hours notice and felt on balance that it would be a useful additional public amenity to the station environment. It will be installed on the hard standing where currently there are four poorly positioned cycle racks; we've asked for the racks to be re-sited elsewhere in the station car park area – details to be worked out. We're very glad to have the new 16-unit covered cycle park facility, installed in the car park just before lockdown, but reckon that when life eventually returns to normal it would be good to maximize the availability of cycle parking.

Meldreth Coronavirus Community Support

Mental Health Support: MCCA has commissioned Mind CPSL to deliver a series of three mental health training workshops, designed for community volunteers. These will take place on Zoom and are scheduled to begin shortly. We're pleased, after extensive conversations with Mind, to have landed on a project that will benefit a wide community, as the learning from this exercise has enabled Mind to create other similar programmes for other Cambridgeshire communities.

Christmas food boxes fundraiser: MCCA is considering launching a new fundraiser specifically in order to provide Christmas food and supplies boxes during the winter holiday school break. MCCA meets Monday 2 Nov to discuss and decide.

Meanwhile, any donations of non-perishable food, household supplies and nice things for Christmas would be greatly appreciated – either contact Anne our coordinator on 07592 355279, or pop anything into the collection box at 69 High Street.

Screenbank continues to deliver laptops to Melbourn Village College, following a new identified need after the start of term, with a new intake of students. Thanks to Andy Thomas, Ian Mitchell and David Coton for their continued dedication to the task. Please contact Susan with any donations. We're especially looking for Windows 7 and above laptops.

Meldreth Walking Friends has a rota of volunteer walk leaders to cover every Tuesday of the month, when walking groups of no more than six meet at Meldreth Village Hall. Fine to just come along, or please contact our coordinator Paul on 07976 256121 to let us know you'll be coming. Update – MCCSS will discuss Nov 2 if and how this can be adapted to lockdown restrictions.

General support: with lockdown, MCCS will activate a support network - details to be worked out at its Nov 2 meeting.