

FOCUS on Godmanchester

May/June 2017



County election result

In the Godmanchester and Huntingdon South division

Liberal Democrats	1194	52%
Conservatives	656	29%
Labour	282	12%
UKIP	152	7%

Cambridgeshire County Council – before and after:

	April 17	May 17
Number of councillors		
Conservatives	32	36
Liberal Democrats	14	15
UKIP	10	0
Labour	8	7
Independent	5	3
Total	69	61

Tories to rule Cambridgeshire as a 'one-party state'

For the last four years, the work of the Council (adult social care, children and young people, transport, highways, community development) has been carried out in committees comprising councillors across the political spectrum.

In the recent election, across the whole of Cambridgeshire, the Conservatives got 40.5% of the total vote; 59.5% voted for other parties (of which 29% voted Lib Dem). Now the Conservatives have changed the way the County Council works to stop opposition to their policies and plans.

All the Committees will have Tory Chairs and Vice-Chairs; no decisions can be reviewed without the support of a Committee on which the Conservatives have a majority; in Full Council, no amendments to Tory plans can be made without prior notice; no councillors can put oral questions; and officers will brief Tory Spokespersons separately from Lead Members from the other groups.

Future challenges

I have been a County Councillor for 8 years. My colleague Peter Downes for even longer (16 years.) Neither of us can remember a time when Cambridgeshire faced so many difficulties.

The main one is the shortage of money – the government has been reducing its grant to local councils and, within two years, this will be nil. In addition, they have capped the amount by which councils can raise local taxes.

The demand for services, especially for the young and old, is increasing and this already takes up 60% of the council's budget. Services such as libraries and buses in rural areas, are under great pressure. The fall-out from Brexit is still unclear and we have to come to terms with a new Mayor for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough – so tricky times ahead. I will keep you informed on how things develop over the coming months and how changes might affect you and your families.

From Graham Wilson, your re-elected County Councillor

Thank you to everyone who voted for me in the recent election. I look forward to continuing to serve all residents over the coming four years.

The County Council boundaries have been changed and the number of councillors reduced. Mike Shellens who used to also represent Godmanchester was re-elected to the County and now represents Huntingdon North, which includes Hartford and most of the Oxmoor estate.

If you have any issues which you think I or one of our two district councillors can help with (Sarah Conboy and David Underwood), please get in touch.

We hold monthly surgeries on the last Saturday in the month at the Market Square in Huntingdon from 11:30 – 12:30. Do come and have a chat.

And we are always looking for volunteers to help deliver our regular Focus leaflets to residents. If you are interested in joining or getting more involved locally, do get in touch.

The Godmanchester Team –

contact any of us if you have a problem we can help with



David Underwood
(411293)
davidunderwood2@btinternet.com



Sarah Conboy
(276276)
sarah.conboy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



Graham Wilson
(412747)
graham.wilson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk



Mike Shellens
(456555)
shellens@waitrose.com

June 8 - the General Election few people seem to want!

Many people have been keen to tell me what they think about the snap election called for June 8.

The biggest shock so far is the Tories' intention to change social care for the elderly and reduce other benefits (winter fuel allowance) and have lower pension increases. No wonder some life-long Conservative voters are telling us they will abstain this time, ... or even vote Lib Dem as a protest!

After a hard-fought campaign in the election for mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, in which he was runner-up to the Tory candidate, Rod Cantrill has now been selected by the local Lib Dems as their candidate for Huntingdon in the General Election on June 8th.

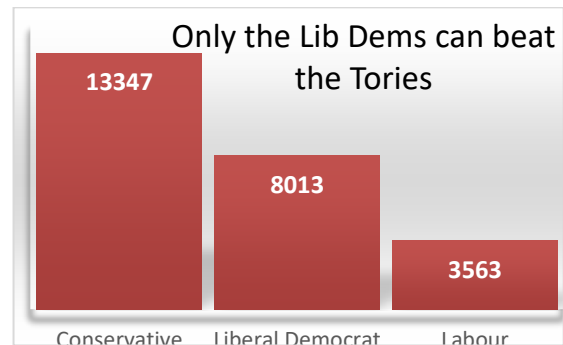


Rod Cantrill – Lib Dem candidate for Huntingdonshire

We hope you will support Rod and the Lib Dems' main priorities of greater resources for the NHS and for schools, and, of course, staying in the single market to protect our country's economy for the future.

Based on the number of votes cast on May 4th for the three major parties in the County Council elections in the Huntingdonshire Constituency, only the Liberal Democrats can beat the Tories.

Labour cannot win here.



Stop Press

New secondary school for Godmanchester??

The Government has given approval for a new secondary school for 750 11-16 pupils to be built in Godmanchester as part of its Free Schools initiative. The school could be opened in September 2020 with 150 Year 7 places and then growing year by year to reach its planned operational capacity of 750 pupils. There appears to be no provision for sixth form students.

So far there has been no consultation with the public, local primary schools or councillors. However, when County Council officers were consulted they said there was "no basic need" to justify the school. They were told by Government officials that the case had been made and approved on the grounds of "community/social need". The argument put forward was that Godmanchester children need their own school rather than having to travel into Huntingdon where places are available. An additional factor was that, at the time of the application, St Peter's was deemed by OfSTED to require improvement. This is no longer the case as it is now rated as "good".

The 'sponsor' of the new school is Chesterton Community College, located 16 miles away in Cambridge. They have already identified a few potential sites which the DfE will now pursue. We suspect these will include the land beyond the Romans' Edge development where the developer has already told the town council they want to build a further 950 homes. This is additional development, not in the District Council's draft Local Plan, which we are opposing.

Our concern is that, whilst we agree with most local parents that it is generally beneficial for pupils to go to a school near to where they live, a 750 place school is not large enough to give pupils the range of options and facilities they would get in larger schools like Hinchingsbrooke or St. Peter's. A new school in Godmanchester, when there is no need for extra places, would also reduce the financial viability of the other two schools so everybody suffers. In addition, a new major development on the edge of the town will lead to pressure for yet more housing development, traffic congestion and parking problems throughout the town and pressure on other essential services such as the doctors' surgery.

We'd welcome feedback from you on your views for a new secondary school and further housing development.

