

The new Mayor starts work ...

Conservative James Palmer won the recent Mayoral election, with Lib Dem Rod Cantrill in second place. The Mayor has an annual government grant of £20 million for the next 30 years. He is commissioning consultants for a light railway around Cambridgeshire, a metro for Cambridge City, improvements to the A10, A47 and A428 and he plans to set up a new university in Peterborough. From the £20m per year he also has to cover the £1 million annual cost of his own salary and his office staff and accommodation. Don't hold your breath!

News from Cambridgeshire County Council:

a. Not so good

The first Full Council meeting confirmed the Conservatives' intention to run the County Council as a 'one-party state':

- * 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 in Full Council meetings;
- * officers will brief Tory Spokespersons separately from Lead Members from the other groups.
- * Opposition groups will no longer have recognised 'Spokespersons'.

b. Good

The Council has used some of its farms estate to open a solar energy plant which will eventually be a source of income to the Council as well as providing environmentally-friendly energy.

News from Huntingdonshire District Council

HDC is developing a new Parking Strategy and is keen to understand from residents what they think the Council does well, and what it can improve upon. The Council's online user survey can be found at

<https://tinyurl.com/HDCCPark> and will be available until the middle of August 2017. Please fill in the form and have your say!

HDC is planning to increase its commercial activities so as to avoid council tax increases as the central government grant disappears in the next two years. What is unclear is what HDC will do if the amount expected does not materialise. Stand by for further service reductions.

P.S. If you are interested in finding out what is involved in being a local councillor, please get in touch with any of the three councillors named at the bottom of this page.

From your Liberal Democrat team

The unusual combination of County, Mayoral and General elections have made the last three months particularly busy.

We would like to thank all those who help us, many by delivering our FOCUS leaflets, some by putting up posters. Many others give us words of encouragement: '*keep up your good work*' and that helps us too!

The Lib Dems believe in keeping in touch with you all year round, not just in the few weeks prior to an election. Our aim is to keep you informed about what the Councils are doing (or not, as the case may be) and to tell you how we are working on the issues you draw to our attention.

We do not expect you to agree with all the opinions expressed in Focus but we hope they will make you think about the issues and challenges we all face in these difficult times.

*Patricia,
John,
Peter*

We are available on the first Saturday of alternate months, July, September, November, January, March and May, from 10 to 11 a.m. at the Scout HQ behind the shops. At other times, please contact us directly:

Your two District Councillors

Your County Councillor



John Morris

07788 977 092

John.morris@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Twitter:@johnmbrampton



Patricia Jordan

01480 383632

patricia.jordan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



Peter Downes

07765 833 486

peter.downes@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Local events and news

Tidy Village Group (TVG)

The volunteers on the TVG will soon be springing back into action to tackle the bushes, trees and weeds growing over footpaths and road signs. If you would like to help, please give Peter Downes a call.

Shakers by John Godber & Jane

Thornton is described by Variety Magazine as 'delightfully funny, thoroughly entertaining, pure theatre!'

July 12-15 at the Assembly Rooms, Huntingdon Town Hall.

For tickets:
www.ticketsource.co.uk/huntsdramaclub

Hinchingbrooke Hospital

Many thanks to those who supported the recent piano concert promoted by the The Rotary Club of Huntingdon. This raised **£2,500** for for the 'Friends of Hinchingbrooke Hospital' enabling them to buy extra wheelchairs to help disabled people move around the hospital more quickly and comfortably.

Some residents' concerns

The traffic on the High Street gets more congested by the day. Please walk or cycle to the shops if you possibly can.

We need a safer way of crossing Grove Lane

People allow their private hedges to protrude over the footpath. Think of wheelchair users. Please cut back your hedge.

Keep up the pressure on the RAF site contractors to keep the roads clean.

Please get the dead trees cut down before they fall on somebody.

Find a way of slowing down the traffic as it passes Centenary Way.

The Park Lane/Buckden Road junction is potentially dangerous.

Expanding village activity

It is heartening to see the increase in social and voluntary activity in the village arising from the Community-Led Plan.

We have our own community library, a computing skills group, a Good Neighbour Scheme and more village social activities such as the excellent 'Open Gardens' and the recent Village Fête.

And we have rambling groups and the Community Speed Watch.

Those volunteering to help with these activities and those organising them deserve our thanks. There is still space for more residents to step forward.

The *Brampton Magazine* is informative and interesting - many thanks to those who write for it, edit it and distribute it.

The national scene

Electionitis*

In June 2016 David Cameron called a referendum on the European Union believing he would silence once and for all the Eurosceptics in the Conservative party and stop the drift of his voting support to UKIP. Instead, he lost his gamble, the country narrowly voted 'Leave' and Cameron immediately walked away from the chaos he had created.

In June 2017 Theresa May called a General Election which she did not need to call. Her aim was to smash the Labour Opposition. Her inept campaign and a strong performance by Jeremy Corbyn actually wiped out her overall majority, though the Conservative are still the largest party.

The cost to the taxpayer of these two unnecessary elections is estimated to be nearly £300 million, plus the £80 million spent by the political parties, plus millions of hours given by activists from all the political parties. We can all think of better ways of spending the time and money.

**Electionitis - an uncontrollable urge to call elections to gain party political advantage*

'Brexit means Brexit', said Theresa May. But what happens now?

On June 23rd 2016 the country voted by a 4% margin to 'Leave the European Union'.

The Leave campaign told us we should 'Take Back Control' or 'Make Britain Great again' and promised us '£350 million a week more for the NHS'. The concerns raised by the Remain campaigners were never seriously debated or refuted, simply dismissed as 'Project Fear'.

Now that the negotiations have started, we are beginning to see more clearly what we were not told during the referendum campaign. The £ has lost value, increasing the cost of imports and food and making travelling abroad more expensive; inflation is increasing; there has been a drop of 96% in EU applicants to be nurses in the UK and a shortfall of 40,000 nurses is forecast for 2020; seasonal workers to collect fruit and vegetables are not coming in the numbers needed.

The Liberal Democrats have argued consistently that the public's votes in 2016 were based on insufficient detail and evidence. When we know what Brexit *really* means - for commerce, for employment, for students coming here or going abroad to study, for agriculture and fishing, for the environment, for crime and justice, - then we should have a second chance to express an informed opinion. Brexit will affect the lives of our children and grandchildren for decades - we owe it them to get it right.

Puttings things into perspective All our local concerns pale into insignificance when we reflect on the recent tragic events in London and Manchester. Clearly we cannot continue to reduce our funding to the police, the NHS, Fire Service and local government. We are going to need them more than ever.