

FOCUS on Godmanchester

October 2017



Update on County Council Services

Libraries

Godmanchester residents currently benefit from having a mobile library which tours the town as well as access to Huntingdon library which provides services ranging from traditional book loans to access to the internet and mother and toddler groups. The County Council is reviewing its library service and likely to make more cuts to save money.

Please make sure you comment on what's being proposed, and if you haven't been to the library recently, do pop in – you may be surprised by what you see!

New Bus Services

The 478 Whippet bus services has now replaced the 476 and 477 bus services. The 478 still serves most of the town with some buses going up to the Oxmoor and Sapley Road Tescos. No buses now go around Crowhill, Grainger Avenue and Sweetings Road and fewer go to the railway station.

However, money from the Romans' Edge development is being used to pay for buses to go to Romans' Edge. The new bus gate which would allow buses to go from Kisby Avenue to the A1198 has not been built to allow buses to go the other way, so until this is changed buses to Romans' Edge go up London Road, down the A1198 and back up Tudor Road. We hope this will be changed soon so people in Kisby Avenue, Petit Road and Windsor Road benefit.

The 478 is a regular bus service and with the X3 service to Cambridge now running on Sundays, we have a good bus service to Huntingdon and beyond. But if we don't use it, I fear we might lose some of the service.

Children's Centres

The Children's Centre on Park Lane at the Community Primary School is to be "re-designated" to help to save £1m per year. We think this means most of the groups and support to parents that it currently provides will be stopped and the centre as it currently exists will close.

Some of the groups might be run at other locations in the town, but the support to hard-pressed parents will be severely cut. The consultation period for these changes is now over and we await the decisions from the Tories on what they plan to do next. We'll keep you informed.

From your local Lib Dem Councillors

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 some of the things we are working on.

As well as our regular FOCUS leaflets, Sarah Conboy is a prolific poster of news on Godmanchester Living and we have just set up a new Facebook page Godmanchester Councillors for you to get in touch.

We try and deal, not always successfully, with issues you tell us about.

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. Let us know what you think.

The Godmanchester Team – *contact any of us if you have a problem we can help with*



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More local news

Proposal for a new Secondary School

Chesterton Academy Trust is still pursuing its plan to build a new secondary school in Godmanchester and intends to start consulting residents soon. We understand that a suitable site has not yet been identified.

We have met Jonathan Djanogly MP and expressed our concern that whilst a new school would seem attractive for local pupils, it is very unlikely to be big enough to provide a full range of courses, no sixth form is proposed, and it is likely to lead to yet more housing and traffic.

Watch out for lorries carrying waste

Over recent years, the waste in the landfill site at Cow Lane has settled. Soon the site will be re-shaped by the addition of top soil. This will make it ready for conversion to a country park with plans for a replica of a Neolithic temple to be built on it. Some 15 lorries a day are likely to go into the site with some coming down the A1198.

Whilst we are happy with this level of traffic, we are concerned that proposals are also being prepared for a massive waste recycling centre and concrete mixing plant at the old golf course at Hemingford Abbott. This could cause considerable noise and pollution nuisance, not least from the hundreds of lorries a day which would use the A1198. We will be monitoring the proposals and will keep you informed.

The ruling Conservative Group grabs the money

Every four years, the allowances given to elected county councillors must be reviewed. An Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed and makes a recommendation. This year, the ruling Conservative group (36 seats out of 61) rejected the Panel's report and imposed their own increases. 24 of the 36 Conservative councillors have Special Responsibility Allowances for example:

- Council Leader (Conservative) increased from £21,636 to £31,745
- Committee Chairs (all Conservative) increased from £12,363 to £18,372

This was an astonishing decision for the Conservative to make to make at a time when the Council is under severe financial pressure to maintain essential services for the elderly and very young, as well as struggling to maintain roads. The total cost of county councillors' allowances will now be £936,000 instead of the £751,550 recommended by the independent panel.

You won't be surprised to hear the Liberal Democrat councillors voted against the Conservative plans.

Your local Councillors are now on Facebook

Look for the page **Godmanchester Councillors**.

Godmanchester Living is a great Group - usually! Our residents often raise issues that are causing them concern. Sometimes a local county or district councillor might be able to help, so this new page is just for that purpose. We will publish useful information and you can share your concerns. We will LISTEN, ADVISE and HELP whenever we can.