



‘SCRUTINY ON THE COUNTY’

Cambridgeshire County Council owns the largest public sector farm estate in the country. In 2017 it awarded a tenancy for Manor Farm in Girton, to its then deputy leader, Conservative councillor Roger Hickford who's tenancy and the subsequent two-year investigation – including by the police – has been dubbed 'Farmgate'.

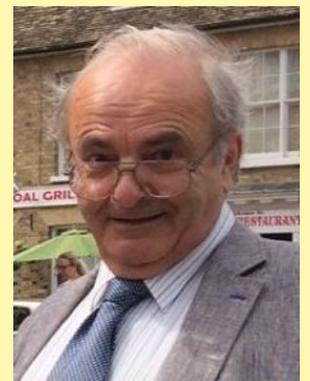
Our Mike Shellens, had spent nearly 8 years as chair of the County's Audit and Accounts Committee. A large two part 'Farmgate' report was produced. The first part concerned actions of staff and weaknesses in procedures. It was discussed in open committee. Over 600 members of the public watched proceedings by video. But when it came to the second part, the actions of the Conservative Councillor, Tory Councillors voted on bloc to conceal the discussion from public view. Cllr.Shellens resigned his position in protest.

Mike Shellens said "Throughout my time as Chair of this committee, all reports have been made public. After all it is public money we are managing. Staff were exposed to public criticism. The same rules should apply to the actions of senior councillors."

Leader of the LibDem group on Cambridgeshire County Council, Lucy Nethsingha, has called for the whole report to be made public. She described the whole affair as "the farmgate scandal". We await full publication with interest.

"County Council - one law for..."

Mike Shellens



MAIN STREET MISERY

Main Street Hartford has become a real headache for local residents. Not only must they risk their lives to cross between bus stops near Owl Way, they are now plagued with articulated lorries cutting through the village and a recent spate of car crashes.

Starting with the long awaited crossing, this has now been approved by Cambridgeshire County Council and slated for construction this summer. Local LibDem councillors Juliet Cole and Mike Humphrey thank Huntingdon Town Council's local highways team for helping to push this through.

The 7.5 ton weight restrictions at the A141 'BP' roundabout are being frequently ignored by heavy goods vehicles, including car transporters, especially late at night and early in the morning. Residents in Desborough Road are particularly affected due to the state of the road surface by their traffic lights.

Cllr Mike Humphrey thinks it is a mix of regional hauliers who have 'always' cut through Huntingdon to the A1, deliveries to town centre retailers and drivers with out of date satnavs. They must also be impacting on traffic holdups around the Riverside Park and Bridge Hotel.

Crash, bang, wallop: you may have noticed that we are going through a rash of bad driving literally impacting on local properties, including (above) a wall onto a classic Jaguar! Another 'idiot' demolished fencing and the

Barley Mow bus stop lamp post. As District Councillor, Mike is worried that someone is going to get killed. "I hear a group of children walking along the pavement narrowly missed being involved in the 'Jaguar' crash! I hope the new pedestrian crossing will have a calming effect, if not we may have to look at further traffic calming measures.

"It must be better for all if we can get them to the Tesco roundabout and St Peters Road to the retail and industrial zones. It is difficult to see any alternative to a 'No articulated HGVs' sign on the A141 Hartford roundabout monitored by CCTV. Mike has put forward the proposal to the A141 steering committee who are currently considering long term improvements to the local trunk roads".

Local county councillor Jonas King has been invited to add his weight and retail knowledge to the campaign as this is a matter that cuts across party lines. We also shall seek Police support.

Below LibDem councillors Juliet Cole and Mike Humphrey at the propoposed crossing site.



STAY LOCAL!

As we come out of lockdown, spare a thought for our local pubs which have made every effort to meet our community needs during this trying time.

Now more than ever they need our support. So before you book a family table at a national pub chain why not stay local? Jenny and Malcolm have an exciting new menu at the family friendly **Barley Mow** while Matt and Jane have a mini beer festival at the **King of the Belgians** in August for those who like to appreciate a range of craft beers.





NORFOLK RD'S POLE APART a monument to Incompetence

Norfolk Road in Huntingdon has an unused BT pole. It has nothing attached to it. No wires. No nothing. It has been there for years. Eventually it will risk falling!

BT Openreach say they have no record of it. But who else goes round the country putting up redundant BT poles?

Local rumour says that they erected the pole in the wrong Norfolk Road.

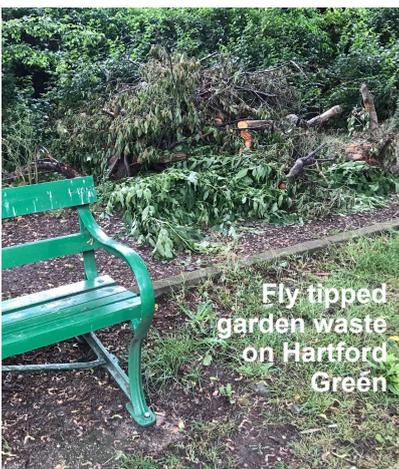
Mike Shellens brought it to their attention. They are quite prepared to come out and look at it with a view to removing it as long as he pays! Barking!

JUST THINK WHERE IT ENDS UP...

Most of us are familiar with BBC TV's 'Rogue Traders'. Lockdown has seen a growth in 'man with a van' businesses. Many are legit', unfortunately not all.

So beware when a 'tradesman' comes knocking offering really competitive rates for driveways, roofing or garden clearance.

A mixture of wet and warm weather this year has brought unusually high growth in hedges etc. Next time one calls, just think where your cut price garden work may end up. Clue: it's not a HDC Recycling Centre. Invariably HTC clear it so WE pay for it!



LIBDEMS SUPPORT LOCAL 'AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY' BID

Last September the Prime Minister publicly committed to protect 30% of the total UK land area in order to increase biodiversity and halt the recent catastrophic loss of wildlife. To achieve this target we must designate a further 4,000 square kilometres of land for protection. The Government is yet to make a policy statement on the 2019 Glover Report.

This report suggested that the concept of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in their current format may be outdated, and that new forms of landscape protection may be required in order to create a more inclusive system that reaches more landscape and more people. For example – to date, most AONBs have been relatively large areas and this has left smaller areas, often of similar landscape value, unprotected: There is a significant in-balance in the distribution of AONBs across the country with very few in central and eastern areas: There is a need to protect valued landscapes associated with growing urban areas. All these issues, and more, are relevant to the Great Ouse Valley.

Huntingdonshire LibDems are delighted to support this project by the Great Ouse Valley Trust.



Market Square Surgery

Local councillors make themselves available on the last Saturday of each month from 11.30 to 12.30. The next drop-in will be on 28th August .



DESIGN FOR (GREEN) LIVING

In a few years time all the land between Tesco and the BP petrol station on the A141 and across towards the new crematorium will be considered for house building.

Town Cllr. Padrica Kennington has a clear vision: "As Liberal Democrats we want to see developers ensure that their schemes are a good mix. That is to say suitable for older residents, young people who want to get on the housing ladder and want coffee places, pre-nursery meeting and play areas, landscaping which encourages flowers and fauna to attract bees, birds and other wild animals, houses with gardens so residents can garden and grow their own vegetables, safe areas for walking and cycling.

All houses to have potential to capture sunlight to heat water and help with fuel bills and architecture that alleviates hot summers, planting of trees and shrubs and encouraging green architecture e.g. roofs and walls".

Taking action on climate change is not a statutory requirement for Local Authorities but there are ways in which they have influence and can intervene in new build housing. Planning councils can insist on insulation and heat pumps etc in new build houses as well as solar panels. Conventional road transport accounts for much UK carbon emissions and whilst we can't influence this we can put in place points for Electric Vehicle charging. There is also scope to look at waste management and surface treatments.

We need residents to tell us what more they require of our councillors on the Town and District Council in providing green, safe and suitable environments.

There is an opportunity for residents to suggest where the councils can plant more trees. This is a conditions of the Queen's Jubilee Year.



Town Councillor Padrica Kennington