



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**TO THE**

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**15TH APRIL 2019**

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**Open to the public - Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 2.30 pm**

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**Chairman of the Council and Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Michael Rouse  
Deputy Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor  
Alison Arnold**

## **CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The City of Ely Council was formed under the reorganisation of local government in 1973, taking over from the Ely Urban District Council, but with parish council status. At this time Queen Elizabeth II granted City status to Ely and the right to have a Mayor as chairman with the official title of 'The Right Worshipful Mayor'. The first Mayor was duly elected in 1974. As a parish council we manage the cemetery, allotments, through the City of Ely Allotments & Garden Association, play areas and a shared equity housing scheme.

In 2015 we purchased the Sessions House for our administrative office and during this year we opened the new council chamber on the first floor with a lift to provide disabled access. The Council has also taken back responsibility for the Maltings from the District Council and, under its new manager and team, it has continued to make great progress. As from last April the Council has taken over Oliver Cromwell House and the tourism service and city centre management. Already the Council has invested in improvements to Oliver Cromwell House as a visitor attraction.

The City of Ely Council, of course, works in collaboration with the District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority. We have recently engaged with stakeholders and supported the District Council in a major bid for government funding for transforming our city centre.

The fifteen unpaid elected members of the Council meet in Full Council every month. The City of Ely Council now employs over 30 staff members, but still rely heavily on volunteers to manage the allotments, support Ely in Bloom, put up the Christmas lights and help at many of the events that make Ely such a vibrant city.

We are delighted that this year to commemorate the Peace at the end of 1914-18 war we erected a permanent City Beacon on St Mary's Green.

This year we began a review of our staffing and structure to ensure a more business-like way of working as we have expanded our responsibilities, but with the forthcoming elections for the whole Council, this will be on that council's agenda to carry forward.

In January this year, the Council mourned the loss of Cllr John Yates, Mayor from 2011-12 and stalwart and hardworking servant of the city. In March the council accepted the resignation of Cllr Jo Pearson. In view of the council elections on 2nd May, both positions were left vacant.

My personal thanks this year to the Clerk of the City of Ely Council, Mrs Tracey Coulson, Mrs Sarah Jay, Mrs Marianne Pickering, for administering the Mayor's diary, Mrs Tracey Harding and staff at Oliver Cromwell House and Richard Delahaye and all the Estates Team, all of whom work with the councillors to do their best to make our City such a desirable place to live and visit.

Cllr Mike Rouse  
Chairman of the Council

## **PERSONNEL, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

The Committee has six members, including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and immediate past Mayor, under the Chairmanship of the Mayor. It meets six times a year, with a main responsibility for managing the council's finances, personnel and setting the annual budget. The City of Ely Council has again been successful in gaining part funding for minor highways improvements and distributed over £12,000 to local charitable organisations from the rents of the shared housing scheme established twenty years ago.

It has been the wish of both this council and East Cambridgeshire District Council that we should be more responsible for the economic well-being of the city and the parish. Inevitably this has meant an increase in the Council tax that we levy, but we always strive to keep this the minimum necessary consistent with sound management.

While there has been a change of management at the Maltings and we have taken on the staff at Oliver Cromwell House and the tourist information service, there have been no other major staff changes.

Shortly the Council anticipates appointing our first City Centre Ranger to liaise with stakeholders and our partner authorities in improving the appearance of the city centre.

Cllr Mike Rouse  
Chairman of the Personnel, Finance & Governance Committee

## **PLANNING COMMITTEES (A&B)**

Council members of the City of Ely Council sit on one of the two Planning Committees that meet every two weeks. In the event when large planning application are submitted, the two Committees merge for discussion and decision making. The Committees can only make recommendations as it is the District Council's Planning Department and Planning Committee that determine planning applications.

The Council's Planning Committees are usually chaired by the Mayor, but as the current Mayor sits on the Planning Committee at East Cambs District Council, the Deputy Mayor has chaired all meetings.

During the year the two Planning Committees have made recommendations on around three hundred submitted planning applications for the Parish of Ely. The recommendations included refusals, more information and no concerns.

I wish to thank the Clerk to the Council for her valued help and assistance to councillors over the past year.

Cllr Alison Arnold  
Deputy Mayor  
Chairman of Planning Committees

## **RECREATION AND CEMETERY COMMITTEE**

The aim of the Recreation and Cemetery Committee is “to nurture pride in the City of Ely by promoting and developing the recreation and play areas owned by the Council and developing Ely Cemetery in co-operation with the citizens of Ely, local businesses and other organisations”.

### **Recreation**

Nine play areas remain the responsibility of the Council. All are regularly used and are maintained to a high standard. Regular checks have been carried out throughout the year by the estates team to ensure the safety of the equipment and the cleanliness of the environment.

During the year, continuing the Council's policy of upgrading its play areas, considerable improvements have been made to the equipment at High Barns and a brand new set of young adult/adult exercise features have been installed at St John's Road. Much of this work has been made possible by the use of Section 106 funds and more work will be done around the parish as funds become available.

### **Cemetery**

The Cemetery along with its roads and pathways has been maintained to a high standard during the year. Repairs to the windows of the chapels, which were damaged in July 2017 have taken rather longer to complete than had been hoped – but most of the work has now been done and the building is again looking in good shape. Last year the Council set up a Cemetery Expansion Working Group to look into the question of finding new areas for burials within the current cemetery boundaries. Two or three such areas were identified and at the time of writing this report planning permission has been sought to make fit for purpose the present recycling area adjacent to High Barns Road. This will add a good many years of use to the cemetery and so delay the need to look for a new site. New storage space at the cemetery has been created by the erection of a storage shed and this has enabled the old storage containers to be removed.

One new initiative has been taken by the Committee through the setting up of a group to be known as the Friends of Ely Cemetery. A number of people have expressed interest in this project, whose aim is to encourage people to take an interest in the cemetery and its history. It is hoped that as the Group develops members will be able to find roles, not only in caring for the cemetery, but in building up an on-line archive of burials and a website for those who are interested in researching family history.

The City of Ely Council is fortunate to have a dedicated Estates Team who, under the leadership of Richard Delahaye, have worked throughout the year to ensure that a high standard of care and maintenance has been achieved.

Cllr C Phillips  
Chairman  
Recreation and Cemetery Committee

## **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

The aim of the Environment Committee is to nurture and develop pride in the City of Ely by facilitating a clean, healthy and attractive local environment in co-operation with the citizens of Ely and a myriad of other agencies and organisations.

The Committee has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of street furniture including 48 dog waste bins, 5 notice boards, 4 benches, 23 flower containers, 16 signs, 19 lamp posts and lights, 16 bus shelters, 2 grit bins, solar powered lights on Cherry Hill and the riverside, a flagpole on the Market Place and the City and Prickwillow's war memorials. It cares for some trees and green areas within the City, as well as floral displays that it provides through the Ely in Bloom Working Group. It also runs the memorial bench scheme.

On behalf of the City of Ely Council, and along with others such as the Perspective, East Cambs Access Group, Speedwatch and Neighbourhood Watch, it monitors litter clearing; street cleaning; removal of graffiti; de-cluttering of streets; maintenance of signs and road markings; provision of cycle ways; changes to street lighting; traffic calming measures; policing; crime reduction, and reduction in anti-social behaviour. Many of these activities are managed on a day to day basis by other agencies such as East Cambridgeshire District Council or Cambridgeshire County Council, with whom the City Council maintains a close working relationship.

The Committee has met 5 times this Council year, and its day to day activities are governed by a rolling action plan. The latter details short, medium and long-term objectives, and ensures that all its activities are budgeted for. In the last year, in addition to all our more routine activities, we have arranged for the installation of 3 lamp lights in areas that were particularly badly affected following the County Council's Street Lighting PFI and have installed LED lanterns in all the lights that we own. Cllr Every, who is one of our members was, for the second year in succession, successful in securing 2 grants through the Minor Highways Initiative Scheme. These, together with last year's grants, monies from the City Council precept and funds from our share of the Community Infrastructure Levy, will contribute significantly to substantial speed reduction measures in Cam Drive, in Prickwillow and on Stuntney Causeway. In addition, one of the grants will allow for the purchase and operation of movable speed indicator warnings, which will be used in conjunction with Speedwatch's ongoing monitoring of traffic speeds throughout the City. Perhaps more mundanely, our Estates Team are in the process of renovating the bus shelters on Cam Drive as well as undertaking general maintenance tasks around town.

Members of the Committee participate in community forums, have taken part in the recent Ely litter pick, and help co-ordinate the work of others in measures to reduce litter around the City. In all we have had a successful year and I feel we have met our aims, and have contributed to an improvement in our community's wellbeing. With sound plans and finance in place our Committee will continue to do so whatever the outcome of the forthcoming election.

Cllr I Lindsay  
Chair of Environment Committee

## **ELY IN BLOOM WORKING GROUP**

The Working Group is chaired by a councillor and consists of community volunteers. The Working Group's aims are to enhance the City of Ely by planting floral displays in containers around the City Centre. The Group budgets and works closely with the City of Ely contractors who plant, water and look after the floral displays. In all there are 8 Welcome gateway City entrance planters, 7 three tiered planters, 8 barrier planters, 1 two tiered planter, the Victoria Fountain, 1 large stone planter, 11 wooden tubs and an in the summer 146 hanging baskets.

Usually the Working Group will decide the colour combinations and plants for the winter and summer planting, but as it is our contractors last year in providing this service, the Group agreed that the summer planting for 2019, the decision would be given to our contractors with regard to floral colour and plant choice. Therefore, the summer colour scheme is not known this year, but as a Group we have every confidence it will be something special.

The yearly Ely in Bloom competition will be held in July, with a presentation two weeks after for the winners and overall winner.

The three tiered planters have started to look tired and it is planned for the Group to replace them at some point within this year.

As Chair, I wish to thank all volunteer members of the Ely in Bloom Working Group for their support and dedication, our contractors who continually give expert and professional guidance with wonderful displays, the Clerk to Ely in Bloom for her valued help, patience and assistance and also the Estates Team for providing their skills in maintenance, fabrication and movement, it is very much appreciated.

Cllr Alison Arnold – Deputy Mayor  
Chairman of Ely in Bloom Working Group



## **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE**

This Christmas Lights Committee consists of Councillors and co-opted community volunteers, who organise and provide the yearly Christmas festiveness of decorations and entertainment with the Switch-On team for the evening, in Ely City Centre and around the Christmas tree on the Market Place.

The Christmas Lights Group is led by Mike Colyer-Chinery, who coordinates this team throughout the year, with the erection and takedown of the lights and maintenance of the lights, fixtures and fittings. Most of the team are now hoist and PAT tested trained. New designs and themes are put forward and brought to the Committee. The lights are erected from the end of October, up to a few days before the Switch-On event. The Group being not afraid to try new things, purchasing up to the minute (remote controlled), all new tree lights. A maiden showing of these were at a Spring Fair in Birmingham for the 2018 festive season. Other new features were also purchased in 2018. For this year, the Committee decided to only replace broken and unsafe festive lights.

It was very disappointing for the team, that the electric connection sockets promised for the lampposts did not happen in 2018, the feature designs would have given Market Street a brighter connection with the other areas of Ely. The Christmas lights and tree come down on the 12th day of Christmas.

It is appreciated when the public and retailers give kind words to volunteers when logistics and weather impact the erection of the Christmas lights. Volunteers give their services freely for several weekends. They are a diehard group that put in several hours in sometimes appalling weather, putting family and friends on hold for the residents and visitors of the Parish of Ely.

The Switch-On Group on the Christmas Lights Committee is led by Ian Newstead, who organises and coordinates this Team for the evening's entertainment. They plan throughout the year to bring in sponsorship, acts and entertainment, charity and trade stalls for a non-stop full evening. They attend the Committee meetings, giving updates and working with the Committee on their themes and ideas.

This Group on the day, direct fairground rides, the stage, stalls, food vendors and road closures. They also coordinate and direct the itinerary on the night and make sure the Mayor is in place, on stage for his speech and in position to switch the Christmas Lights and tree on. This Group, over the year put in many unsociable hours for residents and visitors of the Parish of Ely.

With both teams on site from approximately 5am on the day of the Switch-On and work behind the scenes on the evening, making sure everything runs smoothly. They also stay behind removing and directing traffic off site late into the night, when everyone has gone home.

The Christmas Lights Committee has a stall on the evening of the Switch-On, which has been mainly led by the Chair of Christmas Lights and been manned by Councillors and volunteers to raise awareness and funds for the Christmas Lights.

As Chair, I wish to thank all the co-opted members, volunteers, Clerk to the Committee and the Estates Team, for their passion, endless stamina, patience, can do attitude and positive support to each other over the last year. Councillors who also braved the elements to support these teams who give and keep on giving. Thank you.

Cllr Alison Arnold  
Deputy Mayor  
Chairman of Christmas Lights Committee

## **ASSETS AND ACQUISITIONS COMMITTEE**

The six member Committee meets up to six times a year, under the Chairmanship of the Mayor. It deals with matters related to the Sessions House, the Maltings and Maltings Cottage, the Cemetery chapels and Oliver Cromwell's House.

### **The Sessions House**

A Working Group continues to oversee improvements to the building and I refer to their report. We are delighted the new lift has now been installed and we have been able to use the new Council Chamber, as it is accessible for disabled users. The Estates Team has carried out decorating and general maintenance and work is ongoing to improve the building.

### **The Maltings and Maltings Cottage**

The Maltings continues to improve under its new management team.

We are now in the formal process with East Cambridgeshire District Council of obtaining a tenant for the Maltings Cottage. The District Council, as the owner, has agreed the procedure for this Council to assign the 19 years left on the lease to a new tenant and it is the Council's intention to have the matter resolved this coming year and to have the building brought back into use.

### **Oliver Cromwell House**

With the support of grants the City of Ely Council has been able to improve some of the displays and a very successful re-launch was held on the 26th March.

Cllr Mike Rouse

Chairman of the Council

## **TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE**

It has once again been a very busy year for the Visit Ely Team, where we have seen success across the board with an increase in income levels as well as business engagement. In addition to the new initiatives that we have brought on board we have continued to open the doors of our Tourist Information Centre 362 days of the year and welcomed just shy of 100,000 visitors.

Following a grant from the Fens LEADER programme, we completed a refurbishment of our Civil War Room at Oliver Cromwell's House, which was officially opened by Lord Spencer on the 26th March. The attraction now boasts impressive interactive displays and interpretation aimed at meeting visitor expectations and increasing family visits.

We saw a 20% increase in the number of businesses wishing to join our tourism membership scheme. This resulted in the creation of new sections on our website, as we expanded our reach into Wedding Venues and Experiences, providing further promotional opportunities for businesses in Ely and the surrounding area.

Engagement continues to grow across all our social media platforms and we ran a very successful Christmas Celebration of Business Facebook campaign in conjunction with Ellgia Recycling, which helped raise the profiles of many of our high street businesses.

Following the most successful Eel Festival to date, in terms of numbers and businesses involved in 2018, we are now working hard on this year's festival and have been successful in bringing four new sponsors on board. This is largely due to an increase in business networking, which has also resulted in doubling the use of our function room for corporate bookings.

Our new Tour Guide Training Programme is now drawing to a close. As a result, we are looking forward to expanding our tours programme for the coming season.

A targeted marketing campaign over the Summer has seen our Escape Room increase in usage, which has led to the launch of a new group activity – Murder, Mystery Evenings.

We hit the national news with our #Ely Borrow Bag scheme, in a bid to make Ely the first plastic bag free City in the country. This has been a successful collaboration with town and tourism businesses and the local community. We now have over 20 shops and businesses signed up to the scheme and we are drawing close to our target of 1,000 borrow bags now in circulation.

All in all, it has been a very productive year and we look forward to continuing our work in making Ely and the surrounding area a key tourist destination for the eastern region.

The year ahead is looking equally as exciting and we begin with the appointment of a City Centre Ranger. This new post will support our City Centre management function, by providing a physical presence within our town centre.

As Chairman of the Tourism and Town Centre Committee, I would like to pass on my thanks to Tracey Harding and her small team for an excellent year and the smooth transition to the City Council, in which all departments of the Council played a vital part.

Cllr Richard Hobbs - Chairman of the Tourism & Town Centre Committee

## **CITY OF ELY COUNCIL YOUTH FORUM**

This year we have seen a stronger engagement with the Cambs Youth Panel. The Youth Panel have been communicating with us and we have had at least one representative from the Panel at each of our meetings.

Their plans for combatting knife crime in the area is progressing and the funds for their project to invite the victims of the shootings at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida over to Ely and Cambridgeshire is increasing. They have been fund raising at every opportunity. The Panel have almost reached their target, but still need some more funds for this project. This Youth Panel held a stall on the Market Place and raised over £300. This was supported by Councillor Christine Whelan at the start of the day and later by Cllr Lis Every.

The City Council Youth Forum put a proposal to the Council to donate funds to this project from their budget, which was agreed by the Council and a cheque for £460 was donated to this. This money originated from funds given by the late Cllr John Yates when he set up the Youth Panel when he was Mayor. As chair of the Youth Forum I would like to thank the Council for agreeing to this donation.

Engaging with this group of young people has been informative and useful in finding out what young people think, what interests them and what facilities they would like to see in Ely.

I hope that the Youth Forum will continue its interaction with the Cambs Youth Panel and I would like to see more engagement with youth groups in Ely, going forward into next year.

Cllr Christine Whelan  
Chair of the Youth Forum

## **ELY RIBE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT – APRIL 2019**

The past year has been an important and busy one for the Twinning Association. We have held a variety of events to enable members and friends to get together, including afternoon tea at the home of one of our members, an afternoon garden party in the sunshine of last summer, a quiz evening held at the Session House and the annual dinner at the Golf Club. All these events were well-supported and enjoyable occasions.

As part of our on-going mission to try and link up similar organisations in Ely and Ribe a small group from Ribe RoKlub visited Ely in May at the invitation of the Isle of Ely Rowing Club, staying in the homes of their hosts. As well as spending time together on the river, the rowers from Ribe enjoying themselves exploring our beautiful city. By all accounts they returned home having had a very memorable weekend. A return visit by members of the Ely Club to Ribe is being planned for this autumn. The City of Ely Golf Club is also hoping to arrange a “Ryder Cup” style series of friendly matches in Ribe in September.

The highlight of the year was a visit by a group of 19 people from Ribe to Ely over the weekend of the Cathedral Flower Festival. They were formally welcomed to Ely by our Mayor Mike Rouse at a short reception held in Oliver Cromwell House. As well as visiting the Flower Festival our visitors also had a guided tour of Prickwillow Drainage Museum and enjoyed a lovely evening of food and entertainment at Little Downham Village Hall. As normal on these visits our friends from Ribe stayed with members of the Twinning Association. It was particularly pleasing that this was the first visit to Ely by nine of our Danish guests. I would like to thank the City of Ely Council for its tremendous support during this weekend and throughout the year, Mayor Mike Rouse and Councillor Alison Arnold, both of whom actively participated in various events during the weekend and also the previous Mayor, Richard Hobbs, who helped organise the weekend during his period of office. I am sure that all our guests returned to Ribe with very fond memories of their time here and of the very friendly welcome that was extended to them by everyone they met over that weekend.

Finally, the Association is now able to offer a new category of membership for groups/clubs/associations interested in developing links with similar organisations in Ribe. We would be pleased to hear from any local organisations who would like to become Corporate Members of the Association with a view to forging links with our twin town in Denmark.

Howard McMillan  
Chairman, Ely Ribe Association



## *CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENTS and GARDENS ASSOCIATION*

### **REPORT ON ALLOTMENT YEAR 2018/2019**

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

This year has again been a busy one for the Association, and as most people can remember we had to contend with a long hot and dry period of weather. Watering was a priority, and whilst it gave us bumper crops in some things, others did not do so well, however, it was noted that incidents of disease, such as blight, were greatly reduced.

After several months of discussions, the merger of the Allotment Association and the Ely and District Horticultural Society came to conclusion, with the forming of the new City of Ely Allotments and Gardens Association, on 1st October 2018. The name, itself, was previously used by a similar Association in the 1930's, we have even found the original sign.

This has also meant that the new Association has its own trading stores, supplying members with, composts, fertilisers, bird food, and many other garden requisites.

We also now assist with the maintenance of the flower garden, in the green area, in front of St. Mary's church.

We celebrated the successes of the year with our annual Awards Evening, last September, where tenants are presented with cups and trophies, in three different categories, for the best kept plots, both overall and on the individual sites.

We would like to thank the Mayor of Ely, Councillor Mike Rouse, for attending the event and carrying out the presentations.

The year has also seen the completion and opening of the Ely Southern Bypass, and its effect on the Bridge Fen site.

Many of the sites have been subject to changes of tenants, some due to retirement or people moving away, but a few, sadly, were due to the passing of longstanding plot holders, who will be greatly missed.

The popularity of having an allotment continues to grow (**excuse the pun**) and so does our waiting list, which currently has 30 people on it. We only have 2 vacant plots on one of the sites, and with 4 people on the list wanting a plot on that site, technically we are fully tenanted

## **NATIONAL ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY**

The Association are members of the **NAS** and attend the quarterly meetings of the Eastern Region Panel, held in Cambridge. In 2017 the Panel decided that one of their meetings, each year, should be held out within the region, and I was asked if Ely would be able to host the first of these meetings.

The City Council gave permission and on the 14th July 2018 the meeting was held in the Council Chambers, in Sessions House. A building which was greatly admired by all those attending. The weather was good, and I escorted the attendees to Upherds Lane, as they wanted to visit one of our allotment sites, again we received many comments of approval.

### **Bridge Fen: Number of Tenants - 106**

This site has seen the biggest changes over the year.

The completion and opening of the Southern Bypass caused some reservations and meant the closure of the existing site entrance.

Any increase in noise and pollution levels should be mainly nullified when the trees and shrubs planted on the banking have grown.

After much discussion with the City Council and Cambridgeshire Highways a new entrance and car park were constructed at no cost to the Association.

We are deeply indebted to Councillor Richard Hobbs for his input and work in getting this matter resolved.

There is still some minor work to be completed, the replacement of a section of boundary fencing and additional signage and road markings to make vehicle and pedestrian access to the site safer.

One of our main concerns, now, is security, the surfacing on the drove, adjacent to the allotments, has been improved making it much easier for vehicles to travel along, and gain to access the bottom of the site.

### **New Barns: Number of Tenants – 58**

There were some unwanted visitors on the site, this year, in the shape of a fox and a muntjac deer, and we are now in the process of checking and repairing, where necessary, the boundary fencing in order to keep them out in the future.

A wild flower garden has been planted at the bottom of the site, adjacent to the communal orchard, and we are hopeful of plenty of flowers, this in 2019, thus increasing the presence of pollinators for our crops.

The establishing of a communal shed, has proved to be a great benefit in the storing of machinery, used not only for site maintenance, but which can also be loaned out to tenants for use on their individual plots.

The site continues to be very popular, because of its location and having water available, and currently there are 15 people on the waiting list who have specified New Barns as their preferred site.

### **Upherds Lane: Number of Tenants – 46**

The length of wooden boundary fence along Saxon Close continues to give trouble. It is not our responsibility, and when a section is blown down, we are having to wait until the Housing Association get it repaired, during which time the site is insecure.

After several years of requesting and waiting a tall tree, in an adjacent garden, has finally been removed, along with its shadow, giving significant benefit to the nearest plots.

Investigation into the surface water emerging at the lowest part of the site and running across the footpath into Upherds Lane, is ongoing. It is hoped that the reason for this can be found and the problem eliminated.

A shared scheme, with Bridge Fen, to have regular deliveries of horse manure has been well received, and it soon disappears on to the plots.

The general level of commitment has noticeably increased since the water installation and improvement to the paths.

The site reps are hopeful that a community shed may one day be created at the top end of the site (to rival the New Barns Gardeners' Arms).

It is also hoped, this year, to carry further improvement work on the site, particularly to some of the pathways.

This site is also proving very popular, because of its location and having water available, and currently there are 6 people on the waiting list who have specified Upherds as their preferred site.

### **Back Hill and Canterbury Avenue: Total Number of Tenants – 8**

The site in Back Hill is our smallest site, with only two plots, both of which are very tidy and well stocked.

Canterbury Avenue is also proving very popular, its plots are small and are ideal for first time allotment holders.

It is hoped this year to slightly alter the layout, of the plots, to improve the site for the tenants.

There are, currently, 6 tenants and two vacant plots, but with 4 people on the waiting list wanting this site it should become fully tenanted again in the next few weeks.

### **Trading Stores:**

With the merger of the two original organisations it has provided the opportunity to give the stores a makeover, several items associated with the old annual show have been removed and other products reorganised, to give more space for sales items.

Many other things have been improved or added, a new sign erected, original outside noticeboard smartened, a new 'Stores Open' sign made, and a new post box fitted.

Following a visit and advice from the Fire Service, safety items have been installed and escape procedures posted, thus ensuring that the stores complies with the fire regulations.

A new membership card scheme has been introduced, at the stores, to ensure that customers are members of the new Association.

The annual schemes, that we run, for both seed and seed potatoes are well used and have enabled the Association to make a profit on both, which is used towards the cost of running the stores, including the lease and the electricity.

### **St. Mary's Garden:**

The Association also look after the small garden in front of St. Mary's church, on behalf of East Cambs. District Council, who cover the cost of maintenance.

During this year a beacon was installed by the City of Ely Council, and it was lit on Sunday 11th November 2018, to commemorate the end of WW1, one hundred years ago.

The garden is replanted twice a year and it is hoped that this year its appearance will be improved with the fitting of metal edging to retain the grassed area and eliminate damage caused by mowing.

### **Website and Email:**

The Association also has a website, [www.elyallotmentsandgardens.org](http://www.elyallotmentsandgardens.org), this provides the public face of the Association and a channel for the public to get in touch with us. This year we are seeing between 30 and 40 unique visits per day.

There is an online form for submitting applications for plots, through which 60 applications have been received, to date, since the site went live at the end of January 2018.

During the last year the Association have been subjected to several false emails, causing concern to both the committee and the members.



Unfortunately, this type of free email account, that we were using, is prone to 'spoofing' by unknown and untraceable miscreants, sending forged emails appearing to come from a legitimate source.

Action is in hand to overcome this problem and, after a trial, the committee has decided to adopt a robust business-standard email system and move off the free gmail account.

This paid-for system provides additional behind-the-scenes technology to assist the recipients' machines to identify that the emails are from a genuine trusted sender.

This change also allows us to bring our email address in line with our website address. Our new email address will be, <sitename>@elyallotmentsandgardens.org this system is currently being set up and full details will be given to the Council in due course.

**GDPR:**

2018 was notable for the arrival of the tightened data protection regulation amidst massive hype.

The Association is aware of our responsibilities and the requisite documents

Are being produced as part of the shake-up of all administration following the merger

Graham Bond  
Chairman

## **WORKING GROUPS**

### **SESSIONS HOUSE WORKING GROUP**

The Working Party comprises 4 councillors and 2 officers and is responsible for the ongoing renovation of the Session's House building and advising Full Council on the future use of its facilities. The Chairman of the East Cambridgeshire Access Group has acted as adviser on these matters as needed.

Over the year we have been able to commission the lift that has made our newly refurbished Council Chamber fully accessible, as well as enabling access to the former Magistrate's Room and the upper gallery of the Court Room. The old Council office furniture has been replaced and we are in the process of providing a speaker system, as well as air-conditioning. We have initiated a renovation programme for the court room and the remaining areas of the building. We will be providing some office and storage space for the staff from Ely museum whilst the latter is being redeveloped, and will continue our close association with their education visits and re-enactments of the Littleport rioters' trial. In the longer term we anticipate that the Session's House will become a significant addition to Ely's tourist offer, as it really is one of most important buildings outside of the Cathedral and its precincts.

In closing, I would wish to remind you all that our rooms are available for public hire, and we still participate in the annual heritage open day.

Cllr Ian Lindsay  
Chairman Sessions House Working Group

### **COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS WORKING GROUP**

We continue to monitor the effectiveness of the website and are working to improve this all the time. We are still pursuing the appropriate use of social media and how this might be managed safely and effectively.

The Community Forum continues to provide a platform where local residents can engage with the Police and other agencies who regularly attend. Local issues are discussed and answered, where possible, through the newsletter. We bring guest speakers to the Forum on specific current issues. Our current aim is to increase the participation in these meetings and meet the needs of a wider audience. We held one meeting this year with a really good turnout. However, we are aware that further engagement with our local community is vital and this will be reviewed after May 2019 as part of our Business Planning programme.

Cllr Lis Every  
Chair of the Working Group

## **CCTV PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP REPORT 2018/19**

From 1 April 2019, the CCTV Partnership will comprise the City of Ely Council, the Police and East Cambridgeshire District Council. Soham Town Council will have taken over the implementation and maintenance of their own system which has been passed to them by the City of Ely Council.

During the year, the City Council gave permission for East Cambridgeshire District Council to mount their Wi Fi equipment on the posts that hold our cameras in order to facilitate a Wi Fi service in both Ely and Soham.

We are delighted that the team of volunteers continue to remain very loyal and we could not work the system without their teamwork approach, expertise and good will. Not only do they attend sessions over the week, but also run the system in collaboration with our Clerk, dealing with maintenance and efficiency of the equipment.

We are currently reviewing how we can enhance the service that the CCTV provides for the City.

We know the value that our residents and Police place on the service and the deterrent that we believe it provides.

Cllr Lis Every  
CCTV Working Group

## **CIL WORKING GROUP**

CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) was introduced in 2008 and is designed to help local authorities deliver infrastructure in support of local development. Parish Councils are granted 15% of the levy to spend on projects which will benefit their community.

The CIL Working Group is a new group which has been set up to help suitable applications for CIL money to go forward for approval by Full Council. We ask for a description of the project and how it fits in the business plan and an estimate of its costs. Comments in support of a project are also invited to demonstrate the community benefit.

Projects approved so far are:-

Support for minor highway bids in case the bids are unsuccessful.

Provision of new lamps in Annesdale, Chapel Street and West End.

Bus shelters for Cam Drive (if other sources of funding are not available)

The cemetery expansion programme as the cemetery is running out of space.

Renovation of the Court Room so that it is safe and accessible for community use.

Provision of defibrillators in Ely.

CIL money will continue to benefit our community when proposed new developments are come on stream.

I am grateful for Marianne Pickering's support in this new Working Group.

Cllr Sheila Friend-Smith  
Chairman

## **REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

### **EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACCESS GROUP**

The Council has two representatives on the Access Group and between them they have attended the bulk of the Groups fortnightly meetings. The Group acts primarily as advisory consultees to the East Cambridgeshire planning department and building control, and consider disabled access issues for all those planning applications for developments where there will be access for members of the public. They liaise with the Dean and Chapter on matters of access to the Cathedral, and advise East Cambridgeshire Council on all aspects of parking for the disabled, including the use of blue badges. They have a watching brief on ensuring accessibility to polling booths, and the upkeep and provision of accessible toilets in the local area.

In addition, they consider matters related to access for the disabled on all public transport, and will support individuals who are encountering problems. They continue with their long-standing campaign to mitigate the effects of street clutter and, in particular, A-boards around Ely.

Cllr Ian Lindsay  
City of Ely Council representative

### **PARADISE CENTRE**

I am the single City Council representative at the meetings of the Management Board of the Paradise Centre, but sadly have been unable to attend many of their meetings owing to diary clashes with other Council activities. I regret this, because I remain an avid sportsman. The swimming pool is now demolished, but The Centre continues to be extraordinarily well used, and is now providing over 40 exercise sessions a week in addition to its other activities such as squash, badminton, roller skating and circuit training. The Paradise field remains a home for football and cricket. The Centre is open from early in the morning until late in the evening, each day of the week and offers facilities for a huge range of activities involving all age and abilities. However, there has been some fall off in attendance since the opening of the Hive leisure centre and it may have suffered additional competition from the new Leisure facilities in Littleport.

That said, The Paradise Centre remains in a strong financial position and has undertaken a comprehensive refurbishment programme over the last 12 months. That includes the provision of a new accessible toilet, the refurbishment of both male and female changing rooms, repainting, upgrading of lighting, alarm systems and smoke detectors, resealing of the main hall, renovation of the squash courts, and provision of a host of new gym equipment, as well as improvements to the Paradise field and the cricket scoreboard. The first-responders defibrillator unit was relocated to the side of the building.

In conclusion I am pleased to report that the Centre is particularly well managed, and it has a loyal and stable work force who provide a level of service of which both they and their fellow citizens should feel immensely proud.

Cllr Ian Lindsay  
City of Ely Council representative

## **NEEDHAM'S FOUNDATION**

The Needham's Foundation Trust was founded from the estate of Mrs Catherine Needham who died in 1730 leaving enough money in her will to build and maintain a school for poor boys in Ely. The building, which still exists in Back Hill functioned as a school until 1960, when it moved to Downham Road.

After the passing of the Charity Act of 1909, Needham's Charity was permitted to give financial assistance to schools within the City of Ely and to individuals who were either born in Ely or educated in the City.

The Foundation this year has established in conjunction with the Bishop Laney Sixth Form, ten bursaries to assist students financially, whilst this is in the early stages of development, we are pleased with the initial stages and the modern approach to financial support the Foundation can give.

The charity is managed by Governors representing the Bishop of Ely, the Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral, St Mary's Church, C.C Council and currently Cllr Sheila Friend Smith and myself represent the City Council, and I'm pleased to say the remaining governors are old Needham's boys, and Tracey Coulson is Clerk to the Governors.

Richard Hobbs  
Chairman of Needham's Foundation

## **ELY MUSEUM**

The City Council provides an increasingly large annual grant in support of the Museum, which it regards as a vital asset to the City. I have served as one of 9 trustees of the Museum over the past year, and was able to attend the majority meetings over that time and report back to the Council. I also took part in workshops connected with the redevelopment of the Museum.

Undoubtedly the greatest event in the Museum's year was the announcement just after Christmas that the Museum had been successful in its Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). After prodigious efforts to secure matched funding of £4000,000 from a wide variety of organisations and individuals it was awarded a further £1.66 million from the HLF. The total redevelopment and extension of the building, galleries and education space to create a 21st century Museum that is accessible to all, and which tells the story of East Cambridgeshire life and landscape over time is now truly under way. The Museum will thus become a heritage hub for locals and tourists alike.

The Museum will close in September 2019 once the builders move in, with the aim of re-opening in the spring or summer of 2020. While the Museum is closed the staff will occupy temporary accommodation in the Sessions House, and they will continue to host pop-up events across East Cambridgeshire.

Over time it is a joint ambition to improve access to the Session's House courtroom for educational visits and historical re-enactments, since the two buildings have sequentially been hosts to the administration and dispensing of local justice over several hundred years.

Cllr I Lindsay  
City of Ely Council Representative

### **RURAL CAMBS CITIZENS ADVICE**

The Council continues to be represented on the governing body of the Rural Cambs Citizens Advice and Cllr Phillips attends the yearly meeting.

### **TRINITY DOLE CHARITY**

The Trinity Dole meets twice a year and Cllr Phillips has attended their meetings, as a Trustee on behalf of the Council. The charity has a small income and makes grants relating either to education or to cases of genuine need in the community. General grants of up to £1,000 are given to Ely schools on an annual basis.

### **PARISH REPORT ON STUNTNEY VILLAGE COUNCIL**

The Stuntney Village Council now has a much enhanced village hall through a mix of private and Council donations. It is increasingly used as a local facility and has the potential for further lettings.

We continued to work with the Village as the Ely Southern By-pass progressed with continued support from the County Council for the cycle way. Monitoring of the impact of the Ely Southern By-pass has continued and the City of Ely Council has agreed to fund the move of the 30 mph sign to a site earlier on the road in order to encourage drivers to drop their speed as they enter the village.

Cllr Lis Every  
Council representative on the Village Council

## **PARISH REPORT ON PRICKWILLOW VILLAGE COUNCIL**

This is a community group that has a representative from the City of Ely Council, by raising issues of village residents to authorities that may be able to resolve them. The group produce a village newsletter informing residents of community events, meetings and advertising which is delivered to all properties within the village.

Prickwillow village Speed Watch Team is ongoing and operates in areas within the village, but due to the nature of the environment, winter months drastically limits its operational activity.

Traffic calming measures to the village are still in progress and monies have been allocated for this. Some works to the road surface by Highways in and around the village have been undertaken.

A member from PVC attends Queen Adelaide's crossings forum and reports back to PVC. At the moment it is quiet with nothing further to report.

The old red telephone box in the Main Street is still very much a visual gallery. It has shown to be attired with many prominent calendar events with as many quirky ones. Hooting boards at Padnal Bank PROW on the railway are still a noise problem. PVC and NR have had ongoing discussions, but it will take some time to resolve this issue.

Work is needed on the War Memorial and costs for this are currently being investigated.

Prickwillow Village Council are raising money for a defibrillator to house at the village hall. So far, they have raised £420 with another £300 pledged. It is also hoped that Hiams may join in on this fund raising to help reach their goal.

Cllr Alison Arnold  
Deputy Mayor  
Council Representative on the Village Council