



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

29TH MARCH 2022

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Deputy Clerk to the Council Sarah Jay**

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

COUNCILLORS

WEST WARD

Vacancy

Sue Austen	5 Mayfield Close, Ely CB6 3AB	Tel: 663928
Rebecca Denness	9 West Fen Road, Ely CB6 1AL	Tel: 07950604521
Christopher Phillips	7 Columbine Road, Ely CB6 3WL	Tel: 669940
Dian Warman	38 Back Hill, Ely CB7 4BZ	Tel: 666134
Christine Whelan	119 Kings Avenue, Ely CB7 4QW	Tel: 772123

EAST WARD

Vacancy

Elisabeth Every	80 Barton Road, Ely CB7 4HZ	Tel: 665815
Kevin Wilkins	55A Market Street, Ely CB7 4LP	Tel: 07515911961

CATHEDRAL

Ian Lindsay	Hickling House, 6B Station Road, Ely CB7 4BS	Tel: 614184
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NORTH WARD

Sarah Bellow	Elm Farm, Ely Road, Prickwillow, Ely CB7 4UJ	Tel: 688250
Virginie Ganivet	2 Cambridge Court, Ely CB7 4EQ	Tel: 07846396616
Richard Morgan	23 Merivale Way, Ely CB7 4GQ	Tel: 667905
Michael Rouse	25 Lynton Close, Ely CB6 1DJ	Tel: 667082
Alison Whelan	119 Kings Avenue, Ely CB7 4QW	Tel: 772123

**Chairman of the Council and Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Sue Austen
Deputy Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor
Richard Morgan**

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

It has been an honour to be elected to serve for a second term as Mayor of the City of Ely and Chairman of the Council.

It has been a different year again, but we have had to revert back to face-to-face meetings to allow our parishioners to attend and ask questions of the councillors.

The Council has continued to work efficiently with the Clerks working from home full time but face to face meetings with parishioners have been arranged when appropriate. I must praise the Clerks for their hard work and the support that they have given me.

Our Estates Team have worked full time to keep the play areas, cemetery and recreation areas safe for everyone. All other staff, as always continue to do a marvellous job. Thanks to everyone for hanging in there.

We had a wonderful Christmas lights display which cheered people up with the help of our volunteers.

We look forward to more normal and healthy years to come

CLlr Sue Austen
Mayor of the City of Ely and Chairman of the Council

PERSONNEL, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Committee has six members, with a main responsibility for managing the council's finances, personnel and setting the annual budget.

The City of Ely Council has again successfully distributed funds to local charitable organisations from the rents of the shared housing scheme established over twenty years ago. Local organisations are encouraged to apply for funding to help finance new activities. Over the last few years, this Council has taken on more responsibility for the economic well-being of the city and the parish, including the Maltings, Oliver Cromwell House, the tourist information service and the Sessions House.

This enables us to preserve some of the historic buildings for the parish residents and also to promote tourism as a main economic activity.

The Council stepped up very quickly at the beginning of this year and organised the voluntary groups that had sprung up to support residents during the lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic and is now encouraging those who volunteered to continue volunteering within the City.

The Committee receives the reports from the Council Auditors and we are pleased to note the positive reports received during the year.

The Council benefits from the Community Infrastructure Levy from newly built properties in the Parish. The CIL working Party considered a number of projects over the course of the year where they could provide capital funding.

The Council re-affirmed its commitment to all residents of the Parish. The Council passed a motion supporting all people with protected characteristics following reported increases in hate crimes. The Inclusivity Working Group reports to this Committee and aims to ensure that all activity of the Council promotes behaviours inclusive of all residents. This included making extensive representations to East Cambridgeshire District Council on its Equality and Diversity policy.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the finances of the Council have been substantial. The Council reduced costs wherever possible, and was successful in receiving some support grants, however, the Government failed to provide any direct support for Parish Councils and residents will need to cover the additional costs and lost income as a direct result of this Government's failure.

The Council is now bringing assets back into full use and this is reducing the pressure on the Council finances

The management of historic buildings is an expensive but necessary task that the Council undertakes. The pandemic has reduced the income that can be earned from these events but has also led to additional costs of protecting staff and public. The Council has closely monitored both income and expenditure and has attempted to minimise the impact on the finances. To meet this shortfall, an increase of over 20% in the precept would be necessary. The decision was made to use reserves to meet the shortfall so that we could minimise the impact on residents over the coming year while we better understand the ongoing finances

post-pandemic and also to offer a small amount of help to those suffering financially as a result of the pandemic.

During the year the Council's Youth Working Group engaged with local groups and launched a young person's photographic competition.

Cllr Alison Whelan
Chairman of Personnel, Finance & Governance Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEES

The City of Ely Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications received by East Cambridgeshire District Council that relate to the area covered by the Parish of Ely. There are two planning committees each comprising 6 members, but they share one Chairman and they meet every two weeks. Occasionally they hold a combined meeting when bigger developments need considering (such as the development of the hospital site), or when developers wish to present their proposals (such as the proposed development at the Westmills site). Nearly all the meetings have been face-to-face this year, and members of the public are always invited to attend.

Applications cover a wide variety of planning matters. On the whole, in accordance with national planning policy, there has been a presumption in favour of planning approval.

However, the Committees have recommended that ECDC should refuse planning permission in a number of circumstances related to local issues. Mostly, these centre around applications for development where there appear to be inadequate provision of off-street parking places, less often to danger related to traffic flows, or proposed changes that adversely affect the street scene or amenity of neighbours.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
Chairman Planning Committees

ASSETS COMMITTEE

The Assets Committee has met 7 times during the past 12 months – since May our meetings have been in person conducted at The Maltings.

Sessions House has re-opened although staff have continued to work from home as well as in the office. Bookings for the hire of Sessions House are continuing.

The Maltings continues to be hired and bookings are now back to pre-Covid times. Nearly every weekend is booked for the next 52 weeks.

The Committee is actively restoring the building: next year we will have provided new retractable seating, new stage curtains and new lighting and sound systems. We are grateful to the Deputy Clerk who has done all the ground work for this.

We have met with members of the Ribe Twinning Committee to discuss a better way of showcasing the tapestry in the foyer.

RBK Restaurant, next to The Maltings, is back running at full capacity although during these quieter months business hours have been reduced. During the year we have met with officers from ECDC and the restaurant owner to discuss residents' concerns regarding noise.

Discussions are currently on going with the Council's landlord for the Maltings Cottage as to the way forward for this.

Cllr Richard Morgan
Chairman of the Assets Committee

The former Recreation and Cemetery Committee is now a part of the Council's Assets Committee. Cllr Chris Phillips serves as Lead Member and liaises with Sarah Jay, Deputy Clerk and Richard Delahaye, head of the Estates Team on matters relating to these two important areas of Council responsibility. Under the umbrella of the Assets Committee the aim of 'Rec and Cem' continues to be 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

The Council's recreation areas continue to be very popular and the work of upkeep, renovation and refurbishment has continued throughout the year. At The Park, following suggestions from the public, a major programme of improvements is under way at the time of writing and new equipment in the form of a Home Multi Seesaw, a six metre long Track Ride Tower and a Play and Stay is being installed. A new 98 square metre EcoSmart Single Layer Grass Mat will also be put in place. At the Paradise site, which is particularly heavily used, proposals for an extensive refit are out to tender. Here the emphasis will be on inclusive equipment - this highlighting the Council's commitment to making our play areas easily accessible to all.

Cemetery

Throughout the year the Cemetery along with its chapel, garden areas, roads and pathways has been maintained to a high standard. Work on the new burial area adjacent to High Barns Road has been ongoing and the construction of the Sensory (Well Being) Garden in the same area has begun. To be known as the Rose Appleyard Garden it is hoped that it will be not only a pleasant place for visitors to the Cemetery to explore and enjoy but also a place of remembrance and recollection.

An important purchase for the Cemetery chapel has been a bier and this important new piece of equipment will add dignity to funerals conducted on site. Conversations have also begun regarding the interior of the chapel and it is hoped that in the coming year improvements might be made to both the floor and the seating. The chapel, which is almost one hundred and seventy years old is well cared for but in need of some renovation.

Elsewhere in the Cemetery repairs have been carried out to the boundary fence with the Church Commissioners' land and several more recovered headstones have been placed with those found last year.

Estates Team

The City Council is fortunate to have a dedicated estates team which, under the leadership of Richard Delahaye, has worked throughout the year under sometimes difficult circumstances to ensure a that high standard of care and maintenance has been achieved.

See also the report from the Friends of Ely Cemetery for details of their activities and especially of the two Open Days held during the year.

CLlr Chris Phillips
Lead member for Recreation and Cemetery

Friends of Ely Cemetery

The Friends of Ely Cemetery are a small group of volunteers that do light gardening work and tend to friendless graves. We also organise open days at the cemetery and assist in researching graves for members of the public.

Last year we held two very successful open days. One in May and another to celebrate Heritage weekend in September. During these days we conduct guided tours of the cemetery with our family history coordinator, pointing out and discussing some of the many interesting people that have been buried there over the years. Also during these days, we are more than happy to assist any visitors that require help to locate headstones of relatives within the cemetery. We also provide refreshments during the day.

We will be looking to organise two more of these events during the coming year. Wildlife in the cemetery is also very important to us, and we have installed two hedgehog hotels and various birds boxes that have been kindly donated. We also have numerous bug hotels dotted around the site.

With this in mind, we organised an on-site visit with a Lucy Wilson from the Wildlife Trust. She met with some members of the friends and the estates manager responsible for the cemetery.

This proved very positive and she was able to offer up some valuable pointers to help attract and retain the existing wildlife within the cemetery.

On the 17th of May 2021 a survey was done at the cemetery by Ely U3A Botany Group. This proved very interesting, highlighting the biodiversity that exists within the cemetery. The results were very encouraging, highlighting all the different types of plants, trees and grasses. The results were then forwarded to the County Recorder for analysis and to be added onto the last survey that was carried out in 2005. It was reported back that 17 of these were new, bringing the total to around 200 different species within the cemetery.

Forgotten Headstones

A few more forgotten headstones were uncovered recently during some clearing works and these will be located by the friends alongside the other headstones located at the edge of the cemetery.

Also, on a recent visit It was discovered that someone had taken the time to lay some flowers and a painted stone onto some of the forgotten headstones. What a lovely gesture!

Cllr Arnie Arnold

Chairman of Friends of Ely Cemetery

We are saddened to report that Cllr Arnold passed away suddenly on the 5th March.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The aim of the Climate and Environment Committee is to help tackle the climate change emergency, and 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 of 6 has responsibility for leading on the development of a City wide climate emergency and environment strategy and its associated action plan, with a target of zero carbon emissions by 2045. At the more mundane level it continues with the provision and maintenance of street furniture including dog waste bins, notice boards, benches, flower containers, signs, 21 lamp posts and lights, bus shelters, grit bins, solar powered lights on Cherry hill and the riverside, a flagpole on the Market Place and the City and Prickwillow war memorials. It cares for many trees and green areas within the City, as well as providing and maintaining the City's floral displays. It runs the memorial bench scheme. It receives reports directly from 3 working groups, covering Climate Change, CCTV and Outside Sports and Leisure; and one of its members takes the lead on matters related to highways. In particular this encompasses a strategy to introduce 20's plenty within the City boundaries, and to improve walking and cycling routes.

Along with others such as Perspective, the Access group, Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch, and Ely Litter Pickers we monitor 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. At a more strategic level we have successfully collaborated in implementing plans that have benefited from monies from the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Combined Authority's Market Towns Initiative and have led to improving the appearance of the Town Centre and increasing its digital connectivity, as well as contributing significantly to an ambitious project to extend our CCTV coverage. We also have benefited from Active Travel money that has improved the cycle route down Back Hill, past Broad Street and down Station Road; as well as installing many more cycle racks around the City

The Committee has met 7 times this Council year. Its activities are governed by a rolling action plan, which details short, medium and long-term objectives, and ensures that all its activities are budgeted for. Over the last few years, it has had considerable success in applying for support through the County Council's Local Highways initiative scheme. This, together with monies from the City Council precept and funds from our share of the community infrastructure levy, has enabled the provision of a zebra crossing for St John's School, and this year should help develop traffic calming measures along Prickwillow Road, and in Prickwillow itself.

Our Estates Team continues to monitor and maintain the condition of our green spaces, street furniture and buildings on a rolling basis, and also maintains, recharges and rotates our stock of radar speed signs.

Members of the Committee normally participate in community forums and join with other groups and members of the public in an annual litter pick as part of the annual national campaign. On a day-to-day basis the Ely Litter Pickers and the Cathedral group has rallied to the cause of keeping our surroundings clean and beautiful for the enjoyment of all.

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.

Cllr I Lindsay
Chair of Climate and Environment Committee

TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

During the early part of 2021, we were still experiencing Covid challenges and restrictions. However, since Oliver Cromwell House (OCH) has fully opened admissions have gone from strength to strength with a steady increase of day trippers and pre booked group visits. Eel Day made a comeback this year albeit on a scaled down version and was a resounding success. Ely Apple and Harvest Fair once again took place on Palace Green and this year coincided with Ely Cathedral Harvest Festival.

Visit England carried out their Visitor Attraction Quality Scheme assessment at OCH and it was awarded the Hidden Gem Award. This was testimonial to the high standards achieved, particularly in customer services where it was given 100% satisfaction rating and which the assessor felt was deserving as recognition. Additional signage has been purchased to display this on the outside of the building.

Ely's unique Escape Room continues to be a success with more booking in January than ever recorded.

A Christmas shopping event was held at the end of November, with nearly 2000 people in attendance. There were various stalls and activities both inside and outside the house together with a map giving details of nearly 20 stores giving discounts or gifts on the day. This event will be built on this year and expanded.

I'd like to thank the Tourism and Town Centre Manager, Anna Bennett and her team for all their hard work and enthusiasm, in what has once again been a challenging year. I would also like to thank Annabelle Reddick for all the work she has put into liaising with the local traders.

Cllr Dian Warman
Chairman of the Tourism and Town Centre Committee

CIL SUB-COMMITTEE

CIL is the Community Infrastructure Levy which is a charge that can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

This year to date the Sub-Committee has approved funding of:-

£20,000 for play equipment at Cherry Hill
£140,000 towards updating CCTV
£60,000 refurbishment of the Paradise Play Area

Cllr Sue Austen
Chairman of CIL Sub-Committee

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Christmas Lights Sub-Committee reports to both the Assets and Tourism and Town Centre Committees. The Committee has met 6 times during the year.

The Council is very grateful to the volunteers and staff for the dedication and planning that goes into providing a truly wonderful Christmas lights display for the city. The Council is also appreciative of the many businesses for the continued support they provide to the Christmas Lights.

Without the time, effort and continued support from all involved, the Christmas Lights in Ely would not be possible.

The Christmas shopping event was a huge success with many people attending to support local charities and businesses whilst enjoying the lights and Christmas tree. The Council looks forward to working with local businesses and charities to build on this event in years to come.

Sadly, the Committee has had to say goodbye to one of its valued member's, Cllr Arnie Arnold who suddenly passed away on the 5th March. Cllr Arnold's contribution and support to the Christmas Lights was enormous. He was a great advocate for the lights and was out in all weathers helping to erect them. He will be deeply missed by all those that knew and worked with him.

Sarah Jay
Deputy Clerk

ELY RIBE ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As life slowly returns to some sort of normality the Ely Ribe Association is looking forward to the future with optimism. We managed to hold our AGM last September which was well attended by Association members. We also held a dinner at Ely Golf Club in November for members and friends which was also very well-attended. Other activities are planned for the next few months.

One of the problems which we are facing, along with many other small organisations, is banking. We have had an account with a well-known building society in Ely for many years but that account has now been terminated and we are finding it very difficult to open a new account elsewhere. Negotiations are ongoing but until these are successfully concluded we have no way of depositing or accessing any funds.

We continue to keep in regular contact with our friends in Ribe and are planning to welcome them back to Ely in the spring of 2023. In the meantime, we are arranging for a group of town guides from Ribe to visit Ely this year to meet with our own city guides and share ideas, with a reciprocal visit to follow.

Once again, I would like to thank the City of Ely Council for their continued interest and support.

Howard McMillan

Chair, Ely Ribe Association

CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENTS AND GARDENS ASSOCIATION

REPORT ON THE ALLOTMENT YEAR 2021/2022

GENERAL COMMENTS:

We would like to thank the committee and the plot holders for their work on the allotments in the past year. Fortunately, our everyday lives have been progressively less dominated by the pandemic this year. During lockdown the number of people wanting allotments soared. The allotments became recognised not only producing vegetables that taste far better than anything from the supermarkets but also enjoying the exercise and fresh air. For many the allotment became the place where just for a while it felt as if life was going on as normal. Working from home meant that some plot holders had more time to devote to their plots and to assist with improving the sites.

BRIDGE FEN: Number of Tenants – 130

After years of discussions and thanks to assistance from Ely City and Cambridge County Councillors, and officers of the association past and present, particularly Graham Bond, we are delighted to announce that work to provide a new entrance and a safe crossing to the site for those on foot or cycling has been completed. The potholed and damaged foot/cycle path between Ely and the site has been repaired. Consideration is now being given to improving the security arrangements at this new entrance.

The successful seed and plant swap and produce sharing scheme has continued.

To combat the site rat problem more traps have been purchased and the site reps have been educating plot holders about the importance of turning compost heaps.

Concern was raised about corrugated cement based sheets possibly containing asbestos which has been used for decades as fencing and shed roofs. The presence of asbestos has been confirmed, and site reps are in the process of surveying the site.

NEW BARNES: Number of Tenants - 58

A lot of work was done by site reps clearing a plot that had an unsafe shed, numerous trees, fencing, shrubs and paving slabs. The shed was recycled and remodelled as a communal 'swap shop' where tenants can put their surplus flowerpots, plants and seeds to be used by others.

Possible asbestos boards along the edges of the main path are being removed and replaced with concrete gravel boards.

The damaged fence and rotten gate at the Clayway end of the site were repaired/replaced by Sanctuary Housing in December.

The general work in maintaining the upkeep of the site is undertaken by a small group of site reps who are ably assisted by several of the tenants should the work involved require a larger number of people.

UPHERDS LANE – Number of Tenants – 49

The communal shed has been erected, painted and fitted out with shelving left over when the Association's Stores was refurbished and has also been provided with a rainwater butt which supplies nearby plots.

The vegetation has been cleared from overgrown fences and the owners contacted so that any necessary repairs can be done.

The ongoing problems with sections of the wooden boundary fence along Saxon Close were hopefully to be resolved when Cambridge Housing, who are responsible for its upkeep, announced in early 2020 that they were going to replace it with a chain link fence. Unfortunately, Covid came along and delayed the project, however, it was started this year (2022) and has been a total nightmare for the site reps and the tenants due to the unreliability of the contractors doing the work.

BACK HILL: Total Number of Tenants – 2

Back Hill, our smallest site has only two plots, both of which are well maintained.

CANTERBURY AVENUE: Total Number of Tenants – 12

There have been several working parties to tidy up the site and the entrance path and future ones are to be planned to re-align the main path to increase the size of some of the plots.

TRADING STORES:

The Stores continues to provide a source of necessary gardening supplies for all our members, and apart from a short period has been open on a Saturday morning, from 10.00 - 12.00.

Graham Bond has done an outstanding job keeping the Stores supplied and running smoothly, very ably assisted by Tony Edmondson and a devoted group of volunteers who man the Stores on a rota system, and to whom we are very grateful.

During each year we have continued to run very successful group buying schemes for both Kings Seeds and seed potatoes.

St. MARY'S GARDEN:

The garden is cleared and replanted twice a year with different species of flowers to suit the summer and winter climates. This is done by a group of volunteers, to whom we are very grateful, and they also carry out the general maintenance throughout the year to keep it looking at its best.

The floral display was even more splendid this year because of the addition of a loaned collection of Cana lilies.

The garden has also been added to by a collection of painted stones and has proved to be very popular with both tourists and the local children.

Sadly, the gnome went into isolation due to Covid and hasn't been seen for some time but we hope he will return one day.

WEBSITE AND EMAIL:

During the last two years we have been extremely fortunate, thanks to one of our committee members, to have a very comprehensive website and email system. This has meant that we were able to continue with our monthly committee meetings on line, have a click and collect system, via the website, for our members to order items from the Stores, and to communicate with all our members.

The mail merge system we use has worked well for sending out personalised customer invoices for the annual plot rental charges and the Stores seed potato orders. Mass emails to all members are also personalised to overcome delivery difficulties due to recipients' spam filters.

WAITING LIST FOR ALLOTMENTS:

The waiting list stood at 88 in March 2021 and has risen to 122 in March 2022. This again is managed through the website with an initial form to be completed by applicants and their details recorded so that they can be contacted should a plot become available.

Part of the increase in numbers waiting is due to opening a list for the new allotment site under construction at Orchards Green. This site is already oversubscribed before an opening date is known. The current waiting time for any of the in-town sites is in excess of two years.

Mr Ken Brown

Chairman of the City of Ely Allotments & Gardens Association

WORKING GROUPS

CCTV STEERING GROUP

Further to last year's Report, we are delighted to confirm that we have received funding to undertake the following:

- a) The replacement of all the older cameras with new digital cameras. This will be funded from the City of Ely Council's CIL fund.
- b) CCTV systems will be extended to cover a wider area, eg reaching the station, down to the riverside, the Hive etc. New sites have been identified by the police and our other partners. Two moveable cameras will also be purchased which can be positioned around the town depending on the identification of 'hot spot' issues. These are being funded through a successful bid to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority's Market Town Strategy

We are now implementing the procurement process that will be required to undertake both a) and b). It is anticipated that these will be done in conjunction with each other and by the same contractor. This process should be completed during the next few months and work will start later in the year.

Safer streets is a priority for the East Cambridgeshire's Community Safety Partnership and that of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner.

We appreciate that these initiatives will require more capacity in order to run an efficient and effective CCTV service for the City contributing to our residents feeling safer on the streets. We will be undertaking a recruitment campaign for new volunteers. These volunteers will be fully trained at no cost to themselves providing them with a transferable security qualification.

Lis Every
Chairman – CCTV Steering Group

COMMUNICATIONS AND PR WORKING GROUP

This Group reports to the Personnel Finance and Governance Committee. The Group has not met as often as it would have liked to. The Council shares information and news via several medias. The local newspapers both online and printed. We also have a regular page in Elyi which is distributed through every door in the City and we also communicate with various social media channels. The Council has its own Facebook Page which is regularly updated. The Council meetings are published on the Council's website. Moving forward into next year it is planned that we will publish more of the meetings, so people are aware of them. We are hoping that this may encourage more people to attend our meetings as anyone is able to do this.

Cllr Christine Whelan
Chair, Communications and PR Working Group

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY WORKING GROUP

The Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group, consisting of Cllrs Deness, Ganivet, Phillips, A. Whelan and C. Whelan, has met regularly throughout the year and at its first meeting following the relaxing of Covid rules re-affirmed its commitment to placing inclusiveness at the heart of both Council policies and the life of the local community.

With a view to achieving its aims the Working Group has continued to dialogue with local faith communities, both Christian and non-Christian, in order to make them aware of the Council's aims and to build up a network of people working toward the same or similar goals. The long-established contact with Ely's LBGT+ community has been affirmed and nurtured. Most recently the Group drew the Council's attention to an article in the *Ely Standard* that reported an increase in hate crimes in Cambridgeshire during the Covid lockdowns. The Council unanimously condemned this and issued its own press release which circulated widely.

Members of the Working Group are very aware that a small local authority such as the City of Ely Council has limited powers but on the other hand with its solid reputation in the community is well placed to advocate and can, therefore, be a strong voice for the City to be an open, welcoming, diverse and inclusive community where everyone is valued.

The Working Group would welcome contact with and comment from any community groups that are interested in engaging in discussion of any of the issues surrounding diversity and inclusivity.

Cllr Chris.Phillips
Chairman of the Diversity and Inclusivity Working Group

GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

The aim of the Governance Working Group is to look at the governance and suggest ideas on how the Council can improve its efficiency. It reports to the Personnel Finance and Governance Committee. The Group has met 4 times this current year and have changed some of the standing orders. The Christmas Lights Working group was reinstated as a subcommittee as was the CIL Working Group. The Group's work is still on going as we go into the last year of the current Council.

Cllr Christine Whelan
Chair, Governance Working Group

MALTINGS CHAIRS' WORKING GROUP

This Working Group has now closed, as new chairs will be funded through a loan and a percentage of CIL funds from the City of Ely Council. These are scheduled to be installed in September this year.

In addition, a maintenance and development programme for the whole Maltings has been written and a systematic approach is being applied to the replacement of curtains for the stage, an audio system and other maintenance tasks funded by the City of Ely Council.

Cllr Lis Every
Chairman – Maltings Chairs' Working Group

NORTH ELY HUB AND COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

A verbal report will be given at the meeting by Cllr S Bellow.

OUTDOOR SPORT AND LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Another difficult year trying mainly to help two committed groups - the splash pad enthusiasts and the skateboarders. Despite Cllr Every's best efforts we have not yet reached any resolution for either group. The skateboarders had a setback when their pre-app for the Country Park was not positively received and then the District Council planted a maze on their preferred area. They have been directed again to look at the Leisure Village but may well have to go out of Ely.

The splash pad group likewise have had no luck with their preferred site with the Paradise Trust unhappy with their proposals. The Hive would support a move there, but the group is not happy with the site proposed. They will look again, the alternative may be not in Ely.

The Working party has asked ECDC for their plans, if any, to extend the Leisure Village.

Cllr M Rouse
Chairman

STRATEGIC PLAN WORKING GROUP

The Working Group consists of the Chairs of the Council Committees together with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and the Clerk.

The Working Group was set up to consider the strategic review carried out by LGRC on behalf of the Council.

The Working Group presented a draft Strategic Plan to the Personnel Finance and Governance Committee and this was circulated to all Councillors. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on both the work of the Council and also on the finances of the Council. As such, the plan requires significant overhaul to reflect the impacts of the Pandemic and the recovery to a post pandemic scenario.

The review included a draft action plan and the Chairmans of each Committee are now prioritising these actions and carrying out costing analysis to build the suture Strategic Plan. This will then enable the future budgets to be based on these plans and provide a greater level of certainty and enable well managed development of the council. This is particularly important as the city grows and new services fall to this Council and with the additional responsibilities for the economic well-being of the city and the parish, including the Maltings, Oliver Cromwell House, the tourist information service and the Sessions House.

Cllr Alison Whelan
Chairman, Strategic Plan Working Group

YOUTH WORKING GROUP

This Group reports to Personnel Finance and Governance Committee. This Group has had very few meeting this year. We were, however, able to arrange a Youth Photography Competition that took place during November which was to encourage the Youth of the City to photograph their own view of what Ely meant to them through the lens of a camera. The Mayor, Cllr Sue Austen was able to present the prizes to the winners outside Oliver Cromwell's House in December 2021. We are planning to launch another photography competition for the Jubilee and the plans are underway for this. We have been able to engage with a few of the Youth groups in the City this year and will continue to do so in the future. Youth engagement is still very important to the Council as it is the future of Ely so this work will be ongoing to include the Youth of our City wherever possible looking ahead into the next year.

Cllr Christine Whelan
Chair, Youth Working Group

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

ELY TRINITY DOLE CHARITY

The Ely Trinity Dole Charity is an amalgamation of several smaller charities and is currently governed by a Board of Trustees two of whom – Cllr Rebecca Denness and Cllr Chris Phillips – represent the City of Ely Council. Its remit is to provide relief to those in need and to promote education within the civil parish of Ely and in practical terms this has meant the awarding of annual grants to local schools for specific purposes and occasional grants to individual students to enable them to take part in activities or to purchase books and equipment needed for their courses.

The Trustees, whose remit is to manage the bequests made to the Charity, meet twice a year to hear reports and to decide on awards. In recent years the Charity's annual income has averaged about £9,000 with the large majority of this being disbursed.

Further information about the Charity and its work can be obtained from either of the Council's two representatives on the Board of Trustees.

Cllr Chris Phillips
Representative of the City of Ely Council

ELY MUSEUM

City of Ely Council has a representative on Ely Museum's Board of Trustees. The Council made its formal contributions to the running of the Museum throughout the year.

The Museum opened in its refurbished state for the first time as Covid restrictions were removed. Visitors returned and schools were welcomed once more to enjoy spaces and resources dedicated for them. The Museum opened its first major temporary exhibition post-refurbishment, 'Margins of Empire', in partnership with The British Museum, which combined Roman artefacts found locally with loans from the national collection.

Cllr Rebecca Denness
City of Ely Council representative

PARADISE ASSOCIATION

As a new representative on this Association, I regularly visit and use the building. I have seen all the facilities first hand and attended Trustee meetings.

The Association has fared well despite the COVID pandemic and classes were open and resumed as soon as it was possible to do so. Numbers continue to rise to the previous footfall level prior to the pandemic and the facilities are in constant use.

The Association continues to have and grow regular and loyal clients despite competition in the local leisure industry.

Cllr Lis Every
City of Ely Council representative

PRICKWILLOW VILLAGE COUNCIL

This council has met about 4 times during the past 12 months firstly on Zoom but more recently in person at the village hall.

A mobile library visits Prickwillow every 4th Tuesday of the month. It parks in the lay-by alongside the red phone box at 12.35 -12.55pm.

The library holds a good selection of books, including children's and large print, and will source a particular book for you if Cambridgeshire Libraries holds it, and bring it next visit. Books can be returned either to the mobile facility or the main library in Ely; and vice versa.

The driver says that Prickwillow has very little take-up compared to other villages. It would be a loss if the service decides it is not worthwhile coming to our village. Do consider taking a look at what is on offer in our local Mobile Library.

On 22 August a special visit of the Essex Branch of the Morgan Owners Car Club to the museum took place giving museum visitors an opportunity to see these wonderful British hand built sports cars and even talk with some of the owners,

The 'Picnic in the Park' took place on 29 August which included Garden-in-a-tray competition, and Best Veg competition. Thanks to Loki Performances for their excellent workshop.

A Tractor Road run took place on 5 September; and the Ploughing Match took place on 3 October.

On Sunday 14 November at 11am wreaths were laid at the war memorial and a short time of meditation and prayer was led by Pat Rice.

A successful quiz was held on Friday 10 December at Hiams Sports & Social Club which raised funds for Wintercomfort.

Cary Outis, once again, delighted residents with his dressing up of the phone box as a reindeer.

The former Baptist Chapel is still being marketed by Rapleys. Offers over £100,000 are invited.

A new Speedwatch team is about to restart in the village. The area from Green Farm to the River Lark Bridge is the worst area for offending drivers.

At the January 2022 AGM Dan Littler was elected chair and Chantal Epp was elected Hon Secretary replacing Virginia Mull and Wendy Wilson who were thanked for their work on behalf of the village.

Cllr Richard Morgan
City of Ely Council representative

STUNTNEY VILLAGE COUNCIL

Stuntney falls in the Cathedral Ward of the Ely Parish, so as the ward councillor I have been attending their bi-monthly meetings since September 2019.

With the Ely southern by-pass now in use and renamed Seeking's Way in memory of a local SAS World War 2 hero, the focus has shifted back to the provision of a safe junction at the western end of the village bypass and maintaining and improving a dual use path into Ely. As well as the usual local issues of potholes, improvements to the play area and clearing of local lanes, there is a longer term ambition to complete a cycle way to Soham.

The council has a new chairperson, Jane Dawe, following the retirement of the redoubtable Wendy Fox, and now have plans to reactivate their social club and village hall.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
City of Ely Council representative

CAWDLE FEN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

I have attended every meeting. As always it has been useful and informative. The IDB is very well managed, spends money carefully while quietly keeping us safe and protecting the local economy.

Cllr M Rouse
City of Ely Council representative

FINANCIAL SITUATION 2021-2022

The City of Ely Council's financial situation during 2021/22 has been much more encouraging this year, moving forward living with Coronavirus. Both the Maltings and Oliver Cromwell's House have seen an increase in the number of bookings and visitors. This has resulted in the income being much higher than was expected.

The Council is hopeful that the budgeted shortfall for this year will not happen and that overall, the Council will be in a better financial situation.

The Council's annual return will be prepared shortly for this financial year.

Tracey Coulson
Clerk to the Council