



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

TO THE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

27TH MARCH 2023

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COUNCILLORS

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CATHEDRAL

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**Chairman of the Council and Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Richard Morgan
Deputy Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Chris Phillips**

Chairman's Annual Report

The City of Ely 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". 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.

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

In May we welcomed HRH The Princess Royal to unveil a large 5,000-year-old black oak table in the cathedral; and in June we celebrated Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee culminating in the Lighting of the Peace Beacon on St Mary's Green. A competition saw Cecilia De-Boer become our new town crier replacing Avril Hayter-Smith after 20 years.

In May last year the Council mourned the loss of Cllr Mike Rouse, Mayor 1976-77, 2018-20 a long serving and hard-working public servant. In June the council accepted the resignation of Cllr Kevin Wilkins; and in November the council formally gave Cllr Sarah Bellow a 6 month leave of absence. Following bye-elections Cllr Rouse was replaced by Cllr Daniel Edge; and Cllr Wilkins was replaced by Cllr Mary Wade.

In September we mourned the loss of our late Sovereign HM Queen Elizabeth II after 70 happy and glorious years and greeted the dawn of a new era of hope and progress, our new Carolean age!

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 Anna Bennett and staff at Oliver Cromwell House; Lola Howell, our venue manager at The Maltings; 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 Richard Morgan

The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Ely and Chairman of the City of Ely 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 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 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 task that the Council undertakes. The deficit in running these buildings is a significant part of the Council budget. A majority of the Council voted to approve a rise in the precept to meet this shortfall. This was not a unanimous decision of all Council members.

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

Cllr A Whelan

Chairman – Personnel, Finance and 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 latest Redrow site), 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 regularly throughout the year and its wide remit has meant that a good deal of Council business has come its way.

The Sessions House has continued to house the Council's office and to host various events. The Council has recently been able to offer the Ely Diocese accommodation for members of its education team while their own new premises are under construction and this arrangement has worked well and has also brought in rental income.

The Maltings has been well used throughout the year and has hosted all sorts of entertainment as well as weddings, conferences and fairs. It is well established as a major community asset for Ely and the surrounding area and new seating has very much added to the comfort of the building. Over the past year every effort has been made to work with local residents resolve noise issues and there are now regular meetings where concerns are raised, problems identified and solutions discussed.

The Maltings Cottage continues to be a difficult matter for the Committee to grapple with but discussions are on-going and it is hoped that the coming year will see progress made.

Assets is also responsible for the City of Ely Cemetery and for various play areas around the town. The latter have been renovated and upgraded and continue to be popular and well-used. In the Cemetery work is now moving ahead quickly for the creation of a sensory garden, This will be a pleasant place for people to come and remember loved ones and also a garden of remembrance where those dead and long forgotten, with a special emphasis on children, can be commemorated. The garden will be named the 'Rose Appleyard Garden' after a girl who died of typhus during one of the outbreaks that regularly affected Victorian Ely. In the centre of the garden a special oak tree will be planted to remember the life of the late Duke of Edinburgh. The flowers and shrubs to be planted have been chosen for their appeal to disabled and non-disabled visitors and all pathways have been designed for easy access.

New seats have been ordered and appropriate signage will explain the purpose of the site. Elsewhere in the Cemetery fifteen trees have been planted to commemorate the late Queen's Jubilee – fifteen for the number of councillors who serve on the City Council. The interior of the Cemetery chapel has also seen some minor improvements but a recent fall of masonry has alerted the Council to a probable repair programme.

Tours of the Cemetery have continued to attract 'full houses' but the Friends of Ely Cemetery has struggled since the death of its chairman – the late Cllr Arnie Arnold. It is hoped that the group can be revitalised and engage volunteers in such projects as gardening, caring for graves and researching family histories.

Cllr C Phillips
Chairman - Assets Committee

Climate and Environment Committee

The principle aim of the Committee is to ensure Ely is a clean and healthy place to live, work and visit. The Committee's headline target is to work to reduce emissions to zero by 2045 by operating in a sustainable manner. This includes the Councillors and staff, the Council's estate and the services it provides. But, as a Parish Council, with established relationships with residents, the Council also looks outwards and seeks to support and work with local partners, such as East Cambs CAN as well as sharing best practice with local organizations, such as the Cathedral. This year, there has been a focus on assessing the Council's buildings for 'greenness' with a view to altering the energy sources and use. Looking ahead, this work will continue and the Committee looks forward to involving residents in its work by continued attendance at local forums and its first ever stall at Ely Cathedral's Green Fair.

The environmental theme is continued in the role of the Highways lead who reports on 20s Plenty, Active Travel, Buses, Inconsiderate Parking and Minor Highways Maintenance. This year, a highlight was 20s Plenty with the successfully lobbying of the County Council to introduce it in Ely. 20's Plenty is a national campaign to reduce speeds in towns and cities to 20mph, a speed at which impact is survivable. The scheme also reduces congestion and transport emissions as well as increasing a community feel by preventing the anti-social effect of heavy traffic on roads. To promote awareness, the City Council purchased stickers to be attached to recycling wheelie bins belonging to properties along busier arteries in the City.

Closer links were established with Ely Cycling Campaign with a view to supporting provision of cycle routes.

Working with volunteers, this group focussed on provision of a splashpad intended for all age groups as a fun and environmentally and safe place to play or/and enjoy the sensory experience of running water. Having completed provisional work to find a site and operator, the project was handed over to the District Council to be pursued.

The CCTV Working Group's work came to an important stage where the purchase and installation of new CCTV equipment is in sight.

The Committee is also responsible for 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. The Committee oversees the planting of the City's floral displays, which are an important part of the City's character and attraction. The planting this year included red, white and blue colours at the time of the Queen's jubilee.

Working with other local groups, such as Perspective, the Access group, 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 changes to street lighting; 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 hears reports from the Council's representative on the Allotments Association. The Association thrives with a healthy waiting list and additional sites being added at the North Ely housing development.

It has been a successful year for the Committee in helping to maintain Ely as a healthy and happy City.

Cllr Rebecca Denness
Chairman - Climate and Environment Committee

Tourism and Town Centre Committee

For the first time in a few years we held a full programme events, including Jubilee Celebration, Eel Day and Apple Fayre.

The Platinum Jubilee Celebration was a resounding success, held over four days and started with the lighting of the beacon and civic service. A series of events followed over the four days including Eel day. The weather was a little unkind to us on some of the days but despite this it was well attended and very successful. We also held a Best Dressed Window competition for the local businesses, and there were some fabulous window displays with ultimately Brands being the overall winner.

During the year the website has been updated and made more user friendly, it also means that the team can update and change the content which was not the case with the previous site. This will ensure that it is kept up to date and is more cost effective. It also includes an online shop where some items can be purchased, and the items available to purchase will be expanded over the course of the coming year.

The stock at the Tourist Information Centre shop has been review and expanded. The focus is to now stock local sourced products, and souvenirs.

The walking tours have once again been a success with the majority sold out. It has been expanded to include a variety of tours during both the summer and winter months. The Ghost tours proved to be as popular as ever but also so did the other tours during the year. One of the most successful one was the Right Royal Tour where several guides and staff agreed to dress as regal characters, including King Charles II, Henry VIII, Queen Victoria.

As Chair of the Tourism and Town Centre Committee I would like to thank Anna Bennett and her team for all their hard work, dedication, and flexibility in what has been a very busy 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 - Tourism and Town Centre Committee

CIL Sub-Committee

The CIL Sub-Committee met to discuss a bid from the Assets Committee for a decarbonisation strategic plan for the Council's buildings at a cost in the region of £18,800. The application was refused.

The CIL Sub-Committee met to discuss a bid from the Assets Committee for a new gate at the Paradise Play Area (£884); 2 x picnic tables for High Barns and Paradise Play Areas (£1,044); and a climbing tower at St John's Play Area (£10,000). The application was approved.

Cllr Richard Morgan
Chairman - CIL Sub-Committee

Christmas Lights Sub-Committee

The Christmas Lights Sub-Committee continues to work on creating a beautiful environment for the City centre every Christmas. The Sub-Committee comprises councillors and co-opted volunteers. They plan the designs, put up and take down the Christmas lights and the tree. This takes several weekends from 8.00 am to undertake this, despite the weather. They are supported by the City's Estates Team and, this year, by a large contingent of American Airbase volunteers.

Much thanks are due to Mike Chinery-Colyer who organises everything to do with the Christmas lights.

This year, Mike and the Mayor visited Lakenheath Airbase to say a sincere thank you to the volunteers and present each one with a certificate.

Cllr E Every
Chairman – Christmas Lights Sub-Committee

ELY RIBE ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 27th March 2023

The highlight of our year so far has been the visit to Ely by 5 Ribe Town Guides and a member of the Ribe Museums' team in October. This was arranged through Visit Ely and the Ely City Guides, supported by the Ely Ribe Association, Ely Cathedral and the City of Ely Council. The 6 visitors from Ribe were hosted by members of the Ely City Guides, going on a variety of tours around the city, including a buffet lunch at The Maltings where they were able to see the Ely Ribe Tapestry, and afternoon tours of the Cathedral. In the evening both sets of guides enjoyed a meal together at The Prince Albert, followed by a talk about the History of Brewing in Ely. The following morning both sets of guides, along with representatives from Visit Ely, Ely Cathedral, Ely Museum and the Ely Ribe Association met together for a tour of Ely Museum and a very interesting plenary session. It was great to see so many Ely organisations meeting together in such a positive and co-operative manner. Our visitors returned to Ribe full of praise for the way in which the different organisations in Ely work together to promote our lovely city. Plans are already underway for a group of our Ely Guides to visit Ribe.

Over the weekend 12th – 15th May, we will welcome 20 members of the Ribe twinning organisation to Ely. 9 members of this group will stay with members of the Ely Ribe Association with the remaining people staying at The Lamb. This is a change from our “normal” arrangement in which all our guests have stayed with their host family. However, those people staying at the Lamb Hotel will be twinned with individual members of the Ely Ribe Association throughout their visit. A full programme of activities based in and around Ely is being planned, culminating in a formal dinner at the City of Ely Golf Club on Sunday evening. For quite a few of our guests this will be their first visit to Ely and we are looking forward to “showing off” our lovely city.

The Ely Ribe Association remains very grateful for the support of the City of Ely Council and we look forward to developing and strengthening our links in the future.

Howard McMillan
(Chairman, Ely Ribe Association)

CITY OF ELY ALLOTMENTS and GARDENS ASSOCIATION

REPORT ON THE ALLOTMENT YEAR 2022/2023

GENERAL COMMENTS:

This has been a very challenging year due to the extreme hot, dry weather but, on the whole, we have coped well and produced some excellent crops. Although we have inevitably lost a few plot holders because of ill health and changing job commitments, the vast majority renewed their tenancies promptly and look forward eagerly to the new season.

As an association we have gone from strength to strength, as our waiting list shows. At a time when nationally, the number of allotments is shrinking in many areas, we are one of the few that are expanding.

We have always had an active committee, and with several new members joining during the year and more coming on this year, we are happy that it is going to continue into the future in safe hands.

I put our success down to the committee's efforts and I can only thank the members and the council for where we are, and look forward to the sites on the new developments joining us as we continue to challenge the national trend.

Back Hill

This year saw a change on the site when one of the long-standing tenants retired and their plot re-let.

The existing chain link fence around this plot was in a poor state of repaired and was replaced by Kings School with a post and rail type.

To increase the security of the plot additional work was carried out on the fence and an access gate fitted.

Back hill has 2 plot holders

Canterbury Avenue

This site has seen changes in tenants this year and continues to be fully occupied.

The general maintenance/upkeep on the site is undertaken by the tenants.

Canterbury Ave has 12 plot holders

New Barns

This is the largest in town site, continues to be very popular, and remains fully tenanted.

When one of the large plot became vacant it was cleared by the site reps, help from other tenants and an outside contractor and has now been re-let as three smaller plots.

The sections of the shed, that was on the original plot, have been used to make a 'Swap Shop' where tenants can exchange any unwanted plants, seeds, gardening sundries and tools.

Work has continued throughout the year on general site maintenance and future projects include the improvement of the ground at the top access gate and installation of new edging to retain the side of the main path.

New Barns has 61 plot holders

Bridge Fen

We have had a steady turnover of plots this year, with several tenants leaving or downsizing for various reasons, and being replaced from the waiting list. The site is now full, although we expect more plots to become available this Spring.

Various maintenance projects have been completed; the fence in the car park was repaired, a new wheel fitted to the vehicle gate, and the post on the pedestrian gate was reset. The plot numbers on the number boards were replaced, but the numbers, despite being intended for 'outdoor use' have proven unsatisfactory, with many already needing replacement with something more permanent.

The asbestos removal project has taken up much time and effort, and this is expected to be completed this week. The other major project under discussion was that of installing mains water to the site in some form. We have produced and circulated a development plan for 2023-2024, which is producing some useful feedback from plot holders. It is certainly something we would consider doing again. We also included a detailed explanation of the rationale behind the decision taken not to supply piped water to Bridge Fen.

We now have two regular suppliers of wood chip, and one of manure, who continue to deliver regularly.

Site inspections were conducted as previously and several tenants were contacted and reminded of their commitments under the Tenancy Agreement, with some warning letters issued. We were particularly concerned about unturned compost heaps, and the amount of discarded rubbish on plots, due the increasing problems with rats. On the positive side, we continued with the Certificate of Merit scheme which has been welcomed.

Bridge fen has 133 plot holders

Upherds Lane

All change at Upherds this year with a (mainly) new team of reps. Thank you to John Mitchell for his service over the previous years.

The site continues to be popular, and is now predominantly plots of under 5 poles, which suits people without the time to maintain full-sized plots and enables a (relatively) fast move through the waiting list.

Post-Covid, there's been more turnaround of plots than for the last few years. To help orientate new starters there's now a Welcome Pack and an annual BBQ to coincide with National Allotments Week. Tenants are encouraged to bring food to share, and this year's inaugural event

went very well, fostering a community feel and enabling tenants to meet each other and share experiences.

The community shed has been erected, reroofed, fitted out with tool hooks and the soil around it has been levelled. Thanks to Rob McManus and Roy Smith for doing much of the hard labour involved. Mary May has kindly donated a table and chairs, and Peter and Vicky Holden have bought two benches for this small – but beautifully formed – community garden. We've planted pollinator-attracting perennials around the shed, the site borders and asked tenants to add them to any neglected corners as well. Additionally, there's a seed and seedling swap table as well as community compost heaps, the materials and much of the labour for which we owe a debt to Jason Basted.

We are also actively discouraging the use of pesticides and other nasties in line with the advice of the National Allotment Society. Aly Kassam and Lisa Richards have kindly supplied a load of mushroom compost for community use and will be supplying more in over the next year.

Overall, the emphasis has been on making Upherds a kind, respectful, and friendly site. Feedback from tenants has been very positive, and levels of engagement with the community and environmental efforts high.

The team would also like to express their sadness at the death of Vicky Holden, a long-time supporter of the site.

Upherds Lane has 54 plot holders

Trading Stores.

Business has been much the same as last year and though income was higher this was probably due, in part, to increases in stock purchase prices.

The two schemes that we run through the year, Kings Seeds and our own Seed Potatoes again proved popular, and meant that we were particularly busy during November and February.

The Stores are open on a Saturday morning 10.00 - 12.00 and run by a group of volunteers on a rota system.

We thank these members very much for giving up their time and will give a warm welcome to any new people who feel that they would like to join the team.

Treasurer's Report.

It should be noted that although the Allotment Year runs from 1st October - 30th September our Accounting Year runs from 1st January - 31st December.

The accounts show that we have been able to maintain our bank balance despite increase of several costs especially in the water bills due to the exceptionally hot summer.

Waiting list for allotment plots has grown from 114 in December 2021 to 125 in December 2022 (now 132 at March 2023). This growth has been fuelled by the continuing general interest in allotmenting, and high demand from new residents for plots on the new site at Orchards Green. The earliest applicants for Orchards Green have now been waiting three years.

At December 2022 the numbers waiting for each site were:

	Dec 2022	Dec 2021
Any site	14	7
Bridge Fen	9	8
Canterbury Avenue	8	3
New Barns	26	37
Upherds Lane	20	25
Orchards Green	48	34
Total waiting at 19 Dec 2022	125	114

Website and Gmail

The Association continues to use the Google Workspace software suite for emails, data storage and online video conferencing. The website is hosted by Weebly. No changes have been made to the provision of these services. Several committee meetings have been held on line during the year using the Meet video conferencing facility...

The Association email system is used by site reps and officers for communications with members, all bulk mailings are personalised using a mail merge add-on. This is intended to overcome possible misidentification as spam by the recipient mail servers. Mail merge is also used for notification of annual plot rents and in support of the store's activities, particularly seed potato invoicing.

The website is our communication with non-members (i.e., a shop window to the outside world) and also provides the channel for submission of applications for plots. This is one of the busiest pages.

We do not at present have an official presence on social media.

Mr K Brown
Chairman

Governance Working Group

The aim of the 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 hasn't met many times this current year. The new group next year will continue to look at ways to improve the efficiency of the council.

Cllr C Whelan
Chairman - Governance Working Group

Communications and PR Working Group.

This group reports to the Personnel Finance and Governance. The group has met a few times this year. 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 and have recently been published in the Elyi ensuring everyone gets to see the latest news from the working group. There have been more parishioners attending the meetings after more publicity. The new group will hopefully be looking at other ways to communicate to people going forward next year.

Cllr C Whelan
Chairman - Communications & PR Working Group

Inclusivity Working Group

The Inclusivity Working Group, consisting of Cllrs Denness, Ganivet, Phillips (Chair), A. Whelan, C. Whelan and P. Harris, has met several times during the year and has re-affirmed its commitment to placing inclusivity at the heart of both Council policies and the life of the local community.

The Working Group has continued to dialogue with people in the community in order raise awareness of the Council's aims and to build up a network of people working toward the same or similar goals. The Council's long-established contact with Ely's LGBTQ+ community has been affirmed and nurtured and at the 2022 Ely Pride councillors set up a stall at the Maltings in order show our support, promote our policies and encourage attendees to participate in local government. The Progress Pride Flag was flown in the Market Place during Pride Week and also during LGBTQ+ History Month. Contact has also been retained with faith groups around the city – both Christian and non-Christian and new contacts have been made with groups engaged in work with the disadvantaged and disabled. During the recent refurbishment of the Paradise Play Area the Council installed new, inclusive equipment designed to encourage the participation of both disabled and non-disabled children.

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 its solid reputation in the community has made it possible for it to advocate and be a strong voice in the task of making our city open, welcoming, diverse and inclusive – a community where everyone is welcomed and valued.

The 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 C J. Phillips
Chairman - Inclusivity Working Group

CCTV Working Group

Last year we were 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 still 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 us, 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.

Cllr E Every
Chairman – CCTV Working Group

Outdoor Sport and Leisure Working Group

The Working Group has continued to support the implementation of a splash pad and skate park when requested to do so.

The Splash Pad Group have now identified a venue next to the Hive and in principle this has been agreed by East Cambridgeshire District Council. Further support will be given by the City of Ely Council as the Splash Pad Group work on a feasibility and business plan, decide on how they will be constituted, and raise funds.

We are delighted to continue to work with the Group

No further work has been requested by the Skate Park Group.

Cllr E Every
Chairman – Outdoor Sport and Leisure Working Group

Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group

The Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group consisting of Cllrs Austen, Edge, Every and Wade. They were tasked with researching neighbourhood plans and making a recommendation to the wider council at the first Personnel, Finance and Governance Committee (P,F&G) following the Annual meeting. The group members have met together to share their findings and also met representatives from the ECDC planning team for their input. The interim report will be presented at the P,F&G meeting on 17th April.

Cllr M Wade
Chairman – Neighbourhood Plan Review Working Group

Strategic Plan Working Group

The Working Group consists of the Chairs of the council committees together with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and 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 chairs 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.

It has proved challenging to arrange meetings and agree updates to the plan.

Cllr A Whelan
Chairman – Strategic Plan Working Group

North Ely Hub and Community Working Group

The Working Group was set up to plan the use of the North Ely Hub that is being built by developers off of Cam Drive and will be handed over to the Council in due course.

Councillors fed into the design of the building and worked with developers to establish a building that can be adapted in size and use.

Adjustments included adding a larger kitchen to enable food and drink to be available for meetings, and corridors and storage areas to prevent disturbing other users of the building.

The developers have since delayed the application for planning permission and they have been chased. This will enable us to have designs that can be shared with the public.

We will need to seek members of the public who would like to be involved in the next stages of this project once we get these designs.

Cllr A Whelan
Chairman – North Ely Hubs and Community Working Group

Representatives on outside organisations

Ely Trinity Dole

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. 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. A small portion of the Dole's income is given to the vicar of St Mary's church for use in emergency situations.

The Trustees, whose remit is to manage the bequests made to the Charity, meet at least 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.

At the time of writing a merger between the Ely Trinity Dole Charity and the Needhams Foundation is being considered. It is envisaged that a combined charity to be named the Needhams Trinity Charity will be set up and that it will by virtue of its size, be better able to serve the community. It is intended that City of Ely Council representation on the new body will be continued.

Cllr C. J. Phillips
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.

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, dog waste bins, 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 is a very active one and over the last year they have negotiated a new lease for the Village Hall and are in the process of registering it as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with the Charity Commission.

In addition it is hoped that the village roads will be mostly restricted to 20 mph, in parallel with changes proposed for Ely.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
City of Ely Council representative

Prickwillow Village Council

This council has met about 4 times during the past 12 months in 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 parking place is likely to change in the near future.

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.

The Drainage Museum continues to draw visitors from far and wide:

Tractor Road Run, Sunday April 24th 2022

Motorcycle Show, Sunday May 15th 2022

Vintage and Classic Car Show, Sunday June 19th 2022

Back to the Swinging 60s! 7th August 2022

Sunday September 18th 2022 – 40th Anniversary of Museum formation

Sunday October 2nd 2022 – Ploughing Match

Sunday December 4th – Christmas Run Day with Father Christmas

On the afternoon of Saturday 4th June a Platinum Jubilee Picnic in the Park was arranged by villagers in and around the village hall. The Mayor of Ely spoke to 91 year old retired farmer, Stanley Rice; presented a prize to Hannah Del Grazia, winner of the Prickwillow Bake-Off; and had his picture taken with a life size cardboard cut-out of The Queen!

Another successful quiz was held on Friday 9th December at Hiam Sports & Social Club which raised funds.

Cary Outis, once again, delighted residents with his dressing up of the phone box as “PicasSanta” *after Pablo Picasso* to depict what he described as a “fractured year” following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The former Baptist Chapel has been sold. A planning application to turn it into residential use has been approved and the layby next to the phone box will be closed.

At the January 2023 AGM Dan Littler resigned as chairman but will stay on until a replacement can be found. Chantal Epp will continue as Hon Secretary. Congratulations to Chantal and Rod on the birth of their new daughter Sky – born in September.

Cllr Richard Morgan
City of Ely Council Representative

Paradise Association

I regularly visit and use the building. I have seen all the facilities first hand and attended Trustee meetings.

The Association is attracting good numbers and thrive following the Covid pandemic and the facilities are in constant use. A price rise was agreed but the rates are still very competitive with other facilities in the area.

Cllr E Every
City of Ely Council representative

Cawdle Fen Internal Drainage Board

Like my predecessor, over the last year I have attended every meeting of the Cawdle Fen Internal Drainage Board, which are held at the Prickwillow Drainage Museum. The meetings are always interesting as they deal with a subject that is vital in maintaining the local water drainage environment for much of the City.

A budget has just been set that deals with the current operating costs; but the future financial situation of the Board is fraught. There is major damage to a drainage pipe deep buried in a covered culvert along the Ely Dock access road. The pipe will eventually need repairing, and that will be very costly. A project is underway to tackle both the engineering implications, and the funding thereof.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
City of Ely Council representative

FINANCIAL SITUATION 2022-2023

The City of Ely Council's financial situation during 2022/23 has been much more encouraging this year. 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. Expenditure has however been much more of a concern, due to the increasing costs on energy, supplies and services.

The Council is hopeful that the budgeted shortfall for this year will be less than predicted, but the rise in expenditure to enable the council to provide its services, at the normal high standards, proves a challenging situation.

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

Tracey Coulson
Clerk to the Council